

Analyzing the Barriers to Women's Leadership in New Brunswick Politics

by

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Abstract

The political representation of women is an issue that has been prevalent all over the world for decades. In Canada, women are typically absent from political roles at both the federal and provincial levels of politics. This is particularly true for New Brunswick politics, which has consistently fallen behind other provincial legislatures in terms of equal gender representation in political leadership roles.

This thesis will analyze the lack of women in New Brunswick politics with a special focus on political leadership roles. It argues that there are four primary explanations for their absence: the persistence of traditional gender roles, party recruitment practices, varying party ideologies and a traditionalist and sexist political climate in New Brunswick. These factors have created a political climate that renders political roles, especially leadership roles, largely inaccessible to women in New Brunswick. Drawing on the Canadian literature concerning female representation and more specifically the literature on New Brunswick, I identify common narratives and themes, which I examine using a case study, a survey and interview research. I conclude that New Brunswick is a province with extremely unequal female representation, due to the four barriers, and more research and analysis is required to uncover effective solutions.

Dedication

My thesis is dedicated to every woman who is breaking glass ceilings and approaching glass cliffs in Canadian politics, especially in New Brunswick. To all women who have been candidates, MLAs, acted as leaders, run for political leadership and thought about pursuing political leadership thank you for your perseverance and desire to change politics and inspire future generations of strong, capable women in political leadership!

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Chapter One

Introduction

For democracies to function properly, women and men should be represented equally in political institutions. Democracy is enriched and legitimized when women are equally represented (Carbert, 2006a). Following this logic, it would be assumed that Canada, a country that ranks sixth in the Democracy Index, would be made up of legislatures that reflect that 50 percent of the population made up by women (Democracy Index, 2018). Ideally, provincial legislatures would be microcosms of society and reflect that fifty percent of Canada's society is female.

However, there is a persistent issue with representation in Canadian politics. Among other historically marginalized groups, women are severely underrepresented at all levels of Canadian politics. As of the Spring of 2019, Canada is ranked 60th of 189 countries included in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's classification of women in national parliaments (<https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=7&year=2019>, Accessed July 20, 2019). For the purpose of this research, the term equality will refer to "political outcomes" or equivalent rates at which men and women attain political roles (Thomas, 2017). Many reasons have been proposed to explain the underrepresentation of women in Canadian politics.

Federally, representation is far from equal, as women were only elected to 26 percent of Parliamentary seats in the 2015 Federal election. Provincially, women are represented even less in provincial legislatures, especially in key political leadership positions, such as party leaders and premiers. The lack of women in politics both

nationally and provincially demonstrates that there has been little progress in increasing the number of women who are in decision-making positions, especially elected leadership roles. The major reasons that have been identified and discussed in academic literature in the last fifteen years include the impact of the media (Trimble, 2017; Everitt and Gidengil, 2003), the gendering and stereotyping of political positions (Thomas, 2017; Thomas, 2018), political environments that are unwelcoming to women (Bashevekin, 2019a; Arscott, Tremblay and Trimble, 2013; Tremblay and Stockmer, 2013; Trimble and Arscott, 2003), and a lack of prioritization of female representation on the part of political parties (Everitt, 2017a; Crowder-Meyer, 2013; Young and Cross, 2003).

Although organizations dedicated to increasing women's representation work diligently, internal measures in parties have changed, incentives for parties to recruit more female candidates have emerged, and women are more educated than they were in previous years, the number of women in elected politics has "plateaued" and remained relatively stagnant over the course of decades (Bashevkin, 2011). The intent of this thesis is to uncover possible barriers that are still preventing women from entering politics in Canada, but more specifically in the province of New Brunswick.

Women have perpetually been underrepresented in the New Brunswick provincial legislature. Women in New Brunswick reached their highest level of political representation in the legislature at 18 percent in 1999. Women's political representation subsequently decreased following this milestone and did not reach levels similar to 1999 until the provincial election of 2018. Currently, women fill 22 percent of the provincial legislative seats. The seats in the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick are still overwhelmingly filled by male politicians, and consequently, the political culture is

heavily influenced by male politicians. The following table illustrates the percentage of women nominated and elected from 1935 to 2019. There is a continuing lack of female representation present in both nominations and electoral wins.

Table 1: Female Representation in the New Brunswick Legislature

Election	Nominated		Elected		
	Number of Women Candidates	Percentage of Women Candidates	Number of Women Elected	Number of Possible Seats	Percentage of Women Elected
1935	1	1	0	58	0
1939	0	0	0	58	0
1944	0	0	0	58	0
1948	1	1	0	58	0
1952	0	0	0	58	0
1956	0	0	0	58	0
1960	0	0	0	58	0
1963	2	2	0	58	0
1967	3	3	1	58	2
1970	3	2	1	58	2
1974	13	7	2	58	3
1978	13	7	4	58	7
1982	19	10	4	58	7
1987	31	17	7	58	12
1991	52	23	10	58	17
1995	47	21	9	55	17
1999	46	24	10	55	18
2003	34	19	7	55	13
2006	33	20	7	55	13
2010	72	31	8	55	15
2014	71	32	8	55	15
2018	93	39	11	49	22

Source: Everitt, 2013

Several factors contribute to this underrepresentation, including the rural setting of New Brunswick, the economic conditions and the cultural climate that exists (Everitt, 2013). Of particular concern is that women are missing in critical executive roles, such as party leaders and premier (Thomas, 2018, Claveria, 2014). Only six women have led

parties in New Brunswick since 1981: Louise Blanchard (1981) for the Parti Acadien; Shirley Dysart (as Interim leader in 1995) for the Liberals; Elizabeth Weir (1988-2005), Allison Brewer (2005-2006) and Jennifer McKenzie (2018) for the NDP; and Barbara Baird-Filliter (1989-91) for the Progressive Conservatives (Everitt, 2013). Few of these women had the opportunity to lead major parties and those that did were leaders when the party was at its weakest.

There have been three female party leaders (Elizabeth Weir, Allison Brewer and Jennifer McKenzie) within one party, the NDP. The provincial NDP has had immense success in comparison to other parties in bringing female leaders into their party. The NDP's ability to bring women into leadership roles follows the trend that women are able to acquire top positions in weak or minor political parties (Bashevkin, 2019b). Similarly, the women who led the NDP in New Brunswick did so during an "uncompetitive period," or a time when the party was not popular (Bashevkin, 2019b).

Only Elizabeth Weir was able to earn a seat in the legislature, which marked a great change in the typically Progressive Conservative and Liberal dominated provincial legislature (Bashevkn, 2019). Her successes, though important, did little to actually change the level of female representation in New Brunswick. Even with little increase in overall representation among women in New Brunswick, Weir had a very successful political career and led the NDP from 1988-2005 (McPhail, 2019). The NDP has not won a seat in the legislature in fifteen years and has had little success, with its popular vote reaching only five percent in 2018, the lowest it has been since Weir's resignation 2005 (McPhail, 2019).

Even with the establishment in 2016 of the group “Women for 50%,” there was still a major lack in female representation following the 2018 election. Women for 50%’s mandate is to empower women and guide women who are interested in running as political candidates through the steps of electoral politics. Women for 50% campaigned heavily to have all political parties in New Brunswick offer slates of candidates that were at least 50% female in the 2018 election and still only eleven women make up 22 percent of the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were elected. The need for a group like Women for 50% points to a serious problem that exists in terms of gender representation in New Brunswick.

The current underrepresentation of women in the New Brunswick legislature points to the conclusion that is that there are structural and institutional problems that need correcting. Addressing the issue of female underrepresentation in New Brunswick politics leads to my primary research question: why is there a lack of women pursuing political leadership in New Brunswick? Women in New Brunswick have not historically acquired political leadership positions to the same degree as their male counterparts and have been premier (Carbert, 2006a). In every election since 1935, as women only won the right to be elected to New Brunswick’s provincial office in 1934, more men have run as candidates and more men have been elected in New Brunswick, especially in rural ridings (Carbert, 2005). My aim with this research is to discover the possible reasons explaining why this phenomenon persists. I argue that the lack of women actively pursuing political leadership positions is due to four principal barriers: traditional gender roles, party recruitment, party ideology and political climate in New Brunswick.

Traditional gender roles and familial commitments remain major barriers that prevent women in New Brunswick from entering politics in general, but more specifically pursuing political leadership roles. I argue that women in New Brunswick are still filling traditionally female social roles and obligations and are thus preoccupied with familial commitments, making the time commitment required of political leaders, more specifically premier or party leader, extremely difficult for them to take on. As a result, women who have young families or elderly parents in need of care are less likely to pursue politics (Hennessy, 2015).

This is especially relevant in New Brunswick, as it has a disproportionately large aging population. Roughly 20 percent of people in New Brunswick are over the age of 65, and a lack of availability of nursing home care places the burden on family members to care for their elderly parents (Brunet, 2017). Atlantic Canada, which includes New Brunswick, also has a “strong sense of family” (Carbert, 2006b). In New Brunswick, as elsewhere, “in 2010, women spent an average of 50.1 hours per week on childcare, more than double the average time (24.4 hours) spent by men” (Milan, Keown and Urquijo, 2011).

Furthermore, political parties are failing to actively seek out qualified women to run for elected office. This contributes to the lower number of women holding elected office in the province and consequently results in parties facing a dearth of possible women interested in pursuing or being encouraged to pursue political leadership positions. Parties frequently select male candidates in ridings where they are most successful leaving their less supported ridings open to female candidates (O’Neill, 2015). This enables parties to appear as if they are diligently working to improve representation

when, in fact, they are not making any actual progress in terms of more women being elected to the legislature (O'Neill, 2015). "Party selectorates," or the individuals responsible for recruiting candidates, have consistently failed to seek out women and represent a definite barrier to equal representation (Tolley, 2019). Party leaders also play a major role in the recruitment of women (Crowder-Meyer, 2013). Party leaders who are women attract more female candidates (Tolley, 2019). Evidently, parties' individual cultures impact female representation because they may make women believe the party is open to female candidates, and contain networks that attract more women and make the nomination of women more of a priority.

Moreover, I propose that party ideology plays a large role in the importance placed on women's involvement in electoral politics. Party ideology is constantly evolving and being redefined by those within the party and is essential for parties to find "purpose and direction" (Wiseman, 2017). For example, female representation is a priority in the ideologies of parties located towards the left of the political spectrum, such as the NDP and the Green Party, which have no or limited political power in New Brunswick (Everitt, 2017a). Dominant political parties in New Brunswick, notably the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties, are less inclined to prioritize equal representation. Party ideology often reflects what is perceived as components of a "good society" by the public (Wiseman, 2017). Although female equality has been acknowledged by the majority of society as necessary in a "good society," it has yet to impact large parties' ideologies in a way that increases female representation substantially and decreases institutional and structural barriers (Wiseman, 2017).

New Brunswick has traditionally been a two-party system, and only the Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative Party have formed governments. Due to the continued electoral success of the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties, the smaller parties who are more inclined to adopt more egalitarian gender representation policies have little to no influence (Everitt, 2017b). Because the NDP and the Green Party are not competitive in New Brunswick their ideological focus on prioritizing the representation of women is not transmitted to the larger Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties (Everitt, 2017b).

