Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia

SHURLEE SWAIN

Ladies of Toorak and elsewhere who give your balls, and At Homes, and get your elegant costumes described in the society papers, do you know that your sisters and their children are starving....It is not the spending of all that money that is wrong; it is the spending of it in the wrong way, and on the wrong persons....Stop your dances, and take better exercise by ministering to the poor.

(Melbourne Spectator, July 21, 1893).

This admonition delivered to the women of Australia's then largest city in the midst of their deepest economic depression might wrongly suggest that English patterns of philanthropy had not taken hold in the colonies. In the century following European settlement, the women of Australia did establish a distinctive pattern of philanthropy built upon inherited traditions and adapted to the unique colonial situation.* However, in the twentieth century, women's philanthropy was marginalized and provided limited access to power. The contemporary Australian welfare state was constructed in response to the perceived failure of a government-funded voluntary system. It was never broad enough to remove the need for women's philanthropy, but its domination discredited their efforts and limited their ability to bring about change. In the last

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*The Aboriginal society which Europeans had dispossessed had no concept of, or need for, philanthropy. Although women continue to play an important role within surviving Aboriginal communities, they would see their activity not as philanthropic but as simply a sharing of resources and expertise. Their experience therefore is not the subject of this article.
twenty years, the state has withdrawn and women’s philanthropy has revived, offering a legitimate platform from which women can contest state policy and practice for groups in need.

**COLONIAL CONTEXT**

The concept of philanthropy transported to Australia was a British one, born out of a class-divided society and justified by religious injunctions to care for the less fortunate. British philanthropy was at its peak when the Australian colonies were being formed. This brand of philanthropy was individualistic: the rich were expected to reach out to the poor, giving money and time to alleviate immediate need. Its emergence in New South Wales was celebrated as evidence of the truly British character of the settlement. Only twenty-five years after the arrival of the First Fleet, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge reported that even in this distant and obscure corner of the world, the British character does not degenerate; but that Englishmen, in every clime and on every shore, cease not to remember the characteristic benevolence of their native land; and which benevolence is not the least cause of her present exalted greatness (quoted in Berreen, 1994).

Six coastal settlements served as administrative centers for the colonies that became states when the Commonwealth of Australia was established in 1901. These colonies were creations of free-trade capitalism; this showed in their attitudes to poor relief, rejecting the British Poor Law in favor of (primarily) voluntary charity (Dickey, 1980, 31). The mix of state and voluntary effort in each colony in part reflected their origins. The governments of the ex-convict colonies (New South Wales, Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland) inherited an extensive institutional structure that could be put to benevolent purposes and a continuing responsibility for those transported to the colonies, while the predominantly free settlements of Victoria and South Australia had no such inheritance. But this explanation alone is insufficient. Victoria relied strongly on government-subsidized voluntary effort, South Australia developed the most centralized government relief system. New South Wales developed a strong voluntary sector; Tasmania relied on former penal institutions (see Brown, 1972).

Size is a more important factor: Victoria and New South Wales had larger, wealthier populations than other colonies. Both governments encouraged the emerging bourgeoisie to be involved in philanthropy: they would support charity work, but citizens had to form voluntary organi-
zations to get funding. However, New South Wales retained the stratified society of its convict period and developed a philanthropic network dominated by centralized organizations. Victoria, populated through gold rush immigration, developed a more level society and favored a local approach with small specialized societies (Lyons, 1994, 77).

Despite such regional differences, voluntary activity in all areas showed strong similarities. Where a need was identified, a public society was established with membership through annual subscription. Members elected the committee of management and had the right to nominate "suitable objects for relief. Government assisted with capital and maintenance, initial grants of land, and legal incorporation. By relating funding to donations, it was hoped that government support would encourage charitable habits among the general population. So successful was this approach that in most colonies the state was left with responsibility only for prisons, mental hospitals and, increasingly, a residual child welfare system (Dickey, 1980, 36–37).

The government-funded voluntary system was neither more economical nor more humane than the English system it replaced. The decision of governments to channel relief through voluntary societies removed their opportunity to have a significant say in how that relief was delivered. Yet with no alternatives to offer, colonial governments were left with little choice but to underwrite such organizations when voluntarism failed. However, although it was often the major subscriber, the government had no direct representation on the governing bodies which decided how such relief would be distributed. Philanthropy thus became more central in the Australian colonies than in the countries from which they were settled, but this philanthropy often replicated the very attitudes for which the Poor Law was condemned.

