

An Early Exploration of Evaluation Practices under Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy

By

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Policy

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Abstract

The newly released Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) aims to gender mainstream all stages of Canada's international development projects with the goal of using a "truly feminist approach that supports the economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls, [making] gender equality a priority, for the benefit of all people" (Government of Canada, 2017). However, it is not clear what comprises a "truly feminist approach" in the policy or how this is being applied in the field. This thesis therefore aims to assess what feminist approaches can be found within the evaluations of projects that have been conducted under the FIAP and what type of feminism they portray. The methodology consisted of examining three case examples through a document review of key evaluation materials, an interview with a representative from each organization, and a 'Feminist Evaluation Scorecard' to summarize the findings. The analysis of these qualitative methods demonstrated that the evaluations, although found to be using some feminist approaches, align better with a technocratic version of feminism rather than a transformational one. It was also found that the participating organizations have limited knowledge of the FIAP and face barriers in implementing feminist approaches within their evaluation work. Some suggestions for future practice were provided including increasing clarity in the wording of the FIAP, providing additional resources to organizations through training and funds so that they may better implement feminist evaluations, and increasing overall communication on expectations so that a "truly feminist" approach may be used in evaluations going forward.

Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures and Tables.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Dedication.....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Problem Statement	1
Objective	2
Significance of Study	2
Positionality Statement.....	5
Structure of Thesis	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	8
The History of Feminist Evaluation.....	9
Feminist Evaluation.....	10
Gender Approaches to Evaluation.....	12
Women in Development (WID).....	12
Women and Development (WAD).....	13
Gender and Development (GAD)	13
Technocratic versus Transformational Feminism.....	18
Summary	19
Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods	21
Methods.....	22
Data Analysis	25
Reliability and Validity	27
Strengths and Limitations.....	28
Chapter 4: Findings.....	30

Interview and Document Review Findings.....	31
I. The Use of Self-Reflection Within the Evaluation.....	31
II. A Focus on Gender Inequities Leading to Social Injustice.....	32
III. Ensuring Inclusiveness and Reducing Barriers to Access	35
IV. The Use of Participatory Methodology.....	37
V. A Focus on Attempted Political or Social Change	41
VI. Dissemination of Evaluation Results	42
VII. Knowledge of Feminist Evaluation Principles and the FIAP	44
VIII. Challenges to Integrating Feminist Approaches.....	46
IX. Perceived Value of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP).....	47
Scorecard Analysis.....	48
Summary	56
Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis	58
Situating the FIAP within a Technocratic/Transformational Framework.....	58
A Predominance of Gender-based Technocratic Approaches to Evaluation with Some Feminist Transformative Elements	61
Insights from the Feminist Evaluation Scorecard	65
Limited Understanding of the FIAP and Feminist Evaluation Practices	67
Limited Capacity and Resources to Conduct Meaningful Feminist Evaluations.....	69
Summary	70
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	71
Suggestions for Future Practices	72
Areas for Future Research.....	74
Significance of Findings.....	74
References.....	76
Appendix A: Ethics Approval Certification	81
Appendix B: Invitation to Participate	82
Appendix C: Consent Form for Participants.....	83
Appendix D: Sample Interview Guide.....	86
Appendix E: Analysis Themes and Codes.....	88

List of Figures and Tables

Table 1: Feminist Evaluation versus Gender Approaches.....	15
Table 2: Scorecard Legend	25
Table 3: Organization A Scorecard.....	52
Table 4: Organization B Scorecard.....	53
Table 5: Organization C Scorecard.....	55

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Dedication

To my husband who kept me fed and sane during my Master's Program and my friends and family who had to listen to me talk about a thesis for far too long.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

In 2017, the Government of Canada announced its first ever Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) intended to guide all of Canada's international development efforts. The primary focus of the FIAP is the empowerment of women and girls as a way to eradicate poverty around the world, while supporting Canada's response to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To accomplish this, the FIAP focuses on six core actions areas: gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, human dignity, growth that works for everyone, environment and climate action, inclusive governance, and peace and security (Government of Canada, 2017). These action areas are all based on the premise that in order to make meaningful and inclusive progress, it is necessary to target gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The FIAP aims to accomplish this through gender mainstreaming in all levels of the policymaking process, including evaluation, so that Canada's foreign policy will "lead to better development results and benefit everyone, including men and boys" (Government of Canada, 2017, p.vi).

However, the FIAP is not without its criticisms. Scholars such as Parisi (2020) have argued that the FIAP implicitly relies on neoliberal capitalist growth and the expansion of Canadian foreign policy for the achievement of gender equality. There have also been questions and criticisms surrounding the FIAP about how committed it truly is to feminist values (Morton et al., 2020; Parisi, 2020). For example, Morton et al. (2020) argue that the type of gender equality in the FIAP places women and girls into monolithic categories which fail to take into account the ways in which a variety of identity factors intersect (Morton et al., 2020). These could include, for example, intersectionality of social class, racial demographics, or disabilities,

all of which can alter the experience of a woman and make their needs different from others of the same gender.

This thesis will therefore examine how the FIAP is being implemented by international development organizations in one of the major stages: evaluation. Through this focus, I will consider the practices of organizations funded by the FIAP to assess if there are identifiable feminist principles underpinning their evaluations and, if so, how they are being used. Therefore, the key research questions of this study are as follows:

Research Questions

1. How are organizations conducting evaluations under the FIAP?
2. Are feminist evaluation principles reflected in the evaluations conducted under the FIAP?

If so, how are they being used?

Objective

My aim is to identify how evaluations of international development projects funded by Canada under the FIAP reflect feminist approaches. I also aim to advance the knowledge on feminist evaluation through creating a scorecard which outlines possible practical ways that the feminist evaluation approach can be applied to future evaluations.

Significance of Study

With the FIAP only recently implemented in Canada, there has not yet been ample time for critical examinations of the policy, its implementation and, ultimately, its effects. This is also true for similar feminist foreign policies around the world which have all been implemented within the last decade. The first was Sweden which launched their feminist foreign policy agenda in 2014 followed by Canada in 2017, France in 2019, and Mexico in 2020 (Thomson, 2020).

Overall, only four countries currently follow this type of foreign policy, with Canada being one of the first. This suggests that there is value to be gained through examining the FIAP and how effective it has been, as this information may be useful to other countries which have recently adopted feminist foreign policies or those who are considering doing so in the future.

In addition, evaluation has been increasingly viewed as an important practice in the policymaking cycle, particularly in the field of international development. For example, in 2005, over 100 developed and developing countries convened at the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness to discuss how to manage aid more effectively. Nations around the world agreed that aid efforts were not achieving their intended results (Bissio, n.d.). It was decided that progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, now followed by the Sustainable Development Goals, required further thought in order to achieve the ambitious targets committed to by the world. The Paris Declaration resulted in a “landmark reform” in development endorsed by leading development organizations (Bissio, n.d.). These reforms were organized around five principles intended to make aid more effective:

- Ownership: developing countries should set their own development strategies, improve their institutions and tackle corruption
- Alignment: donor countries and organizations will bring their support in line with these strategies
- Harmonization: donor countries and organizations will coordinate their actions to avoid duplication
- Managing for Results: developing countries and donors will focus on producing and measuring results

- Mutual Accountability: donors and developing countries are accountable for development results (Bissio, n.d.)

Of these five principles, evaluation plays a strategic role in both Managing for Results and Mutual Accountability. Evaluation enhances results-based management and increases transparency and supports accountability relationships (Segone, 2008). Although seen as a key tool to support aid effectiveness, recent reports have shown that the least amount of progress has been made in the areas of frameworks to monitor results and mechanisms for mutual accountability (Bissio, n.d.). This suggests that while evaluation is seen as valuable in ensuring that aid is effective, relevant, and transparent, there is still progress to be made towards incorporating meaningful evaluation into international development projects.

As a signatory of the Paris Declaration, Canada has therefore also committed to increased accountability and managing for results in their international development efforts. With the introduction of the FIAP, the evaluation process was one of the stages which was to be gender mainstreamed. As a self-proclaimed feminist policy, the evaluations conducted on Canada's international development projects should therefore follow feminist evaluation principles. However, there is no one version of what constitutes feminism. Although most feminist theories have similar core principles, such as the acknowledgement of gender inequity or the belief that knowledge is situated and must be considered within its cultural, temporal, or social context, there is otherwise a great deal of variation between what scholars deem to be 'feminist' (Brisolara & Seigart, 2012). It is therefore necessary to consider how feminism is outlined in the FIAP and how this version of feminism is being used in the evaluation of Canada's international development efforts.

Positionality Statement

My research question revolves around a few core themes: feminism, international development, and evaluation. These three themes are important to me and their importance originates in my upbringing. I was raised by a single mother who worked hard to provide for our small family. Watching her struggles helped me to develop strong core values of equality and justice and fed into my interest in feminism. I believe strongly that all people should have equal opportunities to succeed, no matter their background.

When conducting research into feminism and especially Canada's international development policy, it is important to consider my positionality. When working in international development, a primary concern is to recognize that, while I am a feminist, my viewpoint comes from one of privilege. Even having been raised in a lower income situation, I am likely to be far more economically well-off than those in the countries that I would be researching. I come from a background of white, colonial heritage and I need to be aware of this when considering power dynamics in order to ensure that I am not engaged in modern colonialism. I must also be aware of cultural differences especially when trying to influence change towards something that is of value in Western society (such as women's empowerment and equality) which may not be as valued in the society where I am working. Lastly, the fact that I have received a higher education is important to remember as not all individuals in developing countries are able to access primary education much less graduate studies.

It is important for me to be aware of these issues when I am conducting my research and interpreting the results. In order to ensure that I am not engaging in modern colonialism as I work in the international development field, I will need to spend time learning about the history and culture of the areas where I work. I must also acknowledge my positionality and attempt to

be reflexively self-aware to ensure that my intentions, processes, and interpretation of results are analyzed through a critical perspective. I will also educate myself further regarding the manifestations of neo-colonialism within the international development field. Through this research and increased understanding, I hope to avoid falling into the trap of engaging in unintentional neo-colonial thought and practice. I will also consult sources and research from diverse backgrounds, so that I am considering the viewpoints of individuals who live in the area where I am working in as well as across the Global South. Through these methods, I hope to ensure that my interpretation of results will be conducted as fairly as possible.

In addition, I have worked with Global Affairs Canada for a year and a half through three co-op placements and through their Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP). While I was there, I worked in the Evaluation division as a Junior Evaluator. Although I did not work directly with the FIAP as my focus area was Trade and Diplomacy, I was able to observe the evaluation techniques used by the department which provided me with a good basis of understanding of how GAC conducts evaluations both under the FIAP and not. This knowledge will be helpful in my work for this thesis, but I also should recognize that my past work experience with GAC is a potential bias which I must acknowledge.

Structure of Thesis

The thesis is organized into six Chapters plus references and appendices.

Chapter One introduced the thesis topic and outlined the research questions and context which will be focused on in this thesis. It provided a brief positionality statement.

Chapter Two contains a literature review examining the scholarly and grey literature relevant to the research questions. This review includes the history of feminist evaluation, the major theoretical principles underlying it, and identifies different approaches to feminist evaluation.

Chapter Three describes the methodology of the study including sampling techniques and the rationale for the methods used. The thesis includes an analysis of three case studies using document reviews, interviews, and a Feminist Evaluation Scorecard in order to explore how the evaluations have been used under the FIAP in the international development field.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the study through the lens of nine key themes which emerged through the literature review and the interviews.

Chapter Five provides a discussion and analysis of the findings in relation to the research questions, with a focus on to what extent the research questions were answered and the major themes which came out of the analysis. It also explores some unintended results which emerged from the research.

Chapter Six summarizes the thesis and provides final conclusions reached regarding the research questions as well as suggestions for future practices based on those conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As previously mentioned, Canada announced the implementation of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) in 2017 which would become the approach for Canada's development efforts around the world. Part of the FIAP includes gender mainstreaming for all stages of the policymaking process. A key step in this process is evaluation, which the Government of Canada defines as "the systematic and neutral collection and analysis of evidence to judge merit, worth or value" (TBS, 2016, para.9). Another definition of evaluation by Trochim (1998) writes that "evaluation is a profession that uses formal methodologies to provide useful empirical evidence about public entities (such as programs, products, performance) in decision-making contexts that are inherently political and involve multiple often-conflicting stakeholders, where resources are seldom sufficient, and where time pressures are salient" (p.248). Both definitions highlight the importance that evaluations are systematic and make judgements on the value or performance of projects, programs, or concepts. However, the definitions are also positivistic and modernist and, most importantly for this research, do not include any reference to a gender-sensitive or feminist lens. This literature review will therefore look at the research which has emerged on feminist evaluation, which has been defined as an evaluation approach similar to others in that it is fundamentally concerned about ascertaining value, merit or worth but is unique in that it pays particular attention to "gender issues, the needs of women, and the promotion of change" (Seigart, 2005, p.155).

The History of Feminist Evaluation

Although evaluation as a field emerged in the late 1960s with the expansion of social programs in the United States, the roots of evaluation began much earlier. Hogan (2007) writes that evaluation spans seven periods from pre-1900 to 2000. These periods include the *Age of Reform* which occurred pre-1900s, the *Age of Efficiency and Testing* from 1900 to 1930, *the Age of Development* from 1958 to 1972, and *the Age of Professionalization* from 1973 to 1983 (Hogan, 2007). Throughout each of these time periods, what became the field of evaluation matured and developed into a coherent practice that is now one of the primary steps within the policymaking process. As Scriven (1996) noted, “evaluation is a very young discipline – although it is very old in practice” (p.395).

Feminist evaluation, on the other hand, is much more recent, having only emerged at the end of the 1990s as models were created to challenge the dominant theories of evaluation at the time (Brisolara & Seigart, 2012). It was even later before the main tenets of feminist evaluation were published; this did not occur until a special journal issue was published in *New Directions for Evaluation* in 2002. The article was written by group of evaluators with feminist inclinations who outlined what they saw as the six main tenets of feminist evaluation (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002). Following this publication, the feminist evaluation field was further developed and explored academically through the 2014 book *Feminist Evaluation and Research: Theory and Practice* by Brisolara, Siegart and SenGupta. The relative recency of feminist evaluation as a model means that it is a field still being refined and the exact definition and theories are far from immutable. However, this literature review will explore the current theories and principles underlying feminist evaluation as it is understood at this moment in time.

