Women and Electoral Reform in New Brunswick

Brief presented by the

New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women

to the

New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy

July 2004

This is a publication of the:

New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women is a body created by provincial legislation to study and advise on issues of concern to women and to bring these before the public and the government. The Council is composed of 13 women appointed by government who meet at least four times per year to determine priorities for action on women's issues.

July 2004

Ce document est disponible en français. Demandez *Les femmes et la réforme électorale au Nouveau-Brunswick.*

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Women have a large stake in the work of the Commission on Legislative Democracy, established "to examine and make recommendations on strengthening and modernizing our electoral system and democratic institutions and practices in New Brunswick to make them more fair, open, accountable and accessible to New Brunswickers." This brief addresses issues related to electoral system reform, the under-representation of women in elective and appointed office and public participation in governance.

Our provincial electoral system is failing women and current democratic practices are seriously flawed. More than 80 years after winning the right to vote and 70 years since becoming eligible to run as provincial candidates, New Brunswick women are still seeking equal representation and equality of influence. Women constitute just 13% of members of the Legislative Assembly, a situation that has deteriorated in recent years. Nor do women get their fair share of appointments to provincial government agencies, boards and commissions.

Many women voters and reform-minded citizens are increasingly dissatisfied with the way our political system works. Problems of representativity and responsiveness have undermined the effectiveness and legitimacy of our democracy. Our single-member riding, first-past-the-post electoral system often produces distorted electoral results, since all votes cast do not count towards the allocation of seats in the Legislature. It also tends to limit the number and variety of political parties, discourages candidate diversity, fosters competition between regions and neglects broader concerns such as environmental or equality issues.

The sentiment of citizen alienation is exacerbated by what goes on between elections. Elected representatives and civil servants largely fail to tap into the expertise of citizens and to engage the population in the policy-making process in a meaningful way. The consequences for women are particularly severe because they do not have the critical mass of elected representatives needed – at least 30%, it is estimated - to place their issues on the government agenda.

The chronic and serious under-representation of women and women's concerns in governance is unacceptable. It is high time for all New Brunswickers to acknowledge that the gender imbalance in political and public life is a social problem that must be remedied. Action is required on many fronts, involving government, political parties and citizens. The introduction of a mixed member proportional system to replace the current single-member plurality system would favour the election of more women and minorities. This alone, however, will not guarantee improved representation for women and other groups. Other measures are needed to address the systemic barriers faced by women in the political realm and to enhance public participation in decision-making. Recommended actions include the introduction of legislation requiring political parties to adopt pro-active measures to bring about gender balance, financial aid for women's political training and mentoring programs, and government commitment to a gender-based analysis approach in policy development.

Introduction

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women welcomes the opportunity to present its
views on the important issues examined by New Brunswick's Commission on Legislative
Democracy. We applaud the government's initiative in creating this Commission. This
exercise has the potential of improving citizen participation and reducing alienation with
the political process.

Women have a large stake in the work of this Commission. The Commission has been
given a vast mandate: "to examine and make recommendations on strengthening and
modernizing our electoral system and democratic institutions and practices in New
Brunswick to make them more fair, open, accountable and accessible to New
Brunswickers."[1]   More than 80 years after winning the right to vote and 70 years since
becoming eligible to run for provincial office,[2] New Brunswick women are still seeking
equal representation and equality of influence. Women constitute just 13% of members
of the Legislative Assembly, a situation that has deteriorated in recent years. In this
province, as nationally, women do not presently have the same opportunities, nor the
same interest as men in seeking election. Barriers to women's entry into electoral
politics include the adversarial culture of politics, lack of adequate child care services,
difficulties in accessing political financing and political parties' preference for better
known male candidates.

Our provincial electoral system is failing women. The flaws of our current democratic
practices contribute to people's estrangement from politics, dubbed the "democratic
deficit" or "democratic malaise".[3]   Because many of the changes needed for women's
equality require political action, this estrangement hurts women. The very effectiveness
and legitimacy of our democracy have been called into question. Dissatisfied citizens
note that our first-past-the-post or single member plurality system often produces

---

[1] New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy, "Mission, Mandate, and Terms of Reference,"
online at www.gnb.ca/0100/mandate-e.asp
[2] With the exception of Aboriginal women living on reserves in New Brunswick, who along with Aboriginal
on-reserve men, obtained provincial voting rights only in 1963. Aboriginal women and men living on reserve
became eligible for the federal franchise in 1960. "Provincial Elections History" on the web site of the N.B.
Chief Electoral Officer at www.gnb.ca/elections/history-e.asp and "The Evolution of the Federal Franchise"
on the Elections Canada web site at:
www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=ec90785&dir=bkg&lang=e&textonly=false
[3] Linda Trimble and Jane Arscott, *Still Counting: Women in Politics Across Canada* (Peterborough:
Broadview Press, 2003), p. 3-5; John C. Courtney, *Elections* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), p. ix.

distorted electoral results, since all votes cast do not count towards the allocation of seats in the Legislature. It also tends to limit the number and variety of political parties as well as the diversity of candidates. Moreover, because our current system has only riding representatives, it tends to focus on local issues, fosters competition between regions, and neglects the bigger-picture issues, such as environmental or equality issues.

The sentiment of citizen alienation is exacerbated by what goes on between elections. A deep-seated sense of frustration exists among groups and individuals who feel that their voices are not being heard by government. The perception is that elected representatives and civil servants largely ignore citizens' interests and their considerable expertise. Many women are active in voluntary organizations and services, as well as in the labour force, but they still do not get their fair share of appointments to provincial agencies, boards and commissions. Women are just 29% of all members of these bodies.[4]   The consequences for women are particularly severe because they do not have the critical mass of elected representatives needed to place their issues on the government agenda.

The Advisory Council was pleased to partner with the Commission earlier this year to alert women to these issues and to the reform process underway in New Brunswick. In fact, the Council's involvement in this issue began in 2003: the Advisory Council held a public meeting in Tracadie in June of that year on the issue of electoral reform, with invited guests from the Québec democratic reform movement. Since March 2004, the Advisory Council has held fourteen public information sessions on the topic. We also addressed dozens of meetings of women's groups and visited some high schools. By these various methods, the Advisory Council reached about nine hundred women.

We learned several things from these meetings. We learned that while this topic is new to most people, ordinary citizens can speak eloquently about the problems with the current way of doing things in politics and government. The need and potential benefits of electoral reform are quickly understood by most women. For many the appeal of proportional representation is the basic fairness of seats corresponding to votes.

---

[4] New Brunswick Executive Council Office, situation as of December 2003.

Citizens from municipalities which have a mixed municipal system, both at-large and ward councillors, often likened proportional representation (PR) to this system.

In our information tour of the province, we heard about the importance of direct representation, especially for rural residents. Direct representation must remain a part of our system. We also saw that most women have given a lot of thought to the barriers discouraging women from running for office. Finally we note that some women expressed interest in knowing how people are nominated to provincial government boards, commissions or agencies.

This brief deals with a broad range of concerns about the way our democracy works. We have used the term "electoral reform" to encompass the various aspects considered by the Commission on Legislative Democracy under the headings of electoral, legislative and democratic reform.

The brief is divided into three sections. The first focuses on the electoral system. The second examines the problem of women's under-representation in political and public life, while the third explores public participation in government decision-making between elections.

1. Electoral System Reform

Elections are the foundation of a democratic system's legitimacy. They provide the link between government and the public will as expressed by individuals, parties, interest groups and social movements. Elections also offer one way of holding a government accountable for its actions.[5]

There are many different methods for electing representatives in use throughout the world. The Stockholm-based International Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance maintains that "the choice of electoral system is one of the most important

---

[5] Courtney, *Elections*, p. 5.

institutional decisions for any democracy."[6] Electoral systems matter because they establish the rules of the voting game that in turn shape electoral results.[7] Electoral systems determine not only who ultimately governs, but also influence citizen participation as well as the variety and behaviour of political parties.[8] It is therefore important to carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of various systems with respect to the anticipated results.

1.1 First-past-the-post: a familiar but flawed system

The contours of our current voting system, a product of our British heritage, are familiar to New Brunswickers. The province is divided into electoral districts or ridings, each represented by one member of the Legislature. We vote on a single ballot for one candidate who will represent our geographical area. The candidate who gets the most votes in the riding – not necessarily the majority of votes – wins the seat. This is the first-past-the-post (FPTP) or single member plurality (SMP) electoral system in use at the provincial and national level in Canada, and in the United States, India and the United Kingdom. It is also characterized as "winner takes all", because only the votes cast for the winning candidate are considered in the makeup of the Legislature.

The first-past-the-post system has some good features. It is fairly simple in operation, both for voters and for vote counting. It usually leads to stable majority governments. Constituents can also easily identify "their" member and may feel a sense of shared identity with the representative from their geographically based riding.[9] But many feel its flaws are making citizens less willing or able to become involved.

Citizens and scholars have highlighted the disadvantages of the FPTP system. As in other jurisdictions, New Brunswick's system often produces distorted electoral results

---

[6] International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design* (Stockholm: International Idea, 1997), available for download online at: www.idea.int/esd/publications.cfm , p. 1.
[7] See for example, Lisa Young, *Electoral Systems and Representative Legislatures* (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1994), p. 1-3; also Courtney, *Elections*, p. 173.
[8] IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 7-8; Courtney, *Elections*, p. 5-8.
[9] IDEA, "First Past the Post – Advantages", available online at: www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esd01a ; Courtney, *Elections*, p. 137-139.

that do not reflect the popular will.[10] The 1987 elections provide the most extreme example, with one party receiving 60% of the popular vote but all of the fifty-eight seats in the Legislative Assembly.[11]   The system also encourages parties to run candidates with the broadest appeal and limits the number and variety of political parties. Plurality of ideas, effective opposition, promotion of broader concerns, as well as the fair representation of women and men in all their diversity suffer as a result.[12] Moreover, these drawbacks fuel citizen's growing disillusionment with formal politics and contribute to declining voter turnout.[13]

In this context of widespread dissatisfaction with our democratic system, citizens' groups advocating electoral reform at the provincial and federal levels have mushroomed in recent years. These include the national group Fair Vote Canada, P.E.I.'s Every Vote Counts, Quebec's Mouvement pour une démocratie nouvelle and the Collectif féminisme et démocratie, as well as Fair Voting BC.[14]   Several provinces in addition to New Brunswick have set up government bodies to study voting system reform in recent years. Following the work of an inquiry launched in 2002, the Quebec government is expected to present a bill on voting system reform in fall 2004.[15] Prince Edward Island's Electoral Reform Commission submitted its report to the provincial government in late 2003, while British Columbia's Citizens' Assembly is currently examining the question.[16]

---

[10] See for example, Henry Milner, "The Case for Proportional Representation in Canada" in H. Milner (ed.), *Making Every Vote Count* (Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd., 1999), p. 38-40; Lawrence Leduc, "New Challenges Demand New Thinking About our Antiquated Electoral System" in *Ibid*., p. 63-70; Paul Cliche, *Scrutin proportionnel : pour réduire le deficit démocratique (*Montreal: Éditions du Renouveau Québécois, 1999).

