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**WOMEN'S ADVOCACY AND FIREARMS CONTROL:  
THE CASE OF BILL C-68**

BY

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A Thesis  
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
and Research in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Through an examination of the discourse involved in the gun control debate surrounding Bill C-68, this thesis examines the importance of rhetoric in the claims-making process. In particular, it examines the manner in which women's groups used the rhetoric of violence against women to lobby for further restrictions to Canada's gun control laws. The rhetoric used by women's groups is examined through a social constructionist perspective, utilizing Joel Best's model of claims-making. Major sources of data included House of Commons and Senate Committee submissions and transcripts. Through a descriptive analysis, the rhetoric of women's groups is presented; in addition, a content analysis aids in summarizing the broader findings. The principal finding is that a number of specific claims were commonly used by women's groups. These include: the impossibility of separating criminals from law-abiding citizens; the notion of women as defenceless victims; the concept of power; the notion of guns as inherently dangerous; the long-term implications of gun control; and, the assertion that gun control is only one part of a larger solution. While the École Polytechnique killings served as a catalyst to push for increasing controls on firearms, during the debate over Bill C-68, women's groups unanimously choose to highlight the more common plight of the abused woman. The issue of violence against women served as the common "ground" for women's groups, who offered different approaches to the issue, but nonetheless presented a common theme in terms of their definition of the problem. During the debate over Canada's most recent gun control legislation, the gendered discourse of violence against women played a key role in the rhetoric of women's groups.

**It is important that we honour these young women. Their deaths galvanized us as a nation to mark December 6 as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The senseless loss of their young lives has become symbolic of the experience of all women whose lives are shattered by deliberate acts of gender-based violence. December 6 is the day on which all Canadians can pause to remember, and then renew our resolve to end the violence.**

**The Honourable Hedy Fry, December 6, 1999 (10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the École Polytechnique Massacre)**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

It is no coincidence that since the early 1970's, an increase in concern regarding violence against women has closely paralleled increasingly stringent gun control measures. Public concern over the link between firearms and violence against women has also been heightened by several recent high-profile cases, most notably the mass slaying of fourteen women engineers at the University of Montreal in 1989. During the latest round of gun control debate, violence against women was often cited as one of the primary targets of the new legislation.

In order to examine the manner in which language is used in the claims-making process, this thesis will highlight the rhetoric and discourse used in the gun control debate, and further, the particular manner in which women's groups used the gendered discourse of domestic violence to lobby for further restrictions to Canada's most recent gun control laws.

How is it that issues come to be regarded as social problems? How do members of society define what comes to be accepted and what does not? More importantly, *who* claims responsibility for this definition? There is little doubt that violence against women is an issue that has come to be increasingly recognized as a social problem within Canadian society. During the legislative process of our most recent gun control legislation (Bill C-68), women's groups were at the forefront of attempting to link guns to violence against women.

This thesis will examine the manner in which women's groups actively participated in this claims-making process, using a social constructionist theoretical perspective, and particularly, Joel Best's claims-making model.

The second chapter, “The Problem of Guns and Violence” briefly highlights some of the main statistics regarding firearms and firearm crime in Canada. This includes an examination of firearm ownership, deaths (homicide and suicide), accidents, and crime.

The third chapter, “The Construction of the Problem” will describe the theoretical framework. Social constructionism will form the broader theoretical perspective, with a specific focus on Joel Best’s model of claims-making. The three main components of Best’s model are grounds, warrants and conclusions. These components will also be used to analyze the rhetoric of women’s groups involved in recent gun control debates.

The fourth chapter, “History of Gun Control” will focus on the history of gun control in Canada, in order to help locate the current debates within an historical context. The history of gun control, from its earliest days, will help to highlight the incremental rate of change, and also Canada’s long history of regulating firearms in some manner.

The fifth chapter will describe the methodology employed in the analysis of the rhetoric section. A qualitative descriptive analysis was used in order to allow for the richness of the data to be highlighted. Such a methodology encourages a heavy emphasis on quotations so that the thoughts and feelings expressed by the subject are presented in as accurate a manner as possible. This is combined with a content analysis of the warrants and conclusions supported by the various groups that were involved.

The sixth chapter presents the results of the analysis. The first section highlights the range of rhetoric involved in the gun control debate in order to familiarize the reader with the spectrum of claims involved in this legislative process. The second section focuses on an analysis of the women’s groups involved in the gun control debate.

The seventh chapter returns the discussion to Best's model of claims-making and analyzes the rhetoric employed in the gun control debate through this model. Finally, the conclusion will turn to the current situation in Canadian firearms control and highlight some of the recent developments.

Through this examination, it will be argued that women's groups have used a gendered discourse in their claims-making. The principle finding is that a number of specific claims were utilized by women's groups – these included the following:

- the impossibility of separating criminals from law-abiding citizens;
- the notion of women as defenceless victims;
- the concept of power;
- the notion of guns as inherently dangerous;
- the long-term implications of gun control;
- and, the assertion that gun control is only one part of a larger solution.

Through the use of a gendered discourse, the issue of domestic violence formed the common ground for the women's groups, who offer different experiences and professional approaches to the issues, but nonetheless presented a common theme in terms of their definition of the problem. While the Ecole Polytechnique incident served as a catalyst to push for increasing controls on firearms, during the debate over Bill C-68, women's groups unanimously choose to highlight the plight of abused women.

Perhaps one of the most obvious examples of the success of such claims-making activities is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women on December 6 each year, established in 1991. The purpose of this day is to commemorate not only the deaths of the 14 women at the École Polytechnique, but also

to remember the other less sensational cases of women who are killed by men each year.

In Hedy Fry's words:

This minute of silence allows Canadians across the country to pause to remember those 14 young women and all women who have lost their lives through deliberate acts of violence. I encourage Canadians to also think about those women who live with violence every day.

(Status of Women Canada, December 6, 1999)

It is in this vein, through highlighting the numerous women who live and die in situations of domestic violence, that women's groups used a gendered discourse to lobby for Bill C-68, Canada's most recent gun control legislation. It has been said that the use of rhetoric is both implicit and intentional – this paper will highlight how women's use of a gendered discourse in the gun control debate serves as a prime example for such an examination.

## **2. PROBLEM OF GUNS AND VIOLENCE**

In Canada, official statistics and special studies are the two main sources of firearm crime and injury statistics. The majority of the official data originates from Statistics Canada (Health Statistics Division and the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics), although other information is available from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). One of the most challenging limitations of current official statistics is the lack of contextual data available to inform the circumstances surrounding firearm incidents. For example, it is impossible to know how many women are threatened with a firearm in the context of domestic violence. It is also not possible to ascertain the number of aboriginal people who own firearms and the rate of misuse in aboriginal communities, since Statistics Canada does not collect crime statistics based on race or ethnicity. Further, official statistics are not collected regarding the outcome of police involvement in domestic incidents (i.e., whether a firearm was seized). This type of information can only be gathered through special studies that examine detailed contextual data. While the available data does help to inform our understanding of the extent of firearm ownership, death, injury and crime in Canada, it remains frustratingly incomplete.<sup>1</sup>

### **I. FIREARM OWNERSHIP IN CANADA**

The Department of Justice estimates that approximately three million individuals, or 26% of Canadian households, own about seven million firearms (Department of

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<sup>1</sup> For further information on firearm-related statistics collected by Statistics Canada, see Leesti, T. et al (March 23, 1998) *Firearms Data: A Review of Statistics Canada Surveys* (internal report prepared for Department of Justice).

Justice, 1998a). In 1997, the RCMP indicated that there were approximately 1.2 million restricted firearms registered in Canada. Most of these are handguns, with about 992,963 registered to civilian owners (RCMP 1997:4).

The Angus Reid Survey, which has been the most comprehensive survey on firearms ownership in Canada to date, reported that the majority of firearm owners were male (86%) and between the ages of 35 and 54. The survey also indicated that firearm owners generally have less formal education than the population overall. In addition, they were more likely to be employed full-time and as blue-collar workers, in comparison to the general population (1991: 18-19).

The survey also reported the number of firearm owning households in each province and territory. The Yukon and Northwest Territories possess the highest level of firearm owning households, at 67% each. Alberta is next highest at 39%, while New Brunswick (35%), Saskatchewan (32%), New Brunswick (35%), Newfoundland (32%) and Nova Scotia (31%) and Manitoba (28%) are in the mid range. At the lower end of the scale are British Columbia (24%), Quebec (23%), Prince Edward Island (20%) and lastly, Ontario at 15% (Angus Reid 1991).

The above data suggest that jurisdictions with lower population densities and more rural areas contain a higher proportion of firearm owning households. This is particularly relevant for the ownership of rifles and shotguns, which are primarily used for hunting in Canada (Block 1998:23).

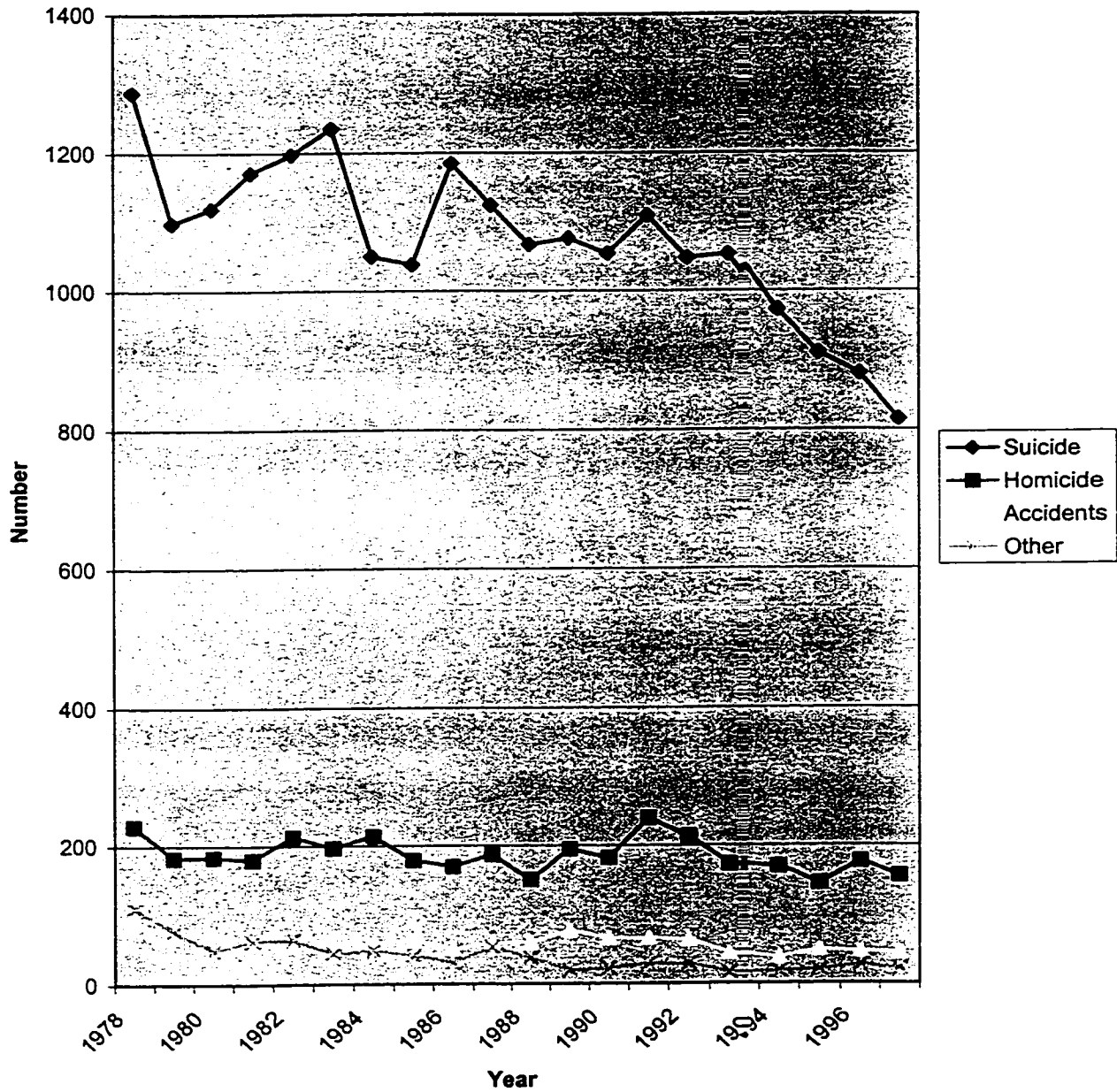
## **II. DEATH**

From 1970 to 1997, approximately 1,300 people have died in firearm-related incidents each year in Canada (Statistics Canada, *Causes of Death*). Most of these deaths are suicides (77%), followed by homicides (14%), while accidents (6%) and legal intervention/undetermined cause (3%) comprise the smallest proportion. Yearly statistics show a rise in the rate of firearm deaths from 1970 to 1977. In 1977, the rates peaked at 7.8 deaths per 100,000. Since 1977, the rate of firearm deaths has decreased by nearly half (48%), to a low of 3.5 per 100,000 firearm deaths in 1997 (Statistics Canada, *Causes of Death*). Table 1 (next page) illustrates the number of firearm deaths from 1970 to 1997.

As community sizes decrease, firearm accidents and suicides tend to increase. Firearm homicides seem to be most prevalent in the smallest and the largest communities in Canada (Department of Justice, 1998a).

From 1990 to 1997, the Northwest Territories (16.6 per 100,000) have had the highest average annual rate of firearm deaths in Canada, followed by the Yukon (11.1 per 100,000), New Brunswick (6.9 per 100,000) and Alberta and Saskatchewan (5.8 per 100,000). In the mid-range were Nova Scotia (5.7), Quebec (5.2) and Manitoba (4.8). The lowest rates were reported in British Columbia (4.4), Newfoundland (3.8), Prince Edward Island (3.2), and Ontario (2.7) (Hung, 2000).

**TABLE 1**  
**NUMBER OF FIREARM DEATHS, 1970-1997**



### **III. SUICIDE**

Between 1970 and 1997, there were an average of 1,055 firearm suicides in Canada. Firearm suicides comprise the highest number of firearm deaths in Canada (77%) (Statistics Canada, *Causes of Death*). Firearms are used in approximately one third (32%) of all suicides. The rate of firearm suicide over this period decreased approximately 20% from 1970, at 3.66 per 100,000. This is in contrast to the overall rate of suicide, which increased by about 19%% during the same period. The graph also illustrates that the percentage of suicides committed with firearms during this period also decreased from 33% in 1970 to 22% in 1997.

### **IV. ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES**

Between 1970 and 1997, there were about 75 accidental firearm deaths each year in Canada. About 5% of all firearm deaths are accidents (Statistics Canada, *Causes of Death*). The graph illustrates that the rate of firearm deaths has been consistently decreasing in this same period.

There has been an average of 1,200 hospital admissions for gun shot wounds between 1981 and present. Almost one-half (49%) of the hospital admissions resulted from an accident, about one quarter (23%) were self-inflicted, 15% were other, and 1% resulted from legal intervention (12% were left undetermined) (Statistics Canada and CIHI, *Hospital Morbidity Study*).

## **V. HOMICIDE**

On average, between 1974 and 1998, there have been 219 firearm homicides annually. Firearms are involved in approximately one-third (34%) of all homicides, representing the most common means of homicidal death. About 15% of all firearm deaths are homicides (Statistics Canada, *Homicide Survey*).

More than half (55%) of all homicides are committed with a long gun. Over the last 25 years, most firearm homicides have been committed with a long gun, although since 1991, handgun homicides have surpassed rifles and shotguns accounting for almost 50% of all firearm homicides (Statistics Canada, *Homicide Survey*).

## **VI. CRIME**

Almost a third of all robberies (29%) are committed with a firearm (Statistics Canada, *Canadian Crime Statistics*). Crime is decreasing in Canada. For seven years in a row, all major categories of violent crime have decreased, including homicide, robbery and firearm robbery (Statistics Canada, *Canadian Crime Statistics*).

## **VII. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND FIREARMS**

In order to ground any discussion of domestic violence, especially pertaining to firearms control initiatives, it is helpful to contextualize the phenomenon being considered. These numbers, percentages, trends and ranges provide a context for the claims being made- they help to make their claim that firearms are being used against women, and at a high enough rate to warrant serious consideration for intensified controls.

The Statistics Canada 1993 National Survey on Violence Against Women found that 3 in 10 women currently in a relationship or previously married have experienced at least one incident of sexual or physical violence. One third of the women who have been abused by a partner have feared for their lives during the relationship (Rodgers, 1994). Additionally, from 1974-1992, a married women was nine times more likely to be killed by her husband than a stranger (Wilson & Daly, 1994).

In a 1997 sample of police agencies across Canada, spousal violence comprised 17% of the victims of all violent offences.<sup>2</sup> Most of the victims (88%) of reported spousal violence were women (Statistics Canada, *UCR II*). From 1978 to 1997, 18% of all solved homicides were victims of spousal violence. Over this time period, three times more wives than husbands have been killed (1,485 women and 442 men). While women can be the perpetrators, research has indicated that the women is the victim of abuse in more than 90% of all cases of domestic violence (Health Canada, 1995).

In 1997, firearms were the most common means used to commit spousal homicide, representing more than one in three (37%) of the cases. Husbands, who comprise the majority of the accused, use firearms most often (40%); wives use firearms less frequently (25%) (Fitzgerald, 1999: 37). Knives were the second most common means for men (25%), while the majority of women used knives (60%). International data indicates that men are more likely to use firearms in committing domestic homicide, whereas women as more likely to stab their partner (Wilson and Daly, 1992).

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<sup>2</sup> The Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR II) collects detailed information of crimes in selected jurisdictions – 179 police agencies were included in this sample.

Between the years 1974–1992, the leading method used to kill a female spouse was use of a firearm (Wilson and Daly, 1994). Stabbing and beating were the second most frequent methods used, each at 21%, which was followed by strangulation at 11%. These trends are consistent in both Canada and the United States over the last 20 years (Wilson and Daly, 1994; Fitzgerald, 1999: 37).

Of all firearm homicides, 85% involved rifles or shotguns (Wilson and Daly, 1994). In domestic homicides involving firearms, in 1995, 60% involved a rifle or a shotgun, 24% used a handgun, and the remainder used a sawed-off rifle or shotgun.

Most female victims of spousal homicide are quite young, with an average age of between 18 and 24 (Rodgers, 1994; Fitzgerald, 1999). The rate of violence among this age bracket is four times the national average, according to Statistics Canada's Violence Against Women survey (Wilson and Daly, 1994). Accordingly, teenage wives face the highest risk of being killed by their husbands (Wilson and Daly, 1994).

In 1997, some type of weapon or physical force was used in the majority (77%) of police-reported incidents of spousal violence. Men were more likely than women to use a weapon (Fitzgerald, 1999:13). Saltzman et al. (1992) found that intimate and family assaults were twelve times more likely to result in death when a firearm had been used.

Domestic abuse does not occur in a vacuum- in many instances, friends, neighbors, family and/or police were aware of a history of violent episodes. In more than half (56%) of the reported cases of domestic homicide between 1991 and 1997, police were aware of a history of abuse between the husband and the wife (Fitzgerald, 1999: 37). Additionally, it has been found that more than half of the husbands who killed their spouses had a criminal record. In 18% of the cases, he was illegally in possession of

the firearm (Dansys, 1992).

Although official statistics cannot confirm this, it has been hypothesized that a proportion of the cases of women killing men might be considered “battered women’s syndrome”, where the women reacts lethally to a history of violence inflicted against her (Noonan, 1993). It has been asserted that, in many instances of wife assault, husbands kill their wives as an expression of power, where the relationship is characterized by control and violence. When a wife kills her husband, there is a great amount of evidence to indicate that she is reacting to past abuse by her abusive husband (there is wide empirical support for this: for example; Wilson & Daly, 1994; Health and Welfare Canada, 1989; Alexander, 1993).

Domestic violence, as the name would imply, occurs most often in private homes; Statistics Canada data put the figure at around 80% (Wilson and Daly, 1994). Furthermore, data collected in a detailed analysis indicated that 97% of domestic homicides occur in the residence of either the husband or the wife.

Many men who kill their wives subsequently kill themselves. A Department of Justice Report found that 70% killed themselves in 1989 and 1990 (Dansys, 1992). This report also found that violent disputes preceded 80% of all cases where husbands killed their wives, and that alcohol was involved in close to two-thirds of the cases (Dansys, 1992).

One of the greatest periods for potentially lethal violence is immediately following a separation of some form (Dansys, 1992). Marital relationships of less than two years had the highest rates of wife assault. In almost a half of domestic homicides, the accused and the victim were in the process of a separation or divorce (Dansys, 1992).

While numerical estimates are important in lending legitimacy to a claim, statistics regarding domestic violence must be viewed critically. Most of the information regarding domestic violence has been derived from those who come into contact with the formal system, even though it is widely agreed that many victims of domestic violence suffer in silence. Statistics must be recorded by an official agency, women who share their experiences have somehow come into contact with a formal system or with social services- generally, then, they will be representative of those who have had contact with an outside agency, but not necessarily of those who have never had any sort of outside involvement.

Most of these women have decided that they need intervention, and sought outside help, and are likely to be very different in some ways from those who remain unknown. Thus, these numbers can only reflect women who have had formal involvement. There may be, and most likely is, a group of women about whom very little is known. There is a greater chance that the numbers reflecting firearm injuries and deaths are more accurate than more general information regarding domestic violence due to the greater degree of harm usually inflicted by firearms. These injuries are more likely to require medical attention, and thus to possibly come to the attention of formal agencies.

Although statistics serve as useful background information in examining social situations, they do not help to explain how some issues come to be regarded as “problems”, or how particular issues enter into the policy arena. The next chapter will shift to focus attention on the process whereby a situation becomes constructed as a policy-relevant issue in the political arena. In particular, a review of social

constructionism and the claims-making process will help to highlight the role of rhetoric in defining which issues come to be regarded as worthy of public and political attention.

### **3. CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROBLEM**

Through an examination of the discourse of women's groups involved in the gun control debate surrounding the 1995 legislative proposals, this thesis will highlight the importance of rhetoric in the claims-making process. The importance of rhetoric in defining a situation as a public or social problem is central. It is argued that the use of rhetoric by claims-makers is both implicit and intentional. This section will examine both the claims-makers who become involved in the use of rhetoric, for example, moral entrepreneurs and problem-solving professionals, and also the process through which these claims are made. Although a number of social constructionists have put forth quite similar theories of the process of claims-making, this paper will utilize Joel Best's (1990) model of claims-making as used in his well-known analysis of the "missing children" phenomenon.

#### **I. THE CLAIMS-MAKERS: MORAL ENTREPRENEURS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING PROFESSIONALS**

Herbert Blumer wrote that "A social problem does not exist as an objective condition. Rather society, itself defines and conceives of the problem and it is through this definitional process that a phenomenon is accorded a specific meaning" (1971: 300). Thus, the social construction of problems may be understood as being a competition among claims-makers, a struggle within a sea of possible explanations and solutions. In essence, claims-makers compete to package and present an issue so as to command public attention, with the ultimate goal being to set the political agenda. These claims-makers compete within a social problems marketplace (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994: 207) and difficulty arises in that this marketplace has a limited attention span. Claims-making activities centre around the packaging and subsequent repackaging of a problem

with the objective being the depiction of the issue in a manner which will serve to push it to the top of the social agenda.

As stated, social problems are not some sort of universal or stable category into which a given “problem” can be neatly categorized at any given point. Rather, they are socially, contextually, politically, temporally and culturally defined and specific. What is defined as a social problem at one point in time may not be in a different context. Just as what is constructed as a social problem is ever-evolving, so is the mass of professionals who claim to represent these people.

Loseke and Cahill (1984) and Gusfield (1982) both critically examine the social construction of social problems and the creation of professionals to deal with these social problems. Central to both arguments is that professionals help in creating and contracting a certain category of social problems, since it is in their benefit to have a clientele to serve. In this way, they engage in a self-fulfilling dialectic where their very presence justifies their continued intervention.

Constructionists such as Gusfield examine how social problems have often been viewed as arising out of the deterioration of modern societies. He argues that the manner in which problems are deemed as conditions which should be dealt with in a particular manner should not be viewed simplistically. The focus on intervening in peoples lives through changing or alleviating their problems is a cultural invention of recent times (Gusfield, 1982: 2). It is a way of organizing social problems into a phenomenon worthy of wider focus and collective response. This is the process of making private troubles into social problems (Mills, 1959). For example, in the 1970’s the women’s movement helped to define wife abuse as not only a private issue, but as a social problem as well (Loseke and Cahill, 1984: 296). By constructing the situation as a social problem, they

were able to assert that resources and attention should be diverted to assist the victims of this social problem.

The development of realms of social life as social problems has led to the view that these phenomenon are public obligations that have been deemed objects of focus and reform for public agencies. The development and proliferation of social problems is partially due to the rise of the state as an instrument of social goals, and the ensuing advent of professions devoted to the solution of these social afflictions (Gusfield, 1982: 2). A key component of the social construction of a problem is the particular typification of the issue which is ultimately adopted by claims-makers. For when claims are made, actors within the social drama are established. Certain individuals are accorded the status of deviant or victim based on behaviour or attributes which represent a "problem" for society. Similarly, possible solutions or forms of intervention are also typified. In today's society, problems are not defined as such in the absence of a wider set of plausibility structures to facilitate understanding. What necessarily arises out of the competing sets of ideas and conceptual frameworks is a call for collective action in the form of specific solutions (Gusfield, 1982: 2).

While Henshel writes that intervention in a social problem is "any and all conscious, organized efforts to alleviate that problem" (199: 91), it should be noted that very specific forms of intervention are legitimated through successful claims-making activities. If one were to take the example of alcoholism, one would acknowledge that intervention in this realm is the product of the intermingling of historically specific politics and culture (1982: 2).

Such a typification is evident in the victory of the medical health approach based on the notion of alcoholism that has been commonly adopted towards problem drinking,

which advocates treatment and support groups, versus the justice (through punishment and deterrence) approach taken towards the abuse of drugs, particularly in the United States. In spite of the fact that alcohol and drugs are pharmacological similar agents intended to produce a pleasant state of being, different typifications of the issues have resulted in varying approaches towards intervention.

Gusfield examines how the creation of the welfare state has led to a view that those who are the victims of any affliction deserve to be treated by specialized professionals, persons with a particular understanding or competence in a given area (Gusfield, 1982: 2). In its early typifications, the excessive use of alcohol may have been viewed as being socially undesirable or a matter of concern, but it was not organized as a social problem, *per se*. The repackaging of alcohol use as an issue warranting intervention is a product of the mid-twentieth century (Gusfield, 1982: 8), a typification which emerged following the repeal of prohibition in 1933. Out of this new typification emerged the notion that a specific segment of drinkers, chronic drinkers of alcohol, were in need of medical help. Thus, a specific set of intervenors were called upon to deal with the issue.

Essentially, the continued claims-making activities of a specific group of moral entrepreneurs resulted in the adoption of a particular construction of the problem. As such, due to the specific nature of the discourse which is adopted, intervention becomes very specific as well. Each typification favours certain occupational forces over others. In the case of the social construction of alcoholism, increased public attention and a new conception of the issue as a medical one, created an environment which was ripe for the emergence of problem-solving professions. Intervention became professionalised.

The emergence of problem-solving professions or troubled-persons industries is generally legitimated on the basis of their claim to a unique body of knowledge (Gusfield, 1982: 5) which is viewed as being inaccessible to society at large.

Loseke, in discussing battered women, states that so-called experts claim expertise based on intellectual study or practical experience in the social services, or both (Loseke and Cahill, 1984: 296). The specific combination of political tendencies and government agencies, as evidenced in the welfare state, has had an influence on which phenomenon have been construed as public problems and the ensuing responses which have been advocated. Indeed, “social policy” itself insinuates that the social organization is directed at the resolution of the so-called problems (Gusfield, 1982: 2).

Thus, professionals are able to define certain categories of people or behaviour as “in trouble”, and as meriting assistance. Within this framework, it is essential to recognize the proliferation of professional occupations that exist in order to “help” those who have been designated as troubled persons. One must understand this “troubled-persons” industry as being an important component in the creation and implementation of policies to deal with deviance (Gusfield, 1982: 4).

The emergence of a number of social problems must be viewed within a context wherein certain categories of social problems come to be defined in terms of people “in trouble”, with a warrant and claim to public aid. In modern Western societies, this has been part of a development where social welfare has been deemed a responsibility of governments to those who are needy. With the increase in the functions of the welfare state, there has been a commensurate increase in a newly significant occupational group, namely those employed in the “troubled-persons” occupations (Gusfield, 1982: 4).

Although the problem-solving professionals may be trained in one particular or specialized area, this does not imply that they are in a static relationship with their clientele, either potential or existing. Gusfield states, “the development of problem-solving professionals has produced a body of people who possess the skills, interests, time, mission, and resources to articulate and organize groups whom they serve or seek to serve” (Gusfield, 1982: 6). Not only do they attempt to organize or articulate on behalf of these groups, but these professionals often create policies and programs, or initiate reform movements, to help improve the conditions of their clientele.