Feminist Evaluation

Before we explore the core concepts relating to this model, it is necessary to understand the definitions of the key terms. It is important to note, as well, that there is “no one, unifying feminist theory; neither does there exist a consensus on how diverse feminist theoretical contributions should be categorized” (Brisolara & Seigart, 2012, p.4). Although there is no one understanding of feminism, one influential definition comes from the ground-breaking publication by Maguire (1987) which states that “feminism is: (a) a belief that women universally face some form of oppression or exploitation; (b) a commitment to uncover and understand what causes and sustains oppression, in all its forms and (c) a commitment to work individually and collectively in everyday life to end all forms of oppression” (p.82). However, this definition does not acknowledge the diverse categories of feminist theory which include theories such as standpoint, critical, postmodern, Indigenous or queer and lesbian. This thesis does not have the scope to discuss each of these theories in depth but there are certain broad common themes amongst each such as an interest in gender inequity and its consequences, a tendency to examine social issues, critiquing assumptions and biases located within traditional androcentric practices, and including a commitment to promote change (Brisolara et al., 2014).

Feminist evaluation is similar to other evaluation approaches in that it is still fundamentally about ascertaining the value, merit, or worth of the program or policy which it studies (Mathison, 2011). It also shares “an affinity with a range of evaluation models and has learned from these models as well”; for example, feminist evaluation shares concepts with other models such as transformative evaluation, participatory evaluation, and empowerment evaluation (Brisolara et al., 2014, p.22). However, what distinguishes feminist evaluation is a focus on “gender issues, the needs of women, and the promotion of change” (Mathison, 2005, p.155). Or as described by

Brisolara et al. (2014), feminist evaluation is unique in that it “begins with an acknowledgement and examination of the structural nature of inequities beginning with gender as a point of departure” (p.22). It is important to note that feminist evaluation does not mean the evaluation of women’s programs but, instead, it is a critical and gender-focused lens to approach all program or policy evaluations.

The field of feminist evaluation was largely formalized in “Exploring Feminist Evaluation: The Ground from Which We Rise” (2002), where the authors attempted to outline central collective conceptions underlying the various theories of feminist evaluation. Through this work, they created a list of six main tenets that can be used as a basis for understanding the model.

These tenets are as follows:

- Feminist evaluation has gender inequities that lead to social injustice as a central focus.
- Discrimination or inequality based on gender is systemic and structural.
- Evaluation is a political activity; the contexts in which evaluation operates are politicized; and the personal experiences, perspectives, and characteristics evaluators brings to evaluations (and with which we interact) lead to a particular political stance.
- Knowledge is a powerful resource that serves an explicit or implicit purpose. Knowledge should be a resource of and for the people who create, hold, and share it. Consequently, the evaluation or research process can lead to significant negative or positive effects on the people involved in the evaluation/research.
- Knowledge and values are culturally, socially, and temporally contingent. Knowledge is also filtered through the knower.
- There are multiple ways of knowing; some ways are privileged over others.

(Sielbeck-Bowen, Brisolara, Seigart, Tischler, and Whitmore, 2002, pp.3-4)

One of the main goals of feminist evaluation is exploring how gender inequities can lead to social injustice, with discrimination and inequality considered key constructs that are understood as systemic and structural (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002). For feminists, evaluation is considered a political activity with the evaluator included as a key part of the evaluation. This means that political influence and power is part of evaluation and that the evaluator must engage with the responses of those who hold political power, including their own (Podems, 2018). In addition, knowledge is seen as “culturally, socially, and temporally contingent” (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002, p.6), which means that what we view as knowledge changes depending on where we live, who we are, and when we live. These concepts of the political nature of evaluation along with knowledge being relative to those who make it form the basis of feminist evaluation.

Gender Approaches to Evaluation

As is typical with a newly started field, there is significant debate about what exactly constitutes feminist evaluation. Podems (2010) argues that there is a difference between feminist evaluation and what she terms ‘gender approaches to evaluation’. According to Podems (2010), gender approaches to evaluation has a separate history, core beliefs, and implementation approach than feminist evaluation. The history of gender approaches is longer, starting in the 50s and 60s, when interventions designed for women in the Global South were primarily welfare-based while being non-challenging to women’s status or to the patriarchal system (Moser, 1993). Starting in the 1970s, three gender approaches were born: women in development (WID), women and development (WAD), and gender and development (GAD). A brief description of each follows:

Women in Development (WID)

Women in development, closely linked with modernization theory, is a liberal approach which focuses on poverty and advocates for changes so that women may be better integrated into economic systems (Rathgeber, 1990). WID is often described as an attempt to ‘add women and stir’ into international development projects. In evaluation, this often manifests as statistical measurement of women’s lived experiences (Podems, 2014). The primary criticisms of WID are: 1) statistics show that women have not benefited equally from modernization, 2) it relied on an acceptance of the existing social structures, 3) it focused on women as a unit of analysis without recognizing differences among women, and 4) it focused almost exclusively on the productive aspects of women’s work without acknowledging the reproductive side of women’s lives (Rathgeber, 1990). Although this approach is still used in development contexts, due to the outlined criticisms, new approaches were developed.

Women and Development (WAD)

Women and development (WAD) followed WID, rising from the critiques of modernization theory and influenced by Marxism. It drew links between women’s position in society and structural changes which led to programs focused on economic, political, and social structures rather than welfare for the individual women (Podems, 2014). However, like WID, there are criticisms of WAD. The first is that it does not take into account the relationship between patriarchy, modes of production, and women’s oppression and therefore assumes that when structures become more equitable, women’s positions will improve (Rathgeber, 1990). A second important criticism was that WAD focuses primarily on the productive aspect of women, or income generation, at the expense of other important parts of women’s lives, such as reproduction (Rathgeber, 1990).

Gender and Development (GAD)

GAD arose from socialist feminism and feminist anthropology and focused on the interconnectedness of gender, class, race, and social construction as defining characteristics (Podems, 2014). GAD includes an examination of *why* women are systematically assigned to inferior or secondary roles while viewing women as agents of change and not passive recipients (Rathgeber, 1990). In the evaluation field, this approach leads to investigations of women's material conditions, class position, and identifies areas that maintain women's subordination (Podems, 2014). One example of GAD in use is Harvard's Gender Roles Framework which provides specific data collection categories for activities including gender, age, time spent, location while mapping factors that influenced gender differences (Overholt et al., 1985).

The history of WID, WAD, and GAD provide the basis for understanding gender approaches to evaluation as used in international development. Although each approach is different, there are similarities between them. All three focus on women and gender issues, although in different ways: WID primarily through recording gender differences, WAD through the belief that structural changes can lead to improved positions for women, and GAD through an examination into the reasons that women are in the position that they are. Overall, gender approaches to evaluation have a long history of refining and developing understanding and techniques which have been used in all aspects of international development, including evaluation.

Feminist Evaluation and Gender Approaches: Is there a difference?

With a general understanding of both feminist evaluation and gender approaches to evaluation, it is possible to ask: is there really a difference? If so, does this difference matter? According to Podems (2010) gender approaches to evaluation paint women in the Global South as homogenous, especially within the WID and WAD approaches. It also assumes all women

have the same goal of equality between men and women, whereas feminist evaluation allows for the possibility of women not wanting what men possess (Podems 2010). Gendered approaches provide a structured framework for evaluations, such as disaggregation of data, whereas feminist evaluation is more of a way of thinking. Feminist thinking emphasizes reflexivity, whereas gendered approaches do not have this level of self-scrutiny. The differences between Gender Approaches and Feminist Evaluation are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Feminist Evaluation versus Gender Approaches

Gender Approaches	Feminist Approaches
Identify the differences between women and men in different ways.	Explore why differences between women and men exist.
Do not challenge women’s position in society, but rather map it, document and record it.	Challenge women’s subordinate position; empirical results aim to strategically affect women’s lives, as well as the lives of marginalized persons.
View women as a homogenous group, without distinguishing other factors such as race, income level, marriage status, or other factors that make a difference.	Acknowledge and value differences; do not consider women as a homogenous category.
Assume that equality of women and men is the end goal and design and value evaluations with this understanding.	Acknowledge that women may not want the same things as men and design and value evaluations accordingly.

Gender Approaches	Feminist Approaches
Do not encourage an evaluator to reflect on her/his values or how their vision of the world influences their design and its findings	Emphasize that an evaluator needs to be reflexive and open, and recognize overtly that evaluations are not value free.
Interpret gender as “men” and “women”.	Recognise other gender identities in addition to male and female
Collect gender-sensitive data	When collecting data, value different ways of knowing, seek to hear and represent different voices and provides a space for women or disempowered groups within the same contexts to be heard.

Source: Podems & Negroustoueva (2016)

Not all agree with Podems that there is a difference between feminist evaluation and gender-based approaches. Bustelo (2017) writes that this distinction is problematic as it is not possible to conduct a truly reflexive evaluation from a gender perspective without being feminist. This led Bustelo to create a ‘gender+ approach’ to evaluation, consisting of four ‘foci’: the political nature of evaluation, its relation to the public interest, the importance of stakeholder involvement, and the need for methodological diversity (Bustelo 2017). The first focus aims to emphasize the political characteristic inherent within evaluation, which is recognized in many evaluation handbooks. The second is concerned with ensuring that evaluation works towards bettering the lives of the clients and stakeholders and ultimately making the world a better place. The third focus highlights the importance of context and involving different stakeholders in evaluations. The final focus recognizes that a variety of methodological approaches is beneficial as evaluation grows ever more complex. In summary, there are many similarities between

Bustelo's gender+ approach and feminist evaluation; however, Bustelo emphasizes the use of evaluation as way to bring gender back into the policy or program.

Brisolara et al. (2014), Podems (2010), and Bustelo (2017) address feminist or gender approaches to evaluation in a general context. In international development, Sudarshan and Sharma (2012) argue that participatory research, such as is used in feminist evaluation, is not only desirable but also generates findings that can be used by organizations which are implementing programs within countries. They argue that it is important to allow for adequate contextualization, trace unintended consequences, and assess progress markers appropriately. One highlighted concern is that evaluations are not linear. Changes in gender norms or practices can challenge traditions, often resulting in conflict or backlashes against the changes (Sudarshan & Sharma, 2012). They also contend that many evaluations conflate short-term change and sustainable change. Sustainable change is a long-term process and therefore impact needs "to be measured in modest terms" (Sudarshan & Sharma, 2012, p.311). This is because, as one activist has described it, changing gender norms is often two steps forward and at least one step back due to the challenge of transforming embedded power structures (Batliwala & Pittman, 2010). How to measure sustainable, non-linear change are therefore important for feminist evaluation in the international development context.

From this review of the literature, reoccurring themes have been identified and conversations explored which are building to a consensus of what feminist evaluation entails. Many of these influential scholars consider evaluation to be a political process and acknowledge that evaluation is intended to create change (Brisolara et al. (2014); Podems (2010); Sudarshan and Sharma (2012)). There is also a general agreement on the necessity of reflexivity. Through reflexivity, one can identify and acknowledge their biases, experiences and perceptions, which

allows the evaluator to provide an analysis that can be critiqued by the reader in an easier manner (Brisolara et al., 2014). Another theme often used is that evaluations should be context dependent. In the international development literature, the themes were the non-linearity of evaluations and change, the importance of sustainable change versus short-term change, and the necessity of measuring small or modest changes as they build up to major changes (Sudarshan & Sharma, 2012).

Technocratic versus Transformational Feminism

It is useful to also consider a relevant broader discussion which has also been emerging in recent feminist literature from Canada. A review of this literature shows a growing consensus among academics to differentiate between what has been termed a ‘transformational’ version of feminism and a ‘technocratic’ or ‘instrumental’ version, the latter which is similar in concept to what Podems (2010) described as a ‘gender approach to evaluation’. Chouinard (2013) examines a similar dichotomy in a review of participatory evaluation and how it reconciles in an “era of accountability”. In her work, she describes a transformational approach to evaluation, although her review focuses on participatory instead of feminist evaluation, which she states is “designed to address diverse program and organizational needs across a broad range of local, program, and cultural contexts, with varied rationales that include local ownership, empowerment, use of findings, organizational and individual learning, and program improvement” (Chouinard, 2013, p.238). Although participatory and feminist evaluation differ in many key ways, they are both considered types of transformational approaches and share theoretical underpinnings (Mertens & Wilson, 2019). These transformational versions of feminism therefore bring gender into centre focus to create an understanding that “gender (in)equality [is] a dynamic process that is rooted in

unequal gendered power relations” and this in turn is a “departure from conceptualizations of gender to mean only women” (Cadesky, 2020, p.300).

According to Chouinard (2013), Canada has a “methodological preference” for a technocratic version instead as evidenced in the Government of Canada policies such as the TBS *Management Accountability Framework* (1997) the Guide for the Development of Results Based Management Accountability Frameworks (2010), and the Policy on Evaluation (TBS, 2009) (p.241). These policies provide a “vision of evaluation as an evidence-based, neutral, and objective instrument designed to provide outcome and results-based information on program performance and spending” (Chouinard, 2013, p.241). Or, in other words, technocratic. Cadesky (2020) describes the feminist technocratic practice as a “sanitized” approach which “effectively sidesteps the feminist, political goals of gender equality that would see policies and interventions engaged with structural inequality and disadvantage” (p. 306). She goes on to note that this is a “subdued” version of gender equality and that the act of simplifying approaches to technocratic versions is “inherently political” as she argues that transformational versions “challenge the very structures that produce and reproduce discrimination” and when technocratic varieties are used instead it is to make the feminist approach “disarmed and rendered ineffective” (pp.306-7). Overall, there is a growing consensus amongst scholars of this dichotomy of feminism between a technocratic and transformational version and an accompanying realization that Canada appears to be aligning closer with a technocratic feminism through the FIAP.