**A GENDERED ACTIVITY**

Much of the analysis of the origins and pattern of Australian philanthropy has been non-gendered. Yet once the extreme gender imbalance of the early colonial period was overcome, patterns already observed in Britain and the United States were apparent (see Windschuttle, 1982). Philanthropy "was one of the few public and highly visible activities allowed women" in the developing settlements, just as it was in other European societies (Godden, 1982, 91). As the numbers of bourgeois women suffi ciently free of domestic and child care responsibilities grew, so too did women's philanthropic activity. Philanthropy in the nineteenth century was thus largely confined to married women, generally beyond their child-rearing years.
Involvement in philanthropic work was distinctly gendered. Of the 240 people who between them occupied 628 positions on 70 Melbourne charities during the 1890s, for example, 102 were men concentrated in the high-status organizations, while the 138 women were spread throughout the system (Swain, 1985b, 104). Men dominated public giving and sat on the committees controlling high-status charities such as general hospitals. It was a privilege they guarded jealously. Replying to a proposal in 1882 to allow women to sit on the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum Board, the honorary treasurer replied “that he was totally opposed, as he considered the ladies were better in their own homes than in public institutions” (Argus, January 20, 1882). Men were managers and patrons offering name, wealth and social prestige, but rarely any great commitment of time.

Although no nineteenth-century charities had large endowments, male-controlled institutions were able to set annual subscriptions rates high and, using business and political networks, quickly build up a large subscription list. The large mercantile and shipping firms that controlled much of the colonial economy were generous contributors, which established their status as good corporate citizens and also ensured support for any of their employees who had fallen on hard times. The local branch of Dennistoun & Co for example contributed £194 over and above regular subscriptions to Melbourne charities over the period 1855–61. Of these charities only one had a female committee: the Lying-in Hospital, which received £50 towards its building fund in 1860 (Victorian Reports). Male committee members avoided direct contact with the clientele. Organizations that could not afford paid employees had little chance of attracting other than clergymen to their management committees.

The bulk of the poor, however, were female and most had needs which were not met by male-dominated institutions (Godden, 1982, 88). Colonial economies presumed a male breadwinner, and single women lived a precarious existence which became desperate if they had dependants. In most colonies it was left to philanthropic women to fill the gaps. Very few had control of substantial fortunes, but many were willing to contribute their labor and connections to establish and maintain alternative organizations. An exception is Tasmania, where Brown’s (1972) study identifies no distinctive female contribution. Certainly, the major outdoor relief functions which fell to women in the major mainland settlements were controlled by men in Tasmania. It could be that the predominance of convicts and ex-convicts in the colonial population limited women’s enthusiasm to be involved in philanthropy without male protection.

There were only 28 women of more than 250 “exceptional” donors...
(who contributed more than twice the required annual subscription) identified in a survey of early Victorian charities compiled from the annual reports of 52 charitable organizations in the Victoria Reports. Fourteen were widowed or single and gave predominantly to the more prestigious organizations managed by men; fourteen were married women who gave to women’s charities with which they were associated. Their monetary contributions were small when compared with donations their husbands had made. The most generous donor gave £195 to women’s charities over an eight-year period, while her merchant husband gave £1185, all but £175 to organizations managed by men. It was in the giving of time that women eclipsed men. Through the three strategies identified by McCarthy (1994) — assimilation, separatism, and individualism — women used the skills and power they acquired through such activities to extend their role in the public sphere locally and nationally.

In the early voluntary charities, women sat alongside men on planning committees. As the number of bourgeois women in the colonies increased, they were more likely to act alone as it became apparent that only through separatism could women gain power. Of the fifteen major public charities in Melbourne in 1887, eight excluded women from their management committee, but many of these had a ladies committee to which they could delegate “housekeeping tasks.” Women, however, had founded and/or controlled the other seven, including two hospitals and the city’s major outdoor relief society, although several of these retained “Gentlemen’s” Committees which they could consult over financial or property matters.

There were also smaller organizations founded and administered by individual women, perhaps drawing financial support from their husbands but in all other respects acting independently in a world which allowed few women such a place. The leader of Melbourne’s licensed child rescuers, Selina Sutherland, fell out with two church-based supervisory committees and decided, in 1893, that the cause would be best served if she worked alone. Establishing her non-denominational Victorian Neglected Children’s Aid Society, she became the prime authority on child rescue in the colony, dealing with more children annually than all the other denominationally based organizations combined. She focused hostility on the “men of wealth…. [the] legislators and so called leaders of society” believing them to be the real sinners. Fallen women and illegitimate children were their innocent victims, who should be effectively and compassionately relieved (Swain, 1985a).