The social construction of deviance by “experts”, or members of the “knowledge class” illustrates how these professionals maintain, and often create, a clientele for their services. In essence, by making a claim to “uncommon knowledge”, they discredit the ability of certain categories of people to manage their own lives without intervention. The experts maintain that their intervention is necessary, and try to act as agents of their clients. They have, in effect, created their own self-perpetuating mandate.

Becker and Gusfield also examine the role of the moral entrepreneur—individuals who are so concerned about a social condition that they advocate change. In his study of youth deviance (1963), Becker outlines the role of the “moral entrepreneur” in the policy process:

The existing rules do not satisfy him because there is some evil which profoundly disturbs him. He feels that nothing can be right in the world until rules are made to correct it. He operates with the absolute ethic; what he sees is truly and totally evil with no qualification. Any means is justified to do away with it. The crusader is fervent and righteous, and often self-righteous (Becker, 1963:146-147).

Once moral entrepreneurs have completed their work, they usually proceed to a new crusade. “When a man has been successful in the enterprise of getting a new rule

established—when he has found, so to speak, the Grail—he is out of a job” (Becker, 1963, 153). Conversely, when these entrepreneurs do not achieve their goals, they sometimes become outsiders themselves “continuing to espouse and preach a doctrine which sounds increasingly queer as time goes on” (Becker, 1963:155). Becker’s work is particularly important in that it highlights the importance of individuals in identifying behaviour as a “social problem” in order for the policy process to commence.

In addition, the construction of a social problems is “not a field on which all can play on equal terms; some have greater access than others and greater power and ability to shape the definition of public issues. Nor do all ideas have public problems as their consequence” (Gusfield, 1981:8). One of the first phases in the definitions of social problems is “claiming ownership.” Such a claim also implies power and authority, which are necessary in order to participate in the public arena. “The power to influence the definition of the reality and phenomena is a facet of a politics of reality” (1981:12). . . Claiming ownership allows groups to help define the social problem. Gusfield (1981) and Becker (1963) also assert that ownership does not guarantee control due to the reliance of “professionals” or experts in the field to implement change.

Social constructionists aim to understand the process by which claims emerge, are organized and are maintained. Rather than attempting to make any judgement about the “objective” validity of social problems construction, Spector and Kituse focus on the process of claims-making. They see the claims-makers as “subjects actively engaged in constructing social problems (or putative conditions) as moral objects (Ibarra and Kituse 1993: 22). Constructionist theorists should therefore not be concerned with the rationality or correctness of the claims, but with “....how members produce determinations of warrant...” (23). As Gubrium states, “social problems are accomplishments” (Gubrium, 1993: 55).

Social constructionism was initially advanced as an alternative to objectivist approaches such as structural functionalism and positivism and later also came to be seen as an alternative to critical approaches that take an objectivist stance. Structural functionalists and positivists assert that there are objective social conditions which exist separately from society's interpretations of them. In this view, the objective state of social conditions are knowable through scientific study. Through utilizing the scientific method, it is possible to ascertain that certain social conditions are actually "real" social problems. Scientific assumptions are used as a warrant for defining problems as real social problems, and the studies used to derive them are portrayed as objective analyses. It is in this matter that those same social scientists claim to be the "experts" and vie for control over the issue identification.

The fundamental approach of the functionalists and positivists was challenged by Spector and Kituse, who questioned the very basis of their analysis – the objective status of social conditions. In this manner, Spector and Kituse also challenged the social scientists' role in the process of problem definition.

In their social constructionist work, *Constructing Social Problems*, Spector and Kituse (1977) offered a new vision of an approach to social problems as products of claims-making within a definitional process. It departed from previous conventions regarding social problems in that rather than being an objective reality, social problems were the result of a social definitional process. "Problems" are defined through an interpretive process warranting social problem status.

Spector and Kituse define social problems as "the activities of individuals or groups making assertions of grievances and claims with respect to some putative

conditions” (Spector and Kituse, 1977: 75). Social problems are not inherent conditions; it is the process of claims-making that transforms putative events or conditions into social problems. If a condition has not been defined as troublesome, or if attention has not been focused upon it, than it is not a social problem. In fact, Spector and Kituse argue that, for sociological analysts, the actual condition is unimportant, but rather the claims are what is important. In short, social problems are those conditions that have been constructed or produced through a social activity. Social problems are constructs, and claims-making is the constructing process.

Within social constructionism, a number of divisions have occurred along ideological lines. The debate mainly centres around the social scientist’s role in analyzing social problems. Strict constructionist argue that the role of the constructionist is only to analyze the process of claims-making, without making any value judgements or assumption regarding the objective conditions (Miller and Holstein, 1993:3)

On the other hand, contextual constructionists contend that the contextual reality of the claim-making process is equally important (Eitzen, 1984; Collins, 1989; Best, 1993). They assert that, although the definitions and claims-making are important, that it is equally important to examine the interests motivating the claims. They argue that it is possible to evaluate the legitimacy of certain claims, and relatedly, that not all claims are equal.

According to Henshel, an objective condition becomes a problem when a sizable proportion of people define the situation as a problem in need of a public reaction (1990, 14). Although this may be a prerequisite for a problem to be defined as a social problem, it will not become officially recognized until it is perceived to be a problem by those who are “strategically located” (1990: 14) within the power structure of society. If those who

advocate constructing a condition as a social problem do not possess some sort of power or official legitimacy, their claims will not be accepted. The claims-makers must have a fairly large base of support, be in a position to exert pressure on those in power or be strategically located (Henshel, 1990: 15). Henshel outlines some of the perceived factors which have transformed an objective condition into a social problem:

- the absolute number of citizens affected by the situation;
- the seriousness of the condition;
- the injustice involved;
- whether it is deliberately imposed by individuals (offender or perpetrator);
- the status of the original claims-makers;
- the status and types of claims-makers disseminating knowledge of the condition;
- the tactic used to raise public awareness;
- the degree of public access available to the group;
- their groups' relation to those in positions of power;
- the openness of society to change in the particular area, in terms of ideology and culture;
- the strength of the opposition; and,
- and the degree of suffering that result to opposition groups.

Thus, from a constructionist perspective, a condition is not a social problem until it is defined as such. As Best states, this type of constructionist research emphasizes “the social organization of claims-making” (Best, 1990: 11). Central to this approach to claims-making are three sets of concerns: values and interests, resources, and conceptions of ownership.

Although claims-makers may be motivated by values and interests, the resources provide the means to success. Resources provide the framework in terms of which values

and interests are mobilized. Without money, power, press coverage, or credibility, claims-makers would be left with few avenues through which to pursue their activities. Best states that most claims-makers must search to find the most effective strategy and combination of resources, in an almost “hit and miss” fashion, until they strike upon a successful strategy. Rarely is this planned; it is usually quite ad hoc and depends largely on the issue and the audience (Best, 1990: 12).

## **II. CLAIMS-MAKING PROCESS**

Best divides the claims-making process into three main stages; grounds, warrants and conclusions.<sup>3</sup> An essential component in constructing a social problem is typifying it, “characterizing it as a problem of a particular sort” (Best, 1990: 4). Typifications are open to reconceptualization, that is, they often change in response to larger societal influences with the result that different aspects of a problem may be emphasized and different responses will be favoured.

For example, gun control, which has been portrayed as a women’s safety issue since the École Polytechnique murders, has more recently taken on more of a children’s safety stance, in light of school shootings in the United States. The stance taken by claims-makers does not require that the typification be immediate or provable, it is more necessary that it strike a chord with the audience. As such, recent typifications of white middle class children shooting other children in school-yards have served to re-orient not only gun control discussions in the United States, but has also served a typification function for claims-makers North of the border.

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<sup>3</sup> Although the particular model of claims-making was adapted through a number of theorists, the main thrust of the model was first proposed by Stephen Toulmin (1958), writing about the logical structure of arguments.

## **i. GROUNDS**

As the name implies, social constructionism is concerned with the manner in which social phenomenon come to be defined as social problems. This perspective is based on the premise that social situations are subjective and social and do not become a “problem” until they are so defined by interested parties. Claims makers engage in the process of defining, formulating, describing, interpreting and evaluating responses to a designated problem (Ibarra and Kituse, 1993: 24).

According to social constructionists, our views of social problems are social constructs. Claims-makers do more than draw our attention to a problem – in fact, they shape our idea of what is a problem. Given any social condition, claims-makers may orient the issue in a number of fashions. For example, the gun control law was presented as a different type of problem depending on who was making the claim. Was it a violence against women issue? Was it a public health issue? Was it an Olympic sports shooting issue? Or perhaps a question of personal freedom?

The “grounds” are alleged facts regarding an issue; they serve as a basis on which to build ensuing discussions (Best, 1990: 25). Since all knowledge and supposed facts are social constructions, the grounds offered by the claims-makers may or may not resonate with their audiences. The types of grounds propounded by a group largely depend on the claims being made (i.e., what it is that they are attempting to “prove”). There are three types of ground statements which commonly appear in claims-making: definitions, typifying examples, and numeric estimates.

A social problem must be given a life, it must have substance and form - this is achieved through definition. In this manner, it will be clear what is and is not included

within the scope of the problem. *Definitions* serve to both clarify the domain of the social problem and suggest an orientation to it (Best, 1990: 26).

*A domain statement* sets the scope of what is included within a particular definition (Best, 1990: 26). Violence against women may range from emotional and verbal abuse to extreme torture and femicide. Within the context of the gun control debate, claims makers were mostly concerned with the particular threat posed by firearms within a domestic violence context, in addition to attacks by strangers wielding firearms. Since the definition was limited, so too were the policy options which were proposed. Although women's groups occasionally made reference to a larger societal problem, for the most part, policy recommendations were limited to the manners in which gun control could deter or lessen the incidence and lethality of violence against women.

*Orientation statements* offer an orientation to the problem; rather than simply stating the definition of the problem, they attempt to delineate the manner in which the issue should be approached (Best, 1990: 27). That is, the claims-makers offer a particular stance towards the problem. For example, by defining domestic violence as a crime of violence rather than a private issue, feminists have served to alter the manner in which society views such acts. Instead of being an issue confined to the partners, it becomes a chargeable offence taken very seriously by the police and the courts. Therefore, although the occurrence may still be the same, a new orientation has altered the interpretation of the problem.

The dangers of violence became increasingly defined as male violence against women, and the single event which offered the quintessential typifying example was the Montreal Massacre on December 6, 1989. It was construed as a blatant act of violent misogyny. The more recent murders in British Columbia in which an estranged husband

shot his ex-wife and several members of her family have become another typifying example. Together these served to emphasize two points: firstly, they were both directed first and foremost at women; and secondly, they were carried out by firearms which were not illegal to possess. The connection between the two was never more abundantly obvious. The Polytechnique murders, in fact, sparked the formation of one of the most influential groups in the gun-control debate - The Coalition for Gun Control, formed by two women, one who attended the University of Montreal (Heidi Rathjen), the other a Professor from Toronto (Wendy Cukier).

The DeCoster Commission, which investigated the École Polytechnique murders, concluded that lax gun control was a contributing factor in the massacre and urged the public to pressure the government to enact more stringent gun control laws. At this point, pressure emerged from both within the government and from women's and victim's groups to respond so that a similar tragedy might be averted in the future. In a brief to the legislative Committee studying Bill C-17, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women stated:

gun control is an issue for all of us, individually and collectively...women are often victimized by guns, yet seldom use them...women's concerns should have a central place in the formulation of policy and legislation on this issue... (CACSW, 1991: 2)

Typifying examples are another form of ground statements. A typifying example offers an explicit or implicit statement about how the problem usually manifests itself, through the use of rhetorical language and often, "atrocious tales" (Best, 1990: 28). This refers to a specific example, which offers the quintessential example of the seriousness of the social problem. The Ecole Polytechnique has become not only the typifying

example, but has also progressed into a sort of symbolic example of men's use of firearms against women.

Not only claims-makers use this technique; journalists, too, thrive on the emotional drama such an example creates. It serves a double function as a symbolic example of the seriousness of the problem, and has the striking effect of putting actual human names and faces on an otherwise faceless issue. This contributes to the sense of horror of the tragic phenomenon. In addition, by illustrating how the issue affects other "regular" individuals, people become less desensitized and more easily identify with the victims. These atrocity tales are usually extreme, and do not necessarily reflect the reality of the situation. The routine incidence of violence against women in domestic situations was therefore temporarily subjugated to the typifying example of a misogynistic murderer killing fourteen women in an engineering class.

Finally, the last component of ground statements is *numeric estimates* (Best, 1990:29). After a problem has been defined and humanized, claims-makers often attempt to estimate its extent. In claiming legitimacy, claims-makers often cite the large number of lives at stake, the number of people at risk, or the potential for policy advances to improve lives. The higher the number of people affected, the more likely an issue is to receive attention. Best outlines three types of numeric estimates: incidence estimates, growth estimates and range estimates.

*Incidence estimates* attempt to put a number on the number of people or incidents involved (Best, 1990: 29). For example, within the gun control debate, claims-makers would cite the number of women killed with firearms in the last ten years. This would put a fairly precise number of the extent of the problem, and thus prove that the issue is worthy of attention. More often, though claims-makers would offer slightly more

ambivalent estimates of the number of women threatened by firearms. This would necessarily raise the number, since it is impossible to know the rate of domestic violence within firearm-owning homes, or even exactly how many homes own a firearm.

*Growth estimates* assert the increasing seriousness of the issue (Best, 1990: 31). This is the “chicken little” syndrome whereby claims-makers assert that the issue is serious, is becoming increasingly evident, and unless something is done, the situation will deteriorate, and ultimately, the trend may be irreversible. Often, claims makers refer to the situation as an epidemic, suggesting that the problem will grow exponentially unless the trend is reversed. In the case of gun control, growth estimates were often based on the increasing problem of firearms in the United States, and suggested that the same proliferation of arms could occur in Canada if legislation was not enacted to curb such growth.

*Range claims* refer to the extent to which problems are said to affect particular populations at particular places and times, or to affect society generally (Best, 1990: 31). Framing the issue in such a manner is designed to make all segments of society feel that they have a vested interest in solving the problem (Best, 1990: 31). It presents the issue in a manner that cannot be ignored, and that encourages all of society to become involved.

## **ii. WARRANTS**

One of the major components in social constructionism is the emphasis on rhetoric. Social problems are defined through a process that is both rationally and implicitly rhetorical. Claims-making and rhetoric are examined in the multiple marketplaces in which social problem definition takes place, and through various venues,

including, “demanding services, filling out forms, lodging complaints, filing lawsuits, calling press conferences, writing letters of protest, passing resolutions, publishing exposes, placing ads in newspapers, supporting or opposing governmental practice or policy, setting up pickets lines or boycotts” (Spector and Kituse, 1977: 79). Social constructionism attempts to “account for the emergence and maintenance of claims making and responding activities’ (Spector and Kituse, 1973: 415).

In addition to focusing our attention on a particular issue, claims-makers choose to focus on particular features of the condition. According to Joel Best, even the names given to a particular issue reveal an orientation towards it (i.e. “teen pregnancy” versus “teen promiscuity” imply very different orientations). Naming is the first way that claims-makers typify social problems. Typification refers to the characterization of a problem’s nature (Best, 1989:xx).

Returning to Best’s model of claims-making, it is possible to see how “warrants” have been used in the context of violence against women, particularly in the case of firearms. Warrants are statements of values, goals, or interests which are used together with statements of fact to justify a course of action or non-action (Best, 1990: 31). A number of warrants that figured predominantly in the push for more stringent gun control related to women and domestic violence.

The notion of blameless victim (Best, 1990:34) was often applied to female victims of male violence- certainly the Polytechnique women were innocent victims, just as the many women who suffered at the hands of abusive men. Deficient policies (Best, 1990: 35) were another warrant commonly utilized by those advocating more stringent gun control- they would outline how the current policies were not strict enough and that too many dangerous or unpredictable men had access to firearms.

Perhaps the warrant most often used concerned the associated evils (Best, 1990: 34) of the dangerous nature of firearms. No matter what the absolute numbers are, it is impossible to refute that firearms are dangerous weapons, and that innocent people have lost their lives to these killing machines. The fact that the dangerousness of firearms is often borne out in the research helps to give particular credence to this warrant.

Throughout their writings, Spector and Kituse place strong emphasis on the purposeful employment of language in the claims making process. Words are not merely used for expression, but are used in particular ways and for particular reasons and to advance certain causes. Therefore, any examination of claims making activities must focus very carefully on the words that are used, the rhetoric, and the meaning behind such tactics (Spector and Kituse, 1977).

Often, constructionists attempt to identify the particular values and interests motivating a claims-maker. Claims-makers are motivated by something, they would not participate in the process if there was no reason for doing so. Appeals to interests tend to be instrumental (i.e., professional benefits, expansion of power or prestige or the accomplishment of a particular goal) while appeals to values tend to be more symbolic, “reaffirm(ing) the correctness of the claims-makers’ values, ideology, or life-style” (Best, 1990: 11).

Nearly all claims-makers aspire, but few ever achieve, ownership of the issue. According to Gusfield this entails, “the ability to create and influence the public definition of the problem” (Gusfield, 1981: 10). Groups who successfully gain ownership of an issue become the authorized knowers, those whose conception of the social problem receives public acceptance and whose policy options become the accepted solution of the social problem. After having gained ownership of a problem, it is easier

to control its evolution. The claims-makers are then more likely to be seen as being the authoritative source of information regarding the problem, and a sort of circular process, by which the claims-makers are relied upon to provide expertise, thereby entrenching their version of the social problem.

Although most constructionists focus on these core issues, Best states that using these as the sole, or even the primary indicators in examining the claims-making process neglects other, more fundamental issues. Instead, he suggests examining the cultural components of claims-making.

Claims-makers must compete in what Goode and Ben-Yehuda call the “social problems marketplace” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994, 207). Although there are a number of competing interests in society at any given time and within any policy realm, there is a limit to the interests which can be effectively heard. Constraints on the media, parliament, bureaucrats’ time, and the general public’s attention all serve to limit the number of issues receiving prominence at any given moment. Best states that there is certain “carrying capacity” to the number of social problems within each policy arena and within society in general. The constraints therefore give rise to a competitive process within which potential claims-makers must vie for the most sought-after attention. Therefore, while some claims receive prominence, others remain obscure.

Best further elaborates that “there is nothing even-handed about this competition”. Usually those with insider status, that is, with privileged access to those in the policy process, established groups who have already claimed a degree of ownership or legitimacy within a particular policy realm and the media enjoy privileged status along with a decided advantage.

Within this competition, rhetoric is one of the main devices through which claims-makers attempt to increase their leverage. The language used by claims makers is neither accidental nor coincidental, it is entirely persuasive. Best (1990: 17) suggests that one cannot really understand the claims-making process without focusing on the “style and content” of claims. Within the social problems marketplace, many claims are doomed to fail, if only for a pure lack of accommodation; all claims simply cannot be given prominence.

Within this equation, Best attempts to account for the reasons why some claims are more successful than others, and how some win the public competition for priority. First and foremost, claims-makers need to convince their audience (the general public, policy-makers and the media) that their cause warrants concern. Best asserts that it is not resources or interest which will determine the likelihood of success, but rather that it is the style and content of the claims which are most likely to offer an advantage; in short, the claim must be compelling (Best, 1990: 17). It is the meaning associated with the movement, through its style and content, which offers the most insight into interest group success. In this process, rhetoric is the key tool utilized by claims-makers in constructing their claims.

Best proposes to elaborate on Gusfield’s previous studies regarding drinking and driving. In this well known constructionist work, Gusfield asserts that the drinking and driving campaign, including groups such as MADD must be viewed within a context of rhetorical claims-making. Best asserts that not only is such a typology appropriate to the drinking and driving campaign, but that it is easily transferable, and indeed quite reminiscent of the process and content of many other forms and claims-making within quite unrelated spheres. Best, for example, applies this typology to missing children and this paper will apply the typology to women’s groups in the firearms debate in Canada.

### **iii. CONCLUSIONS**

Claims are the vehicle through which claims makers attempt to exert influence over our definition of social problems. The main function of claims-makers is to persuade, to exert influence over their audience. Since claims making is a rhetorical activity, one must focus on rhetoric to analyze claims (Best, 1989: 1).

The final stage of Best's model addresses "conclusions". This is where implications which have been drawn are given specific grounds and warrants about what might or should be done, who has responsibility for doing so, and the details of such a solution. Best sets out four areas of conclusions: public education/awareness, preventive action, social control policies and enforcement strategies, and the need to deal with underlying or root problems. This paper, however, is concerned with the definitional activities, rather than the policy responses.

The aim of claims-making is to persuade. The exercise would be futile unless there was an end goal. Although a number of other factors may come into play, it is rhetoric which has the potential, more than anything else to determine the relative success of claims-makers. Best asserts that while the claims-making process may partially rely on a cross-section of interest and resources, it is the manner in which claims are articulated which will most likely shape the reaction of the potential audience. He therefore turns his attention to the use of rhetoric in examining claims.

Social constructionism offers an advantage in that it focuses on the claims-making process and the manner in which objective social conditions come to be regarded as social problems through a process of rhetoric and claims-making. Interest groups must

compete within the social problems marketplace, and in order receive attention, must come to occupy a position of prominence.

From this perspective, the importance of successful claims-making and issue construction are among the initial tasks of the claims-makers. Before entering the formal political process, it is necessary that the interest group frame the issue as one being worthy of attention and regulatory amendment. This is done by constructing the issue as a social problem, or reconstructing it as an issue in need of further consideration. If this initial phase was not successful, interest groups would likely find themselves lacking in further justification or reason to continue advocating change within the policy process. Moral entrepreneurs compete in order to claim a particular understanding of the problem, its cause and its solution.

In the case of Bill C-68, women's groups competed with other claims-makers in order to define the problem from a particular perspective and therefore to advocate their solution. For them, the issue was one of domestic violence and further restrictions on firearms, including universal registration, were among the solutions. I will suggest that throughout their rhetoric, they suggested that gun control is only one component of a larger strategy to help eliminate against women, and that even the policy options that they are advocating are not sufficient.

This is not to say that the policy conclusions put forward by women's groups areas are mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the Firearms Act does attempt to be preventative in nature, trying to stop those who are psychologically unfit from possessing firearms. Similarly, the issue of violence against women has very much been on the public agenda, and there has been a corresponding increase in awareness.

#### **iv. SUMMARY**

Gusfield states that a large number of new occupations and professional have emerged which are committed to the treatment of the troubled people – he calls them the “problem-solving” or “troubled person” professions. He states that these categories of workers make a claim to a specialized body of knowledge, expertise and skill resulting from specialized education and training (Gusfield, 1982: 5). Although the degree of specialization varies, the common thread to these professions is their claim to expertise in a particular area of the troubled population. What is common to those in this “industry” is their commonly held perception that their knowledge and understandings should be used to assist those who are less fortunate. This clientele is in need of their specialized intervention (Loseke and Cahill, 1984: 296). These professionals have been referred to by Berger and Berger as, “the knowledge class” (Berger and Berger, 1983: 38).

The increased involvement of women’s groups and other problem-solving professionals was very evident in the case of Bill C-68. Not only did groups appear before the Committees in order to represent their own interests, but they also claimed to be representing other populations and clientele who, due to a lack of power, knowledge or resources, were unable to speak for themselves. This type of rhetoric will become further evident in the descriptive analysis of women’s groups. Women’s organizations often explicitly claimed to possess a specialized body of knowledge, or to be in a better position to articulate the needs of women better than the women themselves. In fact, most organizations made specific reference to they fact that their appearance was on behalf of a larger group of people, more specifically, the “troubled” population of women.

In order to further ground the discussion of rhetoric in the firearms debate, the next chapter will highlight Canada's history of gun control and the main components of the current legislation.

## **4. CANADA'S FIREARMS LEGISLATION**

### **I. HISTORY**

Since 1877, Canadian laws have attempted to exert control over the ownership, trafficking and importation of firearms. Although Canada has a long history of firearm control, most of the legislative changes have been largely incremental in nature. In a sense, the history of firearms control in Canada can be viewed as being a prolonged sequence of events, of which the most recent legislation attempts to strengthen previous trends of increasingly stringent gun control legislation. This history is outlined in Chart 1 (next page), which briefly highlights the main legislative changes that have occurred since 1877.

With regards to the legislative efforts of the Canadian government and its policy-makers, the approach of politicians has been to “restrict access to firearms in any circumstance for which no demonstrated social need for access could be shown (Ram, 1995: 282). This is in stark contrast to the American approach which has been guided by the Second Amendment right to bear arms.

Ever since the initial phases of European settlement in Canada, firearms have occupied a position of prominence within rural Canadian life. Within early Canadian industries such as the fur trade and agriculture, firearms played a pivotal role (Stenning, 1996: 3). Additionally, the physical isolation of many early settlements served to increase the attractiveness of guns as instruments of self-defence (Ram, 1995: 281). Based on Canadian settlers reliance on firearms, controls over the carriage and transfer of guns were minimal and quite limited in their scope prior to 1877. It was during this year that provisions were first introduced for the jailing of people in possession of a handgun

without “reasonable cause” (MacLellan, 1995: 163). Ownership was permitted based on the “reasonableness” of fear of assault to life or property. This piece of legislation exemplifies Canada’s long-standing commitment to access based on demonstrable social need.

Canada’s first comprehensive Criminal Code was introduced in 1892. Section 105 outlined the requirement to obtain a permit to carry a pistol or an air gun outside of one’s home unless the carrier had reasonable cause to fear an assault or other injury to his person, family or property. The 1892 Criminal Code marked the introduction of the first permit system for small arms in Canada and also made it illegal to sell or give firearms to persons under the age of sixteen.

In 1913, initial measures were strengthened by the removal of the qualifying clause “unless the carrier had reasonable cause...” From this point on, all individuals were required to obtain permits to carry pistols or air guns outside their home or place of business. Silencers were also included in the provisions requiring permits. Furthermore, the sale of handguns was restricted to permit holders - thereby introducing an element of prevention. Finally, in that year, peace officers were officially endowed with specific powers to search for and seize illegally held weapons and silencers.

**CHART 1****HISTORY OF GUN CONTROL IN CANADA**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Milestones in Gun Control Legislation</b>
1877	Justices of the peace are authorized to give six month jail sentences to persons found in possession of a handgun without reasonable cause to fear assault to life or property
1892	First Criminal Code controls; permit system for small arms in Canada
1913	Only permit holders allowed to buy handguns
1920	In order to possess a firearm, every person was required to have a permit obtainable from a magistrate, Chief of Police, or RCMP
1933	A maximum penalty of five years was set for those carrying a handgun outside the home or business
1934	All handguns were required to be registered. Police and the RCMP issued registration certificates
1938	Amendment to the Criminal Code to make handgun registration certificates renewable every five years
1944	Due to the war, re-registration was postponed; long guns were subject to local registration
1950	Criminal Code amended; registration no longer subject to renewal
1951	A centralized registry for handguns is established under the RCMP
1968	First introduction of distinct firearm classes: prohibited weapons, restricted weapons and long guns
1969	The current system of restricted weapon registration was established, requiring one certificate for each weapon
1976	Bill C-83 died on the Order Paper, after having been introduced in Parliament. It included new criminal offences and stricter penalties for firearm misuse, a prohibition on automatic firearms and firearm education proposals
1977	Bill C-51 - Created the FAC and a one-year mandatory minimum sentences for the use of a firearm in a crime
1991	Bill C-17 – Raised the minimum age to own a firearm, strengthened FAC requirements, police granted authority to conduct background checks
1995	Bill C-68 (Present Legislation) – Most significantly, created two new types of licences (renewable every five years); a universal firearms registration scheme; increased criminal penalties (including a new four-year mandatory minimum sentence); increased border controls; and, further restrictions of firearm types

Following the end of the first World War, the firearm permit provision was amended no less than three times. In 1920, the legislation underwent amendments to require every person to obtain a permit in order to possess a firearm. A qualification to this provision, however, was that no British subject would be required to obtain a permit for any shotgun already owned. This particular provision is important only in that in its repeal the following year had the effect of making 1920 to 1921 the year in which Canada had its strictest controls prior to the implementation of present day legislation (Stenning, 1996:8). The current legislation differs from its 1920 predecessor in that in the early twentieth century, no form of centralized registration system was on the books, nor were any records regarding ownership maintained at a national level.

The next major legislative initiative occurred in 1933 when the legislation was amended to create the offence of carrying any concealable weapon without a permit. Additional changes required permits for the sale of a firearm – as a result, records of sale were accumulated in official data banks. Finally, the penalty for carrying a handgun outside of the home or business was increased to a maximum of five years.

While the registration of handguns began in 1932, widespread adherence to this initiative was strengthened through 1934 legislation requiring that all privately owned handguns be registered - wherever kept. Formalized provisions were also set out for registration practices. The provincial Attorneys General empowered the Commissioner of the RCMP or police departments to issue firearm registration certificates.

Several amendments were made to the firearms provisions of the Criminal Code between 1935 and 1950. As Stenning points out, “almost all of the amendments involved minor adjustments to the regulatory scheme” (1996: 10). Noteworthy is the fact that

1938 legislation, which had mandated a gun permit renewal on a five year basis, was postponed until 1944 due to World War II.