Summary

The themes relating to feminist and gender evaluation in international development identified are interesting in the context of the recently implemented FIAP. How is the FIAP using feminist or gender approaches to evaluation? How successful has the approach to

evaluation been in terms of gender issues? What type of evaluations have come out since the policy's implementation? Do they align better with a technocratic or transformational version of feminism? These areas have not received considerable attention due to the relatively recent implementation of the policy. An examination into these questions could provide insights into feminist evaluation overall and how to improve Canada's international assistance policy specifically. There is value in conducting this research as a truly feminist international assistance policy would provide for better opportunities to achieve Canada's development goals and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

This thesis explores how organizations are conducting evaluations under the FIAP, with attention to whether feminist principles could be identified within the evaluations and how these feminist principles are being implemented. To accomplish this, a multi-method qualitative approach was employed to explore case examples which were selected to provide insights into evaluations taking place in the field.

The case examples are based on the evaluations conducted by three organizations, each of which was funded under the FIAP. In order to maintain confidentiality, the organizations were given the pseudonyms of A, B, and C. The exploration of these case examples consisted of three primary components: a review of the key evaluation documents, an interview with an individual knowledgeable about the evaluation, and the completion of a 'Feminist Evaluation Scorecard' derived from the literature review. These methods were selected to provide a deep and thorough understanding of the methods and theory behind the evaluations.

The case examples are the base of the thesis's methodology along with a review of an Evaluation Report and related documents to provide an in-depth description of the methods and theory used to conduct the evaluations. In order to better explore and understand each evaluation, interviews were then conducted with individuals who have thorough knowledge of the evaluations so that the reasoning and perspectives of those who designed and conducted the evaluation could be taken into account. Lastly, a 'Feminist Evaluation Scorecard' was created to analyze and summarize whether, and to what extent, best practices based on the theory for feminist evaluation were followed. Through combining these methods, the thesis sheds light on the following two key research questions:

1. How are organizations conducting evaluations under the FIAP?

2. Are feminist evaluation principles reflected in the evaluations conducted under the FIAP?
If so, how are they being used?

Ethics Approval

As this thesis includes interviews, the research required the approval of the Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) of the University of Victoria. The application was completed successfully and a certificate of approval #20-0599 was provided (refer to Appendix A). All of the research methods followed appropriate research guidelines that included obtaining consent and ensuring confidentiality (see ‘Invitation to Participate’ and ‘Participant Consent Form’ in Appendix B and C).

Methods

Sampling

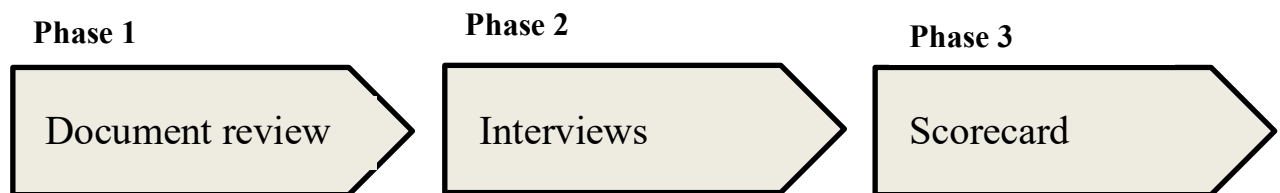
Three organizations were selected as case examples to be explored in terms of the evaluations conducted under the FIAP. These organizations were chosen from the online and publicly available list published by the Canadian International Development Platform (CIDP). The CIDP provides an online database of all development projects funded and administered through the Feminist International Assistance Policy. A purposive sampling method focusing on heterogeneous examples was chosen to select the organizations to contact and invite to be a part of the study. This method was used to ensure that different characteristics exhibited by typical organizations were examined. Characteristics considered included organization status (e.g., non-profit or international non-governmental organization), organization size (small, medium, or large), or field of work (e.g., poverty reduction or promotion of human rights). Organizations were then invited based on their representing characteristics which had not yet been included

within the study. Through this method, three case examples were identified with organizations representing different sizes, statuses, and fields of work. These organizations included:

- A medium sized international economic development organization with a focus on poverty alleviation
- A large United Nations agency focused on social and economic justice
- A small volunteer-run non-profit focused on the promotion of self-reliance through grassroots initiatives

Data Collection

The study consisted of a series of methods to collect data which will be explored in the following section. The phases of data collection are as follows:



Phase 1: Document Review

Once the organizations for the case examples were selected, each was asked to provide any available evaluation materials, such as final or mid-term reports, evaluation design reports, and dissemination materials. The documents were reviewed in advance of the interviews.

Phase 2: Interviews

The second phase of the data collection stage was to conduct interviews with key individuals from the organization who could provide further insight and background to the evaluations. Each organization was asked to nominate someone who was involved in the

evaluation in some official capacity and who were familiar with the methods and indicators used in the evaluation. The interviewees participated in an approximately one-hour semi-structured interview where questions were asked about the evaluation, such as how successful they felt the evaluations were in integrating feminist approaches and why certain methods were selected. A semi-structured interview was chosen to allow for deeper probing regarding each evaluation's specific context and situation. The interviews provided a deeper understanding into the reasoning behind the methods chosen for the evaluation as well as the intentions of the evaluators. In total, three interviews were conducted, one from each of the organizations which participated in the study. An example of an Interview Guide has been included in Appendix D.

Phase 3: Scorecard

Finally, the research synthesized the findings from the previous two phases with the use of a 'Feminist Evaluation Scorecard'. The Scorecard was used to assess the ways that feminist approaches were integrated into the evaluations based on what was found during the document review and interviews. A Scorecard was chosen to provide a clear overview of the level of inclusion of feminist evaluation approaches as well as to be a tool which may be used in the future when examining evaluations. It was designed drawing heavily upon practical descriptions of feminist evaluation found in articles such as Mulder and Amariles's (2014) "Latin American Feminist Perspectives on Gender Power Issues in Evaluation". The criteria were created primarily from this article with the selections based on whether it was possible to make judgements with only a review of the evaluation reports and interviews. The criteria were further refined in order to be simple and concise while still reflecting the tenets of feminist evaluation as outlined by Sielbeck-Bowen et al. (2002). It is important to note that the Scorecard is based on a Latin American cultural context and is underpinned by Western viewpoints which brings into

question its use in different international contexts, but it was nonetheless felt to be a helpful tool in approaching the work. It is also necessary to note that there are issues in a feminist sense when it comes to ranking organizations which can be an outcome when providing a score. The Scorecard is not intended to rank organizations in a hierarchical sense, but merely to inform so as to gain insights into how feminist evaluation approaches can be integrated and utilized further.

Each evaluation was scored based on the level to which each criterion was found to have been incorporated within the evaluation. There were three possible scores:

Table 2:

Scorecard Legend

SCORE	MEANING
0	No inclusion
1	Partial inclusion
2	Full inclusion

Following the completion of the Scorecard, it was possible to determine how each evaluation followed practices as outlined in feminist evaluation literature.

Data Analysis

The primary qualitative data collected from the interviews and the review of the evaluation reports were analyzed using a theoretical and a thematic approach. A thematic analysis approach is used to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data whereas a theoretical analysis is based on the theory covered within the literature review. A semantic approach was also used, which means that the themes were identified using explicit or surface meanings of the data instead of searching beyond what was stated in an interview or written (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In order to accomplish this analysis, both the interviews and evaluation reports were inputted into NVivo, a data analysis software, as a method to read and code the documents. Whenever evidence was found in the interviews or evaluation reports of a feminist or gender-based approach to evaluation being utilized, the section was set with a code describing how it aligned with the theory, particularly the tenets of feminist evaluation as outlined by Sielbeck-Bowen et al. (2002). Once the documents were coded, individual selections were grouped into larger categories to make up the themes. A full list of the codes and themes can be found in Appendix E. The themes were therefore decided upon based on prevalence – whichever category had the largest number of coded selections became one of the core themes to be discussed – as well as through criteria for feminist evaluation identified as important through the theoretical research (e.g., acknowledgement of biases).

In total, nine themes emerged through this process. The themes which originated from the review of the literature review included:

- The Use of Self-Reflection Within the Evaluation
- A Focus on Gender Inequities Leading to Social Injustice
- Ensuring Inclusiveness and Reducing Barriers to Access
- The Use of Participatory Methodology
- A Focus on Attempted Political or Social Change
- The Dissemination of Evaluation Results

The themes which emerged from the interviews included:

- Knowledge of Feminist Evaluation Principles and the FIAP
- Challenges to Integrating Feminist Approaches
- Perceived Value of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)

The ‘Feminist Evaluation Scorecard’ analysis was conducted using similar methods. The interviews and evaluation reports were read with the twenty-eight criteria in mind. Whenever evidence for one of these criteria was found, it was noted how, and to what extent, it provided evidence as fulfilling the question. Once all documents for a case example had been reviewed, the notes were analyzed as to whether they appeared to demonstrate ‘full inclusion’, as in, nothing reasonably further could have been done to integrate this criterion into the evaluation; ‘partial inclusion’, or the criterion was included to some extent but there may have been areas to incorporate it further; or ‘no inclusion’ which indicated that the criterion was not present in the case example. Occasionally it was not possible to determine whether a specific criterion had been included within the evaluation resulting in a “N/A” scoring.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are ways to ensure that the methodology achieves a necessary level of quality. Validity in qualitative research refers to the “trustworthiness” or “appropriateness” of the tools, processes, and data such as whether the research design is valid for the methodology, the sampling and data analysis is appropriate, or that the results are valid for the sample and context (Leung, 2015). To ensure validity in this study, the methodology was designed with triangulation, which is a way of using different data collection modes (such as interviews, questionnaires, or observations) to reach conclusions based on numerous lines of evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, the Scorecard was created from a literature review, primarily based on “Latin American Feminist Perspectives on Gender Power Issues in Evaluation” (Mulder & Amariles, 2014) which provides a theoretical underpinning to the methodology. Through ensuring that the analysis followed peer-reviewed literature on feminist evaluation as well as triangulation of the data, a higher level of validity can be achieved.

Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the replicability of the methodology. It is a precondition for validity, it is tested through replication, and it can be threatened by careless acts in measurement or assessment, by instrumental decay, by insufficiently long assessments, or other factors (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The reliability of this study was ensured through applying the methods consistently and carefully, documenting all data and tools clearly, and publishing a scorecard which can be reused by future researchers.

Strengths and Limitations

The multi-method qualitative research methodology utilized in this study has several strengths and limitations which should be acknowledged.

Strengths

The use of multiple methods (document review, interviews, and scorecard) works to complement the findings of each method to provide a deeper, richer understanding of the material. The methods build upon one another, and each provide a new approach to ensure that the evaluations are properly analyzed. For example, the document review provides the general context for the study. The interviews provide the motivations and personal perceptions of those who performed the evaluation as well as a deeper understanding of the methods used in the evaluations. And, lastly, the Scorecard provides the overall summarization of the findings.

Limitations

One limitation for this study is the fact that a small number of organizations were reviewed which means that there is a small sample size. The small number of organizations available for this review may result in a limited broader understanding of current feminist evaluation practices; however, the exploration does provide an early view of what is happening in the context of a relatively young policy. In addition, only one individual from each

organization were interviewed regarding the evaluation which may result in a narrow understanding of how the evaluation was conducted. Furthermore, another limitation is the use of purposive sampling methods. This method was chosen due to the difficulty in securing participants for the study. The study was conducted during the environment of Covid-19 which made it difficult to secure participants due to limited capacity and resources as well as some organizations choosing to not participate for fear of criticism.

Chapter 4: Findings

As discussed, the aim of this thesis is to provide insight into how organizations funded through the FIAP are conducting evaluations. In particular, the research intends to explore whether and how feminist principles are reflected in their practices. This was accomplished through the use of a number of themes which were identified through the theoretical thematic analysis and through a review of the feminist evaluation literature. These themes included evaluators recognizing and acknowledging their biases, incorporating a fully participatory approach which includes the most marginalized voices, accounting for barriers to inclusion such as transportation and childcare, and planning for the evaluation to be used for political and systemic change.

In order to explore these themes, the research examined three case examples through the use of interviews, analysis of the Evaluation Reports, and rankings on a 'Feminist Evaluation Scorecard' which was developed for this research as per the Methodology chapter. Due to confidentiality, the names of the organizations used as the case examples are pseudonyms. A brief description of each of the case examples follows:

- The first case example was examining “Organization A” and their Mid-Term Evaluation Report published February 2020. This organization is a medium-sized international economic development organization focusing on poverty alleviation. The evaluation was funded through Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and examined the project activities from 2015-2020. The interview was conducted with the Director of Impact and Measurement, who had been in that role for four years.
- The second case example examined “Organization B” and their Independent Mid-Term Evaluation which was funded by GAC and other major donors and covered

between January 2016 to June 2020. Organization B is a large United Nations agency working on social and economic justice. The interview was conducted with a Senior Evaluation Officer, who had been in this role for 12 years, and who also teaches an Evaluation Manager Training Certificate Program within their organization.

- Lastly, the third case example was “Organization C” and their Final Evaluation published November 2021 and covered the period of 2016-2021. Organization C is a small volunteer-run non-profit focused on promoting self-reliance through grassroots initiatives. The interview was with the Executive Director who had been with the organization for over 10 years.

In total, two of the case examples are mid-term evaluations and only one is a final evaluation. This is due to the relatively recent implementation of the FIAP and the fact that most organizations have not completed a full evaluation cycle since the FIAP was implemented in 2017. However, the mid-term evaluations use similar evaluation approaches and techniques as a final evaluation and they provide useful insights into how these approaches are currently being used in the field.

Interview and Document Review Findings

I. The Use of Self-Reflection Within the Evaluation

A primary theme which emerged from the literature review was regarding the use of self-reflection. One of the core principles of feminist evaluation as described by Sielbeck-Bowen et al. (2002) is that “the personal experiences, perspectives, and characteristics evaluators brings to evaluations (and with which we interact) lead to a particular political stance” (pp.3-4). Due to

this, feminist evaluations typically include a self-reflection statement to recognize the evaluator's biases and personal experiences as part of the evaluation process.

Document Review

The document review showed no evidence of self-reflections by the evaluators from any of the three participating organizations.

