

ONLY RAPE!

An examination of the power of ideology
and discourse in the policy process
with a focus on policy pertaining to
refugee women.

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Ph.D. Management

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

CERTIFICATE

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I also certify that the thesis has been written by me and that any help that I have received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

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Table 1 - Dimensions of the Three Policy Frameworks

ABBREVIATIONS

- ACC** – Australian Council of Churches
- ACFOA** – Australian Council for Overseas Aid
- AIMA** – Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs
- AMEP** – Adult Migrant English Program
- AMES** – Adult Migrant Education Scheme
- ANCORW** – Australian National Committee on Refugee Women
- ANCCORW** – Australian National Consultative Committee on Refugee Women
- AWHRC** – Asian Women's Human Rights Council
- BIMPR** – Bureau of Immigration, Multiculturalism and Population Research
- BIR** – Bureau of Immigration Research
- CAAIP** – Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies
- CAPOW!** – Coalition of Australian Participating Organisations of Women
- CPA** – Comprehensive Plan of Action
- CRSS** – Community Refugee Settlement Scheme
- CSS** – Community Settlement Services
- CSW** – Commission for the Status of Women
- DAWS** – Division for the Advancement of Women
- DEET** – Department of Education, Employment and Training
- DFAT** – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- DIEA** – Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
- DILGEA** – Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs
- DIMA** – Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
- ECOSOC** – UN Economic and Social Council
- ESCAP** – Economic and Social Council of the Asia Pacific
- EXCOM** – Executive Committee of UNHCR
- FOI** – Freedom of Information Act
- GIA** – Grant in Aid
- ICEM** – Intergovernmental Commission for European Migration
- IRO** – International Refugee Organisation
- MAPS** – Migrant Access Program Scheme
- NGO** – Non-government Organisation
- NUMAS** – Numerical Multifactor Assessment System
- ODP** – Orderly Departure Program
- OSW** – Office for the Status of Women
- PEAPS** – Pilot Access and Equity Projects Scheme
- PFA** – Platform for Action

PPBS – Planning, Programming, Budgeting Systems
PTSD – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCOA – Refugee Council of Australia
ROMAMPAS – Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services
RRWG – Refugee Resettlement Working Group
SHP – Special Humanitarian Program
UNHCR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA – United Nations Relief and Works Agency
WaR – Women at Risk
WILPF – Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

ABSTRACT

During a long career as a policy analyst, I have noticed that government policy often fails to achieve its stated aims. This dissertation seeks to identify why this happens, and how actors external to government can intervene in the policy process and influence policy outcomes. The study focused on policy addressing the needs of refugee women. It involved my taking a leading role in an action research project which lasted for seven years. The aims of the project were to bring about change in government policy and outcomes in relation to refugee women, and to seek a theoretical understanding of the process in which I was involved. The project was undertaken with a small non government organisation, the Australian National Consultative Committee on Refugee Women and comprised five loops or cycles of action research. It involved working at both local and international levels as links were made between human rights instruments, international law, domestic legislation and refugee policy.

For the purpose of the thesis, policy literature was grouped into three conceptually discrete frameworks, the Rationalist, the Political and the Critical. At each stage of the action research project, writings from three frameworks of policy theory were tested to seek explanations for the activities described. Knowledge gained from theoretical analysis in each reflective phase was applied and used to inform the next stage of research. The outcomes of these five stages produced a theory of policy development and enactment which emerged from the progressive iterative reflections in each of the five cycles.

The theory proposed is that policy often fails to achieve its stated aims because policy actors do not have a discursive understanding of the policy process in which they are involved. It is argued that in order to achieve the level of understanding required to facilitate effective change, it is necessary to take a 'critical distance' from the policy process and identify the ideologically based assumptions which inform it, and how these impact on and shape the social reality of the policy actors involved. It is necessary to understand the power and role of discourse in structuring that reality. In order to bring about change, the discourses which produce and are produced by the policy process have to be challenged and new discourses introduced. The non-government sector can play an active and an informed role by identifying the dynamics driving the process, by using theoretical analysis as a tool to identify and to address the root causes of problems in the policy process, and by realising their power to effect change.

It is argued that the insights gained through the analysis of this action research project have established both guidelines for practice, and theoretical principles which are generalisable to a range of policy domains and policy analysis.