

THE EFFECT OF FEMINIST OPPOSITION TO REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY: A CASE STUDY IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

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Synopsis – This article begins with short histories of international FINRRAGE and FINRRAGE in Victoria, Australia. The second section presents the effect of FINRRAGE/Victoria on policy, media/public debate, and practitioners of the technologies. The third section evaluates whether FINRRAGE could increase its influence. This section also includes a feminist critique of FINRRAGE. It is based on personal interviews with 6 FINRRAGE/Victoria members and 22 at-large participants.

As a recipient of a Fulbright grant, I spent 1990 in Melbourne, Australia, researching the effect of the Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering (FINRRAGE) on reproductive technology policy, media/public debate, and the technologies' practitioners.¹ I chose to locate my study in Melbourne, the capital of the state of Victoria, because reproductive technology had been a major public policy issue in Victoria since 1980, when Australia's first IVF baby, and the second in the world, was born in Melbourne. My goal was to ascertain and document the role that feminist opposition played, and continues to play, in Victoria.²

The primary basis for this article is interviews I conducted with 6 FINRRAGE members in Victoria and 22 at-large individuals with various interests in reproductive technology (see Appendix for a list and description of these individuals). All quotes are from these interviews. With the exception of three participants from New South Wales and one from Canberra, they all lived in Victoria. Each participant was asked to describe the effect they believed FINRRAGE has had on policy, the media/public debate, and the technologies' practitioners in Victoria. Participants were also

asked whether FINRRAGE presented their position in a manner that maximized their influence. Additionally, although I have only focused on Victoria, it should not be assumed that this is the only state they have affected. The women of FINRRAGE/Victoria have been involved in policy and in the media in other states, as well as nationally.

This paper has three sections. The first section discusses the formation of FINRRAGE internationally and in Victoria. The second, and main section, presents the results of FINRRAGE's activism. The third section analyzes whether FINRRAGE has presented their position in a way that maximizes their influence. This section also includes a specific feminist critique of FINRRAGE.

HISTORY OF THE FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF RESISTANCE TO REPRODUCTIVE AND GENETIC ENGINEERING (FINRRAGE)

In 1984, FINNRET (Feminist International Network on New Reproductive Technologies) was created at the Second International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women in Groningen, the Netherlands.³

In 1985, women from international FINNRET organized the Women's Emergency

Conference on the New Reproductive Technologies in Vallinge, Sweden. At this conference, the participants highlighted the interrelationship between reproductive and genetic engineering, as well as the technologies' harmful effects on women worldwide and the need for feminist resistance strategies. Thus, the name was changed from FINNRET to FINRRAGE.

FINRRAGE is loosely structured, without formal membership requirements. However, for descriptive purposes, I will refer to women involved in FINRRAGE as members. FINRRAGE has affiliates in more than 35 countries. Links are maintained by the international coordinating group, currently based in Germany, and the national contacts. The international coordinating group acts as a clearinghouse, collects and distributes information, and coordinates and facilitates the activities of the national contacts and affiliates.⁴ The informal structure results in individual affiliates choosing the issues and activities that are best suited to their specific situation. Broadly expressed, the aims adopted by international FINRRAGE are:

- o To monitor international developments in the areas of reproductive technology, reproductive medicine, and genetic engineering.
- o To assess the implications of these and related technologies for their impact on women, the environment, and other life forms.
- o To raise public awareness about contraceptive and reproductive technologies and genetic engineering and the ways in which they are linked.
- o To analyze the relationship between science, technology, and social relations underlying these technologies, the implications for the feminist movement, and to develop alternatives which respect women and nature.
- o To extend links with women internationally, to pool information, and to develop a set of

strategies for women and women's groups to consider.

- o To work towards a global movement of feminist resistance to population control policies and reproductive and genetic engineering, while confronting the issues that divide women because of difference in their social, economic, political, and cultural situation.

AUSTRALIAN FINRRAGE

The Australian FINNRET/FINRRAGE affiliate was created at the 1984 Australian Women and Labor Conference in Brisbane after a videotape about reproductive technologies, made by Dr. Robyn Rowland, was shown. As a result, an informational network on reproductive technologies was created. This network became the Australian FINNRET affiliate. Lariane Fonseca was the Australian coordinator for four years and began the FINNRET/FINRRAGE newsletter. In conjunction with the Centre for Continuing Education and the Women's Studies program at the Australian National University in Canberra, FINRRAGE/Australia coordinated the "Liberation or Loss? Women Act on the New Reproductive Technologies" conference in Canberra in 1986.

While serving as national coordinator, Fonseca attempted to create a national network with coordinators in each state/territory. However, this system of state coordinators never solidified, leaving Victoria and New South Wales, where a FINRRAGE group began in Sydney in 1989, as the only states with a formal FINRRAGE presence. In fact, the Victoria and New South Wales groups operate independently of one another and have chosen very different styles of activism. Consequently, although Christine Ewing is now the national FINRRAGE coordinator, the only FINRRAGE activity that is national in scope is a quarterly newsletter that reaches

approximately 100 groups and people across Australia.

FINRRAGE IN VICTORIA

Dr. Robyn Rowland, Dr. Renate Klein, Christine Ewing, Sarah Ferber, Lariane Fonseca, and Dr. Jocelyne Scutt comprised the core Victoria FINRRAGE group in 1990 (this group has now increased to 12 active members). (Hereafter, all reference to FINRRAGE refers to Victoria FINRRAGE.) All the members, except for Fonseca, lived in Melbourne. Rowland and Klein were also part of the group of women who created international FINNRET/FINRRAGE. In 1989, FINRRAGE received its first foundation grant from the Victorian Women's Trust Ltd., and was able to hire one part-time staff person. Until then, FINRRAGE was completely run by volunteer efforts. The staff member was employed as a Project Officer for a community education project on the implications of reproductive technologies for women. (A second grant was awarded in 1990.)

The long-term goal of FINRRAGE is to abolish reproductive technology and genetic engineering. Because *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) has been at the center of the Victorian debate over reproductive technology, FINRRAGE has focused on opposing IVF, as well as IVF surrogacy and IVF/embryo experimentation. Specifically, members have stressed IVF's high failure rate and the health risks of the drugs used to induce superovulation. In the short term, FINRRAGE works to educate the public about the implications of reproductive technology and to empower women to consider alternatives to IVF and other technologies.

To accomplish their long- and short-term goals, FINRRAGE members publish books and newsletters (two members serve as editors of this journal); collect information about developments in the technologies; distribute this information to and speak with individuals

and groups, such as schools, women's health centers, universities, and government committees; write submissions in response to government initiatives and serve as informal and formal advisors to government committees and officials. They also work with the media to ensure coverage of the FINRRAGE position in print as well as on radio and television.

FINRRAGE also works to assist women to establish self-help groups that will provide an alternative to groups that are geared towards technological responses to infertility. The first step towards this goal was made in November 1990 when FINRRAGE and four other women's organizations sponsored a weekend seminar for women with fertility problems or an unmet desire for a child. Facilitating this seminar was Geraldine Stevens, founding member of the Western Australia self-help group, "Issues (in) Fertility".

