BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CANADA

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THE CONTINUED UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN CANADIAN POLITICS

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir noted that, among other things, politics "has always been a man's world." [1] This statement remains as true today as it was when it was first published. In all aspects of political leadership – be that in the community, in advocacy, or in electoral politics – Canadian politics is a man's world. Here, I outline why this is the case, identifying obstacles to women's political participation at the individual, social, and political levels. I conclude by examining if targeted education efforts such as campaign schools can help women overcome these barriers.

It may be tempting to conclude that women have made great political gains in Canada. More women were elected to the House of Commons in 2011 than ever before in the past. As of early 2012, women lead six provincial or territorial governments: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nunavut. However, many of these women are in "glass cliff" circumstances: their party's electoral fortunes have declined to the point where their re-election prospects are grim.[2] Furthermore, these higher profile political events obscure the dearth of women in politics in Canada. Less than 20 per cent of the candidates nominated by major parties in 2011 were women; this is much the same as it was in 1997.[3] Stated differently, Canada's political parties nominate and elect about as many women today as they did fifteen years ago (see Appendix A). And yet, Canada's international ranking for women's political representation fell from 16th in

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[1] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, translated by H.M. Parshley. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).

[2] Research shows that women leaders are often preferred to men only under these precarious circumstances. See Susanne Bruckmüller and Nyla Branscombe, "The glass cliff: When and why women are selected as leaders in crisis contexts" (2010) 49 British Journal of Social Psychology 433.

[3] Elections Canada, *Final List of Confirmed Candidates -- 41st General Election* (6 June 2011), online: Elections Canada <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=ele&dir=pas/41ge/can&document=index&lang=e#complete>; Elections Canada, *Thirty-Sixth General Election 1997: Official Voting Results: Synopsis, Table 10 Number of Candidates by Percentage of Valid Votes Received, by Political Affiliation* (20 July 2010), online: Elections Canada <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/off/dec3097&document=res_table10&lang=e>; Parliament of Canada, "Members of the House of Commons," (20 February 2012), online: Parliament of Canada <http://www.parl.gc.ca>.

1997 to 49th in 2011.[4] It is hardly surprising that the Canadian electoral project – the goal to elect 50 percent women to legislatures – is characterized as "stalled."[5]

Indeed, if women's political empowerment is measured as women's participation in political decision-making at the national level, then gender-based political inequality is the most pernicious and robust indicator of inequality. This is measured by the Global Gender Gap Reports[6] In the top-ranked country (Iceland), women's political empowerment is roughly two-thirds of men's; in Canada, women's political empowerment is less than 20 per cent of men's.[7]

Women's political underrepresentation is not restricted to names on federal election ballots. In 2010, women comprised a mere 25% of municipal elected representatives in some Canadian provinces.[8] This is the same rate of participation as the federal House of Commons, though municipal politics is broadly perceived to be more "woman friendly." Similarly, though women are as likely as men to vote,[9] academic research concludes they have been less likely than men to be members of political parties and civil society-based advocacy groups.[10] Research also shows that women are less likely than men to work on political campaigns for parties and for

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[4] Interparliamentary Union, *Women in Parliaments: Word and Regional Averages (Statistical Archive)*, online: Interparliamentary Union <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world-arc.htm>.

[5] Linda Trimble and Jane Arscott. *Still Counting: Women in Politics across Canada*. (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2003).

[6] Ricardo Haussmann, Laura D. Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi, World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2006* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2006); Haussmann, Tyson, and Zahidi, World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2008* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2008); Haussmann, Tyson, and Zahidi, World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2009* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2009); Haussmann, Tyson, and Zahidi, World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2010* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2010) [Haussmann, Ricardo and Zahidi, "Reports"].?

[7] By contrast, according to the same report, Canadian women's economic participation and opportunities are roughly 78 per cent of men's, while women's and men's educational attainment, and health and survival rates are equal. Three factors comprised "political empowerment" in these reports: the proportion of women in parliament, the proportion of women in Cabinet, and the number of years women have served in the political. Haussmann, Ricardo and Zahidi, "Reports".

[8] Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, *Women in Municipal Government*, online: AUMA <http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/Women_in_Municipal_Government>; Federation of Canadian Municipalities, *Women in Local Government: Getting to 30% by 2026* (February 2012), online: CFM <http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Women/Getting_to_30_percent_by_ 2026_EN.pdf> [FCM].

