

Making Waves: Women in Newfoundland Politics

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This case study seeks to account for why the 1993, 1996, and 1997 federal and provincial elections in Newfoundland returned record numbers of women MPs and MHAs. Three explanations are considered: (1) provincial and federal political leaders made a determined effort to incorporate more women into the political process; (2) the long term efforts of the women's movement came to fruition; (3) gender bias ceased to have an effect on voters and party officials. The data analyzed comes from personal taped recorded interviews, mail-in and email questionnaires. Those interviewed consist of twenty-eight women and two men, all active in either federal or provincial party politics or in the women's movement. Particular attention was given to women candidates - successful and unsuccessful - federal and provincial, and political leaders at both levels. The data shows that the efforts of the women's movement were essential. However, the decisions of party leaders - the "leader's will" - also appear important and should be more fully explored.

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There are numerous other Newfoundland women of significance I would have liked to include in this thesis. I hope they understand and do not take offense for I was told “you are not writing a book, you know!” However, a book is needed.

Any mistakes or omissions are my responsibility.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Before the 1990s, very few women were elected to the Newfoundland House of Assembly or to the House of Commons from Newfoundland. However, in the mid-1990s, specifically in the federal election of 1993 and the provincial election of 1996, there was a dramatic change that saw record high numbers of women elected to legislative offices. Although the federal result, two of the seven Members of Parliament (MPs) returned from Newfoundland in 1993 were women was not repeated, provincially it is now common to find women accounting for between a sixth and a fifth of the Members of the House of Assembly (MHAs). Some will note that this result still leaves women under-represented, relative to their proportion of the population. Nevertheless, it does appear that, since 1996, a change has occurred and that an election producing a House of Assembly with less than 15 percent of its members (7 of 48) women would be a surprise.

The following tables demonstrate the escalating percentages of female's candidacies and/or election during the 1990s. Table 1 presents the numbers of federal Newfoundland female candidates and female MPs for the election years of 1993, 1997, 2000, and 2004. Table 2 presents the comparable provincial numbers for 1996, 1999, and 2003. The purpose is to detail the percentages of women for the specific election years being studied and place them in a more current context for future academic analysis.

Table 1: Federal Newfoundland Female Candidates and Female MPs  
1993, 1997, 2000, & 2004

	1993		1997		2000		2004	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
Female Candidates	6	20	3	10.3	3	9.4	7	23.3
Female MPs	2	28.5	0	0	0	0	0	
Total NL MPs	7		7		7		7	

Source: Government of Canada, web site

[http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Source=AboutParl\\_Process&Search=Gres](http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Source=AboutParl_Process&Search=Gres). Accessed February 25, 2005.

Table 2: Provincial Newfoundland Female Candidates and Female MHAs  
1996, 1999, & 2003

	1996		1999		2003	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
Female Candidates	22	17.7	27	18.4	30	21
Female MHAs	7	14.2	8	16.6	10	20.8
Total NL MHAs	49		48		48	

Sources: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, News Releases.

[www.gov.nl.ca/releases/1996/elect/0224n01.htm](http://www.gov.nl.ca/releases/1996/elect/0224n01.htm),

[www.gov.nl.ca/releases/1999/elect/0212n04.htm](http://www.gov.nl.ca/releases/1999/elect/0212n04.htm), [www.elections.gov.nl.ca/elections/pdf/GE-results-2003.pdf](http://www.elections.gov.nl.ca/elections/pdf/GE-results-2003.pdf). Accessed February 25, 2005

This thesis is a case study of what happened in Newfoundland that permitted the breakthrough of the mid-nineties. In attempting to answer the question as to why the greatest numbers of women were elected during the 1990s, the following research questions are offered: what role did the party leaders and the women's movement play in making it possible for more women to be elected? Was gender a relevant issue for those involved? As a case study, this thesis provides a detailed analysis of a particular situation (the results of elections in one province); it discovers something about the situation (why

an unprecedented number of Newfoundland women won political office); as well as politics more generally (how to get more women elected).

The data used to analyze this question came from interviews with those who were directly involved in those elections: the women who were candidates, elected and defeated; activists in the provincial women's movement; and party officials at both the federal and provincial levels. Despite the fact that this analysis is a case study, meaning that its results need not be reproducible elsewhere, the author believes that understanding what happened in Newfoundland will shed useful light on the larger problem of recruiting women into elective politics at the provincial and national levels.<sup>1</sup>

### **THE REALITY OF WOMEN'S UNDER-REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT AND LEGISLATURES**

This section briefly introduces the issue of women-in-politics and women's political under-representation in a historical context prior to delving into the Newfoundland and Labrador case study. The case study commences with a recap of the specific topic areas chosen for exploration and the accompanying research questions in order to fully explore the subject of women's under-representation in politics and the numerical increase of successful and unsuccessful women in Newfoundland and Labrador. A literature review with methodological and logistical specifics provide the final overview prior to exploring the data in Chapter II.

There were two major historical events which played an instrumental role in the

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<sup>1</sup> This study is limited to provincial and national level electoral politics. While the author recognizes the importance of women's participation in local politics and the significance of their political activity in a wide variety of organizations, these themes are too extensive to be explored here.

evolution of women's political participation. The first was when women won the right to vote in 1918. The period in which women secured the vote was at the close of the First World War when the roles of women dramatically changed. Women had been recruited *en masse* to work in the war factories, as men were elsewhere fighting. It was a time when women's potential as an untapped voting group had been realized by the women suffragettes themselves and the politicians (MacIvor 1996). The Women's Franchise Act of 1918 granted women over twenty-one years of age the right to vote. The Dominion Elections Act of 1920 then stated that women could run for elected public office. The second historical event was when women were recognized legally as "persons." The Persons Case centered on women being denied entry into the Senate due to a provision of the British North American Act which did not include women as "persons." Through the efforts of Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby, this issue was brought before the Supreme Court of Canada and then the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain, Canada's then Court of Appeal. In 1929 this Court decision included women as "persons," thus, women could be Senators (MacIvor 1996).

Since the 1920s, women's political representation in all levels has continued to climb, albeit not as substantially as many have demanded. "Between 1917 and 2000, 404 women were elected to serve as representatives in Canada's provincial and territorial legislatures, 154 women were elected to the Parliament of Canada, and 60 women were appointed to the Senate. Almost half of these female representatives were elected or appointed in the 1990s and 2000" (Tremblay and Trimble 2003, 45). Data from Trimble and Arscott points out that despite these advances, Canada is experiencing a "glass

ceiling” effect, meaning that women’s political numbers have peaked (2003). The numerical under-representation is still present, yet the solutions for changing this phenomenon have yet to be found.

There are many topics in the literature that help to explain this discrepancy between the numbers of elected Canadian women. A few of these will be selected for an examination of the participation of women in the politics of Newfoundland and Labrador during the 1990s: political leaders, how parties work, appointments and nominations, winnable ridings, women’s movement, gender-an-issue, women’s issues/difference, a women’s party, increased financial support, and electoral systems.

In 1997, more women held elected public office in Newfoundland and Labrador than at any other time in history. Federally, in 1993, two of the seven Members of Parliament representing the province were women. Provincially, in 1996, seven of the forty-eight members of the Legislative Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador were women. Five of these seven women were appointed to Cabinet, with the total cabinet seats being seventeen. An eighth woman was elected provincially in a 1997 by-election. At the time, women constituted 50.4 percent of the Newfoundland vote and the Women’s Policy Office (1998) stated that as of 1997, 25 per cent of Newfoundland Cabinet members were women.

It is important to list the names of the women who have held provincial and federal political office in Newfoundland and Labrador for many reasons: historical and political reference for example. Specific to this thesis, the year, name, party and constituencies for the provincial and federal levels of government are presented. Table 3 presents the provincial data and Table 4 presents the federal.

Table 3. Newfoundland and Labrador Women Who Have Held Seats  
in the House of Assembly (provincial)

Year	Name	Party	Constituency
1930-1932	Lady Helena Squires	Lib.	Twillingate*
1975-1979	Hazel A. McIsaac	Lib.	St. George's
1979-1985	Hazel R. Newhook	PC	Gander
1979-1996	Lynn Verge	PC	Humber East
1982-1985	Ida Reid	PC	Twillingate
1989-1990	Shannie Duff	PC	St. John's East
1989-1996	Pat Cowan	PC	Conception Bay South
1993-1996	Kay Young	Lib.	Terra Nova
1996-2003	Joan-Marie Aylward	Lib.	St. John's Centre
1996-2003	Julie Bettney	Lib.	Mount Pearl
1996-	Judy Foote	Lib.	Grand Bank
1996-2003	Mary Hodder	Lib.	Burin-Placentia West
1996-	Yvonne Jones	Ind/Lib	Cartwright-L'Anse Au Clair
1996-2003	Sandra Kelly	Lib	Gander
1996-	Anna Thistle	Lib	Grand Falls-Buchams
1997-	Sheila Osborne	PC	St. John's West
2003-	Joan Burke	PC	St. George's - Stephenville East
2003-	Kathy Dunderdale	PC	Virginia Waters
2003-	Kathy Goudie	PC	Humber Valley
2003-	Charlene Johnson	PC	Trinity - Bay de Verde
2003-	Elizabeth Marshall	PC	Topsail
2003 -	Diane Whalen	PC	Conception Bay East and Bell Island

Source: *History of Federal Electoral Ridings Since 1867*. Library of Parliament.

<[http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Source=AboutParl\\_Process&Search=Gres](http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Source=AboutParl_Process&Search=Gres)>; Elections Newfoundland and Labrador.

<<http://www.gov.nf.ca/elections/electionarchive/default.asp>>; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

<<http://www.gov.nl.ca/releases/1996/elect/0224n01.htm>>; Jack Harris, *A Proposal for Representation by Women in the House of Assembly*. (St. John's: House of Assembly, 1992).

\*: Pre-confederate

Table 4. Newfoundland and Labrador Women Who Have Held Seats  
in the House of Commons (federal)

Year	Name	Party	Constituency
1993-1997	Bonnie Hickey	Lib.	St. John's East
1993-1997	Jean Payne	Lib.	St. John's West

Source: *History of Federal Electoral Ridings Since 1867*. Library of Parliament.  
[http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Source=AboutParl\\_Process&Search=Gres](http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/hfer/hfer.asp?Language=E&Source=AboutParl_Process&Search=Gres)

Never before had so many Newfoundland and Labrador female candidates participated in the federal and provincial political process. In 1993, there were three unsuccessful federal female candidates and two were successful. In 1996, there were fifteen unsuccessful provincial female candidates and seven were successful. No other woman, besides the sole successful candidate, ran in the 1997 provincial by-election. In total, eighteen women ran unsuccessfully and nine were successful.

A pattern emerged more so in the provincial versus federal election data, established when analyzing the election years following 1996. The 1996 provincial election saw 17.7 percent of women enter the House of Assembly compared to the 18.4 percent of 1999 and the 21 percent of the 2003 provincial election. Could the continued increase have resulted from the momentum gathered during the 1996 election?

Canadian scholars, and those interviewed for this thesis in Newfoundland and Labrador, agree that women are under-represented in Canada's legislatures. However, the increase in the number of women elected MPs or MHAs in Newfoundland and Labrador, as a result of the 1993 federal election and the 1996 and 1997 provincial elections, has not been thoroughly explored. This thesis will examine three specific

elections and the people involved in these elections, relying primarily on elite-structured interviews<sup>2</sup>, to determine why the 1990s saw the greatest number of women elected to serve in Newfoundland's provincial and federal levels of government.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Political leaders, the women's movement, and gender are three factors that have been extensively discussed in Canadian and international women-in-politics literature. This literature is reviewed below and is the conceptual foundation of the thesis. These factors were specifically chosen based upon my professional experience<sup>3</sup>, conversations with political figures and the frequent reoccurrence of these themes both inside and outside of the political realm. In order to clarify these topic areas, which are the focus of the literature review and utilized throughout this case study, it is necessary to introduce the guiding research questions. To fully explore the subject of women's under-representation in politics and the numerical increase of successful and unsuccessful women in Newfoundland and Labrador, it is necessary for the research questions to be asked prior to delving into the academic literature.

In attempting to answer the question as to why the greatest numbers of women were elected during the 1990s, the following research questions are offered:

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter II for elaboration on structured elite interviews.

<sup>3</sup> The author's professional political experience includes the following: Co-ordinator Special Events for a national political leadership campaign, Community Outreach Liaison at Ontario's Provincial Legislature, Special Assistant for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Senior Assistant to the Minister of Revenue, and currently, as Government Relations Senior Consultant for The Dominion Institute. In a volunteer capacity, the author is currently Chair of Equal Voice, National Capital Region which seeks to raise the profile of the under-representation of women in politics [www.equalvoice.ca](http://www.equalvoice.ca).



1. Could the record number of women elected have resulted from the efforts of the provincial and federal political leaders to incorporate more women into the political process?
2. Could the increase be attributed to the long-term efforts of the women's movement?
3. Was gender a relevant issue for those involved in the female candidate's campaign?

The "political leaders" research question asks if the party leader played a major role in recruiting more women into the political process, promoting women candidates through the appointment process, and having these women run in winnable ridings. It would be the party system, under the leader's authority, which would be crucial to ensuring the political "leader's will", or commitment, would be translated into practical application.

It is interesting that the "leader's will" factor has received little direct academic attention. Instead, the focus has been on the accompanying leadership topic areas: recruitment, nominations and appointments, and winnable ridings under the operations of the party system. The recruitment process in Canada has been largely unorganized with the possible exception of the processes implemented by the NDP. Recruitment is followed by the nomination process - or if skipped, the appointments process - which most scholars find at the root of under-representation (Erickson 1991). Erickson states that "without changes in party nomination practices, gains will continue to be small, and substantial under-representation of women will persist well into the twenty-first century" (1998, 250). Often nominations are referred to as "battles" thus contributing to the notion of a current process viewed as both a psychological and a practical barrier to women's electoral success.

The “women's movement” research question asks if there was a high level of interaction, support, and partnership between the women's movement and women seeking political office, leading to more women participating in the electoral process and increasing the number of women elected to office. Considering that the relationship between the Canadian women's movement and women in politics has a substantial history that has been well documented, it was expected that Newfoundland's women's movement would play a similar role in the lives of Newfoundland's political women. However, the documentation has been primarily of an informal nature, thus academic contribution to the data is important.

The “gender” research question seeks to discover if gender would be an issue to the candidate and the political leadership, asking: ‘Is gender an issue and if so, to whom?’ It also thought that women would have different perspectives than men on this issue and there would be strong support for the acknowledgement of women's issues.

How, though, might the successes of the 1990s be expanded? Three alternative devices -- dual-member (male-female) constituencies, a women's party, and greater financial support for women candidates -- were presented to those interviewed, selected from previous professional discussions and accompanying academic research.<sup>4</sup> The “dual-member constituency” research question sought interviewees' views on the establishment of dual constituencies. The “women's only party” research question focused on whether the majority of interviewees would favour the establishment of an exclusive party. The “increased financial support” research question asked if most interviewees would be in favour of more money going to support women's candidacies.

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<sup>4</sup> It is most unfortunate that during the interview process there was not reference to proportional representation, which as of 2004 is being considered in Canada.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The under-representation of women in Canadian political systems has received considerable academic attention, particularly since the 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Issues that were found in the original publication resurfaced in the 1991 Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing. In recent years the same issues are being academically dissected, this time with a renewed focus on changes to Canada's electoral system as a means of increasing the number of women in elected politics (MacIvor 2003). The question is being examined by more analysts and in greater depth than ever before (Tremblay and Andrew 1998).

The goal here is to examine the various explanations given for the relative under-representation of women in Canada's elected assemblies. This phenomenon is often referred to in the literature as part of the descriptive representation of women (Pitkin 1967, Bashevkin 1993), the politics of presence (Tremblay and Trimble 2003), or as a democratic representation or democratic deficit problem (Bashevkin 1993, Trimble and Arscott 2003).

Several broad topic areas are used throughout this thesis to address the subject: political leaders, how parties work, appointments and nominations, winnable ridings, women's movement, gender-an-issue, women's issues/difference. The complex mix of factors leading to the under-representation of women in elected office has been explored by many Canadians and international scholars who have often suggested remedies to fix this problem (Brodie 1985, Vickers 1989, Carty and Erickson 1991, Young, L 1991, Bashevkin 1993, MacIvor 1996, Tremblay and Andrew 1998). For this thesis, dual-

member constituencies, a women's party, increased financial support and changes to Canada's electoral system will be the 'remedial' focus of the following literature review.

The first part of this literature review will focus on the following themes: political leaders, recruitment, how parties work, appointments and nominations, and winnable ridings. All of these topic areas are treated in the literature as being inter-connected (Tremblay and Trimble 2003, 29-30), yet the material relating to the role political leaders play in encouraging or discouraging the recruitment of women candidates is not well developed. The second section will address the women's movement effect on women's political participation. Next, several fundamental questions will be addressed. Among them are: To whom does gender matter? Are there issues relevant primarily to women? What difference does the increased presence of women in the legislature make? The last topic treated will be suggestions for getting more women into elected office; for example, dual-member constituencies, a women's party, increased financial support, and changes to Canada's electoral system.