Although members such as Robyn Rowland, Renate Klein, and Christine Ewing are often identified with a stance of feminist opposition in people's minds, I found that their names were generally not connected with FINRRAGE. Ewing remarked, "that although a lot of people have heard of FINRRAGE, as yet it doesn't have much of a personal face apart from Robyn." Thus, the people I spoke with had a tendency to answer questions about the effect of FINRRAGE by talking about particular people. At times, this will be reflected in the article.

THE EFFECT OF FINRRAGE

In May 1984, Rowland put feminist criticism of reproductive technology on the map when she went public with her resignation as chair of the donor research coordinating committee of the Monash University/Queen Victoria Meical Centre.⁵ Rowland had been researching the social and psychological consequences of AID on couples and donors. Her resignation was prompted by a number of disagreements with the doctors, but the final break was

caused when she learned of the doctors' plans to incorporate embryo flushing into their IVF practice. Announced at the Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science conference in Canberra, her resignation led to such headlines as "Doctor wants in-vitro babies program halted" and "Test Tube Researcher Quits in Moral Stand".⁶

A common opinion among the people I interviewed was that it was very effective for someone like Rowland, who had worked on the inside, to speak out.⁷ Stories which depicted her, inaccurately, as an IVF doctor, contributed to her aura as an insider. This insider status, according to Rebecca Albury, a member of the National Bioethics Consultative Committee (NBCC), "gave her enormous credibility and it really opened up the possibility for feminist interventions." Rowland believes that her resignation gave the public a person on whom to hang their anxieties about the technologies, noting that "a lot of people had been worried for a long time, but they hadn't been able to say anything because they didn't have anyone to hang it on. All the anxiety got hung on me."

FINRRAGAE AND POLICY

There is debate within FINRRAGE about whether reproductive technology legislation actually helps women, as well as skepticism about the possibility of feminist policy recommendations ever being enacted. For example, Ewing noted that when some of the amendments to the Victoria Infertility (Medical Procedures) Act were offered in the Victorian Parliament in 1987:

We actually chose not to respond because we got into a bind that if you argue for regulation, then you in fact support the technology. I think it is really important to keep addressing the issue at the ground level and not to spend a whole lot of time arguing about regulations because in a lot

of ways, women are not protected by it anyhow.

All of the members believed that the Victorian legislation, which among other things, regulates the practice of IVF, inadequately protects women. However, members were reluctant to oppose all legislation because "in the absence of getting it all stopped, I think it is really important to have regulations that offer as much protection as possible to women."

Victorian policy history

The creation of reproductive technology policy began in 1982 when the Victorian Attorney-General established the multidisciplinary Committee to Consider the Social, Ethical and Legal Issues Arising from In-Vitro Fertilization. The Committee published an issue paper and report on Donor Gametes in IVF, an annotated bibliography on Surrogate Mothering, and a report on the Disposition of Embryos Produced by IVF. In March 1984, the Attorney General introduced the Infertility (Medical Procedures) Act and in August, the Committee disbanded. By the end of 1984, the Infertility (Medical Procedures) Act was passed; however, most of it was not proclaimed law until 1986 and 1988. Given that FINNRET/FINRRAGE was created in April 1984, there was no opportunity for the group to influence the original legislation.⁸

One of the first pieces of the legislation proclaimed law created the Victoria Standing Review and Advisory Committee on Infertility (VSRACI). This Committee, appointed in June 1985, is responsible for advising the Health Minister in relation to procedures for alleviating infertility and deciding which experimental procedures will be approved, in accordance with the Act. In reality, the Committee has spent virtually all its time on matters related to experimental procedures, such as defining an embryo, and very little time on prevention of

infertility or alternatives to technological responses to infertility.

In 1987, the Act was amended, prompted by an application for approval of an experimental procedure involving microinjection of sperm. As Ewing has already noted, FINRRAGE as a group chose to stay out of the amendment process, although Rowland published a commissioned piece in the AGE on the legislation (Rowland, 1987). In 1989, the Committee's approval of an embryo biopsy experiment caused a community outcry and the newly appointed Health Minister, Caroline Hogg, imposed a moratorium on the experiment. She also asked the Standing Review and Advisory Committee on Infertility to invite and review submissions on the subject. FINRRAGE made submissions during the review, but they were among 1,218 others. The moratorium has since been lifted.

Effects on policy. Although it is unlikely that FINRRAGE has had a direct effect on Victorian legislation, both Rowland and Klein believe that FINRRAGE has been part of the slowing-down effect of the legislation because all experimental procedures have to be approved by the Standing Review and Advisory Committee on Infertility. Rowland commented that the need for approval, and the intense public scrutiny that can result from the approval process, means that "those doctors are constantly harassed by it (referring to the legislation). It's a perverse sort of pleasure to say you've held them back by 10, 15 years, but hell we did, we really did."

Victorian Health Minister Caroline Hogg also pointed out that FINRRAGE activism could directly affect the Victorian Parliament the next time it considers amendments to the Infertility Act:

They've made a lot of people think. There wouldn't be a member of Parliament faced with further amendments in a few years time who wouldn't have to stop and think about those issues (my emphasis, issues

referred to are success rates and superovulation)

Additionally, FINRRAGE members have had other important influences on policy. Rowland explained how government officials consult FINRRAGE members for confidential advice on issues pertaining to reproductive technology:

One of the things that I find very interesting is the way these people spring up suddenly. For example, I'll get a phone call from someone in the Department of Immigration and they'll say, "I've been given this brief to write on surrogacy, can you give me stuff because I've been following your work for years and I agree with you totally, how can I get this in?" And it's someone you have never heard of before. And then you find out that she knows someone in the Health Department and at the Attorney General and they are all doing little bits towards it. That's been one of the most important things. FINRRAGE itself may not look like a huge network of people in Australia, but what we've actually created is a lot of women who wouldn't say they belong to FINRRAGE at all. Like saying, "I'm not a feminist," they say I'm not a member of FINRRAGE, but they believe everything we are talking about and are working in the system to try and change things. Now that is important because it's at the Welfare Ministers' level, and it's at the Health Department and Attorneys General where this work can really count. That's what makes me feel secure when I think of how small the core group of FINRRAGE seems to be.

These kinds of exchanges are, according to Rowland, "not recorded anywhere, no one's recorded what you call influence as opposed to power. The influence thing is indirect, like people ringing up with a scenario and you

asking all sorts of questions that really makes them think the thing through. It's that sort of process."

Similarly, a member of the VSRACI stated:

Personally, I will ring up a feminist and I will bounce off things from them as I will do with infertile couples, as I will do with other people. I consider them an important part of the community. I wouldn't be breaching any committee confidentiality.

Jan Aitken, a former member of the VSRACI stated:

Probably the impact of their (referring to FINRRAGE) views is more present not when they speak themselves but when people like myself pick up what they're saying. It affects me and then I speak. I know that some of the things that I supported and fought for in the Committee, their history would include some of those views-and some of their passion that they speak with has affected me and influenced me.