[9] Elisabeth Gidengil *et al.*, *Citizens* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

[10] Lisa Young and William Cross, Women's Involvement in Canadian Political Parties" (2003) in Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble, eds, *Women and Electoral Politics in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press); B Cross, *Political Parties* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004); L Young and J Everitt, *Advocacy Groups* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

advocacy groups, to donate to political campaigns and causes, and to contact government officials.[11]

The most recent data suggest that some of these trends have changed over time, while others have persisted. According to the 2011 Canadian Election Study,[12] women and men are now equally likely to have volunteered for, and been members of a political party at some point in their lives. Women and men are equally likely to sign petitions, engage in protest activities, and use the Internet to be politically active. They are also equally likely to have been active in professional, environmental, and ethnic associations. However, women remain less likely to donate to political parties.[13] Women are less likely than men to participate in buycotts – buying products for political, ethical, or environmental reasons – and women remain less likely than men to volunteer for a community group or non-profit organization. Women continue to be less likely than men to be active in unions, and business and sports associations.

Finally, women are less likely to be interested in politics or confident in their political abilities.[14] They are also less likely to be knowledgeable about some aspects of political affairs.[15]

WHY ARE WOMEN'S LOWER LEVELS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION PROBLEMATIC?

Women's lower levels of political participation are problematic for three reasons. First, women are a historically underrepresented group. In the past, they were formally barred from participating in politics and democracy. Even though these formal restrictions have been removed, informal barriers continue to act to hamper women's political participation. In the face of these barriers, Canada's representative institutions cannot function in a just, fair, and democratic manner. Second, women

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[11] Nancy Burns, Kay Leman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba, *The Private Roots of Public Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Gidengil *et al.*; Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Young and Cross; Young and Everitt.

[12] Patrick Fournier *et al. The 2011 Canadian Election Study* [Dataset]. Author's calculations.

[13] This difference in donations does *not* achieve conventional levels of statistical significance. The other differences are statistically significant at p<0.05.

[14] Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox, *It Still Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Melanee Thomas, "The Complexity Conundrum: Why Hasn't the Gender Gap in Subjective Political Competence Closed?" (2012) 45:2 Canadian Journal of Political Science 337 [Thomas "Complexity"]; Melanee Thomas, *Feminist Mobilization and Gender Gaps in Political Interest* (2012) [unpublished, archived at the University of Calgary] [Thomas, "Feminism"].

[15] Dietlind Stolle and Elisabeth Gidengil, "What Do Women Really Know? A Gendered Analysis of Varieties of Political Knowledge" (2010) 8:1 PS: Perspectives on Politics 93.

are a heterogeneous group with a diversity of political opinions and preferences.[16] Representing this diversity is difficult, if not impossible, with a small number of representatives and activists. This task would be more realistically achieved if women are as active in politics as justified by proportionality and their demographic weight.[17] Third, research shows that in the legislature and the laboratory alike, women's and men's decision-making behaviour changes with the gender composition of that group.[18] Specifically, men paired with women are more likely to choose outcomes that closely match their preferences than are teams made up exclusively of men,[19] and women are more likely than men to "prioritize the protection of the vulnerable and support government intervention on 'compassion' issues."[20] This suggests that women's lower levels of political participation lead to outcomes that are less desirable for society as a whole.

These trends – or, rather, the stability of women's lower levels of political participation – suggest that that considerable barriers to women's political participation persist in Canada. These barriers exist at the individual, community/social, and political levels; specific barriers at each level will be discussed in turn.

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[16] Elisabeth Gidengil, "Beyond the Gender Gap: Presidential Address At the Canadian Political Science Association, Saskatoon 2007" (2007) 40:4 Canadian Journal of Political Science 815; Pei-Te Lien, "Does the Gender Gap in Political Attitudes and Behavior Vary across Racial Groups?" (1998) 51:4 Political Research Quarterly 869.

[17] Jane Mansbridge, "Myth and Reality: The Era and the Gender Gap in the 1980 Election" (1985) 49:2 Public Opinion Quarterly 164. This is one theoretical idea that underpins the notion of a "critical mass" of women in politics. Many academics and advocacy groups argue that real political change can occur for women in politics once they comprise 30 percent of a decision-making group, as advocated for by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Others argue that this characterization of "critical mass" is based on a misinterpretation of earlier work, and that increasing the number of women in politics could potentially lead to less cohesive political representation for women. See Sarah Childs and Mona Lena Krook "Critical Mass Theory and Women's Political Representation" (2008) 56 Political Studies 725. Those arguing from this second perspective suggest that "critical actors" may be more important for women's political representation.

[18] Nicholas Goedert, Christopher Karpowitz, and Tali Mendelberg, "Does Descriptive Representation Facilitate Women's Distinctive Voice? How Group Gender Composition and Decision Rules Affect the Content of Deliberation" (Paper delibered at the NYU CESS Annual Experimental Political Science Conference, New York, 3 March 2012), online: <http://cess.nyu.edu/policon2012/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Goedert-Karpowitz-Mendelberg_NYU_2012_Feb-20.pdf>; Rebecca Hannagan and Christopher Larimer, "Does Gender Composition Affect Group Decision Outcomes? Evidence from a Laboratory Experiment" (2010) 32(1) Political Behavior 51; Lyn Kathlene, "Power and Influence in State Legislative Policymaking: The Interaction of Gender and Position in Committee Hearing Debates" (1994) 88:3 The American Political Science Review 560.