[11] The 1991 N.B. election results offer another illustration of distortions: Liberals 47% of popular vote and 79% of seats; COR 21% of popular vote and 14% of seats; Conservatives 21% of popular vote and 5% of seats; NDP 11% of popular vote and 2% of seats. *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of N.B.*, 1999 at www.gnb.ca/elections/publications-e.asp

[12] Courtney, *Elections*, p. 139-142; ; IDEA, "First Past the Post – Disadvantages", www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esd01b.htm

[13] See for example, Louis Massicotte, "Changing the Canadian Electoral System", Institute for Research on Public Policy, *Choices* (Vol. 7, n° 1, February 2001), p. 3-28, available online at www.irpp.org/research/index.htm

[14] Most of these groups have websites and publications: www.fairvotecanada.org ; www.democratie-nouvelle.qc.ca ; www.cybersolidaires.org/democratie/

[15] See the May 2004 Bulletin du MDN at www.democratie-nouvelle.qc.ca/accueil.htm; Assemblée nationale du Québec, Committee on Institutions, *Reform of the Voting System in Quebec: Discussion Paper* (October 2002), available online at: www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Publications/rapports/rapci1eng.htm

[16] P.E.I's Electoral Reform Commission report is available online at: www.gov.pe.ca/electoralreform/index.php3; B.C. Citizens' Assembly web site: www.citizensassembly.bc.ca/public;

1.2 Searching for a fairer model: proportional representation

There are alternatives to our FPTP system. Most of the world's established democracies use voting systems based on proportional representation (PR).[17] PR systems dominate in Western Europe.[18] Proportional representation has a long history: Belgium introduced a PR system in 1899. By the 1920s, many European countries followed suit. Recently, many newly independent countries have chosen proportional representation systems.[19]

The mechanics of PR systems may be unfamiliar to us, but the basic idea is simple. Proportional representation aims to give each political party a percentage of the seats to match the overall percentage of votes received by that party. If Party A receives 40% of the popular vote, it would get roughly 40% of all the seats in the legislature. If Party B receives 20% of all the votes cast, its share of seats would be about 20%.[20]

How proportional representation works varies from country to country, but PR systems share some common features. Ridings are larger and have more than one member. Voters often vote for more than one candidate. A list system is commonly used. Each party produces a list of candidates for consideration by voters before the election. In a few countries - Australia, Ireland and Malta - voters can rank candidates according to their preference. To avoid fragmentation of parties, many countries set a minimum percentage of the vote that parties must get to qualify for a seat or for additional seats.[21] Minority and coalition governments are more likely in proportional representation systems, a situation that often encourages negotiation and compromise among political parties.[22]

Most advocates of PR call for it because it more fairly translates the popular vote into seats for parties. But proportional representation also appears to work better for women.

---

[17] "Established democracies" are defined as those states with a population of more than a quarter of a million which have held continuing free elections for over 20 years. IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 21.
[18] Countries using PR systems include the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Spain and Greece. See World Database in IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System,* available online at www.idea.int/esd/data/world.cfmDesign
[19] IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 60.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 63-65; Louis Massicotte, "Changing the Canadian Electoral System", p. 13-14, 16-18, 24.

Jurisdictions with electoral systems based on PR generally elect more women than those with a FPTP system.[23]   Most of the countries with 30% or more women in their national parliaments use PR-based systems. For example, current representation of women in the national parliaments of Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium stands at 45%, 37% and 35% respectively.[24]   Women's strong presence in these legislatures rests in part on solid gender equality traditions and the existence of progressive political parties. However, it is generally acknowledged that PR systems offer the potential for more representative outcomes than single-member plurality systems. The creation of larger constituencies and the use of multi-member lists facilitate access to elected office. Women and minority candidates are sought out because parties are under public pressure to present balanced lists with regards to gender and diversity.[25]   A number of scholars and activists therefore believe that "a more proportional electoral system would be a positive development for women in Canadian politics."[26]

1.3 Mixed member proportional systems

There is no perfect voting system. But many political analysts and advocates of electoral reform see mixed systems, combining elements of FPTP and PR – as offering a good balance.[27]   They support what is called a mixed member proportional system (MMP) as the most appropriate in jurisdictions with a single-member plurality tradition because it

---

[23] IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 63.

[24] Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments," at April 30, 2004, available online at: www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

[25] See for example, IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 63; Thérèse Arseneau, "Electing Representative Legislatures: Lessons from New Zealand" in Henry Milner (ed.), *Making Every Vote Count: Reassessing Canada's Electoral System* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999), p. 134-135; Collectif féminisme et démocratie, La politique c'est aussi une affaire de femmes, Cahier 2: *Le Mode de scrutin n'est pas neutre!* , Programme de formation financé par Condition féminine Canada, (February 2004), p. 8.

[26] Heather MacIvor, "Women and the Canadian Electoral System" in Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble (eds.), *Women and Electoral Politics in Canada* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 35; Richard E. Matland, "Enhancing Women's Political Participation: Legislative Recruitment and Electoral Systems," 2002, updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed. , *Women in Parliament: Beyond Number* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998), available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm; Collectif Féminisme et démocratie, *Faire de la réforme du mode de scrutin un enjeu féministe* (October 2002), available online at www.cybersolidaires.org/democratie/; Marilou McPhedran with Rosemary Spiers, McPhedran, *Reducing the Democratic Deficit through Equality-Based Electoral Reform: The Equal Voice Position Paper on Proportional Representation* , Submitted to the Law Commission of Canada's electoral reform review (Spring 2003), available online at: www.equalvoice.ca/electoral.html

[27] See for example F. Leslie Seidle, *Electoral System Reform in Canada: Objectives, Advocacy and Implications for Governance.* Canadian Policy Research Networks Discussion paper F/28, October 2002, p. 20, available online at: www.cprn.org/en/doc.cfm?doc=162

maintains the link between constituent and representative while more faithfully translating votes cast into legislative seats.[28]   The Commission on Legislative Democracy has in fact been asked to propose a PR model that includes "a continued role for directly elected MLAs representing specific geographic boundaries."[29]

In MMP systems, some members are elected in geographical districts by first-past-the-post, while others are chosen through a PR list system. The seats that are chosen through the lists are used to "top up" the number of seats won by parties so that their total number of seats reflects the party's share of total votes cast.[30] This type of system has been in place in Germany for more than fifty years now. It has also been adopted by several Westminster tradition jurisdictions: New Zealand for its national parliament in 1996, Scotland and Wales for their new national assemblies in 1999.[31]

In a mixed system, voters mark off two boxes, one for a candidate and the other for a party. As is explained on the New Zealand ballot, the electorate vote decides which candidate will represent the constituent and their area, while the party vote decides the share of seats each of the parties will have.[32]

Some New Brunswickers are already familiar with such voting methods. Residents of the cities of Moncton and Miramichi vote for both ward (geographical district) and at-large councillors.[33] In Bathurst and Saint John, all city councillors are elected at large. Some

---

[28] See for example Louis Massicotte and André Blais, "La réforme électorale: Profil d'un mode de scrutin mixte approprié au Québec" (chapitre écrit pour publication dans l'ouvrage collectif en hommage à Vincent Lemieux), revised July 2003, p. 3-4, available online at www.democratie-nouvelle.qc.ca/l_tribune.htm; also the recent report of the Law Commission of Canada, focusing on the federal system: *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada* (Ottawa, 2004) available online at www.lcc.gc.ca/en/themes/gr/er/er_main.asp. PEI's Electoral Reform Commission recently recommended a MMP system along the lines of the New Zealand model as the system most likely to be accepted by that province's people. *2003 Electoral Reform Commission Report* is online at: www.gov.pe.ca/electoralreform/index.php3; see also the web sites of citizens' groups Fair Vote Canada, www.fairvotecanada.org and Québec's Mouvement pour une démocratie nouvelle, www.democratie-nouvelle.qc.ca/
[29] New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy, "Mission, Mandate and Terms of Reference," available online at www.gnb.ca/0100/mandate-e.asp
[30] IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 74-75.
[31] Other countries using MMP include Italy, Hungary, Venezuela, Mexico and Bolivia. See World Database in IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System,* available online at www.idea.int/esd/data/world.cfmDesign
[32] For more on the New Zealand system, see the government elections web site at: www.elections.org.nz/elections/esyst/govt_elect.html
[33] Information obtained from New Brunswick's Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

citizens say this brings balance: at-large councillors are freed from ward issues to consider the broader interests of the municipality.

Coalition governments are common in countries using mixed systems as in those using pure PR systems, since smaller parties usually win a seat in the legislature. Having at least several parties represented makes it more likely that no one party will receive the majority of votes. Both Germany and New Zealand, for example, have commonly formed coalition governments since they introduced the MMP system.[34]   Some critics hold up the extreme examples of Israel and Italy to illustrate the political instability possible under PR systems. However, the experience of most European countries in past decades shows that multi-party coalitions usually provide durable and effective government. The more recent MMP systems in place in Scotland, Wales and New Zealand also appear to be delivering stable government with a new emphasis on multi-party negotiation.[35] It should also be noted that some of Canada's most productive governments have been minority governments. Minority governments in Ottawa brought in universal medicare (1966), the Guaranteed Income Supplement for low income old-age pensioners (1967), the Canada Pension Plan (1965), legislation to control election expenses (1974) and a national oil company, Petro-Canada (1975).[36]

Election results in the recent British tradition converts to MMP show the potential of the system for improving women's representation. In New Zealand, the proportion of women in the national legislature rose from 21% in 1993 to 29% in 1996, the first election held under the new system and to 31% in the 1999 election. Since 2002, New Zealand's legislature includes 28% women.[37] In Scotland, 37% of the members of the new Scottish Parliament in 1999 and 40% in 2003 were women, compared to just 13% of the Scottish members elected to the U.K. Parliament in 1997.[38] While 42% of the members

---

[34] IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 76-78.

[35] Seidle, *Electoral System Reform in Canada,* p. 23-24. See also Thérèse Arseneau, "Electing Representative Legislatures: Lessons from New Zealand " in Henry Milner (ed.), *Making Every Vote Count: Reassessing Canada's Electoral System* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999), p. 133-144.

[36] D. Kwavnick, "Minority Government", in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, available online at: www.canadian.encyclopedia/en/themes/gr/er_main.asp.ca

[37] Seidle, *Electoral System Reform in Canada*, p. 21.

[38] See election results source sheets on the Scottish Parliament web site at : www.scottish.parliament.uk/msps/results-03/index.htm; and

elected to the new Welsh Assembly in 1999 were women, fully 50% women were elected in the 2003 election.[39]

The Advisory Council favours the introduction of a MMP system for electing our MLAs, in which some members would be elected in single-member geographical districts by first-past-the-post, and others would be chosen through a proportional representation list system. The lists should be used in a corrective or compensatory manner to ensure that the proportion of seats held by each political party corresponds closely to the total votes received by each party. It should be noted that the introduction of such a system does not require that the number of MLAs be increased. A number of seats not to exceed the current fifty-five could be redistributed between the two methods of electing representatives.

There is some difference of opinion on the minimum proportion of proportional list seats needed to eliminate distortions, but in most MMP systems no more than 60% of the seats are elected directly in single-member ridings. [40] In Germany at the national or federal level, the ratio is 50:50. New Zealand reserves 58% of seats for single-seat geographical districts and the remaining 42% are proportional list seats, while Scotland has 43% proportional list seats and Wales 33%.[41] We consider that at least 40% of Legislative Assembly seats should be PR list seats, to allow for an adequate corrective effect. In our view, the overall allocation of seats should be done at the provincial level. Calculations for seats done at the existing regional level would tend to reduce the proportionality of the outcome and disadvantage women candidates and the small parties.[42]

The style of the voting ballot and list selection rules also raise some considerations. The voting ballot under this system should allow for two separate choices: the selection of a riding representative and of a political party. This allows the voter to choose a particular individual as a direct representative and a different party, if so desired, for general

[39] Fawcett Society (United Kingdom), Press release, May 2, 2003, available online at www.fawcettsociety.org.uk
[40] See Law Commission of Canada, *Voting Counts*, p. 94-96; also Massicotte and Blais, "La réforme électorale", p. 5, 7-8.
[41] Massicotte and Blais, "La réforme électorale", p. 14.
[42] Richard E. Matland, "Enhancing Women's Political Participation: Legislative Recruitment and Electoral Systems,", p. 9-10; Massicotte and Blais, "La réforme électorale", p. 6-7.

governance. This feature gives voters greater flexibility and more choices than our current single vote system. The United Kingdom's electoral reform commission argued that this frees voters "from the prison of having to suffer an unwanted candidate for the constituency in order to get a desired government."[43] The possibility of so-called "ticket splitting" was obviously appreciated by many New Zealanders in the first mixed member proportional election held in that country in 1996, since 37% of voters voted for a riding representative from one party and for a different party on the party ballot.[44]

In PR-based systems the lists may be open, closed or more rarely, free.[45] The open list allows voters to choose the candidates they prefer within the party list. By contrast, the closed list obliges voters to accept the entire slate in the order presented by the party of their choice. The free list allows voters to vote for candidates from more than one party list.[46] The PR lists drawn up by parties and distributed for public scrutiny before the election can be an important tool for favouring a more balanced range of candidates with regards to gender and other considerations than is usually obtained with single-member geographical ridings. By placing women and other traditionally under-represented candidates in favourable positions on the lists, parties can ensure that some will fill the list seats. In our view, the party ballot should therefore present a closed list of candidates. This is important because if voters can express a preference for candidates within a party list, the equity objectives of list ordering can be bypassed.[47] It has also been argued that by putting candidate choice entirely in the hands of voters, open lists let the parties "off the hook" for ensuring that gender and other equity goals are met.[48]

---

[43] United Kingdom, Independent Commission on the Electoral System (Jenkins Commission), *Final Report* (1998), Chapter 7, paragraph 139, available online at: www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm40/4090/contents.htm

[44] See Law Commission of Canada, *Voting Counts*, Chapter 4, p. 19.