FINRRAGE member Sarah Ferber noted that recent government reports on reproductive technology in Western Australia and in Victoria "reflected a much more critical position in relation to reproductive technology" than the reports of the 1982-1984 Victoria Committee to Consider the Social, Ethical and Legal Issues Arising from In-Vitro Fertilization. These more critical approaches, in Ferber's view, could not have happened without the FINRRAGE critique.

A number of people believed that FINRRAGE would have an impact on women within the government, such as Ministers and department heads, because

a lot of women are now in positions of some standing and they can't afford not to listen to it. The government has, in

Australia and in Victoria, really set up many departments to look at women's issues. Now if they've done all that, it means that they want this segment of the community to have some sort of political impact. So obviously if they then say something about this technology, then that would have an impact.⁹

Also, there exists the perception that the feminist opposition has been a watchdog and that has meant that governments are

less likely to simply act unilaterally and that committees, even like the Waller Committee (referring to VSRACI), who may not have had a strong feminist view put from within . . . want to be seen to be fair and just to all of the significant players and so therefore, they will take solid account of feminist thinking.

Women in FINRRAGE have also been involved in policy through writing policy documents. For example, Ramona Koval and Robyn Rowland were commissioned by the Victorian Women's Advisory Council (now the Victorian Women's Consultative Council) to write a paper for public release on Women and Infertility. The paper was commissioned "in the belief that there is a need for more community information and discussion on the subject of infertility, its prevention and treatment, and new developments in reproductive technology, *particularly from the women's perspective*"¹⁰ (my emphasis). The paper was launched at the Royal Women's Hospital by Louis Waller, Chair of the VSRACI.

Koval was also a member of the Victoria Ministerial Committee on the Prevention and Management of Infertility, which released a report on Infertility in 1988. Although Koval is no longer a member of FINRRAGE, during the mid to late 1980s she was involved in FINRRAGE and played a major role in

opposing a plan by Monash University to commercialize IVF through a private company. Journalist Susanna Rodell wrote that Koval was “one of the most vociferous critics of the plan” (Rodell, 1985, p. 17).

Additionally, although the impact of FINRRAGE on policy outside of Victoria was not within the scope of my research, it is worth noting the levels at which they have been involved. Rowland, Koval, and Lariane Fonseca (Fonseca speaking as the national FINNRET coordinator) testified before the National Senate Select Committee on the Human Embryo Experimentation Bill 1985. Fonseca was also involved in the 1985 National Better Health Commission, which was created to inquire into the state of Australia’s health. According to her, because of FINRRAGE, reproductive technology was one of the areas on which the Commission concentrated. In 1984 and 1985, Rowland served on the National Committee to Consider the Issues Relating to Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID), In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF), Embryo Transfer (ET) and Related Matters. The Committee was chaired by the Senior Judge of the Family Court of Australia and reported to the Family Law Council. In 1986, the National Women’s Consultative Council (NWCC) released a report, written by Ramona Koval, called “Manufacturing Babies: What Reproductive Technologies Mean to Women.” Christine Ewing, in her capacity as FINRRAGE (Australia) coordinator, has been offered a consultancy by the NWCC to write a second edition of this report.

FINRRAGE has also been involved in the policy deliberations of a number of states. For example, Rowland was called as a witness before a committee of the South Australian government and has met with the Western Australia Minister for Health and Minister for Social Services to discuss proposals for reproductive technology legislation. Additionally, Rowland and Jocelyne Scutt participated in the 1986 New Reproductive

Technologies Consultation sponsored by the New South Wales Women’s Advisory Council. The Consultation produced a proposal for a National Commission on Reproductive Technologies. According to a number of people I interviewed, this proposal provided the foundation for the creation of the National Bioethics Consultative Committee (NBCC) in 1988. A number of feminists, including some FINRRAGE members, had been pressuring the federal government for years to set up a national committee. They hoped that such a committee would create uniform legislation to regulate the technologies and would also allow women’s voices to be heard through at least 50% representation on the committee. The NBCC, which was dissolved in mid-1991, had enormous feminist divisions within its ranks and proved to be quite supportive of new technologies, particularly surrogacy. The NBCC experience has left some FINRRAGE members unsure of whether a national body is actually in women’s best interests.

FINRRAGE AND MEDIA/PUBLIC DEBATE

Reproductive technology has received an enormous amount of attention from the print and electronic media in Victoria. From January 1981 through August 1990, *The AGE* newspaper ran more than 600 stories on IVF, embryo experimentation, or surrogacy, not including Letters to the Editor, which also numbered in the hundreds.¹¹ Additionally, many radio and television shows have discussed reproductive technology. In the debate about reproductive technology, the media is a particularly important avenue for feminist communication because “media helps construct and is constructed by ‘public opinion,’ so the popular accounts of the debate about IVF help to direct what are regarded as legitimate issues for discussion” (Albury, 1987, p. 67).

The three Melbourne journalists I interviewed, two at *The AGE* and one at the *Herald*, were unanimous in finding FINRRAGE spokeswomen credible and valuable sources. One journalist described a particular FINRRAGE spokeswoman:

She's very articulate, she's to the point, she knows what she's talking about, she doesn't muck around, she rings back when she says she will and so she's just a very good person to deal with. I think it would be good if there were more like her really.

Another said he was attracted to covering the feminist opposition initially through Robyn Rowland because he'd been impressed by:

the accuracy and the breadth of the scientific knowledge that she brought to bear in support of her arguments about IVF. She really highlighted many conflicts and inconsistencies in the often threadbare comments that the scientists were making to the media and which were going unchallenged and unquestioned by the media.

The third remarked:

In everything I've ever heard Renate (Klein) or Ramona (Koval) or Robyn (Rowland) ever say, I thought their messages were always extremely well thought out, and very intelligent, comprehensible to the average person. And to me, that's a model to go for.

The journalists found their perspective interesting, compelling, and challenging, basically making for a good story. Their credibility and the challenging nature of their arguments are the likely reasons for both their inclusion in media stories and requests to author newspaper articles.¹²

While acknowledging that FINRRAGE members do receive media coverage,¹³ the majority of people with whom I spoke believe that the media tends to produce "gee-whiz, high-tech. Dr.-God type of stories," which focus on the happy mother and baby. As Marie Meggit, spokesperson for the Association of Relinquishing Mothers said, the reproductive technologies are represented "very positively, unspeakable, it's enough to make you throw up."