Finally, the political climate plays a large role in the political representation of women. Since women are missing from important elite roles, such as party presidents, riding association presidents and party leadership, they are not given the same political opportunities that men are given (Everitt, 2017b; Tolley, 2019). In other words, because men typically occupy the positions in the dominant parties that select candidates, propose policy and design campaigns, women are excluded (Tolley, 2019). Sexism in the legislature is also rampant and women who are elected must navigate the hostile legislative environment (Trimble and Arscott, 2003b).

I will begin my analysis by providing a brief overview of the relevant literature that examines the general issue of female political underrepresentation in Canada. I will then narrow my focus more specifically to that of the underrepresentation of women in political leadership roles. The thesis will then move into a discussion of women's political representation and leadership in New Brunswick, specifically addressing the inadequate number of women in the legislature, the lack of women in political leadership roles and the fact that New Brunswick has had no female premiers. These findings lead to

the conclusion that there are specific barriers restricting women from pursuing political leadership, which my thesis will focus on.

The intent of my research is to identify, address and analyze the predominant barriers that impact New Brunswick women's political representation. I will use a case study that is intended to build upon the existing literature surrounding female representation and challenges in New Brunswick. The thesis augments this literature with the results of an original study based upon interviews with female political figures and survey research of candidates and party activists that confirms the factors contributing to the lack of women pursuing political leadership positions in New Brunswick. Using this methodology, I identify attitudes on gender representation that female politicians hold in New Brunswick. In doing so I build an analysis that offers solutions to the problem of gender under-representation and identifies potential directions for future research about gender and political leadership in New Brunswick and Canada. More specifically, the research will ultimately help us understand an aspect of female political representation - an ambition to hold political leadership roles - which has been traditionally ignored.

In the last twenty years, greater academic attention has been paid to the underrepresentation of women in Canadian politics (Everitt 2017, Tremblay and Stockemer 2013, Trimble and Arscott 2013, Thomas 2018, Bashevkin 1999, 2011). The literature can be divided into two main themes: (1) that which looks at the representation of women in Legislative Assemblies and (2) that which examines women in more elite political roles, such as the position of party leaders or provincial premiers.

First, I will summarize the aforementioned literature and conclude that the primary variables that contribute to women's limited presence in Canadian politics

include socioeconomic factors and traditional gender roles, gendering and stereotyping of political actors internally within parties and in the media, and the political climate that exist in Canada. The thesis also identifies an important gap in the literature: more attention to the Atlantic Provinces and gender representation in relation to leadership is required. I will conclude with a review of research that focuses on women in New Brunswick politics.

I will then narrow the focus to the question of why women are not pursuing political leadership positions in Canada, and more specifically in New Brunswick. I will provide an overview of the literature that examines female access to leadership positions and the factors that play a direct role in women's underrepresentation in these political positions. Moreover, I will organize this section in four parts which include leadership, gender and leadership, women and political leadership in Canada, and women and political leadership and New Brunswick. I conclude that four primary barriers impact political leadership access for women and best explain why they are not pursuing these leadership opportunities: party organization, party ideology, and party recruitment. More specifically, I identify these factors as the primary reasons that New Brunswick has historically seen so few women pursuing leadership positions such as party leader and hence premier. I will end this section by explaining the barriers that limit female representation in New Brunswick.

Chapter Two

Why is Female Representation in Politics so Low?

Women and men still seem to fall into the traditional and archaic “sexual divisions of labor” (Vickers, 1975). Sexual divisions of labour refer to men traditionally working outside of the home and women working within the home or in roles that are more socially focused (Vickers, 1975). The sexual division of labour has been replicated in politics as more men are traditionally found working within the political sphere than women. When women are political actors they are often scrutinized because they are not fulfilling their familial role. Thus, it is necessary to examine factors identified by academic literature which include sociodemographic factors, stereotypes and gendering in politics, media coverage impact, and structural and institutional barriers to try and explain the lack of women in political leadership roles.

Sociodemographic factors are significant contributors to women’s political participation in elected politics, especially in elite decision-making positions (Tremblay and Stockmer, 2013). The major socio-demographics that typically limit the accessibility of elected politics include education level, gender identity, racial identity, parliamentary experience, and age when first elected (Tremblay and Stockmer, 2013). To elaborate, women with lower levels of education, who are members of a visible minority group, who have never held a role in parliament, and who are young are less likely to attain political positions in comparison to other women and their male counterparts (Tremblay and Stockmer, 2013). Although these aspects will also impact men, it is more difficult for

women to attain political positions because gender is an additional barrier impacting them.

Additionally, familial commitments are a barrier to entering the political arena, as women are more heavily scrutinized and critiqued for being politically involved when they have a family (Hennessy, 2015). Due to the “family commitment schema,” which outlines what roles are traditionally associated with men and women and consequently shapes society’s perception of what is normal and abnormal, the major familial and home roles are assigned to women (Hennessy, 2015). Although women can obtain an income in this traditionalist schema, it is generally perceived more positively if it is derived from a role that does not interfere with their familial commitments (Hennessy, 2015).

Involvement in politics makes this schema difficult to abide by as a woman, as it is very time-consuming and requires large amounts of time away from the home (O’Neill and Stewart, 2009).

Political ambition in women is frequently misconstrued in the media as “unnatural” and makes the public question their commitment to their family (Trimble, 2017, 92). This misconstruing of women’s political ambition by the media has “heightened threats of physical harm” that female Premiers have experienced from the public (Bashevkin, 2019a). Interestingly, male MPs are often parents and much more open about their familial status than female MPs (Thomas and Lambert, 2017). Some women even avoid mentioning that they have children due to safety concerns for their children (Thomas and Lambert, 2018). An example of the precarious balance between motherhood and politics is Catherine McKenna causing controversy when she announced that she would turn her phone off in the evening to be with her family (Bittner and

Thomas, 2017). Evidently, whether women are totally dedicated to politics or their family, there will be individuals who are critical of them.

Additionally, legislatures are not family-friendly. For example, pregnancy and childbirth are “not listed as approved reasons for absence from the legislature” (Bittner and Thomas, 2017). Even with the increase in the number of women in the labour market, which has an impact on familial time commitment due to their work schedule, there is still a small percentage of women entering the political arena (Rapoport and Le Bourdais, 2006). Beyond socioeconomic factors and the division of labor between men and women, societal and cultural norms are also barriers to female representation. Due to the precarious balance of familial responsibility and the responsibility to provide for their family, women are placed in a difficult position that has the potential to make politics very unappealing.

Gender and Stereotyping

Gendering and stereotyping can also limit the representation of women in electoral politics (Maiolino, 2015; Schneider and Bos, 2014; and Trimble and Arscott, 2003). Politics has traditionally been viewed as inherently masculine; therefore women are expected to possess masculine traits that do not drift too far from traditional gender traits if they are involved in politics (Maiolino, 2015).

It has been argued that female politicians face different stereotypes than women in general (Schneider and Bos, 2014). The stereotypes that apply to women, in general, do not apply to female politicians as the traits that are stereotypical to women are not relevant to politics (Schneider and Bos, 2014). Women are traditionally stereotyped as

“affectionate, gentle, sensitive, whiny, gullible, imaginative and creative;” on the contrary, “well-educated, confident, assertive, well-spoken, and hardworking” are often stereotypical traits of female politicians (Schneider and Bos, 2014). As a result, female politicians are removed from stereotypes of politicians and women in general and constitute a “stereotypical sub-group” of their own (Schneider and Bos, 2014).

Demonstrating these more masculine leadership styles is especially crucial for women to prove themselves as legitimate leaders (Maiolino, 2015).

Women tend to perceive themselves as “unqualified” and “unviable” political candidates despite extensive education, speaking abilities, and political knowledge, which may rival or even exceed their male counterparts (Lawless and Fox, 2010). Women and men have similar levels of “political experience” and “political proximity,” but political ambition is much lower among women (Lawless and Fox, 2010). There seems to be little difference between the ability of men and women to win elections; thus, decreased political ambition in women is likely impacting their political representation (Lawless and Fox, 2010). Politics is dominated by men because men can envision themselves as political candidates more commonly than women can (Lawless and Fox, 2005). This phenomenon may occur due to women’s lack of self-confidence and inability to envision themselves in political roles as easily as men can (Lawless and Fox, 2010).

Women who are members of ethnic minorities experience further scrutiny in their personal lives due to their ethnicity and possibly cultural differences (Goodyear-Grant, 2013; Biles and Tolley, 2008). Moreover, immigrants and refugees often lack the required funds to run in and win an election (Biles and Tolley, 2008). Members of ethnic minorities frequently lack a connection to their community as well which only further

complicates their path to the legislature or parliament (Biles and Tolley, 2008).

Interestingly, most female politicians are heavily scrutinized whatever their background may be. Thus, no personal characteristics are the right or the wrong ones to have when a woman is pursuing politics, though some may be more limiting than others (Bashevkin, 2009b).

The sexist nature of legislatures, as traditionally “male-dominated spaces,” is challenging and contributes to the gender deficit in Canada (Gidengil et al., 2003). Numerous female politicians have experienced the sexist “attitudes, assumptions and behaviors” that are present in Canadian legislatures (Gidengil et al., 2003). Women often express that legislatures are unappealing due to their hostile nature and report frequent experiences of “emotional abuse” (Trimble and Arscott, 2003b). Sexism limits women’s potential in the Canadian political arena, making fewer women interested in pursuing politics, which perpetuates the underrepresentation of women at all levels (Gidengil et al., 2003). Because legislatures are commonly an environment where women seem out of place and are made to feel uncomfortable, there is consequent lack of interest from potential female politicians (Gidengil et al., 2003). As former Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne said when asked about the lack of women in politics, “it may be that they don’t want to put themselves in that toxic environment, where people are ripping each other apart” (Teitel, 2013). Consequently, spaces like legislatures would likely be more appealing to women if they were cordial and female-friendly (Teitel, 2013).

Women in politics deal with hostile environments not only within the institution, but outside the institution as well in the form of media coverage. The media is an aspect of electoral politics that further limits progress towards achieving equal representation

(Everitt and Gidengil, 2003; Goodyear-Grant, 2013; and Bashevkin, 2009). The most challenging aspect of the media for female politicians is the “gender-differentiated coverage” of politicians in Canada (Everitt and Gidengil, 2003). For example, the media focuses primarily on a female politician’s personal characteristics (age, hairstyle, clothing, weight, tone of voice, etc.) and her personal life (sexual orientation, relationship status, motherhood, etc.) rather than her political views or contributions to society (Bashevkin, 2009b).

The media often portrays politics as a “masculine domain” where women do not belong (Tremblay and Belanger, 1997). For example, political cartoons usually depict female politicians as “dependent, fearful and powerless,” whereas male politicians are presented as “brave, independent and assured” (Tremblay and Belanger, 1997). Since the media is normally the only connection the public has with politicians, citizens perceptions of politicians are dependent on news coverage (Goodyear-Grant, 2013). Female politicians’ statements are frequently taken out of context and misrepresented by the media in ways that make women look bad (Goodyear-Grant, 2013). As a result, many female politicians prefer to do live interviews as the media cannot alter what they are saying or the context in which it is said (Goodyear-Grant, 2013). Women face a dilemma created by the media: they do not want to be perceived as too combative, but if they are not combative enough, they will not receive media attention at all and will consequently be viewed as weak (Everitt and Gidengil, 2003). The media reinforces the political structures, both internal and external, that deter women from participating politically.