## POLITICAL RECRUITMENT

The discussion of the role of political leaders in the recruitment of women candidates demands a brief discussion of the concept of political recruitment. Dwaine Marvick focused on three approaches to studying political recruitment: structural, the formality of opportunity and the "need for measuring the systemic effects traceable to political recruitment practices" (1976, 30-37). Marvick offers a comprehensive definition that sees political recruitment as:

the study of politics with a special eye to how the participants got there, where they came from and by what party, and hence what ideas and skills and contacts they acquired on the way. Its payoff as a mode of inquiry comes when it helps the observer to anticipate what viewpoints are likely to be introduced into a political context by virtue of the presence of political actors with particular kinds of credentials (Marvick 1976, 30).

Norris and Lovenduski (1995) refer to legislative recruitment, the sub-set of political recruitment that most interests us here, as “exploring the how and why people become politicians, and the consequences [this has] for parties, legislatures and representative government” (1995 1). In order to understand the hierarchy of political recruitment, Norris and Lovenduski devised the following “Ladder of Recruitment” (1995 16). Its purpose is to assist in simplifying the “process of getting into parliament” (1995 15).

MPs
Candidates
National pool of applicants
Constituency party members
Party Voters

The question of “who gets selected, and why?” (2) or the supply and demand model (14) is relevant to this thesis and a fundamental aspect of Norris and Lovenduski’s political recruitment.

*Party strata* are groups at different levels on the ladder. Party voters are those who supported the party. *Party members* are the grassroots card-carrying activists at the selection meetings. In the next step up the ladder, *applicants* are those on the party list, the ‘pool of talent’ who failed to be selected by the constituency. At the top of the ladder are incumbent *Members of Parliament* (MPs) who were returned in the election. The term party elite refers to the combined group of applicants, candidates and MPs. (16)

The question of recruitment is of great relevance to this thesis as the answer provides several insights into why there was a dramatic change in the 1990s that saw record high numbers of women elected to legislative offices. This issue of recruitment is further discussed in the next section and in Chapter II.

## PARTY LEADERS AND THE RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN CANDIDATES

Tremblay, Trimble, and Binda (2004) report that there is a consensus among academic commentators that the “leader’s will” has not been given much attention as a way to rectify the under-representation of women in politics, but that this “will” has the potential to offer significant answers to this problem. In fact, the standard literature never asked “what specific commitment did the Leader make to increase the number of elected women and was it effective?” Heather MacIvor indirectly addresses the question of the “leader’s will” in her discussion of the utilization of affirmative action for female candidates (1996, 263). Instead, there has been a focus on the broader topic of party operations or how one party works in comparison to another. For example, the Liberals gave the leader the mandate to appoint women, while the NDP had a quota for women in winnable ridings (MacIvor 1996, 263).

The party leader's will means that there is an acknowledged commitment from that individual to actively and purposefully increase the number of women seeking election and potentially winning seats. Other than Sonia Pitre's observation that "the leader can create opportunities for women – it is a matter of having the *will* to promote female candidates" (2003, 105) - the topic remains untouched. However, it is a matter that this thesis will investigate.

The nomination process receives a lot of attention in the existing "leader" literature. Lynda Erickson, in her discussions with anonymous party officials, concludes that although leaders have made attempts "to demonstrate their interest in expanding the number of women their parties nominated" (1991, 103), translating that suggestion into action only began happening in the 1990s. Sonia Pitre argues that the party leader must be understood to be another part of the nomination process (2003, 119). Pitre gives credit to the leader's role of officially signing all candidates' nomination papers and having the power to name a candidate if the local party organization is unable to do so. The importance of these powers cannot be overstated. As Cross (2002, 375) demonstrates, the party leader can exercise the power not to sign nomination papers even if the candidate has technically won the nomination process.

## HOW PARTIES WORK

Here we are interested in the relationship between women and the political parties themselves (Tremblay and Trimble 2003). A common theme throughout the literature on the paucity of women candidates in Canada is the failure of parties to address the matter

seriously. Numerous scholars (Brodie 1985, Bashevkin 1993, Tremblay and Trimble 2003) have broadened this discussion by analyzing factors such as socialization and sex-role stereotyping as obstacles to women running for office. The socialization factor is part of a larger “female deficiency” argument based on the premise that “something is wrong with women” in order to explain their lack of political participation. Commonly referred to as one of the social psychological barriers, women are taught through various ways not to be political (Brodie 1991). Socialization is directly linked to traditional sex-role stereotyping in that women are confined to the passive, private sphere, whereas men are found in the more aggressive, public areas in society (Bashevkin 1993). Others have used the issue of incumbency and the turnover rates of politicians (Young, L 1991, Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994, Erickson 1991, 1997), observing that a higher turnover rate of politicians vacating their seats might lead to a greater number of women reelected (Young, L 1991, Trimble and Arscott 2003). Norris and Lovenduski (1993) suggest that issues related to the supply and demand of female candidates is also relevant. If there is a greater supply of or demand for female candidates, then it is believed that there will be a greater number of women elected. Bashevkin (1993) has observed that the higher one climbs on the political ladder, the fewer women one encounters suggesting a “glass ceiling” indicating that one can go no higher. A similar theme (which will be addressed in the section below) is developed by those who have examined the role of the gatekeepers who control access to the party’s powerful elites, thus restricting that climb (Maille 1990, Brodie 1991, MacIvor 1996, Matland 2002).

In the literature, both provincial and federal parties are examined, with particular attention given to what parties do in election years (MacIvor 1996, Young, L 2000,



Tremblay and Trimble 2003). MacIvor identifies two solutions the parties promote to recruit more female candidates: quotas and leveling the playing field. Both the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Liberal Party have used quotas (MacIvor 1996, 263). The NDP has been consistently acknowledged as the party most committed to increasing the number of women candidates through a quota system (Sharpe 1994, Erickson 1998, Young, L 2000); and the Liberal Party of Canada in the 1990s passed a resolution permitting the leader (then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien) to appoint female candidates (MacIvor 1996, Erickson 1998, Young and Cross 2003). Other parties which contested federal elections in the 1990s, such as the Reform, Bloc Québécois, the Progressive Conservatives and the Canadian Alliance, appeared to have not been as committed to increasing the number of women in politics as the Liberals or the NDP (Erickson 1998); certainly they recruited fewer women candidates. MacIvor's second solution, to "level the playing field for female candidates" (1996, 263), focuses on the financial considerations of seeking election, one of the topic areas explored throughout this thesis.

## APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS

Scholars agree that the nomination process is one of the greatest challenges for women entering the political arena (Megyery 1991, MacIvor 1996). Within the nomination process, MacIvor considers lack of access to money to be the greatest obstacle for women (1996, 262). Specifically, financial incentives for the parties to nominate more women have been discussed for some time, yet practical application of such ideas has not occurred despite calls for such action (Brodie 1991, Gotell and Brodie

1996). For example, the 1991 Royal Commission on Electoral Reform stated that “the Commission should use its mandate in an affirmative manner to realize the goal of electing women by adjusting upward, on a sliding scale, the campaign expenses reimbursed to political parties according to the proportion of their *elected* candidates who are women” (1991, 50). As of 2005, this has not occurred. The political parties are in control of the nomination process. More specifically, it is the local organizing committees, regularly referred to as the “gatekeepers,” who have the most influence over nominations, as they are the ones who choose the candidate in the ridings (Brodie 1991, MacIvor 1996, Matland 2002, Trimble and Arscott 2003). MacIvor connects this gatekeeper role with the issue of under-representation as being a “crucial barrier to women’s representation in elite politics” (1996, 241). There is no doubt that these “gatekeepers” are interconnected with elite level politics, thus Sylvia Bashevkin’s well documented “the higher the fewer” rule applies to the nomination process (1991). The party gatekeepers are usually political constituency organizers - those who are more active within their ridings - while the elites are those closer to the leaders and their advisors. Ideally, each level is interacting with the other constantly. This involves the sharing of information and carrying out the “political will” of the elites, indicating a top-down flow of command. For example, if these “gatekeepers” do not wish a candidate to run for elected office, the candidate will not be the recipient of any party support, information, or assistance.<sup>5</sup>

As Carty and Erikson (1991, 96-181) point out, the nomination process is not “carefully regulated” by the Canada Elections Act, therefore, there are few controls ensuring that the system is fair and equitable. Various scholars advance their own points

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<sup>5</sup> This observation is based on the author’s personal experience.

of view regarding why this should be the focus for change. For example, Erickson states that “without changes in party nomination practices, gains will continue to be small, and substantial under-representation of women will persist well into the twenty-first century” (1998, 250).

Various scholars have addressed the appointment of female candidates, yet the appointment of male candidates to cabinet positions before they have won election or the frequency of appointment of men as the riding’s electoral candidate has received no attention. Why is this discrepancy important? It is important because the literature addresses appointments in a one-sided manner: only female appointments have been analyzed. Academics need to examine the question of unelected male appointments.

#### WINNABLE RIDINGS

Even when a party’s nomination is secured, women often have found themselves relegated to running in constituencies where their party has little chance of winning. This phenomenon has produced a series of studies that may be called the “winnable riding” literature. The findings here are not consistent. Some scholars agree that women are often asked to run in ridings where their chances of winning are low; however, others purport that this no longer happens.

Bashevkin, as part of her analysis of the “the higher, the fewer” phenomenon, acknowledges that female candidates tend to run in ridings where the chances of winning are low. The party’s decision is the result of a qualitative versus a quantitative approach to candidate search and promotion (Bashevkin 1993, 85). In explaining what this means,

Bashevkin argues that it would be useful to give credit to those political parties making a conscious decision to run fewer women (quantitative or numerical), but running them in more winnable ridings (qualitative or more substantive) (Bashevkin 1991, 72).

Other scholars refer to the parties themselves being the obstacles for women running in winnable ridings (Sharpe 1994, 171). Special reference is made to the party elites, “the gate keepers” who decide who runs where (Sharpe 1994, Gotell and Brodie 1996, MacIvor 1996). Gotell and Brodie (1996, 61) claim that “as a rule, few women are nominated to ridings where their party has had a tradition of competition or electoral success, and this pattern has remained consistent across time.” Contrary to the majority of scholars, Studlar and Matland state that with the nomination won, there is data showing that women do run in competitive ridings. “No indications of making women ‘sacrificial lambs’ has occurred in any five parties examined after the early 1980s, and sometimes women appear to have received slightly better seats than men, although not to a statistically significant extent” (1996, 287). The evidence suggests that women may be placed deliberately in winnable ridings and that women are being more discriminating in choosing the ridings themselves (Erickson 1998). What is not debated is the suggestion that perhaps women are choosing *not* to run. Yet how can the evidence be gathered from women who have not identified themselves as political contenders? The ‘political literature’ asks more questions than it provides answers to the issue of women’s under-representation.

## WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The relationship between the Canadian women's movement and women in politics has a substantial history that has been well documented and recognized as an important ongoing association (Brodie 1991, Trimble and Arscott 2003). Bashevkin states that "the manner in which organized feminism developed held important implications for women's relations with the Canadian political system" (1993, 4). In terms of acknowledging the association, Brodie (1991) suggests that it is the women's movement political pressure which will assist in effecting change.

This relationship has been analyzed in several ways. One is chronological, based on important historical facts (Bashevkin 1993). Another is a focus on the integration of the movement into the three waves of feminism (MacIvor 1996). Regardless of the approach taken, the relationship between the organization and general political impact of a women's movement outside of government and the number of women elected to political office has been well examined (Brodie 1991, MacIvor 1996, Young, L 1998, 2000) and, at the same time, labeled ambivalent (Young, L 2003). The reason for this ambivalence can be found in Bashevkin's "independence versus partisanship" theory of engagement (Bashevkin 1993, MacIvor 1996). This theory asks if the women's movement should function independent of the political system, or should it work alongside?" (Bashevkin 1993)

As with most of the literature on women in politics, the women's movement literature lacks practical suggestions for how to deepen the relationship between the movement and the political realm, while navigating through unstable political climates.

This may account in part for why the literature has come to focus on the “smaller” women’s groups which have addressed both political and non-political issues facing women (Vickers 1989, Bashevkin 1993, Young, L 2000, Young, L 2003).

## GENDER AS AN ISSUE

Just as the political leaders, how the parties work, appointments, nominations and winnable ridings themes are interconnected in the literature, so, too, are the relevance of gender, women’s differences, perspectives, and the differences that women bring to the political table once elected. In the research for this thesis, the question posed to all candidates, whether successful or unsuccessful, was whether or not gender was an issue when they ran. The scholarly literature is divided along two lines in the attempt to answer this question. Simply put, some find that gender matters and others do not.

Although there is little evidence, what information does exist suggests that voters do not take a candidate’s gender into account when making their decisions (Royal Commission 1991, 121; Sharpe 1994, 176-177). Also, there is evidence that gender is not an issue for elected women. Arscott’s work uncovered that successful female candidates believed their gender had nothing to do with their election (Arscott 1997, 334-335). However, Arscott questions whether or not this is accurate, suggesting that what these women say is not necessarily the complete political picture (1997, 355).

If the voters and the successful candidates themselves do not believe gender is an issue, then it must be asked “who does?” Most of the relevant literature is devoted to those to whom gender does matter, such as the media (MacIvor 1996, Everitt 2003) and

women's organizations (Kealey and Sangster 1989, Pope and Burnham 1993, Young, L 2000). In reference to the media's presentation of successful or unsuccessful female candidates, MacIvor found that "women are presented as sex objects, whores, housewives, or ugly feminists – always defined by their appearance and by their relationship to men" (1996, 195). Kealey and Sangster's (1989) work gave a century's worth of women's political activism in a "broad based movement" ranging from women in the peace movement to Senator Cairine Wilson's political career.

Gender is characterized by academics as a social-psychological barrier –for example, the candidate's attitude and background– to assist in explaining the small number of women entering the political arena (Bashevkin 1985, 1993, Phillips 1991). Bashevkin states "socialization thus restricts female access to elite positions in two ways: first, by defining women in a collective sense as properly outside of politics; and second, by perpetuating a masculine 'ideal type' of political activist" (1993, 169). Gidengil et. al, (2003) refer to this social-psychological barrier as neither a complete nor sufficient explanation for the numerical under-representation of women. Instead, these authors focus on the holistic approach to the experiences of women and men.

## WOMEN'S ISSUES

Scholars, such as Heather MacIvor, argue that "there *are* areas of policy where most women differ to some degree from most men" (1996, 317). These "women's issues" are policy issues that are especially relevant to women, affecting the lives of women more than those of men. Two examples are abortion and child care.

However, declaring certain issues to be only relevant to women has been a contentious issue with academics. MacIvor's explanation for the marginalization of "women's issues" is very clear. First, declaring some issues a "women's issue" gives policy-makers reasons to dismiss the issues as being too costly and controversial, as they affect only half of society. Second, the categorization belittles the issues, making them less powerful (Bashevkin 1991, 15). Finally, the shortage, if not absence of women at the policy and decision making table, particularly those women who are not feminists, works to the detriment of these issues, as there is often no one to speak on their behalf (MacIvor 1996, 317-320). On the other hand, Joanna Everitt embraces these policy differences, attributing the widening gap between men and women to women's greater levels of participation, which in turn reflects women's distinctive positions on issues (Everitt 2002, 110). Despite these differences, scholars generally acknowledge that the term "women's issues" has evolved from one indicating an issue of primary concern solely to women, to a belief that it encompasses issues that affect women, men, families and society (Sharpe 1994, MacIvor 1996).

Another area of investigation is the fact that once elected, women do not necessarily promote a women's-issues or feminist agenda (Brodie and Gotell 1991, Tremblay and Pelletier 2000, Trimble and Arscott 2003). There is an expectation - whose origins are not clear - that women will represent their gender, in comparison to men who are not expected to represent a masculine platform (Sharpe 1994, 7). Therefore, is it better to elect a feminist man or a woman? A growing number of academics are weighing in on this debate (Trimble and Arscott 2003, Tremblay, Trimble, Binda 2004). This will be further clarified below.



## WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

There is no lack of research regarding the different perspectives on public issues of women and men (Bashevkin 1993, Brodie 1994, Trimble and Arscott 2003). Simply stated, women's life experiences are different from men's simply because they are women, and these differences need to be reflected in all institutions (Sharpe 1994; Brodie 1994, 81). Trimble and Arscott believe that Canada currently has a "democratic deficit" because over half of the population (women) is not appropriately represented. They state that the deficit involves "gaps or flaws in the democratic political system that diminish its effectiveness and legitimacy" (2003, 3).

Brodie takes this notion of women's perspectives one step further in that she states that women have occasionally been portrayed in the literature as actually being *better* than men (1994, 81). Such an argument dates back to the origins of the suffrage movement where women were thought to be a purifying force in combating the temperance issue involving men and drinking (Vickers 1989). In modern times, this argument is found in the case that women would change the political system from that of men – a battleground and exclusive – to one reflective of women's perspectives and qualities of gentleness and more inclusive decision making process (Phillips 1991, Brodie 1994).