Albury's analysis of *New Idea's* (a very popular weekly women's magazine) coverage of an IVF-frozen embryo baby is indicative of the way much reproductive technology is covered:

The New Idea presentation of Zoe's conception and birth relies on the cultural myths of motherhood and the family to transform the history of technological experimentation into nature. It resolves the ambivalences that the reader may have about freezing human embryos and intervention into the process of reproduction through images of fulfilled desire. The empty arms filled with a baby, an infertile (unnatural?) woman becoming a mother; the technology is the agent of mythic transformation. The text and the photographs are combined to call the reader away from critical thought into acceptance of the constructed world as a natural world. (Albury, 1987, pp. 53-54)

Additionally, it was widely perceived that when an article included a critique, the feminist view tended to be suppressed or marginalized, instead favoring the Catholic, traditionalist critique. Again, Albury provided a relevant example in her critique of coverage of frozen embryos:

Although the ethical objections of some feminists were acknowledged, they did not receive the same lengthy treatment as the

objections of theologians, nor were they answered, even implicitly, in the article. (Albury, 1987, p. 51)

Nick Tonti-Filippini, the most prominent Catholic Church-based opponent of reproductive technology, relayed an example of how FINRRAGE is marginalized and placed in a defensive posture by the media. He participated in a television debate that included Robyn Rowland as a participant. All the participants debated and everyone stated their views in a “gentle sort of way.” The producer came down and said they weren’t worked up enough, it “wasn’t dramatic enough” and made them debate again. During the second debate, Tonti-Filippini recalled:

The presenter, pointedly I think, avoided directing a single question to Robyn, so it put Robyn into the position of interjecting all the way through, so that she came across as shrill and there was a lot of comment of that kind, that there was an attempt to portray Robyn as shrill and hysterical and all of the words that you can’t use about men, but you use about women. Whether that was considered to be good TV or whether there was something more sinister to it, I don’t know.

Yet, there is no doubt that FINRRAGE has radically changed the presentation of reproductive technology in the media. *AGE* articles from 1982 reveal that women were largely absent. Articles documented primarily a church-based critique. For example, one lengthy piece called “Test Tube Baby Programs: The Moral Issues,” highlighted the opinions of Professor Peter Singer, Dr. Carl Wood, and Priest William Daniel (Carbines & Metherell, 1982, pp. 6-7). The majority of their discussion centered on embryos. Articles like these were the norm until FINRRAGE women placed a woman-centered perspective into the debate.

The FINRRAGE critique has increased the likelihood that questions will be asked about a technology’s effect on women. An *AGE* article, written soon after the embryo biopsy moratorium was lifted, not only includes the views of Christine Ewing, but also Gena Corea, a feminist involved in FINRRAGE in the United States (Pirrie. 1990, pp. 1, 4). Such inclusion is no longer the exception and was accurately described by Rebecca Albury during our interview:

In my media studies, it’s certainly been the case that since 1984, non-Catholic church opposition, that is to say feminist opposition, has become a requisite thing we have to nod to. So we don’t just get doctors and lawyers and theologians, we also get a feminist or two.

Public debate

Nearly every participant in this research believed that FINRRAGE’s presence in the media has transformed the public reproductive technology debate because it has changed the way people think about this issue.

Renate Klein believes that:

Through the considerable feminist presence in the media, infertile women who consider using the new reproductive technologies are now much better informed about the risks and know which questions to ask of their doctors. This is especially true of the work on infertility drugs that Robyn and I did together (Klein & Rowland, 1988). I think the public consciousness-raising is one of the most important and best things FINRRAGE does. It’s hard work to go and speak and publish and do radio and TV, but you have to do it if you want to change people’s consciousness. Even if people think you’re crazy at first, the message begins to seep in after a while.

Similarly, Christine Ewing remarked:

We put out a lot of information that is contrary to their (doctors) claims, especially the information about Clomiphene, IVF success rates, women's personal experiences on IVF. As a result of the information we put out, I think a lot more people are questioning not just the whole impact of these technologies, but also what women are experiencing on IVF. . . . In my experience, the sort of information we give can actually transform the way people think about the issues.

As an example of how FINRRAGE has altered the way people think about the issues, nearly everyone interviewed agreed that FINRRAGE could take credit for "burning into the public consciousness" the health risks of superovulation and IVF's very low success rate. Louis Waller, Chair of the VSRACI stated that "they have, I think it's fair to say, brought superovulation to the forefront of the agenda."

By focusing on IVF's low success rate, FINRRAGE has helped change the debate from one which consistently focuses on the minority of women for whom IVF results in a live birth to one in which the high failure rate of the program is periodically noted. The publication of *The Exploitation of a Desire*, Klein's book about the experiences of women who did not conceive through IVF, heightened awareness within the community of the human costs of IVF's failure rate. According to Minister Hogg, the "power of these small truths" (the personal stories of women for whom IVF did not work) was some of FINRRAGE's most effective work. Ramona Koval made a similar point:

. . . that was something that I don't think the doctors were expecting. Because normally when someone leaves them, they don't follow them up and now they had those women who used to be patients of theirs saying it wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

It was very clever and erudite work on the part of those women (referring to FINRRAGE women).

Jocelynn Scutt, a teacher at the 1990 Deakin Women's Studies Summer Institute (the Institute was created by Robyn Rowland) told me a story which illustrates the effect that FINRRAGE is having:

Two of the women who came to the Women's Studies Institute from Western Australia, including one who is an advisor to the Health Minister, part of their specific purpose in doing that was to be able to speak to women who were involved in FINRRAGE, and to do what they could to affect policy in Western Australia. I think it's been important for them to know that there is a body of theory with a practical aspect that's been going on in FINRRAGE groups. Therefore, they're not isolated and they do have sources that they can refer to if they want to put up alternative positions.

Rose Sorger, a research and information officer at Healthsharing Women, told me that FINRRAGE was an essential source of information and expertise for their statewide health information service. FINRRAGE has also played an important role in defining the questions that the women's health community needs to ask about reproductive technology.

A significant number of the people I interviewed felt that FINRRAGE had affected their own views and analyses of reproductive technology. For example, Tonti-Filippini concentrated on the abuse and exploitation of women, not on embryos, in his talk on embryo experimentation at the 1990 St. Vincent's Bioethics Conference. In his formal conference paper he cited FINRRAGE authors four times and wrote:

The fears expressed by the Warnock Committee (referring to Committee in

England) that the word spare would become a euphemism and by Dr. Robyn Rowland and others that the concept of spare embryos would lead to the rationale that superovulation may be increased in order to create spare embryos, would seem to have become the reality. (Tonti-Filippini, 1990, p. 3)

Tonti-Filippini discussed his early critique of IVF with me:

Most of my discussion of IVF was embryo centered and the whole concept of a child being produced as a product, and the dominant relationship of the technician to the child, all those sorts of things. One of the effects of the various feminist influences . . . on my thinking was to focus much more on the intrusion, not just on the woman, but on the couple's relationship.

Similarly, Shadow Health Minister Marie Tehan told me that FINRRAGE had made her aware that "there is an opportunity for women who are at their most vulnerable to be manipulated, and to some degree, just used for scientific experimental purposes or scientific investigation."