[45] IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, available for download online at: www.idea.int/esd/publications.cfm , p. 89-90. Note that a variation on the open list is some form of "flexible" list system, in which voters can either choose the party slate or vote for a particular candidate within the party list. The election of party-ranked or individually chosen candidates would be based on a set minimum percentage of votes received. A system of this type is used in Sweden. It is a model favoured by the Law Commission of Canada and the Jenkins Commission. See *Voting Counts*, Chapter 4, p. 22-23.

[46] Also known as *panachage*, this option is available to voters in a small number of jurisdictions including Luxembourg and Switzerland. See IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 90.

[47] There is evidence that the use of open lists in local elections in Norway has disadvantaged women. This experience suggests that the impact in countries or districts with less progressive views on women could be even more negative. See Richard E. Matland, "Enhancing Women's Political Participation", p. 8-9; IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 89-90.

[48] Richard E. Matland, "Enhancing Women's Political Participation," p. 9.

Open lists also encourage factionalism and intra-party competition.[49]   Most MMP and PR jurisdictions in the world use the closed list.[50]

One of the concerns raised about electoral systems based on proportional representation is the potential for a proliferation of small parties, some of them representing extreme points of view. Most jurisdictions using PR or MMP systems counter this problem by setting a threshold, or minimum percentage of the party vote required to qualify for PR list seats. Thresholds among PR jurisdictions vary from a high of 10% in Turkey, to lows of 1.5% for Israel and 0.67% for the Netherlands. Both Germany and New Zealand have adopted a threshold of 5%, but both of these countries allow the threshold to be waved for a party that obtains a certain number of directly elected riding seats (three in the case of Germany, one for New Zealand). Neither Scotland nor Wales have any threshold, but in these jurisdictions the electoral chances of small parties are already limited by a regional distribution of proportional list seats. In our view, New Brunswick should establish a reasonable threshold of 5% to avoid undue fragmentation of parties, while still allowing for the representation of a wider range of voices.[51]

1.4 First Nations representation

New Brunswick's small Aboriginal population is thinly spread throughout the regions, making it difficult to elect representatives to the legislature in our current SMP system.[52] Our province's first Aboriginal MLA was elected in 2003. Many feel it is time to find a way to give a voice to New Brunswick's Aboriginal communities. In a survey conducted in

---

[49] See Law Commission of Canada, *Voting Counts*, Chapter 4, p. 21-22.

[50] IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 89. See also Law Commission of Canada, *Voting* Counts, Chapter 4, p. 22. Open lists are used in some European PR systems, such as Finland, where voters cast their vote for individual candidates. Finland currently counts 38% women in its national parliament. The high proportion of women elected in Finland despite this freedom to choose may be linked to the strong gender equality traditions in this country. IDEA, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, p. 72-73.

[51] For more on considerations involved in setting thresholds, see Seidle, *Electoral System Reform*, p. 22; also Massicotte and Blais, "La réforme électorale", p. 17. The Law Commission of Canada recommends that there be no legal threshold for obtaining list seats, in order to encourage a diversity of voices, but would restrict eligibility for list seats to those parties running candidates for election in at least one-third of the provincial constituencies. *Voting Counts*, p. 124-125.

[52] According to the 2001 Census of Canada, New Brunswick's Aboriginal identity population stands at 16,990 or 2.4% of the total provincial population. Aboriginal identity refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, i.e. North American Indian, Métis or Inuit. Also included are individuals who did not report an Aboriginal identity, but did report themselves as a Registered or Treat Indian, and/or Band or First Nation membership. On the disadvantages of the SMP system for groups that are not geographically concentrated, see John C. Courtney, *Elections*, p. 15-16.

2000, 73% of Atlantic Canadians were in favour of seats being set aside for the First Nations population in the House of Commons.[53]

One way that electoral systems can give a voice to a chronically under-represented minority population is to have designated seats for their representatives. A number of countries around the world reserve seats in their Legislatures for ethnic minorities to provide for direct representation of minority interests.[54] The New Zealand example is instructive. The aboriginal Maori are 14% of the population and the New Zealand Legislature includes seven Maori electorate seats. People of Maori descent can register to vote for Maori representatives or they can vote for candidates in their own geographical region.[55] Canada's Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing recommended back in 1991 that the New Zealand model serve as inspiration for the creation of Aboriginal electoral districts and Aboriginal seats in the House of Commons.[56]

The Advisory Council considers that it is time for our legislators and representatives of the First Nations communities to come together to address the question of the under-representation of the Aboriginal population in the Legislative Assembly. Formulas should be agreed on for the allocation of at least two seats reserved for elected representatives of the First Nations peoples, and for the fair representation of women and men in these seats. This would open the way for continuing Aboriginal input into provincial policy-making and help make the electoral process more accessible and responsive to Aboriginal interests.

---

[53] Paul Howe and David Northrup, *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, Institute for Research on Public Policy, July 2000 at www.irpp.org/research/index.htm
[54] IDEA, "Minority Provisions," available online at: www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esc07b.htm Donley Studlar argues that adding an element of proportionality to the electoral system, rather than designating separate seats, would be a better way of increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and female candidates. "Will Canada Seriously Consider Electoral System Reform? Women and Aboriginals Should," in Henry Milner (ed.), *Making Every Vote Count* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999), p. 131.
[55] Under the old FPTP system, the Maori had four reserved seats, set aside in 1867. For more on the New Zealand system, see the government elections web site at:
www.elections.org.nz/elections/esyst/govt_elect.html; see also Thérèse Arseneau, "Electing Representative Legislatures: Lessons from New Zealand" in Henry Milner (ed.), *Making Every Vote Count: Reassessing Canada's Electoral System* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999), p. 133-144.
[56] Canada, Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (Lortie Commission), *Final Report Volume 1: Reforming Electoral Democracy* (Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services, 1991), p. 171-193. The Law Commission of Canada recently echoed the Lortie Commission's support for the creation of Aboriginal electoral districts, recommending that the federal government, in consultation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples explore this possibility. See *Voting Counts*, Chapter 4, p. 36.

2. Addressing the Under-Representation of Women in Elective and Appointed Office

Decades after the introduction of formal political rights for women, true gender equality in politics remains elusive. Most New Brunswick women won the right to vote in 1919 and have been eligible to run for provincial office since 1934.[57] Aboriginal women and men living on reserves in New Brunswick did not get the provincial vote until 1963.[58] Women are still severely under-represented among candidates running for office and elected members of the Legislature. Fully 51% of the New Brunswick population is female, but only 19% of the candidates running in the June 2003 provincial elections and 13% of MLAs in the current Legislature are women. This is down from a high of 23% of candidates and 18% of MLAs following the 1999 elections.[59] Aboriginal women, ethnic minorities and women and men with disabilities are all but absent. Moreover, only 29% of all members of provincially appointed agencies, boards and commissions are women.[60]

2.1 Why does gender balance matter?

The gender imbalance in public office calls into question the fairness of our democratic system. When fully half the population is so seriously under-represented, the very legitimacy of government is undermined.[61] It also contravenes Canada's international commitments to achieve equal representation of women and men in all areas of political and public life. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and ratified by Canada in 1981 requires signatories to ensure women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life.[62] At the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995, member states pledged to take

---

[57] Women's struggle for political rights in N.B. is discussed by Elspeth Tulloch in *We, the undersigned: A History of N.B. Women, 1784-1984* (Moncton: ACSW, 1985), p. 1-75.

[58] See "Provincial Elections History" on the web site of the N.B. Chief Electoral Officer at www.gnb.ca/elections/history-e.asp. On-reserve Aboriginal women and men got the federal franchise in 1960. "The Evolution of the Federal Franchise" on the Elections Canada web site at: www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=gen&document=ec90785&dir=bkg&lang=e&textonly=false

[59] *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of N.B.,* 2003 at www.gnb.ca/elections/publications-e.asp

[60] Composition in December 2003 according to figures provided by the N.B. Executive Council Office.

[61] See for example Heather MacIvor, "Women and the Canadian Electoral System", p. 35.

[62] United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), available online at: www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/e1cedaw.htm

action "to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making", including a commitment to "setting specific targets" and "implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women […] in all governmental and public administration positions."[63] The United Nations Committee on CEDAW recently called Canada and the provinces to task, expressing concern that in Canada "women are still underrepresented in all areas of political and public life", and urging the introduction of "additional measures to increase the representation of women in political and public life" including "temporary special measures with numerical goals and timetables to increase the representation of women in decision-making positions at all levels."[64]

The gender deficit also deprives society of the different perspectives that women can bring, since it is generally estimated that a group needs at least 30% representation to have significant influence.[65] Women have different experiences and interests that should be directly represented. As stated in the Beijing Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women, "Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account."[66] A member of the Welsh Assembly explained why this is so in a 2000 speech:

> Without women taking part in decision-making, their views and needs are bound to be overlooked to a certain extent. It means that the life circumstances and perspective of 52 per cent of the population are inevitably ignored, played down or tackled inappropriately. This does not assume that all male politicians are chauvinist pigs […] It simply recognises that one sex, however sympathetic, cannot fully and fairly represent the interests of the other.[67]

---

[63] Beijing Platform for Action at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm

[64] United Nations, *Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 28th session (13-31 January 2003) and 29th session (30 June-18 July 2003)*, p. 57, available online at: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/28sess.htm

[65] The United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Canada belongs to this international organization of Parliaments of sovereign States, established in 1889, that works to promote representative democracy) consider that 30% is the minimum proportion of women needed in a legislature for women to have a significant impact on the work of the parliament.. Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women Elected in 2003: The Year in Perspective*, p. 1. See also Drude Dahlerup, "Using Quotas to Increase Women's Representation," 2002, updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers.* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998), available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm, p. 1.

