

## Revising McPhail's Feminist Policy Analysis Framework: Updates for Use in Contemporary Social Policy Research

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**Abstract:** In 2003, McPhail published a *Feminist Policy Analysis Framework* concluding that the many available methods of policy analysis across disciplines, including social work, treated policies as gender-neutral compositions. McPhail (2003) asserted that these methods denied the many ways that institutions and policies of society are organized by the concepts of gender, therefore presenting incomplete products of analysis. This guiding purpose for the development of McPhail's (2003) *Feminist Policy Analysis Framework* endures a full fifteen years later. In the years since publication of McPhail's *Framework*, advancements have been made in both feminist theory and in policy analysis methods. This conceptual article outlines a much-needed revision moving the framework into a contemporary position with the inclusion of a focus on privilege, oppression, and intersectionality. The revised framework presented herein is a more conceptually comprehensive and practical model for use by all, but particularly social work students and scholars. The revised model represents an update rendering it more effective in today's polarized political climate as well as with the recently revised social work educational policy (Council on Social Work Education, 2015). A revised framework of *Feminist Intersectional Policy Analysis* is presented, including guiding questions and conceptual complexities to consider in the work of analysis.

**Keywords:** Feminist; policy; analysis; intersectionality; social work

Policy analysis is commonly conceptualized as "neutral" and yet, this approach is inadequate in developing a full understanding of the policy under study (Shaw, 2004). This central message was the guiding purpose for the development of the *Feminist Policy Analysis Framework* by McPhail (2003). The need to develop a method that acknowledges the way gender is used to organize societal structures, and is regulated through policies, is essential and relevant fifteen years after original publication (McPhail, 2003). In order to arrive at an accurate answer about the effectiveness of any given policy and its impact on society, scholars and practitioners must include explicit analysis of gender and gender identity, race, socio-economic status, sexuality, and more.

Applying theories and methods and moving beyond this neutral veil to directly address issues of gender and intersecting identities in relation to policy are necessary to allow for a deeper understanding of the systems and processes of oppression and domination (Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011). Of primary concern is the capacity to address the reality that the public discussion over time has been dominated by white cisgender males which has resulted in a society filled with notions, policies, regulations, and conventions that are constrained and preferential (Harding, 1998).

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