Lariane Fonseca is of the opinion that:

There wouldn't have been a debate without FINRRAGE. Society generally has always been, and in this case proved, prone and receptive to the propaganda that women want it, women need it, and we're the hard slaving doctors who are seeking to only please and give you what you want. Because biological motherhood is prized as such a real need and an issue and an imperative, the technologies would have been seen as something quite acceptable. The only other debate that might have arisen without FINRRAGE is the Moral Majority or the Right to Life, but their

debate has always been couched in terms of the fetus, not concerns about women. So I think as women, FINRRAGE was the only reason there was a genuine debate . . . FINRRAGE has had a huge impact on the debate, on public policy, on the visibility of the issue. I think the fact that the media has covered the debate for so long and still continues to is because people like Robyn and Re-nate have spoken out for five, six years.

In fact, the Catholic Church has been a vocal opponent of reproductive technology since the early 1980s. There has never been any alliance, formal or informal, between FINRRAGE and the Catholic Church in Victoria. Each pursues a completely independent strategy based on different philosophies. Yet because they have been the two most visible opponents of the technologies, they are often perceived to be acting together. Much was made of this "unholy alliance" by the people I spoke with. Like Fonseca, the majority of the people interviewed believed that without FINRRAGE there would have been no significant debate in the press with the exception of the critiques made by the churches, particularly the Catholic Church.

Ironically, the Catholic church and FINRRAGE have lent credibility to each other. Tonti-Filippini said that opposition from the feminists helped the Church to be taken more seriously:

The teams (IVF teams) always wanted to isolate the opposition and in the first instance, they were able to say, because we were opposing it before the feminists gained any great publicity, "Oh it's just the Catholic Church with their weird views on contraception, abortion, etc." We were written off. As soon as the feminists came on the scene, they could no longer really do that.

Conversely, Minister Hogg believes that “one of the reasons why the feminist opposition, which is portrayed as very strident and extreme, is taken seriously is basically it’s saying the same thing as the Catholic Church.”

Tonti-Filippini offered an interesting perspective on the relationship between the Catholic Church and FINRRAGE:

They tried to marginalize us by talking about the unholy alliance between the conservatives and the feminists, all sorts of nonsense, but it really didn’t carry much water. The fact that the feminists and the Catholic Church would have been so strongly opposed in general on an issue like abortion meant that it was never an alliance in that sense. So they were not really able to marginalize us and I think each helped the other in that respect.

The most reasonable conclusion appears to be that having both a feminist-based and a Catholic Church-based opposition “has certainly strengthened, coordinated a certain opposition or a questioning at least of where the IVF debate is going, where IVF is taking us.”

FINRRAGE AND PRACTITIONERS

I requested interviews with Drs. Carl Wood and Alan Trounson, who were both members of the IVF team at Monash University Hospital where Australia’s first IVF baby was born. Both refused to meet with me. I suspect that they refused because I was based at Deakin University, where both Associate Professor Robyn Rowland and Dr. Renate Klein are employed and because I was researching opposition to their technologies.

FINRRAGE members were unanimous in their belief that the doctors and scientists perceive them as a threat. I was cited a number of instances, at conferences and on television shows, where FINRRAGE women were

confronted by doctors and/or IVF patients who sometimes brought along children they had conceived on IVF. The doctors and/or the patients would attack FINRRAGE women for denying infertile women the choice to have a child and ask whether it would have been better if little Ann/Andy had never been born. Klein perceives these tactics as ones which try to discredit FINRRAGE and use division among women to the doctor’s advantage. She noted that “such dirty tricks must mean that we are successful in sending a different message than the IVF doctors want sent.”

Dr. Ian Johnston, an IVF practitioner at Melbourne’s Royal Women’s Hospital, began our interview by asking me why I wanted to waste my time on FINRRAGE. The tenor of his comments throughout the interview reflected hostility towards FINRRAGE, which, according to him, has been:

A nuisance. They are very vocal, they’re well organized, their position is extreme. Because the community doesn’t understand, broadly speaking, anything about IVF or the implications and the morality, the community can be led by extreme views, not only in this area, but in all sorts of positions. . . . So yes they’re a nuisance because we have to continually rebut their points of view.

According to him, this nuisance factor is the only impact FINRRAGE has had on IVF practitioners. However, his opinion is clearly in the minority. Nearly every person I spoke with believed that the doctors and scientists have been forced to change their public image – what they say and how they say it – and medical practice as a result of feminist criticisms.

As one might expect from FINRRAGE’s success in making the health risks of superovulation a media concern, the medical community had been affected by the criticisms of superovulation.¹⁴ In response to my

question of whether some doctors' plans to pursue natural cycle IVF was a response to feminist criticism of superovulation, Louise Bowen, an IVF counselor at Epworth Hospital/Monash University Infertility Medical Centre said:

Partly, yes, I think the vocal antagonism of that small group of feminists has keyed into what I think are pretty understandable anxieties about women feeling that they're being pumped full of hormones. So I think some people have thought let's go back to natural cycle.

In fact, the majority of the interviewees concluded that "the whole move away from the hormones being used back towards the natural cycle was very much because of the fuss the feminists were making about superovulation." However, Johnston insisted that he was interested in natural cycle IVF because it is simple and cheap. He vehemently denied that feminist criticism influenced this interest.

Although a number of IVF professionals and patients complained that the emphasis on the risks of superovulatory drugs confused and scared people, they also recognized that the very fact that patients are scared means that the message is getting out. In fact, Bowen remarked that "one of the things that's been a direct response of the criticisms of the side effects of the hormones is that" when the media quotes publications on the drugs, "we'll get the publications out and summarize them in lay language and publish them for people."

A common opinion was that FINRRAGE's criticisms have caused defensiveness among practitioners. For example, FINRRAGE member Sarah Ferber described an informational evening sponsored by the Epworth Hospital/Monash University Infertility Medical Centre for women on IVF and their husbands. She told me that several senior clinicians and researchers mentioned "Re-nate and Robyn's research, particularly

their article on Clomiphene, and they unsuccessfully tried to refute their arguments." As Rowland noted, the fact that the doctors have to "say there's been disinformation given out about these drugs, women ought not to worry, means we're getting there because somebody is worried. The women are worried, they don't want to take the drugs, they're hassling the doctors, it's worked."

Journalist Rosemary West noted that there has been a calculated attempt to undermine FINRRAGE women. The medical lobby has attempted to suppress their point of view by refusing to speak on the same panel with them and by "putting it out among the medical reporters, in a deliberate whispering campaign, that these women are just ratbags, they're rabid, they're overexposed."

Tonti-Filippini, who has appeared on panels with Rowland and Alan Trounson, offered this insight:

I guess the classic example of a change was that of Alan Trounson. If you'd seen Alan Trounson when he first confronted Robyn Rowland, he was all legs apart, male aggression. He learned, I think, through seeing just how bad that looked, to temper that.

There was a sense among the people I interviewed that the doctors have become more aware of the need to inform women and couples about what happens on the program. Bowen believes that there have been changes in procedures as a result of the criticisms. She noted that "we're much tighter now than we were three years ago" and that "the long-term effect may be that their sort of loudness (referring to FINRRAGE criticism) may in fact improve systems here."