Firearm regulations underwent an overhaul in 1951, at which point provisions were made for a central registry of privately owned handguns. As with the 1934 registration efforts, supervision of this initiative was also delegated to the Commissioner of the RCMP. By 1951, the framework for Canada's current regulatory provisions, that is, an early system for licensing and registration of firearms, had been established.

In 1968 a more comprehensive package of firearms legislation was introduced. The major contribution of the 1968 regulation lies in its classification of firearms into three categories: prohibited weapons, restricted weapons and non-restricted long guns- a categorization which is still reflected in the latest legislation. An additional innovation was the establishment of a provision authorizing courts to issue prohibition orders for offences involving firearms. Any individual found guilty of committing a violent or firearms-related offence could be prohibited from carrying or possessing any firearms for up to five years following conviction or upon release from a custodial facility.

The present system of handgun registration was solidified in 1969, with the adoption of individual certificates for each separate firearm. Previously existing certificates were converted from earlier forms which covered all weapons registered to an individual.

Since this time, there have been three major pieces of gun control legislation. The legislative overhauls of 1977, 1991, and 1995 have all built on and refined the basic regulatory schemes first introduced in 1968 and 1969 (Stenning, 1996: 13).

Bill C-17 was passed by the House of Commons and received Royal Assent in 1977. The provisions of the Bill were proclaimed in 1978 and 1979. This new legislation established the Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC) which was required to acquire any firearm. Section 85 of the Criminal Code was introduced at this point; it set a mandatory minimum sentence of one year imprisonment, in addition to any other sentence, where a firearm had been used in the commission of the offence. Additional firearms were added to the list of prohibited weapons and specific provisions allowing courts to prohibit specific individuals from possessing firearms were expanded in these amendments.

Gun related incidents have always served to keep gun control on the political agenda, but in late 1989, one single event would have a lasting impact on firearms policy in Canada. On December 5th, fourteen women were gunned down at the École Polytechnique in Montreal. Marc Lepine stormed into an engineering classroom, separated the men from the women, and killed or injured all nine women in the class. He killed fourteen women in total before killing himself.

The next round of widespread changes to the existing legislation occurred in 1991, in large part a response to the Montreal Massacre. Bill C-17 received Senate approval in late November of 1991 and received Royal Assent on December 5 of the same year, on the eve of the second anniversary of the École Polytechnique tragedy.

The implementation of Bill C-17 created a number of changes that have served as the foundation upon which current legislation has been built. In 1991, the minimum age of firearm ownership was raised from sixteen to eighteen and the list of prohibited weapons was expanded. The requirements for the FAC were also strengthened. The new application form increased in length as a direct result of the greater number of personal

questions which were now asked of the applicant. Furthermore, the respondent was asked to submit: photographs of him or herself, two references and proof of having completed the pre-requisite safety education requirements. Finally, the police were granted the authority to do background checks on applicants in order to establish the individual's stability and propensity for violence.

In May of 1994, Minister of Justice Allan Rock developed proposals for more effective controls over firearms in Canada. The legislation targeted three broad categories: criminal sanctions for the use of firearms in crime; controls over private firearms ownership, and efforts to curb firearms smuggling and trafficking (Department of Justice, 1995).

This legislation received Royal Assent on December 5, 1995, exactly four years to the day after its predecessor - Bill C-17, and once again on the eve of the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. Following Royal Assent, Bill C-68 came into effect on January 1, 1996.

The approved Bill amended Part Three of the Criminal Code of Canada and created a new statute called the Firearms Act (*Firearms Act*, Chapter 39. Statutes of Canada. An Act Respecting Firearms and Other Weapons.) The Criminal Code encompasses the new criminal offences, while the *Act* deals with the administration of the new licensing and registration scheme. Although the *Act* contains numerous provisions, a quick outline below will highlight the ones most often debated while the Bill went through the legislative process. Later, the positions of the women's groups on these main provisions will be discussed, in order to assess the extent to which their demands were met in the final legislation.

## **II. MAIN COMPONENTS OF CURRENT FIREARMS LEGISLATION**

On December 5, 1995 new gun control legislation received Royal Assent in the Canadian Parliament. The legislation includes a number of new components, including more stringent penalties for the criminal use and smuggling of firearms (as well as other border enhancements), further controls on certain firearms, a new universal licensing system (where all owners must have a licence and will be required to renew their licence every five years), and finally, a universal registration system. Chart 2 highlights the main components of the *Firearms Act*.

### **i. LICENSING**

The 1991 law required that individuals obtain a license prior to purchasing a firearm, but they were not required to renew or update the acquisition certificate. A new licensing system has been established, and individuals will be required to renew the licence every five years, similar to the drivers' licence scheme.

As of January 1, 2001, all firearm owners will be required to possess a firearms licence. The only exception is that individuals possessing an FAC's from the previous licensing system must replace their FAC with one of the new firearms licenses before the FAC expires. There are two new types of licenses, both of which must be renewed every five years. A Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) allows owners to retain their current firearms, as well as to purchase new guns. A Possession Only Licence (POL) allows firearm owners to retain their current firearms, but not to acquire new guns.

Before a licence is issued, safety checks are completed on the individual, including a check on their criminal record. A condition of the PAL is that spouses and

common-law partners (those with whom the applicant has lived within the previous two years) will be notified. The regulations supporting the *Firearms Act* state that when applying for a license to acquire a firearm, that applicants must provide the name and addresses of each current and former spouse and common-law partners that they have lived with in the last two years.

In addition, a Chief Firearm Officer will contact these individuals in order to provide them with an opportunity to voice any concerns which they may have regarding the suitability of the applicant and the safety of themselves or others. The Chief Firearms Officer may conduct an investigation with any person believed to be able to provide supplementary information on the past behaviour of the applicant (*Firearms Act*). New applicants who wish to get a PAL must take the Canadian Firearms Safety Test; this usually entails taking a course before writing the examination.

**CHART 2****MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE *FIREARMS ACT*****MAIN COMPONENTS OF FIREARMS LEGISLATION**

- **Licensing (of all firearm owners, renewable every 5 years)**
- **Registration (of all firearms, including long-guns - one-time only)**
- **Increased penalties for firearm crimes – New 4 year mandatory minimum sentence for the commission of 10 Most Serious Offences, and Section 85 strengthened. Also increased penalties for smuggling and trafficking**
- **Modify firearm classification system - more firearms classified as prohibited, and others moved into restricted category**

In order to acquire firearms by any means (dealer or private transaction), a licence is required. This necessitates that applicants complete a form and provide information regarding their personal history, in addition to providing references. During this screening process, an applicant may be refused if it is found that it is “desirable in the interest of the safety of the applicant or another person that the applicant should not acquire a firearm” (*Criminal Code*, section 106(5)). An applicant may be refused on grounds such as: the applicant has been convicted of an indictable offence, within the last five years, where he has used actual or threatened violence. All applicants will be subject to a basic level of screening and must renew their license every five years (*Firearms Act*).

Further changes to 1991 requirements reflect the nature of the firearms safety course which must be completed by the applicant prior to licensing. Whereas previous legislation necessitated that the individual complete the prerequisite training, the courses were not standardized according to national guidelines. The present legislation builds on its predecessor by stating that the applicant must complete an approved firearms safety course given by an approved instructor. In addition, the course will become more specialized, with general safety course for long guns owners, and another for owners of restricted firearms (i.e. mostly handguns).

## **ii. REGISTRATION**

All firearms must be registered before January 1, 2003. Registration certificates are valid as long as the owner retains the firearm, unless the gun is modified. The fees are payable one-time only and have been set on a sliding scale until the end of 2002. All individual owners must have a valid firearm licence before they can register their firearms. The new registration scheme is particularly relevant to the majority of firearm

owners in that long guns must now be registered, where only hand guns had previously been registered.

Individuals who fail to register their firearms can be subject to sanctions under the Criminal Code of Canada or under the Firearms Act. The penalties under the Firearms Act are more directed at individuals who inadvertently forget to register their firearms. The maximum Criminal Code penalty for intentionally not registering firearms is ten years.

### **iii. INCREASED PENALTIES**

Criminal offences have also been substantially strengthened - there are new and increased penalties for crimes committed with firearms. With respect to the Criminal Code amendments, the new legislation increased mandatory minimum sentences from one year to four years in the case of the 10 most serious offences involving the use of a firearm (including manslaughter, attempted murder, sexual assault with a weapon, robbery, criminal negligence causing death, causing bodily harm with intent, aggravated assault, kidnapping, hostage taking, and extortion).

The Legislation also amended Section 85, requiring a one-year mandatory minimum sentence for the use of a firearm (including the use of imitation and replica firearms) in the commission of any crime. These penalties came into force on January 1, 1996. The legislation also created new offences for smuggling and trafficking of firearms.

These particular amendment serves to exemplify the political commitment to a get-tough approach to the misuse of firearms (MacLellan, 1995: 165). The new sanctions

are coupled with a lifetime prohibition against possession of restricted and prohibited firearms and a minimum ten year prohibition on all other firearms.

#### **iv. STRENGTHENING OF FIREARMS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**

The firearms regulations of 1996 include a growing number of weapons in both the “prohibited” and “restricted” categories. Additionally, age restrictions have been further tightened. Persons between the ages of twelve and eighteen may only possess firearms in certain areas and only with parental consent.

The Firearms Act further restricted the types of firearms allowed to be owned by Canadian civilians. It banned the importation and sale of 25 and 32 calibre handguns as well as handguns with a barrel length of 105mm or less. Individuals with registration permits as of February 14, 1995 are considered to be grandfathered, and are allowed to retain their firearms although they have been prohibited. Only individuals within a specific class of ownership (i.e., same type of firearm) are entitled to possess or exchange these types of guns.

#### **v. OTHER MAIN COMPONENTS**

Although not new, there are currently legislative requirements pertaining to the safe handling and storage for firearms owners and businesses. The intent of these is to regulate specific activities where the unsafe storage or handling of a firearm may present a safety risk. Furthermore, they are intended to help reduce the risk of theft and to make firearms less accessible to individuals in the household who may present a risk to themselves or others.

Prohibition orders, which are court orders which prohibit certain individuals from having access to, possessing, or having control of a firearm or ammunition for a certain period of time, can be given to a person if it is determined that their safety or the safety of the public could be at risk by the possession of a firearm. Where an individual already has possession, prohibition orders enforce their removal (*Firearms Act*). A prohibition order could be given as part of a court sentence or as a condition of a recognizance (peace bond) (Department of Justice, 1995).

The legislation provides for police powers to search and seize firearms for intervention in cases of immediate danger. Where an individual has possession of a firearm and the police believe that they have reasonable grounds to think that a persons safety is at risk, they have the authority to search and seize firearms with or without a warrant (depending on the circumstance) (*Firearms Act*).

The next section will outline the methodology used in the analysis of the rhetoric of claims-making with regard to Canada's gun control legislation. Specifically, a content analysis and descriptive analysis form the methodological approach. It will also present an overview of the sources used in the analysis, as well as limitations to both the theoretical perspective and the current research.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

### **I. DESCRIPTIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS**

This paper is a descriptive content analysis of the rhetoric used by women's groups in the gun control debate. It is a case study of the style and content of rhetoric in the claims-making of women's groups, rather than an impact evaluation. In order to discuss rhetoric, it must be described and presented to the reader, and as such, a purely quantitative approach would not have given a sense of the richness of the data. Through a descriptive analysis, the words of the groups themselves are presented, in addition, the content analysis aids in summarizing the broader findings.

A qualitative approach to social science methodology focuses on “verbal descriptions and explanations of human behaviour...It focuses on careful and detailed descriptions of social practices in an attempt to understand how the participants experience and explain their own world (Jackson, 1995: 17)”. In particular, content analysis involves the “systematic analysis and selective classification of the contents...” (Hagan, 1993: 225). The most central component is an attempt to analyze the content of the communication or the message (Jackson, 1995: 171).

Although most commonly utilized in media and communications analysis, such an approach is also appropriate for analyzing presentations and official committee transcripts. For example, content analysis is often used to evaluate various forms of media, both verbal and written – including film, books, newspapers, television programs (Jackson, 1995: 171). It represents a manner of both systematically analyzing the content of the presentations, while the descriptive component allows the voices of those being studied to be presented for illustrative purposes. In keeping with the emphasis on

behaviour and the subjects' explanation of their own world, it was decided that such an approach would be best for the current examination of rhetoric in the gun control debate.

In particular, a descriptive rather than an explanatory, approach was adopted for the present examination. That is, since this paper is concerned with the content and style of the rhetoric, rather than the reasons behind the rhetoric, or even the success of the groups, the descriptive approach emphasizes the "what" questions, rather than the "why" questions (Jackson, 1995: 18-19).

The basic procedure in completing a content analysis consists of: selecting the categories to be analyzed; establishing criteria for inclusion (therefore facilitating replication); following and coding the classification scheme; and finally, analyzing the results (Berelson, 1952; Pool, 1959). In presenting the findings, quotations and descriptions form the key elements of the report (Jackson, 1995:26).

## **II. ANALYSIS OF THE RHETORIC**

In order to select the categories to be included for analysis, a detailed review of the source documents was conducted, with a focus on presentation transcripts. A list of the types of rhetoric employed was developed and the arguments that showed the highest degree of relation between all of the women's groups were examined in detail and individually coded. Six types of rhetoric were found to have a high degree of consistency among the women's groups. The categories of rhetoric that were subsequently coded included:

- the impossibility of separating criminals from law-abiding citizens;
- the notion of women as defenceless victims;

- the notion of power: guns as an instrument of power and men as having power over women;
- the notion of guns as inherently dangerous;
- the long-term implications of gun control; and,
- the idea that gun control is only one part of the solution.

In the detailed examination of the rhetoric of women's groups, a grid was used to score the content of the main lines of rhetoric employed by the women's groups. The groups were then individually coded and assigned a positive value in each column where the line of rhetoric was used during their presentation. Where a particular line of rhetoric was not employed, no value was assigned. They were scored according to the grid presented in Chart 3.

Within the analysis section, a descriptive narrative, with heavy emphasis on original quotations is utilized. Not every example of every group using each type of rhetoric is outlined, since it would have made the paper unweildly, but rather, examples are employed to highlight the main types of rhetoric used by these groups, while the entire results of the analysis are presented in the grid.

**CHART 3****SCORING GRID: RHETORIC PRESENTED BY WOMEN'S GROUPS**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Law- Abiding Vs. Criminal</b>	<b>Defenceless Victim</b>	<b>Power (Symbolic And Real)</b>	<b>Inherent Dangerousness Of Guns</b>	<b>Long-Term Implications</b>	<b>One Part Of Solution</b>	<b>Total Claims Per Group</b>
<b>Coalition for Gun Control</b>							
<b>Alberta Council of Womens Shelters</b>							
<b>B.C. Institute on Family Violence</b>							
<b>Provincial Association of Transition Homes</b>							
<b>YWCA</b>							
<b>Canadian Federation of University Women</b>							
<b>National Association of Women and the Law</b>							
<b>Federation of Women's Teachers Associations Ontario</b>							
<b>CAVEAT</b>							
<b>Les Cercles des fermières du Québec</b>							
<b>Montreal Assault Prevention Centre</b>							
<b>Total Number of Each Claim</b>							

### **III. ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY POSITIONS**

Within the context of analyzing the groups' positions, or policy Conclusions, the legislation was divided into four main categories, along with Bill C-68 as a package. Groups were scored on their support for or opposition to each component. Their positions were ascertained through an examination of their testimony to the Senate and/or House of Commons Committee, along with their submission (if applicable) to these committees. Although some groups presented to both the House of Commons and the Senate Committees, one or the other was analyzed for each group, since the presentations and submissions are virtually identical in both stages of the committee hearings. An examination of the minutes and submissions confirmed the fact that there was little or no variation in groups' presentations where they appeared before both committees.

Each grouping was assigned either a positive (indicating support) or a negative value (indicating opposition). If a group did not address a particular component, the grid area was left blank. Where a category encompasses a range of groups, the category was scored according to the majority position within the category. The exception to this is that in a couple cases, very strong and opposing views towards a particular component were expressed by different groups within the same category – in this case, both a positive and a negative value were indicated. These categories included the main areas of the proposed legislation:

- Support of the overall legislative package (Bill C-68);
- Licensing;
- Registration;
- Criminal penalties; and,
- Restrictions on firearm types.

Chart 4 presents the scoring grid (next page) for the range of groups involved.

**CHART 4****SCORING GRID: POLICY POSITIONS – ALL GROUPS**

<b>Group</b>	<b>C-68</b>	<b>Licencing</b>	<b>Registration</b>	<b>Criminal Penalties</b>	<b>Restrictions on Firearm-Type</b>	<b>Total Support</b>
<b>National Firearms Association</b>						
<b>Hunting Organizations</b>						
<b>Aboriginal Organizations</b>						
<b>Sports Shooting</b>						
<b>Business/Manufacturing</b>						
<b>Museums</b>						
<b>Provinces</b>						
<b>Cities</b>						
<b>Academics/Professionals</b>						
<b>Police Groups</b>						
<b>Public Health Organizations</b>						
<b>Women's Groups</b>						
<b>Victims Groups</b>						
<b>Coalition for Gun Control</b>						
<b>Total Support</b>						

The same process was repeated in order to score the policy positions of the women's groups. Although all women's groups favoured the legislation, the scoring of certain provisions within the legislation only indicates where a group actually stated their support for that component. Within this category, there was no opposition to any component of the legislation. The scoring grid is presented in Chart 5 (next page).

#### **IV. SOURCES**

Much of the sources used in the latter sections of the paper are primary documents, including:

- Statutes of Canada (Chapter 39: An Act respecting firearms and other weapons);
- Briefs submitted to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs;
- Minutes from the Standing Committee;
- Briefs submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs;
- Minutes from the Senate Committee;
- House of Commons Debates; and,
- Senate Chamber Debates.

I have attempted to let the groups speak for themselves, and to illustrate their own definitions, agendas, and use of rhetoric – therefore, I have quoted source documents extensively. In both the introductory section, and in my analysis, I have attempted let their voices, rather than my own, predominate. For the sake of brevity, in the examination of Rhetorical Themes, I have condensed the key points and arguments of multiple groups into smaller groupings and described their positions as a whole – an in-depth examination of all groups involved would have been beyond the scope of this paper.

**CHART 5****SCORING GRID: POLICY POSITIONS - WOMEN'S GROUPS**

<b>Group</b>	<b>C-68</b>	<b>Licencing</b>	<b>Registration</b>	<b>Criminal Penalties</b>	<b>Restrictions on Firearm-Type</b>	<b>Total Components Mentioned</b>
<b>Coalition for Gun Control</b>						
<b>Alberta Council of Womens Shelters</b>						
<b>B.C. Institute on Family Violence</b>						
<b>Provincial Association of Transition Homes</b>						
<b>YWCA</b>						
<b>Canadian Federation of University Women</b>						
<b>National Association of Women and the Law</b>						
<b>Federation of Women's Teachers Associations Ontario</b>						
<b>CAVEAT</b>						
<b>Les Cercles des fermières du Québec</b>						
<b>Montreal Assault Prevention Centre</b>						
<b>Total Support</b>						

## **V. SCOPE**

Canada has a long history of gun control, dating back to the 1800's, and as long as we have had legislation, there have been groups or individuals attempting to influence the policy-makers. It was therefore necessary to limit the scope of this examination, in order to conduct a detailed examination of women's groups within the gun control debate. In order to describe the influence that women's groups exerted on the policy process, it was decided to focus on the most recent legislative package, Bill C-68, due to the greater number of women's groups who became involved in the gun control debate. Although pre-Bill-C-68 legislation and events are mentioned, this is done so only in a cursory manner, in order to provide a backdrop for the current examination.

## **VI. DEFINITION OF "WOMEN'S GROUPS"**

Throughout this paper, the term "gendered discourse" has been used. It refers to the discourse about violence against women, and is a way of using language that highlights women's concerns as distinctive from those of men. It was found to most accurately reflect the type of rhetoric employed by women's groups and encompasses all forms of male violence against women.

A number of organizations or groups were included under the term "women's groups". First group is the Coalition for Gun Control, a single-issue interest group that was formed in reaction to the Ecole Polytechnique murders in order to lobby for more stringent gun control legislation. Since it is a coalition organization, it represents a range of views; all of the other women's groups are members of the Coalition for Gun Control.

The second grouping of women's organizations are those that operate to assist women in situations of domestic abuse. Four organizations fell into this category: the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, the Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan, the B.C. Institute on Family Violence, and the Young Women's Community Association (YWCA). Although the mandate of the YWCA goes beyond domestic violence, it is an important component of its community outreach, and the organization presented before the Senate and House Committee on that basis.

The third category represents professional organizations that have a female membership base. Three groups fell into this category: the National Association of Women and the Law, the Federation of Women Teachers of Ontario, and the Canadian Federation of University Women.

The fourth category consists of organizations that were founded by women or serve women. CAVEAT is primarily a victims' organizations, which was founded by Priscillia DeVilliers. The other two organizations in this category are the Cercles de fermières du Québec and the Montreal Assault Prevention Centre. The Cercles are a farm-based group of women who are primarily interested in improving the standard of living among women and families as well as preserving Quebec culture. The Montreal Assault Prevention Centre is primarily a self-defence organization that focuses on teaching women how to avoid becoming victims of assaults.

All women's groups that presented to the House of Commons or Senate Committees were included in this analysis, with the exception of aboriginal women's organizations. They were not included in this analysis due to methodological issues. Only one aboriginal women's group, Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association, appeared before the Senate committee and no aboriginal women's groups appeared before the

House Committee. This group appeared before the Senate Committee and presented in conjunction with a Coalition of six other aboriginal groups, represented by twenty-five individuals. As part of a Coalition, their actual presentation time was very limited and did not include the type of content required to conduct a content analysis. It would also be difficult to differentiate between their views and those of the other six groups and their representatives in order to effectively conduct such an analysis. As such, it is impossible to analyze the position of aboriginal women's groups using the current methodology and resources – this is not to say that they were without an opinion, or that they did not express their positions, but that it was done in a realm outside of the formal parliamentary committee hearings, perhaps within aboriginal organizations or at the community level. Nonetheless, the one brief statement presented by Pauktuutit will be highlighted shortly within the context of Aboriginal Groups.

## **VII. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM – LIMITATIONS AND APPROACHES**

Strict constructionists argue that the role of the constructionist is only to analyze the process of claims-making, without making any value judgements or assumption regarding objective conditions (Miller and Holstein, 1993:3). On the other hand, the contextual constructionists contend that the context of the claim-making process as well as the claims themselves must be taken into account (Best, 1990; Best 1993; Eitzen, 1984; Collins, 1989). They argue that it is possible to evaluate the legitimacy of certain claims, and relatedly, that not all claims are equal. From a methodological perspective, this division warrants a quick explanation.

Contextual constructionists assert that the purpose of sociological research should be to provide information and insight into the origins and definitional process involved in social problems. They argue that to focus solely on the definition and claims-making

would do little to advance our knowledge of the real world in which we live. Since the purpose of a social scientist is to contribute to our insight about our society, then one cannot analyze social problems as if they exist in a vacuum. While such theorists realize that any knowledge is a social construct, they argue that failing to go beyond a strict analysis renders any knowledge irrelevant within a societal context.

Critics of such an approach, though, assert that by claiming to be able to evaluate or analyze the validity of various claims, that social constructionists themselves are claiming to have knowledge of an unknowable objective condition. These analysts themselves are engaged in a subjective process by asserting to know the truth about a given social problem. Among the more influential of the theorists in this area are Woolgar and Pawluch (1985), who first accused social constructionist theorists of “ontological gerrymandering”.

In order to make an assertion about changing definitional processes as they relate to the objective condition, one must make assumptions regarding the actual existence of the problem. Woolgar and Pawluch suggest that this selective “objectivism” represents a major theoretical inconsistency. By only questioning the claims themselves, yet not the social scientists’ ability to know the objective reality, social constructionists have opened themselves to the very same critique in which they are engaged. Ontological gerrymandering “glosses over the ways in which constructionist analysts’ descriptions of conditions are themselves definitional claims” (Miller and Holstein, 1993: 6).

There have been a number of responses to Woolgar and Pawluch’s critique, as evidenced in the continuing theoretical divide among social constructionists. Among the contextual constructionists, Joel Best asserts that Woolgar and Pawluch’s critique is counterproductive to the advancement of an understanding of social problems though

social constructionism (Best, 1989). The notion of contextual constructionism was put forth by Best after Woolgar and Pawluch's critique.

In response to critiques of ontological gerrymandering, strict constructionists have purposefully distanced themselves from engaging in any evaluative discussions. In contrast, contextual constructionists have embraced the evaluative component as a central feature of their analysis. For these sociologists, it is an important component of contributing to social knowledge. Best argues that the plausibility of different claims varies with the evidence used to support the claims. Systematically gathered data that follows rigorous procedures, such as the use of representative sampling or in-depth interviews, is superior to other kinds of information. For example, statistics and research studies can provide a fairly reasonable method of evaluation. Although the information itself is a social construction, it is at least consistently measurable (i.e. the crime rates).

From the perspective of the current examination, this argument is interesting, although not particularly relevant. Again, since the focus of this paper is to examine the "what" questions as opposed to the "why" questions, there is no attempt made (other than general references) to ascertain the reasons behind the women's appearances, the relative success of their claims-making, or even whether or not the claims were based in a socially identifiable "reality."

## **VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH**

According to Hagan, the best test of the validity of a content analysis is its replicability; that is, a different researcher, given the same scoring system, should come up with the same findings (Hagan, 1993: 226). In the case of this paper, the results have been verified twice, the second time as a blind verification. Due to the prolonged period

between the initial analysis and the writing of the final paper, I went back to the original sources in order to re-code the findings, without again looking at my original scores. Although there may have been an amount of inherent bias due to my memory of the previous data collection, due diligence was taken in re-coding the results. The results were confirmed a second time. As with any qualitative content analysis, there is a certain amount of discretion involved, and the researcher must make coding decisions. For example, while I chose to leave areas blank where groups stated support for the overall legislation, but did not mention a particular component, another researcher may have chosen to expressly code it as non-support.

Since this is an examination of a particular case example, there is no suggestion made that the results are generalizable to other areas of study, either within or outside of the realm of justice issues. However, I have followed a general framework, as set out by Joel Best, and adopted by other social constructionists in examining claims-making. That is, the lines of rhetoric have been identified and coded, and a descriptive analysis forms the bulk of the examination in highlighting the use of rhetoric and the predominancy of certain lines of rhetoric among women's groups.

Finally, with respect to researcher bias, it must be noted that I was formerly employed by the Department of Justice. This has both advantages and disadvantages in terms of my position as a researcher. It has allowed me to develop an understanding of the issue far beyond what I would have experienced had I chosen a subject outside of my area of knowledge. I have an understanding of the issues beyond purely a scholarly or theoretical realm, since I was very involved in the process for nearly four years. This also allowed me ready access to a number of source documents which, although public documents, otherwise would have been quite difficult to obtain.

Conversely, such an intimate knowledge of the area may cause some to question my objectivity. On one hand, I do support firearms control, on a personal level. On the other hand, I purposely chose to address an issue and an area in which I have had an academic interest preceding my employment – social constructionism and the use of rhetoric. Further, my research question is framed so as to avoid evaluating the success of the groups or of the firearms control legislation itself. First and foremost, this is an examination of the style and content of rhetoric, and women's group within the gun control debate are used as a case study.

The next chapter will examine the “range of rhetoric” evident in the gun control debate to illustrate the many manners that one policy issue can be articulated, using varying claims. The range of interests involved in the gun control debate were wide, and the rhetoric employed by the different groups and organizations illustrates their orientation towards the issue. Afterwards, I will focus specifically on women's groups in order to provide a more in-depth analysis of the content of the claims presented.

## **6. STYLE AND CONTENT OF CLAIMS-MAKING**

### **I. RANGE OF RHETORIC: MAJOR PLAYERS IN THE POLICY DEBATE**

During the 1993 federal election, the Liberal party's "Red Book"<sup>4</sup> contained a promise to Canadians that they would toughen Canada's gun laws; Bill C-68 was designed to fulfil this promise. Essentially, the Liberals were responding to what they saw as a growing demand from the Canadian public for increased control over gun ownership (Ram, 1995: 282). A number of dramatic gun-related incidents - the typifying example being the 1991 École Polytechnique murders - along with public support for the "get tough" approach to crime served to catapult gun control back onto the political agenda.

Attempts by the Liberal government to deliver on its Red Book promises led then Minister of Justice, Allan Rock, to travel across the country to meet with various members of the public in order to discuss issues related to firearms control. Following these consultations, a general policy framework was established - to which the rural based segment of the liberal caucus was quick to voice its protest. Opposition was focused primarily around the proposals for universal registration of firearms and its anticipated costs (Stenning, 1995: 28).

The Minister moved that Bill C-68 be tabled for first reading in early 1995. At this stage there was little debate within the House of Commons. In mid-February the Bill received second reading with the principle of the Bill rather than the specific provisions being debated. After a vote of 173-53 in support of the Bill, the proposed legislation was then reviewed by the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

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<sup>4</sup> The "Red Book" (*Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada*) was the Liberal Party's main election platform for the 1993 election.