Evangelical Christianity strongly influenced most of these women which encouraged such activity. Like Christ, charitable women were “seeking and saving the lost.” By couching their activity in religious
terms, women extended the boundaries of their accepted sphere without ever publicly challenging their accepted and subordinate role.

Although many women came to philanthropy via religion, the organizations they founded moved across Protestant denominational boundaries and mobilized women for whom religious identity was not central. The major denominations focused on building schools, and the responsibility for establishing charities was left largely to colonial elites motivated but not bound by their religious beliefs. The Protestant/Catholic boundary was harder to cross. Catholics were concentrated in the lower socio-economic classes and hence were less likely to have the resources for philanthropy. Yet their presence was essential if a charity was to escape accusations of proselytism.

Compromise was possible in elite charities where a male committee could include the local priest. It was less practical in the smaller organizations where most of the women were involved. Here the few eligible Catholic women were seldom acceptable to the Protestant majority and were left with no alternative but to develop their own organizations. The strength of the Protestant/Catholic divide in charity reflects the strength of this division in the community. Prominent women in the small Jewish community, for example, were welcomed to committees before the small number of wealthy Catholic women. While Catholic women supported schools and charities, these were staffed and controlled by religious orders imported into the colonies, and offered few opportunities beyond fundraising for lay women.

In part this divide persisted because neither Catholic nor Protestant organizations were able to transcend class boundaries. While socially prominent supporters took on the roles of patroness and president, attendance records suggest that for many it was the position rather than the work which was important. Lady Janet Clarke is a typical example. She embarked on a career as a philanthropist after marrying her wealthy employer in 1873. Her biographer lists fourteen organizations on which she held office but an examination of attendance records suggests it was her name rather than her presence which such committees valued (Morrissey, 1969, 415; Swain, 1977, 295). The bulk of the work was done by women of somewhat lower social status, who had sufficient leisure for such demanding work and who were excluded from the demanding social round that occupied the time of their social superiors. Where upper-class women gained status from giving their name and money to philanthropic organizations, middle-class women were content with the prestige their association with such women brought.

While most “ladies” had a narrow definition of philanthropy, a significant minority used their experience in charity work as a base from which...
to agitate for social reform or as a base for a public career. Most notable of these was South Australia’s Catherine Helen Spence (see Margarey, 1985). Born in Scotland, she migrated, with her family, to Australia, where she was obliged to earn an income working as a governess and later through writing. In the new colony, Spence abandoned her Presbyterian faith and joined the Unitarian church. The small South Australian branch of the church was little involved in social reform, but on a visit to England in 1865–6 Spence carried introductions to key Unitarian reformers and quickly became interested in their work, particularly because of the opportunities it offered for women to “trespass” into the world of men (Margarey, 1985, 92).

Spence found an outlet for her interest through government, establishing a committee to manage the boarding-out system for the Destitute Board. In response to criticism from this committee, the government removed all children from the Destitute Board’s control and established a State Children’s Council with a majority of women members. Spence was the Council’s chief publicist, writing its official history (Spence, 1907) and travelling widely to speak of its success. In 1897 she was appointed to the Destitute Board where she argued for programs to prevent rather than simply relieve destitution. For Spence, philanthropy provided access to the public sphere where she could work for such causes as federation, suffrage and marriage reform.

Other women who led the various colonial suffrage movements followed a similar path but spent far less time in the “charitable phase” before turning their attention to political solutions (see Allen, 1994; Bomford, 1993). Many women concentrated on social reform, particularly between 1880 and 1920, when “women of the bourgeois philanthropic or charity network” formed an alliance with “the technical experts of the professional middle class” to rationalize the domestic world, “reconstructing housewifery, motherhood, childrearing and sexuality” (Reiger, 1993). Campaigns for better housing, safer childbirth, reduced infant mortality, and sex education drew their strength from this uneasy alliance, and many of their leaders made careers from what was initially a philanthropic interest.