Interviews

Although there was no evidence found within the document review, the interviewee at Organization A, when asked about the use of self-reflection, expressed that self-reflection was included as part of this evaluation but was not recorded within the Evaluation Report. The interviewee stated that the evaluators recorded their “personal reflections and observations” and this was also done by “all those engaged including those who supported [them] in translating the responses” (personal communication, January 21, 2022). The interviewee with Organization B explained that some of the evaluations conducted by their organization do contain self-reflections and, when they are included, they are located under the “Statement of Limitations” section of the Evaluation Report. However, the participant noted that this particular report did not include such reflections under the “Statement of Limitations” section. Lastly, the Organization C interviewee, when asked about the use of self-reflection by the evaluators, said that “I don’t think they thought of that” (personal communication, January 28th, 2022).

II. A Focus on Gender Inequities Leading to Social Injustice

This theme emerged from the literature review of feminist evaluation. Sielbeck-Bowen et al. (2002) state that “feminist evaluation has gender inequities that lead to social injustice as a central focus” (pp.3-4). As such, the Evaluation Reports and interviews were examined to

determine if they contained evidence of acknowledging gender inequities and how these may affect society within the realm of the project.

Document Review

When examining the Evaluation Reports, all three included analysis and questions focusing on women and gender issues; however, the depth to which the questions included the associated issue of social injustice varied between the evaluations. When examining the Evaluation Report by Organization A, it was found to have an extensive focus on gender inequities leading to social injustice. For example, some of the themes discussed within the report included:

- **Access to Market Actors and Resources:** examined how the project increased “women’s access to market opportunities by linking them with market actors and resources” (p.13)
- **Challenges in Performing Household Work:** examined challenges faced by participants when completing household work with a section on women particular issues such as “women with young children” who “must do extra work when they return from attending any project activity” (p.16)
- **Improved Intrahousehold Relationship:** examined intrahousehold relationships after participating in the project for men and women
- **Increased Recognition:** examined the recognition received by men and women within the community and their own households due to their increased knowledge and skills
- **Increased Contribution to Household Income:** examined particularly women’s contributions to household income and how this affects their wellbeing
- **Greater Involvement in Household Decision Making:** examined particularly women’s involvement in decision making within their own households
- **Increased Public Participation and Leadership:** examined client’s confidence and “ability to speak in public and attend community meetings” (p.22)

(Organization A, Evaluation Report, February 2020)

When examining the Evaluation Report for Organization B, there was limited evidence of a focus on gender inequities leading to social injustice. For example, the sections included in the Evaluation Report’s analysis included sections such as:

- Relevance and Strategic Fit
- Validity of Intervention Design

- Intervention Progress and Effectiveness
- Efficiency of Resource Use
- Effectiveness of Management Arrangements
- Impact Orientation and Key Stakeholder Populations
- Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination

(Organization B, Evaluation Report, March 2019, p.iii)

In addition, the only evaluation question which addressed gender inequities in any form was “what are the key achievements of the programme on gender equality and women’s empowerment?” (Organization B, Evaluation Report, March 2019, p.38).

The Evaluation Report for Organization C, on the other hand, was found to include a focus on gender inequities and social injustice. For example, the Report states that the gender analysis “considered how other factors associated with discrepancies might play a role in contributing to poorer outcomes for women – including the impact of the rural setting, food insecurity, level of education, distance from health posts, and ethnicity (caste), among others” (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.11). The Report stated that it aimed to study the effects of the project on the following:

- Changes in disadvantaged populations and women’s access to water and sanitation
- Improvement in gender equality and empowerment of women and girls
- Changes in self-esteem and security of women and girls
- Barriers to... facilities and maternal health in the context of COVID-19
- Indicators and data collection approaches for future monitoring and reporting of equity of access to services for disadvantaged group, particularly women

(Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.4)

The Report also included an evaluation question asking, “how did the project address social, economic, cultural, political, environmental, and systemic factors to improve the situation of women in... behavior and maternal health situation?” (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.11). Furthermore, Organization C’s Evaluation Report included an appendix

with questions asked of participants during the Key Informant Interviews which included the question: “What are the changes made because of the project activities in your village/school? What kind of changes did you see in the lives of women, girls and excluded groups? What are the evidences to support the changes?” (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.46).

Interviews

There was no evidence of a focus on gender inequities leading to social injustice found within any of the three conducted interviews.

III. Ensuring Inclusiveness and Reducing Barriers to Access

One of the key principles of Feminist Evaluation is that there are “multiple ways of knowing” and that “some ways are privileged over others” (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002, pp.3-4). As such, ensuring that many voices are included within an evaluation is a key approach used in feminist evaluations. Due to this, the theme of ensuring inclusiveness and reducing barriers to access was used to examine the Evaluation Reports and the results of the interviews. Barriers to access may include being unable to attend focus group discussions due to financial cost, transportation difficulties, or childcare commitments. Possible actions to reduce barriers to access could be traveling to where participants live, arranging for transportation methods, ensuring childcare is available at meetings, or providing financial support for involvement in the evaluation.

Document Review

A review of Organization A’s Evaluation Report showed evidence of ensuring inclusiveness. For example, in the Report it outlined how “187 persons (176 women and 11 men)

were interviewed through individual and focus group discussions” and, in addition, “three group discussions were held with the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) to determine the purpose, scope, and research questions” (Organization A, Evaluation Report, February 2020, p.4).

However, there was no evidence found in the Evaluation Report of methods being taken to reduce barriers to access for vulnerable populations. In the Evaluation Report for Organization B, the methodology section describes how the evaluation included Focus Group Discussions with “beneficiaries” of the project (Organization B, Evaluation Report, March 2019, p.8).

However, similar to Organization A, there was no further information provided regarding where the focus groups were held or what methods were taken by the evaluators to address any potential barriers to access. Lastly, Organization C’s Evaluation Report describes how “primary data for the gender assessment was collected using key informant interview(n=21) and focused group discussion (n=4)” (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.6). The focus groups were held by the evaluators in the location of three communities and it was noted that the discussions “was participated in by mixed caste and ethnicities” (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.17). However, no further evidence was found in the report relating to ensuring inclusiveness or reducing barriers to access for vulnerable populations.

Interviews

Although no evidence of attention to reducing barriers to access was found in the Evaluation Report, Organization A indicated through the interviews that they were very cognizant of the importance of ensuring inclusiveness and that the evaluation took appropriate measures to reduce barriers to access for vulnerable populations. The interviewee stated that “each of the participants either were transported to a central location where we were doing interviews or, if not, they were paid for transportation and childcare was available” (personal

communication, January 21, 2022). In addition, it was noted that in some cases, “especially for those with young babies, they were asked to bring them if they wanted and older children and other relatives could also be brought if they wanted and they were more comfortable providing childcare that way” (personal communication, January 21, 2022). The interview with the participant from Organization B, on the other hand, did not provide much further evidence for inclusiveness or reduction of barriers to access. The interviewee noted, when asked about the sampling method for participating in the focus group discussion, that “the beneficiaries who participated in the focus groups were probably recommended by program staff” and that they personally had “no information” regarding whether transportation or childcare were considered and included (personal communication, March 2, 2022). Lastly, Organization C’s interview showed some evidence for this theme. The interviewee noted that the “evaluators went to where the people were” when conducting the interviews and focus group discussions (personal communication, January 28, 2022). However, the interviewee continued on to state that they did not think that childcare was included but it was something that had been “pondered” (personal communication, January 28, 2022).

IV. The Use of Participatory Methodology

Related to ensuring inclusiveness and reducing barriers to access, another theme which emerged from the analysis was the inclusion of participatory methods within the evaluations. This theme is related to the previous theme of inclusion but differs in that it focuses on the methodology and how it was implemented in the evaluation. It particularly focused on the inclusion of a variety of stakeholders in the evaluation design and drafting of recommendations.

Document Review

Organization A does not purport to be following a participatory approach for their evaluation but still showed evidence of participatory methods being used. Within the Evaluation Report for Organization A, it states that “the study adopted principles of Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE) approach that enhances the likelihood of informing decisions and improving performance” (Organization A, Evaluation Report, February 2020, p.7). However, the Report continues on to say that “primary intended users were engaged at the beginning of the evaluation process who made all major decisions about the study (e.g., identifying purpose, questions, shaping the findings, etc.)” and that there was an Evaluation Advisory Committee formed with key stakeholders (Organization A, Evaluation Report, February 2020, p.7). The Report then describes the methods used which include a document review, focus groups with project clients, interviews with project partners, and interviews with project staff.

The evaluation conducted by Organization B describes the methodology as having “applied a qualitative and participatory approach, engaging with key stakeholders... during the design, field work, validation and reporting stages” (Organization B, Evaluation Report, March 2019, p.7). The Report indicates that the evaluation had four phases:

- 1) An inception phase based on a review of existing documents to produce the inception report;
- 2) A data analysis phase;
- 3) A fieldwork phase to collect and analyse primary data; and
- 4) A reporting phase to produce the final evaluation report.

In the “Inception Phase” of the evaluation, the Report indicates that “correspondence and discussions [were] held with the evaluation manager, the programme team... and staff of the two donors” (Organization B, Evaluation Report, March 2019, p.7). During the “Fieldwork Phase”, the main methods included key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and observation of programme activities. It notes that during this phase a meeting was held where “main

stakeholders commented on [the] findings in the general discussion that followed the presentation” (Organization B, Evaluation Report, March 2019, p.8). Lastly, in the “Reporting Phase”, the draft evaluation report “was shared with all relevant stakeholders and a request for comments was issued to respond within a specified time period” after which the consultant “evaluated the comments and considered them for inclusion in the final report” (Organization B, Evaluation Report, March 2019, p.8). Also within this phase, the Evaluation Report notes that a “critical reflection process... for quality communication and reporting of evaluation outcomes” was followed which included the evaluation manager and program team reviewing presentation, key stakeholder attending stakeholder workshop where preliminary findings were presented, and a debriefing (Organization B, Evaluation Report, March 2019, p.8). Overall, therefore, the review of Organization’s B Evaluation Report demonstrated a strong commitment to the use of participatory methods.

The review of Organization C’s Evaluation Report showed limited evidence of the use of participatory methods. The Report notes that a “cross-sectional descriptive study design” was used with “qualitative methods and tools such as focused group discussion, interviews, and observation of the project activities” (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.17). No further evidence was found in the Report describing a participatory methodology or the use of participatory methods in this evaluation.

Interviews

Although Organization A’s Evaluation Report did not claim to use participatory methodology, the interviewee suggested that the evaluation was participatory in nature. When asked about the level of participatory methodology used in the evaluation, the participant from Organization A stated that:

When you say it was a participatory evaluation, it is not a yes or no. It's a continuum to what extent you have engaged or consulted or involved them in this process. So on a scale of 1-10, I would say [this evaluation] was a 6 or 7. Some of the stakeholders were engaged at the design of the evaluation, including our country staff and partners. But direct clients, we could probably have done more... when we first piloted [the evaluation], we did change some of the data gathering tools to make it more responsive. So I would say yes [it was participatory], but probably there is always room to do better. (personal communication, January 21, 2022)

Similarly, Organization B's interview confirmed that the evaluation used many participatory methods. The participant noted that the organization "usually try to do very participatory evaluations" (personal communication, March 2, 2022). The interviewee described the process used as:

Before an evaluation is launched, the evaluation manager will contact all the stakeholders which could include participants. And they solicit their inputs. The evaluation manager uses the inputs that they receive from stakeholders to draft the Terms of Reference which are then circulated back to stakeholder to ensure that they properly reflected the inputs that they received. The Terms of Reference are used to appoint a consultant who collects and interprets data and writes the report. That report is then circulated for comments which are consolidated by evaluation manager and transmitted back to the consultant who makes any decisions that are deemed appropriate. We are quite participatory when we do evaluations.

(personal communication, March 2, 2022)

Lastly, Organization C’s evaluation was not described as participatory in the Report and, when asked about the use of the methodology during the interview, the participant noted that stakeholders were not “involved in the design” and that the approach was “forthright in explaining what they were doing and why” but it “wasn’t simply talking to people” (personal communication, January 28, 2022). Overall, the interviewee stated that the evaluators “explained what they were doing and why” but there wasn’t participation in the design of the evaluation (personal communication, January 28, 2022).

V. A Focus on Attempted Political or Social Change

Another major theme which emerged from the literature review is how feminist evaluation approaches place importance on considering and addressing systemic issues during evaluations. The focus on systemic issues ties into the belief that evaluations should attempt to promote social or political change rather than only reporting on the inclusion of women within a project (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002). As such, the Evaluation Reports and interviews were examined to identify evidence of attempted social or political change throughout the evaluation process.

Document Review

A review of the Evaluation Reports from the three case examples revealed evidence of attempted social or political change within only one of the evaluations. The Organization A evaluation demonstrated attempted political or social change through the subjects being studied. For example, some of the key elements examined in the evaluation included:

- Capacity building trainings including gender and leadership training
- Access to market actors and resources for women

- Impact of the project on women’s intra-household decision-making

In addition, the Evaluation Report included a section of the evaluation report on systemic change (labeled in the report as “Systems Change”) (Organization A, Evaluation Report, February 2022, p.45). The review of the Evaluation Reports of Organization B and C, however, did not reveal evidence of attempted social or political change.

Interviews

The interviews with Organization A and B did not reveal any further evidence for a focus on systemic issues or the desire to attempt political or social change. During the interview with Organization C, the interviewee acknowledged that systemic change was required but also acknowledged that the evaluation did not do enough to address it. The participant stated that “[they] were aware that the issues being dealt with are systemic and political and deeply rooted in society but there was a bit of tension between us and the local partner [that conducted the evaluation as they were not] inclined to take substantial measures to include gender equality more comprehensively” (personal communication, January 28, 2022). This statement helps to explain the lack of focus on systemic issues found within the Evaluation Report.

VI. Dissemination of Evaluation Results

Sielbeck-Bowen et al. (2002) outline that feminist evaluation should acknowledge that “knowledge is a powerful resource that serves an explicit or implicit purpose” and that “knowledge should be a resource of and for the people who create, hold, and share it” (pp.3-4). As such it is important to consider if the evaluation and its report are used for political purposes? Was it shared with participants of the project? Was it disseminated in alternative methods such as video, infographics, or other mediums that may increase sharing and understanding of the

findings? These are the questions that were asked when reviewing the Evaluation Reports and interview transcripts.

