

Women in Politics

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Abstract

Women have been ignored from the political electoral system throughout history, and western countries are only have been now seeking to address this problem only in response to demands made by women since the late 19thc and especially the later 20thc. It is difficult to determine the potential value women can add to democratic debate, but it is clear positive changes do occur. Feminists have noticed states who have legislated a gender quota, have seen improvements in the general well-being of society. This project firstly looks at six different countries: three developed states including Sweden, Finland and Norway as well as three developing states including Rwanda, Argentina and Nepal. The three developed states offer a view into countries which have a long history of gender equality promotion, offering a rich research area of gender politics. The developed countries were selected in different areas of the globe to ensure the effects brought in by the gender quota would not be heavily influenced by a cultural bias. By looking at the success of the quota and the changes which occurred in the legislative agenda in different policy sectors including environment, gender wage gaps within the economy, childcare and foreign affairs, this paper seeks to see if bringing women into politics does create positive change. The second part of the project looks to determine if a gender quota would be the best solution to address the status of women in Canada. By observing the trends of quota implementation in several different countries, one can see the value in using quota systems within countries who do not have strict policies to ensure women's representation as the research from Canada will show. Quotas can be highly successful in bringing more women into the political narrative, creating more comprehensive policy choices. Quotas are only truly successful, however, when they are supported by other gender equality policies such as funding to women's groups, national subsidies for childcare as well as gender commitments from political parties. The findings of this project will illuminate how countries can successful implement a gender quota system to facilitate a stronger democracy.

Comment [NC1]: Good point!

Keywords

Women, Feminism, Government, Quota, Electoral System, Political Candidate

Executive Summary

The first part of this project looked at examining different countries who have attained at least 30% of female government representation and what changes, if any, had occurred to their policies and legislative agenda. The first three countries chosen were not only developed, but they each have a longer history of promoting gender equality in both their policy formation and the society's consciousness. These countries include Finland, Sweden, and Norway and they all have had gender policies including quotas in place since the 1970s to 1980s. These countries offered a longitudinal study of the effects of having over thirty percent of female representation in government. In comparison, the other three countries examined were developing at different levels in terms of economy and governmental structure. These three countries were also from different parts of the globe to discourage any cultural bias that may have presented itself were these countries from the same region. Therefore, Argentina from Latin America was chosen, Rwanda from Africa and Nepal from East Asia. In comparison to the developed countries, the developing countries implemented quotas from 1991 in Argentina to as recent as 2008 in Nepal. These countries all had slightly different experiences and consequences of implementing a gender quota which proved significant in seeing what does and does not work well to ensure the gender quota will be fulfilled effectively.

The second part to this project focused on the lack of women's participation in Canada, and what measures should be used to address the issue. Primarily, the first solution would be to implement a gender quota at a national level to ensure women's participation is boosted. Yet, from the findings of the first paper, quotas need reinforcement through other means to yield any moderate changes. By looking at the opinions of different major Canadian magazines, authors/journalists and national newspapers, the general appetite for a gender quota in Canada was low. When looking at the status of women in Canada, in terms of the strength of interest and non-governmental organizations supporting women's issues as well as government initiatives encouraging equalization of the genders, it became clear that women's status has actually declined in the Canadian context since the rise of the Conservative Party in Canada. This lack of support from the national government colours and normalizes the domestic population with anti-feminist ideas.

The third part of this project was to disseminate this information to a local Peterborough (~~general Canadian~~) audience, who could learn to support the feminist notion of bringing more women into the political arena. In the Canadian context, there have been three waves of feminism, in which a lot of Canadians perceive the third wave to be less significant or important. Many Canadians agree that women's issues were important in the 1960's and 1970's but women have been able to secure their empowerment. This idea ignores the less visible barriers women face not only when entering into politics, but into most professional careers. By networking and talking to Canadians about these barriers, feminist issues gain more awareness and far more acceptance. This networking of ideas was carried out in this project in two ways: through workshops and by creating different information mediums.

Comment [NC2]: I agree.v

Two ~~he~~ workshops were designed to shed light on the research presented in the papers to a general audience. ~~It was designed~~ ~~The first was sponsored~~ by the YWCA and ~~animated by both the YWCA and~~ Betsy McGregor ~~with the purpose of to educate~~ women on the different aspects of launching a political campaign and the trials women face in the electoral system in Canada. The workshop was divided into different panels, including a presentation designed around what a gender quota entails and what effects it can have on society. The first couple speakers included discussion on the barriers women face in the political arena not only in Canada but globally. My presentation included a discussion of quota systems in six different countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Rwanda, Nepal, Argentina) comparing it to the policies and status of women in Canada. The presentation illuminated the reasons why it's important to encourage more women into politics. Later, a youth panel, comprising ~~Trent of~~ ~~U~~ Trent University ~~Political Studies and Gender and Women Studies~~ students and an inspiring high school student discussed the issues they have faced when being political. This demonstrated the need to continue feminist work in encouraging women into political discussions and the electoral system. Lastly, a media panel and panel comprised of political candidates as well as a mix of current or retired politicians ~~to depict~~ ~~discussed~~ the changes that can be made to bring more women into the political sphere. This workshop was a great way to galvanize support for women in politics, to inspire women to be political and to teach women how to work the electoral system to be successful in it since historically, the electoral system has created circumstances that spews out unsuccessful women candidates.

The second workshop primarily focused on what it means to be a political being. For the second paper, ~~I~~ ~~concentrated~~ ~~on~~ women in the Canadian context, ~~The~~ research pointed to a lack of confidence in women ~~of~~ feeling ~~like~~ they were capable of political action and discussion. Therefore, it would be valuable to bring a group of women together and inspire them to act on their political insights and ideas. The workshop began with a panel discussion mixed between female students and politicians to relay to the audience what their own "tipping point" had been. The "Tipping Point" was defined as the moment in which someone realized they are political or the moment that pushed someone to be political. After the panel shared their own experiences, the microphone turned to the audience as members of the community were able to describe and feel the intensity of their own passion for politics. Overall, this workshop helped women realize their political potential and how they can become more politically engaged.

Lastly, promotional media was created to be given out at future workshops, meetings or community forums to encourage these messages outside of the university sphere. The dissemination of the information about gender quotas is important to de-normalize the anti-feminist agenda which is consuming the nation. These small instances of knowledge can peel away any negativity towards increasing women's numbers in politics. Therefore, button pins, pens and key chains were produced with quick and simple messages which help to encourage feminist discussions on women in politics. The message on the pens were: "Women in Politics: The Tipping Point: The moment you realized you were political." The pens were distributed to the women who helped facilitate these workshops so they can continue to discuss "Tipping

Points” with others. The key chains on the other hand, were very broad in the objective of the message to bring a general equality in political representation. The key chains had “I (heart) Diversity in Politics,” which people could display generally to the population to inspire ideas of diversity within politics. These two promotional items were able to shed light in a specific and broad manner to achieve the same objective of encouraging women into politics.

The three button pin designs were developed by researching key reasons why women do not feel confident in promoting feminist values. These reasons were translated into quick phrases, then evaluated and tested by a diverse group of individuals to ensure the messages were respectful and informative. The three messages that were selected are as follows: “Run the House...Run the Country!”, “This is what a Feminist look like,” and “Women who vote are sexy.” The first message looks to ~~re-address a value to~~ the labour women perform which are unpaid and often overlooked by general society. It also looks to show women should be confident that their opinions matter in home and in the government. Secondly, feminist ideas have been viewed as anti-male and have even been attributed to women with a homosexual sexual orientation as well as women who defy the beauty standards of spectacle society. Lastly, the last message looks to encourage women to become more politically active and that this process can be very empowering.

Findings

The first set of conclusions arose from the first paper demonstrating the need to increase the number of women in government on a global scale to promote more equal and democratic legislation. ~~Women have been seen as a value to the political narrative in elected positions is considered important~~ for five main reasons. Firstly, women in politics have been seen to be more cooperative than men, either from an evolutionary development or because of a higher inclination to transform politics as it is. Generally women's inclination to cooperative methods means women are more likely to cross party lines to compromise on policy decisions. This is a positive trend to be more representative of the domestic population, not just a percentage of it. Secondly, having more women in government makes government visibly more representative of populations. Women comprise usually more than fifty percent of a state's population therefore this should be reflected into the government itself.

Thirdly, women ~~have been seen to be~~ more likely to push for peace building initiatives more than their male counterparts. There is also a difference in what kind of peace building and development options. This is because women in politics tend to lean to leftist policies which encourage a less traditional view of gender roles and a stronger sense of social welfare politics. Fourthly, women bring up issues that have been ignored in the legislative agenda. For instance, the wage gap was not addressed until women started voicing this inequality within the political sphere. Fifthly, issues perceived as resolved have been reinvestigated by women to constantly improve the status of Canadians. One example can be seen in the child care policies; ~~for~~ there continues to be a shortage in childcare facilities ~~and~~ the cost of child care is sky rocketing and women are left juggling looking after a family and furthering their own career. By bringing more women into the Canadian government, there will likely be a reopening of childcare debates.

The second set of conclusions from the second paper looks at the successful use of quotas compared to unsuccessful uses. Ultimately, quotas will reinforce equality but are not successful in societies that do not see value in women's issues. Quotas work the most effectively under three circumstances: when initiated in a bottom-up method, when supplemented with support from women's groups and are the most effective when gender quotas are implemented by political parties, not federal governments. Firstly, the bottom-up method suggests when women galvanize at the local level and continue to move into the different levels of government is much more effective mechanism to bring women into government than setting a target quota and looking for women to fulfill these positions. Secondly, when women's groups are supported by funding from the government, they are able to build more awareness and training campaigns to help mould future female candidates. If women's groups are strongly present in a society, it can build the local support networks needed to bring more women into politics on the local and then national level. Lastly, political parties are the bodies responsible for selecting candidates and chose which ridings they will represent. With this power, political parties have the most influence in presenting female candidates to the ~~voting domestic~~ population during an election. ~~If~~ political parties ~~need to make~~ clear initiatives to endorse and boost their own numbers of

women not only in their party membership but bringing women into significant positions within the party. These measures would provide the best circumstances for gender quota systems to work.

Lastly, the second paper finds Canada would be able to create gender equality policies and legislation in support of both genders. Gender equality legislation can include a mandatory paternity leave in child care policies similar to Sweden, or even encouraging the increase of women into professional careers. This includes a shattering of the glass ceiling which holds women back from higher levelled positions in management or even on a corporate board. The search-goal for an egalitarian society is important because as other feminists have noticed, such as Ann Tickner (2001enter year), a patriarchal society is more aggressive, war-like and hierarchical than an egalitarian one. In a patriarchal society, there are obvious winners and losers creating zero-sum political action. Canadians should strive to live in a society where there are no disproportionate (?) winners and losers to become a happier and more functional-equal society.

Women in Politics: Does it Really Matter?

There has been much debate over gender quotas internationally in terms of parliaments, political parties and even corporate boards. These debates have highlighted the gap between women and men in important roles within society, especially in the political sector. There has been numerous publications and literature explaining the multiple barriers women still face in the electoral process and formal politics. There is not much literature, however, on the effects or changes made when women are able to attain at least 1/3 of parliamentary seats. It is said that 30% of seats in parliament is needed for an interest group to make significant impact.¹ These findings can help to persuade, or dissuade, other countries to adopt gender quotas or policies that will help to politically empower women. Usually, two types of quotas are implemented: voluntary party quotas and legislated gender quotas for candidates. In this paper, there will be cases of both types of quotas to see if one system seems preferable or more significant than the other.² Supporters of the quota, or the political empowerment of women, show evidence of women caring more about commercial regulation and financial protections, prioritizing welfare policies such as healthcare, education and anti-poverty measures.³

¹ New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women, "Women and Electoral Reform in New Brunswick," *Paper presented to New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy*, July (2004), 19.

² Franceschet, Susan and Jennifer M. Piscopo. "Gender Quotas and Women's Substantive Representation: Lessons From Argentina." *Politics and Gender* 4 (2008): 395.

³ Dietlind Stolle and Elisabeth Gidengil, "What do Women Really Know? A Gendered Analysis of Varieties of Political Knowledge." *Perspectives on Politics* 8.1 (2010): 95.

Research has shown that women are more unsettled, by using a “Burkean view of the representative as a trustee”⁴ compared to men. This means that men are more likely to feel confident in their judgement when deciding on policy, whereas women are more likely to push for more consultations and public participation. The Burkean view holds that these elected officials attained a level of civic virtue, having the intelligence and logic over the average voter to put their best interests at the forefront of policy formation.⁵ There are studies to suggest that bringing women into the political process will even encourage more women to vote, as the candidates will be more representative of themselves. There have been research to support and disclaim this thesis. Yet, for most cases it proves to be true.⁶ It should be mentioned that women’s representation in government seem to be heavily influenced by the electoral system of the state. Proportional representation and mixed systems have much more women represented in parliament compared to majoritarian-single member district electoral systems, like Canada’s.⁷ So maybe the question is not to debate over the implementation of quotas but to change the Canadian electoral system itself. This could lead to more women in parliament without the use of a quota.⁸

It is always important to look at the local level of women participating in electoral politics, specifically for two reasons. The first reason is that local programs are very successful in recruiting and training women to become candidates for electoral politics, these women slowly begin to trickle into national levels through increased experience and confidence. Secondly, Karen Bird along with other feminist scholars have shown the causation between dramatic

⁴ Bird, Karen. “The Political Representation of Women and Ethnic Minorities in Established Democracies: A Framework for Comparative Research.” *Working Paper Presented for the Academy of Migration Studies in Denmark*. 11 Nov. 2003. 27.

⁵ Karen Bird, “The Political Representation of Women and Ethnic Minorities in Established Democracies,” 27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁷ Matland, Richard E., and Donley T. Studlar. “The Contagion of Women Candidates in Single-Member District and Proportional Representation Electoral Systems: Canada and Norway.” *The Journal of Politics* 58.3 (1996): 707.

⁸ Bird, “The Political Representation of Women and Ethnic Minorities in Established Democracies,” 24.

increases of women in politics leading to different alternative politics, solidifying a stronger democratic decision-making process.⁹ In this paper, the case studies will show a difference between women who have organized at a local level to propel themselves, and their agenda, into parliaments. Whereas, some countries have implemented a quota and then mobilized women into parliament. Before the quota, most of these countries did not even have 20% of women elected into their government. The latter phenomenon does not gain as much success in bringing women's issues and perspectives into policy formation.

This paper is divided into eight sections. Each section will be an examination of one of six different countries: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Nepal, Rwanda, and Argentina. All of these countries have over 30% representation of women in their government (albeit not consistent at each level of government). This paper looks to examine if this increase in female political representatives translates into any beneficial process, such as promoting women's rights in policy. Within each country, different variables and socio-economic factors are examined to determine how the increase of women has changed policy and society. These factors will differ between developing and developed countries because of the economic circumstances which prevent the developing countries to be easily compared; since different information is available. For instance, there is more information about the developed countries in terms of private sector information and global rankings on child care, education and health. These results shed light on the last study, Canada, which has not ever been able to achieve over 30% women in national parliament.

⁹ Karen Bird, "Who are the Women? Where are the Women? And What Difference can they make? The Effects of Gender Parity in French Municipal Elections." *Paper prepared for 2002 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*, Boston (29 Aug – 1 Sept 2002): 2.

Within each study, there will be several policy areas which this paper will develop. These areas for developing and developed nations will differ slightly because the differences in development make them difficult to compare on a similar plane. In developed countries, health care, child care, education, wage gap and gender difference in employment, environment, and foreign affairs. By examining changes to policy development or result in these sectors, this paper can more adequately assess the impact women have had in these parliaments. On the other hand, the developing countries will focus on similar sectors but also including poverty reduction and other issues local to their region. This paper will show that women have been able to make significant changes in policy and how policy is produced, however these mostly refer to changes in 'women's politics'. Most societies at large still marginalize female politicians into areas of politics that has been deemed appropriate for women except for rare cases. Also, when women are put into these new areas of policy like security or national defense, they often feel pressured to be perceived with masculine qualities. 'Women's politics' referring to the areas of policy that have been historically and socially designated to women: child care, health care, and education. Nevertheless, the increase of women in government has been able to enhance the democratic value of each country.