COULD FINRRAGE BE MORE EFFECTIVE?

The previous sections clearly document that FINRRAGE women are well respected by

journalists, they are changing the way the debate is constructed in the media, they are included in policy discussions, and they have impacted on the medical establishment. These are major accomplishments for a very small group of women. I was thus interested to learn whether people felt it was possible for FINRRAGE to present their position in a manner that would allow them to have an even greater effect.

FINRRAGE members felt they could accomplish more with greater resources: time, money, and members. They consistently noted the complicated and often overwhelming nature of reproductive technology and genetic engineering issues. They believe that these issues can intimidate women, thus limiting the number of women who will get involved in FINRRAGE's work. However, members were generally pleased with the way they presented themselves and with the scope of their influence. Christine Ewing commented that:

Because of the impact of the FINRRAGE debate in the media, our position is being taken seriously in a number of areas. . . . Unfortunately, we are not a powerful lobby group, but I do believe that our arguments are taken seriously and seem to have credibility. But quite evidently, we do not have the clout that the interested parties of the medical profession do. . . . We have changed a lot of views in the community.

However, less than half of the at-large people I interviewed believed that FINRRAGE operated in a manner which maximized their effectiveness. A sample of what those in this group said was that their "combination of research and advocacy is very effective" and:

To look at them, the model, the picture, the clothes, the language, they don't do things that are immediately alienating. . . . I think they have been good spokespeople and they have been not just because their arguments

are well marshalled, but because they've thought about their personal presentation and always taken care to take account for that.

The majority, however, felt that either their style of presentation, their language, or the substance of their arguments took away from the effectiveness of their presentation and their credibility. As might be expected, individuals associated with the IVF program as doctors, patients, and counselors, found FINRRAGE the least credible. They believe FINRRAGE is paternalistic in its depiction of women as uninformed victims, geared towards scaring people away from the IVF program, and insensitive to the concerns of infertile people. Bowen, the IVF counselor, said the patients see the FINRRAGE position as:

Someone's having a go at them, and their desires, their position. . . . It's almost like a personal attack is how they experience it. . . . They don't know who to believe, they're confused. They hear from critics, notably the feminist groups, that the doctors and the people who work in the clinic are portrayed as sort of soulless, female-eating, female-hating, clinical operators who are really only in it for the money and their self-aggrandizement. And yet their own experiences tell them something slightly different. . . . I think for women they make it really difficult, particularly women who would see themselves as card-carrying feminists, they see the feminist movement as deserting them and they don't understand why so much media attention is given to what they say is a very small group of women.

A sizable number of the at-large women I interviewed who consider themselves feminists also expressed concern about FINRRAGE's portrayal of women. One woman noted that she didn't much like the victim/perpetrator positioning "as a political

position to work from. I think that's alienating to women who are in the programs. . . . I would like to see some kind of recognition of the complexity of the positioning of women in all of this."

Anne Lucas, chair of the infertility support group Concern, believes that FINRRAGE is unconcerned with women as a group and lacks empathy for infertile women. She "would like to see feminist groups actually back those women who want to have children because I think that's important. They are women, they're not discarded bits in between." In discussing this type of criticism with me, Rowland commented that such criticism is not uncommon and is based on an incorrect presumption that "it is unfeminist to say no to women as if somehow desire is everything."

The speaking style of FINRRAGE's members was repeatedly mentioned as a factor that decreased their influence. Individuals mentioned that FINRRAGE members talked in a way that was seen as too urgent, relying "for their impact on some sort of dramatic presentation." I was told that FINRRAGE presents "one argument very forcefully," which is an important argument, "but I always feel that it seems to be difficult for any of them to actually take account of other views and answer them in a really well-reasoned way."

There was negative reaction to their use of such phrases as *rented womb* or *woman-hating technology*—phrases that feminists working in this area are familiar with, "but that come across to the person who doesn't know that notion as something that's alienating or excluding." Some individuals perceive the name FINRRAGE as a confrontational and aggressive one.

I was interested to find that although a few people faulted FINRRAGE spokeswomen for not knowing medical facts, none of them was able to give me an example of when they had said something that was factually incorrect, nor to point to any one area in which they were consistently off the mark.

THE FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF WHETHER FINRRAGE COULD USE MORE EFFECTIVE

One-third of the at-large individuals I interviewed are women who have been involved in feminist responses to reproductive technology. Each has held a paid or volunteer position in which they had responsibility for reproductive technology issues and worked with FINRRAGE on such projects as conferences, policy development, and media stories. One of the women had been involved in Victoria FINRRAGE and one had been affiliated with national FINRRAGE. The majority of these women continue to do work with FINRRAGE, often relying on FINRRAGE members as sources of information and expertise. While some of them fully agree with the FINRRAGE position, others feel that the position is overdrawn and lacks political sophistication. Others accept portions of their position, such as opposition to surrogacy, while rejecting others, such as opposition to IVF. Their analyses of FINRRAGE's effect on policy, media/public debate, and practitioners, which were included in the preceding sections of this paper, varied from woman to woman. Yet, all of the women believe that FINRRAGE has done vitally important work and has been an influential voice. They appeared to share a sense of gratitude to FINRRAGE for maintaining a forceful presence against a hostile and strong medical establishment.

However, during the course of our interviews, it became clear that the women shared certain reservations about FINRRAGE's approach, although the level of concern differed among them. I chose to highlight these comments by putting them in a separate section because I believe they reflect ongoing tensions within the feminist community that limit FINRRAGE's influence and ability to attract new members. These tensions go back to at least 1986 when Esther

Ramp, reflecting of the 1986 “Liberation or Loss” conference, wrote:

I do not wish to dismiss communal consciousness-raising, for I acknowledge the importance of this practice to the development of the Western women’s movement. But I do feel uneasy, for I saw how it could act to close off those questions which were not part of the radical feminist drama. Indeed to be most ungenerous, the answer to the question in the conference’s title, liberation or loss, was never in real doubt. As one woman at a workshop I attended stated, the dominant assumptions of the conference were never laid out and debated. (Ramp, 1986, p. 4)

She added:

As well, I am very uncomfortable with the moral tone with which potential and actual users of new reproductive technologies were exhorted to withhold their bodies. If we follow radical feminism down this track, I believe we are in danger of falling into the same trap as last century’s moral purity campaigners against prostitution and the more recent campaigners against pornography—that of constructing users of these technologies as either self-interested colluders with patriarchy or as passive victims of false consciousness. In either case they need to be saved. The notion of control becomes murkier and murkier. If control is really on the feminist agenda, then we must know whether we really want some of us to have more control than others. (Ramp, 1986, p. 5)

Rowland’s response, in part, was as follows:

In terms of the conference itself, it is unjust, I think, to claim that the “dominant assumptions” behind it were not discussed.