Political Factors

Other factors that contribute to female underrepresentation include bias within regional political culture, complacency in the electorate, unwelcoming political culture, and ineffective party recruitment practices. Research demonstrates that women have different political experiences and experience varying levels of success in different regions (Carbert, 2005). Women in rural areas have more difficulty in obtaining political empowerment and elected office positions than women in urban regions (Carbert, 2005). In rural areas, fewer female candidates run in ridings where their party is traditionally successful creating a phenomenon that has been labeled the “rural deficit” (Carbert, 2005). As a result of the rural deficit, women are not being elected in such regions and their political representation is not improving (Carbert, 2005).

New Brunswick, a largely rural province, is susceptible to the ‘rural deficit’ that Carbert describes when analyzing female representation in rural ridings (Carbert, 2005). There are several factors that account for this situation. Party recruitment is at the forefront as rural areas have a smaller number of women who are interested in pursuing politics, which in turn complicates recruitment for political parties (Carbert, 2005). The political climate also plays a role in the rural deficit because parties focus their attention on the ridings that they have greater chances of winning and tend to place men in these ridings (Carbert, 2005).

Goodyear-Grant (2010) found that women candidates are seemingly no less appealing to voters than their male counterparts; what appears to matter the most in people’s willingness to vote for a candidate is the candidate's party affiliation (Goodyear-Grant, 2010). Hence, voters will vote for women if they run in ridings where their party

has a chance at winning (Speirs, 2002). Voters play an important role because they can pressure political parties with regard to particular issues, which includes the underrepresentation of women (Everitt and Gidengil, 2013). Thus, parties will act in response to these concerns to maintain their support (Everitt and Gidengil, 2013). For example, provincially, the Liberal party may be more willing to adopt practices to bring more women into their party than the Progressive Conservative party, in an attempt to appeal to the province's left of center voters.

Parties have the ability to increase female representation if gatekeepers - those who actively recruit members - are actively searching out and approaching potential female candidates to recruit them to represent a particular party (O'Neill, 2015). Research shows that even though some Canadians recognize female underrepresentation in Canadian politics, there are still many voters who do not feel that there is an issue, which leads to parties being less concerned with it as an issue (Everitt and Gidengil, 2013).

In addition to voters being complacent and unconcerned, a "false sense of representational success" and the "complacency" that develops as a result will limit the number of women that pursue elected politics (Trimble and Arscott, 2003a). Complacency towards the issue decreases the urgency of equal representation and makes women less likely to put themselves forward as candidates to political parties (Trimble and Arscott, 2003a).

Parties on the left of the political spectrum, such as the NDP, are more "ideologically predisposed" to put in place measures to ensure greater female representation is achieved (Everitt, 2017b). Although women have been involved in political parties for decades, they have yet to consistently attain levels within the party

that lead to representational success (Everitt, 2017b). Women are often hesitant to join parties on their own and usually wait to be approached and asked to join (Young and Cross, 2003). Consequently, parties that are dedicated to increasing the representation of women should be proactive in bringing women into politics (Young and Cross, 2003). For example, in New Brunswick, the NDP is committed to equal representation among its candidates according to its mandate, which requires the party to actively recruit women to the party with sufficient time to prepare them for an election.

Moreover, when women join political parties, they are less likely than men to acquire prestigious positions; the greater the power is concentrated in a position, the less likely a female will hold it (Everitt, 2017a). Thus, women often appear in positions of power in less successful parties or in parties that are more liberal in their beliefs, as those parties are more committed to bringing women into the parties (Everitt, 2017a). More traditional parties, like the Progressive Conservatives or People's Alliance, do not prioritize initiatives like fair representation due to the traditionalist or "old fashioned" nature of their supporters (Everitt, 2017a). Furthermore, there are great ideological differences among various provincial branches of each party, even though they bear the same political party name (Bashevkin, 2019a). Women typically occupy smaller or temporary roles in dominant parties that do little to empower women, advance women's representation or decrease the gender deficit (Everitt, 2017b).

The Canadian electoral system also presents challenges for women pursuing elected politics in Canada. Although electoral systems do not directly impact female representation, they contribute to the problems women experience entering politics (MacIvor, 2003). First Past the Post is an electoral system that limits the true

representation of what voters want (MacIvor, 2003). For example, dominant parties are much more successful in First Past the Post systems, as the lower percentage of votes that the smaller parties receive is not reflected like the number votes that a larger party receives are in the legislature (MacIvor, 2003). As a result, smaller parties, which often run more female candidates, are not well represented in the election results, and this contributes to a lack of female representation. Other countries that have converted their electoral system to Mixed Member Proportional systems from Single-Member Plurality systems have successfully elected more women, as the smaller parties are more accurately reflected in the legislature (MacIvor, 2003). Because the smaller parties run more women candidates, more women are represented in the election results (MacIvor, 2003).

Chapter Three

What is Leadership in Relation to Gender?

While there has been a major focus on increasing the number of women in legislative assemblies, there has been less focus on increasing their numbers in elite or leadership positions. Classical theories of leadership are extremely gendered and exclude women, which may contribute to the lack of interest in leadership expressed by women (Nye, 2008a). Leadership is a broad term that has a variety of meanings depending on who holds a leadership position, what kind of leader the individual intends to be and what motivated the individual to pursue a leadership position. Generally, leadership involves bringing people together for a common goal (Nye, 2008a). Essentially, a leader is an individual who brings together people with similar ideas and common goals (Nye, 2008b). Leaders are sought out depending on the “time and context”, as they shape the needs of followers or respond to their needs (Nye, 2008a). For example, in times of crisis followers will be in search of one leadership style over another and consequently, a leader that exhibits such a style will attract followers at that time (Nye, 2008a).

Although leaders are commonly understood as leading from the top, leadership is much more circular as leaders and followers can be interchanged and must communicate with each other (Nye, 2008b). Presently, a less authoritative and more collaborative leadership style is more successful in political environments, which may be conducive to the emergence of more female leaders as women typically fall into this category (Nye, 2008a). However, acquiring leadership and other elite positions remains a challenge for

women due to traditional understandings of politics as a male-dominated and male favored space in society.

Presently there are three leadership types that women seem to fall into in Canadian politics: “imperiled leadership, empowered leadership, and pioneering leaders” (Bashevkin, 2019b). *Imperiled leadership* refers to political leadership acquired after public support has decreased substantially (Bashevkin, 2019b). *Empowered leadership* refers to acquiring political leadership after a very popular leader resigns (Bashevkin, 2019b). *Pioneering leaders* refer to acquiring political leadership in what is commonly a weak party within a jurisdiction (Bashevkin, 2019b). This suggests that female leaders tend to pull their party from positions where they have reduced levels of support or are facing controversy, only to be later replaced by men when this loss of support or decrease in popularity subsides (Small and Lexier, 2013). Evidently, the major scenarios in which women acquire leadership are unfavorable and do little to make leadership attractive.

How do Women Approach Leadership?

Gender plays a major role in the ambition that individuals possess regarding political leadership (Bashevkin, 2019b; Nye, 2008; Erikson, 2003; and Bittner and Goodyear-Grant, 2017). “Nascent political ambition” is the level of interest that someone has in pursuing politics before doing so (Fox and Lawless, 2005). Often, women possess less nascent political ambition than men (Fox and Lawless, 2005). Fox and Lawless have argued that different aspects motivate different individuals to run for leadership positions, and that the lack of nascent political ambition among women to run for political office can be attributed to six factors: “strategic considerations” (personal assessment of

qualifications), ideological motivations (high levels of money, time and knowledge as well as personal stakes in policy), minority status (gender and race), politicized upbringing (exposure to politics through childhood), competitive traits (highly competitive in other areas such as occupation), and stage in life (age, marital status and parental status) (Fox and Lawless, 2005).

Leadership can be exercised from the middle, which may help explain why women in New Brunswick are not pursuing leadership positions (Nye, 2008b). Leading from the middle refers to bringing about change in a less domineering fashion and women are typically bringing ideas regarding policy and change from a position that is less prominent. Leading from the middle enables women to avoid some of the negative aspects of leadership such as internal criticism and unfavorable media coverage.

Women in Canada may view their power as more effectively wielded and more easily attained from the middle as opposed to the top (Nye, 2008b). Instead of ruling from the top, women may feel their leadership is more effectively exerted from the center of an institution as people are less dubious of them. This tendency to rule from the middle may be as a result of women enduring “constraints in projecting typically masculine leadership characteristics” (Bashevkin, 2019b). This may be because women seemingly cannot be seen as both “likeable and competent” in politics (Bashevkin, 2019b).

Increasing the number of female political leaders has the potential to bolster the engagement of women in Canadian politics and increase their overall representation in legislatures (Everitt, 2003). Female political leaders would serve as important role models to other women, capturing their interest and demonstrating that women have a real place in politics (Erickson, 2003). It is reasonable to assume that an increase in

female party leadership may increase female interest in electoral politics (Erickson, 2003).

Why is there a Dearth of Female Political Leaders in Canada?

Women must be selected as candidates if parties are to have the opportunity to put them into leadership roles. The “supply” of women available to select for these jobs is a crucial factor in determining the representation of women in politics (O’Neill, 2015). Women need to be willing to put themselves forward as candidates before political leadership can be held by women (O’Neill, 2015). This can be challenging for women because there are individuals with certain characteristics who greater chance to be chosen as candidates; usually, the type of individual selected to be candidates is the “the well-educated, affluent, middle-aged male” (O’Neill, 2015). Party recruitment efforts are “highly decentralized operations,” which leaves organizations at the local level to seek out and recruit potential candidates or select candidates from those who are presenting themselves (Bashevkin, 2019b). As discussed earlier, parties have a historical tendency to select male candidates in ridings where they are the most successful and women candidates in ridings where the party support is low (O’Neill, 2015). This tendency results in many female candidates being run, which initially appears as a positive occurrence, but results in little advancement concerning actual representation and in turn limits the accessibility of leadership roles (O’Neill, 2015).

Women have rarely held political leadership positions in Canada: there has only been one female Prime Minister and eight female Provincial Premiers over the course of Canadian political history. Moreover, women’s attainment of political leadership is

typically brief and does little to effect meaningful change (O'Neill, 2015). For example, though in 2013 there were six female premiers, which represented the largest number of female premiers in Canada's history, this number dropped back to two soon after, due to either the defeat or resignation of four female premiers (Everitt, 2015). Seeing other women in politics and following their advancements can encourage women to run for political positions (Everitt, 2015). This sense of encouragement reflects the "role model argument", which refers to women being inspired by other women to become political leaders (Everitt, 2015).

Once these women have been poorly treated within the political landscape or by their party or have suffered great scrutiny in the media other women will be less likely to become involved in electoral politics themselves (Everitt, 2015). This occurrence refers to the "glass cliff" (Bashevkin, 2019a). The glass cliff refers to the fact that women are more able to attain top positions but are often "set up to fail" and "fall" once they acquire the political leadership position (Bashevkin, 2019a). Informal efforts or those of activist groups like Women for 50% are important in empowering women by providing support that enables women to act in political leadership roles without failing (Bashevkin, 2019b).