### DO WOMEN MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The question of what difference women make in politics and why this matters has received considerable academic attention (Brodie 1994, MacIvor 1996, Erickson 1997,

Sawer 2000, Trimble and Arscott 2003). None of the authors consulted doubts that women bring different perspectives to the political table or that women are not all alike. However, there is an assumption that with a greater number of women elected, especially once there is a “critical mass” of women, there will be a political refocusing towards those issues which have been referred to as “women’s issues” in the literature (MacIvor 1996).

Trimble and Arscott (2003, 138-145) cite three Canadian studies which have given evidence to support the correlation between the greater numbers of women and the attention to these issues: First, Sandra Burt and Elizabeth Lorenzin examined Bob Rae’s NDP Ontario (provincial) government from 1990 to 1995. This study “provid(ed) some evidence to support the proposition that women are more likely than men to talk about women’s concerns” (1997, 139) by analyzing member’s statements and question period activity. Second, Manon Tremblay studied the federal government from 1993 to 1997, analyzing the “private members’ bills, notices of motion, and statements, on the one hand, and legislative debates on the other” (1998, 140). Tremblay found that women more often than men were responsible for raising and supporting women’s issues and that some means of doing so are better than others. Finally, Linda Trimble analyzed three Alberta governments to determine if the gradual numerical increase of women benefited women. Her findings were supportive, with the proviso that “opportunity structures” or the political system and that which affects women’s political participation are also taken into account (Trimble and Arscott 2003, 142).

In recent years, with the election of more women to Parliament, some academics have begun to find that increasing the number of female representatives does not

necessarily translate into the promotion of feminist thought or women's issues (MacIvor, 1996, Tremblay and Pelletier 2000, Trimble and Arscott 2003, Young, L 2003). Trimble and Arscott created the term the "Deb Effect" which aids in explaining this occurrence. Deborah Grey, elected to the House of Commons in 1989, who eventually became the Interim leader of the Canadian Alliance party, declared herself not to be a feminist. However, Grey is an advocate for diverse representation. Thus Trimble and Arscott support the Deb Effect as a means of producing "beneficial outcomes for all women as well as for some groups of men that have received relatively poor representation" (2003, 151).

## SUGGESTIONS TO ELECT MORE WOMEN

### DUAL MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES

The use of dual member constituencies is the first of four suggestions to increase the number of women legislators that this thesis examines. Essentially, under this system every constituency elects a man and a woman (Vickers 1997). Bashevkin (1993, 102) and Vickers (1997, 25) cite lawyer and academic Christine Boyle, who in 1983 wrote in favour of a temporary dual member system to increase the numbers of women. The suggestion is that representation in Canada's electoral system should be based on more than geography; thus the inclusion of gender (Boyle 1983).

This proposal is not new to the Canadian political landscape, yet there has been little academic or political interest. Perhaps the explanation for this begins with the

proposal being dismissed as overly ambitious in comparison to other proposed changes (Bashevkin 1993, 102). Furthermore, Trimble and Arscott present several arguments against this reform. These include the contentious quota aspect, where women are given special treatment; that legislative assemblies would be larger thus more expensive, and that this suggestion makes “it appear as if gender is the only representational issue that needs to be addressed by electoral reform” (2003, 67).

Dual constituencies are not unknown in Canada, as is shown in the Discussion Paper released by the Nunavut Implementation Commission in 1995. Indeed, all provinces, except Quebec, have used two-member constituencies within the past 50 years (1995), albeit not to redress gender imbalance. The most recent cases are British Columbia, which used this model until 1991, and PEI, which maintained the practice until 1994 (Studlar and Matland 1996). Surprisingly, these data are seldom alluded to in the literature evaluating dual constituencies as a way to increase the representation of women, all the more so as the Commission found nothing negative in Canada’s use of dual member constituencies (1995). However, one should note that using dual member ridings to guarantee the election of a gender-balanced legislature raises different questions, not least that of whether women legislators automatically represent the interests of women and not those of their party or other group to which they might belong (cf. Bashevkin 1993).

## WOMEN'S PARTY

The formation of a “women’s party,” comprised of only women, was the second suggested change that could be made to increase women’s numerical representation. A women’s party is not a new concept to Canadian politics, having been attempted several times over the past eighty years. Sylvia Bashevkin (1993, 10) refers to Carol Lee Bacchi’s *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877 – 1918* stating that a women’s party was first attempted in 1918 (Bacchi 1983, 129-31). The party was formed after a significant change in the political system, when women were granted the right to vote. The party’s goal was to enable women’s advancement in the public realm. Heather MacIvor (1996, 269) noted that the second attempt at a women’s party occurred in 1979 with the formation of The Feminist Party. Neither author believes that this approach is likely to increase the number of women elected to office (Bashevkin 1993, 26; MacIvor 1996, 269). Sharpe (1994, 177), however, sees the formation of a party as a means to raise awareness of women’s issues, thus meriting attention as part of a larger, longer-term solution to the problem of women’s under-representation in elected office.

Interestingly, the recent literature on women’s parties in Canada has not thoroughly discussed the possibility that such a party could return if Canada were to move to some form of proportional representation (PR). There is room to question this lack of discussion as past attempts at developing a “women’s party” have not been long lived or successful.

## INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This review has discovered no academic work suggesting that the financial resources available to potential or nominated female candidates are sufficient. On the contrary, the money issue has been treated as one of the greatest barriers to women wishing to enter the elite level of the political realm (Innes 1973, Bashevkin 1993, Campbell 1994, MacIvor 1996). Bashevkin points out that since 1982 there has been a considerable shift in trend away from “consciousness-raising” efforts of the second wave of feminism to other barriers that prevent women from entering political life. Bashevkin (1993, 107) argues that providing greater sums of money to women candidates so that they can better contest both nominations at the riding level and make serious runs for their parties’ leadership is crucial. In part, this is because women in Canadian society do not have the same economic power as men (Brodie 1985, Muzychka 1990). Not only do they earn less, but they also face “glass ceilings” that inhibit their access to really remunerative positions (Megyery 1991, Trimble and Arscott 2003).

The 1991 Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing recognized the effects of unequal financing on women’s candidacies and made eight recommendations aimed at rectifying the imbalance (49-50):

1. Spending limits should be set at approximately \$200,000 for party leadership contests.
2. Spending limits should be set at approximately \$5,000 for constituency nomination contests.
3. Contribution for nomination contests should be tax deductible.
4. Campaign expenses for nomination contests should be fully disclosed.
5. Spending for nomination contests should be eligible for reimbursement if the candidate achieves a minimum level of support such as 15 percent of the nomination meeting.

6. Child care and housekeeping should be included as legitimate campaign expenses for both nomination contests and general elections.
7. Legislation should be introduced allowing candidates the right to take unpaid leave from their employment to contest either party nominations or general elections.
8. The Commission should use its mandate in an affirmative action manner to realize the goal of electing women by adjusting upward, on a sliding scale, the campaign expenses reimbursed to political parties according to the proportion of their elected candidates who are women. This innovation, which could be used to promote the political representation of other disadvantaged groups, would motivate political parties to nominate more women to competitive ridings.

Political parties themselves have undertaken initiatives in this area (Trimble and Arcscott 2003). For example all main parties, provincial and federal, have special funds earmarked for female candidates. Although the amounts may not be substantial, they symbolize a commitment on behalf of the party toward women (MacIvor 1996). Of all the parties, the NDP has received the greatest recognition for its efforts to fund women candidates (Bashevkin 1993, 100).

## ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Renewed interest in changing Canada's electoral system has emerged from academic discussion to being proposed through legislation in several of Canada's provinces, among them Quebec and British Columbia (Séguin 2004, A7). The primary focus of this change is a shift from the current Single-Member Constituency-Plurality (SMCP or first past-the-post) to a Proportional Representation (PR) system (Bashevkin 1993, Erickson 1998). In British Columbia, the Citizen's Committee has recommended

implementation of a single transferable vote (STV) system currently used in Ireland and Malta. However, the BC electorate did not approve this system. Essentially, under SMCP the winner is the one who receives the most votes; i.e., a plurality and not a majority. The first-past-the post system has often been criticized as an obstacle to the increased presentation of marginalized groups, women included (Maillé 1990, Bashevkin 1993).

Proportional representation has many forms, two of which have been discussed recently in relation to the question of woman candidates: the list-proportional and the mixed-member proportional (MMP). Under a list system, the voter has to vote for the entire list of candidates a party proposes in the multi-member district. The party then receives essentially the same proportion of seats that it does of votes. If parties put women high enough on their lists in each constituency to see them win, more women will be elected. A mixed system, of which Germany is the usual example, gives voters two ballots: one for the constituency representative and one for the party. The majority of commentators acknowledge that the PR system has been a means of ensuring that more women are elected (Rule 1987, Bashevkin 1993, Matland and Studlar 1996). Others, such as Heather MacIvor (2003) and Pippa Norris (1993) warn that there are other factors that explain women's under-representation besides the electoral system, thus electoral reform is only part of the answer.

There is no doubt that PR could provide an opportunity for under-represented groups in society to get recognition by "ticket balancing" yet there is no guarantee of election (Young, L 1994, Steele and Peckford 2003). Thus, increasing women's numbers requires more than fixing the electoral system (Brodie 1994). Nevertheless, growing



interest in electoral reform as a way to heighten women's political profile has received substantial attention (Norris 1997, MacIvor 2003). This makes it all the more curious that Canada has elected the highest proportion of women MPs among SMCP systems and has received little attention (MacIvor 2003). Until that happens, the reasons for its relative success will remain under-analyzed.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Clearly, there is an impressive range of issues related to getting more women elected to office in Canada. Fourteen of these were selected for analysis: political leaders, how parties work, appointments and nominations, winnable ridings, women's movement, gender, women's issues, perspectives and difference, dual-member constituencies, a women's party, increased financial support, and electoral systems. These reflect themes that bear directly on the central issues of this thesis. The literature challenges the reader to seek answers to many contentious questions, as well as to raise new ones.

Nearly thirty years after the initial Royal Commission on the Status of Women, the 1991 Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing recognized that women's under-representation formed a part of our country's democratic deficit (xvii). None of those who have addressed this problem - academics, the women's movement, the public, or the politicians - have been able to solve it. Perhaps the familiar admonition that further research is necessary is correct, but it may be that this new research will have

to move in directions untried. One line that this study could further consider is the role of a party leader in promoting or delaying women's candidacies.

Anne Phillips and Janine Brodie (1994, 75) observe that political scientists offer "little guidance" on practical strategies that will increase the number of women returned to office. New questions, such as that asking if emerging democracies with the greatest number of women parliamentarians will be able to maintain their momentum, are being studied now and may offer useful insights (Women and Westminster Conference 2004). However, action is what is needed now if the objective is to see more women elected to Canada's Parliament and provincial legislatures.

## **METHODOLOGY AND LOGISTICAL SPECIFICS**

This section sets out the research methods used and explains why they were chosen. More specifically, it describes the type of survey techniques employed, the criteria used for choosing those who were interviewed, and the reasons for selecting the elections actually examined for the case study. The section's objectives are modest. It does not enter into methodological debates but rather describes the methods used and explains why they were chosen.<sup>6</sup>

A qualitative research method was chosen over a quantitative method for the qualitative permits the investigator to undertake a more detailed descriptive analysis (Babbie 2002, 331). The particular method used is the elite interview. The elites interviewed here were the women who ran in the various elections, the leaders of the

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<sup>6</sup> The research was originally designed and carried out under the guidance of the author's original thesis advisor, Dr. Valerie Summers, who later withdrew due to illness.

Newfoundland women's movement, and a number of both male and female federal and provincial party leaders. Interviewing elites brings several advantages (Archer 1998, 11). First, through this mechanism, "researchers can access very detailed, directed, and often private, otherwise inaccessible information" (Manheim and Rich 1981, 134), because elites are individuals or groups with access to specialized information (Archer 1998, 12). Further, it allows "the researcher to 'learn from respondents and acquire unexpected information that can lead to truly new ways of understanding the events being studied'" (Manheim and Rich 1981, 134).

Two types of surveys were employed to gather information and each has advantages and disadvantages (Newman 1991, 252-253). The mail-in and self-administered questionnaire is the cheapest means of collecting data, yet can have either a good or bad response rate. This applies also to the quality of responses. For example, a questionnaire can be returned partially completed. According to Newman, the face-to-face interview has the highest response rate and provided the most thorough responses. The disadvantage is the high cost associated with travel, time commitments, and interview preparation.

The federal and provincial elections were chosen for three reasons. First, the author had political experience in both levels of government and a familiarity with the successfully elected female politicians and political leaders. The author was confident in the ability to secure the interviews and gather information that had not been previously recorded. Second, there has been only one published paper regarding the subject matter in Newfoundland and Labrador and the thesis focused on former Progressive Conservative leader Lynn Verge (Scott 1999). Finally, the author was curious to

discover new material in comparison to the author's personal professional experience. The essential question was, if women are considered equal citizens under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, why are they not equally represented in the country's legislatures? What are the consistent themes that emerged resulting from the chosen questions?

Time constraints and a paucity of material resources limited the number of interviews that could be done. The subjects selected for the interviews were participants in the 1993, 1996, and 1997 elections: women candidates, party leaders, the parties' women's commissions' presidents, and three executive members of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Status of Women and the Coordinator of the Women's Mentoring Program with the Status of Women were chosen because of their positions and lengthy history with the women's movement. The final subject, the past-president of the Status of Women, was selected based on the recommendation from many colleagues. This individual had been with the women's movement for a significant period of time and knew its informal history.

Three methods of data collection were used: in-person taped interviews, a questionnaire sent in the mail, and an e-mail questionnaire. Of an original list of forty individuals, thirty responded. Twenty-eight respondents were women and two were men.

Twenty-two in-person interviews were held and recorded on audiocassette.<sup>7</sup> Interview subjects included unsuccessful and successful female candidates, political leaders, presidents of the major political parties' women's associations, and

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<sup>7</sup> Copies of all interviews are found at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador.

representatives of the women's movement. Eighteen interviews were held in St. John's, Newfoundland between 1997 and 2001. Four were held in Ottawa, Ontario. The interviews ranged in duration from fifteen minutes to ninety minutes, depending on the interviewee's time constraints. The interview commenced with a brief description of the thesis and then proceeded directly to questions. An in-person taped interview allowed for more depth of conversation and flexibility. However, those being interviewed knew they were being taped and may not necessarily have spoken as freely as they would otherwise have. Frequently the author was asked to put parts of the interview off-the-record.

Ideally, all the interviews would have been done in person. However, this was not possible. Therefore, the mailed questionnaire became the alternative method of data collection. E-mail was utilized for convenience and a timely response near the final stages of data completion based upon the suggestion of the respondents.

Eighteen questionnaires were mailed out and eight returned; five of them by e-mail and three written responses. Of the ten who did not respond, five could not be found and five others did not respond to a mailed questionnaire, followed-up by a telephone call, a reminder postcard, and another telephone call.

In total, the following responded: ten successful candidates; eight unsuccessful candidates; five respondents from the women's movement; five respondents were of the party leaders' category; and two respondents were presidents of the parties' women's associations.

Included in the questionnaire package was a postage-paid, return-labeled envelope, an introductory letter, a draft copy of the thesis introduction, and a questionnaire. The introductory letter also asked for a copy of each person's biography

or a brief biographical note. This request proved unsuccessful and the author did not press for the information. Within a month of mailing this package, a follow-up postcard was sent to those who had not yet responded. Within two months, a follow-up call or personal visit was arranged in Newfoundland, to those people who had still not responded. Within four months, the people who had not responded were called again. In addition, personal connections were utilized to attempt to lobby the non-respondents.

The names of all the candidates were collected from the Official Voting Results of the 35<sup>th</sup> General Election 1993 Synopsis, the Chief Electoral Office from the February 22, 1996 General Election Results for All Electoral Districts in Newfoundland and the House of Assembly Report to the Chief Electoral Officer on the St. John's West By-election July 21, 1997.

Amanda Will, Constituency Assistant to Jack Harris, M.H.A. and leader of the provincial NDP; Margot Brown, Scheduling Assistant to Premier Tobin; Heidi Bonnell, Senior Communications Assistant to Brian Tobin in his capacity as Premier and then Federal Minister of Industry; and Cate McCready, Special Assistant Ontario, Prime Minister's Office, provided information on women in their respective parties and assisted in arranging interviews.

The questions for the in-person interviews, the questionnaire, and e-mail were preponderantly drawn from the literature regarding the under-representation of women in Canadian politics: however, some reflected the interests of political professionals.<sup>8</sup> Due to time constraints or the interviewee's re-directing the conversation, not all points were covered in each personal interview. More information was gathered from the in-person

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<sup>8</sup> The questions were chosen in consultation with the author's original thesis advisor, Dr. Valerie Summers.

interviews compared to the mailed or e-mailed questionnaire. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of the respondents was remarkable.