[19] Hannangan and Larimer.

[20] Goedert, Karpowitz, and Mendelberg at 3.

Individual-Level Barriers to Women's Political Participation

A number of individual-level barriers contribute to women's lower levels of political participation. The most important barriers at this level today in Canada are psychological. One socioeconomic factor – income – continues to be an important individual-level barrier.

Historically, socioeconomic factors were highlighted in the literature as the most important. The earliest studies of political behaviour argued that as women's levels of education, income, and occupational status caught up to men's, so too should their levels of political participation and engagement.[21] Canadian women's levels of education now rival and even exceed men's.[22] Though women's median income is about two-thirds of men's, women's wages grew faster than men's since the late 1980s, and women have been steadily moving into higher status occupations over time.[23] These factors are not immaterial to political participation: education and household income are both strong predictors of participation in Canada.[24]

If women's lower levels of political participation could be explained by these socioeconomic factors, then gender gaps in political participation should have narrowed, if not closed over time. This has not been the case.[25] Though women's lower levels of earned income remain a barrier to their political participation, women's other socioeconomic gains – notably, their great strides in educational attainment – should have powerful effects on closing gender gaps in political participation. This may be due, in part, to the fact that women remain underrepresented in the upper echelons of many professions, despite their education gains overall. Still, because women's political underrepresentation persists, other barriers must also be at work.

Income acts as an individual-level barrier through campaign finance regulation (or lack thereof). Electoral contests remain unregulated in some municipal

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[21] Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963); A Campell *et al.*, *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1960); Paul Lazarzfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).

[22] Statistics Canada, "Educational Portrait of Canada, 2006 Census." (Ottawa, Minister of Industry, 2006; OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, *The Reversal of Gender Inequalities in Higher Education: An On-going Trend* by Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin, Higher Education to 2030 (Paris: OECD, 2008).

[23] Statistics Canada, *Why has the Gender Wage Gap Narrowed?* by Marie Drolet (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2011); Statistics Canada, *2006 Census of Population*, Catalogue No. 97-563-Xcb2006068. (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2011); A Eagly and L Carli, *Through the Labryinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007).

[24] Gidengil *et al.*

[25] *Ibid*. Lawless and Fox.

and provincial jurisdictions. This lack of regulation requires potential candidates for office to rely on conventional sources of campaign finance, including personal income.[26] This individual-level barrier can be mitigated through campaign finance regulation, as noted below in the "political barriers" section below.

In the absence of systematic socioeconomic barriers, psychological barriers become more important for women's political participation. Women are less likely than men to be interested in or knowledgeable about politics.[27] Women are also less likely than men to be confident in their political abilities.[28] Research from the United States shows that women's lower levels of political self-confidence translates directly into a gender gap in political ambition. This suppresses women's desire to run for political office at all levels of government.[29] Importantly, levels of socioeconomic resources and family responsibilities do *not* directly explain why women report lower levels of psychological orientations to politics than do men.[30] This suggests that leadership programs that target the development of political interest and political self-confidence may help some women overcome an individual-level barrier to political participation.

Though women's marital and parental status do not have statistically significant direct effects on their likelihood of considering a candidacy, or on their psychological engagement with the political system, most women *perceive* that family responsibilities pose one of the greatest barriers to their participation in politics.[31] This is intuitive: women who work full-time outside the home spend, on

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[26] Cross.

[27] Women are as, and sometimes more, likely than men to possess knowledge of government programs and services and benefits. However, the women who are most likely to need government services benefits – poor women, recent immigrants – are the least likely to know about these programs. See Stolle and Gidengil.

[28] Linda Bennett and Stephen Earl Bennett, "Enduring Gender Differences in Political Interest: The Impact of Socialization and Political Dispositions" (1989) 17:1 American Politics Quarterly 105; Stephen Earl Bennett, "Knowledge of Politics and Sense of Subjective Political Competence: The Ambiguous Connection" (1997) 25:2 American Politics Research 230; Gidengil *et al.*; Elisabeth Gidengil, Janine Giles, and Melanee Thomas, "The Gender Gap in Self-Perceived Understanding of Politics in Canada and the United States" (2008) 4:4 Politics & Gender 535; Lawless and Fox; Stolle and Gidengil; Melanee Thomas Gender and Psychological Orientations to Politics (PhD Dissertation, Department of Political Science, McGill University, Proquest UMI Dissertations Publishing 2012) [Thomas "Psychological"]; Thomas, "Feminism"; Thomas, "Complexity"; Jan Van Deth, "Interest in Politics" (1990) in M. Kent Jennings and Jan W. Van Deth, eds, *Continuities in Political Action: A Longitudinal Study of Political Orientations in Three Western Democracies* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co); Jan Van Deth, "Political Interest and Apathy: The Decline of the Gender Gap?" (2000) 35:3 Acta Politica 247.