[66] Beijing Platform for Action at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm

[67] Cited in Paul Chaney, *Women and Constitutional Change in Wales*, Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics, School of Politics and International Studies, Queen's University, Belfast (Occasional Paper No. 7, October 2003), p. 12, available online at: www.qub.ac.uk/cawp/research/papers.htm

More research is needed on the way women think and act once they are elected to public office. Political scientists distinguish between this so-called "substantive representation" and "descriptive representation" which focuses on the number and background of women officeholders.[68] There is some debate among political scientists and feminists about the willingness or the ability of women to act *for* women once they are elected to office.[69] However, a number of studies from various countries show that female legislators do make a difference in shaping the policy agenda and legislative initiatives. Having a significant number of women among elected representatives helps make women's concerns count and results in policies in areas that matter to women, such as child care, health services and education.[70] For example, the Welsh Assembly, composed of 42% women between 1999 and 2003, introduced funding for a women's consultative policy network, conducted a survey of childcare needs in the Assembly, and introduced family-friendly hours for the Assembly.[71] Norway, with close to 40% of women in its national parliament by the mid-1990s, has notably enhanced its policies in

---

[68] Women's relatively recent entry into legislatures in significant numbers, along with the difficulties in measuring the difference women legislators make are partly responsible for the greater scholarly focus on barriers and numerical representation. Joni Lovenduski and Azza Karam, "Women in Parliament: Making a Difference", 2002, p. 2, updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998), available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm; Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble, "Women and Electoral Politics in Canada: A Survey of the Literature," In Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble (eds.), *Women and Electoral Politics in Canada* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press., 2003), p. 3-4, 8-9, 17-19; Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble, "In the Presence of Women: Representation and Political Power" in Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble, eds., *In the Presence of Women: Representation in Canadian Governments* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, 1997), p. 11-12; Susan J. Carroll, "Introduction" , p. xi-xii in Susan J. Carroll, ed. *The Impact of Women in Public Office.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).
[69] See the discussion in Manon Tremblay, "Do Female MPs Substantively Represent Women? A Study of Legislative Behaviour in Canada's 25th Parliament," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (Vol. 31, no 3, September 1998), p. 436; see also Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble, "In the Presence of Women: Representation and Political Power" p. 11-12; and Jill Vickers, "Towards a Feminist Understanding of Representation" in Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble, eds., *In the Presence of Women: Representation in Canadian Governments,* p. 20-46.
[70] See for example the following case studies: On public spending patterns by Swedish local councils, Helena Svaleryd, "Female Representation - Is it Important for Policy Decisions?", Stockholm University, available online at: http://ideas.repec.org/p/hhs/sunrpe/2002_0007.html ; The Welsh situation is analyzed by Paul Chaney, *Women and Constitutional Change in Wales*; The relationship between policy-making and women's state-level representation in the U.S. is considered by Amy Caiazza, "Does Women's Representation in Elected Office lead to Women-Friendly Policy?" (Institute for Women's Policy Research, May 2002), available online at www.iwpr.org/Publications/pdf.htm; On local legislators in Milwaukee, see Janet K. Boles, "Local Elected Women and Policy-Making: Movement Delegates or Feminist Trustees?", p. 68-86 in Susan J. Carroll, ed. *The Impact of Women in Public Office*; Results from U.S. wide surveys of state legislators are analyzed by Susan J. Carroll, "Representing Women: Women State Legislators As Agents of Policy-Related Change", p. 3-21 and by Debra L. Dodson, "Acting for Women: Is What Legislators Say, What They Do?", p. 225-242 in Susan J. Carroll, ed. *The Impact of Women in Public Office (*Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Manon Tremblay examines women MPs efforts to promote women's concerns in "Do Female MPs Substantively Represent Women? A Study of Legislative Behaviour in Canada's 25th Parliament," p. 435-465.
[71] It should be noted that the establishment of the new Welsh Assembly was accompanied by statutory obligations requiring government to be proactive in promoting equality for all persons. See Paul Chaney, *Women and Constitutional Change in Wales*, p. 4-7; 14-15.

the care sector, including improvements to publicly sponsored childcare services, extensions to the paid parental leave period and better pension rights for unpaid care work.[72]

Finally, we should not underestimate the role model effect nor the influence a significant number of women may have on political practices.[73] The presence of a strong contingent of women in legislatures is needed to encourage other women to follow suit and to help transform the male-dominated political culture. As Bella Abzug, co-founder and past president of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) observed, "How will women sharing the political space make a difference? They will change the nature of power rather than power changing the nature of women."[74] Women members of the new Welsh Assembly claim that they bring a different style to legislative work, more consensus-oriented and constructive than men. Welsh women can also identify with elected representatives who are doing politics differently than men.[75] A recent British study reveals that voter turnout among women is 4% higher than among men in ridings with a woman candidate. The same study shows that the presence of female MPs significantly increases political activism among women, as women voters are much more likely to be motivated to work for a female candidate and to believe that 'government benefits people like me'.[76] Studies of women MPs in Scandinavia found that women politicians worked to recruit other women and that the growing numbers of women in government made it easier for women to be in politics.[77]

---

[72] Hege Skjeie, "Credo on Difference – Women in Parliament in Norway", 2002, p. 3, updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers (*Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998), available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm

[73] There is some evidence that gender diversity increases efficiency in business. A recent North American study showed that companies with a higher representation of women in senior management positions financially outperform those with fewer women at the top. See Catalyst, *The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity* (Catalyst, 2004), available online at: www.catalystwomen.org/2004fin_perf.htm

[74] Quoted in *WEDO Primer: Getting the Balance Right: Strategies for Change*, March 2001, p.2.

[75] Paul Chaney, *Women and Constitutional Change in Wales*, p. 9-10.

[76] United Kingdom, The Electoral Commission, *Gender and Political Participation* (April 2004), available for download online at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/gender.cfm

[77] Joni Lovenduski and Azza Karam, "Women in Parliament: Making a Difference", 2002, p. 2, updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers.* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998), available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm

2.2 Barriers to women's representation

The political game is not played on a level playing field. Numerous obstacles prevent or discourage women and members of other underrepresented groups from running for office and getting elected.[78] To understand why women are less likely to pursue political careers than men, we must understand their economic, social, legal and cultural situation, because "political power is intertwined with all of those other power structures."[79] Indeed, as political scientist Heather MacIvor argues, it is time to stop blaming women for their low numbers in formal politics and look at the underlying causes of women's inequality:

> We have to stop looking at women as if they were politically defective. Instead of blaming women for their own exclusion from politics, we have to ask why women have not been welcome, why women have chosen not to participate, and why women have come to believe that politics is too complicated for them to understand. The blame lies with the gendered structures of power in our society, and with the male-dominated political system, not with women themselves.[80]

Many women underestimate their talents and lack the self-confidence needed to seek nomination. Men are far less likely to doubt their qualifications for public office. Women's socialization contributes to this situation which is encountered throughout the world.[81] Even women with experience in public life may hesitate to put themselves forward for leadership positions. The case of Shirley Dysart, elected to the New Brunswick Legislature in 1974, is instructive in this regard. By the late 1980s, this former teacher had served as Minister of Education, sat on many government committees and headed several organizations outside government. Yet when asked by the Premier in 1991 to serve as Speaker of the House, her immediate reply was: "Oh, do you think I could?"

---

[78] The barriers to women's full participation in electoral politics have received considerable attention from researchers in Canada and beyond. See Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble, "Women and Electoral Politics in Canada: A Survey of the Literature," p. 10-12; also Sonia Pitre, Women's Struggle for Legislative Power: The Role of Political Parties", *Atlantis* (vol. 27, no. 2, Spring/Summer 2003), p. 102-109.

[79] Heather MacIvor, *Women and Politics in Canada* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1996), p. 245.

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] See for example Nadezdha Shvedova, "Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament," (2002), updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers.* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998), available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm; Heather MacIvor, *Women and Politics in Canada,* p. 240-241; Évelyne Tardy, *Égalité hommes-femmes*, p. 202; See also comments by Yvette Roudy, representative of Calvados in France and others in "Paroles d'élues", Observatoire de la parité entre les hommes et les femmes at : www.observatoire-parite.gouv.fr/dossier/plaquette.html#paroles

She did in fact accept the position, becoming the first female Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and held that position until she left provincial politics in 1994.[82]

A host of socio-economic obstacles stand between women and public office. The exercise of formal political rights is still hampered by women's experience of inequality in the workforce, the family and the larger society.[83] Women earn less on average and get by on lower incomes than men, while shouldering a heavier share of unpaid household and caring responsibilities.[84] Running a campaign and pursuing a political career also requires access to social services such as child care and elder care. Few women have the social and economic supports it takes to juggle family and political obligations.[85]

However, obstacles within the political system itself play a major role in women's exclusion. The conditions in which the political game is currently played partly explain why women are often sidelined or uninterested in a political career. The very nature of formal politics is at odds with the aspirations of many women. The "masculine" values and practices that permeate formal politics – competition, hierarchy and adversarial positioning to name but a few - are quite simply abhorrent to many women.[86] Electoral politics is still perceived as an Old Boys' Club where women do not fit in or are made to feel unwelcome.[87] Women in public life tend to be judged more harshly than their male counterparts. As a prominent female minister in the New Brunswick government of the early 1990s noted, "women haven't [yet] earned the right to be mediocre."[88] Long time B.C. MLA and trailblazer Rosemary Brown characterized politics as "a tough arena, and an unpleasant one."[89] We have heard similar comments many times in our discussions with women throughout New Brunswick. Preferring settings where negotiation and consensus are in use, women choose to work for change in the informal sphere. They

---

[82] *Barriers to Women's Participation in Parliament. Report of a Task Force of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Group* (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat, United Kingdom, March 1996).

[83] Chantal Maillé, *Les Québécoises et la conquête du pouvoir politique* (Montréal: Les Éditions coopératives Albert Saint-Martin, 1990).

[84] See N.B. ACSW, 2004 Report Card on the Status of Women in New Brunswick (Fredericton: N.B. ACSW, March 2004), available online at: www.acswcccf.nb.ca/english/acsw3.asp

[85] See for example, Heather MacIvor, *Women and Politics in Canada*, p. 236-238.

[86] Heather MacIvor, *Women and Politics in Canada,* p. 242-243.

[87] *Ibid*.

[88] Aldéa Landry, former deputy premier and Intergovernmental Affairs minister (1989-1991), cited in Don Desserud, "Women in New Brunswick Politics: Waiting for the Third Wave," in Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble, eds., *In the Presence of Women: Representation in Canadian Governments* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada), p. 270.

[89] See online compendium of quotes at: www.coolwomen.ca

are active in "unconventional politics" as members of women's groups, community associations and volunteers in front-line services.[90]

Political parties also raise formidable barriers to women's full participation in electoral politics. There is evidence to show that once women have secured the party nomination, they are at least as likely to be elected as their male counterparts.[91] It is the political parties, rather than the voters, that constitute the "real gatekeepers to elected office, " shaping the candidate pool through the nomination process.[92]

In the Canadian context, where the nomination process of most parties is largely decentralized, local party establishments play a key role in determining who will represent the party at election time. Constituency executives control the organizational and financial support that may be used to favour or discourage potential candidates.[93] Interviews with Canadian women seeking office in the late 1960s revealed the tight control of constituency associations over nominations:

> The constituency association has autonomy in the selection of the candidate and jealously guards this right. It is at the constituency level, according to the women interviewed, that disparagement of women candidates and the belief that a woman candidate will lose votes are usually encountered. Women who have been successful at the polls confirm that winning the nomination is a more formidable hurdle than winning the election.[94]

Thirty years on, more women manage to overcome the nomination hurdle, but political parties are generally still wedded to traditional ways of recruiting and nominating that favour the better-known male candidates. A recent study of female activists in two Quebec parties found that while many women had served for years as "behind the scenes" party workers, very few of them had been encouraged by the parties to stand for

---

[90] See for example, L. Pauline Rankin and Jill Vickers, "Locating Women's Politics", in Manon Tremblay and Caroline Andrew (eds.)., *Women and Political Representation in Canada* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1998), p. 341-367; Sylvia Bashevkin, *Toeing the Lines: Women and Party Politics In English Canada*, 2nd edition (Toronto: University of Oxford Press, 1993); Louise A. Chappell, *Gendering Government: Feminist Engagement with the State in Australia and Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).
[91] See the discussion in Sonia Pitre, "Women's Struggle for Legislative Power: The Role of Political Parties", p. 102.
[92] Drude Dahlerup, "Comparative Studies of Electoral Gender Quotas", in IDEA, *The Implementation of Quotas: Latin American Experiences* , Quota Workshops Report Series, no 2 (Stockholm; IDEA, 2003), p. 13; See also Lisa Young, *Feminists and Party Politics* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), p. 183; MacIvor, *Women and Politics in Canada*, p. 241-242; 261-267.
[93] Sonia Pitre, "Women's Struggle for Legislative Power: The Role of Political Parties", p. 106.
[94] Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1970), p. 349.

office.[95] Parties are often reluctant to support female candidates in winnable ridings in our single member, first-past-the-post system. According to political scientist Sonia Pitre, parties' responsibility for the under-representation of female candidates in New Brunswick, "may be a question less of *resistance* to female candidates as such than of the willingness to do something about it." Her recent study of New Brunswick's three major parties during the 1999 elections showed that this is so because for the most part, party elites harboured a "false perception that the recruitment and selection of candidates is an entirely neutral process, which is not the case."[96]

Women are also at a disadvantage in fund-raising for party nominations and electoral campaigns because they have lower incomes and fewer contacts than men in the important party and occupational networks. It can cost thousands of dollars to compete for nomination alone, a significant obstacle for many women.[97] There are no legislated spending limits on nomination campaigns in New Brunswick. Current spending limits for general and by-election campaigns are set fairly high: for the 2003 elections, candidates could spend up to $33,660 in the race for provincial office.[98]

Finally, direct discrimination on the basis of an individual's political beliefs or party affiliation may also constitute a barrier to running for office. The Advisory Council has been made aware of cases where an employee was fired or refused employment because of the employee's decision to run for office for a particular party.