In early June of that same year, the Bill came before the House for report stage and third reading. The vast majority of proposed amendments were accepted and in spite of opposition from both within the Liberal party and from the Reform Party (Stenning, 1995: 28) the legislation was passed by the House of Commons on June 13, 1995 by a majority vote of 192-63.

Between September 18 and 28, 1995, the largely Conservative Senate Committee heard from witnesses and, in the wake of concern that they were stalling the Bill, the Senate eventually passed the Bill unaltered in late November 1995 (Stenning, 1995: 29). The legislation to received Royal Assent on the eve of the sixth anniversary of the Ecole Polytechnique killings.

Although many policy issues evoke a reaction from a number of interest groups, the gun control debate was unique in its size and scale. It is an issue where few groups are ideologically neutral and where many become actively involved to promote or defend particular interests and values. Given that groups on one end of the spectrum present individual freedom as at risk, and those at the other end present innocent lives as at risk, who couldn't help but get caught up in the emotion and rhetoric? The multiplicity of interest groups involved is apparent when one considers the amount of time Parliament devoted to hearing various groups; indeed, the Standing Committee and Senate Committee heard between one and two months of each. The Standing Committee alone heard over two hundred presentations and received over 400 submissions from various groups.

The issue of gun control also affects many broad areas and interests. No longer was gun control simply about guns or the potential danger that they may cause, but it became a public health issue, an economic issue, a domestic violence issue, an Olympic

sports issue, and an individual rights issue- virtually any group with an interest in gun control had a perfect forum in which to have their interests articulated; thus, nearly any group with a vague interest was able to “piggy back” on the momentum of the gun control debate, in order to have their own interest articulated within the context of gun control.

Due to the emotional nature of this topic, emotions tend to run high on both sides of the ideological spectrum. It would be beyond the scope of the current examination to attempt to identify all of the groups who claimed to have a stake in the gun control debate; but, nonetheless, it is possible to construct a continuum of interest group involvement.

Fairchild discusses how a significant factor related to the success of interest groups is their level of cohesion and activity. It is imperative that interest groups not only generate interest in a particular area, but also that the interest level be maintained at a suitably high level (Fairchild, 1981). Although gun control had already been deemed to be a high priority for the Liberal government, thus eliminating the need for excessive interest group exertion in this area, these groups nonetheless succeeded in ensuring that the urgency of their own interests was recognized in relation to the broader issue of gun control.

One other manner in which interest group involvement was apparent was in the area of research. There has been a recent recognition that governmental policy must be supported and substantiated by research, as demonstrated in the Oakes<sup>5</sup> case (Kiedrowski & Webb, 1993). The Oakes test requires that policy-makers utilize social

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<sup>5</sup> *R. v. Oakes*, Supreme Court of Canada, 1986.

science research in the designing of policy, so that the resulting policy is, as much as possible, empirically defensible in the courts. In interpreting the Charter, social science research has increasingly been called upon to play a significant role in the judicial process (Kiedrowski & Webb, 1993: 379). The government has been increasingly aware of this pressure, and the significance of the Oakes case has not been lost on interest groups, either.

Throughout the committee hearings, time and time again, interest groups relied upon social science research to support their own positions. What is somewhat confusing to many political outsiders, though, is the way in which both sides of the gun control debate are able to present “experts” who agree with their respective positions. Therefore, one of the practical constraints of the Oakes test is the differing level of agreement on any given issue - social science research is rarely conclusive.

Having discussed some of the issues involved in the interest group articulation, it is possible to examine the particular interests involved in the gun control debate. The groups who presented before the two committees will be discussed in terms of a continuum, ranging from those who were against gun control legislation to those who supported further restrictions on firearms.

Chart 6 presents a continuum of interest group involvement in the firearms debate, with the largest groups on polar ends of the continuum, the National Firearms Association, being strongly against the legislation, and the Coalition for Gun Control being wholly supportive. In reality, though if one were to more closely examine the views of the groups involved, one would likely find that the victims’ groups would likely

represent those most strongly for the legislation (and often even having little tolerance for the use of firearms in almost any circumstances).

**CHART 6****CONTINUUM OF INTEREST GROUP POSITIONS ON *THE FIREARMS ACT***

<b><i>MOST OPPOSED TO THE LEGISLATION</i></b>
<b>NATIONAL FIREARMS ASSOCIATION</b>
<b>HUNTING ORGANIZATIONS</b>
<b>ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>
<b>SPORTS SHOOTING</b>
<b>BUSINESS/MANUFACTURERS/MUSEUMS</b>
<b>PROVINCES</b>
<b>CITIES</b>
<b>ACADEMICS AND PROFESSIONALS</b>
<b>POLICE ORGANIZATIONS</b>
<b>PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS</b>
<b>WOMEN'S GROUPS</b>
<b>VICTIM'S GROUPS</b>
<b>COALITION FOR GUN CONTROL</b>
<b><i>MOST SUPPORTIVE OF THE LEGISLATION</i></b>

Consistent with Fairchild's definition of interest groups as those who attempt to influence policy, every group which appeared before the committees or made submissions was, in some manner, attempting to influence the agenda and the formulation of public policy. For the most part, this persuasion was limited to the realm of gun control, but this does not imply that policy recommendations were limited to this policy realm alone. Any change in gun control policy was certain to have implications in other spheres. For example, health care workers were not adverse to mentioning how cuts to transfer payments have put an even larger strain on medical resources. See *Appendix 1A and 1B* for a list of the groups who made presentations to the two Committees.

Chart 7 presents the results of the content analysis on the policy positions of each group along the continuum. This will help form an overview for the more detailed descriptive analysis of each group that follows. As indicated, the National Firearms Association scored a zero. They were not supportive of any aspect of the legislation and were even opposed to the criminal penalties. The hunting organizations, Aboriginal organizations, sports shooting, businesses and museums scored an average of 2, mostly expressing support for the licensing and criminal penalty provisions, but not for the other components, nor the legislation generally. For the most part, the provinces were against the registration component (scoring a total of 3), while the cities strongly supported this component of the legislation, indicating support for all components with a score of 5.

Academics and professionals were quite supportive of the legislation, with most scoring 5. As might be expected, the police were very supportive of the legislation and its components, again indicating support for each individual component.

Further along the continuum, all of the remaining groups scored a 5, being strongly supportive of the legislation and all of the main components, including public health organizations, women's groups, victims groups and the Coalition for Gun Control.

Chart 7 illustrates that most of the groups, thirteen out of fourteen, supported criminal penalties, while a clear majority supported the licensing component. Slightly less popular were the restrictions on firearm types, and as might be expected, the most controversial component was universal registration, with support from half of the groups.

The analysis will now focus upon the descriptive analysis, in order to further explore the discourse employed by the various categories of groups within the gun control debate. Although the content analysis is a useful tool in coding and classifying the findings of the research, the descriptive analysis will offer further insight into the use of rhetoric and the manner in which groups compete to have their interests heard within the policy process. It is in this realm that groups compete to have their articulation of the "problem" accepted as the primary definition. The descriptive analysis will also offer further insight into the range of competing interests that may become involved in any policy issue.

**CHART 7**  
**POLICY POSITIONS: ALL GROUPS**

<b>Group</b>	<b>C-68</b>	<b>Licencing</b>	<b>Registration</b>	<b>Criminal Penalties</b>	<b>Restrictions on Firearm-Type</b>	<b>Total Support</b>
<b>National Firearms Association</b>	-	-	-	-	-	0
<b>Hunting Organizations</b>	-	+	-	+/-	-	1-2
<b>Aboriginal Organizations</b>	-	-	-	+	+	2
<b>Sports Shooting</b>	-	+	-	+	-	2
<b>Business/Manufacturing</b>	-	+	-	+	-	2
<b>Museums</b>	-/+	+	-	+	-	2-3
<b>Provinces</b>	-	+	-	+	+	3
<b>Cities</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Academics/Professionals</b>	+	+	+	+/-	+	4-5
<b>Police Groups</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Public Health Organizations</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Women's Groups</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Victims Groups</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Coalition for Gun Control</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Total Support</b>	7-8	12	6-7	11-13	9	

## **i. NATIONAL FIREARMS ASSOCIATION**

The National Firearms Association (NFA) is Canada's answer to the National Rifle Association (NRA) of the United States. In truth, though, it has nowhere near the political might, influence or money of its counterpart to the South. While the NRA is a truly persuasive lobbying dynamo in the US, the NFA has struggled to be recognized within the past ten years (Ram, 1995: 304). The NFA has become increasingly political in its slant- at first being an interest group, but more recently, becoming more involved in research and politics, such as its alliance with the Reform party during the most recent federal election.

The NFA came out strongly against Bill C-68, as was to be expected. Situated at the right of the political spectrum, it advocated an individual rights approach to firearms possession. It is ironic that the NFA battle-cries often resemble the "right to bear arms" mantra of the U.S., yet there is no such right guaranteed anywhere in the Canadian Constitution, Charter or in any legislation. Furthermore, rather than inciting Canadians to action, such American mantras are often met with the reverse reaction in Canada. One reason why many Canadians favour gun control is because it is un-American and helps to distinguish the unique and peaceable character of our country (Ram, 1995: 311-312).

The NFA often link the right to own firearms to the right to own property and asserted that firearm controls attack honest citizens instead of the "real" source of crime. It is ironic, then, that the NFA were against even the "crime control" aspects of the Bill, saying that they would be ineffective and a waste of money (Evidence to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 106, April 24, 1995).

The most heated part of the NFA argument was their opposition to universal registration. They stated that Bill C-68 was “an example of ham-fisted legislation- a legally, socially, and politically inept document that will have far more evil effects than good effects if passed” (Evidence to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 106, April 24, 1995).

Finally, one of the common tactics employed by the NFA, was raising accusations that the firearms legislation was only one more step towards a totalitarian government, where the citizenry is disarmed so that the government may have complete control (Evidence to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 106, April 24, 1995). In postings in the Canadian Firearms Digest (an electronic news-group of the NFA), there was an ongoing debate regarding the strategy of invoking Hitler’s name in reference to Allan Rock, “In the same way I associate World War Two with Adolf Hitler, I associate C-68 with Allan Rock” (posted March 28, 1997). When this association was brought up in the committee hearings, though, a number of the members expressed shock and outrage .

This is perhaps a case where an interest group went too far in making its point, and helped to diminish its own credibility in the process. No matter what one’s views on gun control, or any policy for that matter, one generally will not gain favour with anyone, no matter what their political persuasion, by alienating the entire government. Those who work with the government are more likely to have their interests heard than those who are too radical to be able to work effectively in designing new policies (Solomon, 1981).

## **ii. HUNTING ORGANIZATIONS**

The hunting organizations that appeared were less radical than the NFA. Generally, they supported the crime control measures, but were opposed to the measures that imposed any additional expense or bureaucracy on their members or organizations. They cited the cost for firearms licenses and registration of firearm as being their main points of contention. They also raised questions regarding the search and seizure provisions and the way in which they would be applied to ordinary hunters, given their concern about random inspections and privacy issues (Evidence of the Responsible Firearms Owners of Alberta, Saskatchewan Responsible Firearms Owners, and the Council for Responsible Firearms Owners of Manitoba to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 123, May 8, 1995).

While supportive of most of the crime control provisions, the hunting organizations stated that gun control is not the most effective measure to deal with social problems and that mandatory licensing would be unjustifiably expensive, ineffectual and an intrusion into people's lives. Accordingly, they suggested that education should be a key area of focus. Finally, they expressed concern that the added time, trouble, and expense of the new measures might lead to a decrease in the numbers of people participating in the recreational hunting and shooting industries (Evidence of the Responsible Firearms Owners of Alberta, Saskatchewan Responsible Firearms Owners, and the Council for Responsible Firearms Owners of Manitoba to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 123, May 8, 1995). The issue for them was primarily framed in terms of cost.

### **iii. ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS**

A number of Aboriginal groups appeared before the committees- essentially, they were concerned with the impact that the legislation might have on their Constitutionally protected rights to hunt and trap (S. 35(1)). In failing to take these into account, they stated that the government created legislation which criminalizes native people for practicing their way of life. This right stems from the Sparrow decision that upheld that the right to hunt includes the right to possess the tools necessary to exercise this right, namely firearms. They further claimed that sustenance and traditional activities would be at stake if the legislation was not amended to suit the particular needs of aboriginal communities. Additionally, they suggested that there are many practical problems which could be faced if the legislation were to be implemented without special reference to the aboriginal way of life (Evidence of the Chiefs of Ontario, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Métis National Council, Assembly of First Nations, Cree Regional Authority, Union of BC Indian Chiefs to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 55-56, September 25-26, 1995).

The high rate of illiteracy would make it difficult and/or impossible for many First Nation people to possess a license. In addition, they stated that the material in the Canadian Firearms Safety Course is not relevant to aboriginal people, who receive their first firearm at a very young age, and are taught safety from that point. Since there is no sense of property such as that in non-native communities, the registration scheme would not make sense where firearms are communally held, for use by those within the community (Evidence of the Chiefs of Ontario, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Métis National Council, Assembly of First Nations, Cree Regional Authority, Union of BC Indian Chiefs to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 55-56, September 25-26, 1995).

The sole women's group, Pauktuutit, the Inuit women's organization argued that although domestic violence and suicide are problems in aboriginal communities, including Inuit communities, Bill C-68 would do little to address the real problems. They suggested that the money would be better spent by providing services and programs in remote communities for both victims and accused. Further, they stated that these programs should be located within Inuit communities and staffed by Inuit people. They also referred to the Royal Commission on aboriginal people and questioned why the recommendations had not yet been implemented (Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 55-56, September 25-26, 1995).

The aboriginal organizations argued their communities should be given control over firearms regulations, and that these should be adaptable to particular communities (Evidence of the Chiefs of Ontario, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Metis National Council, Assembly of First Nations, Cree Regional Authority, Union of BC Indian Chiefs to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 55-56, September 25-26, 1995). Their main point of contention was that the legislation, as it was drafted, was an imposition on the traditional aboriginal way of life and therefore needed to be amended.

#### **iv. SPORTS SHOOTING**

The sports shooting groups were concerned with the manner in which the legislation might impede on the ability of sports shooters to compete in national or international competitions, including the Olympics. They asserted that some guns are dangerous and should be banned, but others had been needlessly moved into the prohibited or restricted categories, though they posed no more risk or danger than others in lower classifications. They said that activities surrounding Canada's participation at

international competitions would be severely restricted and curtailed. They further asserted that there was no need to ban sports shooting guns and expressed concern with the inspection and search and seizure powers (Evidence of the International Practical Shooting Confederation, The Shooting Federation of Canada, and the Canadian Olympic Shooting Team to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 50 September 18, 1995).

On the other hand, they showed support for measures which targeted the criminal misuse of firearms and those that aimed to reduce smuggling. Overall, they were more supportive of the legislation and the criminal aspects, but were worried about certain firearms being banned from use which are currently used in sports competitions (Evidence of the International Practical Shooting Confederation, The Shooting Federation of Canada, and the Canadian Olympic Shooting Team to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 50 September 18, 1995). The issue, for them, was primarily one of sports and opportunity.

#### **v. BUSINESSES/MANUFACTURERS/MUSEUMS**

All three of these groups- businesses (including retailers), manufacturers, and museums were primarily concerned with the costs, increased bureaucracy and red-tape that they would incur as a result of the legislation. They were not opposed to gun control, *per se*. The museums, in particular, stated that they felt almost insulted to have been put into a category in the legislation with other businesses since museums have their own standards which go beyond that of the legislation (Evidence of the Canadian Association of Museums, Army Museum Halifax Citadel and the British North American Living Association to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 116, May 1, 1995).

The manufacturers and businesses were equally concerned about the economic and bureaucratic burden, and asserted that they were concerned with boycotts from the United States due to additional burdens on tourists. In addition, they were worried that they would suffer a financial loss if firearms, which were part of their stock, were prohibited. They stated that sales were already on a decline, as were the number of business permits- proof that the industry is taking a loss due to increased restrictions. Many also raised questions about the logistics of the firearms identification number, and questioned the manner in which the system would be practically managed (Evidence of the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters, Ontario Arms Collectors Association and Excalibur Crossbow and Lakefield Arms and Para-Ordnance to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No.53, September 21, 1995). In essence, they were concerned that the legislation would have an impact on the number of potential customers and framed the issue in terms of the amount of money that they may lose as a result of the legislation.

#### **vi. PROVINCES AND CITIES**

These groups had perhaps the most divergent views regarding gun control and the implementation of the legislation. For the most part, though, it was the provinces who were against registration for economic reasons (citing that they would be forced to bear the brunt of the costs), and the metropolitan cities who were strongly in favour gun control.

Firstly, with regard to the provinces and territories, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario all came forward to oppose firearms registration, its costs, and the practical application of the legislation. Prince Edward Island was the sole supporter. The other provinces remained out of the debate.

Those opposing the legislation seemed to be from areas with the highest percent of rural and gun owning populations, and those with a Conservative provincial government. In fact, these five opposing governments appeared together in their presentation to the Standing Committee, and prepared a joint submission. While they all pledged support for the crime control components, including the smuggling initiatives, they were united in their opposition to the universal registration and licensing. It was asserted that their opposition stemmed from the federal government's failure to demonstrate a link between registration and crime prevention. In light of the financial expenditure which will be required to support these initiatives, was not considered economical. They claimed that the money could be better spent on other crime-control initiatives and firearms education and training (Evidence of the Government of Alberta, Government of Manitoba, Government of Saskatchewan, Government of Yukon, and Government of Northwest Territories to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 57, September 27, 1995).

The administrative burden that registration would have upon police resources and affected provincial /territorial departments was criticized as being unnecessary and wasteful (although the police themselves did not share this view). Finally, they maintained that the projected 85 million dollars to set up the registration and licensing system is unreasonable and will, in all likelihood, far exceed this estimate. Ontario went further than any other province in asserting that the crime control measures were still lax, and should be tightened - most likely a product of Premier Mike Harris' political agenda. This illustrates that one needn't even be an interest group *per se*, to advance one's own interests through "piggy backing" within the policy realm (Evidence of the Government of Alberta, Government of Manitoba, Government of Saskatchewan, Government of Yukon, and Government of Northwest Territories to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 57, September 27, 1995).

On the other side, as mentioned, Prince Edward Island was the sole provincial supporter of the legislation. The legislation was fully supported, through reference to many of the “Canadian character” and “peaceful country” arguments that Allan Rock had often used. They stated that they were not concerned with the costs of administering the system, because it would be cost-neutral after the initial implementation phase, and like any government program, the public would be required to bear some of the cost. Furthermore, they stated that although registration is not the sole answer, it would go along way to reduce firearm injuries and deaths. It is interesting to note that PEI directly addressed the concerns of the other provinces, and said that although they raised valid concerns regarding the administration of the program, that these were practical concerns which could be overcome and should not delay the passage of the Bill (Evidence to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 56, September 26, 1995).

The three cities which appeared, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver all fully supported the legislation, especially with regards to its crime and control, smuggling and public safety aspects (Evidence to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 121, May 4, 1995).

#### **vii. ACADEMICS AND PROFESSIONALS**

A wide array of academics and professionals within the criminal justice and social organization realm appeared before the committees, with a fairly wide degree of variance of views on particular issues. For the most part, though, there was support for the legislation and for universal registration. Economics were not a large consideration, with most people agreeing that the system would eventually pay for itself, and that any costs were worth the potential benefit.

The view was more balanced, in the sense that gun control was not viewed as a “cure all” for the problem of crime, but that it may be part of the solution. There was a consensus that a middle ground needed to be found between public safety and the legitimate use of firearms. Furthermore, among the academics appearing before the committees, there was wide agreement that firearms are a lethal weapon, and that their involvement in a situation can drastically affect the outcome.

The symbolic meaning of gun control to Canadians, as reaffirming our civil nature, was another point often discussed. Other social science-type issues were often raised, such as the effects of mandatory minimum sentences (most criminologists argued against them), aboriginal rights issues, and the need for follow-up and evaluation studies to further augment the implementation of the legislation (Evidence of the Canadian Criminal Justice Association, Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, Meeting No. 139, May 15, 1995), National Crime Prevention Council (Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, Meeting No.142, May 16, 1995), Canadian Bar Association (Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 143, May 17, 1995), Centre of Criminology, University of Ottawa and Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto (Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No. 52, September 20, 1995).

#### **viii. POLICE GROUPS**

The police were supportive of the legislation, and, as might be suspected, were particularly in favour of the crime control aspects. They often referred to the fact that the registration system would be an important investigative tool, and that it would help to identify criminals by elimination. The safe storage provisions were seen as a necessary component to help curb the theft of firearms. They also strongly supported the new

screening procedures and the inspection powers as being key tools in identifying and keeping firearms away from those who may be at risk of misusing them. The only way which money was discussed was in the context of the legislation helping to save money in investigations (Evidence of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Canadian Police Association and Canadian Association of Police Boards to the Standing Committee of Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No.119-121, May 3-4, 1995).

#### **ix. PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS**

Not only was gun control constructed as a crime issue, but it has also been defined as a public health issue. Public health organizations stated that millions of dollars are spent every year treating firearms injuries, and that hospitals and doctors see the destructive effects of these weapons every day. They asserted that not only are people at risk of using them against someone in a violent moment, but that firearms are a major instrument used in teen suicides. In addition, they claimed that accessible firearms may fall into the wrong hands where an unknowing and curious child picks up a gun and plays with it (Evidence of the Canada's National Safety Council, Conférence des Régies regionales de la santé et des services sociaux: Meeting No. 112, April 27 and Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, Canadian Public Health Association: Meeting No. 133, May 11, 1995). All of these situations were of concern to public health officials who stated that they must deal with the aftermath these incidents.

They asserted, unequivocally, that guns are dangerous and pose a medical risk to anyone possessing or near a gun. They claimed that since most firearm injuries are caused by a legally owned gun, it is impossible to distinguish a responsible owner from a potential misuser. These groups feel that gun control needs to be seen as a form of injury

prevention. In addition, women and youth in dangerous situations are usually prime targets to be injured or threatened with a firearm- if the main perpetrators did not have access to a firearm, this risk would be diminished. From this perspective, any gun in the home can present a risk and they claimed that steps should be taken to reduce this as far as possible. They fully supported the legislation and asserted that other programs, such as public education, should accompany its' implementation. Finally, with regards to cost, they said that the actual cost of the program would be recovered, especially when one factors in the money and lives saved from gun control (Evidence of the Canada's National Safety Council, Conférence des Régies regionales de la santé et des services sociaux: Meeting No. 112, April 27 and Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, Canadian Public Health Association: Meeting No. 133, May 11, 1995).

#### **x. WOMEN'S GROUPS**

Women's groups are historically among the most supportive of gun control initiatives. In their presentations, most women's groups tended to focus on domestic homicide and the risk of firearms in the home. Similar to the view of the public health groups, they asserted that because there is no way to ascertain who is at risk of misusing firearms, especially against someone in the home, all firearms are dangerous. Gun control is framed as a women's safety issue. They claimed that registration is a key component of the legislation, and although it will not address the root causes of violence against women, it is a step in the right direction, and will contribute to an overall strategy. They often cited the figure that 1/2 million women live in homes that have a firearm, and that men frequently threaten and use these against women.

It was maintained that the increased powers to police, and the information available to them would help police intervene in domestic disputes, and to more effectively enforce prohibition orders. They stated that firearms control must be seen as a gender issue because women are disproportionately victims (in relation to number of women who own firearms). In addition, women's groups asserted that firearms owners have co-opted victim status. Firearm owners have attempted to portray themselves as the victims, when women are the real victims, and almost exclusively at the hands of men. A slogan which was used was: "Who is the real expert: the man with a firearm in hand or the woman with a firearm in the head?" (Evidence of the YWCA, Montreal Assault Prevention Centre, National Association of Women and the Law, BC Institute on Family Violence, Alberta Council of Women's Shelters to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Issue No, 51 and 52, September 19-20, 1995).

The next chapter will focus more specifically on the rhetoric utilized by women's groups in the gun control debate.

## **xi. VICTIMS' GROUPS**

These groups fully supported the legislation but argued, in most cases, that it did not go far enough in limiting the use of firearms. In fact, on the continuum, this group probably should be the most supportive, since they actually have very little tolerance for firearms, even for the most legitimate uses.

The victims groups argued that there should be greater consideration of victims and their surviving family members; currently, these interests are lost in the process. They asserted that costs should not be a factor when considering this legislation because human lives are at risk. Furthermore, the costs incurred as a result of firearms injuries go

beyond medical treatment to factors such as trauma, emotional pain, and loss of a loved one: how can a price be put on these? In response to the gun lobby's phrase regarding "guns don't kill people, people kill people", the victims groups replied: "people with guns kill, people without guns injure". Finally, they asserted that gun control must be seen as part of an overall effort to reduce violence (Evidence presented by CAVEAT and Victims of Violence to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 140, May 16, 1995).

### **xii. THE COALITION FOR GUN CONTROL**

The Coalition for Gun Control (CGC) was born in the wake of the Montreal Massacre. The impact of this event alone in generating interest group and general public pressure cannot be overstated. The Coalition was formed by two politically inexperienced women in order to lobby for more stringent gun control regulations. One of the founders, Heidi Rathjen, was a 23 year old engineering student at the time, who began circulating petitions among fellow students. Wendy Cukier, the other founder of the Coalition, living in Toronto, heard about these petitions and offered to take charge of collecting signatures in Ontario (Montreal Gazette, December 6, 1995).

From these beginnings, not many years ago, the Coalition has blossomed into the single most powerful lobby group in the firearms debate, being endorsed by more than 360 groups, including the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, municipalities and public-health groups across the country (Evidence the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 143 May 11, 1995 and to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No.58, September 28, 1995). While the NRA are the strongest lobby group in the United States with regards to firearms, the opposite situation seems evident in Canada (with respect to the NFA).

Although the gun lobby, particularly the NFA, does exert some influence in Canada, their influence is not comparable to that of the Coalition, nor to that of the NRA in the United States (Ram, 1995: 281).

In their submissions and presentations, the CGC focused on a wide array of areas related to gun control , including crime control, public health and safety issues. Most likely this is a result of the numerous and varied groups who endorsed and supported the Coalition. They claimed that gun control is not only a big city problem, since guns are also a problem in many rural communities and Western provinces (Evidence the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 143 May 11, 1995 and to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No.58, September 28, 1995).

The Coalition relied quite heavily on empirical evidence, rather than purely emotional or common sense logic. During their presentation, they cited studies showing the lethality of firearms; the source of firearms used in most crimes (legally owned long guns); the link between access to firearms, crime and deaths rates; international studies illustrating a link between ownership levels and crime rates; and, studies showing linkages with suicide and homicide rates in homes with and without firearms ((Evidence the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs: Meeting No. 143 May 11, 1995 and to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: Issue No.58, September 28, 1995).

#### **xiv. SUMMARY**

Among the pro-gun control groups, one must note the strength of the Coalition for Gun Control. Although the continuum was divided into a number of groups depending

on their relative support for the legislation, almost every one of the groups who was supportive of the legislation and appeared before the Committees or made submissions has endorsed the position of the Coalition. Therefore, although each acted on its own behalf, in a sense, the Coalition acted on behalf of all those in favour of the legislation. This helped to present a common and united front in support of the Bill. In essence, the entire supportive side of the continuum represents the various groups represented by the Coalition.

Conversely, the groups on the opposition represent very different, fractured, and even opposing interests, loosely tied by the common thread of some form of opposition to the Bill. While the Coalition served as a unifying agent, the NFA was held at an arms length by many groups, particularly the sports shooters, who purposely did not align themselves with a group thought to be too radical to rationally influence policy. The sports shooters seemed to think that they had a better chance of having their legitimate concerns heard if they distanced themselves from groups making more sweeping denunciations of the legislation. This also illustrates the manner in which interest groups attempt to have their agenda's articulated, and only join with other groups when it is to their advantage. In this case, it clearly was not in their interest to be associated with the NFA. In this sense, the anti-gun control proponents themselves marginalized the NFA by refusing to be associated with it.

Aboriginal groups and businesses each articulated their own interests with little reference to the situations of others along the same end of the continuum. One of the few common elements was the cost issue, but even this was construed in different ways depending on the particular interest at hand (i.e., personal costs versus business revenue).

One of the few cross-over areas was the Aboriginal issue. Although Aboriginal people and organizations were not entirely against the legislation, they were opposed to the way that it would affect their traditional way of life - not to the crime control aspects. Relatedly, even those on the pro-gun control end of the continuum, especially academics, expressed concern regarding the application of the legislation to Aboriginal communities and the need for their special circumstances to be taken into consideration.

Finally, as might be expected, one must consider the way that the two groups at the opposing ends of the spectrum often directly critiqued and targeted each other. In their briefs, the Coalition and the NFA cite each other's literature and reply with opposing "evidence", and often even make quite personal attacks, although this usually originated from the NFA. In fact, the NFA organized a "Bricks for Wendy" campaign in which gun advocates sent bricks to Wendy Cukier, one of the founders of the Coalition in order to voice discontent. One wonders whether this is an effective use of lobbying tactics- the time might have been better spent directing energy towards those who actually formulate the policy. In the end, such tactics probably only served to strengthen the support for the Coalition.