In the absence of a Poor Law, philanthropic women were central to the maintenance of an established order, even though they were effectively excluded from its economy (Harris, 1992, 291). They staked their claim to full citizenship on their contribution of time rather than taxes. Where other European societies were developing a welfare bureaucracy, in the Australian colonies critical decisions as to whom should be relieved and how were made by philanthropic women who appear to have felt no necessity to justify the way they worked.
It has become a commonplace to assert that women achieved this position at the expense of the people they claimed to be helping, participating in the extension of bourgeois regulation of proletarian domestic life, thus buttressing the prevailing patriarchal structure. Yet, as Spence’s biographer argues, it is unduly reductionist to dismiss these women so hastily (Margarey, 1985, 91). Nineteenth-century philanthropy could be alleviatory and oppressive at the same time. Where Kennedy (1982, 65) sees “a ritual of stigmatization and humiliation in the process of inquiry,” others see a more discerning process in which the ability of the donor to identify with the recipient was critical to the way in which aid was dispensed (see, for example, Dickey, 1980, 92; Swain, 1985b, 110–11). Nineteenth-century philanthropists were, like their clients, caught in a trap bound by the limitations of an ideological moral framework which allocated them very meager sums to distribute on a weekly basis … [W]itnessing misery of such a degree on such a scale must have caused them to become judgmental and hardened over time (O’Brien, 1988, 35).

Even this judgement is overly harsh. No charity worker would admit to helping the “undeserving,” but case records disclose that all except those in the most exclusive charities did so because practical experience forced them to see that need and merit were not always related (Swain, 1985b, 111). This apparent contradiction did not distress them as their object was to relieve poverty, not to eliminate it. Nor indeed were working-class women and children silent victims in this interaction. There is considerable evidence that they courted such philanthropic intrusion into their lives, actively negotiating with those offering assistance in order to ensure the best for their families (Van Krieken, 1991, 137–38).

Such woman-to-woman interactions existed at the junction of two discourses, one based on a common sisterhood and the other intent on preserving the distinctions of class. Yet the notion of shared sisterhood was flawed because bourgeois women sought to re-create their working-class “sisters” in their own image, constructing a notion of the good woman in opposition to the “viciousness” of the unreformed (Stansell, 1982, 219). The poor woman could be transformed into a good mother through lessons in thrift and economy, and provision of the means to augment her income, but the “fallen” women was always at risk of “falling again.” While girls in orphanages or foster homes were prepared for domestic service, their fallen sisters were trained for laundry work, a position that enabled them to earn a living without coming in direct
contact with the families of their employers (Windschuttle, 1982). For women, the primary attraction of philanthropy was that it confirmed their gentility.

The pathway to power philanthropy offered to Australian women was flawed. Patricia Harris argues that women's exercise of power was restricted to their own sphere. They worked only with those seen as social subordinates and this seldom included white males. Philanthropy gave women power but only in areas men saw as an extension of their domestic role. Harris (1992, 293, drawing on Godden, 1982, 92ff) argues that women never had authority over white males, but this was not always true. In Victoria, ladies benevolent societies administered outdoor relief. Although meant to be confined to women and children, the societies also assisted families where male wage earners were ill or unemployed. Within this area they exercised almost complete autonomy but were limited by lack of resources.

Both radicals and conservatives accepted that men should be bread-winners and believed that taking charity was a sign of weakness. Where conservatives condemned the man who begged, radicals condemned the society that drove him to beg (Scates, 1993, 46). They also condemned the women who administered relief, classing them with the men whose interests philanthropy upheld. The relief of suffering was conflated with the maintenance of the system that produced such suffering and seen as something which a just society would not support.

Stephen Garton argues that the movement of some women away from charity into social reform was indicative of a growing disillusionment with the efficacy of ameliorative relief as a solution. More telling, however, was the rise of a labor critique which argued that poverty arose from structural rather than personal failings and hence that relief was a right and should not be so grudgingly administered (Garton, 1994, 30–31). Although charity survived this ordeal, it did so with its image tarnished and was left far more vulnerable to attack. Because movements for social reform were constructed in opposition to charitable solutions, it became more difficult for women's philanthropy to encompass both endeavors.

PHILANTHROPY AND THE WELFARE STATE

The federation of Australian colonies in 1901 gave greater political power to the male-based labor movement, and its ideas dominated social policy formation in the new nation. The notion of Australia as a social laboratory was a masculinist, egalitarian one that gave primacy to the state's role in ensuring an adequate life for the working man. If the worker
could provide for his family, it was assumed there would be no need for philanthropy. The constitutional powers necessary to bring this about were delegated to the new federal legislature, but those more relevant to women (education, health, housing and child welfare) were left with the increasingly poor states. Reformist women were forced to fragment their activities between the six state legislatures, leaving the federal jurisdiction to the men (Harris, 1992, 294).