Document Review

None of the evaluations studied indicated inclusion of the types of dissemination outlined in the questions above. The Organization A evaluation documents did not mention dissemination but it was noted that the evaluation report is “written primarily for the project management and staff” (Organization A, Evaluation Report, February 2020, p.4). The evaluation conducted by Organization B stated that the “primary end users” of the Evaluation Report included management, internal departments, and donors with “secondary parties” which may use the results of the evaluation including regional organizations, national tripartite constituents and civil society organizations (Organization B, Evaluation Report, March 2019, p.X). There was no mention of sharing the results with participants or the creation of alternative methods of dissemination in the evaluation report documents or interview. Organization C’s Evaluation Report did not discuss dissemination or the intended usage of the findings.

Interviews

During the interviews, the participants were asked about the intended usage and dissemination for the evaluation reports and associated findings. In Organization A’s interview, it was noted that the evaluation was “used internally” as that is the primary objective for a midterm evaluation; as such, it was disseminated amongst staff both at the organization’s headquarters as well as with the staff located in-country to “learn, adapt, change, or adjust activities” (personal communication, January 21, 2022). However, in addition to this internal usage, the evaluation is available on their website and communicated with “relevant stakeholders” including Global Affairs Canada. The interviewee stated that it was “definitely

not” shared with clients because “[the report] was written in English” (personal communication, January 21, 2022). The interviewee from Organization B stated that their evaluation reports are sent to their resource mobilization department to disseminate and share with donors including Global Affairs Canada, program staff, and that all evaluation reports are online and available to everyone (personal communication, March 2, 2022). The Organization C interviewee stated that their evaluation reports are sent to Global Affairs Canada to meet “contractual obligations”; however, the organization also “wants to use what [they] have learned” for future projects (personal communication, January 28, 2022). They noted that they would not say that the findings will be used for political action, but instead for “small things” such as making “work done by our partner to be more aware of barriers of gender equality and to take significant action to address those barriers” (personal communication, January 28, 2022).

VII. Knowledge of Feminist Evaluation Principles and the FIAP

While conducting the document review and interviews, a key theme which emerged was regarding the overall knowledge level of feminist evaluation and the FIAP itself by those either conducting the evaluations or those in charge of administering them.

Document Review

While reviewing the Evaluation Report by Organization A, there was evidence of a lack of knowledge of the FIAP. The Evaluation Report noted that of the project evaluation specialists in-country “none of them have ever heard of GAC’s Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)” (Organization A, Evaluation Report, February 2020, p.34). It also noted that the in-country evaluation specialists used by the organization have “very weak” monitoring and evaluation capacity and do not have the “frameworks or tools” for the projects and that they are

“usually inexperienced and have not attended any impact measurement trainings” other than those provided by the organization itself (Organization A, Evaluation Report, February 2020, p.34). However, the Evaluation Report for Organization B did not include any evidence regarding the knowledge of the FIAP or feminist evaluation. Lastly, in the review of the Evaluation Report by Organization C, it was noted that data collectors for the evaluation were provided with “intensive training for two days” (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.18) but no mention was made of feminist evaluation specific training or knowledge of the FIAP.

Interviews

The interviews included a question about the self-rated level of knowledge of Feminist Evaluation held by the participants (refer to Appendix D for a sample Interview Guide). Only one of the interviewed individuals, from Organization A, stated that they had detailed knowledge of what constituted feminist theory and feminist evaluation. They noted that they had “been in this field for quite long” and so would consider themselves quite knowledgeable (personal communication, January 21, 2022). The other two interviewees indicated that they either “knew little about it” (Organization B, personal communication, March 2, 2022) or “did not know” (Organization C, personal communication, January 28th, 2022) about feminist evaluation. Organization B noted that they host a training program for evaluators within their organization, the Evaluation Manager Training Certification Program, but this training does not include feminist evaluation. Lastly, during the interview with Organization A, a targeted questions was asked regarding the lack of knowledge by the evaluation specialists indicated in the Evaluation Report. The interviewee explained that while training on topics such as feminist evaluation approaches was conducted at the beginning of the project, staff turnover had led to a lack of

knowledge of the FIAP and feminist principles amongst the monitoring and evaluation staff (personal communication, January 21, 2022).

VIII. Challenges to Integrating Feminist Approaches

A theme which emerged from the interviews was relating to challenges the participants saw as facing their organizations when attempting to integrate feminist or gender-based approaches to evaluation.

Document Review

There was no evidence found within any of the three Evaluation Reports for the theme of challenges to integration of feminist approaches.

Interviews

During the Organization C interview, it was suggested that the budget was a major issue in ensuring that further integration of feminist principles was included. The interviewee stated that there was “reluctance by the local partner to embrace the FIAP” as limited funds could be used for either providing more services to local communities or including more feminist approaches within evaluations and this perceived trade-off led to questions about what it was exactly that the organization and donors wanted to achieve (personal communication, January 28, 2022). In addition, the interviewee also suggested that, although they “did not like to repeat tired stereotypes of patriarchal societies”, there were some issues with “male leaders reluctant to embrace the principles of FIAP” (personal communication, January 28, 2022). In contrast, the Organization B participant noted that a major reason that some feminist principles were not included in the evaluation was due to lack of direction from GAC and the FIAP itself. The interviewee stated that there has been an increase in including gender issues within their

evaluations such as through disaggregating data and that this has been driven by the UN Women requirements to report through the System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) (personal communication, March 2, 2022). However, according to the interviewee, there has been no equivalent requirements for inclusion of feminist principles and approaches coming from GAC through the FIAP and, without such a requirement, there is little incentive to follow feminist approaches (personal communication, March 2, 2022). The Organization A interviewee, on the other hand, stated that the integration of feminist principles was reliant on whether the project itself was feminist and therefore necessitated the inclusion of these principles. The interviewee indicated that “an evaluation is informed by your project design and if that design is not meant to promote the principles of the FIAP then it becomes difficult to design an evaluation using feminist evaluation principles” (personal communication, January 21, 2022). The interviewee continued on to say that if an evaluation is conducted on a project where feminist approaches have not been included, then the evaluation design needs to intentionally include approaches such as “being more intentional, facilitating participation of women respondents, childcare, etc” (personal communication, Organization A, January 21, 2022).

IX. Perceived Value of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)

This theme emerged from the interviews as the participants were asked about their personal opinions on the FIAP and the perceived value they saw in integrating feminist approaches into their evaluations (refer to Appendix A for the interview question).

Document Review

None of the three Evaluation Reports studied spoke to the value of the FIAP and, therefore, there are no findings to report for this section for the document review.

Interviews

All three interviewees stated that there was some usefulness to following the FIAP and including feminist theory within their evaluations. The interviewee at Organization B suggested that feminist principles “help to avoid ecological fallacy that sometimes plague our evaluations” (personal communication, March 2, 2022). The interviewee at Organization A also saw value in the inclusion of the FIAP, but to a more limited extent, stating that “it depends on which stage of evaluation you are including it” and they felt that sometimes it can lead to the inclusion of questions and metrics that did not have a practical purpose and could lead to “wasting time” (personal communication, January 21, 2022). This interviewee illustrated their answer with an example: during the development of data gathering tools, gender specialists wanted to include questions that were “just data” and “wasn’t used for any purpose” (personal communication, January 21, 2022) and, without including action on the findings from this information gathering, the interviewee found that it did not improve the project. The interviewee at Organization C, while seeing value in the FIAP, was critical of the policy as they felt that it was deviating focus from poverty alleviation, which they believed should be the primary focus of Canadian international assistance. They stated that “alleviation of poverty is sidelined a bit” and that “because it is feminist, doesn’t mean that it alleviates poverty” (personal communication, January 28, 2022).

Scorecard Analysis

In addition to the interviews and the evaluation documents, a ‘Feminist Evaluation Scorecard’ was completed for each of the three case examples. The Scorecard provided a number (0, 1, or 2) to indicate the level of inclusion of certain criteria which were selected to show how a feminist or gender-based approach was used during the evaluation. Scores were assigned based on whether the criterion was not included (score of 0), partially included (score of 1), or fully

incorporated (score of 2). The scores were decided upon based on a combination of findings from reading the evaluation report and the results from the interviews. The highest possible score for this Scorecard was 56 which would mean full inclusion of all of the selected criteria and would indicate a very high alignment with the feminist evaluation approach used in the evaluation.

According to the results of the scorecards, the Organization A evaluation had the highest alignment with feminist evaluation approaches out of the three studied case examples. Organization A received a score of 35 points out of a possible 56 (see tables below for details). As discussed in the Document Review and Interview Finding section, the evaluation was found to have queries which extended beyond traditional questions of efficiency, effectiveness and relevance, included evidence of change, and related to the transformation of gender power relations. It also scored highly in ensuring that appropriate terminology was used (e.g., the Report did not use the term “beneficiaries” to describe program participants). The Report also frequently included quotes from women and other participants to showcase and include the voices of those not normally heard. Areas where Organization A’s evaluation were not as highly scored included participant disaggregation as the Report only showed disaggregation of their statistics into “male” and “female”. However, the interviewee from Organization A stated that their internal documents further divided the numbers into age and location although the evaluators chose not to include ethnicity when collecting data from participants (personal communication, January 21, 2022). The criteria which scored zero included explicitly discussing the ethical considerations of the evaluation, which were not included in the Evaluation Report, and the ownership of the evaluation among participants.

Organization B, on the other hand, was found to not have a strong alignment with feminist evaluation approaches within their evaluation. The evaluation received an overall score of 14 out of 56 possible points indicating that there remained much that could have been included to follow feminist approaches. When reviewing the Evaluation Report, one area where Organization B scored highly for feminist approaches was in the 'Change Orientation' section where the evaluation was found to have included concrete recommendations that were strategic and creative and, ultimately, practical. However, other than this section, the evaluation was found to have limited alignment with feminist approaches. In the section of the Scorecard, 'Evaluation Questions', the evaluation was rated 'partial inclusion' for including questions that extended beyond efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance. This was given as the evaluation included a question relating to gender equality and women's empowerment but a deeper look into social issues could have been included in order to score a 'full inclusion' on the Scorecard. Another section where the evaluation scored partially was in the 'Form and Style' section. The Evaluation Report was found to be well-written but it was very technical, which might make it challenging for individuals outside the evaluation field to access. The Report also included some direct quotes to showcase participant voices, but it was determined that more could have been included throughout the report. Lastly, there were a number of sections where there was no alignment with feminist evaluation approaches within this evaluation. For example, when selecting participants for the focus groups, the evaluation was found to not have used methods to ensure that frequently excluded voices were included. This led to a score of zero given in the 'Selection of Participants' section of the Scorecard.

Finally, the evaluation conducted by Organization C was found to be in between the other two case examples for its alignment to feminist evaluation approaches. It scored 23 points out of

the possible 56, indicating that although it did follow some feminist approaches there remained more that could have been included in this evaluation as well. The Evaluation Report for this organization scored highly in the ‘Evaluation Questions’ section as the evaluation included questions that went beyond traditional focus on efficiency, effectiveness and relevancy. For example, the evaluation asked questions on issues such as “knowledge, attitudes, and practices amongst women in the project areas” and “are there any changes in gender-based violence among beneficiaries of the project” (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.11). The evaluation also included concrete recommendations that were practical and creative. For example, one of the recommendations directed the organization to design a theory of change for the project that “incorporates activities and indicators related to maternal and child health and gender, equality, inclusion and empowerment” and another focused on the project management team to “expand and comprise gender-balanced and adequately oriented staff on gender issues” (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021, p.8). However, the evaluation was found to be less inclusive of feminist evaluation approaches in the section ‘Selection of Participants’. The Report notes that the evaluators went to communities to interview and conduct focus groups but there is no discussion of ensuring that the most marginalized voices were included (Organization C, Evaluation Report, November 2021). Lastly, the evaluation received a ‘no inclusion’ score for the areas of explicitly stating ethical considerations, encouraging participants to speak ‘outside the box’ and designing evaluation products to be shared with various audiences.

It should be noted for all of case examples, that a criterion scored as “no inclusion” does not necessarily mean that it was not considered or incorporated by the organization, but merely that there was no evidence available through the interview and document review. This is one of

the limitations of the Scorecard that must be considered when reviewing the results. In addition, some criteria were scored with “N/A” if it was not possible to make a judgement on the inclusion of the criteria based on the available evidence. Overall, the Scorecard is a non-exhaustive list of criteria intended to provide a simple and practical method of assessing the inclusion of feminist approaches within evaluations and should not be taken as a judgement on the merits of the evaluation themselves.