[29] Lawless and Fox.

[30] See Bennett and Bennett; Burns, Schlozman and Verba; Gidengil, Giles and Thomas; Thomas, "Complexity." Instead, women in Canada generate less political interest and political self-confidence from higher levels of income. See Thomas, "Complexity"; Thomas" Psychological." Why this is the case remains unknown.

[31] Lawless and Fox at 172-173; see also Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.

average, almost double the hours engaged in child care than do comparably situated men.[32] This pattern holds when women in political careers are examined.[33] Thus, the absence of a direct effect of family responsibilities on women's political participation is perplexing.

Instead of exerting a direct effect on women's political participation, family responsibilities place women in a "double bind." They must be successful in their political and civic activities, as well as successful in their private roles as "wife" and "mother." Stated differently, for women to "be successful public citizens, [they] must also be successful private citizens."[34] These requirements are not the same for male politicians.[35] The result is that women who decide to engage in community or political activities do so with considerable supports from their spouses, friends, and extended support networks.[36] Interviews show that politically active women report that they "wouldn't be able to do anything like run [for office] without the backing of my husband and friends."[37] This, when combined with the fact that women are far less likely than men to receive the suggestion that they run for political office from a personal source, highlights the nuanced ways in which family responsibilities act as a barrier to women's political participation.

Given the complex nature of the double bind, overcoming this barrier may require multiple strategies. This is reflected in some campaign schools, as women are encouraged to be candidates, or to *support* women who are candidates for public office.[38]

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY-LEVEL BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The gendered division of household and private labour noted above help produce the stereotypes and processes that underpin societal and community-level barriers to

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[32] Statistics Canada, "Families, Living Arrangements and Unpaid Work" in *Women in Canada: A Gender-Based Statistical Report* by Anne Milan, Leslie-Anne Keown, and Covadonga Robles Urquijo (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2011).

[33] Lawless and Fox.

[34] *Ibid* at 71.

[35] A recent example is Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan. Reporters specifically highlighted Madigan's parental status, asking "whether she could serve as governor and still raise her ids the way she wants to," and asking "whether she could simultaneously hold both jobs – governor and mom." From Dave McKinney, "Lisa Madigan refuses to tip hand on governor's race," *Chicago Sun-Times* (4 September 2012) online: Chicago Sun-Times <http://www.suntimes.com/news/elections/14938617-505/lisa-madigan-refuses-to-tip-hand-on-governors-race.html>.

[36] Lawless and Fox.

[37] *Ibid* at 82.

[38] Eqaul Voice, Be Her or Support Her Campaign, Online: Equal Voice <http://www.equalvoice.ca/be_her_or_support_her.cfm> [Equal Voice, "Be Her"].

women's political participation.[39] This gendered division of labour produces broad, blunt ideas and expectations about behaviours that are appropriate, or attributable to the general social categories of "women" and "men."[40] These general social categories form stereotypes; it is against this backdrop that more specific roles, such as those associated with occupations, are evaluated. This means that women who are active in specific political, occupational, and civic activities are evaluated differently than are men in comparable pursuits.

Women's political and civic activities can be understood through this lens. For example, politics is a masculine-stereotyped field that is, by definition, tied to power and competition.[41] Studies indicate that voters tend to prefer masculine to feminine traits when evaluating candidates for high political office.[42] Masculine traits are seen as essential for politics, while feminine traits are not. Importantly, women politicians are stereotyped as significantly less feminine than women in general, but *as* feminine as, and significantly less masculine than male politicians and politicians in general.[43] Thus, while women in general remain broadly defined by diffuse gender roles, women in politics are defined by what they lack: femininity and specific masculine traits.

This reflects on the kinds of civic and political activities that women engage in. As noted above, women are significantly less likely than men to participate in unions, business associations, and sport associations. These gender gaps matter: the top occupation for Canadian Parliamentarians in 2011 is "businessman". This occupation does not appear in the top ten for women Parliamentarians. Instead, the women who enter politics are most likely to be teachers and consultants.[44] These

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[39] Amanda Diekman and Monica Schneider, "A Social Role Theory Perspective on Gender Gaps in Political Attitudes" (2010) 34 Psychology of Women Quarterly 486.

[40] Lourdes Benería, "Reproduction, Production and the Sexual Division of Labour" (1979) 3:3 Cambridge Journal of Economics 203; Diekman and Schneider; Alice Eagly and Aamanda Diekman, "Examining Gender Gaps in Sociopolitical Attitudes: It's Not Mars and Venus" (2006) 16 Feminism & Psychology 26.