---

[95] Évelyne Tardy, *Égalité hommes-femmes?: Le militantisme au Québec : le PQ et le PLQ (*Montreal : Éditions Hurtubise HMH ltée, 2003), p. 197.
[96] Sonia Pitre, "Political Parties and Female Candidates: Is there Resistance in New Brunswick?" in Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble (eds.), *Women and Electoral Politics in Canada* (Don Mills, Ont., Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 122.
[97] Sonia Pitre, "Women's Struggle for Legislative Power: The Role of Political Parties," p. 106; Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, *Brief to the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing* (Ottawa: CACSW, June 1990) , p. 8; Janine Brodie, with the assistance of Celia Chandler, "Women and the Electoral Process in Canada," in Kathy Megyergy, ed., *Women in Canadian Politics: Towards Equity in Representation* (Toronto & Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1991), p. 40-49.
[98] The election spending limits are indexed and calculated according to the following formula: $2.67 x number of electors enumerated in electoral district. Note that individuals, unions and corporations can contribute up to $6,000 per year to registered political parties, registered district associations or registered independent candidates. The *N.B. Political Process Financing Act* sets out the rules of party financing in the province. Available online at: www.gnb.ca/0062/acts/acts/p-09-3.htm ; see also New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy, *Political Party Financing*, presentation to commissioners (March 26, 2004), available online at: www.gnb.ca/0100/presentations-e.asp

2.3 Correcting the gender imbalance

It is high time that New Brunswickers acknowledge that the gender imbalance in political and public life is a social problem that must be remedied. The chronic and serious under-representation of women in governance is unacceptable. As we maintain in the first part of this brief, the introduction of a mixed member proportional system to replace the current single-member plurality system would favour the election of more women and minorities. This alone, however, will not guarantee improved representation for women and other groups.   Action is required on many fronts. Structural change and positive action are needed not because women are unable to succeed on merit, but because direct and systemic discrimination of various kinds too often deprives women of the opportunity to play the game. Even more important than what women can "do better", is what political parties and government must do to open the doors wider for women's participation in public life.[99]

While the Advisory Council recognizes that greater political participation by women depends in part on changes in general society – including societal attitudes, an enhanced status of women in the labour force, more equal sharing of family responsibilities, improved availability of child care and other supports – it also depends on specific changes in the political realm.

A pro-active approach is needed to improve the representation of women in appointed positions. The provincial government should set a target of equal proportions of women and men on provincial bodies and actively recruit women for the seats that become available. Vacancies on provincial agencies, boards and commissions should be publicly advertised and the government should systematically use and promote existing databases such as the Advisory Council's Talent Bank to identify potential appointees. The government can look to other Canadian and European jurisdictions in devising a system for public appointments. Some provinces including Nova Scotia, Alberta and Ontario have developed guidelines and in some cases obligatory advertisement and independent screening processes to ensure a more transparent approach to filling

---

[99] See Jane Arscott, " 'More Women': The RCSW and Political Representation, 1970" in Manon Tremblay and Caroline Andrew (eds.), *Women and Political Representation in Canada* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press) especially, p. 148-149.

positions on appointed bodies.[100] Countries such as Finland, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands have gone further by adopting legislation supporting a policy of gender quotas or gender parity in appointments to various decision-making and consultative bodies.[101] Others like the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Sweden have officially committed to the goal of gender equality in appointed positions. The U.K.'s Equal Opportunities Commission has a section and provides a link on its website to encourage applications for public appointments on government bodies.[102]

Political parties have a major role to play in bringing more women into politics. In an electoral system using party lists to select some members, parties would be under public pressure to actively recruit women and minority candidates. But more is needed. Given the seriousness and persistence of the problems of unbalanced gender representation and limited diversity among candidates, political parties must take planned and sustained action to correct it. Only then can significant change get underway. As Madeleine Albright, Chair of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs recently affirmed: "Political parties […] are the key to advancing women's full participation in the political process. It is not enough for parties to establish women's wings or place women at the bottom end of party lists; they must develop real avenues for women's leadership roles."[103]

Party quotas – voluntarily adopted for the most part - are the most common mechanism used to promote women's political participation throughout the world and they have been effective.[104] The use of quotas "places the burden of recruitment not on the individual

---

[100] The government of Nova Scotia provides a list of agencies, boards and commissions and invites applications on its web site at www.gov.ns.ca (see "What's New" and "Employment Opportunities" sections), while Ontario government's Public Appointments Secretariat encourages citizens to submit their information to the appointments data base, at www.pas.gov.on.ca The Alberta government advertises vacancies and selection criteria on its personnel administration office site, see www.pao.gov.ab.ca/jobs/jobs04.htm

[101] Joni Luvenduski and Azza Karam, "Women in Parliament: Making a Difference", p. 14.

[102] See www.eoc.org.uk under Policies and Campaigns – Women into Decision-Making – Public Appointments – provides link to www.publicappts-vacs.gov.uk that allows the searcher to get details on opportunities by areas of interest, by government department and by location.

[103] Introduction to the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs' Win With Women Initiative's *Global Action Plan* (2003), signed by political parties around the world including by representatives of Canada's Liberal and NDP parties, available online at: www.ndi.org/globalp/women/forum/viewsection.asp?sect=gap National Democratic Institute Chair Madeleine K. Albright launched a global initiative to strengthen political parties through women's leadership in December 2003.

[104] International IDEA, "Special Mechanisms for Women," available online at www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esc07c.htm; Joni Lovenduski and Azza Karam, "Women in Parliament:

woman, but on those who control the recruitment process."[105] Parties can learn from models here in Canada and especially abroad. For example, one New Brunswick party has a provincial search committee co-chaired by a woman and a man working to increase the number of women and to improve diversity. Local and regional search committees in that party are instructed to seek out potential candidates among women and other disadvantaged groups.[106] Parties in countries such as Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, have set quotas ranging from 40% to 50% for women on PR party lists. Some, such as Sweden's Social Democratic Party, also require that women and men alternate on party lists, a practice known as "zipping."[107]

Some countries have legislated gender quotas for all parties.[108] Belgian law, for example, requires since 2002 that all parties in all elections must include at least one-half of the "underrepresented sex" on their lists and the top two to three positions on the list must alternate between women and men. Women are currently 35% of elected members of the Belgian national parliament. In Argentina, party electoral lists since 1991 must include at least 30% women for national elections and female candidate must be placed in positions on the list that would most likely result in election. Women are currently 34% of elected members of the Argentine national parliament. In 1996, Costa Rica legislated a 40% minimum for both sexes on party lists for all public elections and ruled in 1999 that women must be placed in electable positions on party lists. Women are currently 35% of elected members of the Costa Rican national parliament[109]. The

Making a Difference", p. 14, updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998), available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm

[105] Drude Dahlerup , "Using Quotas to Increase Women's Representation," p. 1, updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998), available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm.

[106] Sonia Pitre, "Political Parties and Female Candidates: Is there Resistance in New Brunswick?" , p. 115, 120.

[107] See International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), "Global Database of Quotas for Women" (2003), online at www.idea.int/quota/aboutQuotas.cfm The application of the gender equality principle in choosing one male and one female candidate for dual-member constituencies or the "twinning" of equally winnable single-member ridings has also been proposed or used in some jurisdictions. Twinning was used by the Labour Party in the 1999 elections to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly, while a proposed dual-member system was rejected in a 1999 referendum in the new territory of Nunavut. See "Fawcett Briefing: The Need for Positive Action," online at www.fawcettsociety.org.uk; John C. Courtney, Elections, p. 109-111.

[108] Drude Dahlerup , "Using Quotas to Increase Women's Representation."

[109] International IDEA (2003), "Global Database of Quotas for Women", at www.idea.int/quota/aboutQuotas.cfm; Drude Dahlerup , "Using Quotas to Increase Women's Representation" ; Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments," at May 31, 2004, available online at: www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm; see also International IDEA, *The Implementation of Quotas: The Latin American Experiences.*

government of France has gone even further, adopting a law in 2000 requiring political parties to run equal numbers of female and male candidates in municipal, regional and national elections. Penalties for non-respect of the parity law seem to have produced some results, at least in the municipal elections, where 48% of the councilors elected in 2001 were women, up from 26% in 1995.[110]

New Brunswick political parties must implement pro-active measures to remedy the situation.[111] In a national survey conducted in 2000, 82% of Atlantic Canadians were in favour of requiring the parties to choose more female candidates than they do now and 57% of Atlantic Canadians would favour requiring parties to choose as many female as male candidates. In the same survey, 57% of Atlantic Canadians also said parties should be required to choose more members of visible minorities as candidates.[112] In light of the public funding provided to political parties, it does not appear unreasonable to expect these organizations to uphold certain standards of fairness.[113] We urge the provincial government to introduce legislation requiring political parties to adopt a plan to bring about gender balance. The plan should cover the candidate search process, riding nominations and proportional representation lists. Targets would be introduced in steps: an initial goal of 30% female representation to be reached within three election periods should be gradually increased to 50%.[114]

---

[110] Municipal councilors in towns of more than 3,500 inhabitants. See Mariette Sineau, "Institutionalizing Parity : The French Experience," English translation of case study in Julie Ballington and Marie-José Protais, eds., *Les femmes au parlement : au-delà du nombre,* International IDEA, 2002. Available online: www.idea.int/gender/wip/french_regional.htm

[111] The Law Commission of Canada's recent report on electoral reform recommends that Parliament instruct political parties to consider a range of measures including the use of quotas for party lists and constituency nominations and other incentives for women to participate in politics. See *Voting Counts*, p. 176.

[112] See Paul Howe and David Northrup, *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, Institute for Research on Public Policy, July 2000 at www.irpp.org/research/index.htm

[113] New Brunswick's registered political parties receive an annual allowance from the provincial government for administration costs, political programs and members' activities. This allowance is calculated using a formula indexed for inflation, multiplied by the number of votes cast for the party's candidates in the last election. In 2003, the allowances were as follows: PC: $341,351; Liberal: $239,982; NDP: $56,401. See N.B. Commission on Legislative Democracy, "Political Party Financing", presentation to Commissioners, March 26, 2004.