This section aimed to outline the range of claims and rhetoric which may be evident in any policy issue. The gun control area is quite interesting due to the number of groups involved and the varying positions that they represent. Chart 8 presents an overview of the different groups, and the way that they defined the issue. It helps to illustrate the way in which claims-makers attempt to frame the problem in a manner that is not only persuasive to the audience, but that will elicit a policy response that responds to their needs. In essence, this is the policy definition stage, or according to Best's model, the ground statements. It is in this realm that groups compete to have their articulation of the problem accepted as the primary definition. Although such a

typification is overly simplistic, it readily demonstrates the wide range of issues that were being brought forth in the debate over the firearm legislation, and more generally, the many ways that any one issue can be constructed.

**CHART 8**  
**RHETORICAL THEMES**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>PRIMARY FOCUS OF CLAIMS</b>	
<b>National Firearms Association</b>	<b>Individual freedom and property rights</b>	
<b>Hunting Organizations</b>	<b>Personal cost</b>	
<b>Aboriginal Organizations</b>	<b>Traditional lifestyle, treaty and hunting rights</b>	
<b>Sports Shooting</b>	<b>Sports and Recreation</b>	
<b>Businesses/Manufacturers/Museums</b>	<b>Business revenue</b>	
<b>Provinces</b>	<b>Administrative burden, costs and jurisdiction</b>	<b>Canadian character, peaceful country</b>
<b>Cities</b>	<b>Youth/Gang violence</b>	
<b>Academics and Professionals</b>	<b>Varied -Part of larger solution, symbolic meaning</b>	
<b>Police Organizations</b>	<b>Crime control and investigative tool</b>	
<b>Public Health Organizations</b>	<b>Public health issue, suicide, cost of injuries, children</b>	
<b>Women's Groups</b>	<b>Domestic violence and gender issues</b>	
<b>Victims' Groups</b>	<b>Victims, trauma, lethality of all guns</b>	
<b>Coalition for Gun Control</b>	<b>Varied – crime control, public health, safety issues, violence against women</b>	

## **II. GENDERED DISCOURSE: WOMEN'S GROUPS IN THE GUN CONTROL DEBATE**

**Gun control is a gender issue for women, because women are killed, terrorized and threatened with guns wielded by men, and women are far more likely to be the victims of guns than they are to use them. Vulnerability to violence in the home is distinctively female. (V. Fisher, for PATHS)**

According to Joel Best, among the most important factors in any claims-making activity is the persuasiveness of the argument. In particular, he states that in order to examine any claims, we must focus on the style and content of the claims. This section will focus very specifically on women's groups within the gun control debate in order to examine the content of the claims put forth by these groups.

With respect to women's groups in particular, four major types of women's groups will be identified in order to more generally examine the manner in which women's groups and claims-makers constructed the issue of gun control. These categories include: single-issue coalition, domestic violence groups, professional groups, and a general grouping of "others". Chart 9 outlines the particular groups within each category. Women's groups represented only a small percentage of groups who actually appeared before the House and Senate Committees. The selection of these groups and more detailed information regarding the content analysis and the descriptive analysis is discussed in the Methodology chapter.

**CHART 9****CLASSIFICATION OF WOMEN'S GROUPS**

<b>SINGLE-ISSUE GUN CONTROL COALITION</b>	<b>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE</b>	<b>PROFESSIONAL</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
<b>COALITION FOR GUN CONTROL</b>	<b>ALBERTA COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS</b>	<b>CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN</b>	<b>MONTREAL ASSAULT PREVENTION CENTRE</b>
	<b>PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION OF TRANSITION HOUSES SASKATCHEWAN</b>	<b>FEDERATION OF WOMEN TEACHERS OF ONTARIO</b>	<b>CAVEAT</b>
	<b>B.C. INSTITUTE ON FAMILY VIOLENCE</b>	<b>NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN AND THE LAW</b>	<b>CERCLES DE FERMIERES DU QUÉBEC</b>
	<b>YWCA</b>		

As with any issue that has been identified as a social problem, claims-makers will use different types of claims to push their issue towards to top of the policy agenda. The words and approaches that they use are specifically constructed to put forth an idea of how the issue should be constructed. The gun control area is interesting due to the wide range of claims that were put forth during the passage of Bill C-68, emanating from a very diverse range of organizations. Each organization, with its own agenda, framed the issue in a different manner.

Before further detailing the positions and claims of each group, it is necessary to orient the reader to the most common claims that were used by women's groups in the gun control debate. The next section will focus specifically on the rhetoric employed by women's groups, and examine the extent to which their claims, although brought forward by groups with different goals and mandates, are remarkably similar. As Joel Best asserts, in examining claims-making activities, it is possible to narrow down the key arguments to several claim-statements. In this case, the predominant claims were found to be:

- the impossibility of separating criminals from law-abiding citizens;
- the notion of women as defenceless victims;
- the concept of power;
- the notion of guns as inherently dangerous;
- the long-term implications of gun control;
- and, the assertion that gun control is only one part of a larger solution.

Although some of the groups did not use each of these arguments, most were present in the majority of the presentations. The detailed descriptive analysis of each of the groups will serve to further elucidate how the six lines of rhetoric were used by the women's groups. One can see the high level of consistency between groups having no

formal relation to each other. It also illustrates the extent to which like-minded groups tend to view a particular social issue within the same context, since their world-view is so similar to each other.

As indicated in the results of the content analysis in Chart 10, out of the eleven groups, eight utilized the law-abiding versus criminal firearm owner rhetoric; six used the defenceless victim; seven mentioned power issues, ten mentioned the dangerousness of guns; eight spoke of long-term implications, and all eleven framed gun control as only one part of a larger solution. In addition, it is possible to see some variances between the four types of groups with regard to the types of rhetoric employed.

The Domestic Violence Groups each employed all of the six lines of rhetoric; this is the only grouping to use every one of the arguments. In contrast, the Professional groups are more likely to steer away from the more emotional claims such as the defenceless victim; the only line of rhetoric employed by each of the three professional groups is that of gun control being one part of a larger solution. Interestingly, the Coalition for Gun Control closely mirrors the Professional Groups in terms of the number of claims that are used. Finally, those in the “Other” category, as might be assumed, have a fairly high level of variance between the types and number of claims employed.

The analysis will now focus upon the descriptive analysis, in order to further explore the style and content of the gendered discourse and rhetoric employed by women’ groups.

**CHART 10****RHETORIC PRESENTED BY WOMEN'S GROUPS**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Law- Abiding Vs. Criminal</b>	<b>Defenceless Victim</b>	<b>Power (Symbolic And Real)</b>	<b>Inherent Dangerousness Of Guns</b>	<b>Long-Term Implications</b>	<b>One Part Of Solution</b>	<b>Total Claims Per Group</b>
<b>Coalition for Gun Control</b>	+			+	+	+	4
<b>Alberta Council of Women's Shelters</b>	+	+	+	+	+	+	6
<b>B.C. Institute on Family Violence</b>	+	+	+	+	+	+	6
<b>Provincial Association of Transition Homes</b>	+	+	+	+	+	+	6
<b>YWCA</b>	+	+	+	+	+	+	6
<b>Canadian Federation of University Women</b>				+		+	2
<b>National Association of Women and the Law</b>	+		+	+		+	4
<b>Federation of Women's Teachers Associations Ontario</b>		+	+		+	+	4
<b>CAVEAT</b>	+	+		+	+	+	5
<b>Les Cercles des fermières du Québec</b>				+	+	+	3
<b>Montreal Assault Prevention Centre</b>	+		+	+		+	3
<b>Total Number of Each Claim</b>	8	6	7	10	8	11	

## I. COALITION FOR GUN CONTROL

In their presentation to the Senate Committee on September 28, 1995, Heidi Rathjen, Executive Director of the Coalition for Gun Control introduced her organization:

The Coalition for Gun Control is a non-partisan, non-profit, mainly volunteer organization that was founded five years ago in order to defend the public's right to safety within the gun control debate and also to mobilize existing support in Canada for stricter gun control measures.

Our position is very defined. It was established at the beginning in consultation with a wide variety of what we consider to be experts in crime prevention and public safety. Three hundred and sixty organizations have endorsed this position over the years. They represent broad and diverse interests, from women's groups, to churches, to universities, to unions, to municipalities, but most importantly what we consider the experts in public crime and safety. I would just like to draw your attention to a number of them: the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Association of Police Boards, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Trauma Association of Canada, the Canadian Criminal Justice Association, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians and the Canada Safety Council.

Our list of endorsers is found at the end of our brief.<sup>6</sup> Please notice that we equally represent small communities, small municipalities, as we do big cities in the west and east, not just Montreal and Toronto as some opponents of gun control who want to marginalize us would have it (Issue No. 58:5).

Although the Coalitions' membership is wide, they have been classified as a woman's group because of the founding members, and due to the fact that they organized to become a politically-oriented interest group in response to the École Polytechnique tragedy. Their central concern emanates from the issue of women's safety.

Similar to other women's groups, one of the key themes is that it is impossible to clearly distinguish a law-abiding firearm owner from a potential criminal or criminal. That is, men who abuse their partners are often indistinguishable to the general public,

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<sup>6</sup> Please see *Appendix 2* for a listing of these groups.

and even to their own neighbors, yet these men are the most likely to misuse firearms against a woman. It is not the street criminal or a stranger lurking in an alley who is most likely to murder a woman, it is her own partner:

We now have empirical information that supports what the chiefs of police have been saying all along, along with public health people, which is that this nice, clean division between the guns that belong to law-abiding people and the criminal element simply does not exist (Meeting No. 134:18).

Another common claim is the “for the sake of our children” argument. Thus, the legislation is said to not only have an impact on the short-term safety of Canadian society, but like the environmental movement, will ensure the safety of future generations, “the legislation is not only designed to address problems that exist today, but is also an investment in our future.” (Meeting No. 134:2) In asserting such a claim, one is attempting to frame the issue in terms of the long-term implications, with the view that “this is something bigger than us”.

The diversity of claims about violence in society, as is the case with many other social problems, suggest that its causes and solutions are multiple and complex. Thus, those advocating stricter gun control laws did not attempt to assert that any gun legislation, particularly the Bill before them, would cure all social ills. Rather, it was widely viewed as a “good first step” and something that would contribute to part of a larger solution.

First of all, I want to say that we believe that complex problems have complex solutions; that gun related death, injury and crime are a result of a wide range of factors and access to firearms is only one of them. While it's not a panacea, however, we believe that both common sense and considerable research suggest that further gun control will reduce gun-related death and injury (Meeting No.134:2).

The Coalition addressed the dangerousness of firearms within an international context. Rather than simply claiming that all firearms are dangerous weapons, as was done by other groups, the Coalition chose to frame the issue in a different manner: “there is very clear evidence internationally that the proliferation of firearms increases death, injury and crime rates.” (Meeting No.134:6) By looking at the issue in terms on an international context, the issue is framed in a very basic manner – more guns, more crime. Thus, the inherently dangerous nature of firearms is highlighted in a simple and easily remembered fashion.

Regarding policy conclusions, the Coalition felt that C-68 contained many of the components that were not included in the 1991 legislation. In their presentation, they expressed strong support for the legislation, and for all four of its main components. In particular, they stated:

The measures contained in Bill C-68 very much reflect our basic position. The cornerstone of the legislation, registration of firearms, is to us the most important point. We support Bill C-68 (Issue No. 58:5).

In her recently published book, Heidi Rathjen (*December 6: From the Montreal Massacre to Gun Control: The Inside Story*, 1999) presents a general overview of the manner in which the Coalition was formed and how they attempted to get their policy position on the agenda. Now Executive Director of the Coalition for Gun Control, she was an engineering student at the Ecole Polytechnique in 1989, when Marc Lepine shot his 14 victims.

As a student involved in the student council, and having known victims of the shooting, Heidi Rathjen quickly became very involved in the gun control debate and thus began her first foray into the political arena. In her book, she outlines how rhetoric

played a large part in the debate, even from its first moments, “We were just entering the gun-control battle, but the rhetoric was universal” (Rathjen, 1999: 35).

In this same book, Wendy Cukier, a Toronto professor, who was to team up with Heidi Rathjen and become the President of the Coalition for Gun Control, states that her own strongest link to the tragedy was not to the victims, but to the mothers:

When my sister came to visit me in Toronto, the first thing she said upon bringing in the morning paper was: “Did you hear someone shot fourteen women in Quebec?” She must have read wrong...I couldn’t accept that such a mass killing had occurred in my country...The world had changed: for months afterward, I’d teach my courses thinking that it could happen here, and I’d look at my daughter Sarah, wondering what if it had been her? (Rathjen, 1999: 41)

Rathjen also outlines the manner in which the public was attempting to understand their own emotions regarding the Polytechnique, and how different conceptions of the problem were competing in the social problems marketplace:

Compared to thousands of people who die every day from accidents or diseases, the fourteen victims received a disproportionate amount of attention. It may have been due to the strength of what it symbolized, that sexual equality was much frailer than we had all presumed. It may have been because this kind of horror isn’t supposed to happen to people so young, or in the peaceful confines of a learning institution. Or was it simply because such unexpected and sudden violence made everyone feel more vulnerable and every parent more fearful? (Rathjen, 1999: 54)

Rathjen also outlines her first in-person encounter with lobbyists on the other side of the gun control debate – key figures from the National Firearms Association. During an appearance at a committee hearing, Rathjen describes her first meeting, and her initial impression, along with their use of rhetoric, “Until now, the term “gun lobby” had failed to give me a precise image of the other side, other than a shadowy conglomerate that blocked everything that threatened its interests...” (Rathjen, 1999: 78).

The use of rhetoric is evident on both sides of the gun control debate, and Rathjen's description illustrates the manner in which those who represent different positions become acclimatized to each other's rhetoric and eventually no longer listen to each other.

Oh, they shared our concerns, they truly did. But the world they were describing was very different from our own – a world where criminals reigned supreme and where police was incapable of ensuring our protection. According to them, a tougher law would only benefit the black market and render people more vulnerable to the attacks of violent offenders.

I saw them coming a mile away: *An armed society is a polite society. We don't protect victims by making them unable to protect themselves* (original italics). I braced myself for the usual lecture about fighting criminals, not guns. I had been down this road so many times, there wasn't much they could say that would be news to either of us, let alone change our minds (Rathjen, 1999: 79).

The importance of coalition building is particularly highlighted in Rathjen's book. The theory that a coalition of individuals and groups will be more powerful as a united front than a disorganized grouping seems to bear true in the case of the Coalition for Gun Control. Indeed, the wide backing that they received from many different types of groups seems to be one of the key reasons for their success.

The position we asked groups to endorse contained all of our demands, despite the fact that only a fraction of them were on the government's agenda. This way, the support of the groups would be valid until we obtained everything we considered necessary. In the long run, these endorsements were much more valuable than getting good press. Official support doesn't age; that's where a coalition gets its strength, not from quotes from last week's paper.

We eventually spoke for more than 350 organizations from the local to the national scale. At the time of the hearings, we could proudly state that we represented millions of citizens, not counting individual members. No matter how one added it up, that was a lot more support than the gun lobby could lay claim to (Rathjen, 1999: 99).

Further, Rathjen, in speaking about her own involvement in the issue, fully recognizes that her presence, as a female engineering student in the same building at the time of the Ecole Polytechnic shootings, contributed an emotional factor that seemed to have a persuasive effect on listeners. She came to be regarded as an authorized knower, due to her personal involvement and immediacy in the tragedy.

Ever since we had landed, Wendy's role had been to present the experts' evidence and to introduce the solutions we were promoting. My part was more loosely defined, but no less important: I brought the statistics to life and bore witness that the ravages were not just an abstraction. *I was there* when my classmates were gunned down.

As with the Special Committee, my testimony doubled as a moderating factor. Aside from defining the stakes, it fostered sympathy, and made our opponents less inclined to attack us.

I do wish we could have dispensed with such symbols – gun control is a rational choice, not a sentimental one. But since I needed a tragedy to get involved, I hardly could deny other people's desire to focus on the human dimension of the issue (Rathjen, 1999: 104).

Although the December 6 tragedy is what initially sparked the formation of the Coalition for Gun Control, a number of other, more established groups quickly became involved in the gun control debate. For women's groups, in particular, the Ecole Polytechnique tragedy ignited somewhat of a spark, and helped to highlight an issue even more predominant in Canadian society than mass murders – violence against women.

Although different groups and individuals may have had different perspectives regarding the root causes of the Ecole Polytechnique massacre, one claim was widely accepted: 14 women had been shot in a blatantly misogynistic act. Whatever ones' views on the role of societal, socio-historical, familial or psychological factors upon Marc

Lepine's violent act, most observers accept that he targeted these women because of their sex and that his choice of female victims not accidental.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, even the staunchest women's rights groups could not suggest that such killings were a great social problem in and of themselves. It was the first such act in Canada's collective memory, so it would have been difficult to argue that further gun controls were necessary on this basis alone. What the December 6 tragedy did was to open and revitalize the "violence against women" debate. As tragic as the death of those 14 women was, women's groups began to call for increased gun control on the basis of the number of less sensational, but also tragic gun deaths that women suffer at the hands of men every year. They argued that the Ecole Polytechnic murders were only one small reminder of a larger societal social problem, and they began to construct their claims-making activities in such a fashion.

## **ii. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE GROUPS**

A number of organizations who presented before the committees are primarily domestic violence service providers that provide shelter and/or support services for abused women and their families. Although it seems obvious that they might focus on domestic violence, it is interesting to examine the types of rhetoric used and how those claims are crafted into their presentation. The groups in this category are: The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, the B.C. Institute on Family Violence, the Provincial Association of Transition Homes and the YWCA.

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<sup>7</sup> Ram indicates that survivors heard Marc Lepine shout in French "I hate feminists" during the incident (1995: 287). Furthermore, he left a note blaming his life troubles on women.

## **ii.i ALBERTA COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS**

On September 20, 1995, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS), represented by Arlene A. Chapman, spoke before the Senate Committee:

...The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters is a non-profit organization consisting of 27 member shelters throughout the province of Alberta. The council was founded in 1981 and incorporated in 1983. The purpose of the Alberta Council is to support and strengthen the sheltering movement in Alberta and within the ACWS membership. Our areas of concern are issues of family violence and breaking the cycle of intergenerational violence, our focus being abused women and their families.

The following motion was passed at the February 4, 1995 council meeting: That, as part of a larger strategy to combat violence in our society, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters support the concept of gun control (Issue No. 52:6).

The rhetoric of the ACWS centred mostly around the issue of societal violence, and violence against women in particular. Although the ACWS stress that gun control can only be seen as part of the solution, they assert that it is part of a process towards the eradication of violence against women. As with CAVEAT, they argue that guns themselves are inherently dangerous and need to be controlled for that reason alone.

Gun control is not about guns, it is about violence. When guns are readily acceptable, they become the vehicle for expressing violence. Women are stabbed, strangled and beaten to death, but most women murdered by their husbands are shot. Guns are also used to threaten and terrorize women in their homes (Issue No.52:7).

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters also discussed the "legitimate gun owner" versus "criminal" argument that predominates in the presentations by women's organizations:

Perhaps the pro-gun control lobby does not realize that domestic abusers and domestic homicides are indeed criminal acts. The men who commit

these acts are perceived by friends and neighbors as responsible people... (Issue No. 52:8).

The notion of the defenseless victim is also evident in the ACWS's presentation. The quote below centers on the gravity and immediacy of the need to enact legislation as soon as possible, suggesting that women are being killed while waiting for the legislation to protect them.

Women and children continue to die from unprovoked acts of violence, and many more continue to exist in horrific life-threatening situations while we await the passing of stricter gun control laws (Issue No. 52:8).

The overall orientation that the ACWS uses to frame the issue of gun control is that it is a women's safety issue. This typification is congruent with the conditions experienced by shelter workers and transition home professionals who witness the effects of domestic violence and the threat of firearms on a daily basis. Therefore, the ACWS is not concerned with a larger societal view, but rather with the daily safety of their clients and their children. Additionally, the statement below reflects the notion that enacting effective gun control is not only a current issue, but also one that has future implications.

Gun control is a women's safety issue. Although gun control does not address the root source of violence in our society, it will save lives. This legislation not only goes a long way to addressing current problems, but it is an investment in our future (Issue No. 52:9).

As the above quote also suggests, the ACWS advocates stricter gun control legislation on the premise that it is only one part of a larger strategy to reduce violence against women. Or, to put it another way:

...gun control is not a solution to domestic violence, but it can play an important role in preventing avoidable deaths, and acknowledging that women and children together with men have an interest in building a society free from violence. Strong gun control legislation is one way for the government to contribute to a safer society for all.

Limiting weapons will not prevent family violence, but can assist in a global approach to limiting it....We cannot turn a blind eye to domestic violence, which often involves a threat or use of firearms (Issue No. 52:8).

Like the Coalition, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters supported all of the policy options of the proposed legislation. They expressed their support for the entire legislative package, particularly the registration component, "The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters supports C-68. We believe mandatory registration of all firearms is linked to the safety of women..." (Issue No. 52:6).

### **ii.ii. B.C. INSTITUTE ON FAMILY VIOLENCE**

The B.C. Institute on Family Violence (BCIFV) was represented by Jill Hightower, Executive Director. She stated:

The institute was established in 1989, and our mandate is to do research, education and service-provided training around issues of family violence (Issue No. 52:9).

Much like the other domestic violence organizations, the B.C. Institute on Family Violence focused upon the perpetrators of domestic violence, and the fact that, on the outside, it is difficult to separate a criminal from a law abiding citizen. In addition, even were such a distinction possible, it would not be relevant to women in abusive situations.

.....Much of the debate that I have been hearing on gun control has focused on the need to control the criminal element, rather than legitimate gun owners. For a large number of women who face violence from their partners in their homes, this distinction is meaningless. Most men who are violent towards their partners are not recognized as criminals by their neighbours....(Issue No. 52:9-10).

As with the other women's organizations, firearms are viewed as a dangerous object in and of themselves. The BCIFV suggests that the availability of firearms increases the likelihood of death for all family members, particularly in the home. They further bring the point to a more personal level by stating that all provinces, including British Columbia should be concerned about the problem. The claim that firearms are a lethal and dangerous weapon is evident in the following statement:

The fact is that in British Columbia, we are not immune to the problems of firearms. Guns are lethal weapons and they are used to kill women, men, and children in our province and in other provinces in the country (Issue No., 52:9).

Another common theme in the claims-making rhetoric of women's groups is the notion that while gun control is not a panacea, it is an important step in helping to curb domestic violence. Further, this group more specifically links their solution as one which will enable police to do their job more efficiently, thus making society safer.

....We know this package will not eliminate crime and violence in our society, but we do see it as part of improving public safety and helping to reduce crime. We believe the creation of a registration system will help police in a variety of ways....(Issue No. 52:11).

The British Columbia Institute on Family Violence also addressed the issue of power and the relationship between the genders in society as being a factor in violence against women. Although the notion that power and control are inexorably linked to violence against woman is not new, what is different is that the BCIFV has explicitly linked the use of firearms to power.

Front-line transition-house staff report that women are frequently threatened by their partners, and many of these threats involve firearms. Guns are used as instruments of power and control (Issue No. 52:10).

Finally, they focus on the long-term benefits of implementing more stringent firearms legislation. Here, the legislation is framed not solely in terms of the immediate moment, but as an investment in the future of Canada's youth. The usage of youth, as with any rhetoric, is quite intentional, and given the public's fear of increasing youth crime in the 1990's was likely chosen to remind the audience of the vulnerability of the youth, and the fact that adults have responsibilities to uphold the safety of society for their benefit.

....Bill C-68, I believe, and my institute believes represents a reasonable balance between gun owners and public safety. This legislation not only addresses the problem of today, but is an investment in both our own and our children's future... (Issue No. 52:12).

In terms of policy conclusions, the BCIFV focused most of their presentation on the harms of domestic violence generally, rather than going into detail on the different components of the legislation. In particular, they mention licensing and registration as being the key components of the legislation. Since they express strong support for the entire legislation, their support of the other major components is more implicit:

We, as Canadians, have a tradition of accepting reasonable regulation in the interest of public safety and the well-being of the community at large. We view this legislation as being both reasonable and in the interests of Canadians, those who own guns, and those who do not, and we urge the committee to support this legislation (Issue No. 52:13).

### **ii.iii. PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION OF TRANSITION HOUSES**

#### **SASKATCHEWAN (PATHS)**

Virginia M. Fisher, Coordinator of the Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan (PATHS) presented to the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on September 20, 1995:

We are a non-profit organization which was formed in 1984. Our membership is comprised of the transition houses and interval houses in Saskatchewan, as well as safe homes and shelters and other agencies that provide services to abused women and children. Our purpose is to facilitate networking between and education of our members, as well as to disburse information and to advocate and support research in the area of domestic abuse against women....

She further frames the issue in stating:

Gun control is not about guns; it is about violence. And violence is a part of too many women's lives (Issue No. 52:13).

PATHS challenges the role of the expert by asserting that a woman who is faced with the daily fear of domestic violence, compounded by the availability of a firearm is the one who should be considered the expert. Instead, too often it is the man who uses the firearm who is considered the authority:

.....Obviously, the interests of women must be presented in the issue of gun control. A woman with a gun pointed to her head is said to know nothing about guns; the man pointing the gun apparently does. Gun owners present themselves as the only experts on guns and gun control. However, since gun control is about violence and not guns, it is women who are the experts.

PATHS, my organization, speaks as such an expert and comes here today to present its members' views on the need for Bill C-68 from the context of violence against women... (Issue No. 52:14).

One of the first points articulated by PATHS is the distinction between the law-abiding owner and the criminal. In perhaps one of the most clear delineation's of this line of rhetoric, PATHS spokesperson Virginia Fisher suggests not only that firearms owners are quick to insist on a clear-cut divide, but also that many members of the justice system and police function according to this fallacious conception:

As I understand it, guns on the street are criminal guns, used to carry out bank robberies and drive-by shootings; guns in the home are law-abiding guns, kept there for target shooting along with hunting and killing

varmints on the farm. At least, so say the gun lobbyists. It is an easy no-muss, no-fuss distinction; easy for the police, easy for the justice system.

It is easy to see what a waste of time it would be to force responsible law-abiding gun-owning citizens to register, except for one thing: owning a gun confers no expertise in public health and safety, nor in crime prevention. Legal gun owners completely separate themselves from criminals, with no appreciation that an unacceptable proportion of their own group terrorize women with their guns and that this is a criminal act of violence with a firearm.

...It is the home and not the street that poses the greatest threat to Canadian women, and guns play a frequent and fatal part...Guns in the home; legally owned guns; unrestricted guns; rifles and shotguns; guns owned by target shooters and hunters and farmers; guns owned by men everyone else thinks are law-abiding citizens – guns women live with in terror every day like hostages (Issue No. 52:13).

While reiterating the fact that there is no difference between a law-abiding gun owners and a criminal, PATHS, unlike many of the other groups, goes as far as to suggest that gun owners should take more responsibility for the misuse of firearms by other owners, rather than trying to neatly classify those with guns as either criminal or not. PATHS also condemns firearm owners for having co-opted victim status from the “real” victims of firearms.

Farmers and ranchers are supposedly offended by the principle that a law-abiding citizen must register. However, what farmers and ranchers and target shooters and hunters should be offended by is violence against women. Instead, gun owners have co-opted victim status, taken it away from the murdered, the terrorized, and the women held hostage. With protestations of being targeted by a government out of control, they stand as wounded honest citizens, threatened by uncompromising fear mongers....abusers are normal men (Issue No. 52:14).

Within this context, firearms are described as being inherently dangerous weapons, “Guns are, in fact, the weapon of choice – the most deadly one by far...” (Issue No. 52:13). Therefore, the claim is made that the mere presence of a firearm may have an impact upon the outcome of a violent situation in that, if a firearm were not available, a victim’s chance of survival would be greater.

PATHS also invokes the rhetoric of the defenseless victims, at the same time displaying a typifying example of the lethality of firearms. The urgency of the wording implies that something needs to be done *right now*, and that, until that happens, women's safety is at risk. In addition, by providing a concrete example, the audience is left with no doubt that for this particular woman mentioned, it was indeed too late.

The lives of these women are in danger. The occurrence and severity of domestic violence escalates over time. That danger increases daily. For a 36 year old woman from small-town Weyburn, Saskatchewan, just killed on Sunday with a shotgun by her common law husband, Bill C-68 is already too late (Issue No. 52:15).

The idea that gun control is only part of a larger solution is also addressed. As with many other groups, they also suggest that wider societal changes are needed if the root causes of violence against women are to be addressed, but that as part of this solution, gun control is a key step.

Although the law will not in and of itself create change, law is one of the ways in which social values are communicated and entrenched in society. To start to create change, the government must deal with all aspects of violence against women. The first consideration at all levels must be the safety and protection of assaulted women and their children. It must be the 50,000 Canadian women who, as we sit here, live with guns in their households, in terror day after day (Issue No. 52:17).