Due to the gender norms embedded in Canadian political culture, women are less willing to attempt to hold political leadership roles (O'Neill, 2015). Often, parties recruit women when their electoral support is diminishing ("imperiled leadership" discussed earlier), which forces women into the role of a "sacrificial lamb" as opposed to that of a qualified leader (Bashevkin, 2019b and O'Neill, 2015). Parties all too often place women in leadership roles when they are losing support and dismiss women placed in those roles

when they fail to perform “electoral miracles” (Trimble and Arscott, 2003b). Thus, gender norms contribute to the issues associated with party recruitment and the willingness of women to participate.

Party leaders “propose and implement policy” and “shape party behavior” (O’Brien, 2015). When women hold political leadership positions their symbolic, descriptive and substantive representation is enhanced and there is an increased likelihood of a greater number of women running as candidates and a greater number of women elected (O’Brien, 2015). Although these favorable aspects occur when women hold leadership positions, these positions are very difficult for women to attain (O’Brien, 2015). Women tend to obtain leadership positions when the positions are “unattractive” (“imperiled leadership and pioneering leaders” discussed earlier), and men obtain leadership positions when they are attractive (O’Brien, 2015). There is an “imminent political expiry date” for women in these positions (Bashevkin, 2019b). Traditionally, when women attain party leadership, they tend to hold their leadership position for a short period of time (O’Brien, 2015). For example, since 2008 the average length of tenure for female premiers in Canada nationally is only 3.8 years (Bashevkin, 2019b).

Party ideology also plays a role in opportunities for women in leadership roles. Parties positioned to the left of the political ideology spectrum are more likely to run women in winnable ridings and have female leaders (O’Neill, 2015). The more electorally successful these leftist parties are the more likely dominant parties will increase their commitment to female representation due to the “contagion effect” (O’Neill, 2015). The contagion effect refers to parties taking on the practices of other

parties if the practices are widely received by the constituents and will increase support (O'Neill, 2015).

The “overlap” of uncompetitive parties and leftist parties in terms of female leadership is significant (Bashevkin, 2019b). Women are seemingly much more able to attain top positions in minor parties (Bashevkin, 2019b). This could explain why, in provinces where two-party systems exist, such as the Atlantic provinces, there are greater issues regarding female representation. In New Brunswick, The Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals run fewer female candidates than the NDP and the Green Party and fail to facilitate their entry to political leadership (Everitt, 2015).

Bashevkin (2009) argues that female underrepresentation reinforces the notion that there is a level of “discomfort” due to the unfamiliarity associated with women holding power in Canadian politics. This discomfort is caused by the traditional assumption that women and authority are an unpleasant combination (Bashevkin, 2009a). Women’s reluctance to run for political leadership positions is frequently due to the perception that such positions are best suited for men due to gender expectations and stereotypes (O'Neill, 2015).

Women who overcome gender expectations and choose to run for leadership positions, like Kim Campbell, risk being perceived by the public as “too ambitious for a woman, too eager for power, too quick to brag, too arrogant and calculating to deserve the job” (Trimble, 2017, 215). All too often women are viewed as unfit leaders that do not possess the necessary qualities to be in positions of power (Bashevkin, 2009a).

Looking specifically at political leadership in Canada, the narrative that women rarely hold leadership roles in politics is supported. For instance, between 2002 and 2008

there were no female premiers anywhere in Canada and no female Prime Minister (Thomas, 2018). Additionally, in 2019, there are no female premiers in Canada (Kingston, 2019). Premiers are the most powerful actors within provincial politics and are rarely women (Thomas, 2018). New Brunswick is one of four provinces that has never had a female premier.

As table 2 indicates there have been 8 premiers in 6 different provinces.

Table 2: Female Premiers

Premier	Province	Sworn in on...	Held govt after election?	Length of time in office
Rita Johnston	British Columbia	02-April-91	No	02-April-91 to 05-November-91
Catherine Callbeck	Prince Edward Island	25-January-93	Yes (29-March-93, majority)	24-January-93 to 09-October-06
Kathy Dunderdale	Newfoundland and Labrador	02-December-10	Yes (11-October-11)	02-December-10 to 24-January-14
Christy Clark	British Columbia	14-March-11	Yes (14-May-13, majority) and No (9-May-17, minority)	24-March-11 to 4-August-17
Alison Redford	Alberta	07-October-11	Yes (23-April-12, majority)	07-October-11 to 23-March-14
Pauline Marois	Quebec	04-September-12	Yes (04-September-12, minority)	19-September-12 to 07-April-14
Kathleen Wynne	Ontario	11-February-13	Yes (12-June-14, majority)	11-February-13 to 07-June-2018
Rachel Notley	Alberta	24-May-15	No (16-April-19)	24-May-2015 to 16-April-19

Source: Everitt, 2013

As indicated in table 2, the Atlantic Provinces and more specifically New Brunswick suffer from substantial underrepresentation of women in political leadership. This necessitates an in-depth analysis of the possible barriers that are inhibiting women from pursuing leadership positions in politics. For instance, 75 percent of the eight most recent female premiers attained the position due to “internal party mechanisms” which refers to those within the party putting them in leadership positions for various reasons (Thomas, 2018). This is significant because the majority of male premiers attained the position through general elections (Thomas, 2018). Evidently, the accessibility of the position of premier is largely related to the gender of the individual pursuing the role (Thomas, 2018). Frequently women are disregarded for political leadership positions for various reasons, the most pertinent being that men are often perceived as more qualified (O’Brien, 2015).

Even more significant is that not all provinces in Canada have seen female premiers and provinces that have had female premiers usually only experienced a female premier once (Thomas, 2018). This is significant as women are not making the same gains in political leadership representation as their male counterparts, even in provinces that have seen some progress. Ultimately, women and men do not have the same political leadership opportunities (O’Brien, 2015).

Women also seem to be more frequently analyzed and dissected as leaders than men in the media and this tends to prevent women from obtaining power (Bashevkin, 2009b). As a result, women who are political leaders in Canadian politics are often perceived as “losers” that are only able to lead parties that are losing support or are uncompetitive (Bashevkin, 2009a). This issue matters because leadership positions will

continue to be dominated by men if coming generations of women perceive political leadership as an intimidating and unobtainable position.

Why is there a Lack of Female Leadership in New Brunswick?

For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to review the relationship between gender and political leadership at the provincial level by focusing on the past success of women in political leadership roles and the political culture in New Brunswick. Different provinces throughout Canada have different levels of female representation within their political legislatures, though all provinces have low levels of female representation.

There is limited research available that analyzes New Brunswick politics in and gender and the research that does exist is dated. More importantly, we know very little about the factors that have contributed to the low levels of representation in terms of leadership roles within New Brunswick politics. Because of this, it is important to examine the situation in jurisdictions such as New Brunswick where there is a marked lack of women holding and pursuing political leadership roles.

New Brunswick is a province that has consistently struggled with the political representation of women. As of the 2018 election, there are 11 female Members of the Legislative Assembly in New Brunswick. This number of female MLAs translates into women holding 22 percent of the seats in the Legislative Assembly. This represents an increase from the 2014 election in which 16 percent of the legislative assembly was made up of women. The 2018 election also exceeded the province's highest level of female representation in the legislature which was 18 percent in 1999 (Everitt, 2013). Beyond political female representation in general, representation of women at the political

leadership level is even worse. For example, as of the summer of 2019, there are no female party leaders and only four women in New Brunswick's provincial cabinet which translates to about 24 percent of cabinet ministers.

This lack of female representation may be due to the economic, cultural and rural conditions of New Brunswick (Everitt, 2013). New Brunswick is a predominantly blue-collar province and it has been found that in blue-collar economies there is a male-dominance and a lack of meaningful positions for women (Everitt, 2013, 96). The economic conditions in combination with the "traditionalistic culture" found in New Brunswick lead political actors to be hesitant to accept change (Everitt, 2013, 96). "Traditionalistic culture" refers to the clear divisions among classes and "social hierarchies" (Everitt, 2013, 96). New Brunswick is also bilingual and has experienced political divisions due to language concerns. Moreover, women who lead parties are more likely to be selected from "social activists, social workers, psychologists or teachers than are men who lead parties" (O'Neill and Stewart, 2009). The majority of male leaders of political parties in Canada come from a background in law or business (O'Neill and Stewart, 2009).

In a small province like New Brunswick that is rural and primarily blue-collar the number of female candidates interested in political leadership roles is limited. Resources, such as money and time, also play a role in female representation in leadership roles as these necessary resources are usually less accessible for women due to occupational status or familial responsibility (O'Neill, 2015). Table 3 illustrates the occupational backgrounds that members of the legislative assembly in New Brunswick possess. The majority of elected politicians from New Brunswick come from backgrounds in business

and politics which are outside of the “pink collar” occupational backgrounds that women dominate (Bashevkin, 2019a).

Table 3: Occupational Backgrounds of Sitting New Brunswick MLAs

Occupation Category	Number
Business	8
Education	1
Law	3
Medicine	0
Politics	24
Retired	4
Accountant	1
Administrator	1
Development Officer	1
Farmer	1
Manager	1
Public Servant	1
Realtor	1
Self Employed	1
Ward Clerk	1

Note: These backgrounds were drawn from the sitting MLAs of 2018.

Source: Elections New Brunswick. (Thirty-Ninth General Election, September 24, 2018 – Report of the Chief Electoral Officer)

Furthermore, New Brunswick is a two-party system that has little impact from the leftist parties that are committed to the representation of women such as the Green party or the NDP (Everitt, 2013). In New Brunswick, the Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative party have consistently occupied power limiting the influence that parties who prioritize representation can have on the ideologies of the dominant parties (Everitt, 2013). Women are frequently run in ridings where they are less likely to be successful in New Brunswick which perpetuates their underrepresentation and ultimately limits the number of women available to compete for leadership roles (Everitt, 2013).

Women are also less prevalent in elite positions such as riding president in New Brunswick which results in a less proactive approach to female recruitment to political

parties (Everitt, 2013). Without women working behind the scenes and valuing the participation of women, there will be a consistent insufficiency in representation (Everitt, 2013). Role models for women interested in politics, especially leadership roles, in New Brunswick are also virtually nonexistent. Due to a lack of female role models in New Brunswick politics, there is an obvious lack of empowerment and sense of qualification among women to pursue electoral politics and political leadership (Everitt, 2013).

There has never been a female premier in New Brunswick. Additionally, only two women have held the prestigious title of lieutenant governor in New Brunswick (Everitt, 2013). When looking at senior and high prestige roles in the New Brunswick cabinet there has only been one woman to act as deputy premier, one woman to act as Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs, one woman to act as Minister of Finance and two women act as justice/attorney general.

Conclusion

This review of the existing academic literature highlights the necessary background information that I expand on in my own research regarding the impact of gender roles, party ideology, party recruitment and political climate on female political representation. Evidently, women are perpetually missing in politics, especially in New Brunswick. Specifically, a prominent trend is that there is a demonstrable lack of women in political leadership positions. Though women are missing at all political levels and in many different positions throughout Canadian political institutions, the most significant finding is the lack of women in provincial leadership positions.

Focusing on New Brunswick as a research case this thesis will support future researchers in understanding other provinces with largely rural and homogenous political cultures. New Brunswick is a unique province that is highly rural and lacks political diversity. New Brunswick is a province that has lagged in addressing female representation concerns in comparison to other provinces. I argue that the lack of women actively pursuing political leadership positions is due to four principal barriers: traditional gender roles, party recruitment, party ideology and political climate in New Brunswick.