[114] Some groups have also suggested that the government offer financial incentives to parties that elect a certain proportion of women to the Legislature. Quebec's Conseil du statut de la femme recently recommended that a political party that elects at least 30% women among its representatives receive a reimbursement of its election expenses based on the proportion of women elected by the party. The electoral law would stipulate that this measure would end once there was a 40% female representation in the provincial legislature. Conseil du Statut de la femme, *Avis: Les femmes et les institutions démocratiques : pour une meilleure* participation (Québec, October 2002); The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (Lortie Commission) recommended in its 1991 report that any party with 20% women or more among its elected MPs would be eligible for a higher rate of election expenses reimbursement. For example, a party with 25% women would be eligible for a 125% reimbursement up to a maximum of 150%. The Commission suggested that this incentive should be used until women made up at

Investment in training and mentoring is another means of boosting women's political participation. The Beijing Platform for Action emphasized the importance of action by governments, political parties, community groups and other organizations to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.[115]   It is time for the New Brunswick government, in collaboration with political parties, to fund training and mentoring initiatives designed to encourage and prepare women to run for and hold elective office. Such programs would provide specialized campaign skills training and support in areas including policy development, debating techniques, public speaking, leadership and strategic planning. Initiatives could be undertaken in partnership with women's and community groups and municipalities.

Some models already exist in other provinces and on the international scene.[116]   The Quebec government introduced a funding program in 1999 offering financial support to non-profit groups working on projects designed to increase the number of women in decision-making positions at the local and regional level.[117]   Grassroots efforts include the annual Women's Campaign School organized in Vancouver since 1999 by the non-partisan Canadian Women Voters Congress. Aspiring candidates or campaign staff who attend the School learn practical lessons from female politicians and political organizers.[118]   A variety of women's groups also help to promote and support women in politics.[119]

---

least 40% of the House of Commons, or until after 3 general elections, when the measure would be reviewed. The recommendation was never adopted. Canada, Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, *Final Report Volume 1: Reforming Electoral Democracy* (Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services, 1991), p. 272-273.

[115] See Article 195, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm

[116] See National Democratic Institute, *Win With Women Global Action Plan*, and the international experiences documented in Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), *Primer: Getting the Balance Right: Strategies for Change*, March 2001.

[117] The programme was recently renewed by the Charest government. See Gouvernement du Québec, Secrétariat à la condition féminine, *À égalité pour décider – Guide d'information* (1999), available online at www.scf.gouv.gc.ca/politique/egalité.asp. For examples of projects funded under the program, see www.scf.gouv.gc.ca/politique/outils.asp

[118] See www.canadianwomenvoterscongress.org/ . Other Canadian initiatives include the Femmes en tête – Mentorat au feminine program run by the Quebec City YWCA which provides on-line support services for women who want to get into decision-making positions and One Woman One Vote, a group established by the Edmonton YWCA to encourage women to vote and to prepare them for political leadership positions. See their web sites at: www.ywcaquebec.gc.ca/mentorat.html; www.onewomanonevote.org/

[119] The recently formed national group Equal Voice / À Voix égales has set a goal of one-third of House of Commons seats to be held by women after the 2004 federal election ("104 in 2004"). Equal Voice is encouraging individual women, calling for a form of proportional representation electoral system and for lower financial requirements. See the group's web site: www.equalvoice.ca

Political campaign spending is another area that could benefit from government action. The Advisory Council believes the provincial government should revise its limits on electoral financing to bring down the costs of getting nominated and running election campaigns. It is important that the government set limits on the presently unregulated contributions and contestant spending for nomination campaigns in the province. The new federal law on electoral financing which came into force in January 2004 introduced spending and contribution limits as well as disclosure rules for federal nomination campaigns. Nomination expenditures for federal nomination contestants must not exceed 20% of the limit allowed for a candidate's election expenses in the same riding during the previous election.[120] Current limits on candidate and party spending for general and by-elections in New Brunswick should also be lowered.[121]

Currently there is no set date for provincial elections in New Brunswick. An election can be called at any time within a five-year period and governments can choose to go to the polls when they feel they have the best chance of reelection. This fuels voter cynicism and tends to disadvantage women and others who need to plan for new or modified responsibilities. We believe the New Brunswick government should follow the lead of the B.C. government by setting fixed dates for elections so that candidates and politicians are able to reorganize their paid work and family commitments to meet their political obligations.[122]

The government must also endeavour to end direct discrimination that keeps some citizens out of the race. Political belief or activity should be added to the prohibited grounds covered by the N.B. *Human Rights Act*, as proposed in legislation currently before the Legislative Assembly. Adequate material and human resources must also be provided to the provincial Human Rights Commission so that it may pursue complaints

---

[120] The new federal law also limits corporate, union and individual donations to political parties, and provides for increased public funding for political parties. See Bill C-24, *An Act to Amend the Canada Elections Act and the Income Tax Act*   available for download online at:
www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=loi&document=index&dir=re3&lang=e&textonly=false.

[121] The *N.B. Political Process Financing Act* sets out the rules of party financing in the province. Available online at: www.gnb.ca/0062/acts/acts/p-09-3.htm ; see New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy, *Political Party Financing*, presentation to commissioners (March 26, 2004), available online at: www.gnb.ca/0100/presentations-e.asp

[122] B.C. introduced fixed election dates in 2001: provincial elections will be held on the 2nd Tuesday in May every 4 years. In N.B. fixed election dates already exist for municipal elections.

on these grounds.[123] Five provinces – PEI, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Manitoba - currently prohibit political discrimination.[124]

3. Enhancing Public Participation in Governance

Public participation in governance is not limited to voting and running for office. Democracy is also about what happens between elections when elected representatives and civil servants develop legislation, policies, and services. Active members of community organizations and interest groups have told the Advisory Council that they feel largely excluded from the decision-making process. "Groups and organizations are asked for input but should have involvement in actual policy creation" noted a New Brunswick man involved in a group advocating more collaboration between volunteer groups and government.[125] Non-governmental stakeholders have gained valuable expertise that is currently not being adequately tapped by politicians and bureaucrats. Consultation, when it is carried out, is sometimes short-lived and narrowly conducted. A New Brunswick woman working in an anti-poverty group commented:

> Consultation does not work; sometimes it is only done every few years. Groups want to be part of policy development. Through such avenues as Advisory Council and community participation those people who are most impacted need to be part of solving the problem. The quality of policy-making suffers and many individuals feel alienated because they have little or no say in the decisions that affect their daily lives.[126]

The silo effect is often a reality. The problem is not new. New Brunswickers who participated in the province's Social Policy Renewal Process of the late 1990s expressed great concern about the lack of co-ordination among government departments and the impact of this fragmentation on the efficiency and more importantly the effectiveness of government in meeting people's needs.[127]   Social and economic problems must be

---

[123] As of December 16, 2003, *An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act* had passed Second Reading in the N.B. Legislative Assembly. Note that in a recent position paper, the NB Human Rights Commission pointed to the "urgent need to address the perennial budget shortfall faced by the Commission that limits its ability to provide effective, efficient and timely services." *Position Paper on Human Rights Renewal in the Province of New Brunswick* (February 2004), p. 10 at www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/whatnew.htm

[124] N.B. Human Rights Commission, *Position Paper*, p. 6.

[125] New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women, *Your Vote, Your Issues, Your Government*. (Fredericton: N.B. ACSW., 2004), available online at: www.acswcccf.nb.ca/english/acsw3.asp, p. 7.

[126] Ibid., p. 6.

[127] See New Brunswick, Social Policy Renewal Secretariat, *Building Our Tomorrow: A Report on Social Policy Renewal* (Fredericton: Social Policy Renewal Secretariat, 1999), p. 56-58.

addressed in a comprehensive manner, requiring interdepartmental cooperation. Poverty is a case in point, because poverty raises issues of income support, economic development and training and literacy concerns, each the responsibility of different departments. Gender equality concerns also tend to get lost in the shuffle of budget allocations and departmental initiatives.

3.1 Gender-based analysis: a tool for gender equity in policy-making

The life experiences of women and men – and of diverse groups of women and men including Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, lesbians and gays and members of ethnocultural communities - still differ significantly. These population groups are affected differently by policies, laws and services, especially when women are under-represented among the decision-makers. Identical treatment does not guarantee fair outcomes, because discriminatory attitudes, values and practices, intentional or unintentional, are entrenched in society and constitute a legacy of disadvantage. For example, to ignore the poverty or the child care needs of lone parent women is not neutrality but bias.

Like an environmental impact analysis, gender-based analysis (GBA) is a tool for revealing possible outcomes. It aims at achieving fair results for women and men in all their diversity. This approach requires thinking about the gender differences and the relationships between women and men, and among diverse groups of women and men. And it means taking these differences into account from the start of the development of a policy or program to the evaluation stage.

Gender-based analysis starts with data broken down by sex. It questions basic assumptions and considers the social and economic context. By asking the right questions, we can identify the anticipated effect of an initiative on women, men and on gender equity.[128]

---

[128] Canada has been criticized by international authorities for failing to make GBA mandatory at the national as well as provincial and territorial levels. See United Nations, *Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 28th session (13-31 January 2003) and 29th session (30 June-18 July 2003).*, p. 55, available online at: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/28sess.htm; Status of Women Canada, *Canadian Experience in Gender Mainstreaming*, December 2001, available online at: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/0662667352/200112_0662667352_3_e.html#1

In 1995, the federal government adopted a policy requiring federal departments and agencies to conduct GBA on future policies and legislation. That same year, Canada endorsed the United Nations *Platform for Action* and the *Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development*, both of which call for a gender-based analysis process.[129] However, implementation in federal departments has been uneven. Most provincial governments and non-governmental organizations have not adopted a GBA approach. Gender-based analysis requires high-level commitment and it must be built into the accountability of management, research and policy planners in all types of organizations.

We urge the provincial government to commit to the use of a gender equality perspective at all stages of legislative change, policy development and program delivery, with the objective of ensuring that the results are of equal benefit to women and men in all their diversity. The adoption of a gender-based analysis approach as an integral part of governance is key to achieving substantive equality for the citizens of New Brunswick.

3.2 Other mechanisms for bridging the gap between citizens and government

The importance of increasing public involvement in governance can not be overestimated. Governments should view citizens as valuable partners, drawing on their expertise and perspectives to enrich policy-making. A recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development emphasized the benefits of such a partnership:

> Engaging citizens in policy-making is a sound investment and a core element of good governance. It allows government to tap wider sources of information, perspectives and potential solutions, and improves the quality of the decisions reached. Equally important, it contributes to building trust in government, raising the quality of democracy and strengthening civic capacity. [130]

How can groups and women from diverse realities become true players in the decision-making process? Political commitment to a more citizen-centered vision is essential.

---

[129] For more on how to do GBA, see for example N.B. Advisory Council on the Status of Women, *Equity Analysis Guide* at www.acswcccf.nb.ca/english/acsw3.asp; Status of Women Canada, *Gender-Based Analysis: A Guide for Policy-Making*, rev. ed. 1998, available online at: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/gbaguide/gbaguide_e.html

[130] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making* (2001).