All but three of the women who were elected to office in this period were personally interviewed. Mary Hodder, Lynn Verge, and Margaret-Ann Blaney responded via e-mail. The fact that such a great number of women who successfully ran for political office responded is gratifying. This is the first time such Newfoundland material has been studied systematically (Gardner 1997, 23). As Prime Minister Chrétien was unavailable, his office suggested interviewing two federal cabinet ministers - Hedy Fry and Sheila Copps - on his behalf. Brian Tobin was interviewed in his capacity as former Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. Lynn Verge was interviewed via e-mail in her capacity as former leader of the provincial official opposition and Jack Harris was interviewed in-person as leader of the New Democratic Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. The federal leaders of the NDP and the Conservative party were not contacted due to time constraints.

This thesis has several objectives. First, it seeks to explain why a comparatively large number of women was elected to hold office in Newfoundland during the 1990s. Specifically, the thesis asks if there were any factors operating that affected the success of woman candidates in these elections. Second, it aims to add to the literature regarding the under-representation of women in politics. Currently, the Newfoundland and Labrador feminist political literature is in an embryonic stage. This thesis will contribute to a permanent Newfoundland data set located in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland, which will facilitate future research on the recruitment of women into electoral politics, as well as provide guidance for politically

involved women. Most importantly, this thesis aims to be usable both by academics and the public at large, while providing new information about and a new perspective on women in Newfoundland politics.

The title 'Making Waves: Women in Newfoundland Politics' was chosen to reflect the 'waves' of feminism and to evoke images of the ocean surrounding the province. To date, there have been three waves or historical categorizations of feminism. The First Wave, from the 1880s to the 1930s, focused on women's suffrage and the acknowledgement of women as "persons". The Second Wave, between the 1930s and the 1980s, focused on the classification of feminists such as radical, Marxist, or liberal feminists. We are currently in the Third Wave of feminism. Commencing in the 1980s, this Wave focuses on individual experiences and more acceptance of those experiences rather than classification.

The thesis then proceeds to a presentation and analysis of the data. A conclusion then draws these themes together. Appendices include a Newfoundland Political Women's Timeline, a listing of the Successful and Unsuccessful Newfoundland Women who ran for office, the Proportion of Women in Canadian Provincial and Territorial Legislatures 1997, Sample Questions, the Email Addresses of the Political Parties and an Advocacy section. Due to the length of the completed mail-in questionnaire and the taped in-person interviews, they will not be included as an appendix. Rather, they may be found at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland.



## CHAPTER II

### DATA, FINDINGS, AND ANALYSIS

The answer to the question “why were the greatest number of women elected in Newfoundland's history during the election years of 1993, 1996, and 1997,” is not readily found. Often in elected politics is it difficult to pinpoint the exact reason(s) to explain why something happens. The answers are frequently influenced by what someone says, how they say it, and who documents what was said.

The topic areas analyzed in Table 5 assisted in understanding not the reason, but the reasons, for the numerical increase of women in Newfoundland politics. Could the numerical increase have resulted from the federal and provincial political leaders deciding it was time to have more women at the political table? Yes. Could the numerical increase have resulted from the interaction, support, and partnerships with the women's movement to aid more women in their election? Yes. Was gender relevant? It *was* to the political leaders. To both the successful and unsuccessful candidates, however, gender *was not* relevant. Consequently, according to the data, the women's movement *and* the political leaders are clearly part of the answers to this question. Although the gender topic does provide some insights, they are not as clear.

Table 5 presents a summary of the topic areas explored throughout this case study for the election years of 1993, 1996, and 1997. The topic areas are found in this chapter under the larger subsections of “Political Leaders,” “Women's Movement,” and “Gender.” There was a total of 30 respondents, which are detailed in Chapter II. On occasion, an interviewee would answer a question twice, albeit differently, thus the total of 31 respondents. The ‘yes’ and ‘no’ classification are self-explanatory, however the

'not relevant' requires explanation. This category means that there were a certain number of interviewees whose answer was not required for a particular question. For example, the president of a women's commission would not be required to answer "were you contacted directly by the party (political) leadership in the sense that you could count on their resources and support during the campaign?" The 'no answer' category specifies where there was a time limitation with the interview, thus an answer to the question was not obtained. Finally, 'other' specifies where there was an alternative answer provided outside of the standard 'yes' or 'no' answer. All of the above contributes to an overall view to the interviewee's responses and further reference should be directed at the individual sections.

Table 5. Summary of Findings All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997<sup>9</sup>)

Topic Area	Yes	No	Not Relevant	No Answer	Other	Total
Contacted by Party Leadership	10	8	12	1	0	31
What Can the Parties Do	Refer to Table 7					
Winnable Riding	13	3	12	2	0	30
Appointments and Nominations	5	18	0	3	4	30
Interaction with Women's Groups	21	2	1	2	5	31
Received Support from Women's Groups	4	8	12	6	0	30
Gender as an Issue	3	12	11	2	2	30
Women's Issues	13	2	0	3	13	31
Women's Perspectives	20	0	0	10	0	30
Women's Difference	Refer to Table 14					
Dual Constituencies	7	13	0	5	5	30
Women's Only Party	7	20	0	3	1	31

<sup>9</sup> The total number of respondents is thirty; however, in certain instances an interviewee provided two responses to the one question. Also, certain themes -- Electoral Systems, The Women's Network, The 52% Solution, and The Women's Mentoring Program -- are not included in this table because at the time of the interviews questions corresponding to these themes were not asked.

There were multiple sources of data for this thesis. As explored in Chapter I, there are several means of gathering data and primarily used here were the elite-interview technique. This approach further utilized the in-person interview, a questionnaire by mail, and an email questionnaire to gather the views of all the successful and unsuccessful female candidates for the specifically studied election years as well as the political leaders and the representative from the women's movement. The question arises as to if using multiple techniques to gather data is as reliable as using one technique. Simply stated, using one technique was impossible in this instance.

Obtaining an original data set for this thesis was challenging for several reasons: the author was no longer living in Newfoundland and Labrador when writing, interviewees had moved, securing in-person interviews while visiting St. John's was difficult to schedule, and motivating those who had received a mailed interview to complete and return the form was an achievement to say the least.

Those interviewed for the thesis were directly involved in the recruitment of women candidates, a process that involves motivating women to run as well as structural elements of nominations and campaigning. Perhaps the most important interviews were those held with most of the female candidates, successful or not, who ran during the elections studied here. Only those who did not respond to any of several requests for an interview were excluded.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, it proved impossible to interview leaders of all the political parties involved; nevertheless the study does include senior spokespersons from all political parties. Therefore the data set was not drawn from a sample, as is usual in academic research. Rather, those interviewed were the most direct participants.

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<sup>10</sup> All candidates from all parties, successful or unsuccessful, were included and there is no bias for omission of those who did not respond.

Moreover, new material such as that treating The Women's Network, The 52% Solution, The Women's Mentoring Program, and the Treatment Program was discovered and collected. This new material does not appear to have been treated previously in any academic work.

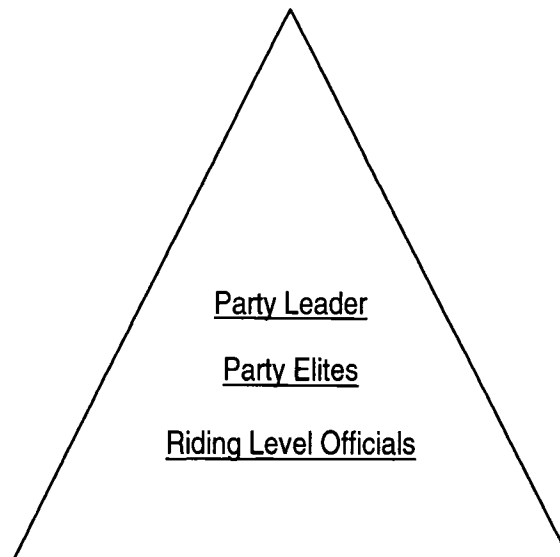
The topic areas used to explore the data, including several not considered in the interviews, are political leaders, how parties work, appointments and nominations, winnable ridings, women's movement (interaction, support, and partnerships), The Women's Network, The 52% Solution, The Women's Mentoring Program, gender as an issue, women's issues, perspectives and difference, dual-member constituencies, a women's party, and increased financial support. These topic areas are not inclusive of all the "women in politics" areas. The provincial government's unofficial "Treatment Program," although mentioned below, is not treated as a variable as it was discovered only later in the interview process.

Each variable is treated individually commencing with the research question, the interview question, a table indicating results, and a commentary. The reason for doing so is to provide the reader with a view to each variable at a basic level. Even though the interconnection between many of these topic areas has been well examined in the literature, they are not elaborated upon here. Also, this individuality allows for each selected respondent to speak for themselves. Whereas Chapter I presented the relevant literature review and logistical specifics, Chapter II presents lengthy quotes from those interviewed where the rich information adds life to the more formal presentation of the data.

## POLITICAL LEADERS

### WHAT CAN THE PARTIES DO, WINNABLE RIDINGS, APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS, AND THE TREATMENT PROGRAM

Looking at a pyramid clarifies the role that the party leadership, especially the party leader, plays in recruiting candidates. At the top of the pyramid is the elected political leader, a position which does not necessarily refer to a premier or prime minister. The term also applies to the person who has been elected at a convention by the members of a political party in order to lead that party. As expected, this person has his or her own style and vision which is vitally important to shaping their party's policies and priorities.



The leader is accompanied by senior level staff, known as “exempt staff,” who advise the leader politically on issues. These “exempt staff” are partisan, political staff, and not bureaucratic; thus their decisions reflect the fact that they must act to secure the

best results for their leader and party. A Chief of Staff, Executive Assistant, Director of Operations, Communications Director, Legislative and Policy Directors, and regional assistants would be among those entrusted to ensure that the leader's operation runs smoothly.

Next are the party elites (such as the National Director of Fundraising) who formally operate from the party's head office, in addition to the network of powerful party loyalists (such as past riding presidents) who informally advise the leader and/or the leader's closest advisors. Finally, there is the riding level operation where the local political work is handled by paid political party staff and party volunteers. This entire system, which operates differently from party to party, often functions on nuances that are near impossible to track as data. As demonstrated in the literature review, a multitude of scholars have written on the subject of political leaders (Erickson 1991, MacIvor 1996), but few have had access to interview the elites themselves for academic purposes.

Overall these data show several points. First, a majority of candidates, 55.5 percent, stated they were contacted by the party leadership and encouraged to run. Second, most of the women, 72 percent, were asked to run in ridings considered unwinnable. Finally, the majority of respondents, 60 percent, were not in favour of women being appointed in a riding and bypassing the nomination system.

## POLITICAL LEADERS

### RESEARCH QUESTION

What role does the party leader play in recruiting, promoting, and supporting women candidates?

### QUESTION

“Were you contacted directly by the party (political) leadership in the sense that you could count on their resources and support during the campaign?”

Table 6. Contacted by the Political Leaders All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997<sup>11</sup>)

<u>Contacted By</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Party Leadership	10	55.5
No One	7	38.8
Not Sure	1	5.5
No Answer	1	5.5
Not Relevant	12	40
Total Female Candidates	18	
Total Interviewed	31	

### DISCUSSION

These data show that the majority of candidates responded that they were contacted by the political leadership. There were 55.5 percent of female candidates who credited the “party leadership” compared to 38.8 percent who credited “no one” for their decision to run. The “not relevant” category is comprised of others than the candidates:

<sup>11</sup> The total is 31 instead of 30 because Jean Payne answered twice: “no” on the written questionnaire and “yes” during the tape-recorded interview.

the party leaders, the representatives of the women's commission, and the women's movement.<sup>12</sup>

The Hon. Shelia Copps and the Hon. Hedy Fry were interviewed as representatives of the government of then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. Provincially the following were interviewed: ex-premier Brian Tobin; Lynn Verge, former Progressive Conservative leader; and Jack Harris, leader of the New Democratic Party. Each of these interviews had a different focus and provided great insight into a process that is of enormous magnitude.

Sheila Copps summarized the role of the Liberal leader and party hierarchy in recruiting, promoting, and supporting women candidates:

I asked for the job in 1993 of making sure we had 25 percent women candidates in our party and we had a strategy. In the space of one election we took the number of Liberal women from eleven to twenty-two percent. We doubled the percentage because we had small numbers and when you change the government, that's an easier time to make those changes because once you have an incumbent, it is very difficult to replace the incumbent to get a gender balance. (Copps, 2001)

Federally, Bonnie Hickey and Jean Payne were contacted by the party leadership for the 1993 election.<sup>13</sup> They were seeking election at the time when Jean Chrétien had received a mandate from the Liberal Party of Canada stating that 25 percent of all candidates must be women. Both candidates were also asked to run in ridings where the Liberal Party was not expected to win.

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<sup>12</sup> The Newfoundland "leadership" data is significant, however what needs to be answered is how active leaders are in nominations generally to ask whether or not this case could be applied nationally.

<sup>13</sup> Note that during the in-person interview, Jean Payne stated that she was "not sure" if the party had asked her to run. With the mail-in questionnaire, she writes a definite "yes."



Bonnie Hickey, former Member of Parliament for St. John's East, credits Chrétien and his local organizers with encouraging and enabling her to run. Hickey stated that everything was made available to her and that she received a great deal of support from the leader and others in the political hierarchy:

I was the federal riding president for a number of years and we were looking for somebody to run against Ross Reid (former Progressive Conservative Member of Parliament). We couldn't find anybody. Sheila Copps came down and no one wanted to take on Ross Reid in 1993. So I said to the Prime Minister 'I don't have the background to do this. I have high school and I've been home with my kids for the last twelve years.' He said 'you are a housewife and a mother and you probably work harder than all of us put together. You're the type of person we need around.' So he gave me a day to think about it and called back. All of a sudden I sat down that night and thought I have got nothing to loose. I had a whole lot to gain. I'll go door-to-door and meet lots of people. I'll get the experience of the press following me around even though I am not good at that sort of thing. I'll learn a lot. (Hickey 2001)

Provincially, four out of five female cabinet ministers credited former Liberal Premier Brian Tobin with their recruitment. There were seven female provincial politicians in total. The other two were Yvonne Jones and Mary Hodder. Yvonne Jones was initially elected as an independent and, during Tobin's time as Premier, crossed the floor to become a Liberal Member of the Legislative Assembly. Mary Hodder was not recruited by the party.

Brian Tobin confirmed his priority, and publicly acknowledged determination, of increasing the numbers of women elected when he stated:

I'd call people and say 'I do not want you to run. I have a star candidate. Her name is X. She's important to me, she's important to this government, and I think she can make a contribution, and I don't want her to have to waste her energy or time going through a destructive and divisive nomination race. I want you to step aside because she's better in my judgment than you are.' Now the purists will say that was interference on my part that was unwarranted. I will say to you that I got candidates in 1996 who turned out to be strong, effective Ministers. In every case they

were women who were demonstrated leaders. Julie Bettney, who ran in Mount Pearl – was the Mayor of Mount Pearl – and an effective and acknowledged strong leader. Joan-Marie Aylward was the President of the Nurses Union – an effective, strong, articulate leader. Sandra Kelly was the Mayor of Gander. Judy Foote had been the Director of Communications for the previous Premier Clyde Wells. Very effective, knowledgeable and experienced in government, players who came to the table. Those were the four who initially came into the cabinet. Later on Anna Thistle came in, who was active in municipal politics in Grand Falls, and Mary Hodder, who had always been the backroom person in Marystown. She suddenly came forward to put her name on the ballot and brought her own skill set to the House of Assembly. So these were all strong women who were demonstrated leaders, who in many cases, we went out of our way, and I went out of my way, to say ‘we need you.’ (Tobin 2001)

Minister Julie Bettney referred to Premier Tobin’s commitment to women:

I have spoken very positively about my involvement (in politics) and it was relatively easy for me this time to get into provincial politics for two reasons. One I think I had a base, a presence, to build on that was well respected, and I also had a leader who went out of his way to encourage and to show others that he wanted to have women in his government, but that made it publicly very acceptable to support me. I did run for a provincial nomination one other time, a number of years ago, and it wasn’t the same experience, it was quite a negative experience where the ‘back-room’ kind of ganged up. (Bettney 1998)

Jack Harris, Leader of the provincial New Democratic Party, has demonstrated over a period of many years his party’s commitment to electing more women. That being said, Mr. Harris is fully aware that he and his party are extremely unlikely to form a government. Despite this, Mr. Harris remains committed to increasing the number of female candidates and strives towards ensuring that his understanding of the barriers for women entering politics are faced and policy is made in an attempt to address these barriers. Provincially, in 1996, the New Democratic Party had three women running. In the 1993 federal election, there were two women running. Mr. Harris stated:

We (the NDP) made every effort to get women to run. I had started, encouraged, and contributed to a separate fund for the women candidates in the party. We were very keen in the party back in the late '80s to ensure when we were revising our Constitution and major issues of having gender parity on committees, gender parity on the executive, gender parity on positions on the executive: we have many special rules in our party about that. We were very progressive on the issue of the executive and there was always debates about these things and people want quotas. I don't have any problem with affirmative action as long as its necessary, but the model that was decided on for what's called the at-large positions in the executive, was I believe a Scandinavian model which was minimum forty percent women, minimum forty percent men for at-large positions. The other part came from what is called the Provincial Council. At a convention you elect five people. The five of them were men and you could do that, but when the Provincial council came there had to be at least four women elected so it was at least forty percent men and minimum forty percent women. Since our last convention the formula has changed slightly but I don't believe the debate was very satisfactory. The proposal wasn't very well understood by people who were voting so now we're rethinking it again. What did the party do in to attract more women to run? Not much, except we got to have some good women running. In our party, getting candidates of any gender is not easy because we can't offer them a real chance of winning in many seats and we can't offer them much if they loose. If you're the party in power you have more ability to control that issue than anybody else. (Harris 2000)

In the Provincial House of Assembly Jack Harris stated:

That if there were an equality of women represented in the House of Assembly, that policies of Government, laws that are tabled in this House, would reflect a point of view that is more representative of the needs of people. I believe that the kind of politics that we have and the nature of political debate, the nature of political contests, is one in which there is a high degree of competitiveness, aggressiveness, and seeking to demonstrate one's greater force, ability, and determination. I see, Mr. Speaker, and I am told this by women who are active in politics and in the seeking of political change, that the approach might well be different with an equality of women and men. That the approach in seeking solutions to the problems that we face would perhaps be more people oriented. More oriented to the needs of families, more oriented to the needs of people who we see suffer in our society, and perhaps greater working together in order to find solutions to the problems we all face. (Harris n.d.)