Not surprisingly, the rudimentary welfare state that emerged was highly gendered. Although means-tested old age and invalid pensions were available for both men and women, in other areas women were assumed to have male providers. Means and morals testing implicit in these new provisions are evidence of the survival of a charitable ideology into the area of state provision. Protective labor legislation served to restrict women in the workforce, while minimum wages were established sufficient to allow a man to support a wife and three children. Working women, whether or not they had dependants, received only 54 per cent of the male wage. While later legislation introduced pensions for widows and deserted wives with dependent children, these were essentially a recognition of the failure of their breadwinners to provide rather than of the status of these women as breadwinners in their own right.

It is ironic that when women achieved political citizenship, these policies dislodged them from social citizenship (Roe, 1988). They were to be the mothers of the nation their husbands and brothers would defend (Garton, 1994, 34). Unemployment relief introduced during the 1930s Depression preserved this distinction, restricting women’s eligibility on the assumption they would have a man to support them. In the Australian welfare state, Wendy Weeks argues, “Women have been wives not individual citizens…not cared for, but assigned to do the caring work for family and local community” (1993, 68).

The gendered Australian welfare state preserved a space for philanthropy, but it was no longer central; nor is it central to histories of the period which concentrate on the growth of state provision, ignoring the survival of older philanthropic forms (see Dickey, 1980, ch. 5). Women continued to dominate philanthropy, but philanthropy itself was marginalized as backward and judgmental compared with the progressive, benevolent, supposedly universalist state. Philanthropists were generally in the vanguard of opposition to social change; men effectively took that opposition into the political sphere, but women, still basically atheoretical and preoccupied with keeping services operating, were ineffective in self-defense. As fundraisers and direct service providers, they were involved in identifying needs and filling the gaps in state provision arguably on a larger scale than ever before. Indeed, the continuing suc-
cess of voluntary charity explains why the early state provision, which in retrospect appears so meager, was so widely acclaimed (O’Brien, 1988: 188).

Yet such activity was increasingly dismissed as residual. When women gained access to previously all-male committees, they still found themselves confined to subordinate roles. However, their success at integration made women-exclusive organizations anachronistic. Godden (1982, 96) relates this to the irrelevance of the separate spheres concept. Beginning in hospitals, and moving through the charitable sector, committees were forced to cede power to their professional employees. In smaller, locally based organizations, the ability of philanthropy to give access to power was diminished by isolation, loss of status and the increasing impossibility of the task. Outside welfare bureaucracies, women aiding women claimants “came face to face with their respective subordinations” (Roe, 1988, 17).

At an even more isolated level, larger numbers of wives and mothers were drawn into raising funds that underwrote the activities of charities, churches and schools. Smaller families and labor-reducing technology provided leisure time, while such small-scale organizations ensured that women were harnessed to ensure the social good without disturbing the status quo. The “benevolent” state provided all that was necessary for family life, with the women’s efforts marginalized as providing the extras (Lyons, 1993). This characterization is quite clear in state education, where the government provided funds based on enrollment, while mothers’ clubs funded the canteens, teaching aids, furnishings and “treats” which distinguished schools in middle-class areas from those in poorer regions.

The inter-war period did see the development of some trusts and foundations, but few were in female hands and those that were usually commemorated husbands and fathers with grants to high-prestige projects rather than services in what was seen as the women’s sphere. There was little of the flowering of trusts and foundations that occurred in America as families consolidated their wealth. Although the Australian middle class embraced American progressivism, they were not economically or ideologically equipped to transform their ideas into action. Neither the large fortunes nor the deep suspicion of the state that motivated US philanthropists ever developed in Australia.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This survey confirms the importance of religion as a motivating factor, but while religious systems validated such activity they did not control
or constrain it. Women were involved in philanthropy both within and
across denominational boundaries, sometimes working under clerical au-
thority but far more commonly not. In establishing non-denominational
organizations, class overshadowed gender as a unifying factor, open-
ing such organizations to upper-class Jewish women while leaving the
far more numerous Catholic women constrained within church organ-
izations which they did not control. The preeminence of evangelical
Christianity is still evident: volunteering and volunteerism are predom-
antly an Anglo-Saxon enterprise in which women of other ethnicities,
have not yet found a place.

Women's organizations have made their greatest impact on public
policy-making agendas through "maternalist" programs for women and
children, although this is more a feature of the twentieth century. In
the colonial period, men funded and controlled the major institutions
but women took responsibility for the bulk of the outdoor relief. This
brought some men, as well as large numbers of women and children,
within their control, but few women used this position to claim a voice
in the development of public policy. The issues which they considered
to be their concern included campaigns for infant life protection, pure
milk, raising of the age of consent, reduction in maternal mortality, pro-
tective labor legislation and the like, all issues which were common to
other Western democracies.