A great deal of effort went into making this happen if it were at all possible. (Rowland, 1986, p. 35)

You say you are very uncomfortable with the “moral tone” which comes through in these debates, reminding you of the “moral purity campaigners against prostitution and the more recent campaigners against pornography.” . . . Neither of these campaigns have constructed the “users of these technologies as either self-interested colluders with patriarchy or as passive victims of false consciousness.” Surely we all understand by now that ideology is a much more complex mechanism than that! It is true that at times women do collude with patriarchy in order to satisfy their own desires. We have actually been very careful not to attack women on reproductive technology programs, though the courtesy has not been returned.

The radical feminist debate has taken a much broader stand than blaming the user. We have looked at the social construction of science and the social construction of motherhood. We have argued that women are encouraged and even coerced to experience motherhood within a heterosexual and patriarchal framework. Within this context reproductive technology is a further tool to reinforce women’s role as breeders. But in the process it affects all women (Rowland, 1986, p. 36).

Ramona Koval’s review of Renate Klein’s book *Infertility* raised issues similar to those raised by Ramp:

What is disturbing and disappointing is a political solution to the reproductive technologies that reflect a fascist tendency in some feminist politics. Since it is clear that the promise of technology doesn’t give women the chance to say no, then the Sisters will deny women the chance to say yes. . . . Renate Klein writes in her

overarching political chapter that “nothing less than legislation to stop IVF and to end the availability of embryos for genetic screening and therapy experimentation will do.” The political naivety that generates this response is coupled with a basic misunderstanding of human relationships and what drives them. For example, the book is especially scathing of the treatment of a fertile woman because her partner is subfertile. This is presented as male science using a healthy woman’s body to deal with a male infertility problem. (Koval, 1989).

FINRRAGE members were stunned by the viciousness of the review, particularly since Koval had been involved in FINRRAGE for a number of years. Koval offered this explanation:

What that review was about was saying look there are really important issues in this book and what the feminist position has done has brought out the dangers of the hormonal treatments, the poverty of the method, that’s really vital for women who think of going on the programs. Some of the things in the book were really terrific. But when you say to that woman . . . don’t involve yourself with this program when you’re not really sick, it’s ridiculous. It doesn’t take her life experience into consideration which is something I thought we were all supposed to be doing . . . And that the Sisters know best was a reflection of my own experience with the Sisters, and by Capital S sisters, I meant the group of women who run the joint, who think they run the joint, and that I find anti-democratic and anti-socialist too. I suppose that’s part of the thing I talked about before, bucking at authority and bucking at orthodoxies. I find an orthodoxy, whether it’s based upon the Russian Orthodox church, Jewish religion . . . or feminism with a capital F, I find that really hard to take.

The view that FINRRAGE is a rigid organization that demands conformity was widespread among these women. Tricia Harper, who was one of the first feminists to be involved in reproductive technology policy, noted that:

They’ve tended to start off from a collectivist theory of operation and collectives, in my experience, although the theory is good about working cooperatively, they often tend to be very inward looking. They are often very critical in terms of other people’s ideological perspective, so that if you’re not ideologically pure, you’re excluded.

This criticism about ideological purity-orthodoxy-is, in my analysis, a two-pronged criticism. First, it includes the belief that becoming an opposition group, switching from FINNRET to FINRRAGE, was a poor political decision. Rebecca Albury commented:

There are women who would have worked around reproductive technology much more if it wasn’t about true believing . . . It did seem to me that it got to be about we have the right line and we’re going to take on all these people with the wrong line long before it seemed to me there had been enough public discussion to know whether that line was widely shared.

The second, and more subtle, part of this criticism, however, centered on how FINRRAGE alienates some of its allies and potential allies. FINRRAGE’s desire to control the feminist response to reproductive technologies was cited. Their actions were seen to reflect a belief:

. . . that because you’ve had an idea, that you own it. Nobody else is allowed to say it, which is a little bit the sort of academic view about things. But if you’re in politics,

you have to say O.K., I'll have an idea, this person can run with it, this other person can carry it.

The style of presentation of FINRRAGE's members was also perceived to turn potential allies away. I was told that their arguments are presented with such weight and certainty, and in such a hardline and hammering manner, that women are often stopped from wanting or knowing how to respond. FINRRAGE members call this style of speaking passionate and it is. But it can also be intimidating and it leaves the impression that women are not feminists if they don't believe that these technologies are women-hating.

CONCLUSION

FINRRAGE has made a significant impact in Victoria during the past seven years. I was quite surprised at the degree to which their accomplishments, such as cementing in the public consciousness IVF's high failure rates and the risks of superovulation, were agreed upon by person after person whom I interviewed. Coming from the United States, where the most watered-down feminism is often considered radical, I was amazed at FINRRAGE's level of credibility – that even though many people found their views extreme, they were still considered by most of the people I talked with to be an integral part of the debate.

However, for all their success, there exists a widespread view that there are shortcomings within FINRRAGE which diminish its potential influence. Although members don't agree that their argument depicts women as "unwitting dupes of male professionals with power," it leaves that impression on many, including other feminists whose views are nearly identical to theirs. The perception also exists that FINRRAGE is unsympathetic to the plight of women/couples with fertility problems, despite evidence to the contrary

such as the FINRRAGE sponsorship of the infertility seminar in 1990.

The reservations expressed in the section on feminist critiques are also important issues for FINRRAGE to address. FINRRAGE actions tend to reflect a belief that if a woman isn't with them 100%, she's against them. This kind of insular politics will preclude FINRRAGE from building a larger movement.

Additionally, FINRRAGE women need to be aware that their case against reproductive technology is often so strong that other women feel silenced by it. FINRRAGE members often forget the lengthy process they underwent from questioning to opposing the technologies. Women need to feel that they have space to question and discuss without the fear of looking pro-technology or un-feminist.

I will leave the final words to journalist Michael Pirrie who offered a fitting evaluation of FINRRAGE's role in Victoria:

I think the feminists raised the consciousness of the community definitely on the issues relating to IVF and its safety and the relationships between the scientist and their patients and questioning the so called benefits of IVF. Who was benefitting and how often were they benefitting? Were they short or long-term benefits and what were the risks involved? Too often IVF has been presented as a . . . breakthrough miracle-type technology and the risks had been swept under the carpet . . . The risks were largely not discussed and the feminists raised those risks. They played a major role in the IVF story.

ENDNOTES

1. I would like to thank the Australian-American Educational Foundation for financial support of my research and the Humanities Department at Deakin University for institutional support. Additionally, many thanks to Romaine Rutnam for sharing her extensive doctoral research with me, and to Rosemary West and Calvin Miller for allowing me access to the libraries at *The AGE* and *The Herald* newspapers. I am very

grateful to each and every one of the individuals who participated in the interviews.

2. Although I have concentrated my research on FINRRAGE women in Victoria, I must note that there are many other feminists, both within Victoria and throughout Australia, whom have made significant contributions to the reproductive technology debate.

3. FINNRET/FINRRAGE historical information is from personal interviews with members, FINNRET/FINRRAGE documents and publications.

4. Information on the international organization is from secondary sources. The international group would not share specific information with me on the organization's function and structure.