My analysis focuses on the lack of female politicians actively pursuing political leadership positions such as party leader and premier in New Brunswick. I am using a descriptive case study, an open-ended question survey and one on one interviews to collect data that concerns both politically active men and women and their opinions towards women's participation in politics, the barriers that women are experiencing when attempting to access political leadership roles, the possible reasons that women have consistently avoided pursuing political leadership and what has been done to date in attempts to remedy the lack of female leaders.

Chapter Four

Methodology

This thesis used dynamic research methods which include a case study, a survey, and interviews. A case study is an in-depth and focused analysis of a specific occurrence in a specific place (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). In my research, the province of New Brunswick and its distinct political practices and culture represented my case study. Case studies stem from the recognition of something that is different than what individuals would expect in that case (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). There are two different types of case studies: the “descriptive case study” and the “theory-testing case study” (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). This thesis features a descriptive case study that is designed to analyze New Brunswick and provide opportunities for future research (Berdahl and Archer, 2015).

An important factor to note when dealing with descriptive case studies is that there are limitations to the applicability of the discovered research results (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). In other words, typically results cannot be used to make generalized statements regarding other cases (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). Although my research focuses on New Brunswick as a descriptive case study, the findings will suggest aspects that should be focused on in the future.

There are a variety of considerations to be made when dealing with case study research. The objective of the case study requires a clear definition by researchers, as well as the particular case that they plan to focus on (Berdahl and Archer, 2015, 144). Case studies clearly incorporate concepts or ideas that have to be defined, in order to

measure the “indicators” that uphold the existence of the phenomenon being researched (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). The indicators that I will be most focused on are derived from the previously identified barriers: negative attitudes held by politicians towards female representation, persistent traditional gender roles, aspects of party organizations that are not conducive to female representation, party ideologies, and party recruitment that is not actively recruiting women for political roles.

New Brunswick is an interesting case study as female politicians do not typically pursue leadership positions in dominant parties. New Brunswick has approximately 730,000 residents and has evident class divisions and social hierarchies that have resulted in its “traditionalistic culture” (Everitt, 2013). As a result, New Brunswick has been less likely than other provinces to elect women (Everitt, 2013). Additionally, New Brunswick is a province operating under a two-party system which consists of the Liberal and the Conservative Party. As a result, it has only recently seen a minority government and has yet to be won by a party from the left of the political spectrum. This two-party system complicates female representation as left-leaning parties that are more mindful of the recruitment of women, such as the Green Party and the NDP, are not competitive (Everitt, 2013).

By researching and incorporating New Brunswick’s political history, political culture, past female representatives and current female representatives, and the lack of women in leadership positions I am able to build an in-depth and focused analysis. Although case studies limit the ability to make generalizations, a New Brunswick case study provides recommendations that are relevant to other provinces that are suffering from similar female representation issues. Looking at the province of New Brunswick is

beneficial as I study and reside in the province and the people I am interested in contacting are, for the most part, accessible. I am also very familiar with the political culture and political history of New Brunswick, which enables a comprehensive understanding when speaking with those who have been politically involved. New Brunswick also represents a great opportunity for a case study as it had a lobbyist group, Women for 50%, campaigning for equal representation among candidates in the most recent provincial election.

The research design that I have developed, both a survey and interviews concerning women in New Brunswick politics, has been reviewed and approved by the research ethics board at the University of New Brunswick Saint John and employs both quantitative and qualitative research strategies to explore these subjects. Qualitative and quantitative research categories have their own “values, beliefs and norms” and the data collected in each method is useful in different ways (Mahoney and Goertz, 2006).

In terms of ethical considerations, this survey and interview research presented little risk to the respondents as the collected data will remain anonymous and confidential (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). Moreover, the participants were thoroughly informed regarding the intentions of the collected survey and interview data. As politicians and politically involved individuals, they are accustomed to the kinds of questions I intended to ask (Berdahl and Archer, 2015).

For my survey, I selected a politically involved population, which consists of approximately 150 individuals, who are in both elected and unelected roles in the active parties within New Brunswick. The participants of this study consist of male and female

MLAs, party leaders, riding association executives and executive directors of the parties that have publicly accessible email addresses.

Both quantitative and qualitative research is crucial to my thesis to build an in-depth analysis that examines the impact of traditional gender roles, party organization, party ideologies and party recruitment impact female representation in political leadership roles. Surveys are a very common method of collecting data when conducting research and typically enable researchers to analyze multiple cases or people at once and provide insight into the “thoughts and beliefs” of individuals (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). Interviews enable the collection of very detailed and candid beliefs of individuals that would be lacking in the survey responses. By having conversations with women who have been, are or are interested in being politically involved I was able to draw out information from their responses to the original question set.

My research may have been affected by the influence of Women for 50% in New Brunswick and their campaign to spread awareness about the lack of female representation in politics and to increase the percentage of female candidates in each party to at least 50%. As a result, the issue of female representation was likely on the minds of the participants of both the survey and interviews. This may have biased the participants of my research to promote an increase in female representation as it is the common narrative even if they are not truly interested in resolving the political underrepresentation of women.

Since I was particularly interested in understanding the beliefs of politicians regarding female access to leadership positions, I built qualitative components into my survey. This allowed me to collect information beyond a simple “yes” or “no” response

to uncover the “conditions, norms, and values” of politicians and party executives (Berdahl and Archer, 2015, 30). Open-ended questions enabled me to gather personal opinions and attitudes, which generic responses are unable to provide, and allowed me to focus on specific factors that were discovered in the quantitative data (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). An advantage of open-ended survey questions is that different perspectives and responses reveal data that is not biased by a researcher’s predetermined response (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). A disadvantage is that they typically generate different responses, which increases the complexity of analyzing the information (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). Although the acquired information was interesting and certainly useful to my research, it was also tedious to examine every individual response to compile the data.

My survey was designed to take participants approximately twenty minutes to complete. Thought was given to ensure that there was no vagueness or bias in the design of the questions and that questions were asked in an appropriate order that welcomes participants, rather than overwhelms them (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). Unlike other surveys, my approach was to start with sociodemographic questions (age, race, gender, etc.) that are unthreatening and work towards questions that are more invasive as they involved various participants' personal attitudes and opinions regarding female representation.

The survey was administered in May 2018 via email to both female and male politicians, other elected officials and members of party elites. It is important to note that, due to the 2018 election, some of the surveyed individuals may no longer be in the positions they were in at the time of distribution. All political parties in New Brunswick

were involved in some dimension in this research project. The participants of the survey consisted of both men and women. Some questions were asked very generally, and other questions were more so directed towards men or women depending on the context. All questions on the survey were answered by all participants no matter their gender. The participants were expected to provide substantial, thoughtful typed responses to a variety of open-ended questions in addition to short answer and multiple-choice questions. The participants were first asked to answer questions regarding their involvement in politics, then about their personal and party views towards the representation of women in leadership positions in New Brunswick politics. The data collected as a result of the survey provided information that helps to explain why women pursue or do not pursue leadership positions, the attitudes of both men and women towards this issue, and what can be done to increase women's access to political leadership roles.

The survey relied on the voluntary participation of the respondents in completing the survey. This resulted in a 23 percent participation rate or 34 individuals completing or partially completing my survey. I suspect the participation rate was low because the upcoming election was consuming much of the potential respondents' time and certain parties were not allowing their members to participate individually.

Because there was a low participation rate in my survey, I revised my research and decided to conduct interview research to supplement the results. By incorporating interview research, I was able to hear about the personal experiences of women who have been involved in politics and acquire anecdotal evidence to support my claims.

Interviews are especially useful when studying particular groups that are "hard to reach", such as politicians who are busy (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). By bringing in interview

research, I was able to reach the individuals that I had intended to reach. Another advantage of interview research is that it is much easier to obtain “often inaccessible” detailed information (Berdahl and Archer, 2015). I found that by engaging in conversations, the respondents were much more inclined to share intimate details, candid beliefs and thorough explanations of their experiences in politics.

I reached out to approximately 40 different women who were current MLAs, past MLAs or past female political candidates via their publicly available or public government emails to see if they were interested in participating in my interview research. In the end, twelve interviews were completed, which represents about a 30 percent participation rate. This participation rate is reflective of the repetitiveness of the results that I was collecting. I have incorporated direct quotes and summarized findings in my results section that were obtained through my interviews with MLAs (past and current), party leaders and candidates. All active parties in New Brunswick politics were involved in the interviews.

These interviews included 7 women from the Liberal Party, 2 women from the Progressive Conservative Party, 1 woman from the Green Party, 1 woman from the People’s Alliance and 1 woman from the NDP. The women were asked various questions about their own opinions towards representation in New Brunswick politics, their own experiences, barriers that they experienced or saw other women experience that hindered their participation in politics and political leadership, and whether they had considered running for leadership. I chose to interview only women as opposed to both women and men, as I wanted to discover the experiences of women who had participated in politics firsthand. The information obtained through the interviews was beneficial to my research.

Most of the women who were interviewed reiterated my thesis and were experiencing the types of barriers that I have identified: gender roles, party recruitment, party ideology, and political climate.

Due to my interest in women choosing not to pursue leadership positions, I paid particularly close attention to female participants who chose to remain in their positions, as opposed to advancing their political career by obtaining or pursuing a leadership position such as party leader. Through my interview research, I learned that the majority of my interview participants remained MLAs as opposed to pursuing political leadership.

I began working with my data by analyzing participant's responses to various questions and then proceed to compare responses based on various comparable areas such as party affiliation, political era, riding, and age. I compared responses controlling for the party to determine if differences exist between the respondents from various parties and if party ideologies impact personal opinions about women's roles and opportunities in New Brunswick's political life. My research tests past explanations for limited female political participation such as the impact of party organization, party ideologies, party recruitment, gender stereotypes, and familial commitments. I relied much more heavily on my interview findings as opposed to my survey data.

There were several limitations to this research study. The most significant limitation was that the data was collected during an election year. This made the collection of survey data extremely difficult as those affiliated with political parties were reluctant and for the most part unwilling to participate. Parties have strongholds on their members and in an election year, those party affiliates are limited in both who they can talk to and what they can participate in. As a result, I moved to interview research, which

required participants to divulge greater detail and personal experience. Because they had to share personal experience some women were reluctant to participate though they relented once I explained the value of their contribution to the thesis.

Furthermore, there is a limitation in the political parties that are represented in my data. Although all major parties in New Brunswick were included, in some cases there is only one person per party surveyed or interviewed. This study did not equally account for the opinions of men and women and was much more focused on the beliefs and sentiments of women. Additionally, this study did not account for differences beyond gender, so other social aspects may influence the limited number of women in leadership roles such as race, age, socioeconomic background, etc. Women for 50% may have also generated a bias among the data I collected. Women and men were inclined to agree that there was a need for increased female representation even if they did not believe so as it was a popular narrative at the time that the survey was sent out and the interviews were conducted.

There has also been limited research that analyzes the lack of female representation in political leadership roles in New Brunswick. This limited my ability to compare my findings to existing literature specific to New Brunswick. Having said this, my research should not be discarded as it offers insight into the lack of political leadership in New Brunswick that has not been investigated by other academics prior to my work. Moreover, my research represents a starting point for a research project that could illuminate a variety of issues within the political system not just in New Brunswick but on a larger scale with regards to barriers and female access to political leadership.