SWEDEN

Sweden has been noted for its focus on gender-equality policies. Although women in formal politics significantly increased during the second wave of feminism, the battle for equality between the genders has not dissipated entirely. For instance, women still struggle to bring feminist ideas to the table when decision-making begins. A national feminist party, Feminist Initiative Party, has been struggling to claim seats in parliament, or even attention from Swedes. This party started as a political and social movement in 2003, and gained traction

within Sweden; especially due to results highlighted in a gender-equality booklet published by Statistics Sweden. The Feminist Initiative Party, however, has remained optimistic. The leader, Gudryn Schyman, has found interesting ways to mobilize the women in Sweden in discussing these issues by arranging house parties of 20 or more women. These house parties allow the women to focus directly on the issues, and everyone is able to take part in discussion. With these intimate campaigning opportunities, Schyman is able to shape policies that female citizens have constructed together.¹⁰

Sweden has never adopted any gender quotas in its constitution, but rather the political parties have taken the initiative to use quotas to ensure gender equality. The Social Democratic Party, the Left Party and the Green Party all have quotas to ensure 1/3 of women in their parties. The Social Democratic Party has set its quota to 50%, although they are just shy of this goal (47.2%). The Moderate Party and the Center Party have not chosen to use quotas in their own constitutions, yet have endorsements and sentiments of gender equality. Although this does not seem very promising, both parties have over 33% of women in their party members.¹¹ Surprisingly, the Center Party has a 50/50 split between the genders, achieving this equality without quotas.¹² This process has been a successful way of bringing women into government since most of these parties already were comprised of 25% females. The implementation of voluntary quotas suggests a truer sense of striving for equality, because there was no rush to fill the quota. Lastly, these parties had to have had strong enough reason from public sentiment, or else they may have committed their political demise. Therefore, the voluntary quotas have been widely accepted in Swedish society.

¹⁰Ann Törnkvist, "Sweden's Cash-Strapped Feminists Hold House Parties to Lure Voters," *The Local* (13 Jan 2014), 1.

¹¹International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. *Sweden: Women's Representation in Parliament*. Stockholm. 2006. Web. 1-2.

¹²Ibid, 1-2.

As for the private sector, women are still trailing behind men. There have been discussions about implementing an executive board quota for women within large corporations, but thus far Sweden has decided against it. Although, recent research has shown companies with more women on their board outperform their rivals; former UK trade minister Lord Davies confirms these trends. Women have different approaches to problem solving and are able to bring this to the table, not solely focused on the bottom line. In Sweden, there are only about 11% of board members that are women.¹³ There are several obstacles preventing the promotion of women into these higher positions within corporations, but there are initiatives besides quotas that the Swedish government is using to address the stagnation. The problem with the imbalance is rooted in the way board members are selected – usually found among friends of current members or past CEOs of other companies. Clearly, these obstacles are withholding the promotion of women. In the Discrimination Act, there is a focus on gender equality in the workplace. The law requires specific goals to ensure equality, prohibits discrimination and harassment and acknowledges the discrepancies in wage payments between the sexes. It is difficult for the government to ensure equality within high leveled positions in the private sector but has improved significantly in the public sector with a majority of managers, council women and municipal boards with women securing 64% in 2012. This is compared to the measly 4% on private sector publicly listed companies.¹⁴

The former equality minister, Margareta Winberg, threatened to implement quotas for corporate board and surprisingly companies have been taking this threat to heart. The amount of female representation on boards of listed corporations increased from 6% in 2002 up to 22% in 2010. Although this number is still at an imbalance, it shows a significant improvement. In

¹³ Directorate-General for Justice. *Women in Economic Decision-Making in the EU: Progress Report*. European Commission. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. 2012. 12-13.

¹⁴ The Swedish Institute, "Facts about Sweden: Gender Equality," Stockholm: (2013): 3.

2011, then equality minister, Sabuni, did not want to restrict the freedoms of the private sector, claiming it is not the responsibility of the government. She does support gender equality in the workplace through other means, however, as she implemented a gender quota for municipal-run companies.¹⁵

Sweden has been a leader in child care and family care policies. When a child is born or adopted, parents receive 480 days leave with women still taking up most of the leave. In 2012, only 24% of men took a parental leave, a fact which the Swedish government looks to improve. This is why they have implemented a measure that at least sixty days of the leave are allocated to each parent, and can not be transferred; thus the men actually have the chance to lose their families combined paid leave by not taking it.¹⁶ In Sweden, gender mainstreaming is seen as the main strategy for achieving targets within equality policy. Before a baby is born, expectant mothers in Sweden get prenatal care through free or subsidised courses that help them prepare for the delivery, with breathing techniques, coaching sessions and group support. It provides a gender equality bonus (*jämställdhetsbonus*), an extra daily payment, if 270 days of the paid parental leave are divided evenly between mother and father. Child-friendly public space construction has been an important focus to Swedish urban planning. Not only are places built to be safer, and more exciting to children, but over ten national libraries were created just for children. On the discussion of children's literature, Sweden is home to many children's literature authors and the government helps to promote the publications of these works. Sweden also ranks as first place globally for the UNICEF child care report card.¹⁷ All these policies show how

¹⁵ Paul Rapacioli, "Gender Quotas Would Benefit Sweden's Corporate Boards." *The Local*. 08 March 2011. Web. 2.

¹⁶ The Swedish Institute, "Facts about Sweden: Gender Equality," 2.

¹⁷ Peter Adamson, "The Child Care Transition; a League Table of Early Childhood Education and Care in Economically Advanced Countries," *UNICEF*. Florence. 2008. 4.

women working with men in government have been able to positively influence child care policies effectively.

Child care is not the only area in which women have been able to positively affect, shaping a very strong social safety net. Sweden introduced a health care guarantee in 2005. This means no patient should have to wait more than seven days for an appointment at a community health care center, 90 days for an appointment with a specialist, and 90 days for an operation or treatment; once it has been determined what care is needed. If the waiting time is exceeded, patients are offered care elsewhere. The Swedish government also looks at health issues creatively to decrease the impact these issues have on their population. For instance, the incidence of smoking has been falling in Sweden since the mid-1980s. A study by the European Union has found that Sweden has the lowest proportion of smokers (18 per cent) among EU member states. This may be due to the active campaigning of the government, in addition to adequate health services.¹⁸ New ways of looking at social issues, like smoking, in context of what government departments are mobilized, can truly benefit a democracy. By improving these larger health concerns, Sweden is able to successfully lower the costs of their medical infrastructure.

Similarly, one of the great effects of bringing women into formal politics is the benefit of their different views to address issues. For instance, prostitution has been not only a long-standing societal issue for Sweden, but has historically been a global gender issue. Starting from an initiative in 1999 which made it illegal to purchase sex, prostitution has further been treated differently in Sweden as part of a reform of sexual crime legislation in 2005, which incorporated the purchase as a criminal act in the general criminal code. The government decided to switch

¹⁸ "What You Need to Know When Quitting Smoking," *Swedish Health Services*. 2013. Web. 3.

the focus from the prostitute to the purchaser, who is now the target of surveillance and criminal punishment. Since 2005, (and even from 1999) prostitution in Sweden has dramatically declined although most charges are made for repeat offenders.¹⁹ When looking at prostitution in Sweden, in comparison to the prostitution charges and estimate figures of Norway's capital, Oslo, it is astonishing to see how much this law has been able to influence the sex trade. Since both of these countries bridge a gap between east and west Europe, they are often sites of human trafficking. Since the law has changed, trafficking in Sweden has been reported to be under 1000 females a year. In Oslo, it is estimated to be over 10,000 females per year.²⁰

The government has also had an important role in protecting the environment, creating an Environmental Code in 1999. The code created a framework for creating environmental policies, creating several bureaucracies to oversee funding distribution and different solutions for environmental issues; including the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, which was formed as recently as 2011. The government continues to be committed to the environment by allocating SEK 503 million for the Agency for Marine and Water Management, specifically overlooking the protection of the Baltic Sea. Emissions from the housing and service sector has decreased significantly because of Sweden's switch to using alternative heat sources. The government has continued to support the decline and reduction of emissions by introducing a CO2 tax. The government seems committed to bringing alternative energy sources to Sweden, as one of their goals set for 2030 is a fossil-free transport sector.²¹ These environmental initiatives show the collaboration between both men and women in promoting a policy that supports the interests of Swedes to keep the environment protected.

¹⁹ The Swedish Institute, "Facts about Sweden: Gender Equality," 3. ; Williams, Rachel. "How Making the Customers the Criminals Cut Street Prostitution." *The Guardian*. 5 Jan. 2008. Web. 25 Oct. 2013. 2.

²⁰ Rachel Williams, "How Making the Customers the Criminals Cut Street Prostitution," 3; André Anwar, "Criminalizing the Customers: Prostitution Ban Huge Success in Sweden," *Speigel International*. 8 Nov. 2008. Web. 1.

²¹ The Swedish Institute, "Sweden's Environmental Policy," Stockholm (2013): 1-2.

The Swedish government has established an equality ombudsman that fights discrimination and looks to bring gender equality issues to light, making recommendations to the government to address these inequality issues. It reviews issues in school systems, the workforce, public sector and other areas, including promoting the effectiveness of gender-equality policies such as the parental leave law. They work to uphold the laws and work within the framework of the Discrimination Act.²²

A commission has been launched by the federal Swedish government to look into gender equality in University and College enrolment. The head of the commission, Pia Sandvik Wiklund, has suggested the use of cash bonuses to universities that support gender equality - which will show up in their enrolment statistics. She has even proposed an equality bonus of 50 million Kronor (\$7.5 Million US) which would be divided amongst the deserving schools. Other suggestions were to review guidelines for research funding, as well as looking at securing improvements in recruitment of female professors and staff. This would require supervision of the universities and colleges by the Equality Ombudsman (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen-DO) in upholding and promoting gender equality. Sandvik Wiklund looks to promote women and men equally into higher education, because this will lead to gender equality in other sectors, perhaps even helping to promote women into high-levelled positions.²³ Today, a greater proportion of women than men complete upper secondary education in Sweden, which has come to attention as a reverse gender issue. Significantly more women than men also participate in adult education. Women comprise roughly 60 per cent of all students in undergraduate university

²² The Swedish Institute, "Facts about Sweden: Gender Equality," 2.

²³ "Bonuses to Boost Gender Equity at Swedish Unis," *The Local*. Jan. 21 2011. Web. 1.; *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2012: Sweden*, Paris: 2012. Web. 3. The Swedish Institute. "Facts About Sweden," 3-4.

studies, and almost two-thirds of all degrees are awarded to women. Equal numbers of women and men now take part in postgraduate and doctoral studies.²⁴

In terms of foreign affairs, Sweden has been a country with respected status. They are mostly non-confrontation and isolationist in participating in global affairs. In 2002, Anna Lindh, the foreign affairs minister, changed the foreign policy agenda to include cooperation with other countries and alliances in case of military or security threat, although in peacetime they will not be associated with any military alliances. This has proven to be a great foreign policy, since they have been secure from external forces and have been able to channel funds most countries use for military towards their welfare system. International Aid Minister Gunilla Carlsson seeks peaceful resolutions and looks to promote development with aid that directly put women's concerns at the forefront. Carlsson expresses the Swedish government's sentiment over gender equality and wants to bring the values of gender equality into their foreign policy. State agency, Sida, is an arm of the Swedish government that has created successful midwife projects in different areas internationally. They will be responsible for setting up educational projects and other projects to empower women. Sweden is set to allocate 8 billion Kronor (\$1.2 B US) for these initiatives over the next 20 years until 2024.²⁵ Also, SEK 150 million of Swedish humanitarian aid will be given to Afghanistan, along with the approximate SEK 250 million for food and medicine contributed in 2012.²⁶

NORWAY

Norway has always been a leader in gender-neutral policies and helping to bring gender equality to political discussions. In the second wave of feminism, Norway's women became invested in driving national politics and organized groups to promote women into the formal

²⁴ OECD, *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2012: Sweden*. Paris. (2012) Web. 2-3.

²⁵ Törnkvist, Ann. "Sweden to Keep Women Focus in Afghan Aid." *The Local* Aug. 8 2013. Web. 1.

²⁶ Ibid, 1

political sector. This push allowed for women to be elected without quotas in place by the 1980s. In 1981, Norway received their first female Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, who brought even more women into higher positions within the government. In 1986, her Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet), was known famously as the 'women's government' because she had appointed eight out of her eighteen ministers to be women; which was momentous internationally.²⁷ Even by 1985 there were only twenty-two out of the 444 councils that were solely dominated by men, and nine had over forty percent women in the councils. These figures suggest that the image and role of women in politics was beginning to be accepted in Norwegian society.²⁸ This phenomenon is significant because it shows the natural desire for both genders to include all people in parliament and the political decision making process. Therefore, with women already claiming their stake in the parliament, collectively both genders pushed to implement gender quotas in parliament. These quotas were widely accepted, however, women already fulfilled the quotas in place; unlike other developing countries. It was not an easy process to bring these women into governmental positions in the first place, as many women's organizations collaborated ceaselessly to gain these successes in women's advancement.²⁹ Other developed and developing countries can use this research to implement their own quotas without drawing much contention or disappointment.

This attention is usually given to the national level of governance, but there has been a severe lack of focus given to the local levels. In 1995, nearly one third elected into municipal seats were women. However, only sixty-eight out of four hundred and thirty-five mayors are

²⁷ "100th Year of Democracy For Women in Norway," *The Nordic Page* Sept. 9 2013. Web. 1.

²⁸ Ingunn Norderval Means, "Women in Local Politics: The Norwegian Experience." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 5.3 (1985): 370.

²⁹ Means, "Women in Local Politics," 375-378.

women.³⁰ Female representation is not evenly spread. Focus is beginning to shift to the disproportionate representation between national and local levels, indicated by different campaigns to rally female political activity. Some of these campaigns include female coups, where voters will cross out the male names on a ballot and rewrite the female candidate's name. A surprising amount of male politicians have lost seats to less experienced women, especially in the local elections where women's representation has been previously neglected. Local elections allow for cumulation, therefore the 'adjustments' made on the ballots can gain political legitimacy.³¹ Cumulation has never been used as successfully to garner electoral surprises as it was used in 1967 to elect women in parliament.³² This has been seen as a successful method in electing not only women into governmental positions throughout many democratic states in proportional representation systems, but ethnic minorities as well.³³ Electoral systems play a part in the success of these gender quotas, as proportional representative electoral systems work to the advantage of quotas.³⁴

Regardless of the level of government women enter into, there is a clear indication that women have been able to make positive changes within policy and party viewpoints. In a study conducted from 1988 to 1992, 146 out of 155 members of parliament were interviewed if any changes occurred to party policy from the increases of women. An overwhelming majority agreed women have been able to be successful in changing party viewpoints. The results exactly was 86% (83% of men voted yes; 93% of women voted yes). Clearly, the results from this survey in Norway indicate the difference gender makes in political decision-making and idea

³⁰ Ibid, 378.

³¹ Ibid, 372.

³² Ibid, 373.

³³ Bird, "The Political Representation of women," 13.

³⁴ Matland and Sudlar, "The Contagion of Women Candidates" 1.

formation.³⁵ A recent example of women changing the agenda is the importance placed on preserving the environment (not that male politicians do not – women tend to bring up environmental concerns more). Norwegian Environmental Agency was established on 1 July 2013 as a result of the merger of the Norwegian Climate and Pollution Agency and the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management. Ellen Hambro is the director general of the Norwegian Environment Agency, who is leading strong research projects to promote cutting greenhouses gases, preserving wetlands, less toxins in air and water, and addressing noise pollution.³⁶

During the 1900s, the welfare state took significant shape in Norway, which was accompanied by the development of a public healthcare system. The public health sector is financed through taxes and is to be equally accessible by all residents, regardless of their income. This sector is also one of the largest employers in Norway. Male paternity laws were introduced in 1993 to encourage men to take a leave from work to watch over their newborns. There has been an increase from forty-five percent to seventy percent from 1994 to 1995 of new fathers taking advantage of this new policy. These numbers have climbed up to 85% in 2012, showing that the only reason males usually do not take the time off work for parental leave is the loss of income.³⁷ Furthermore, the New Children Act looks at the interests of the child, disregarding the long-standing assumption that the mother is the best caretaker of the child in question. Cash benefit schemes are being debated that would give payments to families with young children. There is anxiety from the opposition, however, since these payments may not strengthen the gender equalization in the work force, but may actually reverse the process. More specifically,

³⁵ Hege Skjeie, "Credo on Difference – Women in Parliament in Norway," *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance*. 2002. Web. 25 Oct. 2013. 2.

³⁶ "Environmental Pressures." *Environment.ca*. Climate and Pollution Agency. 11 April 2010. 1-3.

