

# COMPARATIVE STATE FEMINISM



DOROTHY McBRIDE STETSON  
AMY G. MAZUR  
EDITORS

# COMPARATIVE STATE FEMINISM

DOROTHY McBRIDE STETSON  
AMY MAZUR

EDITORS



**SAGE Publications**

*International Educational and Professional Publisher*

Thousand Oaks London New Delhi

Copyright © 1995 by Sage Publications, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

*For information address:*



SAGE Publications, Inc.  
2455 Teller Road  
Thousand Oaks, California 91320  
E-mail: [order@sagepub.com](mailto:order@sagepub.com)

SAGE Publications Ltd.  
6 Bonhill Street  
London EC2A 4PU  
United Kingdom

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.  
M-32 Market  
Greater Kailash I  
New Delhi 110 048 India

Printed in the United States of America

## **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Main entry under title:

Comparative state feminism / edited by Dorothy McBride Stetson, Amy G. Mazur.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p. ) and index.

ISBN 0-8039-5829-3 (cloth: acid-free paper).—ISBN

0-8039-5830-7 (pbk. : acid-free paper)

1. Women—Government policy—Cross-cultural studies. 2. Feminism—Cross-cultural studies. I. Stetson, Dorothy M. II. Mazur, Amy G.

HQ1236.C62 1995

305.42—dc20

95-12280

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

95 96 97 98 99 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Sage Production Editor: Diana E. Axelsen

# COMPARATIVE STATE FEMINISM

# Abbreviations

---

These abbreviations apply to all of the chapters. Those that are not country-specific are found in the first category.

## General

<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CSW</b>	UN Commission on the Status of Women
<b>DAW</b>	UN Division for the Advancement of Women
<b>EC</b>	European Community (before 1994)
<b>EEP</b>	Equal Employment Policy for Women
<b>EU</b>	European Union (after 1994)
<b>FLS</b>	Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>IWY</b>	International Women's Year
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernment organization
<b>OECD</b>	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>UN</b>	United Nations

**Australia**

<b>ERC</b>	Expenditure Review Committee
<b>OSW</b>	Office of the Status of Women
<b>OWA</b>	Office of Women's Affairs
<b>PM&amp;C</b>	Prime Minister and Cabinet
<b>WBP</b>	Women's Budget Program
<b>WEL</b>	Women's Electoral Lobby

**Canada**

<b>CACSW</b>	Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women
<b>CEWC</b>	Committee for the Equality of Women in Canada
<b>CIDA</b>	Canadian International Development Agency
<b>IDC</b>	Interdepartmental Committee
<b>NAC</b>	National Action Committee
<b>SWC</b>	Status of Women Canada

**Denmark**

<b>DESC</b>	Danish Equal Status Council
<b>DWS</b>	Danish Women's Society
<b>WC</b>	Women's Commission

**France**

<b>CETF</b>	Comité d'Etudes et de Liaison des Problèmes du Travail Féminin
<b>CIDF</b>	Centre d'Information de Droits des Femmes
<b>CSEP</b>	Conseil Supérieur de l'Egalité Professionnelle
<b>CTF</b>	Comité du Travail Féminin
<b>DNCF</b>	Délégation Nationale à la Condition Féminine
<b>LDF</b>	Ligue du Droit des Femmes
<b>MDCFF</b>	Ministère Déléguée auprès du Premier Ministre à la Condition Féminine et à la Famille
<b>MDDF</b>	Ministère Déléguée auprès du Premier Ministre chargé des Droites de la Femme

<b>mdf</b>	Mouvement Démocratique et Féminin
<b>MDF</b>	Ministère des Droits de la Femme
<b>MEP</b>	Mission pour l'Egalité Professionnelle
<b>mlf</b>	Mouvement de la Libération des Femmes
<b>PS</b>	Parti Socialiste
<b>SDF</b>	Service des Droits des Femmes
<b>SECF</b>	Secrétariat d'Etat à la Condition Féminine
<b>SEDF</b>	Secrétaire d'Etat aux Droits des Femmes
<b>SEDFVQ</b>	Secrétariat d'Etat aux Droits des Femmes et à la Vie Quotidienne
<b>SEEF</b>	Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Emploi Féminin

### Germany

<b>CDU</b>	Christian Democratic Union
<b>CSU</b>	Christian Social Union
<b>FB</b>	Frauenbeauftragte (Women's Affairs Offices)
<b>FDP</b>	Free Democratic Party
<b>FRG</b>	Federal Republic of Germany
<b>GDR</b>	German Democratic Republic
<b>SPD</b>	Social Democratic Party
<b>UFV</b>	Unabhängiger Frauenverband (Independent Women's Association)