Table 3:

Organization A Scorecard

Topic	Criteria	Score
Evaluation Questions		
	Questions extend beyond traditional questions of efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance	2
	Questions have been added to ensure evidence of change in women’s lives is gathered	2
	Questions included about transformations in gender power relations and specific female concerns/interests	2
Rapport/Common Language		
	If the word “feminist” is not included, are the concepts, principles, and arguments being used?	1
	Is the evaluation provocative but not hostile?	2
	Is appropriate and up-to-date terminology used? (e.g., “beneficiaries” is an outdated term)	2
Ethics		
	Has the ethics of the study been explicitly considered?	0
	Have concrete context-specific measures in the work plan been proposed to guarantee implementation of ethical principles? (i.e., safeguarding confidentiality, protecting vulnerable informants from reprisals, anticipating risks and applying secure strategies to access testimonies)	0
Selection of Participants		
	Are affected actors included from the most powerful to the frequently excluded (i.e., marginalized women, rural women, victims of violence, girls, transsexuals, sex workers)?	2
	Are participants disaggregated by age, ethnicity, class, education level, etc to capture and analyze group diversity and disparities?	1
Be Creative		
	Have flexible and informal roundtable discussions with key actors and informants been conducted?	2
	Are less structured methods used to allow evaluators to react to situations of uncertainty, adapt to specific cultural contexts and situations and counteract imbalances of power relations	N/A

	Are participants encouraged and motivated to speak ‘outside the box’	1
	In meetings with marginalized women: are drawings/charts/storytelling/other creative methods used to capture their sense of change and success	1
Expand Sources and Understanding		
	Has who attended the meetings and who did not and why been analyzed?	1
	Have families been visited whenever possible?	2
Capture Diversity		
	Have relevant differences and inequalities between and within genders been identified?	1
Listen for Meanings		
	Are actors included as co-analysts and not only as informants?	1
	Are meanings visualized and charted?	0
Evaluation Products		
	Are specific evaluation communication products (i.e., videos, executive reports, public policy recommendations) prepared when possible for different audiences and uses?	1
Validation and Ownership		
	Has ownership been promoted as well as use of the evaluation findings among participants for advocacy purposes?	0
	Are specific communication activities and products planned to ensure that results and findings are shared with each stakeholder group in understandable, relevant, pertinent, useful manner to increase participants’ capacities to understand their situation, strengthen their purpose, propose, negotiate, make decisions, find solutions	0
Form and Style		
	Is the report written and structured to reduce barriers to understanding for all readers? Is it friendly and attractive to read?	1
	Are quotes extracted from interviews used extensively throughout and in presentations/workshops to support findings and reflect the voices of those not normally heard?	2
	Has it been remembered that change is slow and it is necessary to highlight small victories which could serve as an example for other programs and motivate further progress?	2
Change Orientation		
	Are recommendations included with concrete steps and advice on follow-up actions?	2
	Are the recommendations strategic and creative?	2
	Are the recommendations practical?	2
	TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED	35

Table 4:

Organization B Scorecard

Topic	Criteria	Score
Evaluation Questions		
	Questions extend beyond traditional questions of efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance	1
	Questions have been added to ensure evidence of change in women’s lives is gathered	0
	Questions included about transformations in gender power relations and specific female concerns/interests	0

Rapport/Common Language		
	If the word “feminist” is not included, are the concepts, principles, and arguments being used?	0
	Is the evaluation provocative but not hostile?	0
	Is appropriate and up-to-date terminology used? (e.g., “beneficiaries” is an outdated term)	0
Ethics		
	Has the ethics of the study been explicitly considered?	0
	Have concrete context-specific measures in the work plan been proposed to guarantee implementation of ethical principles? (i.e., safeguarding confidentiality, protecting vulnerable informants from reprisals, anticipating risks and applying secure strategies to access testimonies)	1
Selection of Participants		
	Are affected actors included from the most powerful to the frequently excluded (i.e., marginalized women, rural women, victims of violence, girls, transsexuals, sex workers)?	0
	Are participants disaggregated by age, ethnicity, class, education level, etc to capture and analyze group diversity and disparities?	0
Be Creative		
	Have flexible and informal roundtable discussions with key actors and informants been conducted?	1
	Are less structured methods used to allow evaluators to react to situations of uncertainty, adapt to specific cultural contexts and situations and counteract imbalances of power relations	N/A
	Are participants encouraged and motivated to speak ‘outside the box’	N/A
	In meetings with marginalized women: are drawings/charts/storytelling/other creative methods used to capture their sense of change and success	N/A
Expand Sources and Understanding		
	Has who attended the meetings and who did not and why been analyzed?	0
	Have families been visited whenever possible?	0
Capture Diversity		
	Have relevant differences and inequalities between and within genders been identified?	0
Listen for Meanings		
	Are actors included as co-analysts and not only as informants?	1
	Are meanings visualized and charted?	0
Evaluation Products		
	Are specific evaluation communication products (i.e., videos, executive reports, public policy recommendations) prepared when possible for different audiences and uses?	1
Validation and Ownership		
	Has ownership been promoted as well as use of the evaluation findings among participants for advocacy purposes?	0
	Are specific communication activities and products planned to ensure that results and findings are shared with each stakeholder group in understandable, relevant, pertinent, useful manner to increase participants’ capacities to understand their situation, strengthen their purpose, propose, negotiate, make decisions, find solutions	0
Form and Style		
	Is the report written and structured to reduce barriers to understanding for all readers? Is it friendly and attractive to read?	1

	Are quotes extracted from interviews used extensively throughout and in presentations/workshops to support findings and reflect the voices of those not normally heard?	1
	Has it been remembered that change is slow and it is necessary to highlight small victories which could serve as an example for other programs and motivate further progress?	1
Change Orientation		
	Are recommendations included with concrete steps and advice on follow-up actions?	2
	Are the recommendations strategic and creative?	2
	Are the recommendations practical?	2
TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED		14

Table 5:

Organization C Scorecard

Topic	Criteria	Score
Evaluation Questions		
	Questions extend beyond traditional questions of efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance	2
	Questions have been added to ensure evidence of change in women's lives is gathered	2
	Questions included about transformations in gender power relations and specific female concerns/interests	1
Rapport/Common Language		
	If the word "feminist" is not included, are the concepts, principles, and arguments being used?	1
	Is the evaluation provocative but not hostile?	1
	Is appropriate and up-to-date terminology used? (e.g., "beneficiaries" is an outdated term)	0
Ethics		
	Has the ethics of the study been explicitly considered?	0
	Have concrete context-specific measures in the work plan been proposed to guarantee implementation of ethical principles? (i.e., safeguarding confidentiality, protecting vulnerable informants from reprisals, anticipating risks and applying secure strategies to access testimonies)	0
Selection of Participants		
	Are affected actors included from the most powerful to the frequently excluded (i.e., marginalized women, rural women, victims of violence, girls, transsexuals, sex workers)?	1
	Are participants disaggregated by age, ethnicity, class, education level, etc to capture and analyze group diversity and disparities?	1
Be Creative		
	Have flexible and informal roundtable discussions with key actors and informants been conducted?	1
	Are less structured methods used to allow evaluators to react to situations of uncertainty, adapt to specific cultural contexts and situations and counteract imbalances of power relations	0
	Are participants encouraged and motivated to speak 'outside the box'?	0
	In meetings with marginalized women: are drawings/charts/storytelling/other creative methods used to capture their sense of change and success	0

Expand Sources and Understanding		
	Has who attended the meetings and who did not and why been analyzed?	0
	Have families been visited whenever possible?	1
Capture Diversity		
	Have relevant differences and inequalities between and within genders been identified?	1
Listen for Meanings		
	Are actors included as co-analysts and not only as informants?	0
	Are meanings visualized and charted?	0
Evaluation Products		
	Are specific evaluation communication products (i.e., videos, executive reports, public policy recommendations) prepared when possible for different audiences and uses?	0
Validation and Ownership		
	Has ownership been promoted as well as use of the evaluation findings among participants for advocacy purposes?	0
	Are specific communication activities and products planned to ensure that results and findings are shared with each stakeholder group in understandable, relevant, pertinent, useful manner to increase participants' capacities to understand their situation, strengthen their purpose, propose, negotiate, make decisions, find solutions	0
Form and Style		
	Is the report written and structured to reduce barriers to understanding for all readers? Is it friendly and attractive to read?	1
	Are quotes extracted from interviews used extensively throughout and in presentations/workshops to support findings and reflect the voices of those not normally heard?	2
	Has it been remembered that change is slow and it is necessary to highlight small victories which could serve as an example for other programs and motivate further progress?	2
Change Orientation		
	Are recommendations included with concrete steps and advice on follow-up actions?	2
	Are the recommendations strategic and creative?	2
	Are the recommendations practical?	2
	TOTAL POINTS ASSIGNED	23

Summary

In sum, the research examined how the organization conducted evaluations under the FIAP through the use of multiple qualitative methods. In the document review, the Evaluation Reports from each organization were reviewed using NVivo software and, whenever evidence of feminist evaluation approaches as defined by the literature review were found, the section was coded. The semi-structured interviews were then conducted with a participant from the organization and questions were asked about the evaluation, including specific questions to

provide clarity on the findings from the document review. The interviews were also analyzed and coded using NVivo. From this analysis, nine overarching themes emerged. Six of the themes relate to the evaluation itself and these include the use of self-reflection, the incorporation of participatory methods, and the depth to which the evaluation dealt with systemic issues. The remaining three themes emerged from the interviews and the perceptions of the interviewees. These included their self-rated knowledge of feminist evaluation approaches and the FIAP, their perceived challenges to integrating these approaches, and what they felt the value of the FIAP was to the evaluations they conducted. Lastly, a Scorecard was completed for each organization based on the results of the previous two analysis. The Scorecard provided an overall glimpse to how closely each evaluation aligned with feminist evaluation criteria and where more could have been incorporated. Through this analysis, it was found that all the case examples used some level of feminist evaluation approaches in the studied evaluations but there was ample room to include more, particularly in the case of the evaluations conducted by Organization B and C.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis

In this chapter, I discuss and analyze the findings from the three case examples regarding the practices of evaluation under the Feminist International Assistance Policy. Specifically, I will be examining how feminist approaches are being reflected within the studied evaluations. I will also be exploring unintended results which emerged from the research, such as factors influencing the level of feminist approaches incorporated into the evaluations. The analysis will aim to answer the two research questions which were outlined at the beginning of this thesis:

1. How are organizations conducting evaluations under the FIAP?
2. Are feminist evaluation principles reflected in the evaluations conducted under the FIAP? If so, how are they being used?

Situating the FIAP within a Technocratic/Transformational Framework

With the discussion of the dichotomy between technocratic and transformational feminism discussed in the literature review, it begs the question of which can be seen demonstrated within the Feminist International Assistance Policy. Although the FIAP is still relatively new, a number of recent publications have addressed this very question including articles by Parisi (2020), Morton et al. (2020), Tiessen (2019), and Cadesky (2020). While there are no definitions of feminism or gender equality found within the FIAP, the overwhelming answer by these scholars is that the FIAP appears to demonstrate a technocratic version of feminism rather than a transformational one. Parisi (2020) describes the FIAP as being “business as usual” for Canada’s aid policy and that the FIAP “does not just embody neoliberal feminism but also feminist neoliberalism” (p.164). Morton et al. (2020) also agree that the FIAP follows a more ‘transactional’ approach for feminism, although they term it “mainstream liberal feminism”

(p.329). Finally, Cadesky (2020) writes that the FIAP has “several weaknesses that hinder its full potential to promote feminist goals” (p.299). All of the authors cited above highlight issues with how the policy represent feminism. One of their major concern relates to the use of intersectionality. Morton et al. (2020) question “can a diluted, politically palatable, taxidermy of feminism be considered ‘feminist’ if it eschews intersectional analysis?” (p.334-5). Parisi notes that the FIAP renders the concept of intersectionality as “little more than a buzzword” (p.168). The primary concern was that the FIAP focuses almost exclusively on gender while ignoring other social categories such as class, age, sexual orientation, and ability and, when describing gender, appears to refer to women and girls as monolithic categories (Morton et al., 2020; Parisi, 2020; Cadesky, 2020). Tiessen (2019) notes that the policy contains 144 references to “gender” and 430 references to “women”; the fact that “women” appears at three times the rate of “gender” suggests “the ongoing challenge of articulating gender inequality and the power relations between groups” and can “reinforce power dynamics when the experiences of women and girls are predominantly expressed in essentialist victimhood sentiments” (p.5).

In addition, concerns were raised by these scholars about the ways that the FIAP aligns pro-gender norms “with global economic norms around growth, productivity, and competitiveness” (Parisi, 2020, p.165). Morton et al. (2020) note that this tendency has been termed “smart economics” which denotes the “marriage of economics and women’s empowerment” and it is a problem as it risks “recreating the very structural issues that feminists, and gender and development, seek to trouble and transform” (p.333). Parisi (2020) similarly argues that “the FIAP’s unwavering focus on economic growth as the path to poverty alleviation obscures how the structure of neoliberal capitalism produces and sustains these inequalities and

Canada's role in maintaining them" and that "this framing ostensibly reduces women's and gender equality rights to market citizenship" (p.173).

Due to these issues with the FIAP, Parisi (2020) and Cadesky (2020) both describe how the policy appears to align better with a WID approach to development rather than a GAD approach. It is also helpful to have a brief understanding of Canada's history of these approaches as it illustrates how the Government of Canada has switched between a WID and GAD approach throughout their policies. Beginning in the 1970s, Canada's former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) adopted guidelines on Women in Development (WID) making Canada a pioneer in gender issues (Swiss & Barry, 2017). However, the WID approach was criticized as an 'integrationist' or 'add women and stir' type of gender mainstreaming which positions women as objects of development" (Parisi, 2020, p.165). This focus on WID then changed with the adoption of the Gender Equality Plan in 1999 which signalled a shift in Canada's international development efforts to a gender and development (GAD) approach, (Tiessen, 2019). The GAD approach is considered by scholars as a "transformational form of gender mainstreaming" with a focus on the "social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations to women and men" and views "women (and men) as agents in development" (Parisi, 2020, p.165). However, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness led to a return to the WID approach in development as countries lost their focus on transformational change and instead focused on 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' (Parisi, 2020). With the adoption of the Feminist International Assistance Policy there was hope that this signalled Canada's return to a GAD approach. However, Parisi (2020) argues that while the FIAP appears to exhibit a GAD framework, the

policy in fact reflects more of a WID approach with its emphasis on poverty reduction and economic growth.

A Predominance of Gender-based Technocratic Approaches to Evaluation with Some Feminist Transformative Elements

Considering this review of the difference between technocratic and transformational feminism and the history of Canada's use of the WID and GAD approaches, how does this fit into the findings which came out of this research? As has been discussed, there has been a consensus in the literature that the FIAP reflects a more technocratic version of feminism and that it aligns better with the WID approaches to development, and I will argue that this is also reflected within the evaluations conducted by the case examples studied. Through the lens of the nine themes used in the findings section, I will therefore discuss how these reflect the use of a technocratic version of feminism in the studied evaluations similar to what was found in the FIAP itself.