³⁷ Katrin Bennhold, "In Sweden, Men Can Have It All," *The New York Times* 9 June 2010. Web. Jan 10 2014. 1.

they fear women will choose to abandon their jobs (as they are usually paid less than their male counterparts) and become housewives. Women are also seen as a less stable source of income, due to the amount of part-time labour that is assigned to women.³⁸ Overall, Norway has been able to achieve sixth place globally for child care according to the UNICEF child care report.³⁹ Although there are some issues with these new policies, they are significant as they represent this idea of “care politics.”⁴⁰

One of the leading countries for addressing gender equality in the private sector, Norway has implemented a quota for supervisory boards. The quota in 2003 stipulated that women make up 40 percent on public corporate boards at listed companies with over ten employees. This has given disappointing results of up to forty percent women only represented in select few corporate boards. There are questions of whether or not Norway went far enough with their quota, because only a small group of private corporations were targeted by it.⁴¹ Even though most boards have complied with the 2003 quota, the number of females on boards has remained stable. This is due to a phenomenon known as “Golden Skirts,”⁴² where few qualified women are given several titles and positions, sitting on several boards. Therefore, the quotas are not doing much to bring new women into high levelled corporate positions. None of the biggest twenty-five companies in Oslo have a female chief executive, and there is only one female financial officer. There does not seem to be clear relation between bringing women into politics and women climbing up the ladder in the private sector.

³⁸ Ann Sweigart, “Women on Board for Change: the Norway Model of Boardroom Quotas as a Tool for Progress in the United States and Canada,” *Northwestern Journal of International Law Business* 32.4 (2012): 5.

³⁹ Adamson, “The Child Care Transition,” 4.

⁴⁰ Skjeie, “Credo on Difference,” 3.

⁴¹ Sweigart, “Women on Board for Change,” 102.

⁴² Sweigart, “Women on Board for Change,” 83; “Men Lead Business Operations of Listed Companies: Women End Up in Support Functions,” *Finland Chamber of Commerce*. Helsinki. Dec 2011. Web. 20.

This still raises questions about gender equality, since in the private sector, far more than any other sector of employment, the highest paying jobs most usually go to men. For example, the average salary for CEOs at the top twenty-five businesses in Oslo listed at around \$1.4 M US, compared to the \$134,000 US for a member of parliament.⁴³ The public sector is constantly flooded with women compared to the private sector, which remains dominated by men. According to Statistics Norway, women in the public sector comprised over seventy-one percent in 2011, much greater than the thirty-seven percent in the private sector.⁴⁴ Women apparently are “reluctant to go into the private sector because those jobs aren’t amenable to family life.”⁴⁵ Erna Solberg, Norway’s premier, agrees the quota has not done much to change the private sector. Studies are also being conducted to see the inherent benefits in bringing women into the private sector, but results from consulting firm McKinsey & Co, as well as the Norwegian School of Management, still cannot show evidence that these companies will benefit by following the quota. Solberg agrees these quotas may have been counterintuitive, because of a couple companies that had rushed women into higher positions regardless of skill, which actually decreased board competency. She proposes giving women the chance to build better CVs to gain the experience needed to get hired for these positions on their own.⁴⁶

Taking into account the difference between part-time and full-time, women made 15.7 percent less than men did on average in 2012.⁴⁷ More specifically, certain sectors seem to neglect gender-equality initiatives. These industries include oil and gas companies, in which a study was conducted to look at women’s employment within the energy sector. The study targeted fifty-

⁴³ Saleha Mohsin, "Norway Gender Gap Lives as \$1.4 Million Male CEOs Outperform," *Bloomberg*. 9 Oct. (2013) Web. 25 Oct. 2013. 2.

⁴⁴ Mohsin. "Norway Gender Gap Lives as \$1.4 Million Male CEOs Outperform," 2.; Richard E Matland, "The Norwegian Experience of Gender Quotas," *Paper presented at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance/CEE Network for Gender Issues Conference*. Budapest: (22 October 2004) Web. 7.

⁴⁵ Bystydzienski, Jill M. "Women in Politics in Norway," *Women & Politics* 8.3-4 (1988): 79.

⁴⁶ Mohsin, "Norway Gender Gap Lives as \$1.4 Million Male CEOs Outperform," 2-3.

⁴⁷ Ann Törnkvist, "Norway's Female MPs Tell Women to 'Give a Damn'," *The Local*. 26 July 2013. Web. 25 Oct. 2013. 1.

seven companies and were only able to receive responses from thirty-five. Out of these thirty-five, only 18% of employees were women and 0.07% were in top management. 43% of women in Norway work part-time, compared to the 13% of men who do.⁴⁸ This could suggest that women do want these higher-level positions in the private sector, but could point to signs that they do not have the time to pursue these employment opportunities. Women in parliament need to bring their awareness to these issues to see if there are barriers to participation in different economic sectors, and why they are not being addressed effectively.

Given all this, it should then be a surprise, when the Norwegian University of Science and Technology conducted a study of political knowledge between the sexes, and found women still lack the political knowledge men generally have. Although Norway's educational system ranks high on a global scale,⁴⁹ there is still an issue with how women are engaged. The journalist writing on this issue, Ann Törnkvist, is a respected journalist on Norwegian society and culture, and lends her view. She admits the gap in political knowledge could be from the assigned gender roles still enacted in Norwegian culture. The man of the household will still be reading the newspaper, shut away from his family, whereas the women are still looking after the children. This phenomenon could help to explain the lagging gap between men and women's political apprehension.⁵⁰ This may explain why women are still reserved to 'women's issues' or 'care politics'. Fortunately, women will continue to advance their position in the Norwegian parliament because of their close relationships with women's groups, forming cross-party alliances with 'women-specific' policy ideas, as well as their experience in parliamentary

⁴⁸ Ida Blom, "Women's Politics and Women in Politics in Norway since the End of the Nineteenth Century," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 12 (1987): 23.

⁴⁹ "World Data On Education: Norway," *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (2010) Web. 2, 29-30.

⁵⁰ Ann Törnkvist, "Norwegian Women Trail Men's Political Savvy," *The Local* July 25 2013. Web. 1.

interaction, gaining more legitimacy and political savvy, and making use of party competition by lobbying important issues directly to the female population.⁵¹

FINLAND

Finland like its Nordic neighbours, Sweden and Norway, has been an international leader for gender equality. Finnish women were the first to receive the vote and the ability to be elected into parliament. When the Finnish government ratified universal suffrage in 1906, Finland was still under Russian sovereignty. Since they were not independent, numerous citizens within Finland found that elections were a way of expressing some political authority. This helped to bring women in, as long as they were not representative of Russian dominance. One of the reasons Finland presents a great case study is that they have realized their exceptionalism in terms of gender equality, but have also acknowledged the work they still have to accomplish. Finland's foreign minister, Erkki Tuomioja has expressed this sentiment continually to the press, demonstrating the idea that there is space for improvement. The entire society of Finland, like its Nordic State beside it, seems to fully embrace gender equality, so it is useful to see what barriers are still in place and why women are still not making up 50% of government seats.⁵² The Network of Women Deputies of the Finnish Parliament created in 1991, promotes women's issues among others by setting up informative luncheons intended to arouse debate in parliament. Female state ministers have been known to attend. This helps to facilitate a connection between people interested in women's issues but also gives women a lively and inspiring environment to debate issues.⁵³ Lastly, although they do not have official political party quotas or gender quotas within their constitution, Finland does have a law in their Equality Act for minimum proportion

⁵¹ Skjeie, "Credo on Difference," 4.

⁵² Laura Smith-Spark, "Finland's Trailblazing Path for Women," *BBC News*. June 1 2006. Web. 2-3.

⁵³ National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. *Women's Caucus Sheet*. Morocco. 21 Feb. 2003. Web. 2.

of 40% of both genders on state committees, as well as executive decision making bodies at local levels.⁵⁴

There has been extensive work in the government to form a legal framework to pursue gender equality policies. The first being created in 1987 called the Act on Equality between Women and Men, as well as Section 5(4) of the Constitution Act of Finland in 1995. These acts and legal frameworks guide policies in terms of addressing gender issues more easily. To focus on gender inequality in the workforce, Finland gives the employer the responsibility to make a gender-equal environment viable. More importantly, gender quotas have been put in place to install a 40/60 divide (women/men) on government committees, advisory boards, municipal boards and any corresponding institution or body. Two councils were made to enforce these new gender-equality policies, including the Council for Equality between Men and Women and the Office of the Ombudsman for Equality; also known as the Equality board. The Council keeps track of arising and persisting gender equality issues in all sectors and areas of life. The equality board on the other hand, processes claims of inequality and discrimination.⁵⁵ These councils have proven effective, for instance, statistics show only 27% of women are placed in senior managerial positions. The Finnish government has put much research into increasing the level of women in senior positions which has been noticed from an increase of over 10% since 1999.⁵⁶

Women make 18% less than men; compared to Nordic neighbours this is where Finland differs significantly, as there is often a lack of women in high paid positions and women are also dominant in part-time positions in the public sector. In the public sector, some

⁵⁴ Raevaara, Eeva. "The Struggle for Quotas in Finland - From Women's Mobilisation to the Politicisation of Gender." *Nordiques*. 6 (2005): 1.

⁵⁵ Jaana Katriina Kuusipalo, "Report from Finland by our Transnational Partner," European Database: Women in Decision-making. (August 2000) Web. 25 Oct. 2013 4.; Nieminen, Tarja. "Gender Equality Barometer: 2008." *Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health*. Helsinki, (2009): 23-24.

⁵⁶ Kuusipalo, "Report from Finland by our Transnational Partner," 6. Grant Thornton International Business Report 2012, "Women in Senior Management: Still Not Enough," *Grant Thornton* (2012): 2.

improvements have been made since 2000, dependent on levels of government. On the national level, the first female president of the Supreme Court was appointed in 2006, and there has been a 1/5 threshold of female university professors, and rectors. On the local level however, only 13% of women are municipal managers.⁵⁷ Comparatively, the results for the private sector vary depending on the amount of government shareholding within the specific company. For instance, all companies that had a majority share owned by government were able to bring in 40% of women, on the other hand, only 17% of the 100 most profitable companies' board members were women.⁵⁸

The welfare system was implemented when Finland began to modernize and reform its systems in the 1950s and 1960s. Since then, there has always been a sentiment to keep the welfare system, and thus far no government has contested this principle. Women were very active in promoting their interests during this time, which is why the welfare system incorporates what is known as 'women's issues.' Recently, every government programme after Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen's second government (2003) has given particular attention to poverty. This underlines the importance of poverty as a significant issue that merits serious attention, and can also be seen as a sign of continuity in the changed policy. Unemployment rates in Finland are at 8.2%, and unemployment insurance lasts for 500 days.⁵⁹ Other departments besides poverty have been widely under the scope of government debate, looking for new ways to improve these sectors.

⁵⁷ "Gender Equality Policies in Finland," *Ministry of Social Affairs and Health*. Helsinki (2006): 9.

⁵⁸ "Gender Equality Policies in Finland," 10.

⁵⁹ Olga Khazanjul, "The Secret to Finland's Success with Schools, Moms, Kids – and Everything," *The Atlantic* 11 July 2013. 1 and 4.

Finland's healthcare and educational system is highly ranked in the world, continually ranking first place globally for their educational system.⁶⁰ Health care spending in Finland amounted to EUR 16 billion in 2010. This equated to 8.9 percent of gross domestic product – similar to the other Nordic countries. Their education system, however, has been ranked highest on the global scale; although comparatively they do not spend as much as other countries on education. Tuition at universities is free, and loans are given for other living expenses with interest rates no higher than 1%.⁶¹ Not only do children see more customization to their needs in Finland schools, but the students spend less time in school than other developed countries. Day care fees in Finland are progressively paced for it is calculated on family size and income. Lower-income families are able to receive day care for free. The municipality usually covers up to 90% of the day care services allow there are private options which can be fairly more expensive. Lastly, the fees received from the families acquiring service compromise only 15% of the total facility costs. This option gives women much more freedom in being able to sustain a career of their choice regardless of the time obligations it may require.⁶² Like the other Nordic countries, the parental leave policies are not only generous, but have aims to encourage both parents to take time with their children. For instance, in Finland, there is a father bonus leave that stipulates a bonus of 12 days if the father uses the last 12 days of parental leave. They also have an 18 day parental leave, which both the father and mother can take at the same time. Usually, fathers use this 18 days to spend immediately after the birth of the child.⁶³ Finland, compared to the other countries examined in this paper, has ranked fourth for child care.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ "World Data on Education: Finland." United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2010. Web. 10-11.

⁶¹ Khazanjul, "The Secret to Finland's Success," 3; Anderson, Jenny. "From Finland, and Intriguing School-Reform Model." *The New York Times*. 12 Dec. 2011. Web. 1.

⁶² Khazanjul, "The Secret to Finland's Success," 3; Arja Alho, "Women Active Participants in the Politics of Finland – Yet Problems Remain," *Canadian Women Studies* 9:2 (1987): 46-47; "Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland," *Ministry of Social Affairs and Health* (2004): 3-4.

⁶³ "Gender Equality Policies in Finland," 13.

⁶⁴ Adamson, "The Child Care Transition," 4.

Foreign and security policy is based on good bilateral and international relations, a strong role in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), effective multilateral cooperation, and credible national defence. Not much spending is dedicated to military or defense. Unlike other developed democracies, women have been appointed as defence and foreign affairs ministers several times since the increase of women in government. This is a significant change from women's usual role in 'care politics'. Finland is committed to the European Union with a focus on increasing the importance of the Nordic region and the preservation of the Baltic seas. This importance is reserved for environmental reasons, a change in focus from most democratic countries, where foreign policy usually protects economic interests. Finland's foreign policy looks to build stronger cooperation with other countries, not only in the EU, to address global problems such as nuclear proliferation, terrorism and other environmental issues.⁶⁵ These issues have always concerned Finland, but since the mid-2000s the objectives for international cooperation have become stronger, as they have had a greater impact on Finnish society.

NEPAL

Nepal was another case study to include in these findings, specifically because of the intensely patriarchal society which has created barriers to women in politics. Nepal has just recently (2010) been able to attain 33%, but this is a massive increase just from 2005 (5.9%).⁶⁶ This dramatic increase proves significant, as this implies a massive change in Nepalese society to educate, train and popularize women to gain political positions. In 2014, there are more women in the government of Nepal than there are in Canada, a developed nation, well-known for its polite and democratic society. Since the attitudes of men were seen as a barrier to increasing women in politics, but also the implementation of quotas, it is valuable to look at how people can

⁶⁵ "Finland's Foreign and Security Policy," *Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland*, 2013, 1-2.

⁶⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index. *BTI 2012: Nepal Country Report*, Gütersloh: 2012. Web. 3.

use these findings in other countries that face similar barriers. Significant projects have been launched mostly by NGOs, or under the direction of the UN, to train women to develop the skills to run for political office. These campaigns run by NGOs have been able to significantly increase since the monarchy abdicated the throne in 2006.⁶⁷ From that period, they were able to achieve slight enhancements of women in government, but only by a couple percentage points. Since women have begun taking a stronger voice locally through training, they were able to pass a quota system for the elections set after 2008. Since then, Nepal has been able to secure at least 30% of women in their parliament in national levels. Although women's voices are heard locally, a lot of work must be done to make sure they are being taken seriously and given the authority needed to make change.

Ever since the 1990's, the Nepalese government has sought to include more women into politics, which can be noted in the government's 9th five year plan. The goals included in the plan, although broad, did create a sentiment to accelerate the process of bringing women into the political process. The plan also looked at empowering women, not only through formal politics, but also by uplifting their economic and legal status.⁶⁸ The 1997 Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment National Work Plan divided its attention into twelve sectors to improve women's status in Nepal. These included: poverty, education, health, violence, armed insurgency, economy, policy making, institutional structure, human rights, environment, children and media. As a result of these plans and policies, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare as well as the Child and Women Development Council were created. Other departments were created as a part of these programs, although not directly looking at gender issues, the

⁶⁷ *BTI 2012: Nepal Country Report*, 26; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. *Report on the State of Women in Urban Local Government Nepal*. Nepal. 2010. 15.

⁶⁸ Bishal Bhattarai, "Present Status of Women in Nepal: Constraints and Policy Measures to Gender Equality and Women Empowerment," *Office of the Prime Minister*, Kathmandu. N.d. 3.

establishment shows the difference in priorities between the genders and signals the increasing acceptance of 'women's issues' and female participation. These programs and new departments range from the Environment Protection Act of 1997, development of microfinance lending programs, National Plan of Action to address health care, and the Local Self Governance Act to reduce poverty.⁶⁹ When women's ideas and interest are included, it is not just bringing in different solutions to already existing problems, but it also shines a light on the issues that are still being ignored or perpetually neglected.