Chapter Five

Results

To provide context, I will briefly overview the New Brunswick election in 2018. In September of 2018, the thirty-ninth provincial election took place in New Brunswick. The Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative Party were vying closely to form the government of the day (McPhail, 2018). The Progressive Conservatives managed to form a minority government with only one more seat than the Liberal party (McPhail, 2018). The 2018 election resulted in the first minority government in 100 years (McPhail, 2018). Ultimately, 22 seats were won by the Progressive Conservative Party and 21 seats were won by the Liberal Party (McPhail, 2018). The People's Alliance Party won 3 seats and the Green Party won 3 seats as well (McPhail, 2018).

The electoral outcome was unexpected by the province and left a great deal of uncertainty among politicians and voters alike (McPhail, 2018). This election marked the greatest representation of New Brunswick's smaller parties, namely the Green Party and the People's Alliance, as they amassed support that they had never experienced before (McPhail, 2018). A significant explanation for the election results was the language divide in New Brunswick which is predominantly French across the Northern regions and English across the Southern regions (Everitt, 2013). The Liberal Party earned the support of primarily Francophone voters while the Progressive Conservative Party earned the support of primarily Anglophone voters (McPhail, 2018). This is likely because Blaine Higgs, leader of the PC Party, is an Anglophone with limited French language abilities (McPhail, 2018).

The 2018 election represents a shift away from the traditional two-party system that New Brunswick has endured for decades (McPhail, 2018). The 2018 election in New Brunswick also represents an increase in female representation, though it remains far from equal. As the below table demonstrates, the parties found on the left of the political spectrum, namely the Green Party and the NDP ran almost an equal number of men and women candidates. Although the Liberal party did not run 50% female candidates it did make a more significant effort in recruiting female candidates (nineteen women) in comparison to the other dominant party, the Progressive Conservatives (fourteen women). Each party elected had at least one female representative, for example, the Liberal Party elected five women, the Progressive Conservative Party elected four women and the Green Party and People's Alliance Party each elected one woman respectively (Fraser, 2018). Table 4 illustrates the gender comparisons for the 2018 election and demonstrates that ninety-three women ran out of two hundred and forty one candidates and only eleven women were elected which makes up 22 percent of the legislature (Fraser, 2018).

Table 4: Candidate Gender Comparisons 2018

Party	Males Nominated	Females Nominated	Males Elected	Females Elected
Liberal	30	19	16	5
Progressive Conservative	35	14	18	4
KNB	6	3	0	0
NB NDP	24	25	0	0
PVDBGP	24	23	2	1
PANB	21	9	2	1
IND	8	0	0	0
Total	148	93	38	11

Source: Elections New Brunswick
(Thirty-Ninth General Election, September 24, 2018 – Report of the Chief Electoral Officer)

While minor, this is an improvement from 2014 where only eight women were elected, four of which were from the Liberal Party and four of which were from the Progressive Conservative party and made up 16 percent of the legislature (CBC, 2014). The following table illustrates the candidate gender comparisons from 2014 which illustrates the marginal increase that was seen in nominations won by women as well as women who were elected.

Table 5: Candidate Gender Comparisons 2014

Party	Males Nominated	Females Nominated	Males Elected	Females Elected
Liberal	36	13	23	4
Progressive Conservative	35	14	17	4
NB NDP	34	15	0	0
PVDBGP	24	22	1	0
PANB	13	5	0	0
IND	7	2	0	0
Total	149	71	41	8

Source: Elections New Brunswick

(Thirty-Eighth General Election September 22, 2014- Report of the Chief Electoral Officer)

Throughout the election Women for 50%, a non-partisan activist group campaigned to persuade each party to offer a slate of candidates that were at least 50% female in the 2018 election (Cromwell, 2017). In the end, female candidates made up 38.6 percent of all candidates in the New Brunswick election (Fraser, 2018). After conducting twelve interviews with politically affiliated women in New Brunswick, including past and current MLAs and political candidates, a pattern of responses that are consistent with my thesis was apparent. To reiterate, my thesis is that the lack of female political leadership in New Brunswick is due to four specific barriers to female participation: gender roles, party recruitment, party ideology and political climate in New Brunswick.

Those who were interviewed spoke of the adverse effects that the aforementioned barriers have on women. Additionally, the participants mentioned that due to various barriers in simply accessing electoral politics, political leadership is extremely difficult to attain for women. Though all the barriers that I identified were mentioned in some capacity by those who were interviewed, some were mentioned more predominantly than others. Ultimately though, it was clear 11 out of 12 interview participants (92%) perceived a lack of women involved in New Brunswick politics. From the survey data, that was completed by both men and women, 56.25% of respondents also believed that there was a lack of women in New Brunswick politics.

Gender Stereotypes and Familial Commitments

In the past several decades there has been little change in the roles that women and men play in the family (Ulrich and Cosell, 2009). Women are still assumed to be the primary caregiver to children and expected to fulfill duties associated with household chores (Ulrich and Cosell, 2009). Socialization into these roles begins early and results in boys and girls having different perceptions of their abilities and opportunities (Ulrich and Cosell, 2009). As Participant Nine mentioned, this “goes from teaching them [boys] when they are little boys, you can do anything... Maybe we aren't teaching our little girls enough you can do anything.”

While men and women have evolved in their roles in the workplace, the lack of change within familial gender roles seems to hinder women from growing capacity and agency within political spheres (Ulrich and Cosell, 2009). Parenthood evidently impacts mothers and fathers in their professional lives differently, and what mothers can do seems to be much more impacted than what fathers can do (Bittner and Thomas, 2019).

What is perceived as “normal” by society is a woman who is dedicated to their family and it is less common for a woman to fill a role that will take her away from her family (Hennessy, 2015). Political roles, especially leadership roles, are all-consuming positions that require politicians to work long hours away from home. Thus, women leaders in politics are “typically single and childless, and rarely do they have young children” contrary to men who are frequently married and have children (Trimble, 2017, 92). For Participant Ten, “the public perception of politicians [is off putting]. The requirement [to be] away from home, sitting days, coming to work, you know from the Fredericton vicinity, you have overnight often. It is certainly a deterrent to family life.”

This reiterates the difficulty that women experience in balancing familial obligations and political commitments (Hennessy, 2015).

The priority that women place on their families proved to be an important factor in their attitudes towards participating in politics. Many women pointed to the hostile and critical environment that they found in political spheres with Participant Ten saying, “you have to have a tough skin, but at the end of the day you are looking at how all these elements will affect your family and it is not easy.” Thus, to consider running for politics and more importantly, leadership, a woman needs to not only consider their own reputation but that of their family. This goes back to the fact that women in politics worry about the safety of their children and frequently avoid mentioning them publicly (Bashevkin, 2019a).

Moreover, making the schedule of a politician work logistically for a parent is especially hard if they do not have support. As Participant Six mentioned, “childcare is hard, finding someone for the hours that we work... It is always going to be [hard] but if you have the support in place it will make it easier.” Thus, women who are mothers of newborns or preschool-aged children are not typically found in politics due to the demands of raising small children (Bashevkin, 2019a). The women interviewed mention that being in politics is an invitation to criticism, for both having children and being away from them or not having children and not properly understanding policy concerns of mothers (Bittner and Thomas, 2017). Thus, women have to accept that “there is the scrutiny of always being a politician no matter where you go,” especially if you are a woman and even more so if you are a mother (Participant Six).

Building on that, being premier requires taking on a role that is extremely demanding both mentally and physically. Premiers are required to travel often and work extremely long hours, which often removes them from their home and family. For women, due to societal gender roles, this requirement to be constantly on the road and away from home makes it a role that is difficult to fill and opens one up to criticism and lack of support. Due to the demanding nature of politics, as Participant Four noted, who was a mother during her tenure, “it is very difficult to be the primary caregiver in a family, the person who is primarily responsible for the function of the family and to be in politics.” Evidently due to traditional gender roles, “men still seem to have the upper hand. It is hard, women are still having to look after children” (Participant One).

It is also important to acknowledge that for women most times family commitments extend beyond children. Women are frequently expected to care for their elderly parents as well, especially in a province in which the aging population is growing and resources for their care is not (Brunet, 2017). This makes it extremely difficult for women to identify a window in their life that allows them to uphold the commitment that politics requires. Participant Three notes that “being a woman in politics today still carries more home and family responsibilities, whether it is children, aging parents or home in general. That is looked at unfavorably [for women] because men have someone home to do that.” Until there is a normative shift in gender roles and the perception of women in untraditional roles, women who are interested in pursuing politics will have to juggle various roles concurrently and endure forms of scrutiny.

Linked to these arguments is the fact that the legislature's sitting times and the legislature's archaic rules are not family-friendly (Bashevkin, 2019a). The legislature has

night sittings and a great deal of required travel which makes it much more difficult for women with familial commitments to run as political candidates and sit as MLAs. As Participant Four pointed out, “I think to make the timetable of the legislature...to make it more family-friendly...[must] eliminate the night sittings...I think the entire experience can be more family-friendly. But having said that, you still will have to work weekends, during the summer and it is very hard to take vacations just when you want to.”

Ultimately a major barrier to women entering politics and sitting in leadership roles is the intrusive nature of politics to family life.

A second theme found in the literature that frequently came up in the women’s responses was the more masculine environment within which politics is conducted. The working environments that men and women enjoy working in and excel in are very different. For women, adverse and conflict-ridden work environments are not appealing (Hennessy, 2015). The political sphere is one in which the work environment is frequently hostile and combative as opposed to collaborative. As Participant Three pointed out, “...it kept me away... I don’t want to fight about everything, I would rather work together to move things forward. It is kind of the old boy way of doing things. It is just has been tradition forever.” If the structure of the legislature changed to decrease conflict, it may become more attractive to women (Bashevkin, 2019a).

Party Recruitment

Political parties have traditionally been male-dominated. More often than not men are executives in riding associations and are selected to run as candidates and as party leaders and this has presented a significant barrier to women who have political

aspirations. Participant Nine noted about her own party that male dominance is “systemic, as far back as we can remember it has been run by men” and that this has had an impact on their recruitment of women. Another participant complained that “if there are a few men wanting to be candidates in one riding then they don’t even bother to seek out potential women. There is too much laissez-faire” (Participant Ten). The women interviewed all to some extent believed that “recruiting and preparing good women candidates takes more than a few months, it takes at least a year, the political parties should at least have a woman headhunter there” (Participant Ten). This goes back to the argument that parties have the potential to change representation but will fail to do so if they continue the practices that they currently recruit candidates (Bashevkin, 2019a).

From the interview data, it was evident that the majority of women who pursued politics were approached or encouraged by political parties to run as candidates. Being approached by parties and recruited seems to inspire confidence in women that pushes them to run. Participant Twelve mentioned, “I had a lot of people reaching out to me because I fit the identity politics that they wanted.” Currently, “[parties] only concentrate energy to put women candidates to fulfill their potential quotas in ridings where there is no identified candidate. That is not very inspirational” (Participant Ten). Women desire party involvement that is conducive to ensuring their success. Women also seem to require reassurance that confirms their ability to take on a role. The lack of party recruitment is inhibitory to female participation especially in terms of leadership roles.