Sue (Skipton) Hart was the only other NDP candidate who agreed to be interviewed. Ms. Hart ran unsuccessfully in the 1996 provincial election for St. John's South, losing to Progressive Conservative candidate Tom Osborne, by 1663 votes. No one from the party had contacted her; it was Ms. Hart who told the party that she would run. Up until that point she had been active with the provincial NDP. For Ms. Hart it was clearly the women's movement, not the political leader or system, which prompted her interest in running. She stated:

I had actually quite a good network of women in the women's movement so I found the name of this campaign manager through my contacts with women in the community. Really it was her who negotiated what district for me to run in because I didn't know very much about the political scene at that time and the district I ended up running in was not obviously winnable, but not a lame duck either (Sic!). (Hart 2001)

Lynn Verge was leader of the provincial Progressive Conservative during the 1996 election. Though her interview response by email was brief, it was very frank. The reader should take particular note of the third paragraph:

As leader of the Party, I wanted women candidates. My belief in the need for a balance of women and men in leadership positions had propelled me to run for the House of Assembly in the first place, seventeen years earlier. From then on, I tried to encourage women to consider running for political office. I had a close association with the women's movement in the province, which went back to 1974 when I helped start the Corner Brook Status of Women Council. I lobbied for the establishment of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women and supported Brian Peckford for the leadership of the provincial PC Party partly because he was on side.

When I ran for the leadership of the Party in 1975, several women were active in my campaign. The next winter when the leadership of the Liberal Party changed by acclamation and it became obvious that there was going to be a snap election call, I put together an election organization that again included women in key positions. For candidate recruitment, in addition to drawing on the caucus, I involved women with provincial networks who were committed to attracting other women to run. Two such women who

were effective were Ann Bell, former President of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and Kathy Dunderdale, former President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities. I put in many hours appealing to women to run, in some cases drawing on my own memories of past conversations, and in other instances acting on the suggestion of the recruitment committee.

Early in that campaign, the new Liberal leader, Brian Tobin, sent out word that he had attracted star women candidates. It seemed to me that was, at least in part, a ploy to counteract my appeal as a woman leader. Interestingly, three of the women the Liberals recruited were women I had encouraged to run: Julie Bettney, whom I had supported for a PC by-election nomination in the late 1980s; Sandra Kelly, whom I had asked to run for the PC nomination in the Gander by-election the previous summer; and Joan-Marie Aylward, whom I had taken to lunch the previous fall to encourage to run for the PCs and whose reasons for not being able to serve as an MHA (children, husband, etc.) I had rebutted.

I believe another reason both parties ended up having a record number of women candidates is that the election took people by surprise and there wasn't enough time for contested nominations. In the case of the PC Party, we used an emergency provision of the constitution to dispense with the usual democratic but time-consuming process of candidate selection.

In my experience, women are more reluctant to run than men. Women typically doubt their qualifications and need a lot of reassurance and encouragement. The prospect of a contested nomination may be one too many mental obstacle(s) for women. (Verge 2001)

Several contradictions were found within the data. For example, Sandra Kelly stated that "no one" recruited her to run provincially, she made the decision and contacted the party to run. Yet Progressive Conservative Leader Verge stated that she attempted to recruit Kelly for the Progressive Conservative Party, not the Liberal Party. Finally, former Premier Tobin is quoted as saying, "I need you," to several of the female candidates, Kelly included. With three different answers to the one question, it is challenging to determine which answer is the correct recollection.

According to the data, how much credit the political leadership should get for electing a record number of women in Newfoundland and Labrador politics during the 1990s remains debatable and open to interpretation. There was a near equal division between those interviewed who said yes, the party called and offered their assistance, and those who said that no one called them. It appears that the greatest proponents of taking credit for the increase in the number of women are the political leaders themselves. Even though the successful female candidates acknowledge the support of the party and its leadership, they relied more on their professional experience and public reputations as a means of explanation their presence in the provincial and federal legislatures.

#### *WHAT CAN THE PARTIES DO?*

##### RESEARCH QUESTION

What you think is the best way to encourage more women to run for provincial or federal office?

##### QUESTION

“What can parties do to help more women get elected?”

Table 7. What can the Parties do? \*

<u>Changes</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Mentoring	7	15.56
Financial	6	13.33
Recruitment	6	13.33
Education	4	8.89
Not Relevant	4	8.89
Nothing	3	6.67
No answer	2	4.44
Improve women's wages	1	2.22
Try dual constituencies short-term	1	2.22
Potential female candidate information session at AGM	1	2.22
Focus on winnable ridings	1	2.22
Welcoming new women	1	2.22
Accommodate family life	1	2.22
Greater involvement of the Women's Commission	1	2.22
Change ballot categorization	1	2.22
Do not deny gender	1	2.22
Encourage women on policy committees	1	2.22
Child Care	1	2.22
Less 'selection' of candidates	1	2.22
Quotas	1	2.22

\* Responses from all three years are pooled.

## DISCUSSION

The data show a wide range of suggested changes to the parties' role because respondents were asked to make their suggestions based on their own experiences. The answers were so diverse resulting in twenty suggestions in total. The author was curious to see if new suggestions could be elicited during these interviews other than those traditionally noted in the literature on women and politics found in Chapter I.

Some of these proposals have been previously explored in the literature regarding women's electoral participation, such as mentoring, recruitment, and winnable ridings (Trimble and Arscott 2003), yet it was not expected that there would have been such a

vast breadth of responses. Such ambiguity is indicative of the diversity among the respondents based on their expressed individual experiences.

The top three suggestions of mentoring, financing, and recruitment have been addressed throughout this thesis. All three political parties and the women's movement organization have varying degrees of financing (Bashevkin 1993), mentoring, and recruitment plans (MacIvor 1996). As with the changing nature of political leadership, the focus on all three is also fluid. The effort put into each is dependent on those responsible for each issue and a corresponding prioritizing of these issues by the political leadership and other elites.

Lorraine Michael, president of the New Democratic Women's Association, observed:

There are specific guidelines for assuring that women become nominated as NDP candidates for election: there is an educational process to promote the party's affirmative action policy; women and other affirmative action candidates will be reimbursed up to \$500.00 for costs incurred if seeking the nomination in ridings where the NDP incumbent is retiring; women and other affirmative action candidates for nomination in a contested nomination race will be reimbursed up to \$55.00 for child care expenses incurred in seeking the nomination; in large, rural ridings there is financial support for all affirmative action candidates; women and other affirmative action candidates for nomination may receive up to \$1,5000.00 for tax purposes, three times that permitted for other candidates. (Michael 2001)

Provincial cabinet minister Sandra Kelly stated:

I think the biggest thing is getting women to consider political life. Many women don't. I had the biggest surprise of my life when I was the only woman on council in Gander and I was determined that when the next election came, I would encourage women to run and when I approached them, many of them said 'I don't think I could do that, maybe you should ask my husband. He would be better at that.' In the meantime, they were the women who were running the churches or the head of the PTA (Parent Teachers Association), they were women with very good skills. I think having women to consider doing it is important. The other thing is that if women can not enter politics at this stage in their life, they can consider it



latter in life. Because I would not have been able or I would not have wanted – I would have always been able because you can find a way to do almost anything - to consider doing this when my children were younger and when I didn't have the experience or the background that I felt was required to do this job well. (Kelly 1998)

Cynthia Layden-Barrett, President of the Liberal Women's Commission, was the only interviewee to focus on recruitment of female candidates within the party:

I think there needs to be more respect given to the women in the party instead of trying to recruit women outside of the party. First, I find that when recruitment happens you're recruited because you are the president of some teachers association or you were a mayor of a town where you have already proven yourself politically. That's a good thing not a bad thing, but it counteracts the women in the party. For example, I've been involved in the party for twenty-two years. I have a degree in political science, worked inside and outside of government I've worked for the private sector, and I've worked for the NGOs so my experience is quite broad. These people are the ones not being asked and they should be. We should look more internally. Second, I think that there is, unfortunately, an attitude by a large number of women within the party that this gender stuff shouldn't even be going on. (Layden-Barrett 2001)

Cheryl Stagg was an unsuccessful Progressive Conservative candidate in 1996.

She wrote:

The party should strive to convince more women to become involved in policy committees and on the organizational side of campaigns – and they should encourage that especially in young women. It is not good enough for women to be part of *women's* organizations within the party. That serves only to segregate them and to perpetuate the myth that there are separate issues which should be of interest to them alone. They should play key roles in provincial campaigns generally, and be kept fully involved in the development of party platforms and issues – and keep on top of local and provincial issues.

I believe it is difficult for women to skip that critical step and move directly into becoming candidates.

The challenge for the party is to determine how they can best serve and be served by these competent women. Change has to start at this basic level and gradually work its way through the system, and that will take time. It should begin without further delay. (Stagg 2001)

## WINNABLE RIDINGS

### RESEARCH QUESTION

Do women candidates think they are nominated to run in riding their party believes it cannot win?

### QUESTION

“Were you asked by your party to run in a riding where its winnability was questioned?”

Table 8. Riding Winnability Questioned All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997)

<u>Winnable Ridings</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	13	72
No	3	16.6
No Answer	2	11.1
Total Female Candidates	18	
Total Interviewed	30	

### DISCUSSION

The majority of female candidates, 72 percent, were asked to run where the chance of winning the riding was low. Eight out of the thirteen candidates who ran in what they felt were questionable ridings actually won. There were 16.6 percent of those interviewed who stated they ran in winnable ridings. The not relevant category includes

those who were not running, such as the political leaders or representatives from the women's movement.

Winnable ridings are ridings where victory can be reasonably expected and "winnability" is usually based on party affiliation. For example, if a Liberal candidate chooses to run in a riding that has voted Progressive Conservative for the past ten elections, the chances of being elected are slight. Feminist political literature stated that women are more often than not asked to run in un-winnable ridings because this boosts the number of female candidates, allowing the party to meet its quota of female candidates (Bashevkin 1993, Sharpe 1994). Yet the literature also points towards unwinnable ridings earmarked for women no longer being an issue (Studlar and Matland 1996). The women who run in these ridings are referred to as "sacrificial lambs or sacrificial candidates" in the literature (MacIvor 1996, Trimble and Arscott 2003). The outcome of these instances is meaningless for they serve to superficially raise the percentage of women as candidates. The leaders and party elites know which ridings are winnable, which are not, and which can swing. This information may not always be obvious to the voters, yet it is clear to those involved in party affairs.

Newfoundland activist and Program Co-ordinator for the Women's Mentoring Program, Kathy Dunderdale (appointed in 2003 as provincial Minister of Industry, Trade and Rural Development), was one of a few women interviewed to speak candidly about winnability and the political situation surrounding the 1993 federal election. She stated:

St. John's East and West were considered to be Tory strongholds. Nobody thought that Ross Reid (East) or the incumbent, Loyola Hearn (West), would lose. Nobody thought that those two seats were winnable – they thought they were pretty tied-up. Therefore the men weren't interested in the nomination and they had to find a sacrificial lamb to put in there, completely misreading the public mind and put two women in there. I am not sure who was most surprised: the women themselves when they won, the party who put them there, or all around! Gender had everything to do with it. I think if the Liberals had thought they had any chance at all of winning those seats, that they would have been such a fierce battle for the nomination that the women wouldn't have had a look in. I think gender had everything to do with it in that case. (Dunderdale 1998)

Undoubtedly the most interesting response regarding winnability came from successful MLA Mary Hodder:

I wasn't asked to run. The Party had plans for another candidate, a very credible person with an unquestionably high profile. I contested the nomination and, again, the result was a resounding majority. This seat had been held for several years by the PC Party, but I knew I had enough personal support to win the District. I least expected, however, to get the highest majority in the province. (Hodder M, 2001)

Minister Joan-Marie Aylward stated:

I ran in a district where there was no incumbent because they had renewed or changed the electoral boundaries. My district was a new district in that it was part of two incumbent districts but a new one was created. Generally an incumbent has an advantage by virtue of name recognition and nothing else. So I went into a district where I had never run in politics before. I had never been organized in any type of campaign. I had never been affiliated with any party before and my district is an inner-city district with a high percentage of social assistance recipients and senior citizens. (Aylward 1998)

## NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

### RESEARCH QUESTION

Would female candidates favour or oppose being appointed by the leader rather than going through the usual nomination process?

### QUESTION

“Should women be able to bypass the nomination system and be appointed as the party candidate in a riding?”

Table 9. Nomination and Appointments All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997<sup>14</sup>)

<u>Nominations and Appointments</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	5	16.67
No	18	60
Certain Conditions	4	13.33
No Answer	3	10

### DISCUSSION

These data show the majority of respondents, 60 percent, are *not* in favour of women being appointed in a riding and bypassing the nomination system. Eighteen respondents stated “no.” Five respondents said they were in favour of the appointment process, yet that number would be higher if “certain conditions,” such as an equal process for male candidates (Muzychka 2001), were met. If so, the total would then be nine.

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that Diane Whelan answered “certain conditions” on the written questionnaire, yet during an interview with the St. John’s Evening Telegram on June 22, she answered “no.”

Although appointments are made at the discretion of the party leader, there must be a mandate to do so from the party members. Appointments, whether for a female or a male candidate, are a means of ensuring that the leader's preferred candidate skips the nomination process and becomes the party's candidate for the next election (MacIvor 1996). This process bypasses the traditional selection procedures where local party members play a role in choosing the candidate, often leading to problematic situations such as the local members believing they are not a part of the process (Megyery 1991, Trimble and Arscott 2003) regardless of the candidate's gender.

If the nomination process must occur each party has specific criteria that must be met to contest and win the nomination. The nomination process commences when several individuals first unofficially, then officially, state that they are interested in being the candidate for a particular party in the next election. All candidates and their supporters aim to sell, for a nominal fee set by each party, the largest number of party memberships in their riding. Doing so increases the number of supporters who can vote for the candidate at the nomination meeting. The person with the greatest number of votes is the winner and is the party's candidate in the election.

Federally, Jean Chrétien is credited with making the decision to interfere in the nomination process to ensure that his goal of having more women Members of Parliament was met. Minister Hedy Fry spoke on behalf of former Prime Minister Chrétien:

The (Liberal) party itself, with a 98 percent vote, gave to the leader (Chrétien) the ability to influence the nomination process, so that he could have a target of 25 percent of women running in the party and that he would also influence that process so that they would run in winnable ridings. When all of the polling and everything show that you have a chance of forming government, suddenly people want to run in winnable ridings and it tends to be the 'old boys network' who also have been in the party for many years. 'I am a bagman, I bring money, I do this and that. I am a power broker in the party.' It has always been men who have been the power brokers in the party. Women work in the party where they tend to make sandwiches, coffee, lick stamps, and run the campaign offices. But when the time comes to run, they never get pushed forward. So Chrétien did something unprecedented: he interfered in the nomination process. And he interfered in a positive way with a 98 percent mandate from the party to do so. But what he did is he worked with the liberal ridings associations and indicated this is a winnable riding. 'I am going to either assist helping to promote a woman to win this or if you can't help me to make sure that a woman wins this, I am going to appoint her.' And if you recall in the 1992, amidst a fair amount of political flack, he had a democratic mandate from within his party to do so and he appointed eleven women to run in winnable ridings and that was the first and most important step was the target of 25 percent. (Fry 1999)

Progressive Conservative candidate Sheila Osborne spoke most passionately about her preference for nominations. She stated "I would have felt less worthy and patronized (if appointed). I didn't mind one bit seeking the nomination. Had there been a couple of men interested and they had said, 'no, we're going to appoint Sheila as a candidate,' I would have felt less than qualified. 'She can't win a nomination therefore we'll appoint her' so from my point of view, I didn't mind seeking the nomination at all." (Osborne 2000)

Women's movement staffer Kathy Dunderdale, a supporter of women's appointments, was the only person to mention the fact that several times in Newfoundland's political history men have been appointed to ministerial positions. Ms.