Although women are making up 1/3 of government seats, their voices are rarely put at the forefront of debates. Jhalanath Khanal, leader of the Communist Party of Nepal – Central Working Committee, has 148 members within his party, of which only twelve are women. There are also only two female representatives within the politburo (containing 45 members).⁷⁰ These figures are similar among the other main political parties. Female politicians believe the neglect of female voices is because of a reinforced patriarchal attitude, where most of Nepalese society sees men as natural leaders, and might even find it strange when women are put into these roles. Women seem to have more influence in smaller parties such as the Nepal Sadbhavana Party led by Sarita Giri. Savitra Bhusal from the CPN-UML even discusses the media's neglect of female politicians.⁷¹ The media also rarely uses females as sources for knowledge, perhaps as a result of male-dominated investments and ownership of these media outlets. A power-point was created by female officials in Sagun Basnet, to relay the lack of female leadership even with imposed gender quotas. The proportional representation system seems to work in favour of women's political participation, but challenges in illiteracy and

⁶⁹ Bhattarai, "Present Status of Women in Nepal: Constraints and Policy Measures to Gender Equality and Women Empowerment," 4.

⁷⁰ Alexandra Delaney, "Nepal's Women Have a Voice in Politics but No One is Listening," *The Guardian*, 27 May 2011, Web. 2.

⁷¹ Delaney, "Nepal's Women Have a Voice in Politics but No One is Listening," 2.

general lack in political knowledge limit the women's ability to become candidates. Senior or high-caste males in the major political parties still seem to make the decisions.⁷² For instance, the two major political parties, the NC and the CPN-UML retain their tradition mechanism of recruiting member, and therefore are not able to bring women (or other visible minorities) to the decision making process.⁷³ The opportunities of women in these major parties are most often determined on their loyalty and even relationship to these males.⁷⁴

There are still many issues in bringing women into the Nepalese government; including discrimination of both women candidates before they are elected and during the decision-making process when they are finally elected into a seat. In 2011, The UN committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women launched a study in Nepal, and proposed several recommendation to the government. They found a low number of Dalit or indigenous women at either the national and local levels. To the observers who argue that these groups are not politically inclined should look to the Feminist Dalit Organisation, which acted as a lobbyist group to not only bring Dalit women into the political discussions, but women in general. Most of the time these women experience discrimination from higher castes, but also from their own community as men are still dominant. This speaks to the barriers women still face in entering electoral politics, even with a quota 'ensuring' their participation. Recommendations the report gives include: collection of data to be fully aware of the gender issues, adopt comprehensive programs empowering women, encouraging public education and awareness campaigns that not only include the government, but mass media, community and religious leaders. Their recommendations have helped to successfully implement quotas both in the political sphere and

⁷² Sagun Basnet, *Women's Political Participation: Revisiting the Number Game in Nepal*, Nepal: United Nations Development Programme, 2010. 5, 6, 14.

⁷³ Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, *BTI 2012: Nepal Country Report* Gütersloh, 2012. Web. 26.

⁷⁴ Basnet, *Women's Political Participation: Revisiting the Number Game in Nepal*, 8.

the judiciary, government and educational administration; and changed views on education, health and land ownership. The next report will be published in 2015, with the aspirations of making drastic improvements to gender equality and the empowerment of women.⁷⁵

Policy dialogues have been taking place since 2012, under the direction of Nepal's Minister of Women Badri Neupane, to discuss issues of childcare. There have not only been instances of abuse, but also difficulty in securing childcare services and the promotion of family care. To discuss these issues, Neupane invited several NGOs, childcare officials and several civil society leaders to these discussions. The government has been able to allocate resources to fund a Child Rights Management Information System which helps to regulate and enhance the accountability of care homes and in child care centres. They have recommendations to promote childrearing within families and promotion of family values – in the form of looking at efforts to prevent parental separation and foster care. They would also like to see a legislative framework in place to protect children's rights in national, district, and municipality levels.⁷⁶

At the beginning of 2012, Search for Common Ground funded by the National Endowment for Democracy was able to launch a yearlong project looking to strengthen the role of women, viewing it as a positive force in the peacebuilding process in Eastern Terai. The project specifically focussed on local politics, and how to bring women into the process. Activities of the project included: training for women (and girls), training for local officials on gender issues and peacebuilding, as well as starting women-led community based projects. The project worked mainly in the districts of: Dhanusha, Mahottari, Siraha, Saptari, with a total of 57 participants. Positive results yielded, such as increased political knowledge and skills for

⁷⁵ "UN Committee Urges Nepal to Increase Political Participation of Dalit Women." *International Dalit Solidarity Network*. Aug. 17 2011. Web. 1.

⁷⁶ Bishwa Maskay, Nidhi Keshar, Ishwari Pundir, Sharma Prashad, Dahal Bhola, Ujala Shrestha and Palpasa Prajapati, "Policy Dialogue on Alternative Care of Children," *SOS Children's Village, Sanothimi* (2012) Web. 1-2.

participants, increased acceptance of women in new roles by family and members of the community, more instances of collective power, increased involvement of women in the decision making process and even women-led community peacebuilding initiatives.⁷⁷ The project, gaining positive insights for future projects, still faces many challenges. Women are still perceived as untrustworthy, especially in authoritative positions, and there tends to be a lack of political will to change this perception – even with a quota system. Many of the women who were sent out to these trainings found it difficult when convincing their families to allow them to attend trainings.

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Women have been able to make significant changes for the female (and male) youth demographic in terms of health and education. Nepal's enrolment and completion of primary education has improved; the enrolment and completion of secondary school has almost doubled for females since 2000.⁷⁹ In 2009, the Health Sector Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy was created to have more inclusive health policies. Marginalized groups in Nepal such as the Dalit, Terai, Janajatis, Madhesis and Muslims have had a difficult experience securing access to health care facilities. The program looks to help this inequality to access by mobilizing resources for rural areas (especially for the Terai), particularly resources for immunization clinics.⁸⁰ The strategy also establishes feedback mechanisms, which has been able to improve contraceptive use. One major issue is that the contraceptive clinics continually run out of

⁷⁷ Search for Common Ground Nepal. "Women Building Community Peace in Eastern Terai." Paper for National Endowment for Democracy, Washington DC (28 June 2012) Web, 4; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Final Report on Community dialogue/Public Hearing & Round Table Program for Women Constituent Assembly/Parliament Members*, Baluwatar, Nepal (2010) 28-29.

⁷⁸ Search for Common Ground Nepal, "Women Building Community Peace in Eastern Terai," 7-8.

⁷⁹ Education Policy and Data Centre, *EPDC Education Trends and Projections 2000-2025: Nepal*. Bangkok (2001) Web, 2.

⁸⁰ Nepal Gender and Governance Brief 3-4; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Marching Ahead* Washington (2010) 24-25.

preferred contraceptives, therefore a tracking system was initiated to deal with this repeated stock outs.⁸¹ Other programs have developed to deal with other issues such as this.

The economy has definitely improved since women have been empowered. Nepal's GDP has grown steadily from 2007. Economic instability does occur frequently in local communities, however, because of political instability among the political parties. Inflation, although still on the rise, rises less dramatically each year since 2008, in comparison to 2000-2007 figures. Both public and external debt has lowered, albeit public debt has been dramatically decreasing since 2007 in comparison to external debt.⁸² From 2008 to 2009, the percentage of the GDP spent on education rose almost a full percent; a significant change from a stagnate rate of funding from 2000-2007. Women's economic opportunity sits globally at 116. Although this is not by any means a good score, it has been improving each year since 2006.⁸³ Women have been able to secure microfinance loans through different organizations similar to the Grameen banking system. These loans have been criticized as it makes women appear to have economic empowerment, but many problems still arise. In some instances, women are just a name on paperwork to secure a loan, and their husband runs the business, earning profit under his control. Other times these loans need to be secured through group arrangements, and are difficult to organize because of the weight of financial debt burdens.⁸⁴ Even though there have been improvements to women's economic empowerment, it's very difficult to create more change in a culturally entrenched patriarchal society. There is still a large gap between women working in the public sector and men dominating managerial positions, as well as the private sector in

⁸¹ Elisabeth Rottach. "Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Local Health Governance in Nepal: Brief." *Health Policy Project*. (2010) 4.

⁸² Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, *BTI 2012: Nepal Country Report*, Gütersloh: (2012) 14; NDI, *Marching Ahead*, 43.

⁸³ The Economic Forum. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2013*. Cologny/Geneva: 2013. Web. 15.

⁸⁴ Brenda Bushell, "Women Entrepreneurs in Nepal: What Prevents Them From Leading the Sector?" *Gender & Development* 16.3 (2008): 552

general.⁸⁵ If women began to claim more legitimacy in different roles by engaging and participating in electoral politics, the entire societal climate for women can change.

Nepal presents a very recent example of using quotas to bring women into politics using a top-down approach that has been seen as less successful. Perhaps these countries with top-down mandates of gender quotas will need more time for the culture to adopt to this transformation of government. When women have been able to make changes to policy, it has largely been a process including a great deal of cooperation and support for local women's groups.⁸⁶ Also, the religiosity of Nepal has created a frustration among men to see the increase of women in politics. It was not uncommon to see a male abusing, physically or verbally, a women spokesperson just prior to the peace settlement in 2006.⁸⁷ This suggests that women's groups and civic organizations, along with direct female empowerment into legislature, may be a better combination for change when dealing with a top-down approach.

RWANDA

Since the Rwandan genocide of 1994, women have been able to participate more fully in politics through the electoral system. This is not only attributed to the work of NGO training and funding, but also because of the women's own political will for change after the trauma of genocide.⁸⁸ Unfortunately, after the genocide, there were almost twice as many women as there were men.⁸⁹ When forming the new constitution, women really wanted to get involved initially to address the laws surrounding genocide and increase the severity of punishing sexual assault and rape. When getting involved, they become interested in forming other policy debates which

⁸⁵Bushell, "Women Entrepreneurs in Nepal," 555.

⁸⁶ Åshild Falch, "Women's Political Participation and Influence in Post-Conflict Burundi and Nepal," *Peace Research Institute Oslo PRIO paper* Oslo (May 2010) 8.

⁸⁷ Augusta Molnar, "Women and Politics: Case of the Kham Magar of Western Nepal," *American Ethnologist* 9.3 (1982): 496.

⁸⁸ "Rwanda: Women Helping Lead Country's Transformation," *United Nations Development Programme* (12 July 2012) Web, 2.

⁸⁹ Chris McGreal, "'We are the Future,'" (17 Dec. 2008) 2; Gretchen Bauer and Jennie E. Burnet. "Gender Quotas, Democracy, and Women's Representation in Africa: Some insights from Democratic Botswana and autocratic Rwanda," *Women's Studies International Forum* 41 (2013): 105.

lead to an explosion of women entering electoral politics.⁹⁰ After the genocide ended, many widows were left without any inheritance because of patriarchal laws. When women saw the potential accomplishments through the use of this power it became easier to help women across the country have means for survival.⁹¹ Currently in 2014, Rwanda has over 50% of women represented in their parliament, which has led to several policy implementations; such as Vision 2020, the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008-2012, and the establishing of a Gender Monitoring Office. Other initiatives such as establishing institutions to promote women's participation in politics and economics such as the ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, The Nation Women's Council, National Youth Council, and the Forum for Women's Parliamentarians were formed to promote women into politics.⁹²

Rwanda presents a unique case because of the high percentage of women in politics in a society known for having male-dominated positions of power. The unique case, settled in Africa, allows for different cultural settings in which to examine the benefit of bringing women to the decision-making process. It's important to relieve the critics who point to cultural relativism as an excuse for these women rising in parliament. Therefore, a selection of developing countries from around the world, including one from Africa, was very important. Furthermore, with the highest level of women in government, the effects or changes would be evident. This case solidifies the argument that more women should be involved in electoral politics – and they should be able to equal the men in parliamentary representation.

Women were a major force in the peace process of the 1994 genocide. Women started a campaign to travel to the northern provinces of Ruhengeri, Gisenyi, Gitarama and Kibuye, where

⁹⁰ "Rwanda: Women Helping Lead Country's Transformation," 2; Elizabeth Powley, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. "Rwanda: Women Hold Up Half the Parliament." *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, Stockholm (2012) 5-6.

⁹¹ McGreal, "We are the Future," 2.

⁹² Republic of Rwanda. *National Accelerated Plan for Women, Girls, Gender Equality & HIV: 2010-2014* Kigali (2010) 13.

insurgency forces remained, to coax them into a peaceful settlement. Most of these men were husbands and relatives, but this campaign was still extremely dangerous for the women to take. They were able to convince the rebels to leave by partnering with the governmental troops, negotiating a peaceful surrender, ending the insurgency.⁹³ Women have been able to uphold justice and law by being given a much greater opportunity to become justices and police officers. Before the genocide, Gacaca judges were often chosen to be wise, respected males of the community. Post-genocide, 29% of judges in the Gacaca courtrooms are female.⁹⁴ Now, women do not just solely dominate in the political sphere, but also heads of the Supreme Court, the police, with women also filling a majority of the country's prison governor position.⁹⁵ On the local levels, women occupy 26% of the positions on the executive council of each province.⁹⁶

Unfortunately, the genocide and the sexual assaults resulted in a wide spread of HIV/AIDS among women. Therefore, the government has tried to focus on reducing the mortality of people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as helping those with HIV/AIDS have access to the same opportunities of those living without HIV/AIDS. These health initiatives also look to empower women and girls to educate them on safe sex and to help grow skills to be able to be assertive when dealing with men. The National Accelerated Plan for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV 2010-2014 specifically looks to address these barriers that prevent women from gaining independence and preventing increased vulnerability to HIV.⁹⁷ Espérance Mwiza, a female member of the current government has even discussed the difficulty of passing legislation to address gender issues when men were in charge. Now that women have taken the

⁹³ Jeanne Izabiliza, "The Role of Women in Reconstruction: Experience of Rwanda," *UNESCO*. N.d. 7.

⁹⁴ Izabiliza, "The Role of Women in Reconstruction: Experience of Rwanda," 7.

⁹⁵ McGreal, "We are the Future," 2.

⁹⁶ Izabiliza, "The Role of Women in Reconstruction: Experience of Rwanda," 4.

⁹⁷ Republic of Rwanda, *National Accelerated Plan for Women, Girls, Gender Equality & HIV: 2010-2014*, 13-14.

reins (or at least have been given the opportunity) they are able to form policies like the National Accelerated Plan.⁹⁸

Since 2007, poverty has declined 12% and there are significant efforts to keep the Millennium Development Goals, especially with help from UN departments like the UNDP.⁹⁹ Other goals, however, still need some work, and are finally receiving attention from the government. For instance, the drop-out rate for women is 15.2% whereas the national average for men is 7.9%. Scholarships are still often rewarded to men; an average of 22% of scholarships are given to women.¹⁰⁰ Women also gain status in society by participating in socio-economic opportunities. There are numerous networks of women working with various NGOs to drive the economy in Rwanda. Their leadership in economic development has directly led to changing perceptions of women in society. Men and women alike are more accepting of women in different roles, such as joining the business world.¹⁰¹ Women have gained much more respect in the patriarchal society, especially in their revamping of the agricultural sector. After the 1994 genocide, the agricultural sector was perhaps the most disadvantaged and stalled. Since the genocide, women have revived the industry through several activities and programs, and actively provided food for families if none was available. Since 1997, women have also helped to repatriate refugees, and for the first time in Rwandan history, tremendously aided in rebuilding communities. One great example is the rebuilding of the Imidugudu settlement, where both women and men worked side by side to reconstruct houses.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ "Rwanda: Women Helping Lead Country's Transformation," *United Nations Development Programme* (12 July 2012) 3.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

¹⁰⁰ Izabiliza, "The Role of Women in Reconstruction: Experience of Rwanda." 5; African Development Bank Group, *Rwanda: Gender Assessment: Progress Towards Improving Women's Economic Status*. (2008) Web. 10.

¹⁰¹ Izabiliza, "The Role of Women in Reconstruction: Experience of Rwanda." 6; Juliana Kantengwa, "Why Rwanda has the Most Female Politicians in the World," *Left Foot Forward* (Sept. 17 2013) 1.

¹⁰² Izabiliza, "The Role of Women in Reconstruction," 6.

One of the problems to Rwanda's current political situation is that most women do not feel empowered, and in some cases these quotas have created tension between genders. Rural women were interviewed in 2009, and suggested that not much has changed since women have been elected into government. Some women even report cases of domestic abuse. This happens because men have not come to respect women or because some men have become frustrated by women's lack of advantages when giving their time to political office and act out in anger. For instance, they do not have a wife to look after the household as much as they used to, and the women do not receive what they believe to be appropriate economic compensation.¹⁰³ These issues suggests the notion that top-down approaches to quotas are not effective in empowering women across all branches of society at first because of the tensions it creates.