All too often women are perceived by parties to be candidates only when men are not interested in being run. This approach makes women feel as if they are wasting their time attempting to run as a candidate. For example:

To be a leader and a successful politician you have to be able to relate to everybody. It requires a lot of self-confidence; you can't do it if you aren't self-confident and a lot of women lack that confidence. I think that men are more confident about it, even though they may not be any better at it or have any more skills, or experience that they tend to be more confident (Participant Four).

Participant Twelve iterated similar needs for confidence in saying: “so, I guess I am an example of the tenet they use that you have to ask a woman 7 times or something like that before she will say yes...” Although, what may be limiting women from being approached, and given confidence is that “within the party, there was an issue around men [who] had been waiting around for years to run for the nomination” (Participant Five). Thus, a barrier is that women perceive the recruitment method to favor men in ridings that are winnable.

An interesting point raised by an interview participant was that parties are evidently not as concerned as they should be about female recruitment: “I think when they look at it and say over 50% of our population is females, and we have groups like Women for 50% why do we have to join groups, why do those groups have to exist? They exist for a reason because political parties are not addressing the issue...” (Participant Nine). Additionally, when asked if she thought her party was concerned about the number of women in politics Participant One responded “I don't think so, I think otherwise we would see much bigger change, this last election in New Brunswick didn't really change things much. All four leaders are men.”

There is a difference in the willingness of different parties to recruit women. Evidently, “women's political participation declines as the relative competitiveness of the party increases” (O'Neill and Stewart, 2009). Typically, parties that are found to the

center or left of the political spectrum are more likely to recruit more women candidates (Everitt, 2017b). This was clearly evident in the 2018 election in New Brunswick as the Green Party and the NDP, both parties that are traditionally uncompetitive in New Brunswick ran the most female candidates. Participant Nine mentioned that:

It is interesting that those parties that attract more women tend to be the more socially minded policy, [such as] NDP or the Green parties so to me it always makes the question why are they able to attract more women? Is it because people are thinking less chance to win running for one of those parties, let's just put someone on the ballot? Or is it because the issues in those parties attract more women?

Visibility of women within the party after their political involvement, or patronage appointments, is also rare for women in New Brunswick. Participant Nine explained:

You very rarely see them [women] after politics. I find the parties tend to, often you see a lot of appointments, for health ministers, and former this and former that - the majority of which tend to be men. I think the parties - I don't know if women just go on to other things, but I highly doubt it. I think there is a tendency for the parties to go back to former male colleagues because they are very good at keeping those networks going.

Visibility after politics within the party may represent a barrier to the interest that women hold with regard to pursuing politics. Otherwise, being a politician is perceived as a short stint that will not lead to anything if you are a woman. This is not a concept that has been dealt with much in academic literature.

Winnable ridings are ridings in which a particular party has been consistently successful (Everitt, 2017b). When parties are trying to bring more women into the political arena it is beneficial to place women in ridings where the party is likely to win. As Participant Nine explained:

There could be ridings that have been historically [had by] a certain party... historically that riding is Conservative, why not get a strong female candidate in there? You know, because it is certainly increasing the odds of getting in, but of course everyone wants those ridings... It is to take a hard look at those ridings and say look we really want to get some women to run in those ridings.

By incorporating more women into those ridings, it is undeniable that there will be more women in the legislature. When asked about ridings, Participant Nine explained that “You know, because it is certainly increasing the odds of getting in but of course everyone wants those ridings. It is [time] to take a hard look at those ridings and say look we really want to get some women to run in those ridings.” By running strong female candidates in ridings where a particular party is successful there will likely be a surge in female representation.

Although much of the feedback from interview participants was criticizing the parties for their failed recruitment techniques there were some participants who pointed to the improvements that parties have made. For instance, Participant Eleven said, “I think that all parties are doing more to involve women in politics, realizing the potential it would have to make them that much better and more effective.” Participant Five also mentioned that,

Parties understand that they can't stay in the dark ages anymore. They have to rectify this situation because otherwise people, in general, are not being represented adequately. Or in the best way, the right voices are not around the table in sufficient quantities. I think this has to do with the public's developing understanding of what representation should be.

Thus, as public opinion shifts in favor of equal representation, parties will likely try to recruit more women to appease voters. Interestingly, most interview participants did not perceive voters as being concerned with the representation of women in New Brunswick

politics. For example, Participant Five mentioned, “I think this has to do with the public’s developing understanding of what representation should be.” Thus, as voters become more aware of the importance of having more equal representation the parties will respond accordingly. This current perceived lack of interest in fair representation may be why parties have not made substantial changes in their recruitment techniques. Until all voters demonstrate concern for fair representation in the New Brunswick legislature it is unlikely that parties will make the required efforts to recruit and incorporate more women in their party.

Party Ideology

In the 2018 New Brunswick election, there was a significant difference in effort among the leftist, centrist-left, centrist-right and right parties in running equal numbers of female candidates. It is possible that this lack in effort to run female candidates may be due to the differences among party ideologies with regards to female representation. Because in the 2018 election, the dominant parties did not run an equal number of female and male candidates and continued to run more men, it is much more difficult to attain female political leadership representation. Parties with ideologies that align with equal representation will prioritize seeking out capable women and putting them in winnable ridings even if there are male candidates with similar qualifications vying for that riding.

The women who were interviewed spoke of their parties (Liberal, Progressive Conservative, NDP, People’s Alliance and Green), their perception of other parties, and their experiences with other parties. As research suggests, those women who were from parties traditionally positioned to the center and left on the political spectrum such as the

NDP, Green party and the Liberal party spoke highly of their party, their party's willingness to take on women candidates and their party's openness to female leadership. For example, Participant Two explained her relationship with her leftist party and said "I can say that my experience with the Green Party has been 100% positive...David Coon is very inclusive of having women involved in all the discussions and all the decisions, his staff is at least 50% female which has a big impact." From this statement, it is clear that the leftist party ideology is much more conducive to female participation (Bashevkin, 2019a).

On the contrary, when women who are primarily leftist spoke of the parties that are typically found on the center-right and right of the political spectrum, such as the Progressive Conservatives and People's Alliance respectively, they were dubious of those parties' willingness to recruit women and their motivation behind recruiting women. For example, Participant Three said, "I think everyone is trying to do that [recruit more women] and whether it is genuine because you really think it should be equal or that it is politically popular to do that the fact is it is a good thing to do, whatever motivates them." Although they were optimistic about the support a woman would receive once she was in the party.

Those who were interviewed, and not a member of the Progressive Conservative party, did not believe that the Progressive Conservatives were ready for a female leader as there are still party members who criticize female politicians. For example, Participant Three mentioned "I don't know if in the PC Party they would be ready to take a female leader, I personally think they would not be ready. I still see too many women still, they are almost still apologizing that they are women in the party."

Contrastingly, women who were members of the Progressive Conservatives and the People's Alliance believed that their party was open to the involvement of women and were concerned about representation. Although, one participant from the right did not believe that gender representation should be of concern. Rather, she believed that politicians should be selected based on skill, rather than gender. This was reflective of the differences in ideologies among parties and their representatives. In other words, all women interviewed thought their own parties were supportive of women in politics but did not always see other parties as being so.

Political Climate

The inherently male-dominated and unwelcoming political climate is a barrier that almost all women who were interviewed spoke to. Most women spoke of rampant sexism in the legislature as a result of the current political climate, and the fact that politics and the parties are a male-dominated structures (Everitt, 2017a). Political parties are made up of predominantly male members and this is apparent in New Brunswick's. All too often men are the leaders of political parties and if their party is victorious in an election, the premiers of the province. Thus, sexism is rampant in political institutions because they were created and are still occupied for the most part by men.

The women who were interviewed were aware of overt and covert sexism within New Brunswick's political landscape. They spoke anecdotally of their own experiences with sexism and of other's experiences with sexism. When combating sexism Participant Six said, "I felt like a little girl with her hand up trying to say this isn't right, but nobody wanted to listen to me. Until finally I said I am not taking this anymore. I made a

statement in the house that I wasn't going to be treated that way anymore and that was the way it was going to be. I took that control and I took that power back." This instance is important as the majority of women who behave in this way are perceived unfavorably by the media. Although the media may take this instance and create a mockery of the politician it is important that women feel able to take back control of their position in the legislature. It is difficult for women to take control of their position in the legislature as "politics is sort of a nasty place. There is a lot of personal attacks. There is a lot of negativity in the discourse" (Participant Twelve).

Participant One spoke to the fact that when she tried to defend a woman from another party she was "jumped on" by her party; "I came to her defense and said I worked with her and I had a lot of time for her and such and my party jumped on me, people were ready to quit because I said something positive about a provincial cabinet minister. I thought oh gee this is not the way I want to operate." This speaks volumes to the outdated, male-dominated form that political parties take on. It should not be unfavorable for women to leverage other women around them if fair representation is an objective of all political parties.

Furthermore, when female politicians occupy traditionally male-dominated roles, in cabinet or leadership, they are harshly questioned as to whether or not they are qualified. For example, participant three was interviewed and possessed a traditionally male cabinet position said:

Right away people will ask why I am a minister in a male-dominated area... I asked previous ministers of the same portfolio, were they asked? [they were not]. Women's voices still, when you have an idea, based on other research, experience, or a knowledge base that you come from it is not immediately heard with equal credibility as if a man raised the idea.

Ultimately, this perceived lack of credibility influences women to dislike the idea of sitting in roles like cabinet. No woman who is qualified and has the capacity to lead wants to be in a position in which as Participant Three said, “the expectations are men are assumed to be credible and have something valuable to say and women have to prove it.” Women are made to feel that they are not as valued in their positions, for example, a highly educated interviewee explained “I sometimes feel as a woman you walk into a building and there[is] a mat outside the door and it says leave your brain at the door” (Participant Three). This sentiment on the part of women is a result of the covert and overt sexism that occurs in the unwelcoming political climate that continues to exist today.

On the other hand, some women contended in the interviews that the majority of men who were sexist did not realize that they were being sexist to their female counterparts. For example, Participant Three explained “I see, if not daily, a few times a week examples of pretty blatant sexism that isn't recognized. Like, at a nomination when a man was introducing a woman who was being nominated, the very first of several examples of her good qualities that he listed was her pretty smile. That is totally unacceptable. The last quality was, ‘and she is intelligent.’” Until men are made aware of what qualifies as sexism and there is a desire to change this, sexism will continue to be a prominent issue affiliated with the current political climate. Women also need to be recognized as equal players in the political arena, by men and women, to avoid experiences like “my gender was often a lightning rod from sexual comments, gender-related comments, I even had a woman call me barbie which was meant as an insult”

(Participant Eight). The persistent undervaluing of women and sexism in political parties and institutions will continue to be a barrier that inhibits women from entering politics at all levels.

An interesting point made by Participant Four was “I always believed, work with men not against them. People always said you got to compete against the backroom boys, little boys club, and I said no you need to join that club.” Even when referencing women who were successful in combating sexism that many respondents described women who were similar to Elizabeth Weir, leader of the NDP, “...kind of one of the boys, she was tall, big voice, she was a physical presence to come up against as well as an intellectual presence. So, she was able to stand up to the old boys in the party and believe me there were old boys” (Participant One). Thus, in order to overcome sexism, a woman had to possess traditional male characteristics as opposed to women changing the landscape and making it more accommodating to female politicians and their traits. By going against what is familiar and comfortable to men, women will have much more difficulty in attaining their representational goals within the political sphere. Instead, an effective approach is not to overthrow the old boys club but rather to infiltrate the old boys club and convince its members that equal representation and female representation in leadership roles holds inherent value.