Models for consultation and cooperation that have worked in the past should be used to include citizens in policy development. In this regard, the government should consider more frequent recourse to models such as the recent Ministers' Group on Violence Against Women and the Social Policy Renewal process of the late 1990s as a means of engaging the community and benefiting from its input.[131] It is also important to look for new mechanisms to bring the population into the policy process, including those involving technology such as online discussion groups, surveys and comment boards.[132]

3.3 On the use of referendums

New Brunswick currently lacks specific legislation on the holding of province-wide referendums. While referendums have not been used frequently in the province or in Canada as a whole, it is important that this form of direct democracy be carefully regulated. The Advisory Council has a number of concerns about the potential drawbacks and dangers of referendums. Many issues are too complex to be decided on the basis of a "yes" or "no" response to a referendum question. Women's rights and minority rights may be endangered by a direct vote on certain controversial issues, such as access to abortion. Advocates on various sides of an issue may bring their greater clout and financial resources to bear, thereby unduly influencing the referendum outcome and undermining the authority of the Legislature. Referendums may also foster extreme individualism, destructive social conflicts and resentment towards certain social groups.[133]

---

[131] New Brunswick, Social Policy Renewal Secretariat, *Building Our Tomorrow: A Report on Social Policy Renewal* (Fredericton: Social Policy Renewal Secretariat, 1999); New Brunswick, Minister's Working Group on Violence Against Women, *Minister's Working Group on Violence Against Women* (Fredericton: The Working Group, December 2001), available online at: www.gnb.ca/0012/Violence/pub-e.asp ; New Brunswick, Executive Council Office, *A Better World for Women: Government's Response to the Minister's Working Group on Violence Against Women* (Fredericton: The Council, December 2001), available online at: www.gnb.ca/0012/Violence/pub-e.asp

[132] Some initiatives have been launched at the municipal level. See for example Donald G. Lenihan with Abla Hanna, E-*Government. The Municipal Experience*, the Crossing Boundaries Municipal Caucus Discussion Paper (Ottawa: Centre for Collaborative Government., October 2002), available at www.crossingboundaries.ca/files/cg8.pdf

[133] Some of these concerns as illustrated by the experience of other jurisdictions are discussed in Conseil du Statut de la femme, *Avis: Les femmes et les institutions démocratiques : pour une meilleure* participation (Québec, October 2002), p. 91-96; also Matthew Mendelsohn and Andrew Parkin, "Introducing Direct Democracy in Canada," Institute for Research on Public Policy (June 2001), at www.irpp.org/choices/archive/vol7no5.pdf

The Advisory Council believes that referendums may be a mechanism for increasing public influence over policy decisions, but only if used sparingly and in accordance with clear guidelines. We support the cautious approach presented by analysts Matthew Mendelsohn and Andrew Parkin, who argue that a referendum model suitable for Canada must be shaped by a respect for our existing political values.[134] Crucial criteria for evaluating referendum practices include the protection of minorities, fairness, the quality of decision-making and political accountability. In particular, they note that "a balance must be found between allowing the majority to make decisions and ensuring that the referendum is not used as a weapon by one community against the other."[135] As Mendelsohn and Parkin affirm: "the enhancement of democracy requires much more than an increase in the number of opportunities for citizens to vote […] It requires an increase in the opportunities for citizens to participate in political deliberation: to engage each other and their elected representatives in a meaningful conversation in which not only the political executive, but also parliamentarians, interest groups, and the general public have a meaningful say in decision-making. The increased use of direct democracy, properly structured, can help in achieving this goal."[136]

A series of controls are needed to ensure that referendums are conducted in a fair and productive manner. Only the government should be able to directly initiate a referendum, and only after an issue has been debated in the Legislature. Citizens may present petitions to the government to request the holding of a referendum, but the government is responsible for deciding on and shaping the referendum question through legislative committee hearings. It is important that referendums do not serve partisan ends. Questions be framed with the sincere desire to obtain public input on policy options or processes. To minimize partisan considerations, questions should be considered by members of an all-party legislative committee. There should also be restrictions on the number of questions that can be put to voters at any given time. A referendum should be allowed only as part of a process involving public debate, after a public education campaign overseen by a non-partisan body. We also believe spending limits are essential for parties, groups and individuals during referendum campaigns and that all sources of funding be disclosed. Spending "floors" are also necessary, to allow affected

---

[134] Mendelsohn and Parkin, "Introducing Direct Democracy in Canada."; see also Pierre Marquis, *Referendums in Canada: The Effect of Populist Decision-Making On Representative Democracy* (Ottawa: Library of Parliament, August 1993).
[135] Mendelsohn and Parkin, "Introducing Direct Democracy in Canada," p. 5, 22.
[136] *Ibid*., p. 32.

parties to participate in the campaign.[137] The government should provide funding for those interested sides unable to invest a minimum amount in the referendum campaign. Referendums should require a "double" or "compound" majority to pass, that is a majority of all voters, as well as a majority of voters in a majority of the individual electoral districts. Finally, the results of a referendum should not be binding on government.

Conclusion

Improving the representation and influence of women is essential to achieving a fair and effective democracy. It is imperative that New Brunswickers recognize lack of gender balance in political and public life as a social problem and support corrective measures designed to address its structural causes. In 1970, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada concluded that "the voice of government is still a man's voice." [138] The commissioners maintained that "the genuine obstacles to women's participation, when they lie in prejudice, in unequal family responsibility, or in financing a campaign, must be approached with a genuine determination to change the present imbalance."[139] Thirty years on, there are more women at the government table, but there is still much to be done to ensure that women and their concerns take their rightful place.

Women and all citizens have potentially much to gain from reforms guided by a commitment to substantive equality and significant citizen involvement. With these goals in view, the Advisory Council submits the following recommendations.

---

[137] The need for spending "floors" as well as ceilings is emphasized by Chedly Belkhodja, "The Issue of Direct Democracy: Referendums", presentation to the Academic Conference on Legislative Democracy (February 2004), available online at: www.gnb.ca/0100/pres-e.asp
[138] Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1970), p. 355.
[139] *Ibid.*

Recommendations

1. That the provincial government introduce a mixed member proportional system for electing our MLAs, in which some members are elected in single-member geographical districts by first-past-the-post, and others are chosen through a proportional representation list system used in a corrective or compensatory manner to ensure that the proportion of seats held by each political party corresponds closely to the total votes received by each party.

2. That at least 40% of Legislative Assembly seats should be PR list seats and the overall allocation of seats should be done at the provincial level.

3. That the voting ballot should allow for two separate choices: the selection of a riding representative and of a political party. The party ballot should present a closed list of candidates, so that voters choose a slate of candidates in the order presented by the party of their choice. These lists, distributed for public scrutiny before the election, can be an important tool for favouring a more balanced range of candidates with regards to gender and other considerations than is usually obtained with single-member geographical ridings.

4. That the threshold or minimum percentage of the party vote to be eligible for PR list seats be set at 5% to avoid fragmentation of parties.

5. That legislators and representatives of the First Nations communities decide on formulas for the allocation of at least two seats in the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly for elected representatives of the First Nations peoples, and for the fair representation of women and men in these seats.

6. That the provincial government set a target of equal proportions of women and men on provincial bodies and adopt a pro-active approach to recruit and select potential female appointees. Vacancies on provincial agencies, boards and commissions should be publicly advertised and the government should systematically use and promote existing databases such as the Advisory Council's Talent Bank to identify potential appointees.

7. That the government introduce legislation requiring political parties to adopt a plan to bring about gender balance. The plan should cover the candidate search process, riding nominations and proportional representation lists. An initial goal of 30% female representation to be reached within three election periods should be gradually increased to 50%.

8. That the provincial government, in collaboration with political parties, fund training and mentoring initiatives designed to encourage and prepare women to run for and hold elective office. Initiatives could be undertaken in partnership with women's and community groups and municipalities. Such training and mentoring programs would provide specialized campaign skills training and support in areas including policy development, debating techniques, public speaking, leadership and strategic planning.

9. That the provincial government revise its limits on electoral financing to limit the costs of getting nominated and running election campaigns. While some limits on candidate and party spending for general and by-elections currently exist, there are no legislated spending or contribution limits for nomination campaigns in N.B.

10. That the provincial government set fixed dates for elections so that candidates and politicians can make plans to reorganize their paid work and family commitments to meet their political obligations.

11. That political belief or activity be added to the prohibited grounds covered by the N.B. Human Rights Act, as proposed in legislation currently before the Legislative Assembly. Moreover, the provincial Human Rights Commission should have the material and human resources needed to pursue complaints on these grounds.

12. That the provincial government actively promote and expand mechanisms for bridging the gap between citizens and government, so that groups and women from diverse realities may become true players in the decision-making process. In this regard, the government should consider more frequent recourse to models

along the lines of the Ministers' Group on Violence Against Women or the Social Policy Renewal process as a method for engaging the community and benefiting from its input.

13. That the provincial government commit to the use of a gender equality perspective at all stages of legislative change, policy development and program delivery, with the objective of ensuring that the results are of equal benefit to women and men in all their diversity. The adoption of a gender-based analysis approach as an integral part of governance is key to achieving substantive equality for the citizens of New Brunswick.

14. That use of referendum be guided by the following rules:
- only the government may directly initiate a referendum, and only after an issue has been debated in the Legislature. Citizens may present petitions to the government to request the holding of a referendum, but the government is responsible for deciding on the referendum question. Referendum questions are framed with the objective of obtaining public input on policy options through a process involving discussion by an all-party legislative committee.
- the number of questions that can be put to voters at one time is limited.
- a referendum is allowed only as part of a process involving public debate after a public education campaign overseen by a non-partisan body.
- spending by parties, groups and individuals is limited during referendum campaigns and all sources of funding must be disclosed.
- some funding is provided by government for those interested sides of the referendum debate which are unable to invest a minimum amount in the referendum campaign.
- a "compound" majority is needed to pass, that is a majority of all voters, as well as a majority of voters in a majority of the individual electoral districts.
- the results of a referendum are not binding on government.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arscott, Jane (1998). " 'More Women': The RCSW and Political Representation, 1970" in Manon Tremblay and Caroline Andrew (eds.). *Women and Political Representation in Canada*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, p. 145-168.

Arscott, Jane and Linda Trimble (1997). "In the Presence of Women: Representation and Political Power." In Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble, eds., *In the Presence of Women: Representation in Canadian Governments*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, p. 1-17.

Arseneau, Thérèse (1999). "Electing Representative Legislatures: Lessons from New Zealand." In Henry Milner (ed.). *Making Every Vote Count: Reassessing Canada's Electoral System*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, p. 133-144.

Assemblée nationale du Québec, Committee on Institutions (2002). *The Reform of the Voting System in Québec: Discussion Paper*. October. Available online at: www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Publications/rapports/rapci1eng.htm

Bashevkin, Sylvia (1993). *Toeing the Lines: Women and Party Politics In English Canada*. 2nd edition. Toronto: University of Oxford Press.

Beijing Platform for Action (1995). Available online at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm

Belkhodja, Chedly (2004). "The Issue of Direct Democracy: Referendums." Presentation to the Academic Conference on Legislative Democracy. February. Available online at: www.gnb.ca/0100/pres-e.asp

Boles, Janet K. (2001). "Local Elected Women and Policy-Making: Movement Delegates or Feminist Trustees?", p. 68-86 in Susan J. Carroll, ed. *The Impact of Women in Public Office.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

British Columbia Citizens' Assembly web site at: www.citizensassembly.bc.ca/public

Brodie, Janine with the assistance of Celia Chandler (1991). "Women and the Electoral Process in Canada." In Kathy Megyergy (ed.) *Women in Canadian Politics: Towards Equity in Representation*. Toronto & Oxford: Dundurn Press, p. 3-59.

Caiazza, Amy (2002). "Does Women's Representation in Elected Office lead to Women-Friendly Policy?" Institute for Women's Policy Research, May. Available online at www.iwpr.org/Publications/pdf.htm

Canada, Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (1991). *Final Report.* Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Canada, Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970). *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services.

Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1990). *Brief to the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing.* Ottawa: CACSW. June.

Carroll, Susan J. (2001). "Introduction." In Susan J. Carroll, ed. *The Impact of Women in Public Office.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. xi-xvi.

Carroll, Susan J. (2001). "Representing Women: Women State Legislators As Agents of Policy-Related Change", In Susan J. Carroll, ed. *The Impact of Women in Public Office.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 3-21.

Chaney, Paul (2003). *Women and Constitutional Change in Wales*, Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics, School of Politics and International Studies, Queen's University, Belfast, Occasional Paper No. 7, October. Available online at: www.qub.ac.uk/cawp/research/papers.htm

Catalyst (2004). *The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity*. Available online at: www.catalystwomen.org/2004fin_perf.htm

Chappell, Louise A. (2002). *Gendering Government: Feminist Engagement with the State in Australia and Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Cliche, Paul (1999). *Scrutin proportionnel : pour réduire le deficit démocratique.* Montreal : Éditions du Renouveau Québécois.