Australian non-profit organizations have always been dependent on
government funding. Although the nature of this dependence has
changed over time, it appears that the 70 to 80 per cent funding which
was common among the major organizations; in the nineteenth century
remains the standard today. Smaller organizations, though able to sur-
vive on private donations in the past, have been drawn into government
funding. However, these figures measure only monetary contributions
and take no account of the contributions of time which characterized
the smaller organizations women controlled. It was the willingness
women to perform unpaid labor that allowed for the survival of such
organizations during the expansion of the welfare state, but the invisibil-
ity of this labor increased their marginalization. Because the invaluable
work they were performing did not have to be paid for, it was easy to
deny the existence of the needs it addressed.

Such invisibility limited the degree to which philanthropy led to the
development of power structures that paralleled the political and com-
mercial structures available to men. In the nineteenth century, when
philanthropy was central to service provision, participation did give
women access to power. However, this was power over the lives of
their social inferiors rather than power over their own. Where organ-
izations were developed to co-ordinate such activity, they remained within male control and it was men who represented their causes to government. While there were women beginning to explore this path towards the end of the century, their early success in winning the vote tended to divert their energies into political networks. Where women were able to exercise power, it was more likely to be through interest or industrial groups—such as the Country Women’s Association, War Widows’ Guilds and women’s trade unions—than through those with a philanthropic base.

There is little evidence that, through their philanthropy, women were able to exercise power which they were denied in the political, legal or business spheres at the time. Most women-exclusive organizations apparently turned to male supporters to deal with business matters. Apart from a few organizations like the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women, there is little evidence of women using their position to create employment for women. Most organizations women controlled ran on small budgets, encouraging any staff they did employ to see their work primarily as an act of charity. Only male-controlled organizations had the funding to develop a hierarchical career structure for their employees. Participation in non-profit organizations continues to be highly gendered as a survey of Western Australia clearly demonstrates: “Where 75.4 per cent of the volunteers and 72.9 per cent of the paid staff involved in direct service provision were women, they represented only 42 per cent of committee members and 49.2 per cent of administrators” (Vellekoop-Baldock, 1990).

The absence of a parallel power structure may perhaps be explained by the early supremacy of a blend of the assimilationist and subsidiary models of women’s philanthropy. While in the nineteenth century there was considerable exploration of the separatist model and space too for individualism to develop, the marginalization of women’s philanthropy in the early years of the welfare state saw a move back towards an accommodation with men. Women fought to be accepted in male-dominated organizations where they were inevitably confined to “domestic” roles. Simultaneously they developed women-only organizations allied to masculine centers of power like political parties and trade unions. In order to maintain access to such sources of power, women-controlled organizations invited prominent men to join their committees. In the inter-war years, when class became the major source of social division, organizations that sought allegiance on the basis of gender were regarded with suspicion while those that brought men and women together attracted the support they needed to survive. Survival, however, extinguished the distinctiveness of women’s philanthropy and
left such organizations as a focus for class antagonism when ideology changed.

The pattern of Australian women’s philanthropy was established by the first European bourgeois women, most of whom were of English or Scottish origin, and reinforced by continuing close contact between the province and the center over the intervening period. The first goal of any group seeking to establish a philanthropic organization was to gain access to government funding under the conditions of the time. Although these conditions have changed dramatically over time, the expectation that government would fund voluntary effort is constant. The success which feminists within the bureaucracy have had in Australia can perhaps be explained within this context. As government had supported services managed by women in the past, there was an expectation that it would also subsidize the domestic violence, rape crisis and child care agencies which “second-wave” feminists were seeking to establish in the 1970s. This is not to suggest that the relationship between feminist organizations and government has been trouble-free, or that women’s services have not been underfunded when compared with those managed by and for men, but the differences have clearly not been as great as those in countries where the notion of such shared responsibility is not so well established.

It is in accessing private funding that Australian women’s organizations find themselves more markedly disadvantaged. In a nation without a strong tradition of individual giving, the bulk of such funding is collected through business and professional networks in which women continue to be underrepresented. Only when women’s marginal position in the workforce is reduced will they be able to enter such networks in equal numbers and perhaps to direct their resources to women’s philanthropic organizations more equally than today.

REFERENCES