In terms of policy conclusions, PATHS stated that it supported Bill C-68 in its entirety. During their presentation, they outlined the particular components that they felt would be most likely to address domestic violence:

The key elements of Bill C-68 from the perspective of domestic violence against women are that it provides more barriers to impulsive use by encouraging safe storage and the reporting of misuse; it provides appropriate penalties for misuse, being the loss of the right to own a firearm; it requires regular reapplications for licencing and therefore new

opportunities for screening; and it restricts the sale of ammunition to licenced owners only (Issue No. 52:16).

#### ii. iv. YWCA

Sandra Essex, of YWCA Government Relations, in her presentation to the Standing Committee on May 16, 1995, stated that:

.....The YWCA of Canada is a voluntary charitable women's organization established in 1893 to serve as a national body for YWCA and YM-YWCA member associations in Canada. The YWCA provides high-quality community-based programs and services, is a source of public education on women's issues and advocates responsible, political and economic change. Our core mission is to seek equity and equality for all women (Meeting No. 141:1).

In order to establish their legitimacy, the YWCA refers to their wide base of support, and the fact that they are well established in Canada and throughout the world, both historically and socially.

In Canada, the YWCA has worked with women and their families for over 100 years.....and continues to work in 200 communities. Of the 850,000 people participating in our programs and services, over 400,000 were members. The YWCA is a worldwide movement, operating in 91 countries. We speak for 5 million women, making us the largest and oldest membership-based women's organization in the world.

Some of the services offered by the YWCA include programs to end violence against women, long-term supportive housing, emergency and short-term housing and non-profit. We are the largest single provider of housing services for women in Canada (Meeting No. 141:2).

To further bolster their authority for becoming involved in the legislation, they cite their experiences with providing abused women with shelters. They claim a specialized knowledge that grants them the status to be taken seriously as problem-solving professionals.

Our grass-roots involvement with programs to end violence against women and the provision of emergency housing services have shaped the YWCA's perspective on Bill C-68 as it relates to women's and children's safety... (Meeting No. 141:2).

During their presentation to the Senate Committee, they further elaborated on their base of support, again, noting the importance of Coalition-building:

...Our position on the impact on Bill C-68 on the safety of women and children was prepared in consultation with our diversified membership base from across the country. We have also consulted with other shelters and women's organizations. I am here today with endorsements from 131 national, provincial, and local women's groups. I have a couple copies of the list, which I am more than happy to share.<sup>8</sup> The endorsements are still arriving... (Issue No. 56:53).

The use of rhetoric is very evident throughout the YWCA's presentation. The issue is framed in terms of violence against women – the key message being that “gun control is a women's safety issue.” Further, they use statistics throughout their presentations in order to lend legitimacy to their claims. The specific use of statistics in claims-making will later be examined further.

Another focus of the rhetoric that is evident in the YWCA's presentation is the difference between the legitimate and illegal use of firearms. While anti-gun control groups often suggest that the government should focus on reducing the criminal misuse of firearms, the YWCA turns this argument around, suggesting that it is impossible to separate these two categories. For example:

The gun lobby has focused the debate on criminals. They have presented briefs with the position that Bill C-68 will have little effect on violent crime....they may be right as far as random acts of violence are concerned... Has the gun lobby not read the statistics?...Most homicides are not random acts of violence and most guns used to commit murder are not smuggled or illegally owned. Does the gunlobby not realize that

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<sup>8</sup> Please refer to *Appendix 3* for a complete listing of the groups endorsing the YWCA.

domestic abuse and domestic violence are criminal acts? The men who commit these crimes are usually perceived by their friends and neighbours as law-abiding, responsible people, and many of them own guns legally. But when a man abuses his spouse, he commits a crime... (Meeting No. 141:3-4).

Another key term in the rhetoric of violence against women is that of “power”.

Women are portrayed as solely the victims of violence, while men are portrayed solely as the perpetrators, whether against other men, or against women:

Violence against women is an abuse of power. It is not the same as violence that men experience. When men are violent, it's often a fight in a bar, a fight over somebody's girlfriend, or any number of things. It's not the same when men are violent towards women. I'd like to point out that it's men that are violent. It's men killing men. It's men killing women. The violence is different. It's rooted in the belief that women don't have power.

And they don't have power.

Until we have equality, there won't be that balance.

Violence against women is a power issue. It will change only when we have economic, political and social equality (Meeting No. 141:13).

As with the other groups, the YWCA suggests that gun control will not address some of the most serious social problems that are at the base of violence against women, but that, within these confines, it is a necessary improvement that will help women be safer:

Through our work in all of these areas, we have advocated that tougher laws against men who abuse their spouses and stronger gun control legislation. It is our work that has shaped our opinion that gun control is an important measure in addressing violence against women and children. Although it doesn't address the root cause of violence in our society, it will save lives (Meeting No. 141:3).

The YWCA also discusses the lethality of firearms and their inherent dangerousness in terms of domestic violence, “Firearms are not the only weapons used for killing a spouse, but they are the most lethal” (Meeting No. 141:4).

The rhetoric of the defenceless victims is also evident in that women are portrayed as the victims of male abuse, and of a super-masculinized culture that teaches boys to be violent, at the expense of women.

Boys are taught early to resolve conflict with violence. They are given toy guns to shoot each other with. The heroes in the movies, books, and media are the ones who use the largest guns to shoot the most people. The perception is that guns are used to resolve conflict.

We believe romantic attachment to guns is behind the desire of many people to allow access to paramilitary and military rifles. We have become desensitized to violence in our society and have therefore allowed an acceptance of these guns (Meeting No. 141:5-6).

Furthermore, not only does the YWCA suggest that women are defenceless in the realm of domestic violence and firearms, but also that they have little power in the political sphere. They are thus constructed as political victims, in a sense, unable to take any action against those making laws at the highest level in our country.

As women are generally under-represented in Canada’s political institutions and public service, laws and politics do not always reflect women’s priorities or meet their needs or concerns.

Gun control legislation has not been tough enough in the past. It is an example of legislation that has failed to meet the needs of women because of their lack of involvement in the consultations...

...Women have consistently told you through their MP’s, research polls and organizations like the YWCA that we want mandatory registration of firearms...Women represent 52% of the population. We are not a special interest group.

We hope the committee will listen to the voices of women, as represented through this brief... (Meeting No. 141:6).

The wording used by the YWCA is such that the parliamentarians themselves are constructed as the perpetrators and as partly responsible for the situation of women. Since women are under-represented in the highest decision making bodies, they must rely on a group like the YWCA to take action for them. In this manner, women are constructed as having very little power or recourse on their own, without the aid of a larger organization to represent them. Further, by framing the claim in such a fashion, the YWCA constructs itself as having a mandate beyond that of its' organizational priorities, that is to represent women's interests at large. Such a typification makes it more difficult for parliamentarians to ignore the claim.

Finally, another tactic used by the YWCA was the typifying example, particularly the "atrocious tale", as outlined by Best (Best, 1990: 28). Sandra Essex goes into great detail to outline a story about a woman who came to the YWCA in Alberta to seek refuge from an abusive partner. The woman was later killed by her partner while she was holding her daughter. On the advice of a judge, she had told her abusive partner where she was living. The husband owned several firearms, but despite court proceedings, they were not confiscated. An example of the testimony follows:

On the pretense of needing to discuss custody issues, Ron entered her home with a .22-calibre firearm. Denise was making breakfast for them all when Ron began shooting at random. Denise protested, pushing her way to the front of the door with Sarah in her arms.

Denise was hit with nine bullets, which made twelve wounds and died when a bullet entered her brain at the left temple. She finally fell, just outside the front door, with Sarah still in her arms, miraculously spared. Later Sarah remembered, "I couldn't make my mommy alive no more" (Meeting No. 141:7).

It is not difficult to assess the impact that such a story was meant to have on the audience. Although those involved in the debate often suggest that gun control is a

rational choice, it is apparent that, for both sides of the debate, the issue is emotionally charged.

The YWCA presented one of the clearest policy conclusions of all the women's groups. They discussed a number of components separately, in addition to addressing the need to pass the bill as a package. All four of the main components were addressed and supported individually. In addition, they were quite clear in stating that the legislation formed a comprehensive package, and needed to be passed as such, "We hope the committee will listen to the voices of women, as represented through this brief, who support the implementation of Bill C-68." (Meeting No. 141:6)

### **iii. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

In addition to domestic violence organizations, a number of women-centered professional organizations became involved in the gun control debate. These include the Canadian Federation of University Women, the National Association of Women and the Law and the Federation of Women's Teachers Associations of Ontario. Although they generally operate in order to serve their membership, these professional interest groups chose to become involved in an issue of more general interest as well.

#### **iii.i. CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN**

Betty Bayless, Chair of the Legislation Committee of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), introduced this group on May 16, 1995 to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs:

....Founded in 1919, the Canadian Federation of University Women, CFUW, is a voluntary, non-partisan, non-profit, self-funded, bilingual organization of 10, 750 women university graduates. CFUW members are active in public affairs, working to improve the social, economic and legal status of women as well as to improve education, the environment, peace, justice and human rights. Representatives of 131 clubs in every province in Canada vote on CFUW policy at annual general meetings (Meeting No. 141:8).

In order to establish their credibility, the CFUW cite their previous involvement with gun control legislation; this historical involvement presents the group as one which has a stake in the outcome of the policy development and which has a genuine ongoing concern.

In 1990 the Canadian Federation of University Women urged the Canadian government to build on the success of existing gun control legislation by passing laws to ban automatic and semi-automatic rifles and to make the requirements for obtaining a firearms acquisition certificate more stringent. The government has moved to implement these ideas.

Gun control returned to the public agenda in 1994. As a result, CFUW members reiterated and refined their support of gun control at the annual general meeting in Winnipeg. They also voted to support regulation of the sale of ammunition.

CFUW's newest resolution supports further limitation on the use and possession of guns. Our members are lobbying local members of Parliament on the firearms act, Bill C-68. We encourage the justice and legal affairs committee to pass Bill C-68 without major amendments (Meeting No. 141:8).

In their presentation, the Canadian Federation of University Women focused on the American right-to-bear-arms argument and contrasted this with the intention of the law in Canada. Thus, by asserting that "easy access to firearms contributes to the increase in violence in society", one shifts the focus of the rhetoric to a public safety approach. Further, such a statement supports the equation utilized by the Coalition for Gun Control that more guns equals more deaths - or, in a later statement, that "fewer guns mean safer households" (Meeting No. 141:11). In this manner, guns are seen as dangerous object themselves, and access to firearms should therefore be severely limited.

In framing the issues, the CFUW, as a professional organization, takes a slightly different perspective than the domestic violence organizations, in stating that “violence is a public health and safety issue.” What it has in common with the domestic violence organizations is that the issue is couched in terms of violence and safety, albeit with a public health component. In terms of their presentation, though, the CFUW is not as focused on domestic violence as some of the other groups, and addresses issues such as arming for self protection, which are not even broached by most of the other women’s groups. In addition, in citing sources of support for the legislation, the CFUW lists a number of public health and medical organizations (i.e., Quebec Association on Suicide, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Suicide and the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians).

Further, the CFUW adopts another line of rhetoric popular among the public health professionals, that is, the costs of firearm injuries:

Violence due to firearms is not just a result of criminal activity. It’s not just a concern of the courts. It’s a public health concern and a safety concern in Canadian homes. The costs in lives, disability and health care dollars must be part of the debate on gun control (Meeting No. 141:10).

Finally, the CFUW invoked the “American-threat” rhetoric, as also articulated by a number of other groups, to assert that unless Canada were to take a firm stand against the proliferation of firearms, that we would be following in the path of the violent United States, “We would like to see Canada safer than what we would term a dangerous urban United States (Meeting No. 141:10).

In terms of policy conclusions, the CFUW strongly urged that the legislation be passed as proposed. Although they did not enter into great detail during their

presentation, it is clear that they supported the entire legislative package. Of the four main components in the legislation, they address licencing, registration and enhanced penalties for firearm crimes.

In closing, CHUW urges the federal government to work closely with provincial and territorial governments to improve gun control legislation and to strictly enforce existing regulations. It is vital that C-68 be passed and implemented as proposed (Meeting No. 141:11).

### **iii.ii. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN AND THE LAW**

On September 19, 1995, Lisa Addario, Acting Director of Legislation and Law Reform, of the National Association of Women and the Law made a presentation to the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs:

The National Association of Woman and the Law is a national, non-profit organization which advocates for gender equality under the law. Our members are lawyers, academics, students and others from a variety of experiences, but all of whom share a commitment to gender equality (Issue No. 51:6).

They continued, noting their “expert” status not only in the realm of gun control, but in numerous issues related to women and their safety. This helps to establish their credibility.

Over the last 20 years, NAWL (National Association of Women and the Law) has appeared before parliamentary and Senate committees on a variety of provisions in the Criminal Code, including the last gun control bill, sexual assault provisions, child pornography provisions, and, most recently, provisions dealing with criminal harassment; what we have come to know as “anti-stalking” legislation (Issue No. 51:6).

In addition, they further establish legitimacy by linking themselves with other high-profile women’s organizations:

The National Association of Women and the Law is also a member of the national Action Committee on the Status of Women and the National Council of Women of Canada... (Issue No. 51:6).

Dani Ann Robichaud, member of the National Steering Committee of the National Association of Women and the Law continued:

.....we support this bill...this bill represents an important component of the strategy to fight violence against women... (Issue No. 51:7).

In their presentation before the Senate Committee, The NAWL focused extensively on the pervasiveness of domestic violence in Canadian society:

I am sure you are all aware of the hideous and pervasive problem of violence against women in our society. Over the last two decades, the Canadian consciousness has been raised significantly about the extent to which women live with violence in their lives, and live with the fear of violence (Issue No. 51:6).

The National Association of Women and the Law also highlighted the extent to which the line between criminals and law-abiding citizens is blurred when it comes to domestic violence and gun control laws, “women have more to fear from the men they know than the stranger on the street...” (Issue No. 51:7).

Making a direct link to the lethality of firearms and the inherent dangerousness of these weapons in such incidents, they continued:

...as troubling as this information is, it is important to realize that death need not be the result of such assaults. What we do know is that when domestic assault occurs, the assault is 12 times more likely to end in death if a firearm is present during the assault (Issue No. 51:7).

Linking back to the power issue, one of their strongest statements, similar to other groups examined, questions the very basis of the power relationship between men and women:

Violence is one particularly nasty and demoralizing dimension of the power and balance which women experience on a daily basis, and represents one of the most serious and pernicious obstacles to women's quest for equality (Issue No. 51:7).

The NAWL further articulates its interest in gun control as being only one of a number of prevention strategies that will help promote the safety of women:

We see this bill as a component to in the strategy to fight violence against women. We do not see it as a total solution, but we see it as one important aspect (Issue No. 51:15).

Although the NAWL focused on many legal issues, they also made it very clear that they supported the Bill as a whole, in terms of policy conclusions. With regard to the four main components, they paid particular attention to the licencing and registration components, "The features of this bill, primarily registration and licencing, will provide the police with necessary information to effectively diffuse domestic violence altercations..." (Issue No. 51:7).

### **iii.iii. FEDERATION OF WOMEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS OF ONTARIO**

This organization was represented by Sheryl Hoshizaki, who presented to the Senate Committee on September 26, 1995:

I am the President of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, one of five teaching organization in Ontario. We represent 41,000 women who teach in the elementary public school system (Issue No. 56:58).

She begins by reminding the audience of the important role of teacher's in Canadian society and their special place in the lives of our children, and therefore in building and maintaining our communities:

We are not experts on gun control legislation. I am here to lend a voice because as teachers and as women, we believe we have important things to say in support of gun control. We believe in this legislation because we are part of the community and we recognize we have a responsibility within the context of communities (Issue No. 56:58).

The teachers' interest in gun control is then linked to their own anti-violence initiative, in order to illustrate that their involvement is part of a larger campaign to reduce violence.

We are an organization that has traditionally cared, not only about public education, but the link of children's learning and the context in which they live. Our federation launched a major anti-violence campaign in the province several years ago. The purpose was to organize and work with communities for local strategies to create more peaceful communities. We addressed areas such as violence in the media, family violence and certainly the impact of violent toys. These groups continue today.... (Issue No. 56: 58-59).

The Federation of Women Teachers Association of Ontario offered a typifying example within moments of beginning their presentation. Such examples on their own are often meant to evoke an emotional reaction, and to illustrate real-life examples of the social problem. The following account (by Sheryl Hoshizaki), with a particular focus on the child's perception, is particularly moving, and is meant to illustrate that this problem is very close to home, as it is a personal experience of the presenter.

I was a principal in Dryden, Ontario. During my tenure, I was approached by a boy who asked if I owned Hoshizaki house...in Dryden we have a crisis centre called Hoshizaki House, partly because my mother worked to establish it.

He said to me that he was in Hoshizaki House. He went on to tell a tale of how he had fled his father, who had a gun, during the night. He felt very free in being able to tell me this information because he linked my name to the home. I tell this story to illustrate the definite link between our children's lives and what occurs in schools (Issue No. 56:59).

Even at a young age, the teachers outlined how children learn about power and control. Boys grow up to become men, and their early socialization will have an impact on their lives as adults. They suggest that school-yard bullying or games of control turn more serious as these children mature – implying that firearms are the ultimate embodiment of power:

Children grow up in a world of violence where power and control rules and will learn that it is the way to solve problems. The power becomes a larger weapon as children grow older (Issue No. 56:60).

In terms of policy conclusions, the Federation of Women's Teachers of Ontario strongly supported the legislation as a whole. They also address each of the four major components in their presentation:

Our organization has growing concerns. Our voices have been added to millions of Canadians in support of strong sanctions in the case of criminal misuse of firearms and a ban on most handguns, replica firearms and all assault weapons. We believe in strict enforcement and severe penalties in relation to the smuggling of firearms. We also support registration of all firearms, in spite of the hysteria and the exaggerated reaction against it (Issue No. 56:60).

#### **iv. OTHER GROUPS**

This final section represents a cross section of three different groups who presented before the Committees, a victims' group, an assault prevention centre and a social organization. Although at the surface level, they have very different mandates and offer different services to women, what they have in common is their concern for women

and a social-service orientation. As will be illustrated below, the positions of the three groups are closer to one another than might be expected.

**iv.i. CAVEAT (CANADIANS AGAINST VIOLENCE EVERYWHERE  
ADVOCATING ITS TERMINATION)**

On May 16, 1995, Carole Walzak, the Director of CAVEAT, presented to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs:

CAVEAT is a national grassroots charitable organization that gives a voice to victims of violence and to the public. Our mission is to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe, just and peaceful society.

Not all members of CAVEAT are primary or secondary victims. The majority of members are members of the public who are deeply concerned about the escalating violence in our society, whether in the media, at home or in the streets.

.....CAVEAT's presentation today is based on research conducted by a group of people who share a common interest in promoting public safety, through a comprehensive firearms act which will only help to reach this goal (Meeting No. 140:2).

The above statements are meant to give an overall orientation towards the organization, but also to illustrate that they claim to speak for the general public. After all, who would not be in favour of a safe, just and peaceful society. Further, the fact that CAVEAT's members are comprised largely of such concerned citizens is an attempt to frame themselves as acting only in the public interest, as opposed to being a narrowly defined interest group. CAVEAT utilizes a typifying example to illustrate the dangers of firearm crime:

In 1991, three months after the brutal death of her daughter Nina, Priscilla de Villiers appeared before the Senate Committee to make a statement about Bill C-17. We knew few details of the entire Yeo story at that time, but we were convinced that a process of certification of the class and

number of guns would be beneficial. We still believe five people might be alive today had such a system been in place..... (Meeting No. 140:2).

A particular line of rhetoric used in CAVEAT's presentation was the inherent dangerousness of guns themselves. By their very design, guns are created to fire bullets at a high rate of speed towards a certain target which makes them powerful instruments with the force to kill. The consequences for a person who is shot are serious:

There are three mechanisms in which the availability of guns increase domestic violence increase violence. Guns instigate violence. Guns facilitate violence. Guns intensify violence. It must be recognized that guns are designed to kill. The fact that guns may be used for sporting, collecting or other pursuits does not deny their inherent dangerousness.

Fatalities and traumatic injuries are listed as statistics with no attempt to assess the enormous loss to our society, our communities, and our families (Meeting No. 140:3).

CAVEAT also focuses on rebutting the sentiment of gun owners that it is owners who are the victims of this legislation. They suggest that gun owners are misguided in their suggestion that it is they, as owners, who should have the victim-status, rather than the countless women who are victimized every day.

We are deeply disturbed that all the debate over firearms legislation has centered almost exclusively on the inconvenience and the threat to the perceived civil rights of gun owners. We have hear little, if any, acknowledgement that incalculable human suffering has resulted from the use of firearms...It is time that we shift the debate from the rights of gun owners to the rights of the public to safety. In particular, domestic violence against women and children with legally owned firearms must be acknowledged (Meeting No. 140:3).

The issue of the defenceless victim is also invoked by CAVEAT, as they claim to represent the people who have been, or may one day be killed by firearms, "in the names of all victims of violence, we are pleading for support..." (Meeting No. 140:3) Further, they claim that, "the escalating number of senseless, fatal attacks on innocent, vulnerable

members of our society must be urgently addressed..." (Meeting No. 140:4) Thus, within such a claim, it is the group who is willing to speak for them (CAVEAT) that becomes the sole protector of the innocents.

Another claim asserted by CAVEAT is common among the women's groups, that is, that gun control is only part of a wider solution, "Bill C-68 is the first step in establishing a process: comprehensive firearms control, which will be but one albeit essential facet of a systematic violence prevention strategy" (Meeting No. 141:4)

In terms of policy conclusions, CAVEAT strongly supported all components of the Bill, particularly licencing and registration. In particular, they stated that:

Bill C-68 must include a registration and firearms certification if we are to address both the problems of criminal misuse of firearms and the unnecessary accidental and suicidal deaths and injuries associated with many types of weapons (Meeting No. 140:4).

In addition, CAVEAT was one of the few groups suggesting that the legislation did not go far enough, and that the implementation timeframe was too lengthy:

CAVEAT supports the proposed Bill C-68, although we feel that the timeframe of five years allowed for compliance is over extended. The urgency of addressing the protection of the public must be paramount (Meeting No. 140:4).

#### **iv.ii. LES CERCLES DE FERMIERES DU QUÉBEC**

Louse Lagarde, from Les cercles de fermières du Québec spoke for her organization before the Senate Committee on September 22, 1995 (translation follows):

...I represent the Association des Cercles de fermieres du Quebec. Our organization was founded 80 years ago and we currently have 46,000 members across the province. Our mission is to improve the standard of living of women and families and to pass on our cultural and artistic heritage. Our organization promotes the development and self-realization of women and safeguard(s) their interests and those of the family.

Throughout our eighty-year history, we have embraced non-violent values. This is extremely important to all our members.

We are deeply troubled by the increase in violence, so much so that for two consecutive years, we made this issue the focus of our attention. In 1991-1992, we examined violence against women and in 1992-1993, we turned our focus to domestic violence.

It was in 1991 that our members adopted the following resolution: That the federal Minister of Justice introduce tougher controls on the import into and sale of firearms in Canada (Issue No. 54:39-40).

In order to lend legitimacy to their claim and to illustrate their commitments to the values, they cite their other forms of involvement in attempting to exert influence over the public policy agenda:

In 1994, we circulated a petition calling for tougher gun controls. We collected several thousand signatures and the petition was presented to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Honourable Allan Rock.

We support the Coalition for Gun Control. We have sent out numerous letters in support of C-68. Among other things, this legislation will make it possible to bring in tough, effective and fair measures for controlling firearms in this country... (Issue no. 54:40).

Although the Cercles' presentation was very short, they did still display the rhetoric of women's groups, focusing on domestic violence. In addition, they articulated the viewpoint that guns are inherently dangerous "The presence of a firearm presents a risk in and of itself".

Finally, Les Cercles quite succinctly presented all of their main policy conclusions, addressing licencing, registration, criminal sanctions and further

strengthening firearms types. They also reinforced their support for the entire legislative package:

We support the Coalition for Gun Control. We have sent out numerous letters in support of C-68. Among other things, this legislation will make it possible to bring in tough, effective and fair measures for controlling firearms in this country... (Issue No. 54:41).

#### **iv.iii. MONTREAL ASSAULT PREVENTION CENTRE**

On September 22, 1995, Leona Heillig, Coordinator of the Montreal Assault Prevention Centre, presented before the Senate Committee:

The Montreal Assault Prevention Centre is a charitable community organization which works to reduce violence against women and children. The centre grew out of the work of two organizations, the Action Assault Prevention Program and the Child Assault Prevention Project, which was started in the United States and is used all over the world. Those two organizations have been active in Montreal since 1982.

We use innovative educational techniques to teach children, teenagers, women, the elderly, and the physically and the intellectually disabled and other vulnerable groups to recognize and to prevent aggression in their lives. We also work to develop community awareness of assault issues and a general sensitivity to survivors of assault (Issue No. 54:36).

The MAPC refers to other groups in order to lend legitimacy to their claim, and to further strengthen their own argument. When a group is able to assert that they speak with and for other groups as part of a coalition, their support base seems to be much stronger.

Like other groups that represent women and parents, we have always taken a strong stand in support of stricter gun control, control over firearms, and that is one component in a comprehensive strategy of assault prevention. We know that gun control is an important issue for Canadian women (Issue No. 36-37).

During the presentation by the Montreal Assault Prevention Centre, this group focused almost exclusively on assault prevention, particularly, arming for self-defence. They address the issue of power and the manner in which abusive husbands often exert control over their spouses, “women’s fear of violence is an important factor in limiting their freedom” (Issue No. 54:37).

The MAPC also claims that guns are inherently dangerous, and that they are more likely to be used against the person carrying them than an attacker. In addition, they also claim to rebut the alleged myth of “law abiding firearm owners” versus “criminals”:

The myth that guns are effective self-protection tools for women are based on many misconceptions. Firstly, while women are urged to carry weapons while out on the street, it is well documented that most assaults done to women are done by someone known to them, usually in her home or his home or in a car or another familiar place (Issue No. 54:38).

With regard to policy conclusions, the Montreal Assault Prevention Centre strongly supported the entire legislative package. In terms of addressing the main components in the legislation, they highlight the need for licencing and registration of firearms, along with banning handguns. In sum, they stated that:

We believe that Bill C-68 responds to the demands from women’s organizations and to the recommendations made by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women in their brief to the legislative committee in 1991. We strongly urge you to pass Bill C-68 into law (Issue No. 54:36).

#### **iv. SUMMARY**

Through this analysis, with a strong emphasis on direct quotations, I have examined the rhetoric employed by women’s groups during the debate over Canada’s new gun control legislation. Although the groups originated from different perspectives,

their orientations towards the proposed Firearms Act were remarkably similar. This examination has also highlighted the predominance of the six lines of rhetoric, and the extent to which these were invoked by the individual groups. In the same light, it is likely no coincidence that groups expressing similar interests and values echoed very similar rhetoric and focused on similar claims. In this manner, the casual observer, or the parliamentarian on a committee could not help but hear the same messages over and over again, thus reinforcing a particular way of viewing and constructing the issue at hand.

The next Chapter will synthesize the descriptive analysis and the content analysis into a final discussion relating to Best's three stages of claims-making: grounds, warrants and conclusions. Afterwards, the discussion will highlight some of the recent developments and future issues facing Canada's gun control legislation.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

After examining the rhetoric used by women's groups during the debate on Bill C-68, it is possible to return to Best's model of claims-making and to examine the manner in which these groups used a gendered discourse in an attempt to influence the policy agenda.

### **I. GROUNDS**

As discussed earlier, "grounds" are alleged facts regarding an issue; they serve as a basis on which to build ensuing discussions (Best, 1990: 25). Within the gun control debate, a number of different and competing claims regarding the "grounds" of the issue are evident.

Chapter Six illustrated how groups from differing orientations were able to take the issue of firearms legislation and frame it in a manner that suited their perspective. The grounds for any issue may be molded depending on the perspective of the group or individual who is attempting to formulate the definition of the "problem". The orientation towards firearms ranges from an individual liberty issue, to a sports issue, to a business issue and a heritage and women's safety issue.

The Ecole Polytechnique incident served as a catalyst around which women's groups were able to organize in order to push for increasing controls on firearms on behalf the more common occurrence of women suffering from domestic violence. The Montreal murders pushed the issue of violence against women into our collective memory in an unforgettable fashion. To this day, a little over ten years since the tragedy, vigils are held every year on the Anniversary of the Ecole Polytechnique tragedy, and the

day was named a National Day of Remembrance and Action for Violence Against Women (Status on Women Canada). In addition, all legislatures across the country paused for a moment of silence on December 6.

That women's groups have been successful in claims that symbolically link the École Polytechnique incident to violence against woman is quite apparent. The day of the murders, although still very much a remembrance for the fourteen women who died, has also been constructed as a national day to consider the many more women who are murdered at the hands of men each year, "We must never forget the 14 slain women, and only by remembering and working together for change will a legacy of sorrow evolve into a future of hope" (Hedy Fry, Status of Women, December 6, 1999).