ARGENTINA

Argentina adopted national gender quotas in 1991, one of the first countries to do so. Argentina's gender quotas have been seemingly well organized, because it has not allowed for any loop holes compared to the quota system in Mexico. For example, if candidates are chosen through internal primaries, they are exempt from gender quotas.¹⁰⁴ Another reason why quotas have been successful is because of their careful application, increasing with each election. In 1995, 27% of women were filling parliament, whereas the previous election had only ushered in 5% (the quota allowed 14% due to party member manoeuvring after it was enacted in 1991). Finally in 2005, Argentina had over the quota's designated goal, achieving 36%.¹⁰⁵ Some

¹⁰³ Jennie E Burnet, "Women Have Found Respect: Gender Quotas, Symbolic Representation, and Female Empowerment in Rwanda," *Politics & Gender* 7 (2011): 324.

¹⁰⁴ Mala Htun and Jennifer M. Piscopo, "Women in Politics in Latin America and the Caribbean," Paper prepared for the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum, *Global Institute for Gender Research* (Dec 2010) 7.; Elisa Maria Carrio, *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* "Argentina: A New Look at the Challenges of Women's Participation in the Legislature" *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. Stockholm (2012): 168.

¹⁰⁵ Jennifer M Piscopo, "Setting Agendas for Women: Substantive Representation and Bill Introduction in Argentina and Mexico," Taken from Chapter 3 of Ph.D Dissertation, "Do Women Represent Women? Gender and Policy in Argentina and Mexico," Department of Political Science, University of California. (August 2011) 405.

concerns surrounding the increase of women political representatives in Argentina arose as women seemed to affect legislative agenda but not outcome. One reason this concern appears for women in politics is that when this quota was first enacted, many of the women in government were relatives of male representatives, so they remained loyal to party principles. Other instances of male candidates being replaced by female relatives was also a reality. There is no indication of how often this occurs, however, it is less of a concern then it was in the 1990s.¹⁰⁶

Throughout Latin America, and Argentina more specifically, there has been surveys conducted to view culturally the perspective of women as political leaders. In Argentina, an overwhelming majority strongly disagreed with the statement that men make better political leaders. This cultural atmosphere is important to note when examining the influence women have been able to have in politics.¹⁰⁷ A study conducted by Franceschet and Piscopo' in 2008 of the Argentine Congress showed that bringing women into parliament at levels of over 30% has led to greater promotion of policies on violence against women, reproductive health, labour rights, and sexual harassment; but unfortunately, women's rights bills were more than twice as likely to fail as other types.¹⁰⁸ Similar to the other countries examined in this paper, women in government have been mostly placed in traditional, or lower levels of politics that have been deemed as "women's issues." One significant challenge to evaluating women's impact on policies is that corruption is still so prevalent in Argentinean institutions.¹⁰⁹ If Argentina were more economically independent, the government would be able to employ stricter methods, and women's influence in policy decisions would be more apparent.

¹⁰⁶ Jennifer M Piscopo, "Setting Agendas for Women," 406.

¹⁰⁷ Mala Htun and Jennifer M. Piscopo, "Women in Politics in Latin America and the Caribbean," 8.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰⁹ BTI 2012 Argentina 10

Healthcare has been reformed slightly since 1991, so that it is more inclusive towards women, yet a lot must still be done to achieve higher levels of equality of health and survival between sexes. Drug costs have risen over 60% since 1991, so investing into the healthcare system is a priority of Argentinian society. Healthcare in Argentina is made up of a compulsory health insurance and private medical practice. While all residents are entitled to a certain level of insurance coverage, there is also an option to receive supplementary, private healthcare, if the patient is willing to cover the extra cost. Argentina has a universal child benefit. Working pregnant women have a right to leave before and after childbirth for a total of about three months, with salary paid from the family compensation fund to which employers have contributed. Although Argentina has made significant international commitments to women's rights in regards to healthcare, they have been unable to implement any changes because of internal forces within the domestic population and civic groups. For example, specifically in health care, both private and public health clinics are legally mandated to distribute family planning literature and contraceptives. These policies has been dismantled and thwarted by the local religious outright opposition.¹¹⁰

Other issues have increasingly come under the government's scope since gender quotas were implemented in 1991. Recently, there has been campaigning for gay rights, especially through the current female president, although the Catholic Church still has significant influence over this issue.¹¹¹ School is free and compulsory, Argentina experiences the highest levels of literacy among Latin American countries. University education is almost completely free, with undergraduates at state universities paying no fees, but meeting textbook costs, living expenses

¹¹⁰ Mala Htun and Jennifer M. Piscopo, "Women in Politics in Latin America and the Caribbean," 11.

¹¹¹ Nicole Greenfield, "LGBT Argentina Ready to Fight For Full Equality After Gay Marriage Made Legal," *Huffington Post* (Dec. 18 2011) 1; Dora Barrancos, "Problematic Modernity: Gender, Sexuality, and Reproduction in Twentieth-Century Argentina," 142.

and commuting expenses.¹¹² Workers receive some salary during temporary unemployment periods, and some benefits for total and permanent injury because of work accidents. Workers and retirees have access to some health services, which in most instances they and their employers pay for.¹¹³

In terms of poverty reduction, there is not much of a safety net after the economic crises that hit Latin America from the 1980s onwards, but this is a great example of how women have brought more welfare-minded policies in a neo-liberal age. These trends might give clues to how women's interests in Canadian politics can help to do the same in a similar neo-liberal economic state. For example, only 10% of unemployed were getting compensation, however, the National Employment Fund, created in 1993, has as its main source of income a 1.5 percent contribution assessed on the private sector payroll and has given way to creating more jobs.¹¹⁴ Unemployment for women is higher than for men, as well as the single female having the highest unemployment rate. Men's unemployment is due more to the trend of declining employment, but women's unemployment rose mainly as a result of the workforce expanding to locations overseas, rather than job growth. When women enter the labour market they typically must seek work in the informal sector of the economy, where wage levels are most often drastically lower.¹¹⁵

Growing public awareness about the critical condition of the nation's water supply has put pressure on the government to act, in addition to raising public interest in other environmental issues. However, to create enforceable policies research must be done and the public must be educated so that they will not accept the propaganda and lack of enforcement, which has been the current government position. The government aimed to double their budget

¹¹² "Education in Argentina," *Argentour.com* (2013) 1.

¹¹³ International Labour Organization, *3rd Decent Work Country Programme for Argentina: 2012-2015 Period*. Buenos Aires: 2013. 25.

¹¹⁴ International Labour Organization, *3rd Decent Work Country Programme for Argentina: 2012-2015 Period*, 16.

¹¹⁵ International Labour Organization. *3rd Decent Work Country Programme for Argentina: 2012-2015 Period*, Buenos Aires (2013), 16.

towards environmental policy by 50% from 1994-1999, which did not occur.¹¹⁶ Unfortunately, the economic climate in Latin America has been to avoid a ‘race-to-the-bottom’, as state governments attempt to lower their environmental standards to attract investments; which is just as true for Argentina. This suggests the inability of women to get their agenda implemented in real policy. The sentiment exists to not only strengthen environmental laws, but also the welfare system. Unfortunately, perhaps this phenomenon in particular to Argentina’s case could be partially attributed to neoliberal economics, inherent from political and economic conditions attached to loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.¹¹⁷

Argentina is fairly active in foreign affairs from overseeing their contested ownership of the Falkland Islands conflict as well as recreating their role in Latin American politics. Argentinian foreign affairs is still dominated by men. When negotiations occur, it is usually to shape policy in the image of the G8 countries. In this sense, Argentina is very much like Canada, taking a middle power stance. (Except in the case of the Falkland Islands). A huge step in changing the direction of Argentina would be to focus less on foreign policy and security, and look to enforce public safety more consistently and effectively. Only 10% of Argentineans believe the country is safe or secure internally.¹¹⁸ One important step Argentina has taken is to reverse the abuse of power the military exercised after Argentina’s ‘Dirty War’. The military no longer has veto power over the government, and in 2008 the Senate demolished the military justice system, submitting military officials to rule of law. Cristina Kirchner has been able to successfully prosecute military officials and police who were responsible for disappearances, kidnappings and murders during the ‘Dirty War.’¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Jennifer M Piscopo, “Setting Agendas for Women,” 19-20.

¹¹⁷ Floyd Norris, “Not Crying For Argentina but Fearful of a Ruling,” *The New York Times* (Aug. 29 2013) 1.

¹¹⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index, *BTI 2012: Argentina Country Report*, Gütersloh (2012) 11.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

Overall, there has been some movements to bring women's issues onto the political agenda from both women in parliament and civic groups. When the issues are debated, however, they are often brushed aside largely due to the constraints placed on policy due to Argentina's economic hardships. The women brought into parliament are usually loyal to their party rather than women's issues, which presents another problem similar to that of other developing countries. Women as relatives or friends of male members of parliament is common place, especially when the quota was first implemented in the 1990s. Surveying current women members of parliament, a majority did not share a 'gender' perspective or are committed to the fighting discrimination against women.¹²⁰ The quotas have been successful in achieving higher levels of women's political participation as parliamentary members, but has not deeply affected policy.

CANADA

Canada's status has been stagnant, and in some areas, has even declined under the Conservative Harper government. Twelve out of sixteen regional offices for the status of Women have been closed.¹²¹ These offices were responsible for engaging with local women's groups and female individuals to figure out women's issues, dilemmas and feelings of disempowerment in contemporary Canadian politics. By closing these regional offices, women from different areas of Canada are not able to voice their opinions and ideas. Furthermore, funding has been cut to women's groups, international aid development for women, as well as cuts to university funding that will likely cut programs in the humanities that have gender foci, such as Women's Studies. This situation seems dire - and is - since women's participation in

¹²⁰ Tricia Gray, "Electoral Gender Quotas: Lessons from Argentina and Chile," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 22.1 (2003): 63.

¹²¹ Gerald Caplan, "The Harper government, women's rights and the cost of speaking out," *The Globe and Mail* (4 June 2010) Web. 1; Andrew Heard, "Women and Elections," Simon Fraser University: Political Science Department Web. (2011) 4-5.

government has not improved significantly since the 2003 federal election. Only twelve women belong to Prime Minister Harper's cabinet, however, four of these women were appointed to junior positions.¹²² The New Democratic Party has affirmative action policies to bring more female candidates to elections, even freezing nominations until a riding has proven a genuine search was taken to find a woman. Even if political parties set goals or gender quotas, local riding associations maintain a certain autonomy over the nomination process, making it difficult for parties to fulfill target goals.¹²³ These signs are not inspiring for women in Canada.

Canadian businesses have not treated women more kindly, perhaps since the government has no secure national policies to encourage women into higher level positions. Women in Canada only hold 13% of directorial positions at Financial Post 500 companies.¹²⁴ A study looking specifically into Canadian businesses found that bringing more women onto the board has been able to develop more strategic protocols and organizations for the companies. Globally, bringing women onto the corporate board has increased communication among board members, and has improved management style.¹²⁵ There have been numerous other studies showing higher levels of women in government have been able to increase the competency of the board by promoting diversity, increases in market capitalization, an improvement to employee morale and satisfaction, in addition to higher organizational functioning.¹²⁶ In a paper written by Sweigart, she discusses Norway's quota system for corporate boards and examines the possibility and usefulness of bringing this model into the United States and Canada. She believes that it would be easier to implement nationwide quotas for corporate boards in Canada; Quebec already

¹²² "7 Key Changes in Harper's New Cabinet: Prime Minister Shuffles Cabinet with Eye to 2015 Federal Election," *CBC News: Politics*, July 15 2013, 1.

¹²³ Brock Carlton, *Federation of Canadian Municipalities*, "Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Decision Making: Strategies for More Inclusive Canadian Communities," FCM 1047E, Ottawa, International Centre for Municipal Development (2004) 4.

¹²⁴ Sweigart, "Women on Board for Change," 91.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

leading the way in gender quotas for public corporate boards.¹²⁷ Some challenges that may lay ahead is the Golden Skirt phenomenon seen in Norway's system. Others include the lack of experience women have as board members and management position. Another potential drawback is "Queen Bee Syndrome"; as one women attains a higher position, she holds back the younger female counterparts from succeeding professionally.¹²⁸ Even if a quota is not used, Canada must do something to address the continuing effects of the glass ceiling.

In Canada, the global child care ranking for 2008 was 24th out of the 25 countries examined.¹²⁹ This is a terrible ranking, as Canada has no policies regarding child poverty, special policies for children with disabilities, and generally does not focus on improving the caretakers or educators of children; child care centres or children's workers usually do not require special education. Education, has ranked fairly well in Canada according to the OECD's development research, earning an "A" grade.¹³⁰ Women have also penetrated the post-secondary stream, commonly holding over 50% enrolment in most Canadian universities.¹³¹ It is interesting to see these levels in university, while the gender gap in managerial or high paid positions is still large. Clearly, these figures suggest that even with the equalization of females enrolled in education, that women are not benefiting and that there must be some barrier that continually put women into lower-paid positions.

Similarly, health care has been a prized public system in Canada, but the current government is making budgetary cuts to disability aid, prescriptions provided by healthcare, as well as a complete change to the national funding of health care. Prime Minister Harper, along

¹²⁷Rohini Pande and Deanna Ford, "Gender Quotas and Female Leadership: A Review," *Background Paper for the World Development Report on Gender*, Harvard University and the World Bank (7 April 2011) 36.

¹²⁸ Sweigart, "Women on Board for Change," 96.

¹²⁹ Peter Adamson, "The Child Care Transition," 4.

¹³⁰ Peter Adamson, "The Child Care Transition," 4-5.

¹³¹ "Education Indicators in Canada: Fact Sheets: Doctoral Students and University Teaching Staff," *Statistics Canada*. Feb. 24 2011. 1.

with his financial minister, has given the provinces and territories a deal where funding would increase 6% each year until 2017.¹³² However, the amount of funding given to provinces would be based on the economic growth of these provinces. Although some can see this as an ‘incentive’ for the provinces to generate growth to alleviate both national and provincial debt, it compromises the province’s ability to provide meaningful services to secure the health of the population. Many health care critics have noted the need for healthcare reform, and this new change in policy may affect the provinces’ ability to start reform until after 2020. This is important to women’s issues, as women are usually the group who suffer the most within a poor healthcare system (as they are socially given the responsibility to look after children).

At provincial levels, Canada still has a large gender gap in government. There have been recent elected females to premier positions, yet within the government, women are still lacking. Specifically looking into New Brunswick as a case study, in the 2003 elections, only 13% of government was represented by women (only 19% of candidates were women). As a whole, there is only 29% of all members on provincially appointed agencies, bodies and commissions that are women.¹³³ As this paper has shown with the Nordic countries bottom-up approach, it is important to bring more women into the local levels of government. By allowing women’s groups to organize, to become political actors, more women become involved. The more female candidates are presented to female voters, the more they have participated in electoral politics.¹³⁴ Unfortunately, Canada’s first-past-the-post electoral system has made it difficult for women candidates to be supported since parties are often reluctant to place a female candidate in

¹³² “Roy Romanow Urges PM to Meet with Premiers on Health Care,” *Huffington Post*. July 24 2013. 1.

¹³³ New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women, “Women and Electoral Reform in New Brunswick,” *Paper presented to New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy* (July 2004) 18.

¹³⁴ New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women, “Women and Electoral Reform in New Brunswick,” 24.

winnable ridings. Thus, female candidates are most often put in constituencies the party knows they will not win, due to strong historical patterns of loyalty to one political party.

Another area to examine municipally, that has always had sentiments of gender equality, is Quebec. In 1985, the number of department with at least 3 female leaders in Quebec cities was only 1.5%, whereas in 1995 it climbed to 9.4%.¹³⁵ In the study conducted by Gidengil and Vengroff, they were able to see the increase of women because women wanted these positions. They believe that stereotypical reasons are often cited for women's unequal participation, not only in politics but also in the private sphere. In most cases, they were also able to show that there were cases of tokenism, but for the most part, bringing one women on local councils allowed more women to join the councils in the future.¹³⁶ Quebec does present a somewhat unique case because of the difference of politics of the Quebecois, tending to focus more on issues such as gender equality. Looking locally at Canada can be difficult to explain the entire country's progress, largely due to Canadian regionalism.

In other municipalities across Canada, women's status in politics has not improved. Over 86% of councils were surveyed and 14% reported having no women on board.¹³⁷ Even when women are placed on local boards and councils, it is still quite difficult to not only have their voice heard, but to be taken seriously. Looking at municipal politics in terms of gender gaps was difficult to examine since there is no central body for information about women in municipal governments. These documents released by central organizations allow people to form the best practices to improve these trends of women in politics. There is not much training for municipal councils, boards or commissions to receive anti-oppression workshops, and therefore women's

¹³⁵ Elisabeth Gidengil and Richard Vengroff. "Representative Bureaucracy, Tokenism and the Glass Ceiling: the Case of Women in Quebec Municipal Administration," *Canadian Public Administration* 40.3 (Fall 2008): 462.