The first theme outlined in the findings was related to the use of self-reflection by the evaluator. Self-reflection supports the notion that “knowledge and values are culturally, socially, and temporally contingent” and that “knowledge is also filtered through the knower” (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002, pp.3-4). In practice, this means that for an evaluation to be aligned with a transformative feminist approach the “evaluator needs to be reflexive and open” (Podems, 2010, p.9) while overtly recognizing potential bias. Although a gender-based technocratic approach can also recommend and include self-reflection, feminist evaluation “insists that the evaluator explicitly recognize that she or he is neither free nor disinterested” and for evaluators to be “explicit regarding their issues, values, and interests at the evaluation’s onset” (Podems, 2010, p.12). As such, when examining the use of self-reflection in the case examples, the findings demonstrate that this key component of feminist evaluation was absent in the case examples,

except for one participant stating that self-reflection was conducted by the evaluators but not explicitly included in the Evaluation Report,

The next theme which emerged from the research relates to the tenet of feminist evaluation that evaluations should have a central focus on “the gender inequities that lead to social injustice” as well as the understanding that “discrimination or inequality based on gender is systemic and structural” (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002, p.3). In a transformational feminist approach, there is a “particular stance, a worldview, a critical eye, that promotes the asking of different questions” (Mathison, 2005, p.155) which goes beyond the mere recognition of inequalities. The research found that all the case examples included questions on gender inequality and the evaluations appeared to exhibit a critical eye such as the use of “different questions” as Mathison (2005) described in the above quote. Therefore, it appears from the case examples that gender inequity was considered by the evaluators and a critical eye was used to formulate questions which aligns with the more transformational version of feminist approaches.

However, when looking at the next two themes of incorporating participatory methods and inclusiveness, there was less of an alignment with transformational feminist approaches. One of the tenets of feminist evaluation is that “there are multiple ways of knowing; some ways are privileged over others” (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002, p.3). Due to this, feminist evaluation “urges evaluators to employ a variety of ways of knowing, using intuition, emotions, and love as legitimate sources of insights into problems or program dynamics” (Brisolara, 2014, p.27). As such, someone’s ‘way of knowing’ can be different than another’s and the way that this knowledge can be created can be dynamic and inclusive, it becomes very important to ensure that many different voices are included through a variety of methods when conducting an

evaluation. The findings indicated that each case example employed a participatory approach to some extent although the depth to which participants were consulted throughout the design, implementation, and recommendation stage was found to be limited. Participation is considered a key element in transformational evaluation practices as the evaluations should “empower participants to transform the status quo and emancipate themselves from ongoing oppression” (Mertens & Wilson, 2019, p.161). In contrast, a technocratic approach lacks the “participatory and collaborative approaches to evaluation” (Chouinard, 2013, p.238). As such, the case examples demonstrated some elements of transformational feminist evaluation but more remained which could have been included to empower participants through involvement in the evaluation process and this resulted in a closer alignment overall with a technocratic approach to evaluation.

Similar to the theme of including participatory methods, the physical inclusion of participants through the removal of barriers to access, such as ensuring that childcare is offered or that transportation to focus groups is provided, is important to feminist evaluation. Without ensuring that the barriers to access were minimized, marginalized voices may not be able to participate within the evaluation, leading to a lack of sharing of their “way of knowing”. In the case examples studied, it was found that only one of the evaluations made a priority out of reducing barriers to access. In a transformational feminist approach, it is important to ensure that marginalized people are included in order that they may be served by the evaluations being conducted. For example, Mertens & Wilson (2019) write that for a truly transformational process to be used, “an evaluator needs to have a close and collaborative relationship with the stakeholders, including community leaders and members” (p.165). Thus, when examining the

inclusiveness of the evaluations used in the case examples, the analysis indicates that they align closer with a technocratic approach rather than a transformational feminist approach.

Another theme which was discussed in relation to the evaluations was whether and how the evaluations attempted social or political change. This theme emerged from the tenets of feminist evaluation which state that “discrimination or inequality based on gender is systemic and structural” and that “evaluation is a political activity” (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002, pp.3-4). In the case examples studied, it was found that only one of the evaluations had evidence of attempted social or political change shown in the themes studied throughout its evaluation. This lack of focus on political or social change by the majority of the evaluations is a major indicator that transformational feminist approaches were not being followed in these evaluations as these approaches require a focus on “the long-term systemic changes required to alter the power relations and structures that perpetuate inequalities” (Tiessen, 2019, p.7). In contrast, in a technocratic approach to feminism, the transformational potential on society and politics is “stripped” and instead the evaluations can “provide political cover to support investments that fall short of transforming patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender inequality” (Cadesky, 2020, p.299). This would suggest, therefore, that due to the lack of focus on political or social change, the evaluations demonstrated a potentially troublesome technocratic version of feminism.

The last relevant theme which emerged from the findings was regarding the dissemination of the results of the evaluation. This theme related to the tenet of feminist evaluation that knowledge should be shared and become a resource for those who helped create it (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002). In the findings, it was noted that some basic dissemination was

included in all of the case examples. For example, this was done through publishing the evaluation reports publicly or sharing the results with stakeholders such as funders and project management and staff. However, none of the evaluations was found to have used innovative techniques to share the results with project participants which would have aligned closer with a transformational version of feminist evaluation. This remained an area where more could have been done by all of the studied evaluations to move away from a technocratic version of feminist evaluation.

Insights from the Feminist Evaluation Scorecard

The analysis above can also be seen reflected in the ‘Feminist Evaluation Scorecard’ which was completed for each case example. The Scorecard was designed with a list of criteria, selected to be representative of practical ways that transformational feminist evaluation approaches can be included into an evaluation. The list was not intended to be exhaustive but merely to gauge the manner and extent that these feminist approaches were utilized during the evaluation. Although there are arguments that indicators and evidence-based measurement, originating largely from economics and business management, are a “dissemination of the corporate form of thinking” (Merry, 2011, p.S83) which tends to locate decision making in the Global North (Merry, 2011, p. S85), there are also benefits to measuring and documenting as a way to bring attention to deficits and can be a “valuable reform tool” (Merry, 2011, p.S85). Studies conducted suggest that, when used appropriately, scorecards can increase transparency and accountability (Kosack et al., 2021). The Feminist Evaluation Scorecard was therefore created as a means to assess the manner and degree to which transformational feminist approaches were used in an evaluation, based on the eight tenets of feminism as outlined by Sielbeck-Bowen et al. (2002), and is intended to provide a means of visualizing methods that this

version of feminism can be further built into future evaluations. The Scorecard was designed with the acknowledgement that there is no one interpretation of feminism as feminist theory varies widely and is inherently context-based (Beasley, 1999). The Scorecard approaches this reality through not dictating *how* the criteria can be met, leaving ample of room for interpretation and context-based methods. For example, the assessment for the evaluation questions asks whether questions have been included showing evidence of change in women's lives. This can be accomplished in many possible ways, but the inclusion of such questions is an indicator of whether transformational feminist theory was considered when creating the evaluation. However, the Scorecard is not intended to pass judgements over what was done wrong but instead provide insight on how further integration of feminist approaches can be included. Very few evaluations could score a full inclusion for all of the criteria as there are always avenues to further integrate theory into practice.

With this in mind, the results of the Feminist Evaluation Scorecards illustrate, similar to the interview and document review, that all three of the case examples did not fully utilize transformational feminist approaches when designing and implementing their evaluations. These scores indicate that there were many areas where further incorporation of transformational feminist approaches could have been done. For example, a consideration of ethics could have been explicitly included within the Evaluation Reports to illustrate how participants were safeguarded and protected. In addition, ownership of the evaluations could have been promoted so that participants could have been empowered throughout the process rather than being seen as 'beneficiaries' or passive actors in the process. Through measures such as these, transformational feminist approaches could have been further incorporated resulting in a less technocratic approach to feminism.

In sum, the findings indicated that the evaluations appeared to be more aligned with a technocratic version of feminist evaluation than a transformational one. This reflects the same findings as what has been discussed about the FIAP by Parisi (2020), Cadesky (2020), Tiessen (2019) and Morton et al. (2020) in their studies on the language of the policy. It is interesting to consider that the use of technocratic feminist approaches in the evaluations may be due to the way that the FIAP has been outlined and worded and that this influences how it is put into practice in the field. Cadesky (2020) notes that the presentation of gender equality and empowerment found within the FIAP can have “ramifications” on the translation into gender equality tools causing them to become “watered down” when put into practice (p.303). Parisi (2020) also notes that the wording and presentation of the policy can effect “the way that gender equality has been conceptualized and evaluated in international development funding and programming” (p.167). From the findings of this research, it would appear that this fear may be founded as transformational feminist approaches are being used sparsely in evaluations conducted by organizations under the FIAP.

Limited Understanding of the FIAP and Feminist Evaluation Practices

One unexpected finding identified during this research was that there appears to be limited and uneven knowledge and understanding of the FIAP and feminist evaluation by those who are responsible for commissioning and conducting the evaluations. The research found that only one of the three interviewed individuals (Organization A) possessed substantive knowledge of feminist evaluation and its underlying theories (January 21, 2022). The other two interviewees acknowledged that they had little to no knowledge of feminist evaluation (March 2, 2022; January 28, 2022). As to the limited understanding of the FIAP, the interviewee from the Organization B stated that they were “not familiar with [the] policy but, in general, [they are]

supportive” although they made sure to mention that the organization has an expert on feminist evaluation but they were not the evaluator-in-charge for the evaluation studied for this case example (March 2, 2022). The interviewee from Organization C had some knowledge of the FIAP but when discussing the details of the policy, there appeared to be confusion as to what it included and how it was implemented. Although the participant had read the FIAP and was aware of the pillars used in the policy, they stated that “the mandate of GAC should be to alleviate poverty” and that “feminist approaches have nothing to do with poverty alleviation” (January 28, 2022). They admitted that these viewpoints were based on “vague suspicions” (January 28, 2022).

Furthermore, the level of knowledge of feminist theory and the FIAP indicated in the interviews by those either conducting the evaluations or in charge of them was strongly related to the level in which feminist evaluation was incorporated into the evaluations. This can be seen through the ‘Feminist Evaluation Scorecard’ where the case example with the highest score was Organization A, which rated a 35 out of a possible 56, and this was the only interviewee to self-rate through the interview as having extensive knowledge relating to feminist evaluation. The other two organizations, which scored 14 (Organization B) or 23 (Organization C) out of 56, were the ones to declare their limited understanding of feminist evaluation. This finding would appear to suggest that, without some knowledge of feminist evaluation approaches and feminist principles, it may be difficult to ensure that these are incorporated within the evaluation. This can lead to the inclusion of more technocratic gender approaches to evaluation instead as these approaches are often simpler to incorporate than feminist evaluation approaches. For example, when disaggregating participants’ demographics, it is easy to place participants into ‘male’ or ‘female’ categories rather than further separating the groups into race/ethnicity, class, or other

statuses. It is also more difficult to examine systemic issues, or to attempt social or political change within an evaluation, or to overcome barriers to access through the inclusion of childcare or transportation. This difficulty could lead to these technocratic gender approaches to evaluation being defaulted to when there is a lack of knowledge of what feminist evaluation includes and methods on how to incorporate it.

Limited Capacity and Resources to Conduct Meaningful Feminist Evaluations

Another unexpected finding which came to light when conducting this research was related to the challenges of integrating feminist approaches into the evaluations. The primary challenge identified by the participants was the lack of resources to be able to integrate these approaches into their evaluations. The challenge extended beyond merely funding to also include a lack of training and knowledge sharing through GAC. For example, Organization C highlighted budget as a major constraint, stating that given a certain amount of funding they had to decide what was more important: ensuring feminist approaches are utilized in the evaluation or providing additional funding for the project to enhance water systems in the community (January 28, 2022). The Organization B interviewee highlighted lack of direction and knowledge sharing from GAC as a primary challenge to include feminist approaches such as ensuring that barriers to participate are overcome or the inclusion of self-reflection in the evaluations (March 2, 2022). These challenges indicate that although the Government of Canada would like to follow a feminist approach in their international development projects, it is the organizations themselves which are tasked with implementing these approaches. While this may provide freedom to organizations in implementing their own evaluations and to use approaches that are tailored to their programs, there should be support provided to organizations to implement the

approaches they need to align with the goals espoused by the FIAP. The partner organizations are often underfunded and do not have the training or knowledge to ensure that the approaches are included in their projects as expected by the FIAP. Even when training was included, for example as was done in the Organization A evaluation, issues such as turnover of staff can become a huge issue leading a loss of institutional knowledge of feminist principles and approaches (January 21, 2022). Overall, it is interesting to note that the government may assert intentions to follow feminist principles but without an associated commitment in providing funding, training, and direction these policies will be difficult or impossible for participating organizations to carry out the implementation in practice.

Summary

Overall, the research found that although some transformational feminist approaches were included in the studied evaluations, the extent to which they were included were not consistent throughout the case examples. Some of the evaluations were closer aligned to these transformational feminist approaches while others were not aligned closely with the tenets of feminist evaluation. When considering all of the case examples, however, it was found that technocratic approaches would be a better descriptor for the type of evaluation approaches used in the studied case examples. It was also found that the more knowledge that an evaluation or organization had on feminist evaluation, the more likely that they would be to follow feminist approaches. It was also interesting to note that GAC provides expectations of following these principles but without sufficient corresponding guidance or communication to how feminist approaches can be incorporated into the evaluations.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis began with the aim of exploring how organizations were practising evaluations under the Feminist International Assistance Policy. The topic was chosen as means to explore the implementation of this new policy announced by the government of Justin Trudeau in 2017 who “proclaim themselves as feminists” (Government of Canada, 2017, p.i). This proclamation led to questions such as: what kind of feminism? How is it being implemented? What are the intended results? With the relatively recent implementation of the policy, there have been few studies executed by scholars to answer these questions. The thesis chose to examine the implementation of the policy in regards to evaluation practice, often overlooked but essential to assess the quality of aid thereby helping “providers to more effectively answer their critics” (Renzaho, 2008, p,XVI). Evaluation, indeed, has been identified as “the most underexplored stage of the policymaking process” (Bustelo 2017, p.85). The FIAP, which states that it will target all international assistance initiatives including monitoring and evaluation, aims to follow “a feminist approach to international assistance [that] recognizes that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls require the transformation of social norms and power relations” (Government of Canada, 2017, p.9). The statement shows that a transformational feminist approach is intended to go beyond merely documenting differences between men and women to transforming society. The research conducted attempted to provide an early view of evaluation practices under the FIAP and to investigate whether this transformational approach to feminism was being used by organizations in their evaluations. It was found that a combination of technocratic and transformational gender approaches to evaluation are being used; however, overall a closer alignment was found with technocratic feminist approaches.