[41] Leonie Huddy and Nayda Terkildsen, "The Consequences of Gender Stereotypes for Women Candidates at Different Levels and Types of Office" (1993) 46:3 Political Research Quarterly 503 [Huddy and Terkildsen, "1993a"]; Leonie Huddy and Nayda Terkildsen, "Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates" (1993) 37:1 American Journal of Political Science 119 [Huddy and Terkildsen, "1993b"]; Kira Sanbonmatsu, "Gender Stereotypes and Vote Choice" (2002) 46:1 *American Journal of Political Science* 20; Kira Sanbonmatsu and Kathleen Dolan, "Do Gender Stereotypes Transcend Party?" (2009) 62:3 Political Research Quarterly 485.

[42] Leonie Huddy and Theresa Capelos, "The Impact of Gender Stereotypes on Voters' Assessment of Women Candidates" (2002) in Victor Ottai, ed, *Social Psychological Applications to Social Issues: Developments in Political Pscyhology* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum); Huddy and Terkildsen, "1993a"; Huddy and Terkildsen, "1993b"; Sanbonmatsu; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan; Monica Schneider and Angela Bos, "Measuring Female Politician Stereotypes" (Paper delivered at Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Seattle, 2011).

[43] Schneider and Bos.

[44] Parliament of Canada, "Top 10 Occupations in the House of Commons" (20 March 2012), online: Parliament of Canada <http://www.parl.gc.ca/ParlInfo/Lists/Top10Occupations.aspx?Menu=HOC-Bio-

differences in the Canadian political pipeline and civil society participation reflect more general, gendered expectations about work. Though women are now more likely to enroll in and complete university degree programs than men, women are disproportionately found in feminine-typed "caring" fields such as health care and education. Furthermore, women are more likely to study in these fields now than in the past.[45]

This trend is reflected in Canadian women's participation in municipal politics: women are most likely to participate in School Boards. By contrast, men are more likely to participate in Public Utilities Boards and municipal councils.[46] As a general rule, even local politics is perceived to be a "male-dominated career."[47] This may contribute to why municipal politics associations have cited a need for mentors and mentoring to recruit women to participate in local politics.[48] As a result of gendered perceptions and behavioural expectations, women are disproportionately found in professions outside the political pipeline.

These same municipal associations cite discrimination and disrespect as barriers to women's participation in municipal politics.[49] These barriers rest on stereotypical perceptions of "ladylike" behaviour.[50] Notably, these behaviours do *not* include debate and dissent. These stereotypes are reinforced through media coverage of women politicians at all levels of government. Women who violate these stereotypes are trivialized and condemned by the media.[51] In politics, female federal party leaders who vigorously participated in debate were characterized as aggressive and attacking, though their behaviour was less hostile and less aggressive than that of male party leaders. Female leaders who took a more conciliatory tone in debate were ignored in the press.[52] Women's personal relationships and physical appearance also receive far more scrutiny from the press and other politicians than do their male colleagues, and the tone of the press coverage women politicians receive is

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[45] Statistics Canada, "Women and Education" in *Women in Canada: A Gender-Based Statistical Report* by Martin Turcotte (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2011).

[46] Kathryn Kopniak, "Women in Canadian Municipal Politics: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back" (1985) 22:3 *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 394.

[47] Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.

[48] *Ibid*. Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

[49] Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.

[50] Federation of Canadian Municipalities at 9.

[51] Gaye Tuchman, "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women" (1978) in Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels and James Benet, eds, *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media* (New York: Oxford University Press).

[52] Joanna Everitt and Elisabeth Gidengil, "Tough Talk: How Television News Covers Male and Female Leaders of Canadian Political Parties" in Trimble and Tremblay.

disproportionately negative. Research demonstrates that these trends are international phenomena.[53]

Thus, though political marketing in Canada is already sophisticated,[54] media training may be a particularly important part of recruiting and retaining women in political and civic affairs. Many Canadian universities offer comparable training for women faculty designed to help them establish their authority with the media quickly and efficiently.[55]

POLITICAL BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Women who overcome individual and social/community level barriers to political participation then face uniquely political hurdles. These political barriers are tied to political parties and legislatures.