¹³⁶ Gidengil and Vengroff. "Representative Bureaucracy, Tokenism and the Glass Ceiling," 463-464.

¹³⁷ Carlton, "Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Decision Making," 10.

statuses may not significantly change as the attitudes remain the same.¹³⁸ In the case of Peterborough, Ontario, Lesley Parnell is the only female councillor on the City Council. It is a remarkable accomplishment, however, she still lacks the respect that should be awarded to her. In an October council session, Parnell discussed challenging city residents to recycle more of their bathroom waste. Her comment, relevant to the agenda at hand, as they were to discuss waste management, was lost in bathroom humour. Perhaps if a male council member had put forth the challenge, humour would not have been the response.¹³⁹ This specific example highlights how female politicians are marginalized by the actions of their colleagues. Most female politicians receive the treatment of having a spotlight over fumbles, miscalculations and errors in speech, drastically more than men will. Bringing more women into politics, either with government initiative or not, will help to change this atmosphere.

In terms of Canadian international policies, without women's voices in the government, Canada has become more interested in developing economics and military powers. Women have been lost in any aid development, as Canada now requires any aid to be given needs to show indications of producing economic benefits for Canada. Therefore, international aid from Canada usually neglects women's issues.¹⁴⁰ As this paper has shown, bringing women into government in one country can help women internationally simply because women are interested in uplifting women. It is also evident in areas of conflict, a swift decline in women's status takes place even if the conflict was not instigated by women in any way. These areas are often where aid is distributed in. Like in Rwanda, the genocide was primarily motivated by racism, but acted out by males. Often, women were the victims - and still are - as they need to reconstruct their

¹³⁸ Ibid, 10-11.

¹³⁹ Sarah Frank, "Councillor has earned her seat the council table," *Peterborough this Week*. October 23 2013. 7.

¹⁴⁰ Kim Mackrael, "Commercial Motives Driving Canada's Foreign Aid, Documents Reveal," *The Globe and Mail*. Jan. 08 2014

society. Thus, women are more inclined to use peaceful resolutions because they are often the most oppressed in times of conflict.

CONCLUSION

In comparison to the results of the Global Gender Gap Report, there are numerous studies like the Gender Inequality Index. This index looks at variables such as maternal mortality rates, seats in parliament occupied by women and labour force participation rates. Norway, Sweden, Canada, Finland and Argentina all resulted in performing in the “very high human development”. Nepal and Rwanda have been ranked within the “low human development”.¹⁴¹ As for discrimination against women, a study between 2009 and 2012 was developed by the OECD looking at the drivers of gender inequality. The country with the least discrimination against women is Argentina. Rwanda was 28th and Nepal was at 36th out of 86 developing countries. All of the countries improved, especially Rwanda and Nepal who moved at least 20 spaces down.¹⁴² All these countries do show an overall increasing trend that bringing women into politics, (not in the case of Canada), has been able to achieve positive results for the development and policy decision making of each country.

Gaining perspective from the results from all seven countries, this paper demonstrates how women’s increases in parliament has been able to harness five positive changes. Firstly, women can bring issues to the agenda that are often ignored. For example, the men in Rwanda would most likely not have changed the punishment for rape although it has deeply affected so many women throughout the country.¹⁴³ Secondly, women shed light on issues that have been seen as ‘accomplished’ policies. This means the policies that have been fashioned in a particular

¹⁴¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Report 2013: The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World*. New York, (2013) 156-158.

¹⁴² “2012 SIGI: Social Institutions and Gender Index: Understanding the Drivers of Gender Inequality.” *OECD*. Paris: 2012. 14.

¹⁴³ Powley, “Rwanda,” 156.

paradigm that ignore other alternatives. For instance, child care is often not a popular debate topic in most established democracies. Yet it should be, as the needs of parents are constantly changing. The Nordic countries' ability to endorse incentives for the father to take parental leave with children is an enormous change in child care policies.¹⁴⁴ Thirdly, women have not only participated in cross-party cooperation more often, but also consult with civic groups more regularly about issues than their male counterparts. By including the public opinion into the debate, it widens the horizons for democratic policies. Fourthly, women are inclined to resort to peace making resolutions or compromises instead of deadlock conversations. Lastly, all these countries have around 50% women in their populations.¹⁴⁵ By bringing at least 30% women into parliament, it secures a more representative parliament reaching agreements for the interests of the entire population.

Alas, after looking at these different countries, women improve the democratic process by highlighting different priorities and use different means to develop policies through the government's decision-making process. Gender quotas have been successful in bringing women into politics in all these countries (except Canada and Finland). In countries where gender-equality was not prevalent in society (Nepal, Argentina, Rwanda), these quotas were needed to help break the gender stereotypes and roles assigned to women. There is notably much work to be done in several areas: such as seriously listening to the women whom are elected and looking at improving women's representation in the high levelled private sector. Women have been able to progress leaps and bounds for themselves and for society at large through these quotas or gender equality laws. Despite these significant improvements to women's status in society, they are still continually marginalized into positions of traditionally 'feminine' politics and given

¹⁴⁴ Jill M Bystydzienski, "Women in Politics in Norway," *Women & Politics* 8.3-4 (1988): 88; The Swedish Institute. "Facts About Sweden," 2; "Gender Equality Policies in Finland," 13.

¹⁴⁵ Mona Lena Krook, "Gender Quotas, Norms, and Politics," *Politics and Gender* 2 (2006): 110.

stereotypical roles in healthcare, education and so on. Meaningful participation in government for females can truly affect a wide range of policies, as gender has proven to have a direct impact on policy priorities.¹⁴⁶

Although there is some dismay over the progress women have been able to bring, it has increased the democratic relations of the countries discussed. The women in government are more likely to consult with civic groups and organizations, in comparison to their male counterparts. This ability to reach out to constituents about issues in debate can enhance the entire decision-making process to be more representative of the population's interests. After examining the quota systems in each country, it is evident that in post-conflict/revolution states, the quota was written into their constitution for egalitarian visions, although this was far from the reality in society. Especially after the Beijing Platform – the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing 1995 – gender quotas are endorsed by the international community. Regarding quotas, women in parliaments of states where women in communities and civic organizations pushed for gender quotas have been quite successful.¹⁴⁷ The key in making women a success in politics is to have a society that will give these women a chance to create change. Parliaments must also be wary when enacting these quotas, being sure to implement cautiously. The lack of success experienced by women in Africa (excluding Rwanda) and Asia in fulfilling these quotas can be attributed to the hastened ratification and application of the quotas.¹⁴⁸ Quotas have not gained much support in Canada, even among women¹⁴⁹, therefore, it

¹⁴⁶ Susan Markham, "Women as Agents of Change: Having Voice in Society and Influencing Policy," *National Democratic Institute and the World Bank*. (2012) 7.

¹⁴⁷ Susan Franceschet and Jennifer M. Piscopo, "Gender Quotas and Women's Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina," 402.

¹⁴⁸ Franceschet and Piscopo, "Gender Quotas and Women's Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina," 404.

¹⁴⁹ Elisabeth Gidengil, "Gender and Attitudes towards Quotas for Women Candidates in Canada," *Women & Politics* 16.4 (1996): 38.

is up to all actors to help support and elect women into the Canadian government, even if this is done without quotas.

If we all recall the transformation of the computer, it first started as a monstrosity of a machine which could barely do simple functions. Even the CEO of IBM in 1968 thought the microchip was a useless invention.¹⁵⁰ Although this might be speculated, it shows trends of human behaviour where it takes time for society to value something and make it useful. Over time, humans have not only been able to fine tune the computer to make it more accessible, but also to include different functions. Now, computers are almost seen as a necessity – especially in North America. This same process accounts for most new social phenomenon – it takes time to truly take effect. Most scholars concur to a fair degree that gender does make some positive change. This methodological problem exist when examining women’s influence in politics after achieving 1/3 of seats because it is impossible to isolate the changes women make, especially when some women elected do not even stand for women’s rights.¹⁵¹ From seeing the results from all the countries, it is difficult to say if quotas would be effective in Canada, even if they were initiated through grassroots movements. Therefore, one should try to produce an engaging environment for both genders to encourage more women into politics.

¹⁵⁰ "Prediction-Quotes," *ETNI - English Teachers Network*. 1997.

¹⁵¹ Nina C. Raaum, "Gender Equality and Political Representation: A Nordic Comparison," *West European Politics* 28.4 (2005): 890.

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Paper: Gender Parity in the Canadian Government: Are Quotas Necessary?

Gender Parity in the Canadian Government: Are Quotas Necessary?

The implementation of gender quotas ~~are being hotly contested~~ to encourage more women into traditionally male dominated spheres ~~are being hotly contested~~. These debates are centred on the merit of candidates and the lack of women's ability to break through the glass ceiling that is ever-present in these sectors. In the Canadian context, it would make much more sense to approach gender parity much like the Nordic countries such as Sweden, Finland and Norway. Sweden and Norway both only implemented quotas through political parties when there was already about 25-30% of women in government. This path to gender parity has been much more sustainable and effective. In comparison, Nepal has experienced a slight decrease in women elected ~~into~~ from their most recent elections ~~s in 2013 down from 33% to 29%~~ ~~(insert number?, which is less than the number of women in government after the 2008 national election (number?))~~ (The United Nations ~~2014 need date for all citations~~, 1; The United Nations ~~2008 need date for all citations~~, 1). These experiences from different countries will illuminate the best possible solution for reaching gender parity in the Canadian government.

In Canada, women make over half of the population but less than a third of the politicians in Canada are female. This clearly represents a dysfunctional aspect to the Canadian democratic system as there is academic evidence supporting the positive impact of increasing female representation to a minimum of thirty percent. The Canadian government has systematically defunded women's groups and ~~hasve~~ taken no other initiatives to promote women's participation into politics. The Canadian government must be prepared to reinvest in women's groups and

encourage political culture to be more accepting of diversity in politics in smaller measures before installing a gender quota. This is not to say a gender quota would not be useful, but a strengthening of women's groups must occur with or without a quota to be able to successfully inspire females to become politicians. These actions should be the first step in a long journey to gender equalization in Canadian politics.

This paper will examine the different ways Canada has discussed achieving gender parity in the political sphere. By looking at different opinions on the feminist movement and moreover on the implementation of a quota system in both a political and financial context, a clear perspective will emerge on the societal acceptance of these proposals. Secondly, by contrasting these opinions of Canadians to the realities of the countries who have been able to apply a gender quota to their electoral system, it will be worthwhile to see if quotas would work in a Canadian context. This paper will seek to highlight the problems in the Canadian domestic sphere that complicates achieving gender parity, regardless of a quota, due to several governmental and societal factors which weaken~~detract~~ women's support networks. Lastly, these issues will show that quotas may not be the best route as the first step in reaching levels of gender equality, but would be a second or third step. First, Canada must reinvest in women's issues not only through monetary funding from the government, but also by developing policies in other areas that will help improve the overall status of Canadian women. By doing so, there is a far greater chance of Canadian women becoming involved in the electoral process, specifically as a political candidate themselves. Quotas, however, can be much more effective after these measures are taken to ensure the number of women in politics does not decrease. Therefore, gender quotas following the protection and empowerment of the status of women in Canada would be the most effective route to reach gender parity.

When examining women in politics, most studies point to the fact that women are disinterested in entering the realm of politics for numerous reasons. One of these reasons specifically, is the government is structured against female culture and ignores other roles a member of parliament may have (Bird ~~2003-year~~, 6-7). To mitigate these barriers, the Canadian government could follow suit of Tasmania and conclude parliamentary sessions at six o'clock in the evening to ensure a family-friendly environment (Bashevkin ~~year—please add year for all in-text citations~~2009, 79-81). Another reason why women are not represented in the political arena is the lack of potential female candidates available and how society views the female candidates who do run. Societal perceptions of leadership usually develop around the individual's ability to command instead of to find a compromise. Aggression and assertion is often valued by the media over the ideas of open communication and discussion (Bashevkin 2009, 121-123; Everitt and Gidengil 2003, 197).

Looking into the ideas of the Enlightenment as well as the modern era when democracy, arguments to include women have been made. Edmund Burke believed the representative of a constituency had the legitimacy to make policy of his own accord because, as the elected representative, he was the symbolic representation of the community's interests. In comparison, John Stuart Mill argues a truly representative government would have a collective of the best ideas and most persuasive orators. Although not explicitly states, political ideas cannot solely come from men as women offer different experiences and perspectives on issues for the legislative agenda. Secondly, Mill believed citizens' interests could be represented only when the citizens themselves are represented(?)ing within their own government. In this sense, if women's interests are being ignored, it is most likely because the government has no or little female representation. Mill does agree with Burke on one aspect of democratic governance:

reformation must happen slowly. Mill however, sees change to the democratic system as a necessary function for it to improve. Government can be difficult to change because government often reflects the status quo of society where the ‘winners’ become political officials. Mill, however, believes through the collective power of people, government can change (Mill [1862](#), 36-37, 39). These ideas from Mill can help shape the debate by embedding them within arguments for changes to the political arena.

When women achieved the suffrage in 1918 – excluding [Asian women of colour \(i.e., non-white women\)](#) and [Aboriginal women](#) – women were still largely excluded from electoral politics (Young and Cross 2003, 91). Until around the 1970s, women’s participation in politics remained in supportive roles, women remained greatly under represented until [the](#) 1980s. In the 1980s however, the numbers of women in government only slightly increased. In the 32nd parliamentary session less than five percent of the representatives elected were women. By the twenty-first century, women have been able to achieve much more substantial numbers in government, but average around twenty-three percent. In 1991, a survey conducted in each constituency of Canada revealed that only 20% of riding presidents, 32% of treasurers and 69% of secretaries were women. Although women were able to gain higher positions in political parties, there still remains a barrier to women reaching executive levels (Young and Cross [2003](#), 92-3). Views on feminism in Canada however, usually fall into two camps: women must be treated equal to men [and](#)s feminism provides a mechanism for women to stand up for themselves or that women need to stop ‘complaining’. Women’s acceptance of feminism can skew the perception of gender equality in Canada because the ‘oppressed’ group cannot recognize their own oppression collectively. (Young and Cross [2003](#), 102). People who accept the first interpretation are usually more supportive of measures to promote gender equality.

In surveys conducted by Lisa Young and William Cross [in 2003](#), both genders in multiple political parties were asked if women should be able to exert more influence over the parties' decisions and policy formation. The results showed that men just as much as women want women to gain more influence in party politics (93). Once women do become candidates however, their success heavily depends on how the media depicts these female candidates. These females are presented with a double-edged sword: if they act in the masculine norms of electoral politics, they are made to look aggressive and women who are not masculine are made to be seen as unnatural in the political race (Sampert and Trimble [2003](#), 213). The media constructs the electoral contest as a boxing match or even a war. ~~Using this metaphorical language of conflict and competition~~ that often conveys masculine identities; creates a masculine narrative in electoral politics ~~that~~~~which~~ reflects the patriarchal values in society. Although this narrative seems subtle, the media is not a passive outlet in society but can exert much influence on society itself. Therefore, when the entire electoral political narrative is masculinized systematically, women even with the nomination and support of a party, still remain largely unsuccessful (Everitt and Gidengil [2003](#), 196-197).

Many articles and perspectives offer a view of Canada which indicates gender equality within the political sphere. Yet, these authors primarily focus on the premier leadership of the provinces confined usually just in the past provincial elections. They believe gender equality has not only been reached but is not even an issue because of the recent examples of three female candidates for the leadership in Newfoundland, the main two candidates in Alberta were female and the Ontario's female premier may be succeeded by another female leader of a different party (Furey [2013](#), 1). The critics of gender politics point to these examples to highlight ~~that a lack of~~ quota implementation or use of affirmative action policies ~~are unnecessary for to lead these~~

women ~~to attain into~~ their current or past positions. Others even will highlight the few female ministers in the House of Commons and neglect to mention how they are put in traditionally feminine roles like overseeing healthcare and public works. These authors suggests quotas give the message to women that as individuals, they will never reach these positions through merit (Kwan 2013, 1).

In one article published by the Globe and Mail, ~~the author~~ columnist Margaret, Wente, discusses employment as becoming increasingly gender blind because of the recent examples of a woman becoming the new head of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Germany's head of state as well as the managing director of the IMF. Wente argues ~~that~~ when feminists point to significant gender gaps in the areas of economics and politics, it's simply because women are not interested in these areas. She believes women just would "rather go to teacher's college," (Wente [2014](#), 1). Wente echoes other Canadians when she argues increasing the number of women on boards has actually decreased profitability for the company. She believes this decrease is a result of having young, unqualified women fulfilling a spot on the board. Her articles views quotas as mostly responsible for putting these 'underqualified' women in a vulnerable position both personally and for the company (Wente [2014](#), 2). The question remains of the Canadians if they want to continue a male-dominated trend in the corporate sector because there are no opportunities for women to gain the experience 'necessary' for these roles. Unknowingly, most of these male CEOs float between different sectors of the corporate world and no one questions their experience. Women are often neglected in their own companies as top-level ~~ed~~ positions are filled from external sources (Grant Thornton [2012](#), 4-5).