Dunderdale's point is that this appointment process is a process that women should not be hesitant to accept:

The thing that really annoys me about that question is that nobody had any problems with Clyde Wells when he was appointed. Nobody had any problems with Ed Roberts when he wasn't even elected and appointed to the cabinet. Nobody has any problems with John Crosbie. I mean we can go through example and example of very high profile politicians in this province who were appointed. Mr. Wells (in his capacity as premier), who would never hear for one moment of a woman being given any kind of a special purpose to bypass the nomination process, has no problem taking Ed Roberts right off the street and putting him at his cabinet table. Mr. Wells didn't see anything wrong with it at all. (Dunderdale 1998)

Several examples exist which substantiate to Ms. Dunderdale's claim. Under the Smallwood Liberal government of 1966, John Crosbie was appointed Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, T. Alex Hickman was appointed Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and Clyde Wells was appointed Minister of Labour. Under the Clyde Wells Liberal government, Ed Roberts was appointed Minister of Justice and Attorney General and Government House Leader. In 2000, Brian Tobin was appointed as Minister of Industry and was not yet elected. Given these male appointments, made with little fanfare, and numerous others throughout Canadian history, we must further question and reflect on why women take great issue with female appointments.

In response to the appointment and nomination questions, Martha Muzychka, of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, stated:



I support appointments only if you're going to do the same thing for men and are clear on the process. In the nineties the government had said every time they made a political appointment they would alternate between men and women. It was a clear policy. This all came to a head when Clyde Wells was premier and they appointed the Police Commission. All men were appointed to the Commission. There was not one single woman and this was challenged. The women's movement asked why the government did not use the policy with this discretionary appointment. The government did not know that there was such policy. Wendy Williams (former president, Status of Women) and I gathered the information that said this policy existed. Should women be appointed without a nomination? We wouldn't do it if men aren't going to have the same option. Men have always been given the winnable seat or they've been given the long-standing smooth road. So to answer that question is yes and no. No, you wouldn't bypass the proper nomination process but when you look at history there's lots of evidence to show how things get done and how to bypass the normal route. (Muzychka 2001)

### *TREATMENT PROGRAM*

One of the most interesting findings in this thesis is the "Treatment Program," uncovered while interviewing one of the provincial cabinet ministers. As an unofficial program, this lighthearted term is used by the female provincial Liberal caucus members in specific instances to note unsuitable behavior. When male provincial Liberal caucus members say something inappropriate, the female caucus members state that the males are in the "Treatment Program" which essentially means their behavior needs modification and they are not to use sexist language. There is nothing written about this program and this was the only instance throughout the interviews where it was mentioned. This 'program' shows a consciousness that certain professional behavior is unacceptable and reflects an effort to take action to address the situation in a manner that is not confrontational.

Minister Aylward stated:

If the men get out of line or say something sexist, gender biased, insulting, or grievous we will say that you are in the treatment program. We will do it unofficially and publicly in front of our colleagues if they make some comment that is less than appropriate. We will say that you are back in the treatment program which means you are acting unacceptably and smarten-up. Now it is the way we communicate in Cabinet. If somebody says something, they will say 'back in the treatment program for you' and people kind-of laugh at it but you get your point across. It has proved to be quite good. (Aylward 1998)

## **WOMEN'S MOVEMENT**

### **INTERACTION, SUPPORT, AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT, WOMEN'S NETWORK, THE 52% SOLUTION, AND THE WOMEN'S MENTORING PROGRAM**

The "women's movement" research question suggests that there would be a high level of interaction, support, and partnership between the women's movement and the women seeking political office. This would result in the women's movement having a significant effect on the numbers of women politically participating and, optimistically, elected to office.

These data show a high level of interaction between the candidates and the women's movement. Interaction includes letters, telephone calls, invitations to meetings, consultations, and speaking engagements. However, the level of support, once this interaction was established, was minimal. Yet these data may not be clear as 33 percent of candidates interviewed did not have the opportunity to answer due to time constraints. These data also demonstrate high levels of partnership between the women's movement

and politically interested and active women. These partnerships include The Women’s Mentoring Program, The Women’s Network, and The 52% Solution.

*INTERACTION WITH WOMEN’S GROUPS*

RESEARCH QUESTION

Did the women’s movement have a significant level of interaction with the women seeking political office? Did this influence the numbers of women seeking political office?

QUESTION

“Do you (or have you) interact(ed) with the women’s groups in Newfoundland?”

Table 10. Candidate Interaction with Women’s Groups All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997<sup>15</sup>)

<u>Interaction</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	12	66.6
No	2	11.1
Somewhat	4	22.2
Not relevant	12	40
Total Female Candidates	18	
Total Interviewed	30	

DISCUSSION

Considering the limited Newfoundland material available on the relationship between the women’s movement and women in politics, it was thought that a question posed to acquire whether or not there had been any interaction between the two groups

<sup>15</sup> Jean Cook answered both “yes” and “no.”

would be informative. Further exploration of the data would have involved a more specific line of questioning as to the type and level of interaction. The same can be said for Table 10.

The result show that the majority of respondents answered that they did interact with the women's movement. The two "nos" need clarification. Joan Cook referred to her lack of participation in the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Margaret-Ann (O'Rourke) Blaney was the other candidate who answered "no" and unfortunately there was not an opportunity to ask for an elaborated answer. The "not relevant" category includes those who were not running, such as the political leaders and those from the women's movement.

Both the women's movement and the female politicians admit that their relationship is of mutual interest. For example, Joan-Marie Aylward succinctly asserts "you have to be a very active liaison with all of these (women's advocacy) groups if you want to do the types of changes we have just done (with the social policy provincial budget)." (Aylward 1998)

Joyce Hancock, President of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, stated:

In terms of political campaigns that may help women, we do a candidate forum. It's one of our strengths in Stephenville. Every time there was an election – municipal, provincial, federal – we had a co-sponsor with us for the event. We planted in the audience people who would ask questions about basic women's issues. First, when I started, we were going right away to candidates asking them about their stand on issues. Do you have a woman's agenda in this election? We were making ourselves known to (Premier) Tobin and to anyone else who ran. We kept that connection, with the Advisory Council in their face so to speak. We supported the whole notion of more women running and more women candidates. (Hancock 2001)

## RECEIVED SUPPORT

### RESEARCH QUESTION

Did women seeking political office receive high levels of support from the women's movement? Letters, telephone calls, invitations to meetings, consultations, and speaking engagement would be indicative of that support.

### QUESTION

"Do you (or have you) receive(ed) support from the women's groups in Newfoundland?"

Table 11. Received Support from Women's Groups All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997<sup>16</sup>)

<u>Support</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	4	22.2
No	8	44.4
No answer	6	33.3
Not relevant	12	40
<hr/>		
Total Female Candidates	18	
Total Interviewed	30	

### DISCUSSION

Even though the majority of those who answered the question stated they did not receive support from the women's movement, with such high numbers of "no answer," the data are ambiguous. The "no answer" category is the result of time constraints where the question could, unfortunately, not be asked. The "not relevant" category includes those who were not running, such as the political leaders or representatives from the women's movement.

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<sup>16</sup> Jean Cook answered both yes and no.

These data show there are high levels of interaction between the women's movement and the candidates, yet this does not necessarily mean there is a significant level of support. The interviews with the women's movement representatives indicate that the movement was not well organized due to budgetary restraints and inadequate human resources. For example, Ann Bell, former president of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, stated that "years ago we recognized that (same people, same responsibilities), but we were so busy putting out fires that we didn't take the time to do really good compilation of data." (Bell 2001)

*PARTNERSHIPS: WOMEN'S NETWORK, THE 52% SOLUTION, AND WOMEN'S MENTORING PROGRAM*

The interaction, support, and partnership efforts between the women's movement and the female politicians led to the formation of The Women's Network, The 52% Solution, and The Women's Mentoring Program. All were uncovered during the interview process; therefore there are no corresponding hypotheses or interview questions, only explanations. It is necessary to distinguish between The Women's Mentoring Program and The Women's Network. Often the titles and organizations are interchanged, which causes confusion, because at one time there were two different mentoring projects. Both have organizers in common and both organizations often serve the same purpose.

Generally, the first Women's Mentoring Program was established through the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Set up through the Women's Enterprise Bureau, this was a business network for women. The second program, which

is relative to this thesis, was established by political women with the main focus of encouraging more women to run (Bell 2001).

### *THE WOMEN'S NETWORK AND THE 52% SOLUTION*

*The 52% Solution: Women for Equality, Justice and Peace* was a spin-off from the Women's Network. The 52% Solution was dedicated to women and men having equal rights, discovering the cause of inequality, and providing radical solutions to secure change (The 52% Solution, n.d.). The main purpose of organizing these women was to participate in a province-wide bus tour, from August 5-11, 1987, with local organizing feminists Lynn Verge, Dorothy Inglis, and Ann Bell (The 52% Solution 1987). Based on a similar Icelandic bus tour, this tour provided an opportunity for women across the province to speak with each other in an informal social setting about women in politics and activism. Much of the tour was videotaped and remains at the headquarters of Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The mandate of The 52% Solution did not end after the 1987 Bus Tour. In 1988, The 52% Solution lobbied all three Newfoundland political parties to sponsor and send representatives to a "Women and Politics" Conference in Hamilton, Ontario (The 52% Solution 1988). As of 1991, The 52% Solution was no longer active with the exception of two events (Williams 1993). In 1992, an effort was made to pay-off the program's outstanding debts. In 1993, Ann Bell raised money to place an advertisement in the Evening Telegram entitled "*Positions Available.*" This clever advertisement was purposely fashioned after employment advertisements, with a tongue-in-cheek listing of

the qualifications for running in political office. In addition, telephone numbers were included to make it easier for women to access this information.

### *WOMEN'S MENTORING PROGRAM*

Unfortunately, there is little written about The Women's Mentoring Program. What is available is a list of women who ran in the 1997 local elections, various small articles from the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women's newsletter entitled *News Bulletin*, an organizing manual, and a press release. The majority of information gathered for this thesis came from the Program Coordinator, Kathy Dunderdale, and Ann Bell, a Newfoundland feminist who was former-president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Status of Women and leader of The 52% Solution.

Ann Bell stated The Women's Mentoring Program was tied to The Women's Enterprise Bureau, an agency established by Bell. The Women's Mentoring Program was a remarkable initiative, which only lasted one year, 1997, due to lack of funding. This program assisted women with organizing their election campaigns, not only to the various levels of government, but also to educational, health, and regional economic development boards. Specifically, The Women's Mentoring Program was established with, "the short-term objective of supporting women in this year's (1997) local elections and the long-term objective of increasing the representation of women at all levels of government" (Mentoring Program 1997).

The Women's Mentoring Program concept grew from a conference "*Women in Local Governments*," held in Gander, Newfoundland on February 10-12, 1989. There



are two different references as to who the organizers were, thus a lack of clarity. Kathy Dunderdale stated that Julie Bettney and Sandra Kelly were the main organizers. However, the article in *Women Speak* from the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women stated that the conference was “organized by three deputy mayors with the assistance of others around the province” (Women in Politics 1989). The conference participants came together to network, but also to identify how they could encourage or mentor other women to become politically active.

The conference passed several recommendations; for example, changes to Question Period, the Election Expenses Act, and televising the House proceedings (Women in Politics 1989, 7). The conference initiatives, however, were never fulfilled (Dunderdale 1998). Shortly afterwards, under Julie Bettney ‘s guidance and encouragement, a group of St. John’s women from all political affiliations met to discuss and decide a course of action to get more women elected. This group, known as The Women’s Mentoring Program Advisory Committee (WMPAC), had similar background experiences and shared interests. Julie Bettney says “I really think the mentoring aspect, keeping women thinking about political power as a means to change people’s lives and to do things that are important to themselves, their families and their communities is a way of getting them involved.” (Bettney 1998)

The Advisory Committee was comprised of the following members: Patricia Hempstead (Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities, Committee Chair), Carolyn Butler (Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association, member), Kathy Dunderdale (Women’s Mentoring Program, Project Coordinator, member), Joyce Hancock (Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women,

member), Dorothy Inglis (social activist, member), Luanne Leamon (Women's Policy Office, member), Kathy LeGrow (Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association, member), Millicent Minty (Department of Development and Rural Renewal, member), Dorothy Robbins (Women's Policy Office, member), and Dianne Whelan (Mayor, Town of Paradise, member) (WMPAC n.d., 2).

Their initial target was school boards and municipal elections, which are non-partisan, in accordance with the independent approach of The Women's Mentoring Program. This strategic targeting decision was based on the fact that five out of six women elected provincially, at that time, had previously been elected to a municipal office (Dunderdale 1998). The non-partisan approach was utilized to encourage these women to work together toward a common goal and not be concerned with party policy or political affiliations. A by-product of this Women's Mentoring Program Advisory Committee was an event entitled, *Women and Politics: Getting Elected*. Held in conjunction with the St. John's Women's Network, this dinner-discussion meeting challenged women to strategize to elect more women municipally (Discussion Questionnaire n.d.).

Kathy Dunderdale was hired by the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women to establish and further the "un-official" women's network across the province. This grass-roots network identified potential female candidates. Kathy Dunderdale stated "we had one central office on my body, in my brain and that was it!" (Dunderdale 1998) Ms. Dunderdale was the principal organizer, mentor, and strategist for maintaining and furthering the existing set of contacts.

From the Women's Mentoring Program, *A Woman's Manual on Organizing an Election Campaign* was published, providing a framework for those women interested in becoming politically involved. Women who have had political experiences as well as women who lack political experience would find suggestions on planning, building a campaign team, required jobs, election day and general campaign strategies.

Julie Bettney, one of The Women's Mentoring Program founders, stated that

[Political involvement] is a difficult step for women to take and depending on the circumstances surrounding them at the time, it can be a real tough move and it can have some real negative connotation for them, so I don't downplay the significance of the step and choice that women make when they go into politics. It can be a difficult choice for them and a difficult experience. But generally speaking, it is achievable more than anything and it is very necessary, so we have to create the paths. I really think the mentoring project, keeping women thinking about political power as a means to change people's lives, and to do things that are important to themselves, their families and their communities, is a way of getting them involved. (Bettney 1998)

While conducting the research for this thesis, much was uncovered about the women's movement. For example the efforts of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women to encourage and organize women politically; the women's mentoring project developed by the Council; as well as regular publications about women in politics.

These data show that there were high levels of interaction between the female candidates and the women's groups in Newfoundland. These interactions, however, did not indicate support, yet there were partnerships. Three main partnerships were discovered, however it was only around elections that these initiatives were active due mainly to the availability of personal and financial resources. The main vehicle for the

women's movement, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, is at arms length from the provincial government and must remain publicly politically neutral.

## **GENDER**

### **AS AN ISSUE, WOMEN'S ISSUES, WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES, WOMEN'S DIFFERENCE**

The gender variable addresses four questions: the first question was gender an issue when you ran? 72.2 percent said no; second, are there political issues that can be called "women's issues"? There was no clear answer. The second question found the "yes" and the "family and people issues" responses were almost equal; the third question was, do women have different perspectives than men? 66.7 percent agreed; finally, what difference does it make with more women elected? The answers clarified that women have different perspectives, styles and issues than men, but the data was overall ambiguous.

### *GENDER AS AN ISSUE*

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

Did female candidates feel that their gender was an issue in their campaigns?

#### **QUESTION**

"Was gender an issue when you ran?"

Table 12. Gender an Issue During Election All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997<sup>17</sup>)

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	4	22.2
No	13	72.2
No Answer	1	5.5
Don't Recall	1	5.5
Candidate Tried to Make an Issue	1	5.5
Not Relevant	12	40

## DISCUSSION

The author wondered if gender mattered and if it did, to whom. Analysis of these data show a clear majority of respondents, 72.2 percent, stated gender was *not* an issue when running. This finding is consistent with the women-in-politics literature, which suggests that voters do not take a candidate's gender into account when making their decisions (Royal Commission 1991, 121; Sharpe 1994, 176-177). Upon reflection, it would have been prudent to be more specific in phrasing this question. For example, for whom was gender an issue: the media, voters, opposing candidates or to the candidates themselves? The "not relevant" category includes those who were not running, such as the political leaders.

The most surprising revelation in the data came from Kay Young, unsuccessful Liberal candidate in the 1996 provincial election, Bonavista South, who tried to raise the gender issue herself during the campaign. She stated "I tried to make it an issue but soon realized it would diminish my chances of winning." (Young, K 2001) Despite the

<sup>17</sup> The total is 20 instead of 18 because Joan-Marie Aylward and Bonnie Hickey answered both "yes" and "no" to this question.

importance of gender to the candidate, it was not relevant to others involved in the campaign.