First, once a woman decides to seek elected office, they need to be nominated to stand on a ballot. This process has been described by former parliamentarians as a confusing "black box."[56] Municipal associations echo this concern, describing the process of seeking local election as a process that needs to be demystified.[57] This is one area where campaign schools help women by informing them about the steps required to get their name on a ballot.[58]

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[53] Lisbet van Zoonen, ""Finally, I Have My Mother Back" Politicians and Their Families in Popular Culture" (1998) 3:1 The International Journal of Press/Politics 48; Lisbet van Zoonen, "The Personal, the Political and the Popular: A Woman's Guide to Celebrity Politics" (2006) 9:3 European Journal of Cultural Studies 287; Caroline Heldman, Susan Carroll, and Stephanie Olson, "She Brought Only a Skirt: Print Media Coverage of Elizabeth Dole's Bid for the Republican Presidential Nomination" (2005) 22:3 Political Communication 315; Melissa Miller, Jeffrey PEake, and Brittany Anne Boulton, "Testing the Saturday Night Live Hypothesis: Fairness and Bias in Newspaper Coverage of Hillary Clinton's Presidential Campaign" (2010) 6:2 Politics & Gender 169; Trimble and Arscott.

[54] Alex Marland, Jennifer Lees-Marshment, and Thierry Giasson, *Political Marketing in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012).

[55] "Informed Opinions" (26 March 2012), online: Informed Opinions <http://www.informedopinions.org/>

[56] Allison Loat and Michael MacMillan, The Accidental Citizen, online: Samara Canada <http://www2.samaracanada.com/downloads/Samara_Report_The_Accidental_Citizen.pdf>.

[57] Federation of Canadian Municipalities. That said, municipal politics is characterized has having fewer political barriers – party elites and gatekeepers, expensive campaigns – and thus, more friendly for women. See Elisabeth Gidengil and Richard Vengroff "Representational Gains or Token Growth? The Case of Women in Quebec Municipal Politics" (1997) 30 Canadian Journal of Political Science 513.

[58] Nova Scotia Advisory Council on The Status of Women, *Nova Scotia Campaign School for Women: Navigating the Campaign Process*, online: Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women < http://women.gov.ns.ca/assets/files/Campaign%20School%202011%20Backgrounder%20-%20v2.pdf>.

Canadian political parties vary in their nomination procedures. Some, such as the Conservative Party of Canada, have very few formal nomination rules, while others, such as the New Democratic Party, have a formal nomination process that must be followed by every local association.[59] The more formal processes are seen to promote women candidacies, as candidate search committees are encouraged to seek out qualified candidates from historically underrepresented groups.[60] Not surprisingly, the sociodemographic make-up of search committees also affects women's political nominations, as women riding association presidents are more likely than male presidents to recruit women candidates.[61]

Parties also vary in their commitment to nominating women candidates. For example, in the lead up to the 2011 federal election, most, but not all, federal parties pledged to Equal Voice that a certain portion of their candidate slate would be comprised of women.[62]

Nomination contests and electoral campaigns at all levels of government are also expensive. Though election receipts indicate women candidates are as good as their male counterparts at securing campaign funds,[63] the perception that women have difficulties raising campaign funds persists. Thus, women active in municipal politics in Canada argue that increasing resource supports would help increase the number of women in local politics.[64] At the federal level in Canada, regulating nomination and electoral campaign financing and spending limits through Elections Canada has mitigated this issue.[65] Despite this, women and visible minority candidates have noted that in hotly contested nomination contests, "they have difficulty raising sufficient funds to be competitive."[66] This reflects the fact that, as noted above, women do not have comparable access to income as do men. These issues persist all the more in jurisdictions with lax or no campaign finance regulations, such as some provinces and municipalities.

That said, it is worth noting that very few electoral nominations are actually contested in Canada. Elections Canada reports show that the overwhelming majority

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[59] Cross.

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] Christine Cheng and Margit Tavits, "Informal Influences in Selecting Female Political Candidates" (2011) 64:2 Political Research Quarterly 460.

[62] Equal Voice, *Canada Challenge 2009: Building the Momentum to Elect More Women in Canada*, online: Equal Voice <http://www.equalvoice.ca/challenge_09.htm>.

[63] Lawless and Fox.

[64] Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.

[65] Cross.

[66] *Ibid* at 167.

of federal nomination candidates spend *no* money on their nomination campaigns. Instead, only 4% of candidates (70 of 1601) in 2008 and 3% of candidates (53 of 1587) in 2011 reported spending money on their nomination campaigns at the federal level.[67] Women are, however, more likely to be a candidate in a contested nomination. Women comprised 28% of total candidates in 2008 and 2011, but 33% of candidates in contested nomination campaigns in 2008, and 42% in 2011.[68] This suggests that some nomination contests may serve a gate-keeping function, and act as a barrier to women's political participation.