In this manner, the École Polytechnique Murders serve as perhaps the most tragic example of violence against women, but the December 6 observance, when flags are flown at half-mast on Parliament Hill and women gather at night across the country, has served to link the sensational killing of fourteen women with the lesser known deaths of many more women across the country each year.

Thus, claims-makers have been quite successful in harnessing the École Polytechnique memory in order to articulate their interests and raise awareness of the more general issue of violence against women. They have not only put forth their definition of the problem, but have succeeded in shaping a large segment of the public orientation to the December 6 anniversary of the École Polytechnique.

It is in this manner that women's groups shared a common ground and addressed the House of Commons and Senate Committees on the very emotional, and also very real issue of domestic violence in Canada. In presenting a common ground in terms of the

definition of the problem, they also chose to use particular claims or “Warrants”, in asserting how the issue should be addressed.

## **II. WARRANTS**

Returning to Best’s model of claims-making, it is possible to see how “warrants” have been used in the context of violence against women, particularly in the case of firearms. Warrants are statements of values, goals, or interests which are used together with statements of fact to justify a course of action or non-action. The content analysis (Chart 10) presented a synopsis of the six most predominant warrants and their frequency among the presentations by women’s groups. The predominant lines of rhetoric were found to be:

- the impossibility of separating criminals from law-abiding citizens;
- the notion of women as defenceless victims;
- the concept of power;
- the notion of guns as inherently dangerous;
- the long-term implications of gun control;
- and, the assertion that gun control is only one part of a larger solution.

All of the groups framed gun control as only one part of a larger solution, nearly all highlighted the dangerousness of firearms, the long-term implications, and the law-abiding citizen versus criminal rhetoric. More than half also employed the rhetoric of the defenceless victim and power issues. In addition, some variances were noted between the four types of groups with regard to the types of rhetoric employed.

The Domestic Violence Groups were found to employ all six lines of rhetoric. The Professional groups were more likely to steer away from the emotional claims such

as the defenceless victim; the only line of rhetoric that was employed by each of the three professional groups was that of gun control being one part of a larger solution. The Coalition for Gun Control was found to closely mirror the Professional Groups in terms of the number of claims that were used. Finally, those in the “Other” category, were found to have a fairly high level of variance between the types and number of claims employed.

### **III. CONCLUSIONS**

Finally, the last stage of Best’s model addresses “conclusions”. This is where implications that have been given specific grounds and warrants and translated into proposals about what might or should be done, who has responsibility for doing so, and the details of such a solution. Although the focus of this paper is on the rhetoric and claims-making employed by women’s groups, and not on the final policy outcomes, a cursory examination of this stage vis-à-vis women’s groups will be conducted.

Although Best’s model highlights a number of possible conclusions, the focus of the current examination is on the legislative process. Best sets out four areas of conclusions: public education/awareness, preventive action, social control policies and enforcement strategies, and lastly the need to deal with underlying or root problems. Specifically, this paper is concerned with the policy responses of social control policies. This is not to say that these areas are mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the legislation does attempt to be preventative in nature, trying to stop those who are unfit from possessing firearms. Similarly, the issue of violence against women has very much been on the public agenda, and there has been a corresponding increase in awareness.

Although women's groups, and others supporting the policy may have hoped that the other objectives might be met, the main vehicle through which they hoped to accomplish this was through the legislation and social control policies. In this sense, awareness and prevention would flow from the legislation, but in their view, the legislation was essential to any potential conclusion.

Obviously, within the context of this examination, the responsibility for implementing gun control legislation would fall within the jurisdiction of the federal government. This is not to say that any recommendations dealing with firearms or gun control legislation would be limited to the government, but merely that within the legislative context, the parameters are limited. Indeed, some groups may have drawn other conclusions; for example, some domestic violence organizations have internal policies dealing with how they protect women in cases of domestic violence where a firearm is involved, including asking standard questions about the availability of a firearm in the home.

Although it is not the intent of this paper to make any final statements about the success of women's groups, it is possible to objectively examine their suggested policy positions, and the extent to which their positions were incorporated into the *Firearms Act* as it was passed. The Chart 11 highlights the four main components of the legislation and the support of these provisions by women's groups. All of the women's groups supported Bill C-68 in its entirety, although some of them did not make specific reference to each component within their presentation (as is indicated on the chart). Only specific references were coded as positive or negative, none of the women's groups, however, expressed opposition to any component of the legislation.

More to the point, it is worth noting that there were a large number of groups, such as the National Firearms Association and other hunting groups, who were specifically against the universal registration component, and who managed to have it taken out of the 1991 legislation. All of the main provisions remained and passed both in the House of Commons and in the Senate – any changes were minor (i.e., including a minor penalty for inadvertently neglecting to register firearms).

Looking at the policy positions, it is quite obvious that women's groups strongly supported Bill C-68 and urged the government to pass the legislation as it was presented. The only areas that are left blank in Chart 11 reflect where the individual groups did not mention a particular provision, but not that they were not supportive of it. In fact, as was outlined earlier, they all made it very clear that they supported the legislation in its entirety.

It is not the intent of this paper to evaluate the success of the various groups in having their claims answered in the policy process, but at a cursory level, a comparison between the positions of the groups who opposed the legislation and the positions of women's groups does suggest that those who supported the main components of the legislation would have been more satisfied with the outcome than those opposing the legislation. The Firearms Act was passed with all of these main components included in the legislation.

**CHART 11**  
**POLICY POSITIONS: WOMEN'S GROUPS**

<b>Group</b>	<b>C-68</b>	<b>Licencing</b>	<b>Registration</b>	<b>Criminal Penalties</b>	<b>Restrictions on Firearm-Type</b>	<b>Total Components Mentioned</b>
<b>Coalition for Gun Control</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Alberta Council of Womens Shelters</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>B.C. Institute on Family Violence</b>	+	+	+			3
<b>Provincial Association of Transition Homes</b>	+	+	+	+		4
<b>YWCA</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Canadian Federation of University Women</b>	+	+	+	+		4
<b>National Association of Women and the Law</b>	+	+	+			3
<b>Federation of Women's Teachers Associations Ontario</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>CAVEAT</b>	+	+	+	+		4
<b>Les Cercles des fermières du Québec</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Montreal Assault Prevention Centre</b>	+	+	+	+	+	5
<b>Total Support</b>	11	11	11	9	6	

#### **IV. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE ISSUES**

The passage of the *Firearms Act* has not been without controversy or complications. In fact, even as final edits are being made to this paper, the main headline of the Ottawa Citizen reads, "Gun Registry is Millions Over Budget" (April 20, 2000). It reports that the yearly cost of the firearm registration system is almost ten times higher than originally estimated. Between December 1998 and February 2000, the Canadian Firearms Centre had issued 142,324 licences, with 270,000 FAC's still valid. Out of an estimated three million gun owners, there are obviously still many people yet to be licenced.

In addition, in October 1999, two national police organizations (Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and Canadian Police Association) publicly questioned the registration system by putting their support of the *Firearms Act* to association votes at national conventions. In a country where support for the police is highest of all industrial countries, this had the potential to signal more serious concerns to the public (International Crime Victimization Survey, 1996). Their support was upheld both times, but the Canadian Police Association also voted to ask the Auditor General to conduct a review of the viability of the system. They stated that they originally supported the firearms legislation on the basis of three main conditions, and that they want to ensure that they are still being met.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> These conditions include: that the registration system does not take money away from police resources, that it not result in fewer front-line officers on the streets, and that the information collected be of use and available to officers.

In 1996 the province of Alberta filed a Reference to seek a judicial opinion of the constitutionality of the *Firearms Act*. The Alberta Court of Appeal was asked to address the following questions:

2(1) Do the licensing provisions, insofar as they relate to an ordinary firearm, constitute an infringement of the jurisdiction of the Legislature of Alberta with respect to the regulation of property and civil rights pursuant to s. 92(13) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*?

2(2) If the answer to the question posed in subsection (1) is "yes", are the licensing provisions *ultra vires* the Parliament of Canada insofar as they regulate the possession or ownership of an ordinary firearm?

3(1) Do the registration provisions, as they relate to an ordinary firearm, constitute an infringement of the jurisdiction of the Legislature of Alberta with respect to the regulation of property and civil rights pursuant to s. 92(13) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*?

3(2) If the answer to the question posed in subsection (1) is "yes", are the registration provisions *ultra vires* the Parliament of Canada insofar as they require registration of an ordinary firearm?<sup>10</sup>

On September 29, 1998 the Alberta Court of Appeal released its decision in a three to two decision in favour of the federal government. Chief Justice Fraser, Madam Justice Hetherington, and Mr. Justice Berger, in three separate opinions, advised that the legislation is valid under the federal government's criminal law power. Chief Justice Fraser wrote:

...I agree with Canada that the licensing and registration provisions are inextricably intertwined and comprehensively connected with meeting legitimate public safety concerns associated with all firearms, including ordinary firearms [para197]... with these latest measures, Parliament has sought to balance public safety concerns against the legitimate use of ordinary firearms for safety and sustenance concerns as well as hunting... This is not regulation for regulation's sake but regulation for safety's sake and the federal government is not controlling ordinary firearms as property but as dangerous weapons [para212].

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<sup>10</sup> In the Matter of section 27(1) of the *Judicature Act*, R.S.A. 1980, chapter J-1 and in the Matter of a reference by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the Court of Appeal of Alberta for hearing and consideration of the questions set out in Order in Council 461/96 respecting the *Firearms Act*, S.C. 1995 chapter 39. (1998) A.J. No. 1028. Docket: 9602-0497-AC.

In the dissenting opinion, Justice Conrad and Justice Irving indicated that the law was an infringement on provincial powers and as a result was unconstitutional. Justice Conrad argued that the legislation criminalized “law-abiding gun owners” and that the federal government does not recognize the benefits of firearm ownership. Justice Conrad writes:

Firearms are essential for survival in many parts of Canada, where hunting is necessary to provide food or protection from predators. Guns provide a means of defence [para469].

The practical effect of the Firearms Act is to turn today’s law-abiding gun owners into tomorrow’s criminal offenders for the mere failure to hold a registration certificate or hold a licence which says that they can do that which they been doing legally and safely in the past [para521].

The decision was appealed to the Supreme Court Challenge of Canada, and arguments were heard on February 21 and 22, 2000 (Background Information: About the Supreme Court Challenge Re: Firearms Act, Department of Justice). In a decision released on June 15, 2000, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld the constitutionality of the *Firearms Act*, stating that the licensing of firearm owners and universal registration are within the jurisdiction of the federal government. In the unanimous judgement, the court stated:

The *Firearms Act* constitutes a valid exercise of Parliament's jurisdiction over criminal law. The Act in "pith and substance" is directed to enhancing public safety by controlling access to firearms. Its purpose is to deter the misuse of firearms, control those given access to guns, and control specific types of weapons...The purpose of the *Firearms Act* conforms with the historical public safety focus of all gun control laws. The changes introduced by the Act represent a limited expansion of the pre-existing gun control legislation. The effects of the Act also suggest that its essence is the promotion of public safety.

...The *Firearms Act* possesses all three criteria required for a criminal law. Gun control has traditionally been considered valid criminal law because guns are dangerous and pose a risk to public safety...

...The Act's complexity does not necessarily detract from its criminal nature... Parliament's intention was not to regulate property, but to ensure that only those who prove themselves qualified to hold a licence are

permitted to possess firearms of any sort. Finally, Parliament may use indirect means to further the end of public safety...

...While ordinary guns are often used for lawful purposes, they are also used for crime and suicide, and cause accidental death and injury. Their control accordingly falls within the criminal law power...

...The apprehensions of northern, rural and aboriginal Canadians that this law does not address their particular needs do not go to the question of Parliament's jurisdiction to enact the law. The cost of the program and the efficacy of the law, or lack thereof, are equally irrelevant to Parliament's ability to enact it under the division of powers analysis. Within its constitutional sphere, Parliament is the judge of whether a measure is likely to achieve its intended purpose.

(Reference Re Firearms Act (Can.), 2000 SCC 31)

Chart 12 illustrates that even once legislation is passed, and one might assume the policy process complete, claims-making continues. The Supreme Court heard the same line of arguments as were put forth in the House of Commons, sometimes using the exact same wording. The claims-making continues, as the process continues to evolve. In short, what this paper has served to illustrate is the number of interests involved in any policy process, and the importance of rhetoric in articulating these interests.

**CHART 12****PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE SUPREME COURT CHALLENGE**

<b>Parties Supporting the Firearms Act</b>	<b>Parties Opposing the Firearms Act</b>
The Government of Canada	Province of Alberta (Appellant)
The Coalition for Gun Control	Province of Ontario
The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police	Province of Manitoba
City of Toronto	Province of Saskatchewan
City of Montreal	Northwest Territories
City of Winnipeg	Yukon Territory
The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters	Province of New Brunswick
L'Association Pour la Santé Publique de Québec Inc.	Province of Nova Scotia
CAVEAT	The Shooting Federation of Canada
La Fondation des victimes de 6 Décembre contre la violence	Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
The Canadian Association for Adolescent Health	Coalition of Responsible Firearms Owners and Sportsmen
The Canadian Paediatric Society	Law-Abiding Unregistered Firearms Association

In particular, with respect to women's groups, the analysis found that they often assumed the same type of approach and invoked similar lines of rhetoric towards the proposed gun legislation, even though their general orientations to women differed (encompassing a single-issue gun control group, domestic violence organizations, victims groups, and professional and social organizations). In essence, for women's groups, the Ecole Polytechnique murders and the subsequent two rounds of legislation offered a "sounding board" upon which to have their common claims heard and legitimated. The issue of domestic violence, although less sensational, served as the common "ground" for the women's groups, who offered different approaches to the issues, but nonetheless presented a common theme in terms of their definition of the problem. Thus, the gendered discourse of violence against woman played a key role in the rhetoric of women's groups.

Although it would seem that women's groups have had the majority of their demands met in the implementation of the *Firearms Act*, one might suggest that without sustained support and activity, the legislation might become vulnerable, particularly as some of the operational obstacles become increasingly evident. In addition, although the Liberal Party is still supportive of the firearms legislation, both the Reform Party and the Conservative Party have voted to repeal the legislation should they form the next government. Though the Liberals still demand a majority of public support in the polls, it is likely that at some point in the future another political party, who is not as supportive of gun control, may form the government. Thus, without sustained activity, it is difficult to ascertain if the victory achieved in the passage of the *Firearms Act* will be permanent.

Howard Becker stated that once moral entrepreneurs have completed their work, they often find a way of earning a livelihood out of it or they may proceed to a new crusade. "When a man has been successful in the enterprise of getting a new rule

established—when he has found, so to speak, the Grail—he is out of a job” (Becker, 1963, 153). This has been the case with two of the major figures in the Canadian gun control crusade. Wendy Cukier of the Coalition for Gun Control has moved on to become increasingly involved in the international firearm control arena, although still involved with the Coalition for Gun Control. Similarly, Heidi Rathjen currently is employed as a strategist for an anti-tobacco coalition (Rathjen, 1999: back jacket flap).

As stated by Wendy Cukier, women’s groups have contributed in making significant progress in the area of Canadian firearm control laws, but without a sustained level of cohesion and activity, particularly in the face of an organized opposition, the future of firearm control laws cannot be taken for granted. Ten years after the École Polytechnique incident and two major firearm control initiatives, the main players are still involved, and the rhetoric has not changed:

The Montreal massacre was a starting point of a 10 year struggle for effective gun control in Canada. While we have made progress, a number of challenges remain. With the progressive tightening of laws over the last ten years, there have been significant declines in gun related death and crime... And we have won one round in court...

But after 10 years, the gun lobby is relentless. Even though the experts in crime prevention from every corner of the country insist that we need this law, and even though poll after poll shows that the vast majority of Canadians support this law, and even though this law brings Canada up to the standard established by the United Nations in 1997, the gun lobby and its allies are as active as they have ever been. And our opponents have political allies. Just over a year ago, the Reform Party, the Conservative Party and half the NDP voted to repeal the law.

...Our new law is a testament to the tenacity of the families of the victims of the Montreal massacre and indeed to all victims of gun violence. Victims, along with women’s groups, police, health care professionals and hundreds of others have worked long and hard to bring us this far. The gun lobby remains very vocal and committed to undoing what we have achieved. Canadians who value gun control must not be silent.

(Coalition for Gun Control Press Release: December 6, 1999 *Ten Years After the Massacre: Much has Changed but Much Remains the Same on Gun Control*)

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- Brief submitted by Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.* Issue No. 55: September 25, 1995.
- Brief submitted by Lakefield Arms and Para-Ordnance. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.* Issue No.53: September 21, 1995.
- Brief submitted by Les cercles des fermières du Québec. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.* Issue No. 54, September 22, 1995.
- Brief submitted by Métis National Council. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.* Issue No. 55: September 25, 1995.
- Brief submitted by National Firearms Association. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.* Meeting No. 106: April 24, 1995.
- Brief submitted by Responsible Firearms Owners of Alberta. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.* Meeting No. 123: May 8, 1995.
- Brief submitted by Saskatchewan Responsible Firearm Owners. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.* Meeting No. 123: May 8, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.* Issue No. 52: September 20, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Army Museum Halifax Citadel. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.* Meeting No. 116: May 1, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Assembly of First Nations. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.* Issue No. 55: September 25, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the B.C. Institute on Family Violence. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.* Issue No. 52: September 20, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the British North American Living Association. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.* Meeting No. 116: May 1, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canada's National Safety Council. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.* Meeting No. 112: April 27
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.* Meeting No. 133: May 11, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.* Meeting No.119: May 3, 1995.

- Brief submitted by the Canadian Association of Museums. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 50: September 18, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Association of Police Boards. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 122: May 4, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Bar Association. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 143: May 17, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Criminal Justice Association. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 139: May 15, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Federation of University Women. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 141, May 16, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Medical Association. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 133: May 11, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Olympic Shooting Team. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 50: September 18, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Police Association. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No.119: May 3, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Canadian Public Health Association. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 133: May 11, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Centre of Criminology, University of Ottawa. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 52: September 20, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 52: September 20, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Chiefs of Ontario. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 55: September 25, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Cities of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 121: May 4, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Coalition for Gun Control. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No.58: September 28, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Coalition for Gun Control. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 143: May 11, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Council of Responsible Firearms Owners of Manitoba. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 123: May 8, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Cree Regional Authority. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 56: September 26, 1995.

- Brief submitted by the Federation of Women Teacher's Associations of Ontario. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 56, September 26, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Government of Alberta. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 57: September 27, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Government of Manitoba. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 57: September 27, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Government of Prince Edward Island. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 56: September 26, 1995.
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- Brief submitted by the International Practical Shooting Confederation Canada. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 50: September 18, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the National Association of Women and the Law. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 51, September 19, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the National Crime Prevention Council. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No.142: May 16, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No.53: September 21, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Ontario Arms Collectors Association. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No.53: September 21, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 52: September 20, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No.53: September 21, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Shooting Federation of Canada. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 50: September 18, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 56: September 26, 1995.
- Brief submitted by the YWCA. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 141, May 16, 1995.
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- Evidence of Arlene A. Chapman, Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 52: September 20, 1995.
- Evidence of B.C. Institute on Family Violence. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 52: September 20, 1995.

- Evidence of Betty Bayless, Canadian Federation of University Women. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 141, May 16, 1995.
- Evidence of Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 133: May 11, 1995.
- Evidence of Canadian Federation of University Women. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 141, May 16, 1995.
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- Evidence of Carole Walzak, CAVEAT. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 140, May 16, 1995.
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- Evidence of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 55: September 25, 1995.
- Evidence of Jill Hightower, B.C. Institute on Family Violence. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 52: September 20, 1995.
- Evidence of Les cercles des fermières du Québec. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 54, September 22, 1995.

- Evidence of Lisa Addario, National Association of Women and the Law. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 51, September 19, 1995.
- Evidence of Louise Lagarde, Les cercles des fermières du Québec. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 54, September 22, 1995.
- Evidence of Metis National Council. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 55: September 25, 1995.
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- Evidence of Sandra Essex, YWCA. *Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*. Meeting No. 141, May 16, 1995.
- Evidence of Sheryl Hoshizaki, Federation of Women Teacher's Associations of Ontario. *Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs*. Issue No. 56, September 26, 1995.
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**9. APPENDIX 1A**

**WITNESS LIST - STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**APPENDIX 1A****HOUSE OF COMMONS OF CANADA  
35th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION****EVIDENCE****Standing Committee  
on****JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS****Chair: Warren Allmand****Witness List (In order of appearance):**

The Honourable Allan Rock, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

National Firearms Association:

Robert Morton;  
Linda Thom;  
David A. Tomlinson, National President.

Northwest Territories Government:

Jim Antoine, MLA  
Don Evaison, Deputy Minister  
Jeannie Marie-Jewell, MLA  
The honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Minister of Justice  
Fred E. Koe, CMA, MLA  
John Ningark, MLA  
Dennis Patterson, MLA

Excalibur Crossbow Inc.

William Troubridge, President

Royal Canadian Mounted Police:

D/Commr. R.A. Bergman, National Police Services;  
Insp M. Buisson, Officer in Charge Special Registries Branch;  
Supt Tom Egglestone, Officer in Charge Contract Policing;  
Insp R. Lanthier, RCMP Member on Firearms Control Task Force;  
Supt Doug Simpson, Officer in Charge CPIC Services;  
M. Smith, Chief Scientist - Firearms.

Revenue Canada, Customs, Excise and Taxation:

Ian Bennett, Associate Deputy Minister;  
Allan Cocksedge, Assistant Deputy Minister, Customs Border Services Branch;  
Bill Ledrew, Director-General, Enforcement.

Canada's National Safety Council:

Ethel Archard, Manager.  
Émile J. Therien, President;  
Canadian Public Health Association:

Dr. Stephen Corber, Medical Officer of Health, Ottawa-Carleton Health Department;  
Kathryn Tregunna, Senior Program Officer, National Programs.

Conférence des Régies régionales de la santé et des services sociaux:

Dr. Antoine Chapdelaine, Member of the Canadian Advisory Council on Firearms  
from 1990 to 1993, Centre de Santé  
publique de Québec.

Dr. Robert Maguire, President of the trauma prevention committee of the "Réseau  
de la Santé publique du Québec",  
Public Health Director in the Lower St. Lawrence Region;  
Florian Saint-Onge, President;

Dominion of Canada Rifle Association:

Lieutenant Colonel (ret'd) T.J.Kaulbach, Executive Director.  
Jon Kirton, Vice-President;

Canadian Federation of Agriculture:

Roger George, President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture;  
Sally Rutherford, Executive Director;  
Jack Wilkinson, President.

Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters Association:

Jim Grayston, Executive Director.

Saskatchewan Outfitters Association:

Len Romanuik, President.

Yukon Outfitters Association:

Lee Bolster, President;  
Cliff Hanna, Vice-President.

Canadian Museums Association:

Brenda Brownlee, Hamilton Military Museum;  
John G. McAvity, Executive Director.

Army Museum Halifax Citadel:

Bruce F. Ellis, Curator and Properties Review Board, Expert Examiner of Military Objects for Cultural Properties Review Board.

British North America Living History Association:

Richard Feltoe, Coordinator;  
David Webb, Historic Sites Representative.

Association des collectionneurs d'armes semi-automatiques du Québec:

J.-C. Caron.  
Georges Panagiotidis, Vice-president;  
Stephen Torino, Vice-president;

Ontario Arms Collectors' Association:

William E. Bateman, Director;  
Donald Holmes, Member and Spokesperson.  
Judith Ross, Spokesperson;

Saskatchewan Gun Collectors' Association:

Robert Henderson, Director/Editor.  
Tom Lewis, President;

From Canadian Sporting Arms & Ammunition Association:

Mark Dorricott, President;  
John Williams, Member and Spokesperson.

From Lakefield Arms:

Allan H. Taylor, President.

From Para-Ordnance Mfg. Inc.:

Thanos Polyzos, Vice-President.

Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP):

Chief Brian Ford, Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Service;

Asst. Dir. Pierre Sangollo, Service de police de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal et membre de l'Association canadienne des Chefs de Police;

Vince Westwick, General Counsel.

Canadian Police Association:

Neil Jessop, President;  
Scott Newark, Executive Director.

Province of Ontario:

Finn Nielsen, Forensic Expert.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Forensic Laboratory, Regina:

Sgt Grant Veitch, Firearms and Toolmark Examiner.

Cities of Toronto and Montreal:

Robert Côté, Councillor of the City of Montreal (absent);

Barbara Hall, Mayor of Toronto.

Canadian Association of Police Boards:

Mike Badham, Vice-President;  
Frederick Biro, Executive Director.

Council for Responsible Firearms Ownership Manitoba Inc.:

Larry Schultz, Director at large;  
Larry Tardiff, President.

Responsible Firearms Owners of Alberta:

George Duffy, Spokesperson;  
Dave Nelson, President;  
Terry Ursacki, Ph. D., Member.

Saskatchewan Responsible Firearms Owners Inc.:

John Hardy, Legal Counsel;  
Zena Putnam, Communications Director.

Responsible Firearms Owners Coalition of B.C.:

Joanne Easdown, Director of Administration;  
Jack McCollum, Treasurer.

Responsible Firearms Owners Coalition of Yukon:

Al Albers, Chairman of the Information Committee;  
Paul F. Rogan, President.

New Brunswick Firearms Alliance (NBFA):

Edmund Casey, Vice-President;  
Morell Sisk, Vice-President;

Responsible Firearms Owners of Nova Scotia:

Brian Densmore, Co-Chair;

Tony Rodgers, Co-Chair.

'Regroupement pour une gestion efficace de la possession d'armes à feu':

Taylor Buckner, Associate professor, Department of Sociology, Concordia University;

Gilbert Gour, Director;

Gordon Prieur, Counsel.

Responsible Firearm Owners of Ontario:

Jules Sobrian, President.

Members of the Legislature of the Saskatchewan:

Bill Boyd, Leader of the Opposition and MLA for Kindersley;

Dan D'Autremont, MLA for Souris-Cannington, Member, PC Caucus;

Lynda Haverstock, Leader of the Liberal Party;

Pat Lorje, MLA, Saskatoon Wildwood, Member, NDP Caucus;

Hon. Robert W. Mitchell, Q.C., Saskatchewan Minister of Justice.

Hon. Brian Evans, Q.C., Minister of Justice of Alberta.

Ministry of Justice - Yukon Territory

Jonathan Parker, Policy Analyst;

Hon. Doug Phillips, Q.C., Minister of Justice of Yukon.

Council for Yukon Indians:

Chief Birckel, Champagne & Aishihik First Nations;

Dave Joe, Legal Counsel.

Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec:

Deputy Grand Chief Kenny Blacksmith, also Chairman of the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee;

Brian Craik, Director of federal relations;

Robert Mainville, Legal Counsel;

Bill Namagoose, Director General.

International Practical Shooting Confederation of Canada

Bryan Hodges, President;

Lorne Rowe, Director, Legislative Affairs.

Shooting Federation of Canada

John Perocchio, Director;

Paul Shaw, Executive Committee Member.

Government of Manitoba

Honourable Rosemary Vodrey, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Manitoba;  
 Jim Downey, Deputy Premier and Minister of Industry;  
 Honourable Darren Praznik, Minister of Labour; and Bruce MacFarlane, Q.C.,  
 Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General.

The Canadian Medical Association,

Dr. Bruno L'Heureux, President  
 Dr. David Walters, Director

Department of Health Care and Promotion.

Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians,

Harold Fisher  
 Dr. Alan Drummond, Past President.

Association québécoise de suicidologie;

Mr. Robert Simon

The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention;  
 Dr. Robert Mishara

Coalition for Gun Control;

Wendy Cukier, President  
 Heidi Rathjen, Executive Director  
 David Cassels, Deputy Chief, Assistant Director, Edmonton Police Service; and,  
 Louise Viau, professeur de Droit, Université de Montréal, conseiller juridique.

Senior Officials from the Department of Justice  
 - RCMP  
 - Revenue Canada

R.G. Mosley - Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Justice;  
 Mr. Connolly - Department of National Revenue;  
 Inspector Buisson - RCMP;  
 Mr. Mathias - Chief Firearms Officer; British Columbia  
 Mr. Kramers - Chief Firearms Officer; Nova Scotia

Inuit Tapirisat of Canada;

Mr. David Gladders, Executive Director, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada  
 Ms. Rosemarie Kuptana, President, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada

Nunavut Tungavik Incorporated;

Mr. Alan Braidek

National Coalition of Provincial and Territorial Wildlife Federations.

Kate MacQuarrie, Prince Edward Island Wildlife Federation; Claude Gauthier,

Quebec Wildlife Federation;  
 Rick Morgan, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters; Gord Gallant, Ontario  
 Federation of Anglers and Hunters;  
 Ed Begin, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation;  
 Andy Von Busse, Alberta Fish and Game Association;  
 Gary Mauser, British Columbia Wildlife Federation.