Bonnie Hickey, who was elected in 1993 as the Member of Parliament for St. John's East, had the opposite experience. She specifically noticed that many people were making comments to her about being a political woman. For example, "Oh, my God, you should be home with your children. Why are you out doing this?" Equally, there were a large number of people, both men and women, encouraging Hickey with statements like, "You go girl!" (Hickey 2001) It must be noted, however, that Hickey stated she experienced gender as an issue only when she was campaigning door-to-door.

## *WOMEN'S ISSUES*

### RESEARCH QUESTION

Do the respondents believe that there are specifically "women's issues"? What might they be?

### QUESTION

"Are there political issues that can be called women's issues?"

Table 13. Women's Issues All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997<sup>18</sup>)

<u>Women's Issues</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	12	37.50
Family and/or People Issues	9	28.13
Both Women and Family Issues	3	9.38
No	2	6.25
Not Sure	2	6.25
No Answer	4	12.50

## DISCUSSION

These data are ambiguous. There is no substantial distinction perceived between women's issues and issues considered to be family and people issues.<sup>19</sup> Twenty-four out of thirty-one responses referred to women's issues and family issues. However, there is a clear definition between those who agree there are women's issues and those who do not, or are not sure.

Judy Foote was the most outspoken "no" interviewee:

I hate to refer to anything as women issues. A little bit of my background may be different than some others. I have always worked in areas that have been predominantly male whether I worked in the newsroom as a news reporter with CBC or working as Director of University Relations. No matter what I did my colleagues were always male so issues have always been discussed with me. Never in terms of whether it was a woman's issue or a man's issue. (Foote 1997)

<sup>18</sup> The total amounts to thirty-two instead of thirty due to Sandra Kelly answering "yes" and "no". Also, Judy Foote answered to "no" and "people issues."

<sup>19</sup> It was interesting to note during the interviews there was not an expressed idea that family issues were closely tied to women's issues. No mention of men and their responsibility within the family realm was made nor connected to men's issues.

Ann Bell, in the “not sure” category, stated:

There are issues which women seem to be more in-tune with that I think are societal issues, community issues, and family issues. Women may be more perceptive about them and they may be more important because of where we come from and the roles that we play. But they’re not really, in a lot of cases, just women’s issues. There may be some. I mean when you think of issues like violence against women. I see that very much of as a women’s issue, but it an issue for families, an issue for society. So I have trouble distinguishing. (Bell 2001)

### *DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES*

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

Do the respondents believe that women have different perspectives on political issues than men?

#### QUESTION

“Do women have different perspectives than men?”

The wording was chosen in order to explore the views of Newfoundland women political activists on the ‘perspective’ issue. Much has been written in the literature on this subject and it is widely acknowledged that women’s perspectives greatly differ from men’s. The author was curious to inquire if the same holds true for Newfoundland women.

Table 14. Women Different Perspectives All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997)

<u>Different Perspectives</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	20	66.67
No	0	0
No Answer	10	33.33



## DISCUSSION

It is unfortunate that there are ten interviewees who did not answer the question. In most instances, the answer was omitted due to time constraints. However, these data clearly point to women having different perspectives than men – agreed upon by men as well as women.

Kathy Dunderdale, Program Co-ordinator for the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women stated that, “we’re (women) socialized in different ways. We are different from men, we have different points of view and different experiences than men and that point of view and that experience needs to be represented at the table” (Dunderdale 1998).

Joan-Marie Aylward, a provincial cabinet minister, stated, “I think that gender is really relevant. I think we should use the differences of gender to bring people together in a more accepting way, a more integrative way. To say that men and women do not have anything different to offer is not true. I mean, it is definitely not true. You think differently. You have a different way of visioning and organizing” (Aylward 1998).

## *WOMEN'S DIFFERENCE*

### RESEARCH QUESTION

Do the women interviewed see representing women’s distinct perspectives as the reason why we need more women elected officials?

### QUESTION

“What difference does it make whether there are many or few women elected?”

Table 15. Women's Difference All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997)

<u>Difference</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Women different perspective, different issues, and different styles	9	30
Community issues moved forward	1	3.33
Women much more dedicated to cause, not recognition	1	3.33
Fills gender gap on issues	1	3.33
Must be elected to effect change	1	3.33
No answer	17	56.67

## DISCUSSION

The large number of “no answer” overshadows the results for this question. The majority of the time, this question was omitted due to time constraints when interviewing in-person. From the twelve people who did answer the question, nine mentioned “women’s different perspective, different issues, and different styles” as the main difference.

Between 1989 and 1996, under the Liberal premiership of Clyde Wells, there were three female members of the provincial legislature: Pat Cowan (Progressive Conservative, Conception Bay South), Lynn Verge (Progressive Conservative, Humber East) and Kay Young (Liberal, Terra Nova). From 1996 to 2000 there were eight female members in Brian Tobin’s Liberal Government. For several of the respondents, such as Julie Bettney and Joan-Marie Aylward, the “difference” which women bring to the political table could be seen through the efforts of these eight female members in developing a social budget in 1997.

Joan-Marie Aylward, Minister of Health and Community Services, explained the significance of this budget. “This was the first year ever we have put out a social budget

with the focus on social policy and programs on a picture of our budget. It was a very moving time for us (the women in cabinet) because the focus was on children, early childhood education, the School Lunch Foundation, licensed regulated daycare” (Aylward 1998). Aylward directly credits then-Premier Brian Tobin with supporting the change in focus. “We would not have put this budget together is he were not behind us on it. It was not easy to do. It is a cultural change in how we, as a government, think and our priorities. To move away from buildings and mega-projects and start focusing on children” (Aylward 1998).

The Hon. Sheila Copps, on behalf of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, believes that:

Women pursue issues that are of interest to them. There is definitely a gender gap when it comes to looking at issues like the environment and health care issues. There is a gender-divide in terms of how people perceive the issues and I also think that when more women are involved some of the issues that are more important to women are more quickly to confront the agenda. Telling from my own experience and being in a parliament where I was the only woman in the Liberal Caucus and where we now have almost forty women, it makes a tremendous difference when you want to carry issues because you’re not carrying all the issues. The load is shared (Copps 2001).

## **SUGGESTIONS TO ELECT MORE WOMEN**

### **DUAL-MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES, WOMEN’S PARTY, AND INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

“Dual-member constituencies,” “a women’s party,” and “increased financial support” are three suggestions to increase the number of female political representatives. These data show that the only suggestion to receive overwhelming confirmation was “increased financial support” or placing more money into the hands of female candidates.

“Dual-member constituencies” and the formation of “a women’s party” were not expected to gather as much support as the former.

### *DUAL-MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES*

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

Would women support dual constituencies, which guarantee that half those elected are women?

#### QUESTION

“Would you support dual-member constituencies as a means of ensuring greater representation for women?”

Table 16. Support for Dual-Member Constituencies All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997)

<u>Support</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	7	23.33
No	13	43.33
Maybe	5	16.67
No answer	5	16.67

#### DISCUSSION

The majority of those who expressed an opinion stated that dual-member constituencies would *not* be supported. The data shows thirteen respondents, 43.3 percent, are in favour while seven, 23.3 percent, were not in favour. Thus, there was little actual support for this option.

Dual-member constituencies, as such, are not new to Newfoundland. When applied to women’s candidacies, under this system every riding elects a man and a

woman (Vickers 1997). In this specific context, Jack Harris (2000) states there has been a variation of dual constituencies which has already existed in Newfoundland, however, the duality was based on religion, not gender. The religious divide was between Roman Catholic and Protestant, with the occasional third member representing a district. There were three districts in Newfoundland between 1949, 1951, and 1955 that had two members: St. John's East, St. John's West, and Harbour Main. Jack Harris stated "for a time it was a political convention that each party would field, as a candidate, an adherent of each of the major religious denominations in the district. This practice lasted in one district up to the 1975 General Election when the last dual district of Harbour Main was made into a one member district" (Harris 2000).

Mr. Harris said that he had proposed the House of Assembly would no longer hold fifty-two seats. Instead, the districts would be divided in half. With twenty-six ridings, both a man and a woman would be elected, and the districts would be twice their original size, yet there would still be fifty-two members needing an office and a seat in the House of Assembly. "This would at one stroke guarantee gender equality in representation. Each voter could cast a ballot for one man and one woman" (Harris 2000).

According to a press release from Mr. Harris (1992), a 1992 poll completed in Newfoundland asked the public about dual constituencies. The poll indicated that "a majority of these [those] who expressed an opinion on the subject favored his [Jack Harris's] proposal to divide Newfoundland and Labrador into 26 electoral districts instead of 52 and have each district represented by 2 M.H.A.'s, one man and one woman" (Harris 1992). With any poll, it is important to look at the numbers and the particulars of

the question. In this instance, it is obvious that Mr. Harris is interpreting the numbers to validate his position.

Table 17: 1992 CBC Poll Results for Dual Constituencies

	Respondents	%
Don't Know	135	34%
Somewhat Favor	103	26%
Strongly Favor	36	9%
Somewhat oppose	40	10%
Strongly oppose	87	22%
Total	401	

Source: House of Assembly Press Release, *Harris Encouraged by Poll Results on Women's Representation*, 14 December 1992

### WOMEN'S PARTY

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

How is a women's party viewed?

#### QUESTION

"Would you support the formation of a women's party as a means of greater representation for women?"

Table 18. Support for a Women's Party All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997<sup>20</sup>)

<u>Support</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	7	22.58
No	20	64.52
More information	1	3.23
No answer	3	9.68

<sup>20</sup> Note that the total is 31 due to Dorothy Robbins answering yes and no to this question. Yes philosophically and no practically.

## DISCUSSION

The majority of respondents do *not* support the formation of a women's party. Newfoundland has already experienced a women's party in 1925. Maura Hanrahan, in her lecture *Women and Politics – A Separate Sphere*, stated that in 1925, there was a "women's party" whose members included three women: Fanny MacNeil, Julia Salter Earle, and Mae Kennedy, who ran in the 1925 St. John's municipal election and lost.

Kathy Dunderdale, Program Co-ordinator at the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, agrees with the notion of a women's party. Her support focused around the desire for more opportunities for women, coupled with the fact that Dunderdale enjoys working with women and always finds it an empowering experience (Dunderdale 1998). Sheila Kelly-Blackmore stated "we'd get a heck of a lot more done in a better environment than that which currently exists in the political system" (Kelly-Blackmore 2001).

Joan-Marie Aylward was one of twenty interviewed who did not support a "women's party." During the in-person interview, Aylward stated, "I think children and men are integral parts of our community and I think that a women's party is another form of segregation. Instead of becoming segregated or vertical society, I think we need to become more horizontally based. Instead of representing groups, I think we should try and represent society at large. It is hard to single out women, or single out men, or single out any group" (Aylward 1998).

Julie Bettney stated:

I don't like the idea of a women's party. I no more want to see all of a women's perspective being the focus of our decision than the way it was, with it being all men. I believe in a balance and I try to keep that in mind with the approaches that we use. With dual constituencies, I

can see merit in that. I can see problems in the numbers, but if you really thought it through I think it is possible to break out constituencies, for example, across the province and divide the lines a little bit differently. And then you have the male-female perspective for the larger areas for example (Bettney 1998).

### *INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT*

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

Do those interviewed support greater financial support for women candidates?

#### QUESTION

“Would you support increased financial support as a means of assisting the greater representation of women?”

Table 19. Increased Financial Support All Years (1993, 1996, and 1997)

<u>Support</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	15	50
No	6	20
No answer	9	30

#### DISCUSSION

Half of the respondents stated that financial incentives would be greatly supported as a means of assisting with the increased representation of women; however, this datum is somewhat misleading. Often the “no answer” response occurred because of interview time limitations, otherwise there would have been the opportunity to ask the question. While it would be equally misleading to focus only on the 15 of 30 who answered, a



prudent interpretation would suggest that it would not be surprising to find that rather more than half of politically involved women favour special funding arrangements. It would have been practical when asking the questions to clarify exactly the origins of the financial support. The implication was the money would come from the parties, yet the question also arises that the money could have originated from the government. Unfortunately, these sorts of questions were not raised.

The three main parties in Newfoundland and Labrador - the Liberals, the Progressive Conservatives, and the New Democrats - all have funds for women. This is applicable both federally and provincially. The former Progressive Conservatives, currently renamed the Conservative Party of Canada, have had the Ellen Fairclough Fund and the Provincial Progressive Conservatives have the Grace Sparkes Award. The Federal Liberals have the Judy LaMarsh Fund and the Provincial Liberals have the Lady Helena Squires Fund. The Federal NDP has the Agnes Macphail Fund and the Provincial NDP have the Helen Fogwill Porter fund for women.

The main purpose of creating, developing, and offering monetary incentives to women participating in politics is to cover nomination, election, or by-election expenses. These expenses may include for example advertising, communications, staff, rental materials, entertaining, daycare, and travel. Only the New Democratic Party has provisions for child care expenses incurred during the nomination process (Michael 2001).

Martha Muzychka, of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, wrote that "the lack of women's financial resources has been recognized as a key factor in the under-representation of women in politics," and recommended the following: "that

the current spending limit on election campaigns be revised to take into consideration women's financial inequality and that limits be set on expenses for nomination and leadership campaigns” (1990).

In five instances, these data reveal doubts about increased financial incentives. The main thought was that women should not be receiving gender-based financial assistance. When the choice is made to run for political office, it is the “credible” candidate’s responsibility, whether male or female, to be able to raise funds. Mary Hodder stated, “In my opinion, there is no credible candidate hampered because of lack of finances” (Hodder M, 2001). Sharing the same sentiment, Sheila Kelly-Blackmore wrote, “Women who chose to run must be creditable and able to carry out their role” (Kelly-Blackmore 2001). Judy Foote offered encouraging words: “Attitude is everything. Whether or not it’s a local company: it’s attitude. Don’t say you can’t do it because you don’t have the money. You’ve got to say I can find a way to do it” (Foote 1997).

Ann Bell stated:

You know I’ve been involved in a lot of campaigns both provincial and federal and I’ve been involved both from a candidate’s perspective and from the management campaign. Everybody has difficulty getting money. I don’t think the women have any more difficulty getting money than men in as much as it depends on the individual. *Everybody has difficulty raising money for campaigns.* I know that women maybe have a more difficult time than men but the campaigns that we’ve had we’ve had no more difficulty or problems getting money than the guys have because I’ve worked on provincial campaigns and I thought that some of the guys had no money whatsoever. It didn’t have to do with the fact they were male or female. They just didn’t have any money and the community – nobody went behind them to support them and we couldn’t raise the money for them. Everybody can do with more money in a campaign. (Bell 2001)

Lorraine Michael favours increased financing as a means of having more women elected. She wrote:

I think that funds should be set aside to support the women's committees on both the federal and provincial levels. This money could be used to do educational work with women in the party promoting their involvement in the election process – not just about running themselves, but also how to recruit and support women who might like to run. There needs to be long term planning – not just knee-jerk reactions at election time. I think that election budgets should include candidate costs such as child and/or elder care and those funds for such considerations, or equivalent services should be available at all party functions to encourage women's participation (Michael 2001).

## CONCLUSION

In summary, the answer to why the greatest numbers of women were elected in the 1990s in Newfoundland and Labrador is a multi-layered puzzle complicated by interpretations or recollections of events. Adding to this puzzle is the fact that many questions about women's participation remain unanswered with the political framework of academia's marginalization of the issue (Carroll and Liebowitz 2003, 3). As demonstrated in the literature review, there is not even a consensus about how best to theorize the concept of "women."

What is certain is the following: In the 1993 federal election, two of the seven Members of Parliament returned from the province were women. Provincially, in the 1996 election, seven of the forty-eight members elected to the Legislative Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador were women. Five of these seven women were appointed to Cabinet, with the total cabinet seats being seventeen. An eighth woman was elected provincially in a 1997 by-election.

What had happened during those specific years in order to produce the highest numbers of women elected to Newfoundland public office? Would the political leaders or the women's movement assist in explaining this success? Did gender have anything to do with the issue? This thesis utilized a qualitative approach with elite-structured interviewing techniques in its attempt to answer the main question.

Data obtained for the case study revealed the following: 55 percent of those interviewed stated that the party leadership had contacted them about their candidacy; over 15 percent stated that the party could focus more on mentoring female candidates; 72 percent of female candidates were asked to run in un-winnable ridings; over 60 percent responded that the nomination process should not be skipped and appointments made; 66 percent had been contacted by the women's movement; only 22 percent said they received support from the same group; gender was not an issue for over 72 percent of the female candidates; over 37 percent agreed there are issues which can be referred to as "women's issues"; and women having different perspectives was agreed to by 67 percent.

There were three suggestions to elect more women and the results are as follows: dual member constituencies received 43 percent support; a women's party was not supported by 64 percent of those interviewed; and 50 percent supported increased financial support.