Women candidates are also more likely to be nominated in districts where their party stands a poor chance of winning compared to men. Nearly 60% of women candidates for federal office in 2008 and 2011 ran in a district that was another party's stronghold; 47% of candidates who are men were comparably situated. By contrast, 25% of male candidates ran in their own party's stronghold, while only 17% of women candidates were found in these safe seats.[69]

Similarly, 80% of incumbent candidates in 2008 and 2011 were men. As a result, far fewer female candidates enjoy the benefits of the incumbency effect.[70] This is a key barrier to women's political participation. However, even when women are incumbent candidates their seats are not nearly as safe as their male counterparts. Only 19% of women incumbents ran in their own party's strongholds in 2008 and 2011; the remainder of women incumbents ran in hostile electoral environments.[71] The re-election challenges faced by women incumbents hampers their retention in the political process, and represents another political barrier to women's participation.

Finally, it is worth noting what does *not* constitute a political barrier to women's political participation. There is no evidence of a gender bias in the Canadian electorate: voters are equally likely to support women and men

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[67] Elections Canada, Financial Reports: Contestants' Nomination Campaign Returns (Ottawa: Elections Canada, 2011b).

[68] Melanee Thomas and Marc André Bodet, "Sacrificial lambs, women canddiates, and district competitiveness in Canada." Electoral Studies (2012) DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.elect stud.2012.12.001>

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] André Blais *et al*., *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory: Making Sense of the Vote in the 2000 Canadian Election* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2002); R.K. Carty and Munroe Eagles, "Do Local Campaigns Matter? Campaign Spending, the Local Canvass and Party Support in Canada" (1999) 18:1 Electoral Studies 69; Andrew Gelman and Gary King, "Estimating Incumbency Advantage without Bias" (1990) 34:4 American Journal of Political Science 1142; Ivan Pastine and Tuvana Pastine, "Incumbency Advantage and Political Campaign Spending Limits" (2012) 96:1-2 Journal of Public Economics 20.

[71] Thomas and Bodet.

candidates.[72] Political barriers to women's participation in politics are more likely to occur before Election Day.

DO CAMPAIGN SCHOOLS HELP WOMEN OVERCOME THESE BARRIERS?

Campaign schools are widely seen as an asset for women's political participation. Surveys of women in local politics show that campaign schools and educational materials have wide appeal.[73] Canadian organizations such as Equal Voice, the Canadian Women Voters Congress, and the College of Continuing Education at Dalhousie University organize campaign schools for women on a regular basis. These schools mirror well-established campaign schools for women in the United States. Notable examples include the *Ready to Run* program organized by the Center for American Women and Politics, the Women's Campaign School at Yale University, and the Campaign College organized by the Women and Politics Institute at American University.

Each organization monitors the success of these schools in a different manner. Local chapters implement many schools, such as those organized by Equal Voice and the Canadian Women Voters Congress. Equal Voice also offers an online campaign course.[74] As such, monitoring the effectiveness of the schools is, at best, *ad hoc*.

Other schools monitor the political participation of their graduates more closely. The Women's Campaign School at Yale highlights on their website when its graduates win their elections.[75] Notable graduates from this school include Kirsten Gillibrand, a current member of the United States Senate. The Campaign College at American University is designed to spark women's participation in campus politics, as research shows that running for student office is a strong, positive predictor of political participation in later life.[76] This school is remarkably effective: after its first

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[72] Sylvia Bashevkin, "Women's Representation in the House of Commons: A Stalemate?" (2011) Spring Canadian Parliamentary Review 17; Jerome Black and Linda Erickson, "Women Candidates and Voter Bias: Do Women Politicians Need to Be Better" (2003) 22 Electoral Studies 81, Blais *et al*.; Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant, Who Votes for Women Candidates and Why? Evidence from the 2004 Canadian Election Study?" (2010) in Cameron D. Anderson and Laura B. Stephenson, eds, *Perspectives on the Canadian Voter: Puzzles of Influence and Choice* (Vancouver: UBC Press); Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant and Julie Croskill, "Gender Affinity Effects in Vote Choice in Westminster Systems: Assessing "Flexible" Voters in Canada" (2011) 7 Politics & Gender 223.

[73] Alberta Urban Municipalities Association; Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

[74] Equal Voice, "Be Her".

[75] "The Women's Campaign School at Yale University" (2009-2013), online: Women's Campaign School at Yale University <http://www.wcsyale.org/index.php> .

[76] Lawless and Fox.

offering, the women's representation in campus political life increased by 43 per cent.[77]

The *Ready to Run* program is one of the most impressive campaign schools. It has been offered by the Center for American Women and Politics for over a decade, and has over 1500 graduates. Of these, more than 25 percent have run for public office; 70 per cent have won their races.[78] *Ready to Run* targets state politics in New Jersey; though the school cannot be credited for the entirety of the change, it is worth noting that before the school started, New Jersey was rated 39th for women's representation at the state level in the United States. By 2011, their rank increased to 12th.[79] As a result of this success, the *Ready to Run* program has established partnerships in a number of other states. Their structure appears to be similar to that employed by Equal Voice *vis-à-vis* their local chapters.