A recent example that highlights this issue is the recent female appointment of General Motors, ~~of~~ Mary Barra. Her salary appears to be less than her predecessor Dan Akerman, whom

is now hired on as a consultant. The most insulting component is that Barra has been a long time employee of GM, for two decades whereas Don Akerman had been with an investment firm. This case study highlights the problem where women are often ignored for higher leveled promotions, and when they arrive to these higher positions they are usually paid less than people who have less experience than themselves. (Kwan [2014](#), 1) There has been recent research, however, demonstrating a link between gender equality on boards - in the case of North America - the recruitment of more females on boards proved to [lead to better company performance](#) ~~better~~. Kellie A. McElhaney and Sanaz Mobasseri at the University of California, ~~their~~ report ~~shows~~ that gender equality on boards perform better on multiple aspects of corporate sustainability. Comparatively, a study conducted in 2012 by Dow Jones reported gender equality represented on an executive team creates [more successful start-ups](#) (Kwan [2014](#), 1). This information is vital to inform the public that the actions to bring women into these male-dominated areas is a good phenomenon because [of the outcomes it helps to strengthen that area of society](#).

In terms of encouraging more women into the executive levels of public companies, Canada still lags behind. The level of executive women rests on an average of 20% nationally (Grant Thornton [2012](#), 3). There have been explorations to see if companies have been internally pushing for women to break the glass ceiling or if it would be more effective to install legislation to improve this trend. Firstly, Canada regulates companies using a comply-or-explain model (Anand [2014](#), 1). Therefore, legislation regarding increasing women in executive roles would still not endorse an impactful increase to women's numbers because the company still decides what the gender complement is. The company is only required to explain why they have chosen a different stance than the legislation requires. According to a study conducted by Frank

Milne, Lynnette Purda and Anita Anand, internal compliance rates have improved significantly in the past five years. Anand is optimistic of firms complying with gender equal policies for management positions (Anand [2014](#), 2).

Last year, Rona Ambrose, the ~~current~~ minister of the ~~S~~status of ~~W~~women in Canada, organized a committee to oversee the issue of the lack of women on board of directors for publicly traded companies. In regards to the number of women as directors on boards for public companies, the national average remains at a low 10%. ~~Twenty-five~~²⁵ members were selected, most from the business community including representatives from Weyerhaeuser Co. Ltd., Linamar Corp., Open Text Corp. as well as TMX Group Ltd. (McFarland [2013](#), 1). Ambrose ~~has~~ suggested the committee ~~was~~ not inclined towards implementing quotas and ~~that~~ merit ~~would~~ still be a key factor considered (McFarland [2013](#), 2). The committee deciding the fate of the measures recommended to the government ~~were themselves~~^{are} in the corporate sector ~~themselves~~ and ~~were~~^{are} able to ignore the [reality that women simply cannot compete by not addressing the customs in business developed by men](#)~~facts at hand (which facts?)~~. The comply-or-explain method is not an effective tool to motivate companies to change their highest paid officials. The comply-or-explain model would be much more effective with other supplementary recommendations, as Ms. Baxendale, a leader in the business community, has suggested. She proposes Canada sets strategic targets for the number of women on boards along with an increased transparency on the hiring selection. This way, when a company gives a report explaining why they have not complied with the national target, it is much clearer how to improve the success of hitting these targets. Yet this still side-steps a responsibility these corporations have for social equality. They are given no [responsibility to endorse equal](#)

opportunities for those who have the qualifications ne (what? Need to be clear) with this comply-or-explain model (Eichler [2013](#), 2).

The general progress of women's rights in Canada has lagged behind many of the industrialized nations of the world. These women's rights(?)issues, however, must be framed in a broader sense. For instance, Canada's pay equity laws must be reformed because women on average make 81% of men's wages. Since there is different labour market opportunities for women, the estimates in lost income due to the differences is around \$168 billion a year. Marc Garneau (MP?) of in a piece he wrote for in a piece he wrote for the Globe and Mail suggests that this is an economic issue, not just a women's issue anymore, because of the intense economic impact the barriers women face in the workplace have. Unfortunately, to address the wage gap, the legal system has placed the onus on the employee to prove the differences in wages and report their employer, most often their current workplace (Garneau [2013](#), 1). Therefore, society must take this issues to heart not just as women's problems but to look at the overall negative impact they have on Canadians.

There are others however, like Senator Linda Frum, who argues the feminist movement in Canada has been able to settle key issues in their favour - they have remained successful largely through patience - not legislation. Senator Frum has been debating between other senators over-against the proposed legislation to implement a 40% quota for each sex on their corporate boards. The legislation would require these standards be met or face losing the licensing needed to legally operate a business in Canada. Senator Hervieux-Payette disagrees with Frum and continues talks with other women's groups to draw awareness to the glass ceiling which still acts as a barrier to women in their career. Since the Senate is Conservative-dominated, the bill is unlikely to pass but it is important to keep these efforts alive for the

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conversations ~~on surrounding gender politics~~ facilitating change to reduce ~~these~~ barriers for women (Carlson [2013](#), 1-2) In contrast to this argument, the government needs to address the development males have achieved over the female population as males have been able to dominate in important sectors including politics, economics and even until recently, education. If people argue merit as the key quality to employment, it disregards the fact that women have not been able to fairly ~~nor~~ adequately, on a general scale, develop their own skills within their career.

Often, critics of the quota point to the reaction 'felt' by women themselves. Anthony Furey of *The Sun* has written an article in response to last year's proposal by Laurel Broten to administer ~~of~~ gender quotas s on publicly traded companies' corporate boards. He argues against the quota by suggesting that a quota coddles women and maintains a culture of inferiority concerning the female gender. The Chairman of Canadian Tire, Maureen Sabia, has publicly expressed her disapproval of quotas citing similar reasons. These critics often point to the number of female graduates from post-secondary education and how the trend has increased for the female population within the recent decades (Furey [2013](#), 1). Therefore, it is safe to assume in context of this argument, women will naturally claim these positions in corporations, boards and government. Although the fact that women's graduation rates are often equal or higher than men coming out of post-secondary institutions, it is not safe to assume entire industries will accept these graduates. Also, this ignores the fact that women are still being held back even in the most obvious form: their paycheck. Since these results still come out of surveys and research, there are still significant barriers that must be addressed. Time is not going to weaken these barriers.

The second layer within the debates over gender quotas points towards a general inclination to employ other mechanisms to improve gender parity instead of using a quota as a

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first resource. These debates are important to continue, facilitate and observe because they offer insights into why women are not in the political sphere, as well, ~~they-as~~ illuminate other recommendations. Similarly, by contemplating the results of gender quotas in other countries, Canada can find the best solution for its society. In this next section, problems arising from the quota system in Nepal and Argentina highlight ways the quota system could create further complications in the electoral system in terms of representing diversity. Next, by looking at the success of the Nordic countries as well as Rwanda, Canada can consider implementing similar steps before initiating a gender quota to ensure women can truly seek a political career without many discriminatory obstacles in their way.

One could argue quotas would be able to undo the damage of gender-biased media, which is seen as one of the largest barriers to the success of female candidates. Quotas however, cannot change public perception like the media can. When examining the success of the quota system in Nepal, it can be useful to highlight the need for an already gender-neutral society. Since 2008, Nepal has had a quota in place to ensure females receive 33% of the seat in government. In the most recent election, the number of women in government has fallen below the years previously as well as below the target set by the quota. These numbers in Nepal suggests that when a quota is implemented without the consensus of society, it will not have a powerful effect (Basnet [2010](#), 4-5). This is important in context of the opinions reviewed in the first part of this paper. If the Canadian society does not agree with the implementation of a strict quota, they must exercise other options before doing so.

Nepal boosted the number of female politicians the most effectively in the 2008 election. This trend may be influenced by the initiation of training programs for local women to gain skills and knowledge of the electoral system in 2004. Other measures have been introduced such as

giving a monetary incentive for these women to receive training. This method tends to be the most effective as husbands or fathers of these women are more permissive of the women attending these sessions for a monetary value. In a society that is less developed, it can be difficult for women to circumvent the fate placed upon them to take care of the children and household, even at times gaining outside employment to support the family income. It is often difficult for most women to view themselves in a political context because of their impoverished conditions (Basnet [2010](#), 7). Otherwise, Nepal's study reveals the key to successful strategies in bringing more women into politics: the need for support and opportunities to learn about a system that has historically shut women out.

Another issue which may arise in the Canadian context in terms of implementing a quota, is that the women elected will be the wives, sisters and relatives of the male members of parliament. The trend of using female relative to fulfill gender quotas is to quell the feminist unrest in the country by achieving gender parity by using loyal or even submissive members of the family to ensure the same policy agenda will be pursued. This pattern occurred in Argentina when they first began to enforce the quota in 1991 (Franceschet and Piscopo [2008](#), 302-4).

Although the pattern has been curtailed and can be explained partially due to cultural relativism because the elite classes' education largely outweighs those of the common Argentinean creating a larger gap between the rich and the poor than in the Canadian context. It could be foreseeable that political parties ask loyal female members to fulfill the seats needed if a quota were to be implemented. The risk is the potential fear tactics that could be used on these women to keep toting the party line instead of highlighting the women's perspective the quotas seeks to make more prominent (Carrio [2012](#), 171-2).

Instead of implementing a gender quota, there are other ways Canada can make the political sphere much more female-friendly to encourage a natural diversity to emerge. Since gender quotas has sparked such controversy in the media without much debate in the House of Commons over this issue, it is clear that Canada needs to provide other means of empowering women politically than by starting with quotas. The Canadian government can make their society more culturally open to the needs of women. For instance, child care policies could be changed to support greater involvement of ~~make the male partner more responsible~~ men in for child-raising. Another example was to change the hours of legislative debate for the Member of Parliament at each level of governance to allow politicians to have family-friendly careers. The problem, realistically in Canada, is that society continues to be patriarchal and favours men in power positions. The Canadian state, continuing with the current Conservative government led by Stephen Harper has divested Canadian interests in empowering women by systematically disengaging women's groups and representation. This will be discussed in more detail below.

In Sweden, they have implemented child care policies that require the father to take parental leave as these days with pay are non-transferrable to the partner (The Swedish Institute [2013](#), 2). This measure was implemented to encourage more equalization between the genders generally in society and numerous trends have resulted. Some included a lower divorce rate. For instance, since Sweden has enacted this legislation in 1995, the national divorce rate has declined. Other trends even include higher wages for female workers. In a Socio-culturally ~~aspect, the time~~ when a couple is having and raising a young child, the parents usually negotiate a plan for this time in their lives. Unknowingly, these patterns become engrained and the mother is usually left to tend to the children as the primary caregiver in the family. This Child care ~~policies such as that of Sweden legislation~~ can reverse this trend by allowing the father the

social acceptability to take the time off as it seems socially inept for someone to give up paid paternal leave (Eichler, [“Would more men take a ‘use it or lose it’ paternity leave, 2014.”](#) 1-2).

Other interesting methods the Nordic countries have taken [that positively effect gender equality include more stable have largely been successful impart due to the welfare state policies which promotes](#) funding for women’s groups. Since these women’s groups have access to resources, they are able to grow nationally and create network systems for nurturing the potential of female candidacy among their members. For example, the Feminist Initiative (Fi) began and grew by small local meetings set up in one of the members’ homes. The Fi were able to gain government grants even before establishing themselves as a political party (Törnkvist [2014](#), 2). If Canada were able to mobilize more women into political groups, women’s issues would be discussed more and brought into light for the rest of society outside of feminist circles. This would create a more conducive environment for women to participate in the political arena. Furthermore, many women in Canada do not see themselves as potential candidates. If there were more organizations which had a local presence to encourage women at a local level to participate, women would become mobilized in larger numbers into politics (Gidengil [1996](#), 23).

In Rwanda, the increase of women into government has been unfortunately largely accredited to the genocide of 1994, but there have been opportunities for female politicians to ensure women continue to have an equal footing with men. In a continent historically having low numbers of females graduating from elementary and secondary school compared to males, Rwanda stands out as an exception. The female members of parliament brought in a quota for entrance into prestigious boarding schools which allowed more females the opportunity to be afforded a secondary school education. This allows women the confidence and education to be able to run as candidates in future elections. Secondly, the way the constitution was re-written as

the country began to rebuild brought in a new found awareness for women's issues. The constitution allowed for quotas in different aspects of society which generated an inspired political will to seek gender equality (Bikorimana [2012](#), 2).

By looking at the quota systems in different countries, the trends may be applied to the Canadian situation to be able to measure which variable in implementing the quota was the most effective. The Nordic countries offer Canada longer studies of how gender equal policies build a stronger female workforce and a society open to giving opportunities to [women, although more focus should be done on increasing the participation of minority groups](#)~~women (minority groups? I don't think this is the case for racialized minorities)~~. Also, women's groups in the Nordic countries were able to push the political parties to adopt a gender threshold target for both genders. It should be noted in Finland, there is no national quota system nor have all the political parties agreed to drafting and ratifying any gender-equal policies for their candidate search, [yet the number of women politicians is high currently at 42.5% \(The United Nations 2014, 1\)](#)~~(give a number or stat if possible)~~. This may be a sign of the strength the women's groups have been able to exercise in Finland (Alho [1987](#), 45). The cases in the developing countries, since they have implemented quotas more recently, provide some light into some of the difficulties that arose when adjusting society to the realities of a quota [and circumstances peculiar to the country such as the case of Rwanda](#). By examining different factors in Canadian society and superimposing issues which occurred in other countries to the Canadian context, the most effective route to gender parity in Canada will become clearer.

The Canadian feminist movement [appears to have been](#) ~~has~~ been in decline [significantly](#) since the early nineties. [It would appear that](#) ~~(~~ This is ~~in~~ part because of internal disagreements and a fracture of the movement has decreased its influence on political change (Bashevkin [2009](#),

28-31). At the same time, funding for women's organizations such as The National Action Committee of the Status of Women (NACSW) was cut to the point where it folded. The NACSW was created in response to The Royal Commission on the Status of Women that looked ~~ing~~ into women's inequality issues in 1967 during the second wave of feminism in Canada. (during the peak of the feminist movement(? According to whom? I think this is debatable, i.e., when such a peak occurred). Throughout the decades into the early nineties, the ~~committee~~-NACSW was able to persist in keeping an awareness of women's issues along with pushing for appropriate action through legislation. During the rise of the Conservative Party at the turn of the century, the feminist movement was further disabled not by internal problems but because of the cuts to funding from the government (Bashevkin [2009](#), 54). Twelve of the fourteen~~Many of the (Would be better if you could state how many...)~~ offices for the Status of Women have been closed which makes it more difficult to keep record of issues in different regions of Canada. Since the country is so large geographically and with varying cultural difference, the federal government must ensure a standard of rights and living for women across the country. It is nearly impossible if the offices overseeing women's trends are only located in four areas across the entire country. The Conservative Party has gone to the lengths of removing the word 'equality' from the party mandate to reverse any accountability assumed with using a loaded term such as 'equality'. The Harper government specifically, has the lowest number of women both in candidates and in governmental representatives in all of the parties in the last federal election, holding at about eleven percent (Bryden [2010](#), 1-2; Garneau [2013](#), 1).

Increasing women's representation in government has been shown to increase the efforts of women to work across party lines – in a way this helps to promote democratic values versus the non-cooperation and hostility between parties (Skjeie, 4). With this non~~Being able to act in~~

ways outside the strict expectations of -partisanship-perspective, the legislative agenda and debate becomes much richer with cooperation instead of continual and brazen disagreement. In the 1990s, women from three political parties formed a subcommittee on the status of women in Canada and were able to successfully pass legislation according to the recommendations of the reports. These policy initiatives included improvements to sexual assault legislation, a tightening of firearms control and other advancements such as helping to prioritize devastating women's health issues to be covered by government funding. It is important to add though, that the political party system in Canada is remarkably strict. This makes the cooperation between the parties very difficult and can create hostilities and tensions towards someone or some people in the Party. This has already occurred in most parties, an example from the liberal party makes this clear. After Chrétien had appointed and shuffled the new cabinet, Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett was put in negative light when she criticized the cabinet's lack of gender representation (Trimble 2008, 90-1).