Suggestions for Future Practices

Although some elements of transformational feminist evaluation have been incorporated into the case examples, it has been found in this research that if GAC and the Government of Canada want partner international organizations to further include these types of feminist approaches in their evaluations, more must be done to facilitate this inclusion. The research indicated that a major barrier for partner organizations in including feminist approaches in their evaluations was the lack of clarity in the FIAP, as well as limited knowledge and training of what constitutes feminist evaluation. A major issue is the failure to define feminism within the policy which “leaves the FIAP open to a range of interpretations” but has primarily resulted in a technocratic definition in alignment with the spirit of the current FIAP wording (Tiessen, 2019, p.8). This finding is corroborated by others in the field; for example, Christoph Zürcher, a professor of international affairs at the University of Ottawa who worked with GAC to conduct an analysis of the FIAP’s action areas for evaluation, noted that the policy is “too abstract to evaluate and lacks the local context to be effective” (Courtney, 2018). Lack of clarity in the policy has led to confusion on the behalf of the organizations and those in charge of the evaluations as to what is expected to be included and how it should be done. This can be observed in the interview with Organization C where the participant expressed confusion as to the FIAP’s goals and framework. It could be beneficial, therefore, to update the FIAP so as to define and operationalize a transformative feminist approach which focuses explicitly on gender relations and intersectionality (Tiessen, 2019). However, there may be some value in keeping the policy vague as it can allow openness to interpretation in local contexts. This means that when updating the policy GAC may need to find a balance between increased clarity and flexibility to adapt to diverse cultural contexts. Such a balance would be challenging as there are intrinsic

difficulties in finding a middle ground, especially with two competing objectives such as clarity and flexibility.

In addition, to increase knowledge of the policy and, ultimately, the utilization of additional feminist evaluation approaches there are a number of practical approaches that can be taken by Global Affairs Canada. The first, and arguably most important, is to provide appropriate funding to partner organizations through earmarking funds for this objective. The FIAP states that 95% of international assistance will be going towards feminist goals and, if that is the goal, then it should be necessary to have up to 30% provided for monitoring and evaluation (Zuercher, 2018). Another suggestion for future practice would be to organize training workshops for partner organizations on the theory behind feminist evaluation and how to implement the approaches in practice. Training is important to increase knowledge of the FIAP itself and feminist evaluation in particular, both of which were identified within the research as being major barriers to implementing feminist approaches within the studied evaluations. It would also be helpful to increase overall communication on the expectations of Global Affairs Canada to the partner organizations. As the participant from Organization B mentioned in their interview, without a clear mandate and communicated expectations there is little incentive to implement feminist approaches as they can be resource-consuming. A possible example which could be followed by GAC is the UN Women's System Wide Action Plan (SWAP) which serves as an "accountability and performance monitoring framework designed to measure, monitor and drive progress towards a common set of standards to which to aspire and adhere" (Kamioka & Cronin, 2019, p.4). The system used by UN-Women involves a framework of 15 performance indicators within six strategic areas through which reporting entities must provide ratings (Kamioka & Cronin, 2019). While a similar system could be utilized to provide guidance and advice on

approaches that align with feminist evaluation, it would need to be highly context-dependent and structured to ensure that it fit feminist beliefs as evaluations with a feminist lens can be “situated within different approaches to evaluation and draw upon differing traditions in design, methodology, and approaches” (Hay, 2014, p.209). A possible solution could be to use something similar to the ‘Feminist Evaluation Scorecard’ which could provide detailed and feasible, but context-specific, action items to be followed to allow for the inclusion of feminist evaluation approaches.

Areas for Future Research

Further research needs to be conducted on the Feminist International Assistance Policy and how it is being implemented in practice around the world. As the FIAP becomes older and more established with more concrete examples of the results of the policy, it is important to assess what the impact has been and how it can be improved. It would be useful therefore to conduct a larger study with more examples of evaluations to assess whether the conclusions found in this research hold true on a larger scale. It could also be useful to expand the scope to look at all stages to see how feminist principles are being integrated into the projects’ designs and implementation. Through these studies, it will be possible to gain a deeper understanding into feminist approaches as well as recommendations on how the projects and evaluations can be improved for the future. This is particularly important as countries around the world look to Canada as one of the first feminist governments and decide whether to follow our example.

Significance of Findings

Overall, the research in this thesis contributed to the understanding of evaluation practices under the Feminist International Assistance Policy, which are vital to study due to its recent adoption and significance to Canada’s international assistance objectives. How the policy

is being understood and implemented in practice can have large impacts on developing countries around the world. Beyond the Canadian scope, other countries are also monitoring its success to decide on their own possible feminist policies. Through a preliminary understanding of how the policy has been implemented in practice, it is possible to foresee positive changes that will aid Canada, the partner organizations and the countries where they work, and other donor countries that are considering adopting similar policies. The research has also contributed to an understanding of the differences between gender approaches and feminist evaluation, including the development of the ‘Feminist Evaluation Scorecard’ which can be used to analyze how evaluations have been developed and implemented. Through these insights, the research hopes to advance the field of feminist evaluation for future studies.

However, it is important to be mindful of the limitations of the Scorecard, which is mostly based on a specific cultural context and is rooted in the Western ethos. While the Scorecard can be a useful tool, it needs to remain inherently context-based and the limitations kept in mind. It is also important to not become trapped in a binary between transformative or feminist evaluation. While there are differences, there are also many similarities between these approaches. This is also important when discussing what GAC should do as there may need to be a middle approach taken when implementing feminist evaluation approaches. It may not always be possible to fully integrate feminist evaluation approaches due to a variety of reasons. In this way, there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution and it is always necessary to keep this in mind when reviewing the evaluations being conducted.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval Certification



**University
of Victoria**

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Certificate of Approval - Annual Renewal

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Astrid Perez Pinan (Supervisor)	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER 20-0599 Expedited review - delegated
PRINCIPAL APPLICANT: Amanda Mack Master's student	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 17-Mar-2021
UVIC DEPARTMENT: Public Administration PADM	APPROVED ON: 04-Mar-2022
	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 16-Mar-2023
<p>PROJECT TITLE: An Exploration of the Feminist Principles in the Evaluation Approaches used in Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)</p> <p>RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS: None</p> <p>DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None</p> <p>DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL: tcps2_core_certificate.pdf - 14-Dec-2020 Interview Guide.docx - 14-Dec-2020 Consent_Form.docx - 14-Mar-2021 List of FIAP Organizations.xlsx - 14-Mar-2021 Email to participants.docx - 16-Mar-2021</p>	
Conditions of approval	
<p>This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.</p> <p>Amendments To make changes to the approved research procedure in your study, please submit "Amendments" or "Annual renewal with amendments" form. You must receive research ethics approval before proceeding with your amended protocol.</p> <p>Renewals Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.</p> <p>Project Closures When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.</p>	
Certification	
<p>This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria's policies for research involving human participants.</p>	
<p>Dr. Sandra Gibbons Chair, Human Research Ethics Board</p>	<p>Dr. Matthew Murphy Vice-chair, Human Research Ethics Board</p>

Certificate Issued On: 04-Mar-2022

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate

Hello {name},

My name is Amanda Mack and I am a graduate student at the University of Victoria. I am contacting you as I am conducting research on the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) and I found your organization in the Canadian International Development Platform (<http://cidpnsi.ca>).

As an organization which is funded under the FIAP, I would like to request a short interview to answer a few questions which will help to inform my research. Specifically, this research project will be attempting to answer the following questions:

- How, and to what extent, are the FIAP and the policies and practices been informed by a feminist lens?
- More specifically, what extent are the evaluation approaches informed by a feminist lens?

Through this research, the literature on feminist evaluation will be advanced and a critical examination of the FIAP will be completed with the intention of ensuring that FIAP is a useful and meaningful feminist tool in Canada's international assistance agenda.

As a participant of this research, you would commit to a 1 hour interview which would be conducted either over the telephone or via a teleconference software, as is your preference.

If you are willing to be a participant in this research, please respond at your convenience and we will schedule a time that works best for you.

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,
Amanda Mack

Appendix C: Consent Form for Participants

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

An Exploration of the Feminist Principles Used in Evaluation under the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “An Exploration of the Feminist Principles Used in Evaluation under the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)” conducted by Amanda Mack, MPA student and Dr. Astrid Pérez Piñán, Associate Professor of the University of Victoria. The study is situated under the School of Public Administration at the university.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to examine the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) with a critical lens. Specifically, the project will be looking at evaluations conducted under FIAP in order to understand how evaluations are being conducted and whether, and to what extent, feminist principles underlie the design, methodology and implementation of the evaluation.

Importance of this Research

Due to FIAP’s recent adoption, there has not yet been time for many critical examinations of the policy, how it has been implemented and, ultimately, its effects. In addition, evaluation as a field is increasingly being viewed as an important stage in policymaking and program development. This research project will therefore be providing a critical examination of the FIAP, how it is being used in practice, and whether it is achieving the goals that it sets out. Through the findings of this project, the field of feminist evaluation will be advanced and a further understanding of the effects of FIAP will be gained.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because your organization has international projects funded through the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) and you have completed an evaluation on one of these projects. This research project will be using case studies as examples of how feminist principles are being implemented in Canada’s international assistance project and the subsequent evaluations. In your role as a staff member involved in evaluation, you have insights into the practical implementation of the evaluation practices which are conducted through this policy.

What is Involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include sharing of an evaluation report and potentially other relevant evaluation documents (i.e., evaluation design, matrix, and/or methodology). You will also commit to a one-hour interview over the telephone or videoconferencing software (e.g. Zoom). Audiotapes and hand-written notes will be taken.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some minor inconvenience for you. This may include preparation in advance of the interview to ensure that information about the evaluation and its principles and methodologies are known. Some resources from the organization may be asked to be shared, which the participant may or may not share based on their preference.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

Participation in this study will help to further knowledge regarding the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) and provide information to policymakers and other researchers about the utilization and implementation in practice. Your organization may benefit in ensuring that future policy adopted in Canada is useful, effective, and based on evidence.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used.

Anonymity

The participant will have the option of anonymity or to be recognized. This will be clarified with the participant during the interview. If the organization does not wish to have their name used in the study, the results of the case study will be published without attribution to the organization.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected through a secure numbering system, should you choose to remain anonymous. The data from the interview will be numbered and kept securely locked on a password protected device.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: thesis, class presentation, and potentially published article.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of once the research has been completed and the research thesis has been written, submitted, and approved.

Project Contacts

Amanda Mack, UVIC Graduate Student, 778 350 2786 or amanda.m.mack@gmail.com

Dr. Astrid Pérez Piñán, UVIC Associate Professor, 250 721 6116 or perezpin@uvic.ca

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
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I consent to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I consent to have my responses attributed to me by name in the results: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

Future Use of Data:

I consent to the use of my data in future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I **do not** consent to the use of my data in future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I consent to be contacted in the event my data is requested for future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher

Appendix D: Sample Interview Guide

** Before we begin, I would like to record this interview so that I can go through it afterwards and take notes based on the responses. Do you mind if I record at this time? **

Introduction

This thesis examines evaluations conducted on projects funded under Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) in order to answer questions about what type of feminism is being used in the evaluation process and to what extent it is being used. Through this examination, the field of feminist evaluation and the critical examination of FIAP will be advanced.

Participation and Confidentiality

I am conducting interviews with stakeholders who have programs which are funded under the FIAP and that are familiar with the evaluation process which was used. These interviews are only one source of data amongst a series of methods that will be used to answer the questions posed in this thesis.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and confidential. You may conclude your participation at any time. It is your decision whether you would like your name and organization to remain anonymous. This interview will take approximately 60 minutes but please elaborate as much as possible in your answers so that the information obtained will be rich and detailed.

Questions

Context Questions

1. What is your current role and how long have you held it?
2. Can you briefly tell me about the work your organization does in relation to this evaluation?
3. What responsibilities did you personally have during this evaluation?
4. How much do you know about Feminist Evaluation? Would you consider yourself knowledgeable regarding its theories and implementation in practice?

General Evaluation Design

5. I saw in the evaluation report that the (XXXXX) approach was used. Do you know if feminist evaluation and its principles were at all considered when designing this evaluation?

6. Would you say that the evaluators were trained or knowledgeable about feminist evaluation theory and techniques?

Specific Methodology Questions

7. When data was collected about this project, was it disaggregated beyond sex into categories such as gender, ethnicity, age, education level, etc?
8. How much self-reflection was expected during the evaluation process? Do you know if the evaluators created reflexivity statements or acknowledged their own biases and viewpoints as part of the process?
9. To what extent would you say participatory methods were included in the evaluation? Were project participants consulted throughout the entire process?
10. Could you explain how participants for the focus group were selected?
11. When conducting interviews and focus groups, were barriers to access such as childcare and transportation considered to ensure that minimalized voices were included?
12. Was there full participation in focus groups?
13. How was the completed evaluation report used? Was it intended to achieve political outcomes? Was it shared with stakeholders and participants?

Concluding Questions

14. In future evaluations, is there anything that you would do differently to make the evaluations more feminist? Is this something that is being considered in order to align with FIAP better?
15. Do you perceive there to be value in FIAP and integrating feminist approaches into evaluations?
16. What are the challenges that you see in integrating feminist principles or approaches into evaluations?
17. Is there anything about the evaluation process that stands out to you which we have not discussed? Do you have anything further that you would like to add?

Appendix E: Analysis Themes and Codes

Themes	Code	Instances
The Use of Self-Reflection Within the Evaluation	Biases Acknowledged	3
	Reflexivity Statement	0
A Focus on Gender Inequities Leading to Social Injustice	Focus on Gender Issues	8
	Focus on Female-Specific Issues	16
Ensuring Inclusiveness and Reducing Barriers to Access	Attempt to be Inclusive	15
	Barriers to Access Considered	3
The Use of Participatory Methodology	Participatory Methods	10
	Methodology Followed	3
	Evaluation Advisory Committee	1
A Focus on Attempted Political or Social Change	Political or Social Change	1
	Focus on Systemic Issues	3
The Dissemination of Evaluation Results	Dissemination Approaches	6
Knowledge of Feminist Evaluation Principles and FIAP	Knowledge of Feminist Evaluation and FIAP	6
Challenges to Integrating Feminist Approaches	Challenges to Integration	9
	Budget Issues	2
Perceived Value of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)	Perceived Value to FIAP	5