#### Assembly of First Nations

Ovide Mercredi, National Chief;  
 Gordon Peters, Ontario Regional Chief;

#### Dene Nation

Bill Erasmus, Chief;

#### Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations

Allan Adam, Chief;

#### Métis National Council

Gerald Morin, President.

#### Canadian Criminal Justice Association

Yves Alie, co-chair of the policy review  
 Matthew Yeager, secretary, policy review committee; Marlene Koehler, committee  
 member; and,  
 Eugene Oscapella, committee member.

#### Canadians Against Violence Everywhere Advocating its Termination (CAVEAT);

Priscilla de Villiers, President;  
 Carole Walzak, Directors.

#### Victims of Violence,

Robert McNamara, Vice-President  
 Mark Hogben, Members

Concordia University in Montreal;  
 Charles Bertrand, Interim Rector and Vice-Chancellor.

#### Young Women's Community Associations (YMCA)

Sandra Essex, in charge of government relations;  
 Gael MacLeod, board member with the YWCA

#### Canadian Federation of University Women;

Betty Bayless, the chair of the legislation committee,  
 Marilyn Letts, a member of the national committee.

The National Crime Prevention Council;

Johanne Vallée, Vice-Chair;  
Antoine Chapdelaine, member of the Council.

Madam de Villiers, who is a member of the National Crime Prevention Council.

The Canadian Bar Association

Thomas G. Heintzman, Q.C., President;  
Sheldon E. Pinx, Q.C., vice-president, National Criminal Justice Section; and  
Joan Berkovitch, Senior Director, Legal and Governmental Affairs.

Le Barreau du Québec (The Québec Bar)

Claudette Picard, President  
Michel Marchand, Member of the Criminal Justice Committee  
Patrick Healy, Member of the Criminal Justice Committee  
Annie Chapados, Secretary of the Criminal Justice Committee.

From Canadian Labour Congress:

Dick Martin, Secretary-Treasurer.  
Parliamentarians - 5 minutes of testimony.

Senior Officials from Department of Justice

Richard Mosley, Q.C., Department of Justice Richard, assistant deputy minister of  
criminal and social policy.  
Mark Connolly, director of enforcement operations, Revenue Canada  
Inspector Mike Buisson, Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The Honourable Allan Rock, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

Department of Justice

Richard Mosley, Assistant Deputy Minister

**10.APPENDIX 1B**

**WITNESS LIST - STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL  
AFFAIRS**

**APPENDIX 1B****SENATE OF CANADA  
35th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION****Proceedings of the  
Standing Committee  
on****LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS****Chair: Gerald-A Beaudoin****Witness List (In order of appearance):**

The Honourable Allan Rock, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

Department of Justice - Senior Officials

R.G. Mosley, Q.C., Assistant Deputy Minister, Criminal and Social Policy  
James Hayes, Coordinator, Firearms Control Task Group;  
Karen Issac, Analyst, Aboriginal Consultations, Firearms Control Task Group;

The Canadian Police Association

Neil Jessop, President;  
Scott Newark, Executive Officer.

Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Brian Ford, Chief, Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police, Chair of the CACP's Law  
Amendments Committee;

Pierre Sangollo, Assistant Director, Montreal Urban Community Police Service;

David Cassels, Deputy Chief, Edmonton Police Service;

Vincent Westwick, Legal Counsel, Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police.

National Firearms Association;

Linda Thom, National Director;  
David A. Tomlinson, National President;

Canadian Public Health Association;

Robert Burr, Director of Public Affairs and Communications;  
Dr. Carolyn Pim, Deputy Medical Officer of Health, Calgary Health Services.

Canadian Sportings Arms and Ammunition Association;

Rene J.J. Roberge, Executive Director;  
 John Williams, Owner, Williams Arms;  
 Allan Taylor, President, Lakefield Arms;  
 John Mock, General Manager, Stoeger Canada.

Le Barreau du Quebec (Quebec Bar);

Michel Marchand, Criminologist and member, Standing Committee on Criminal Law;  
 Professor Patrick Healy, member, Standing Committee on Criminal Law.

International Practical Shooting Confederation Canada;

Bryan R. Hodges, Regional Director;  
 F.W. Lorne Rowe, Director, Legislative Affairs.

Shooting Federation of Canada;

John L. Perocchio, Director of Public Affairs.

Dominion of Canada Rifle Association;

J.G. Kirton, Vice-President.

National Association of Women and the Law;

Lisa Addario, Acting Director of Legislation and Law Reform;  
 Dani Ann Robichaud, member, National Steering Committee.

National Crime Prevention Council;

Professor Ross Hastings.

Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention;

Dr. Brian L. Mishara, Past President.

Association quebecoise de suicidologie;

Robert Simon, Vice-President.

National Coalition of Provincial and Territorial Wildlife Federations;

Rick Morgan, Spokesperson, Executive Vice-President, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters;

Claude Gauthier, Vice-President, Federation quebecoise de la faune;

Gord Gallant, Land Use Specialist, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters;

New Brunswick Firearms Alliance;

Gerald Calhoun, President;

Frank H. Ryder, Consultant.

Responsible Firearms Owners of Nova Scotia;

Tony Rodgers, Co-Chair.

Federation quebecoise de tir;

Gilbert Gour, President;  
Gordon Prieur, Lawyer.

Responsible Firearms Owners of Ontario;

Dr. Jules Sobrian, President.

Responsible Firearms Owners of Alberta;

George Duffy, Spokesman.

Saskatchewan Responsible Firearms Owners;

John Hardy, Lawyer.

Council for Responsible Firearms Ownership Manitoba Inc.;

Larry Tardiff, President.

Alberta Council of Women's Shelter;

Arlene A. Chapman, Provincial Coordinator.

B.C. Insititute on Family Violence;

Jill Hightower.

Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan (PATHS);

Virginia M. Fisher, Coordinator

City of Ottawa;

Patti Mordasewicz, Chair, Crime Prevention Council of Ottawa;  
Erik Bunkis, Executive Director, Crime Prevention Council of Ottawa;  
David Pratt, Member, Regional Police Services Board;  
Vince Westwick, Legal Counsel, Regional Police Services Board.

Canadian Criminal Justice Association;

Yves Alie, Member, Policy Review Committee;  
Arn Snyder, Member, Policy Review Committee;  
Matthew Yeager, Criminologist.

John Howard Society of Manitoba;

Graham Reddoch, Executive Director

Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto;

Professor Rosemary Gartner.

Centre of Criminology, University of Ottawa;

Professor Tom Gabor.

Honourable Robert W. Runciman, M.P.P., Solicitor General and Minister of  
Correctional Services.

Honourable Christopher Hodgson, M.P.P., Minister of Natural Resources and  
Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Honourable Noble Villeneuve, M.P.P. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural  
Affairs with responsibility for Francophone Affairs.

Excalibur Crossbow Inc.;

William Troubridge, President.

Canadian Museums;

John McAvity, Executive Director;

Barry Agnew, Senior Curator, Military History, Glenbow Museum, Calgary.

British North America Living History Association;

Richard Feltoe, Coordinator;

David Webb.

Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters;

Jim Grayston, Executive Director.

Saskatchewan Outfitters Association;

Len Romaniuk, President.

Ontario Arms Collectors' Association;

William Bateman, Director;

Dr. Judith Ross;

Edith Iwama.

Association of Semi-Automatic Firearms Collectors of Quebec Inc.;

Steve Torino, Vice-President;

George Panagiotidis, Vice-President;

Jean-Claude Caron, Director.

Canadian Federation of Agriculture;

Jack Wilkinson, President;  
 Sally Rutherford, Executive Director;  
 Roger George, President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

Victims of Violence International;

Robert McNamara, Vice-President.

CAVEAT;

Priscilla de Villiers, President;  
 Carole Walzak.

Canadian Association for Adolescent Health;

Dr. Katherine Leonard, Teen Clinic, North York General Hospital.

Clarke Institute;

Dr. Issac Sakinovski.

Montreal Assault Prevention Centre;

Leona Heiling, Coordinator;  
 Louise Viau, Lawyer and Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Montreal.

Cercles des fermieres du Quebec;

Louise Lagarde.

Chiefs of Ontario;

Gord Peters, Ontario Regional Chief;  
 Doug Maracle, Grand Chief, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians.

Inuit Tapirisat of Canada;

Rosemarie Kuptana, President;  
 Mary Sillett, Vice-President;  
 Wendy Moss, Advisor;  
 Jose Kusugak, President, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.;  
 Joey Amos, Inuvialut Game Council;  
 Zebeedee Nungak, President, Makivik Corporation;  
 Johnny Watt, Makivik Corporation;  
 George Koneak, Makivik Corporation.

Martha Flaherty, President, Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association.

Wendy Moss, Advisor, Inuit Tapirsat of Canada.

Metis National Council;

Gerald Morin, President;

Clem Chartier.

Assembly of First Nations;

Ovide Mercredi, National Chief;  
 Brian Davey, Deputy Grand Chief, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation;  
 Chief Bernie Meneen, TallCree First Nation, Alberta;  
 Blaine Favel, Grand Chief, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations;  
 Ernest Crowe, Elder, Member, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, World War II Veteran.

Cree Regional Authority, Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec;

Matthew Coon Come, Grand Chief;  
 Bill Namagoose, Executive Director, Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec;  
 Robert Mainville, Legal Advisor;  
 Rick Cuciurean, Special Projects Co-ordinator, Cree Trapper's Association Cris.

Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs;

Chief Saul Terry, President;  
 Ardith Walkem, Articling Student in Law.

Government of Prince Edward Island;

Honourable Alan Buchana, M.L.A., Minister of Provincial Affairs and Attorney General;  
 Eric Goodwin, Chief Provincial Firearms Officer.

Conference des regies regionales de la sante et des services sociaux du Quebec;

Florian St-Onge, President;

Robert Maguire, Director, Public Health of Bas St-Laurent;

Pierre Maurice, Coordinator, "Equipe secure dans les milieux de vie", Public Health Centre du Quebec.

YWCA of Canada;

Gael MacLeod, Member, Board of Directors, Calgary YWCA.

Federation of Women Teachers' Association of Ontario;

Sheryl Hoshizaki, President.

Honourable Brian Evans, Q.C., M.L.A., Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Government of Alberta.

Honourable Rosemary Vodrey, M.L.A., Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Government of Manitoba.

Honourable Robert W. Mitchell, Q.C., M.L.A., Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Government of Saskatchewan.

Honourable Doug Phillips, Minister of Justice, Government of Yukon.

Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, M.L.A., Minister of Justice, Government of Northwest Territories.

Coalition for Gun Control

Wendy Cukier, President;  
Heidi Rathjen, Executive Director;  
David Cassels, Deputy Chief, Edmonton Police Force;  
Dr. Richard Stanwick, Medical Health Officer, Capital Regional District, Victoria, British Columbia.

Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians;

Dr. Alan Drummond;  
Dr. Harold Fisher.

The City of Montreal;

Robert Cote, Associate Councillor and Montreal Mediator.

Gail Dobney, Lawyer (Crown Attorney from Ontario - opinions are her own and not that of an association or organization).

Osgoode Hall Law School, York University

Professor Allan Hutchinson, Associate Dean.

Dalhousie University

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Professor of Law; Aboriginal Scholar, University of Saskatchewan; Barrister and Solicitor, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan Bars.

University of Saskatchewan Law School;

Professor T.L. Quigley.

Osgoode Hall Law School, York University;

Professor Peter Hogg;

Ian Binnie, Lawyer (now a Canada Supreme Court Judge).

Office of the Privacy Commissioner;

Bruce Phillips, Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

Holly Harris, Legal Advisor.

National Inuit Youth Council;

Moses Aupaluktuq, President;

Jimi Onalik, Youth Delegate.

Honourable Allan Rock, P.C., M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney General of  
Canada.

Department of Justice;

Richard G. Mosley, Q.C., Assistant Deputy Minister, Criminal and Social Policy.

**11.APPENDIX 2**

**List of Coalition for Gun Control Endorsers**

# Coalition for Gun Control

P.O. Box 395, Station D, Toronto ON M6P 3J9, tel & fax: 416-604-0205  
4835 Christophe-Colomb, Montreal Qc H2J 3G8, tel: 514-528-2358, fax: 514-528-2435

## POSITION:

### Overview:

Introduce legislation to include:

- possession permits which are periodically renewed
- a cost-effective system to register all guns
- a ban on assault weapons and large capacity magazines
- controls on the sale of ammunition
- tougher restrictions on handguns.

### Related issues:

- strict safe storage requirements
- education countering the romance of guns and the myth of arming for self protection
- ban on replica firearms
- measures to reduce the illegal importation of guns
- effective implementation of the law (police discretion)
- deterrence and prevention in the justice system.

## ENDORERS OF THE POSITION OF THE COALITION (Mai 1995)

### NATIONAL

- Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Canadian Bar Association
- Canadian Association of Police Boards
- Canadian Public Health Association
- Trauma Association of Canada
- Canadian Criminal Justice Association
- Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians
- Canada Safety Council

- B'nai Brith Women of Canada
- Canadians Against Violence Everywhere Advocating its Termination

### (CAVEAT)

- Canada Auto Workers' Union
- Canadian Teacher's Federation
- Canadian Jewish Congress
- Canadian Union of Public Employees
- Church Council on Justice and Corrections
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
- Humanist Association of Canada
- Mennonite Central Committee
- National Union of Public and General Employees
- Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada
- Quaker Committee on Jails and Justice
- United Church of Canada
- Victims of Violence International

### POLICE

#### (Provincial:)

- Manitoba Police Association
- Nova Scotia Association of Chiefs of Police
- Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police
- Ontario Senior Officer's Association
- Quebec Association of Police and Fire Chiefs

#### (Regional:)

- Belleville Police Services Board
- Brandon Police Service
- Brantford Police Services Board
- Belleville Police Services Board
- Calgary Police Service
- Delta Police Services Board
- District 54 du Service de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal
- Edmonton Police Service
- Gloucester Police Service
- Halton Police Services Board
- Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police
- Hamilton-Wentworth Police Services Board
- Hawkesbury Police Services Board
- International Police Association, Régime 7 Montréal
- Kanata Police Services Board
- London Police Services Board
- Metropolitan Toronto Police Services Board
- Montreal Urban Community Police Brotherhood
- Montreal Urban Community Police Service
- Moose Jaw Board of Police Commissioners
- Nepean Police Services
- New Westminster Police
- Niagara Police Services Board
- Ottawa Police Services Board
- Peel Regional Police Association
- Peel Regional Police Senior Officer's Association
- Peel Police Services Board
- Peterborough Community Police Service
- Port Moody Police Services Board
- Samia-Clearwater Police Service Board
- Sault Ste. Marie Police Service
- Service de la sécurité publique de Trois-Rivières
- Service de Police de Québec
- Strathroy Police Services Board

- Sudbury Police Services Board
- Thunder Bay Police Services Board
- Victoria Police Board
- Waterloo Regional Police Services Board
- Winnipeg Police Service

### MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

- Anjou
- Aymer
- Baie-James
- Beaconsfield
- Beauport
- Beloeil
- Boucherville
- Brampton
- Bridgewater
- Buckingham
- Burnaby
- Cabano
- Charlemagne
- Châteauguay
- Communauté urbaine de l'Outaouais
- Cornwall
- Cumberland
- Cupar
- East York
- Esquimalt
- Tobicoke
- Fleurimont
- Gatineau
- Gloucester
- Goderich
- Granby
- Guelph
- Hamilton
- Hamilton-Wentworth
- Hawkesbury
- Hull
- Huntington
- Joliette
- Kirkland
- Kitchener
- Lachenaie
- Lachute
- Lac-Mégantic
- L'Ancienne Lorette
- Laval
- Lévis
- L'Île Perrot
- Lindsay
- Lennoxville
- London
- Loretteville
- Lorraine
- Louiseville
- Magog
- Malartic
- Masson-Anger
- Matagami
- Mississauga
- Mont-Royal
- Montréal
- Montréal-Est
- Mont-Laurier
- Montreal Urban Community
- Mont-Tremblant
- Murdochville
- Nackawic
- Nepain
- Newcastle
- Niagara Falls
- Nicolet
- North York
- Oakville
- Oshawa
- Ottawa
- Ottawa-Carleton
- Papineau
- Port Moody
- Prévost
- Québec
- Repentigny
- Richelieu
- Richmond Hill
- Rivière-du-Loup
- Roberval
- Saint-Basile
- Sainte-Foy
- Sainte-Julie
- Saint-Félicien
- Saint-Georges
- Saint-Hyacinthe
- Saint-Joseph de Beauce
- Saint-Joseph-de-Sorel
- Saint-Laurent
- Saint-Romuald
- Sarnia
- Scarborough
- Senneterre
- Senneville
- Shawinigan-Sud
- Sherbrooke
- Shawinigan
- St. John's
- Stratford
- Sutton
- Thurso
- Toronto
- Union des municipalités du Québec
- Vaudreuil-Dorion
- Waterloo

- Westmount
- York

### HEALTH CARE

#### (Provincial:)

- Association des Services de Réhabilitation Sociale du Québec
- Association des hôpitaux du Québec
- Association pour la santé publique du Québec
- Association of Local Official Health Agencies (Ontario)
- B.C. Injury Prevention Centre
- Conférence des Régies régionales et Conseils régionaux de la Santé et des Services Sociaux du Québec
- Conseil des directrices et directeurs régionaux de santé publique du Québec
- Manitoba Child Care Association
- Ontario Public Health Association
- Ordre des Chiropraticiens du Québec
- Réseau de la santé publique du Québec, Comité de prévention des traumatismes

#### (Regional:)

- Association Canadienne de la santé mentale, Filiale de Montréal
- Calgary Health Services
- Calgary Injury Prevention Coalition
- Département de médecine préventive de l'Hôpital Saint-Luc
- Équipe de Santé publique de l'Hôpital Sainte-Justine
- Eastern Ontario Health Unit
- East York Board of Health
- Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit
- Etobicoke Public Health Department
- Halton Health Services
- Hamilton-Wentworth Health Department
- Hamilton-Wentworth Trauma Prevention Council
- Harambee Centres Canada
- Health Professionals for Nuclear Responsibility
- Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont
- Kinic Community Health Centre (Winnipeg)
- Montreal General Hospital Surgical Intensive Care/Trauma Unit
- Montreal Jewish General Hospital
- Montreal Children's Hospital
- Niagara Health Services Department
- North York Board of Health
- Ottawa Carlton Health Department
- Oxford County Board of Health
- Perth District Health Unit
- Régie régionale de la santé publique, Région Abitibi-Témiscamengne (Directeur)
- Régie régionale de la santé publique, Région de la Côte-Nord (Directeur)
- Régie régionale de la santé publique, Région Gaspésie-Iles-de-la-Madeleine (Directeur)
- Régie régionale de la santé publique, Région des Laurentides (Directeur)
- Régie régionale de la santé publique, Région de Laval (Directeur)
- Régie régionale de la santé publique, Région de Montréal-Centre
- Régie régionale de la santé publique, Région de l'Outaouais (Directeur)
- Régie régionale de la santé publique, Région de Québec
- Régie régionale de la santé publique, Région Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean

#### (Directeur)

- Royal Victoria Hospital
- Sandy Hill Community Health Centre
- Société Chiropratique de l'Estrie
- Sudbury General Hospital Trauma Program
- Toronto Board of Health
- Toronto Department of Public Health
- University of Alberta Hospitals Injury Prevention Centre
- York Board of Health
- Wellington-Dufferin Guelph Health Unit Board

### UNIVERSITIES

- Concordia University
- Ecole Polytechnique
- Lakehead University
- McGill University
- Mount Saint Vincent University
- Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
- Ryerson Polytechnic University
- Saint-Paul's University
- Université de Montréal
- Université du Québec
- Université du Québec à Montréal
- Université Laval

### BOARDS OF EDUCATION

- Brant County Board of Education
- Commission des Écoles Catholiques de Verdun
- Commission scolaire d'Aylmer
- Commission scolaire de Huntingdon
- Commission scolaire de la Chaudière-Etchemin
- Commission des Écoles Catholiques de Verdun
- Commission scolaire Jérôme-Le Royer
- Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board
- Etobicoke Board of Education
- Kent County Board of Education
- Manitoba Association of School Trustees
- Niagara South Board of Education
- Ottawa Board of Education
- Peel Board of Education
- Regina Board of Education (School Division no.4)
- Roman Catholic School Board, Labrador
- Scarborough Board of Education
- Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Public School Board
- Sudbury Board of Education
- Toronto Board of Education
- Vancouver Board of School Trustees (District no 6)
- Waterloo County Board of Education
- York Region Board of Education

### OTHER EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Alumni Council of Marianopolis College
- Association des Étudiants de Polytechnique
- Association des Diplômés de Polytechnique
- Collège Saint-Bernard
- Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec

- Etobicoke Council of Home and School Associations
- Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario
  - Gaspesia Teachers' Association
  - Montreal Teachers' Association
- Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations
- Syndicat des professeur(s) l'Université de Sherbrooke
- University of Calgary Status of Women Committee
- University of Prince Edward Island Alumni Association
- University of Prince Edward Island Student Union
- University of Toronto Graduate Students Union
- Women's Studies, John Abbott College

### CRIME & JUSTICE

- Burnaby Family Court & Youth Justice Committee
- Citizens Crime Prevention Ass. of Newfoundland & Labrador
- Conseil des églises pour la justice et la criminologie (Québec)
- Elizabeth Fry Society Mainland Nova Scotia
- Glen Abbey Community Policing Committee
- John Howard Society of Manitoba
- Manitoba Criminal Justice Association
- Montreal Assault Prevention Centre
- Toronto Safe City Committee
- TANDEM Montréal
- Willowdale Community Legal Services

### LABOUR

- Brampton-Mississauga District Labour Council
- Ottawa and District Labour Council
  - S.T.T.C.E.C. Section locale 84
- Syndicat canadien des communications de l'énergie et du Papier, section 84Q
- Syndicat des employés de Université de Montréal

### WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

- Acadia Women's Centre
- Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
- Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale
- Calgary Society for Women Plus
- Carrefour des femmes de Rosemont
- Centre d'éducation et d'action des femmes de Montréal
- Centre des femmes de Montréal
- Centre des femmes de Verdun
- Cercle des fermières St-Benoit Lâbre
- Cercles de fermières du Québec
- Cercles des dames d'Acadie
- Comité de coordination en matière de violence faites aux femmes de Prescott-Russell
- Family Transition Place (Dufferin)
- Échange entre femmes de Saint-Laurent
- Edmonton Women's Shelter
- Gender Status of Women Council
- Herspectives
- Interval House (Ottawa)
  - Maison des femmes de Bois-Francis
  - Maison des femmes de Rimouski
- Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women

- NA'AMAT Canada
- New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre
- Prince Albert Emergency Shelter for Women
- Portage Women's Shelter
- Rosewood Shelter (Midland)
- SOS Violence Conjugale
- Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre
- Voice of Women for Peace
- Women's Place, St-Catharines
- YWCA of Calgary
- YWCA of Hamilton
- YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto
- YWCA of Montréal
- YWCA of Peterborough, Victoria and Haliburton

### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Artistes pour la Paix
- Association of United Ukrainians
- Beaufort United Church
- Centre-de-la-Maurice des jeunes
- Centre for Spanish-speaking peoples
- Chalmers-Wesley United Church
- Comité Solidarité franciscaine (Québec)
- December 8th Victims Foundation against Violence
- Évêché de Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière
- Fédération de la famille Richelieu-Yamaska
- Fondation Alfred Delleire
- Franciscains (Administration provinciale)
- Going and Company Ltd.
- Golden Age Association
- Gower Street United Church
- Hamilton Conference, United Church of Canada
- Japanese Canadian Citizens of Greater Vancouver
- Kingston Operation Dismantle
- Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship
- Mile-End Citizens Committee
- North Okanagan Unitarian Fellowship
- Olivet United Church
- Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens Organizations
- Paroisse Sainte-Brigide de Montréal
- Pacijou
- Project PloughShares (Calgary)
- Simons Foundation
- Slovak Canadian Senior Club C.S.L.

**12. APPENDIX 3**

**List of YWCA Endorsers**

**WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE YWCA OF CANADA'S POSITION IN  
SUPPORT OF BILL C-68**

Acadia Women's Centre  
ACTEW  
Alberta Council of Women's Shelters  
Appleton Women's Network  
Association feminine d'education et d'action sociale  
Autigonish Women's Association  
B.C. Institute on Family Violence  
B.C. Voice of Women  
Barrie and District Rape Crisis Line  
Business and Professional Women's Club of Ottawa  
Calgary Action Committee Against Violence  
Calgary Society for Women Plus  
Calgary Status of Women Action Committee  
Canadian Federation of Business of Professional Womens Clubs  
Canadian Federation of University Women  
Canadian Research Institute on the Advancement of Women  
Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport  
Carleton University Status of Women  
Carrefour des Femmes de Rosemont  
Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Centre d'education et action des femmes de Montreal  
Centre des Femmes de Verdun  
Cercle des fermieres de St.Benoit Labre  
Cercle des femieres du Quebec  
Cercles des dames d'Acadie  
Coalition of Visible Minority Women (Ont.) Inc.  
Comite de coordination en matiere des violences aux femmes de  
Prescott-Russell  
Cranbrook Women's Resource Society  
Disabled Womens' Network Ontario  
East Prince Womens' Information Centre  
Echange entre femmes de Saint-Laurent  
Edmonton Working Women  
Edmonton Women's Shelter  
Elk Valley Family Society  
Family Transition Place (Dufferin)  
Federation of Women's Teacher's Associations of Ontario  
Feminist Alliance on New Reproductive and Genetic Technologies  
Focus for Ethnic Women, Waterloo Region  
Fort Nelson Women's Resource Centre  
Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre  
Gander Status of Women (Newfoundland)  
Golden Womens Resource Centre  
Halifax Transition House Association (Bryony House)  
Halton Women's Place  
The Halton Rape Crisis Centre  
Herpectives  
METRAC - Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children

Hope Haven Transition House  
Indo Canadian Women's Association of Edmonton  
Interval House (Ottawa)  
Issues Surrounding Sexism, Imagery and Language Task Group  
Jewish Women International of Canada  
Kelowna Women's Resource Centre  
Kingston Sexual Assault Centre  
Labrador West Status of Women Council  
Maison des femmes de Bois-Francs  
Maison des femmes de Rimouski  
Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women  
Montreal Assault Prevention Centre  
NA'MAT Canada  
National Council of Women  
National Action Committee on the Status of Women  
National Association of Women and the Law  
New Brunswick Coalition of Transition Houses  
New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women  
North Shore Women's Centre  
North Shore Crisis Services Society  
North Island Women's Services Society  
Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women  
Okanagan University College - Status of Women Committee  
Older Women's Network  
Ontario Women's Reference Group on Labour Market Issues  
Opportunity for Advancement  
Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre  
Parkland Status of Women  
Peel Women Teachers' Association  
Phoenix Rising Non-Profit Homes Inc.  
Physical Activity  
Pictou Co. Women's Centre  
Port Coquitlam Area Women's Centre Society  
Port Albert Women's Resources Society  
Portage Women's Shelter (Manitoba)  
Prescott-Russel  
Prince Albert Emergency Shelter for Women (Saskatchewan)  
Prince Edward Island Women's Network  
Prince Albert Council of Women  
Provincial Association Against Family Violence, St. John's, NF  
Provincial Association of Transition Houses of Saskatchewan (PATHS)  
Quesnel Women's Resource Centre  
Revelstoke Women's Shelter Society  
Rexdale Women's Centre  
Rosewood Shelter (Midland, Ontario)  
Saskatchewan Council of Women  
Sault Ste Marie Business and Professional Women's Club  
Sexual Assault Centre London  
Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton  
Sexual Assault Support Center

Sexual Assault Centre for Hamilton  
SOS Violence conjugale  
South Surrey / White Rock Women's Place  
Sudbury Women's Centre  
Tearmann Society for Battered Women  
The Women's Centre at University of Toronto  
The Sexual Assault Support Centre  
The Norfolk Women Teachers' Association  
The Nova Scotia Association of Women and The Law  
The Women's Action Centre Against Violence  
Times Change Women's Employment Service  
Toronto Women Teachers' Association Executive  
Toronto Women's Health Network  
Toronto Public Health Department  
University Women's Club of Vancouver  
Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre  
Voice of Women (National)  
Voice of Women for Peace  
Western's Council on Women's Issues  
Windsor Women's Incentive Centre  
Women of Halton Action Committee  
Women's Place St. Catharines  
Women's Sexual Assault Helpline  
Women's Health in Women's Hands  
Women's Sexual Assault Centre of Renfrew Co.  
Women's Health Clinic  
YWCA of Niagara Falls  
YWCA of Moncton  
YWCA of Sudbury  
YWCA of Regina  
YWCA of Cambridge  
YWCA of Kitchener-Waterloo  
YWCA of Montreal  
YWCA of Peterborough, Victoria and Haliburton  
YWCA of Hamilton  
YWCA of Calgary  
YWCA of Prince Albert  
YWCA of Saskatoon  
YWCA of Halifax  
YWCA of Toronto  
YWCA of St. Catharines  
YWCA of St. Thomas  
YWCA of Lethbridge  
YWCA of Canada  
Korean YWCA