This is a new idea: An American study conducted research looking at the introduction of higher levels of female judges and how it has influence^d court culture towards a greater openness (Campbell 2013, 1). Specifically, Kim Campbell, the first female Prime Minister of Canada, was able to open discussions and eventually reform sexual-assault legislation (Campbell 2013, 2). In 2009, Kim Campbell ~~has~~ received an EVE award from Equal Voice, an organization promoting the election of female members of parliament in Canada. Campbell has proposed her own recommendations for increasing female politicians which includes a drastic reform of the electoral boundaries so that every constituency would become two-member constituencies. This way, a representative of each gender can be selected and elected into the House of Commons. This solution, she suggests, would create instant and equal gender parity (Campbell 2013, 2).

The Harper government, it can be argued, has even implemented traditional family policies that discourage equality both in politics and the workplace. For example, the Child Tax Benefit encourages women to stay at home, since men are still paid on average 19% more than their counterparts. Therefore, it would make more economic sense for the breadwinner to continue to work and the ~~woman primary caregiver, usually women, to~~ stay at home to collect a tax break from the government to ~~supplementary~~ their income. It also makes it difficult for women to gain their own income and lessens the chance of networking with vital individuals and industry leaders to build political ~~and social~~ capital. On the other hand, if the government were to install a national child care program, it would not only allow mothers to take on more political responsibility at an earlier age, but it brings women into the political process by ~~removing taking them out of~~ the question ~~between-whether to~~ raising a child versus building a career – political or not (Eichler [2013](#), 2).

Not only has his budget cuts drastically reduced funding of women's ~~equality rights~~ groups, the government has targeted organizations critical of the government's anti-abortion stance. The government made it clear that abortion is not a 'women's right' and organizations funding abortions for maternal health overseas would have their funding cut (Caplan 2010, 1). Since the government has become a majority in the most recent federal elections, the feminist movement in Canada has received more pushback. Specifically, Harper has cut funding to ~~fourteen-several~~ different ~~women's-interest~~ groups ~~endorsing gender equality in their work,~~ which had previously received federal ~~funding,~~ ~~such as CIDA and Match International~~. One of these organizations funded through the Canadian International Development Agency ended after 30 years of ~~efforts~~. In the 2010 G20 summit in Toronto, Harper ~~has even~~ promised to make the funding of maternal health care a foci of the agenda. Yet, Harper still eludes any policy

Comment [NC3]: Need to list the the fourteen groups in a footnote. As a rule, organizations need to be specifically listed.

Comment [NC4]: Which organization?

initiatives to install any form of national child care policies which can be seen as a complement or even a component to maternal health care. Lastly, by cutting any funding to international organizations that provide safe abortions to women abroad, Harper ~~projects~~ makes clear his own opinions, against the consensus of not only the feminist movement, but the majority of Canadian citizens' opinion on abortion (Brennan 2010, 2; Mackrael, 2). Women have been propelled towards politics for this very reason of improving social policy as women in politics tend to lean to leftist policies (Gidengil, Blais, Nadeau and Nevitte 2003, 154).

Unfortunately, this attitude has rippled through the entire party, a Conservative Senator, Nancy Ruth, had publicly and aggressively warned aid workers about their criticism over Harper's decisions in this regard. (Brennan 2010, 1) Another interesting regard to Harper's defunding of women's groups is the simultaneous funding to women's shelters. Therefore, Harper's government can continue to express a caring attitude towards women's rights. Harper, however, cuts funding to the very organizations who look at addressing and finding solutions to the underlaying causes of the social problems women face in Canada. These organizations focus on solving the very problems which brings women to need these shelters in the first place (Brennan 2010, 2).

Nancy Ruth's statement has been deemed by critics of the Conservative Party as showing its' true ideological roots. Bob Rae has termed this incident as representing evidence of the "culture of intimidation," (Bryden 2010, 1) that is ingrained within the party. Although other Conservative Party members distanced themselves from the comment, their defunding of women's groups does raise issues for the future of women's rights in Canada. Some of the groups that have had their funding cut include: the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, the Alberta Network of Immigrant

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Women and the New Brunswick Pay Equity Coalition (Bryden 2010, 1). The Liberals' status of women critic, Anita Neville, has released research showing that there have been more groups to lose funding but have chosen not to go public with this information ~~for~~ fear of other governmental repercussions (Bryden 2010, 2). With these cuts to women's groups, it is difficult for the women in Canada to find outlets to gather and find support within a community which is traditionally male-dominated.

Specifically, the Harper government has cut funding to Match International, which was dedicated to issues of women's equality internationally. Also, CIDA has cut funding that is directed for projects in Pakistan and Kenya for promoting gender equality. CIDA staff, much like the conservative senator, has good-heartedly warned non-governmental organizations to remove the terminology of "gender equality" out of funding proposals. This has proven to be the trend of the conservative government: to reduce funding for organizations that promote women's issues domestically and internationally (Caplan 2010, 1). A retired head of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, Gerry Barr said at the time that the government is pursuing a policy of "punishment politics," (Caplan 2010, 2). Punishment politics in the sense that if organizations speak out against government policies and the possibility of losing funding will be high (Caplan 2010, 2).

Women are facing evolving barriers to participation and success in the electoral arena. Women candidates have been marginalized by the media specifically such as lack of visibility, stereotyping the candidates to highlight feminine traits as well as suggesting the female candidates have incompetency as a political candidate. A new form of media discrimination has been observed termed 'gender-differentiated treatment.' This suggests that in the realm of politics, masculine identities are the norm. The women however, will be either deemed

aggressive or crossing a line if she portrays herself in line with this image. On the contrary, if a woman does not suit this masculine role, she is ignored or categorically un-newsworthy (Everitt and Gidengil 2003, 194 and 196). The increase in the number of women competing for elite elected office has done little to change the norms of political journalism since journalism itself is still dominated by men (Sampert and Trimble 2003, 215). Journalism continues to threaten the idea that women can participate in electoral politics because it reinforces politics as a 'man's game,' (Everitt and Gidengil 2003, 208).

In terms of political parties, there is evidence to suggest when women participate more in the extra parliamentary wings of government, the greater increase of women being elected into government (Young and Cross 2003, 91). Women are more likely to wait to be invited into a political party instead of joining on their own initiative. Also, similar findings have been demonstrated in terms of women's confidence in nominating themselves for a candidacy. This suggests that women feel less confident in the electoral sphere of politics. What does make women run, then? Studies suggest that women are most likely to be recruited through social networks for leadership and nomination contests since they are more likely to nominate themselves as a candidate once they have found a place in a political party or organization (Young and Cross 2003, 99 and 106). Therefore, it would be optimal for organizations and political parties to support social networking and connecting individuals within their communities.

Although women have made significant progress in the past thirty years, political parties ~~should~~ could do more to reinforce encourage and support gender representational guarantees ~~to~~ and remain vigilant of the barriers women face in electoral politics (Young and Cross 2003, 107). There have been no formal efforts by the major Canadian political parties to implement a

quota system, most likely because of the negative attention it would receive from the Canadian public. There are instances where parties have implemented other mechanisms to encourage more number of women in their own party membership but also as potential candidates for members of parliament. Women in the federal Liberal party have fought actively in the past decade to gain more influence in party politics which is noted in continued efforts to not only absorb more women into their membership but also the to nominate more women into electoral politics (Young and Cross 2003, 105). The New Democrat Party has initiated policies aiming at gender equality such as training and financing female candidates as well as placing target numbers for women candidates in each election. The Liberal Party has followed suit as they promote similar policies to the NDP. The Conservative Party have made no indications of gender-balance policies, although they represent a significant number of the winnable ridings throughout Canada.

Women's involvement in interest groups and political parties arguably make the parties themselves more responsive and responsible to women's issues. ~~In conclusion, Yet, according to Young and Cross,~~ women ~~to~~ find interest groups more effective in changing politics than political parties ~~due to their tendency to channel their energy into these groups accordingly~~ (Young and Cross 2003, 93). This evidence demonstrates the lack of support political parties' offer to women ~~(since politics has historically been dominated by males — I think there is more nuance required, here; I would delete this).~~ More efforts must be made to bring more women into the parties and to bring them into more meaningful leadership positions in the parties. By taking a similar process the political parties undertook in the Nordic countries in the 1970-1980s, Canadians could be ~~confronted-introduced with-to~~ a new wave of female politicians.

Also, gender quotas have been shown to be more effective in proportional representation electoral systems through the research conducted surveying other countries. Therefore, Canada with a single-member plurality voting system, would not have very impacting results if a gender quota were to be put in place (New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women 2004, 24). Discussions have taken place in most provinces in debating the transition into another electoral system. Every proposal and referendum has been defeated.¹⁵² Other proposals have included to circumvent a complete overhaul of the electoral system has been to introduce smaller measures within the single-member plurality system which would be more conscious of women's barriers to politics. For instance, when opening discussions when forming Nunavut's electoral system, several women's groups aroused concern over the low number of women participating in the political process and proposed having a female and male candidate for each seat to increase the opportunity for women into government seats. The proposal was officially defeated but it is another idea to entertain in a first-past-the-post system which makes women's successful journey into politics more difficult on a systemic level (Young 1997, 307; Matland and Studlar 1996, 711).

When looking at women in Aaboriginal politics, the Canadian context is improved slightly. Women are leaders in communities but not because of quotas, affirmative action or other measures. They are because of the cultural perspective Aaboriginal communities take ~~on~~ in terms of gender politics: erasing gender divisions. With those mechanisms mentioned above, gender divisions only become more engrained. Learning from these communities, the Aaboriginal communities point to the local level of governance. If local communities were able

¹⁵² This included the referendums in 2005 and 2009 in British Columbia as well as one in 2007 in Ontario. Also, in PEI there was a referendum in 2005.

to support women candidates on councils and positions for mayors, then women would feel more empowered to move up the political ladder into higher levels of government (Scofield 2012, 2).

There are many different strategies Canada can employ before using a gender quota to improve the numbers of women into government. Once 25-30% of parliamentary seats are filled with women, society will-may be more willing to maintain these levels through the installation of a quota, similar to the context in which the Nordic countries implemented gender quotas. Firstly, the government must revisit its policy concerning the funding of organizations promoting women's rights in Canada. The Canadian government should also look to revitalize other policies which heavily influence a modern women's ability to have a demanding career such as in politics. These measures could include a non-transferrable paternity leave, a national child care policyies, making the operations of the House of Commons more accessible to those with other obligations such as taking care of other family members. Secondly, people need to learn how to involve themselves in politics at a local level, for examples. Improvements to the municipal system and hosting workshops for women before the nomination of candidates begins to encourage women to run for office would be a suggestion to increase the national number of women into politics. Lastly, political parties should investigate new ways to recruit more women into meaningful roles in their parties and to nominate their female members into constituencies which they have a chance at winning (Pelletier and Tremblay 2000, 388-9).

If Canada were to implement a gender quota, the best route would be to initiate a bottom-up movement for gender equality in politics. However, many steps can be taken by all levels of government, Canadian political parties as well as feminist organizations in Canadian society. Canada must be prepared to spend the time and money to improve the status of women to reach gender parity in Canada. This means reversing the actions of the recent Conservative

government as well as reinforcing the importance of gender equality within the policies of the Canadian government and all the political parties. Canada must be able to implement these changes as well as implement a measurement requiring the political parties to not only create gender equalization policies, but to actually follow them. It would be almost impossible to influence these private groups so the push for equal gender representation must come internally.

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Women in Politics: Does it Really Matter Fact Sheet

WOMEN IN POLITICS: Does it really matter?

Countries	Canada	Sweden	Norway	Finland	Rwanda	Argentina	Nepal
When Quotas formed	NDP Party sets rule in constitution for equal gender representation	voluntary quotas at various times from 1972-1995	voluntary quotas at various times from 1970-1980s	Quotas were never used	2003	1991	2008
% of Women in Government / Global Rank	24.7% 54	44.7% 4	39.6% 13	42.5% 8	63.8% 1	37.7% 21	33.2% 36
Ranking of Gender Equality on Global Scale	20	4	3	2	N/A	34	121
Economic Participation and Opportunity Rank*	9	3	2	1	N/A	101	116
Wage Gap	28%	9-10%	17-18%	19%	31%	30%	21%-47%
Percent of women in senior management**	25%	23%	22%	27%	41%	20%	Difficult to determine
Global Child Care Ranking	24/25	1/25	6/25	4/25	N/A	N/A	N/A

Issue at a Glance ***	Closed 12 of 16 offices of the Status of Womena	Sweden changing prostitution laws	Quotas for corporate boards to bring 40% women	Highest ranking education system	HIV/AIDS programs are funded by government	Ranked number one globallyaa at addressing gender discrimination	Most new businesses are established by women; skepticism over microfinance loans
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*Global Gender Gap Index 2013

**Including women in high level or managerial positions; only private sector businesses over 30 employees; conducted by different studies

***Every country has been able to develop new policies under the guidance of women in government

⌘ Since 2006 under Harper's Conservatives

⌘ Only Developing countries were examined; 86 in total

5 REASONS TO ELECT WOMEN INTO GOVERNMENT

1. ADDRESS ISSUES THAT ARE IGNORED
2. READDRESS ISSUES THAT ARE VIEWED BY MOST AS "RESOLVED"
- 3.
4. MORE CROSS-PARTY COOPERATION
5. MORE INCLINED TO INITIATE PEACE KEEPING/PEACE BUILDING PROCESS
6. MAKE PARLIAMENTS VISIBLY MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF POPULATION

In 2006, 23.2% of candidates were women. 28.5% of 2011 candidates were Women. Let's aim for over 30% in 2015!

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Women in Politics: Does it Really PowerPoint



Schedule for Tipping Point Workshop

Schedule

1. **7:00 – 7:15** Registration - evaluation sheet and chart “How Can I Be More Politically Engaged?” will already be at tables/seats
2. **7:15 – 7:20** Introduction - Lynn Zimmer, Nadine Changfoot or Joëlle Favreau
3. **7:20 – 7:25** “Politician: Am I One?” Presentation - Presents the idea of what a ‘Tipping Point’ is – Adrienne Sultana
4. **7:25 – 8:45** Panel Discussion – “The Tipping Point” – Chelsea DesRochers, Adrienne Sultana, Dana Zaumseil, Marie Keating, Charlotte Caza, Sara Ostrowska, Zara Syed, Carol Wilton, and Marion Burton
5. **8:50 – 9:00** Wrap up: Lynn Zimmer, Nadine Changfoot or Joëlle Favreau - “Please stand or raise your hand if you feel you are a political person”

Poster for Tipping Point Workshop (Compliments of YWCA)



**TIME FOR
CHANGE** *Women in Politics*
Let's make it happen.

Women in Politics: What is the Tipping Point?

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2014 7-9 PM

NORTHMINSTER UNITED CHURCH
(300 SUNSET BLVD., PETERBOROUGH)

DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

Please see www.ywcapeterborough.org for details
or call Miriam Lyall at 705.743.3526 ext. 128 for more information.

PRESENTED BY:

The Canadian Federation of
University Women - Peterborough



A TURNING POINT
FOR WOMEN



Finding Your Tipping Point Worksheet

How Can I Be More Politically Engaged?

Areas of Political Space	Tipping Point	How Am I Already Politically Engaged	How Can I Become More Engaged (list specific actions)
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Ex: Home or neighborhood 1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Women in Politics Community Innovation Forum Poster

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH PAPERS WORKSHOPS

PAPER ONE:

Research Question: Is it important to bring more women into politics?

Compared 6 countries to Canada: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Rwanda, Argentina, Nepal. These 6 countries all have quotas or over 30% of women in government.

By looking at the policy direction of each country with these new women in power, one could determine if there are changes when higher levels of women are involved in electoral politics.

PAPER TWO:

Research Question: Is there a way Canada can reach gender parity in politics through quotas?

This was written to focus more clearly on the possibility of bringing a quota for gender representation in Canada. This paper examines different perspectives Canadians have on gender quotas. Ultimately, federal quotas are not the best way for Canada to achieve gender parity.

WOMEN IN POLITICS



FINDINGS

3 Reasons to Elect Women into Government

1. Address issues that are ignored or are seen as "resolved"
2. More instances of cross-party cooperation
3. More inclined to initiate peace keeping/peace building process



3 Findings on the Use of Quotas to Reach Gender Parity

1. Quotas are less useful if they are implemented in a top-down manner meaning there is not substantial levels of women in government
2. Quotas are less useful than awareness campaigns and workshops that help women become more confident as a political being
3. Quotas are more effective when implemented by political parties

WORKSHOPS:

WOMEN IN POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT: A ROADMAP

WOMEN IN POLITICS: WHAT IS THE TIPPING POINT



RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Continue workshops in the community and on campus
- 2) Build networks between people to increase support between individuals

Chelsea Desrochers 3rd Year Student
 Faculty Supervisor: Nadine Changfoot
 Political Studies POST 4870Y
 Host Supervisor: Joëlle Favreau from the YWCA