The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on The Status of Women organizes one of the most active campaign schools in Canada.[80] These campaign schools were first organized in the early 1990s, and their programming was developed in consultation with academics, civil servants, and elected officials.[81] Importantly, this development included attending the campaign school organized by the Canadian Women Voters Congress, suggesting that that school has more of a national impact than first thought.

Overall, the effects of campaign schools are suggestive. More systematic evaluation of Canadian campaign schools, particularly those that are multi-partisan and regularly offered by organizations such as Equal Voice, may identify uniquely Canadian success stories, as well as highlight ways that campaign schools help women overcome barriers to participation that are unanticipated by the academic literature. To date, a systematic study of the full effects of these campaign schools has not been undertaken in Canada. Future research could probe the short and longer-term effects of these schools on the political engagement and participation of the women who attend them. Particular focus could be paid to the aspects of each curriculum that address the different types of barriers outlined above.

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[77] "Campaign College", online: Women and Politics Institute <http://www.american.edu/spa/wpi/Campaign-College-About-Us.cfm>.

[78] Center for American Women and Politics, *Ready to Run: Campaign Training for Women*, online: CAWP <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/education_training/ReadytoRun/index.php >.

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] Nova Scotia Advisory Council on The Status of Women, "Nova Scotia Campaign School for Women: Navigating the Campaign Process", online: Nova Scotia Advisory Council on The Status of Women < http://women.gov.ns.ca/assets/files/Campaign%20School%202011%20Backgrounder%20-%20v2.pdf>; Louise Carbert, "Making It Happen in Practice: Organized Efforts to Recruit Rural Woman for Local Government Leadership" (2011) in Barb Pini, ed, *Women & Representation in Local Government* (New York: Routledge).

[81] Carbert.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The legitimacy of Canadian democracy depends on integrating more women into the political process. Achieving this goal requires that several barriers be removed. This report identifies several of these barriers at the individual, social/community, and political levels. Many of these barriers will only be removed fully when the broad social attitudes about gender and women's 'appropriate' behaviour, particularly as they relates to politics and civic activity, change.

It is important to note that removing barriers at one level may go a long way to removing barriers at another. Research shows that electing more women to national public office can spark women's interest in politics.[82] Women's lower level of political interest is a key individual level barrier; the presence of more political role models for women may lift many women over this barrier.

In identifying the barriers to women's political participation in Canada, this report also highlights a number of opportunities and remedies that can be applied to these barriers. The challenge is to continue with existing opportunities that appear to work – including campaign schools, limits on campaign spending, and mentorship – and to raise awareness about the barriers women face in politics.

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[82] Pippa Norris and Mona Lena Krook, One of Us: Multilevel Models Examining the Impact of Descriptive Representation on Civic Engagement" (Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Toronto, 2009), [unpublished]; Thomas, "Psychological"; Thomas, "Feminism".

<u>**APPENDIX A**</u>

Proportion of Women Elected to the Canadian House of Commons: 1974-2011
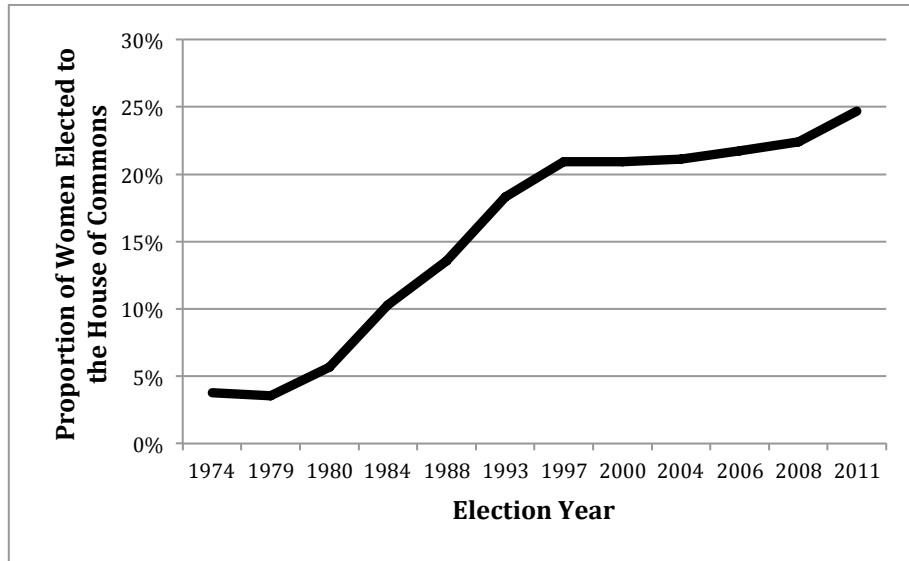
Source: Parliament of Canada, "Members of the House of Commons," (20 February 2012), online: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>, *Author's Calculation*