The evidence points to a wide variety of issues within the realm of women in politics. Specifically, the evidence shows that the women's movement, and not the political leadership, had the greatest percentage of contact with the female candidates. The final Chapter will give the reader a review of all findings in relation to solving this

puzzle commencing with a assessment of the data, ancillary findings, overall patterns which emerged, and future scenarios of areas of study. Not only are these issues applicable on a Canadian level, they have also been found internationally. Are scholars in agreement as to what has to be done to rectify the situation? No. Is there possibility for future research? Yes.

## CHAPTER III

### CONCLUSION

Today, political women are offering a modern version of the same outdated case when they say that their values and styles are more beneficial to the public. Hidden within their argument is the lingering assumption that because they are women, they need some extra justification to be in political life. They do not. It is time to recognize that they deserve full political equality with men simply because they are equal. No elaborate defenses are required, and none should be demanded.

Sharpe, *The Gilded Ghetto*

Sydney Sharpe wrote these words in 1994. Today, if women were politically equal, this conclusion would be somewhat shorter. It might read ‘We recognized the problem, we organized, and we provided a solution.’ The reality of women’s participation and election in the Canadian political system is far from this pithy remark. Various changes have attempted to rectify the under-representation of women in Canadian politics since the original 1970 electoral reform commission *thirty-five years ago*. However, the numbers of elected women have peaked around 21%.

This case study asked the question “why were the greatest number of women elected in Newfoundland history during the 1990s?” It was an important question to ask because the issue had yet to be studied. Never before had as many women been elected to hold federal *and* provincial office in Newfoundland and Labrador: two women were elected federally in 1993 and eight women were elected provincially in 1996 and 1997.

Despite the current rise in the number of female MHAs (see Table 2), the number of women in electoral politics remains disproportionately low compared to men. Was a new pattern established in the three elections studied here? This appears to have

happened at the provincial level, though not at the federal. However, we must now ask if the current level represents the maximum amount, because it has varied between seven and ten members for a decade.

The broader topic areas of “party leader,” “women’s movement,” and “gender” provided many insights into the question posed here. The “party leader” research question suggested that the leader plays a substantial role in recruiting, promoting, and supporting women candidates. With only 55.5 percent contacted by the party leadership and over 72 percent of those asked to run in questionable ridings, the meaning of the leader’s role is unclear with the candidates. The federal and provincial political leadership publicly promoted the importance and commitment of having more women included in the political process and took full credit for the increase in the number of women. It is the political leader’s will which spread throughout the entire party system and set the whole party ‘machinery’ to work on female candidate search. What accounts for the discrepancy between the politicians stating they actively sought out women to run and the lower percentage of women candidates who stated they had contact with this political leadership? What accounts for the high percentage of candidates stating they were asked to run in questionable ridings?

This case study stated there would be a high level of interaction, support, and partnership between the women's movement and the women seeking political office, resulting in more women running and winning. In fact, the Newfoundland women’s movement appears to have laid the foundation for women in public life by continuously striving to improve the private realm of women’s lives and partnered with women at critical political moments. Over 66 percent of women candidates interviewed

acknowledged that they had interacted with the women's movement, yet only 22 percent responded that they had received support from the movement. This low percentage is interesting and suggests the need to look further at the three partnerships (The Women's Network, The 52% Solution, and The Women's Mentoring Program) which were formed between the candidates and the women's movement during the years under study.

Finally, a rather large proportion of female candidates - 72 percent - reported that gender was not an issue, positively or negatively, in their campaigns with a near equal division between the successful and unsuccessful candidates. However, the women interviewed generally agreed that gender is indeed a relevant consideration in selecting candidates because there are issues that are specific to women, i.e., women's issues, and because women have different perspectives than men on a number of points. Nevertheless, the numbers holding these views are rather low: while over 37 percent of respondents stated that there are specific women's issues, some 28 percent thought these themes were better described as family issues or as affecting all individuals equally. However, 66 percent agreed that women have different perspectives than men on matters of public policy.

The thesis also asked the politically active women how to engage more women in electoral politics more successfully. Some suggested changes to the parties and stressed financial support but also mentioned mentoring, education, and accommodating family life. Interestingly, some recommended changing nothing. They also pointed to the partnerships between the women's movement and women engaged in political life that existed in the mid-nineties: The Women's Network, The 52% Solution, and The Women's Mentoring Program. These three initiatives provided a networking opportunity



for business and political women where women were encouraged to run and women were mentored. These findings suggest that the solutions to engaging more women politically are not simple, but rather will involve movement on several fronts simultaneously.

The overall pattern that emerges from this study is twofold: First, more academic attention needs to be directed towards the area of women in Newfoundland politics. Second, the links between academia and practical politics needs strengthening. Have these links occurred and are not publicly acknowledged for fear of compromising academic neutrality if one appears to favour one party over another? On the other hand, perhaps the political operatives have not thought to consult academics.

Women have faced systemic barriers to entering politics that form the base from which all other elements of women's under-representation are built. Barriers such as women receiving less pay for the same work as men, or women being the primary caregivers to children and aging parents. There is also the conjunctural issue of young women not believing there is a "problem" with the election of women. If people do not think there is an issue, then how can the political leadership be expected to take action? Simply stated, there are no easy solutions for the under-representation of women in politics. Suggestions that have been made in this thesis and in other academic work are a positive step. However, bigger steps are necessary if Canadians want to see more women elected.

## APPENDIX 1

### NEWFOUNDLAND POLITICAL WOMEN'S TIMELINE

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1918	Canadian women granted the right to vote in a federal election
1920	Armine Gosling named the first president of the Women's Suffrage League
1921	Women win the right to vote in municipal elections
1925	Women win their right to provincially vote in Newfoundland and Labrador Julia Salter Earle, May Kennedy Goodridge, and Frances McNeil were the first women to run for municipal office
1928	Lady Helen Squires was the first female elected to the House of Assembly
1934	Commission of Government in Newfoundland
1949	Confederation with Canada
1969	Dorothy Wyatt was the first female successfully elected to municipal council
1973	Dorothy Wyatt was the first female municipal Mayor
1975	Hazel McIssac was the second female elected to the House of Assembly
1979	Hazel Newhook and Lynn Verge were the first provincial female cabinet ministers
986	Ethel Cochrane was the first female appointed to the Senate
1989	Lynn Verge was the first female deputy-premier
1993	Bonnie Hickey and Jean Payne were the first females elected federally
1995	Lynn Verge was elected first female leader of the provincial Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador
1996	First social policy budget was passed in Newfoundland's history by Brian Tobin's provincial government

*Source(s):* Harding, Les. 1992. Newfoundland Women's Firsts. *Newfoundland Quarterly* 3, (Summer/Fall): page unknown. Robbins, Dorothy. 1994. *Reflections on the Last 100 Years: The Struggle for Equality for Women in Newfoundland and Labrador*. (speech presented at the International Women's Day dinner, Wabush, Labrador, 8 March 1994), copy obtained from Ms. Robbins. Kealey, Linda, ed. 1993. *Pursing Equality*, (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland), 236.

APPENDIX 2

SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES  
1993, 1996, AND 1997

<b>1993 SUCCESSFUL FEDERAL FEMALE CANDIDATES</b>			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Position/Department</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Party</i>
Hickey, Bonnie	Member of Parliament	St. John's East	Liberal
Payne, Jean	Member of Parliament	St. John's West	Liberal
2 out of 7 Federally elected Members were women. Non placed in Federal Cabinet			

<b>1993 UNSUCCESSFUL FEDERAL FEMALE CANDIDATES</b>			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Position/Department</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Party</i>
O'Rourke, Margaret Ann	-	Humber-St. Barbe-Baie Verte	Progressive Conservative
Soper, Linda	-	Humber-St. Barbe-Baie Verte	New Democratic Party
Tobin, Lynn	-	Bonavista-Trinity-Conception	Newfoundland and Labrador Party

<b>1996 SUCCESSFUL PROVINCIAL FEMALE CANDIDATES</b>			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Position/Department</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Party</i>
Aylward, Hon. Joan-Marie	Minister of Health & Community Services	St. John's Centre	Liberal
Bettney, Hon. Julie	Minister of Human Resources & Employment	Mount Pearl	Liberal
Foote, Hon. Judy	Minister of Education	Grand Bank	Liberal
Hodder, Mary	Member of the Legislative Assembly	Burin-Placentia West	Liberal
Jones, Yvonne	Member of the Legislative Assembly	Cartwright-L'Anse Au Clair	Independent (became a Liberal in 1999)
Kelly, Hon. Sandra	Minister of Industry, Trade & Technology	Gander	Liberal
Thistle, Hon. Anna	President of Treasury Board	Grand Falls-Buchans	Liberal
7 out of 48 Provincially elected Members were women. 5 out of 7 were placed in Cabinet			

<b>1996 UNSUCCESSFUL PROVINCIAL FEMALE CANDIDATES</b>			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Position/Department</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Party</i>
Blake, Kay	-	Fortune Bay-Cape La Hune	Progressive Conservative
Cook, Joan	-	Signal Hill-Quidi Vidi	Liberal
Gear-White, Darlene	-	Lake Melville	Progressive Conservative
Kelly-Blackmore, Sheila	-	Trinity North	Progressive Conservative
Lavers, Carolyn	-	St. Barbe	Progressive Conservative
LeMoine, Bev	-	Virginia Waters	Progressive Conservative
Organ, Evelyn	-	Humber Valley	Progressive Conservative
Skipton, Sue	-	St. John's South	New Democratic Party
Snow, Mary	-	Kilbride	New Democratic Party
Soper, Linda	-	Carbonear-Harbour Grace	New Democratic Party
Squires, Nellie	-	Trinity-Bay De Verde	Progressive Conservative
Stagg, Cheryl	-	Burgeo & La Poile	Progressive Conservative
Verge, Lynn	-	Humber East	Progressive Conservative
Whalen, Dianne C.	-	Topsail	Progressive Conservative
Young, Kay	-	Bonavista South	Liberal

<b>1997 SUCCESSFUL PROVINCIAL BY-ELECTION FEMALE CANDIDATE</b>			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Position/Department</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Party</i>
Osbourne, Sheila	Member of the Legislative Assembly	St. John's West	Progressive Conservative
8 out of 48 Members were women. 5 out of 7 were in Cabinet			

<b>1997 UNSUCCESSFUL PROVINCIAL BY-ELECTION FEMALE CANDIDATES</b>			
There were no such candidates			

Source(s): The 1993 Official Voting Results; The 1996 General Election Results; The Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on The St. John's West By-election July 21, 1997.

APPENDIX 3

PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN CANADIAN PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL  
LEGISLATURES 1997<sup>21</sup>

Province or Territory	Number of Women	Total Number of Seats	Percentage	Party Affiliation
NWT	1	24	4.2%	NA
Yukon	3	17	17.6%	2 NDP, 1 IND
B.C.	21	75	28%	13 NDP, 8 LIB
Alberta	21	83	25.3%	13 PC, 7 LIB, 1 NDP*
Saskatchewan	12	58	20.7%	9 NDP, 2 LIB, 1NDP
Manitoba	10	56	17.8%	5 PC, 5 NDP
Ontario	19	130	14.6%	11 PC, 4 LIB, 4 NDP
Quebec	26	125	20.8%	17 PQ, 9 LIB
New Brunswick	7	55	12.7%	5 LIB, 1 PC, 1 NDP*
PEI	3	27	11.1%	2 PC, 1 LIB
Nova Scotia	6	52	11.5%	4 LIB, 1 PC, 1 NDP
Newfoundland (Highest in Atlantic Canada)	8	48	16.7%	6 LIB, 1 PC, 1 IND
TOTALS	136	750	18.1%	-

**KEY**

NDP: New Democratic Party

LIB: Liberal Party

PC: Progressive Conservative Party

PQ: Parti Quebecois

IND: Independent

\* Indicates Party leader is a woman

The Northwest Territories has a non-partisan legislature

<sup>21</sup> Printed with permission from Robyn Gardner. Note that at the time of publication, Nunavut was not mentioned.

## APPENDIX 4

### SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS USED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE, IN-PERSON INTERVIEW, OR E-MAIL

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1. When did you first become interested in politics?
2. What was your age when you first ran for provincial/federal office?
3. Did you run for another level of office prior to the provincial/federal level and why?
4. What was the political situation when you ran?
5. Were you asked by your party to run in a riding where it was questioned as to its winability?
6. Were you contacted directly by the party leadership in the sense that you could count on their resources and support during the campaign?
7. Was gender an issue when you ran provincially/federally?
8. Do you think under representation of women in politics is a problem? If so, why?
9. Do you think the average voter really cares about having more women elected?
10. What difference does it make whether there are many or few women elected?
11. Are there political issues that can be called 'women's issues' & what are they?
12. Did you raise these issues during your campaign?
13. Do you think women are more or less ambitious than men?
14. Will you be running again for political office in the future?
15. What do you consider to be the factors that would have an effect on your level of ambition? For example, finances, the nomination process, or personal commitments.
16. Do you interact with the women's groups in Newfoundland?
17. Did you receive support from the women's groups in Newfoundland during the campaign? What type of support?
18. What do you consider to be the deterrents to women entering political life?
19. What changes could be made in the party to help women get elected?
20. Should women be able to bypass the nomination system and be appointed as the party candidate in a riding?
21. Certain suggestions for change have been made. Increased financial support, dual constituencies, and the formation of a women's party. What is your opinion on each?
22. Do you foresee a future where gender is irrelevant in politics?

## APPENDIX 5

### EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR THE POLITICAL PARTIES

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Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador  
<http://www.liberal.nf.net/>

Liberal Party of Canada  
<http://www.liberal.ca/>

Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador  
<http://www.pcparty.nf.net/>

Conservative Party of Canada  
<http://www.conservative.ca/english/index.asp>

New Democratic Party of Newfoundland and Labrador  
[www.nl.ndp.ca](http://www.nl.ndp.ca)

New Democratic Party of Canada  
<http://www.ndp.ca/>

## APPENDIX 6

### ADVOCACY

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Discussions about women in politics are flourishing. It remains to be seen whether these discussions translate into action intended to readily increase women's numbers. During a 2003 conference in Ottawa entitled *Women's Representation in the House of Commons*, Marion Dewar, former MP and former Mayor of Ottawa, stated that she has been talking about the same issues for *over twenty years*. How many more years are going to pass talking and further analyzing this issue? Leaders with political will have demonstrated that there can be measures taken to increase the number of women and the actual numbers have increased.

One way to achieve this objective is by the use of quotas. One sees increasing use of quotas for women candidates around the world, especially in new democracies like Rwanda. This means that they will have higher proportions of women parliamentarians than Canada, one of the world's charter democracies. Unfortunately, as noted in Chapter I, most Canadians, professional politicians and ordinary citizens alike, oppose the use of quotas. For this reason, attention here has turned to electoral system reform, concretely moving to some form of proportional representation. However, this still does not address the question of candidate selection, because party lists could under-represent women to the same degree that nominations in single-member constituencies do. Nevertheless, the mobilization of civil society in support of electoral reform - for example Fair Vote Canada - encourages dialogue and provides a network for those who want to change the status quo.



Action by civil society has already proven important for politically active women. One of the defining aspects of this Third Wave of feminism, as for everyone else, is the Internet. International support systems are more accessible than any other time in history, yet there will always be women who are marginalized and a variety of reasons why women cannot politically participate. There have been several attempts in Canadian politics to utilize the Internet as a means of increasing the numbers of women seeking elected office by organizing men and women who support this goal. Two examples are The Committee for '94 and Equal Voice: An Action Group for the Election of Women, both originated by Torontonians and former political journalist Rosemary Speirs. The Committee for '94 was formed in 1984 and existed until the election of 1994. However it is of great interest to note the activities of Equal Voice and what effect their efforts might have on future elections. Equal Voice has been increasing its membership and organizing provincial chapters, in order to raise the issue of the under-representation of women with as many people inside and outside of politics as possible. Current activities involve preparations for the anticipated nomination contests for a future federal election and an on-line campaign school. The goal is to ensure that women's involvement in the nomination process is a priority for all parties.

There is much latitude not only for future research, but also for political science finding a way to get more women into politics by developing partnerships with political practitioners. To study and analyze is part of the process, but the implementation of those findings makes the picture complete. One possibility would be the political parties or a "women in politics" group, such as Equal Voice, inviting academics to speak at meetings. The Women and Westminster Conference (2004) is a successful example.

The panelists were from universities around the world, yet the attendees were a mix of MPs, political assistants, and concerned members of the public. The conference provided an opportunity for people to comment on the panel's discussions in terms of practical applications or personal experiences with the point being to present a more complete political picture to all involved.

Advances are being made in terms of current research. In April 2005, a National Roundtable Series on Women, Public Service, and Politics was organized by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) and Equal Voice: National Capital Region (EV:NCR). The findings will be most important and as new data are collected, they will be published as a National Report, thus raising the profile of the under-representation of women in politics. Topics studied include: political and socio-economic obstacles, ideological and psychological hindrances, what differences do women make and the future for women in politics.

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