

Summaries of articles

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SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

Welfare State : State Benevolence towards Women

Bérengère Marques-Pereira

The author considers the euristical value of the gramscian problematics of hegemony, with respect to the articulation between class and gender relations. The issue is to find out the logics of the Welfare State in the gender relations, in Western Europe since the end of the Second World War. This analysis constitutes a prerequisite to a theoretical reflection on the State, which has been led in the light of recent women's studies. The author defines the logics of the Welfare State as a type of hegemony in which the family is closely articulated to the State. After having stressed the role of the general interest ideology in this articulation, the author suggests to think the relations between feminism and this ideology, within the framework of the Welfare State's crisis.

Gender, Social Policy, and Welfare State in Great Britain

Ellen Jacobs

While the « feminisation of poverty » is a concept introduced by contemporary feminist social scientists, the concept of « gender » as a category of analysis was introduced into British social policy discussion by women social investigators in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This article provides a case-study of the way in which the category of gender was introduced into social welfare policy discussion in Britain by Helen Bosanquet and Beatrice Wegg, as members of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and the Relief of Distress, 1905-1909.

Sexual Division of Labor and State Intervention : The Case of Poland

Jacqueline Heinen

From a perspective that is both historical and comparative with other East European countries, this article examines the effects of the egalitarian laws enacted in Poland after World War II and the protective laws concerning women workers. These effects often appear in contradiction with what was initially expected. This process is illustrated by the full-paid parental leave, a measure adopted in 1981, which was the object of a sociological inquiry by the author. Originally intending to palliate lacks in childcare facilities and to serve as a regulator of labor-flow, it is now obvious that it was a means to maintain women as subsidiary labor force. It also illustrates the crucial role of State intervention in the formation of class and sex inequalities.

The State and Family Allowances : A Policy That Never Move Off

Sylvie Lépine

During the last fifteen years or so, the State has been experiencing a growing deficit which has to be reduced by all means. According to the New-Conservatives, the solution lies in freeing the State from economic and social obligations in favour of privatization. However, this shift of responsibilities in the social area too often hides increasing social as well as economic inequalities for women. Based on a case study on federal family allowances, this paper seeks to emphasize the inadequacy of this neo-conservative solution with respect to women.

Electoral Participation of the Québécoises since 1921 : An Unexpected Assiduity

Chantal Maillé

This article is about Québec women's political participation during the 20th century. It first introduces data on women's participation to federal elections since 1921, and, second, relates data concerning their participation to Québec provincial elections after 1944. The analysis draws the conclusion that, in the Québec context, women have used in bulk their voting rights after they obtained them. So, a feminist analysis of relations between women and political territory needs to take in consideration their insertion inside official channels of political life, even if this insertion is not fully completed.

The Mother Without a Shadow ?

Marie-Blanche Tahon

Seizing the opportunity of recent mobilizations in Québec around abortion, this article wonders whether there is still a symbolic component around maternity in a context that sees the intervention of both the feminist movement and the Welfare State. It traces a progression that leads to a disappearance of the mother in order to allow the emergence of the woman. It also suggests that we must turn back to a reevaluation of the slogan « the children we want, when we want them ».

Tremblay vs Daigle : Back to the ABC of Feminism

Micheline de Sève

Political rather than legal considerations are at stake when someone like Jean-Guy Tremblay takes an injunction to prevent his ex-companion, Chantal Daigle, to abort or when the Parliament is considering the adoption of Bill C-43. These patriarchal interventions challenge women's unquestionable sovereignty in procreation. The constitutional guarantee of the right to security remains the sine qua non condition for women's self-determination and rests upon mothers and non-mothers achieving political representation in a democratic society.

Women and Employment : An Analysis of the Discontinuity of Feminine Trajectories

Céline Le Bourdais et Hélène Desrosiers

The increased participation of women in the labour market represents one of the major socio-economic changes that Canada and other western countries have experienced over the past several decades. Contrary to conventional wisdom, this increase has not ensured a greater stability of employment for women. An analysis of the employment histories of women that participated in the 1984 Family Survey reveals that younger women leave the labour market in the same proportions as their older counterparts, but that they enter and re-enter it more quickly. Women's reproductive histories still exert a major influence on their employment trajectories, but to a considerably lesser extent for the younger generations. Can one thus conclude that tomorrow's working women will be assured of a more stable place in the labour market ? The rapid development of new and precarious forms of employment leaves room for doubt.