5. Romaine Rutnam has noted that ". . . the first (faintly) critical mention of IVF by a feminist in Australia was published late in 1981 by Rebecca Albury, an activist in the women's health movement in Sydney and a political scientist by training" (Rutnam, thesis draft, Chap. 5, p. 2; see also Albury, *Women's health, man-made medicine, Scarlet Woman*, 1981, Spring, pp. 6-11).

6. *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 18, 1984, p. 3, and *The AGE*, May 18, 1984, p. 1. Although Rowland is now an opponent of reproductive technology, she did not begin as one. In my interviews with FINRRAGE members, I found that a shift from questioning the technologies to opposing them was common and reflected a great deal of careful thought and analysis. It is inaccurate and simplistic to label their opposition as a Luddite dismissal of technology as many of FINRRAGE's opponents have done.

7. Rowland's resignation received an enormous amount of media coverage across Australia. She became a figure the public wanted to know more about. For example, one newspaper article pictured Rowland playing the Irish fiddle, and in addition to reporting her criticism of reproductive technology, discussed her marital status and love of cooking.

8. Before the creation of FINNRET, and based on her donor program research, Rowland submitted three papers on AID/AIH to the Committee to Consider the Social, Ethical and Legal Issues Arising from IVF. Louis Waller, the former Chair of the Committee, said, "her research was very important because it balanced a lot of assertions that had been made to us about the desperate need for anonymity if these programs were going to go on." Rowland also testified before the Committee about the "Moral and Social Issues in Embryo Research and IVF." However, this occurred in June 1984 and the legislation had already been submitted to Parliament.

9. These comments refer to the creation of specific government structures to benefit women. A phenomenon that accompanied this was women entering government bureaucracies as self-identified feminists,

known as "femocrats." For more information on *femocrats*, see Sawer, Marian, (1990), *Sisters in suits, Australia: Alien and Unwin*; and Watson, Sophie, (Ed.), (1990), *Playing the state*, Australia: Alien and Unwin.

10. *Women and infertility*, Victorian Women's Consultative Council, June 1988, Acknowledgement page. Tricia Harper, Convenor of the Victoria Women's Advisory Council and convener of its Women and Reproductive Technology subcommittee when the paper was commissioned, told me that the paper was completed in 1985, but it was not launched until 1988. Additionally, although it was supposed to be available to all Victorian women, only 1000 copies were produced and to date, no one has been able to obtain copies apart from the people who attended the launch.

11. *The AGE*, with a daily circulation of 232,690 (as of September 30, 1989) Monday through Saturday, had the middle circulation among the three Melbourne dailies. (As of October, 1990, the papers with the largest and smallest circulations merged.)

12. For example, Rowland has authored five lengthy pieces for Melbourne newspapers and Jocelyne Scutt has written one. When Klein's books *Infertility and The exploitation of a desire: women's experiences with in vitro fertilization* were published in Australia, the books and her views were reviewed in a number of papers.

Rowland, Robyn, (1984, June 13), Of woman born-but for how long?. *The AGE*, p. 11; Rowland, Robyn, (1985, March 6), Why curb the business of test-tube pregnancy, *The AGE*, p. 24; Rowland, Robyn, (1987, January 30), Where do embryos come from?. *The AGE*, p. 18; Rowland, Robyn, (1987, March 30), Woman's rights, a basic issue. *The AGE*, p. 7; Rowland, Robyn, (1987, October 2), Women-the silent victims of IVF research, *The Herald*; Scutt, Jocelyne, (1988, December 30), Why women don't win from IVF, *The Herald*.

Examples of coverage Klein received: Cafarella, Jane, (1989, January 25), The IVF Experience. *The AGE*, p. 18; Crawford, Patricia, (1989, October 2), IVF program "a health risk that should be abandoned," *The Australian*, p. 6; KizUos, Kathy, (1989, June 1), Why this woman says the IVF program is BAD MEDICINE, *The Herald*.

13. Much of *The AGE'S* critical coverage of reproductive technology, and the inclusion of an opposition feminist view, must be attributed to Rosemary West, editor of the ACCENT page (approximately half a page, run twice a week). West considers ACCENT to be a kind of "affirmative action" page. As a result, feminist points of view and general women's issues are given a legitimacy not often found in the media.

14. Tonti-Filippini told me he believes that he started raising superovulation related issues as early as 1982. I did not find any evidence of this in the general media. However, he certainly has raised these issues since FINRRAGE began to raise them.

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APPENDIX

FINRRAGE members

Christine Ewing, doctoral student in immunology and arthritis, FINRRAGE (Australia) coordinator; Sarah Ferber, doctoral student in 17th century French history; Lariane Fonseca, Women's health activist and women's bookstore co-owner; Dr. Renate Klein, lecturer in Women's Studies; Dr. Robyn Rowland, Associate Professor, Coordinator of Women's Studies; Dr. Jocelyne Scutt, Barrister.

At-large participants

Jan Aitken, Former member, Victoria Standing Review and Advisory Committee on Infertility (VSRACI); Rebecca Albury, Member, National Bioethics Consultative Committee (NBCC); Louise Bowen, IVF Counselor, Epworth Hospital Monash

University Infertility Medical Centre; Max Charlesworth, Member, VSRACI, Member, NBCC; Christine Crowe, Founder, FINRRAGE/ Sydney; Heather Dietrich, Member, NBCC, Former New South Wales Coordinator, FINNRET; Tricia Harper, Former secretary, Asche Committee, Former convenor, Victoria Women's Advisory Council, Former member. National Women's Consultative Council; Jasna Hay, Member, VSRACI, former member, Victoria Committee to Consider the Social, Ethical and Legal Issues Arising from IVF; Caroline Hogg, Victoria Minister for Health, Labor Party; Ian Johnston, IVF Doctor, Royal Women's Hospital/Freemason's Clinic; Ramona Koval, Former participant in FINRRAGE, radio journalist; Anne Lucas, Chair, CONCERN Infertility Support Group; Judith Lumley, Member, VSRACI; Marie Meggit, Spokesperson, Association of Relinquishing Mothers; Calvin Miller, Medical/Science Editor, *The Herald* Newspaper; Michael Pirrie, Medical Reporter, *The AGE* Newspaper; Peter Singer, Director, Monash University Centre for Human Bioethics; Rose Sorger, Research and information officer, Healthsharing Women; Marie Tehan, Victoria Shadow Minister for Health, the Liberal Party; Nick Tonti-Filippini, Former Director, St. Vincent's Bioethics Centre; Louis Waller, Chair, VSRACI, Former Chair, Victoria Committee to consider the Social, Ethical and Legal Issues Arising from IVF; Rosemary West, ACCENT editor, *The AGE* Newspaper. (All of the individuals interviewed spoke only for themselves. Affiliations are indicated for informational purposes. Drs. Carl Wood and Alan Trounson declined to speak with me. Susan Ryan, who was largely responsible for setting up the National Bioethics Consultative Committee during her tenure as federal Cabinet Minister for Education and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women, also declined.)