### Great Britain

<b>CBI</b>	Confederation of British Industry
<b>EOC</b>	Equal Opportunities Commission
<b>EPA</b>	Equal Pay Act
<b>NIEOC</b>	Northern Ireland Equal Opportunities Commission
<b>QUANGO</b>	Quasi Nongovernment Organization
<b>SDA</b>	Sex Discrimination Act
<b>TUC</b>	Trade Union Congress
<b>WNC</b>	Women's National Commission

### **Ireland**

<b>JOCWR</b>	Joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights
<b>MELR</b>	Ministry of Equality and Law Reform
<b>MSWA</b>	Ministry of State for Women's Affairs
<b>TD</b>	Teachta Dala (member of parliament)

### **Italy**

<b>ESC</b>	Equal Status Committee
<b>ESONC</b>	Equal Status and Equal Opportunity National Commission
<b>PDS</b>	Democratic Party of the Left
<b>PCI</b>	Italian Communist Party
<b>UDI</b>	Unione Donne Italiane

### **Netherlands**

<b>CCWP</b>	Cabinet Committee for Women's Policy
<b>DCE</b>	Directie Coordinatie Emancipatiebeleid (Department for the Coordination of Equality Policy)
<b>EK</b>	Emancipatiekommissie (Emancipation Commission)
<b>MVM</b>	Man-Vrouw-Maatschappij
<b>STEO</b>	Stimuleringsgroep Emancipatieonderzoek (Steering Committee for Women's Research)

### **Norway**

<b>ESC</b>	Equal Status Council
------------	----------------------

### **Poland**

<b>LK</b>	Liga Kobiet
<b>PNOW</b>	Polish National Organization of Women
<b>PUWP</b>	Polish United Workers Party
<b>USWF</b>	Undersecretary of State for Women and Family



## Spain

<b>CCPP</b>	Comisión consultiva para el seguimiento del Primer Plan para la Igualdad
<b>CR</b>	Consejo Rector
<b>IM</b>	Instituto de la Mujer
<b>PSOE</b>	Partido Socialista Obrero Español

## Sweden

<b>EOA</b>	Equal Opportunities Act
<b>JÄMO</b>	Jämställdhetsombudsmannen (Equality Ombudsman)
<b>SEOC</b>	Swedish Equal Opportunities Commission

## United States

<b>AAUW</b>	American Association of University Women
<b>ACLU</b>	American Civil Liberties Union
<b>cacsw</b>	Citizens Advisory Council on the Status of Women
<b>CLUW</b>	Coalition of Labor Union Women
<b>ERA</b>	Equal Rights Amendment
<b>NOW</b>	National Organization for Women
<b>OFCC</b>	Office of Federal Contract Compliance
<b>PCSW</b>	President's Commission on the Status of Women
<b>PDA</b>	Pregnancy Discrimination Act
<b>WB</b>	Women's Bureau
<b>WUW</b>	Washington Union Women

## Preface

---

This book presents the results of a research project, the first stage in a multinational study of institutionalized feminism. The introduction describes the project design, the country case studies compose the data, and the conclusion presents the findings. Our goal—to direct and produce a work of comparative political analysis—has been realized only through the collaboration of a remarkably talented and knowledgeable group of scholars. Their individual achievements are demonstrated in each of the country case studies that make up *Comparative State Feminism*.

While the plan and results of the research project are found in the introduction and the conclusion, the case studies provide the essential empirical component for the comparative project. Each chapter offers information on the complex interaction between feminism and the state in a unique political culture, and we urge readers to study them in detail. The findings outlined in the conclusion about the extent to which the state can act to achieve feminist political goals have depended on the expertise of the contributing authors. We remain, however, responsible for the decisions about classification of the cases in the typology and comparisons discussed in the conclusion.

Our goal is to contribute to the development of a comparative theory on the subject of feminism and the state. In launching this effort, we have benefited from commentary, advice, and encouragement from many scholars of comparative politics and state feminism whose work is not a formal part of the comparative study. They include Hester Eisenstein, Sylvia Bashevkin, Phil Cerny, Susan MacManus, Martha Cottam, Barbara Nelson, David Collier, Anna Birte Ravn, Birte Siim, Elizabeth Meehan, Eva Kolinsky, and Sophie Watson. We look forward to working with them and others as we move to the next stage of this project.

Collaboration, these days, is enhanced by the tools that information-age technology has produced. Although we are grateful for these aids, they make us even more aware of our dependence on the assistance of our universities' computer and office staffs. Thus we wish to acknowledge the library, computer, and department staffs at Florida Atlantic University and Washington State University. For compiling a coherent manuscript and bibliography from 14 international case studies we are especially grateful to John Tennert of Washington State. We would also like to thank our editor at Sage, Carrie Mullen, and the attentive editorial staff for encouragement and care in transforming the raw materials into the finished volume.