Collectif Féminisme et démocratie (2002). *Faire de la réforme du mode de scrutin un enjeu féministe*. October. Available online at www.cybersolidaires.org/democratie/

Collectif Féminisme et démocratie (2004). La politique c'est aussi une affaire de femmes, Cahier 2: *Le Mode de scrutin n'est pas neutre!* Programme de formation financé par Condition féminine Canada. February.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat (1996). *Barriers to Women's Participation in Parliament. Report of a Task Force of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Group*. United Kingdom. March.

Cool Women Canada. "Quotes." Online at www.coolwomen.ca

Courtney, John C. (2004). *Elections*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Dahlerup, Drude (2003). "Comparative Studies of Electoral Gender Quotas" in IDEA, *The Implementation of Quotas: Latin American Experiences*, Quota Workshops Report Series, no 2. Stockholm: IDEA, p. 10-19.

Dahlerup, Drude (2002). "Using Quotas to Increase Women's Representation." Updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed., (1998). *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers.* Stockholm: International IDEA. Available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm

Desserud, Don (1997). "Women in New Brunswick Politics: Waiting for the Third Wave" In Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble, eds., *In the Presence of Women: Representation in Canadian Governments*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, p. 254-277.

Dodson, Debra L. (2001). "Acting for Women: Is What Legislators Say, What They Do?" In Susan J. Carroll, ed. *The Impact of Women in Public Office.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 225-242.

Fair Vote Canada web site at: www.fairvotecanada.org

France (2000). "Paroles d'élues", Observatoire de la parité entre les hommes et les femmes at : www.observatoire-parite.gouv.fr/dossier/plaquette.html#paroles

Gouvernement du Québec, Conseil du Statut de la femme (2002). *Avis: Les femmes et les institutions démocratiques : pour une meilleure* participation. Quebec City, October.

Gouvernement du Québec, Secrétariat de la condition féminine (1999). *À égalité pour decider – Guide d'information* at www.scf.gouv.gc.ca/politique/egalité.asp

Howe, Paul and David Northrup (2000). *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*. Institute for Research on Public Policy. July. Available online at www.irpp.org

International Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance (1997). *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*. Available for download online at: www.idea.int/esd/publications.cfm

International IDEA (2003). "Global Database of Quotas for Women." Available online at www.idea.int/quota/aboutQuotas.cfm

International IDEA (2002). "Minority Provisions." Available online at: www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esc07b.htm

International IDEA (1998). "Special Mechanisms for Women." Available online at www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esc07c.htm

Inter-Parliamentary Union (2004). "Women in National Parliaments" at April 30, 2004. Available online at: www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

Inter-Parliamentary Union (2003). *Women Elected in 2003: The Year in Perspective*.

Kelber, Mim, ed. (1994). *Women and Government: New Ways to Political Power*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Kwavnick, D. (2004). "Minority Government." In *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Available online at: www.canadianencyclopedia.ca/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0005326

Law Commission of Canada (2004). *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Ottawa: Law Commission of Canada. Available online at: www.lcc.gc.ca/en/index.asp

Leduc, Lawrence (1999). "New Challenges Demand New Thinking About our Antiquated Electoral System." In Henry Milner (ed.), *Making Every Vote Count.* Peterborough: Broadview Press, p. 63-70.

Lenihan, Donald G. with Abla Hanna (2002). E-*Government. The Municipal Experience*, the Crossing Boundaries Municipal Caucus Discussion Paper. Ottawa: Centre for Collaborative Government. October. Available at www.crossingboundaries.ca/files/cg8.pdf

Lovenduski, Joni and Azza Karam (2002). "Women in Parliament: Making a Difference", updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed. (1998). *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers.* Stockholm: International IDEA. Available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm

MacIvor, Heather (1996). *Women and Politics in Canada.* Peterborough: Broadview Press.

MacIvor, Heather (2003). "Women and the Canadian Electoral System." In Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble (eds.). *Women and Electoral Politics in Canada*, p. 22-36.

Maillé, Chantal (1990). *Les Québécoises et la conquête du pouvoir politique*. Montreal: Les Éditions cooperatives Albert Saint-Martin.

Marquis, Pierre (1993). *Referendums in Canada: The Effect of Populist Decision-Making On Representative Democracy*. Ottawa: Library of Parliament. August.

Massicotte, Louis (2001). "Changing the Canadian Electoral System." Institute for Research on Public Policy, *Choices*, Vol. 7, n° 1, February, p. 3-28. Available online at: www.irpp.org/research/index.htm

Massicotte, Louis and André Blais (2003). "La réforme électorale: Profil d'un mode de scrutin mixte approprié au Québec" (chapitre écrit pour publication dans l'ouvrage collectif en hommage à Vincent Lemieux). Revised July. Available online at www.democratie-nouvelle.qc.ca/l_tribune.htm

Matland, Richard E. (2002). "Enhancing Women's Political Participation: Legislative Recruitment and Electoral Systems." Updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed. (1998), *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers.* Stockholm: International IDEA. Available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm

McPhedran, Marilou with Rosemary Spiers (2003). *Reducing the Democratic Deficit through Equality-Based Electoral Reform: The Equal Voice Position Paper on Proportional Representation.* Submitted to the Law Commission of Canada's electoral reform review. Spring. Available online at: www.equalvoice.ca/electoral.html

Mendelsohn, Matthew and Andrew Parkin (2001). "Introducing Direct Democracy in Canada." Institute for Research on Public Policy. June. Available online at: www.irpp.org/choices/archive/vol7no5.pdf

Milner, Henry (1999). "The Case for Proportional Representation in Canada" in H. Milner (ed.), *Making Every Vote Count.* Peterborough: Broadview Press, p. 37-49.

Mouvement pour une démocratie nouvelle (2004). Bulletin du MDN. May. Available online at: www.democratie-nouvelle.qc.ca/accueil.htm

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (2003). *Win With Women Global Action Plan*. Available online at: www.ndi.org/globalp/women/forum/viewsection.asp?sect=gap

New Brunswick (2004)*. An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act*. Bill passed 2nd reading. Available online at:

New Brunswick, Minister's Working Group on Violence Against Women (2001). *Minister's Working Group on Violence Against Women*. Fredericton: The Working Group. December. Available online at: www.gnb.ca/0012/Violence/pub-e.asp

New Brunswick, Executive Council Office (2001). *A Better World for Women: Government's Response to the Minister's Working Group on Violence Against Women*. Fredericton: The Council. December. Available online at: www.gnb.ca/0012/Violence/pub-e.asp

New Brunswick, Social Policy Renewal Secretariat (1999). *Building Our Tomorrow: A Report on Social Policy Renewal*. Fredericton: Social Policy Renewal Secretariat.

New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1995). *Equity Analysis Guide*. Moncton: N.B. ACSW. December. Available online at www.acswcccf.nb.ca/english/acsw3.asp

New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women (2004). *2004 Report Card on the Status of Women in New Brunswick*. Fredericton: N.B. ACSW. Available online at: www.acswcccf.nb.ca/english/acsw3.asp

New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women (2004). *Your Vote, Your Issues, Your Government*. Fredericton: N.B. ACSW. Available online at: www.acswcccf.nb.ca/english/acsw3.asp

New Brunswick, Commission on Legislative Democracy (2003). "Mission, mandate and Terms of reference." Available online at www.gnb.ca/0100/mandate-e.asp

New Brunswick, Commission on Legislative Democracy (2004). *Your Voice, Your Vote, Your Turn!* Available online at: www.gnb.ca/0100/pub-e.asp

New Brunswick, Human Rights Commission (2004). *Position Paper on Human Rights Renewal in the Province of New Brunswick*. February. Available online at www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/whatnew.htm

New Brunswick, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (1999, 2003). *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of N.B.*, at www.gnb.ca/elections/publications-e.asp

New Brunswick, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (2004). "Provincial Elections History." Available online at www.gnb.ca/elections/history-e.asp

New Zealand (2004). "New Zealand's Electoral System." Available online at: www.elections.org.nz/elections/esyst/govt_elect.html

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001). *Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making*.

Pitre, Sonia (2003). "Political Parties and Female Candidates: Is there Resistance in New Brunswick?'". In Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble (eds.). *Women and Electoral Politics in Canada*, p. 109-124.

Pitre, Sonia (2003). "Women's Struggle for Legislative Power: The Role of Political Parties." *Atlantis*, 27, 2, Spring/Summer, p. 102-109.

Prince Edward Island, Electoral Reform Commission (2003). *2003 Prince Edward Island Reform Commission Report.* Available online at: www.gov.pe.ca/electoralreform/index.php3

Rankin, L. Pauline and Jill Vickers (1998). "Locating Women's Politics", " in Manon Tremblay and Caroline Andrew (eds.). *Women and Political Representation in Canada*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, p. 341-367.

Seidle, F. Leslie (2002). *Electoral System Reform in Canada: Objectives, Advocacy and Implications for Governance.* Canadian Policy Research Networks Discussion paper F/28, October. Available online at: www.cprn.org/en/doc.cfm?doc=162

Shvedova, Nadezdha (2002). "Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament." Updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed. (1998). *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers.* Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998. Available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm

Sineau, Mariette (2002). "Institutionalizing Parity : The French Experience." English translation of case study in Julie Ballington and Marie-José Protais, eds., *Les femmes au parlement : au-delà du nombre,* International IDEA, 2002. Available online: www.idea.int/gender/wip/french_regional.htm

Skjeie, Hege (2002). "Credo on Difference – Women in Parliament in Norway." Updated version of chapter originally published in Azza Karam, ed. (1998). *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers.* Stockholm: International IDEA. Available online at: www.idea.int/gender/wip/eng_updates.htm

Status of Women Canada (1998). *Gender-Based Analysis: A Guide for Policy-Making*. Revised edition. Available online at: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/gbaguide/gbaguide_e.html

Status of Women Canada (2001). *Canadian Experience in Gender Mainstreaming*. December. Available online at: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/0662667352/200112_0662667352_3_e.html#1

 Studlar, Donley (1999). "Will Canada Seriously Consider Electoral System Reform? Women and Aboriginals Should." in Henry Milner (ed.), *Making Every Vote Count.* Peterborough: Broadview Press, p. 123-132.

Tardy, Évelyne (2003). *Égalité homes-femmes?: Le militantisme au Québec : le PQ et le PLQ.* Montreal : Éditions Hurtubise HMH ltée.

Tremblay, Manon and Linda Trimble (2003). "Women and Electoral Politics in Canada: A Survey of the Literature." In Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble (eds.). *Women and Electoral Politics in Canada*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press. p. 1-20.

Tremblay, Manon (1998). "Do Female MPs Substantively Represent Women? A Study of Legislative Behaviour in Canada's 25th Parliament," *Canadian Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 31, no 3, p. 435-465.

Trimble, Linda and Jane Arscott (2003). *Still Counting: Women in Politics Across Canada.* Peterborough: Broadview Press.

Tulloch, Elspeth (1985). *We, the undersigned: A History of N.B. Women, 1784-1984*. Moncton: N.B. ACSW.

United Kingdom, The Electoral Commission (2004). *Gender and Political Participation.* April. Available for download online at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/gender.cfm

United Kingdom, Independent Commission on the Electoral System (1998). *Final Report*. Available online at: www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm40/4090/contents.htm

United Nations. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). Available online at: www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/e1cedaw.htm

United Nations. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2003). *Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 28th session (13-31 January 2003) and 29th session (30 June-18 July 2003)*. Available online at: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/28sess.htm

Vickers, Jill (1997). "Towards a Feminist Understanding of Representation." In Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble, eds., *In the Presence of Women: Representation in Canadian Governments*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, p. 20-46.

Women's Environment and Development Organization (2001). *Primer: Getting the Balance Right: Strategies for Change*. March.

Women's Environment and Development Organization (2001). Fact Sheet 2: "Women Making a Difference."

Young, Lisa (2000). *Feminists and Party Politics*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Young, Lisa (1994). *Electoral Systems and Representative Legislatures.* Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.