—DOROTHY MCBRIDE STETSON

—AMY G. MAZUR

Lightning Source UK Ltd.  
Milton Keynes UK  
UKOW020627010616

275346UK00002B/127/P



# Contents

---

<b>Abbreviations</b>	ix
<b>Preface</b>	xv
<b>1. Introduction</b>	1
<i>Dorothy McBride Stetson and Amy G. Mazur</i>	
<b>2. "Femocrats in Glass Towers?": The Office of the Status of Women in Australia</b>	22
<i>Marian Sawyer</i>	
<b>3. An Array of Agencies: Feminism and State Institutions in Canada</b>	40
<i>Linda Geller-Schwartz</i>	
<b>4. A Political Niche: Denmark's Equal Status Council</b>	59
<i>Anette Borchorst</i>	
<b>5. Strong State and Symbolic Reform: The <i>Ministère des Droits de la Femme</i> in France</b>	76
<i>Amy G. Mazur</i>	

6. **Making Equality:  
The Women's Affairs Offices  
in the Federal Republic of Germany** 95  
*Myra Marx Ferree*
7. **An Emerging Advocate:  
The Equal Opportunities  
Commission in Great Britain** 114  
*Joni Lovenduski*
8. **Ireland's Policy Machinery:  
The Ministry of State for Women's Affairs  
and Joint Oireachtas Committees for Women's Rights** 132  
*Evelyn Mahon*
9. **The Latecomers:  
Italy's Equal Status and  
Equal Opportunity Agencies** 150  
*Marila Guadagnini*
10. **Administrative Accommodation in the Netherlands:  
The Department for  
the Coordination of Equality Policy** 168  
*Joyce Outshoorn*
11. **Women's Equality Structures in Norway:  
The Equal Status Council** 186  
*Jill M. Bystydzienski*
12. **Women, the State, and the Need for Civil Society:  
The *Liga Kobiet* in Poland** 203  
*Jean Robinson*
13. **The Power of Persuasion:  
The *Instituto de la Mujer* in Spain** 221  
*Celia Valiente*
14. **The State's Equality for Women:  
Sweden's Equality Ombudsman** 237  
*R. Amy Elman*
15. **The Oldest Women's Policy Agency:  
The Women's Bureau in the United States** 254  
*Dorothy McBride Stetson*

<b>16. Conclusion:</b>	
<b>The Case for State Feminism</b>	272
<i>Amy G. Mazur and Dorothy McBride Stetson</i>	
<b>References</b>	292
<b>Appendix</b>	311
<b>Index</b>	315
<b>About the Authors</b>	329

# 1

## Introduction

---

*Dorothy McBride Stetson*  
*Amy G. Mazur*

Social movements provoke official action, especially by democratic governments. Whereas movement activists seek real change and permanent access to arenas of power, government actions may be symbolic or even cosmetic, a way of damping the fires of reform. Second-wave women's movements in advanced industrial societies have generated an assortment of responses from their governments.<sup>1</sup> The most striking consequence of over 25 years of women's movement activism has been the array of institutional arrangements inside democratic states devoted to women's policy questions. Such a widespread change in institutions has the potential of turning the state into an activist on behalf of feminist goals,<sup>2</sup> embedding gender issues in national policy agendas and giving advocates for the advancement of women permanent access to arenas of power. The purpose of this book is to study systematically this cross-national trend of establishing state structures to improve the status of women.

The concept *state feminism* in this work refers to activities of government structures that are formally charged with furthering women's



status and rights. At issue is the extent to which these agencies are effective in helping women as a group and undermining patterns of gender-based inequities in society. To many women's movement activists, the idea that the state could further such a feminist agenda is problematic if not impossible. Their skepticism triggers the central questions of this comparative study. First, does state feminism exist? That is, do state structures assigned by political leaders to address women's inferior position in society contribute to policies that reduce gender-based inequities and provide an opportunity for women's movement activists to influence feminist policy formation? Second, if state feminism exists, are there variations in the abilities of these state structures to promote feminist political agendas in the context of the different political, social, and cultural traditions of various countries? *Comparative State Feminism*, therefore, has three major objectives:

1. To describe the range and diversity of state structures formally responsible for promoting women's position and rights in advanced industrial societies
2. To analyze the extent to which these state offices achieve feminist goals within the social, political, and historical context of each nation-state and the variations in achieving goals across different countries
3. To propose, based on this cross-national comparison, the combination of political and social factors that appears to produce state structures prone to pursuing effective state feminist action

### Women's Policy Machinery

No single inventor claims to have developed the idea that the state could, through its institutions, become an actor in promoting equality between men and women. One of the first countries to have a permanent agency for women was the United States, where Congress established the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor in 1920. Over the years, especially during World War II, women's agencies and offices appeared in other countries. More recently, successive governments have added offices, commissions, agencies, ministries, committees, secretaries, and advisers to deal with women's issues. A source of encouragement and advice to them has been the United Nations.