Leadership

A finding in my research was that the majority of women that I interviewed had not considered running for the leadership. The women who I interviewed had been for the most part, extremely successful in politics and this lack of interest in political leadership

did not seem to follow logically with the level of knowledge and experience that they possessed. This decision to avoid leadership arose from the identified barriers, namely, gender roles, party recruitment, party ideology, and political climate.

The majority of women I spoke to were skeptical of the potential for a female leader. Even a female who held a major leadership role in her party was not convinced that it is a position that a woman would want to hold. For those who had run for leadership, it seemed to be more of a strategic political move (to gain attention or attract supporters), instead of genuine interest in being a party leader. For instance, Participant Eight said “I was one of only, I can count it on one hand, women who ran for leadership. But for me it was a launching pad...” Other women who had thought about it, but not seriously considered it, mentioned things like “women don’t just vote for women; they vote for who they think is the best candidate. So, there were no guarantees there that I would get the female vote. It doesn't encourage people to vote just because you are female” (Participant Nine). Additionally, women have encountered pushback and doubt from parties when they expressed interest in leadership. When asked what impact this has on women Participant Nine responded, “[I] think women are much more receptive to have someone tell them that [they doubt their abilities]” and as a result, women tend to avoid political leadership roles. Other women, primarily Liberal and Green Party members, spoke more optimistically about having expressed interest in leadership and even being approached by the party to run for political leadership positions.

Moreover, women spoke about the environment that politics embodies and the impact that a position of leadership would have in increasing the sense of hostility. For example, for Participant One said:

Lack of interest [in political leadership] came from really not wanting to be in that political arena. I had seen it. It seemed dirty it seemed messy. I didn't want my family exposed to that kind of thing... I also really didn't want to play a rough game which seems to be part of it.

If political leadership is perceived in such a way, it is unlikely that women will be attracted to the role. Other women were more optimistic and said things like "I think all the other parties would accept a female leader" (Participant Three) because of the hot topic issue that gender representation represents in today's political climate. Thus, the more people push for gender parity and female leadership representation the more often that parties will be willing to take on a female leader.

Many women also spoke to the potential benefits of a female leader emerging with comments such as:

I think the type of politics I want to see is a much more inclusive and collaborative and less hierarchical structure and more community and circular engagement kind of stuff. Women's leadership studies show that women tend to be more collaborative and inclusive leaders and tend to veer away from classic hierarchical structure of command and enforce and I wanted more diversity in the legislature of life experience" (Participant Twelve).

Survey data from politically involved men and women revealed that the answers varied, although 12.5% of respondents were very concerned with representation in their party.

Evidently, a shift in leadership style may be what the province of New Brunswick requires to attract more women into politics and ultimately into pursuing political leadership opportunities like party leader or premier. Having a female premier would give women who aspire to be the premier of New Brunswick a role model to look up to. Women and the rest of society must see role models in these positions to inspire and

encourage others to do the same. Although female leadership would likely improve the number of women in politics and political leadership roles, many women take on a complacent attitude with regard to political involvement. This attitude can be exemplified by Participant Three, “I would rather support someone I believe in than do so [run] myself.”

Without women who are eager to change the status quo and willing to attempt to become a political leader, New Brunswick will fail to ever see a female party leader or premier. Perhaps in order to accumulate more women who want to be party leaders and premiers, there needs to be a system in place in which women who have previously been leaders are able to build a legacy and inspire other women to do what they did. As a result, this places a large amount of pressure on the women participating in politics to not only compete on an uneven playing field but also to level the playing field for their female successors. This in itself may be a barrier to the involvement of women in politics, especially leadership roles.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

The results of my interview research consistently supported my thesis that the four identified barriers (gender stereotypes, party ideology, party recruitment, and political climate) make participating in politics much more difficult for women, especially at the leadership level. All interview participants touched on the mentioned barriers in their interviews and confirmed that they are prevalent in New Brunswick and detrimental to female politicians' success. Moreover, interview participants echoed claims made by Canadian feminist academics regarding female representation and potential for political leadership being held by a woman (Bashevkin 2019; Trimble and Arscott, 2003; Carbert, 2006a; Thomas and Bittner, 2017; Everitt, 2015, 2017; and Everitt and Gidengil, 2013). Though most of the participants were not sure when a female leader will emerge in New Brunswick, the majority were confident that at some point New Brunswick will experience a female premier.

Survey responses from both male and female politically involved politicians and party elites suggest that there was less concern associated with the number of women running as candidates and women's overall political representation in the New Brunswick legislature. It is crucial to note that the majority of respondents to the survey were male. As participant Three mentioned, "I think all women want more women and some men want more women." This sentiment is certainly reflected in the survey data. The survey data was definitely less useful to this study in comparison to the interview data.

Despite the attention that has been paid to representation in New Brunswick's political arena, there are still major barriers inhibiting women from pursuing elected politics and consequently acting as party leaders and premiers. These barriers reinforce that politics is not easily accessible to women for a variety of interrelated reasons. This study illustrates that these barriers continue to impact women from different parties, eras, and socioeconomic backgrounds and ultimately dissuades them from pursuing political leadership roles. Female party leaders in New Brunswick are limited and women have seemingly taken on the complacent attitude of "someone else will do the job and I will support them" as opposed to actively trying to become leaders themselves (Participant Ten).

Though the New Brunswick NDP has had three female party leaders, only one of these leaders, Elizabeth Weir, saw electoral success (McPhail, 2019). Following Weir's success, the party has had little support in the past fifteen years (McPhail, 2019). Even though the NDP has made comparatively impressive gains in terms of female involvement, especially in leadership, this may be due to the incorporation of fair representation in the party's mandate and the fact that the NDP frequently makes use of "internal party rules" and gender quotas to ensure gender parity (Bashevkin, 2019a).

It is clear that aspects of persistent traditional gender roles, inefficient party recruitment practices, varying party ideologies, and unwelcoming political climate are still impacting female representation heavily and will continue to do so until societal, systemic and institutional change is implemented. Though changes are desired in these areas, it is necessary to recognize that these changes will take time to occur and for real change to be evident in female representation. Until the political landscape in New

Brunswick begins to significantly change there will likely be little increase in the levels of representation that women attain in the legislature. This change in the political landscape will enable more leftist parties to influence the ideologies of larger parties and hopefully inspire the prioritization of female candidate recruitment and fair representation. Furthermore, as more women become political leaders, either in the form of party leader or premier, and become role models it is likely that more women will be inspired to pursue political leadership roles. It will certainly be interesting to see if a female premier will be elected to the New Brunswick legislature and if that milestone will have an impact on politics in New Brunswick and female representation.

This research is crucial in an era where gender parity is recognized as such a pillar in the overall success of democratic institutions. This research is also important during an era in which the political landscape is changing. New Brunswick should be concerned with the current level of female representation and actively working towards improving their current level of female representation, especially in terms of political leadership. New Brunswick would benefit greatly from having a premier that is female and attaining adequate representation of women.

Potential for change

There is great potential for change in the New Brunswick political arena to increase the number of women interested in pursuing elected politics and more importantly political leadership roles. Firstly, legislatures should consider implementing measures to ensure they are more cordial and female-friendly (Teitel, 2013). Women are typically much more collaborative; thus, they require environments that are conducive to

collaboration as opposed to conflict to be interested (Bashevkin, 2019a). Legislatures could be altered to better accommodate parents, such as limiting sitting hours, and recognizing pregnancy and childbirth as approved reasons to be away from the legislature (Bittner and Thomas, 2017). Furthermore, the hostile nature that traditionally exists within the legislature is not appealing to the majority of women (Teitel, 2013). Women are more collaborative and willing to work together to resolve issues, which is not valued in the contemporary legislature (Bashevkin, 2019a). If these conditions improved, more women would likely be interested in pursuing politics (Teitel, 2013). Though changes within the structural realm of politics in New Brunswick would be favorable, the media also plays an important role in dissuading women from participating in politics.

Canadian political media coverage would deter fewer women if it were to be altered and rethought to better represent women (Everitt and Gidengil, 2003). Women are all too often heavily scrutinized in the media when politically involved, which can turn many women away from entering politics. When women are featured in political media coverage, all too often their familial and marital status are the focus, as opposed to their political role (Bittner and Thomas, 2017). If the media were more conscientious of their coverage of male and female politicians, they may be able to limit the differences in coverage (Everitt and Gidengil, 2003). The media may play a role in women being unable to appreciate the need for representation and recognize their relevant and diverse qualifications (Trimble and Arscott, 2003a).

Women doubt their abilities more frequently than men, which limits their ability to move forward and obtain positions of higher prestige (Trimble and Arscott, 2003a). If women were more engaged in politics, they would have a greater chance of being

selected as candidates by parties (O'Neill, 2015). If this were to occur then parties would have a greater pool of qualified women to choose from to act in leadership and other prestigious roles such as cabinet (O'Neill, 2015). Thus, women would benefit from putting themselves forward as candidates (O'Neill, 2015). Putting support in places such as advocacy groups or instructional classes that will help women who are unfamiliar with politics to navigate the political process would be helpful. With these supports in place, there may be a shift in those who have a greater chance at being selected to be candidates. Although support is crucial in navigating the political process, there are still aspects that women have to endure if they acquire political positions such as misogyny and sexism.

Women typically do not match the traditional political persona and as a result, there is frequently misogyny and sexism experienced by female political actors (Praud, 2013). To combat overt and covert sexism within political parties and institutions a realization among men as to what covert and overt sexism look like. To accomplish this, it would be helpful to have individuals in place within parties that champion the limitation of covert and overt sexism and reprimand party members when instances of sexism occur.

Parties would benefit from limiting the traditional political assumptions, which were established by men, that are embedded in most traditionalist parties (Everitt, 2015). The traditionalist parties should put effort into incorporating ideologies that are more equalitarian (Everitt, 2015). Though for some parties this will be a novel practice and more difficult to accomplish, all parties would benefit from incorporating more inclusive ideologies. It is important to note that to do this a party cannot simply insert women into their parties, rather they need to bring women who are progressive and desire political

change into their party (Bashevkin, 2019a). By incorporating women and men who possess ideologies that prioritize the participation and representation of women there will likely be an increase in the number of women involved in politics in New Brunswick.

Gender quotas, though controversial, may be effective in bringing in women to political parties as it forces those individuals in local constituency organizations who may not be concerned with gender parity to select women (Bashevkin, 2019a). This has been exemplified in the NDP which has been able to recruit three female party leaders in New Brunswick, one of which was elected to the legislature as an MLA (Brunet, 2017). Putting individuals in local constituency organizations that value the recruitment of women will also have the power to improve the number of female candidates that come out of political parties.

Implications for Further Research

This research study offers information to those who are interested in pursuing studies of a similar nature in other provinces or on a larger scale. This analysis is transferable to other provinces of similar demographics and political landscapes such as other Atlantic Provinces that are experiencing a lack of female representation in politics. This analysis may also be useful in analyzing why other provinces have been more successful in bringing women into the political arena in leadership roles such as Alberta, Ontario, and Nunavut. This study identifies various barriers that can be further examined and analyzed if so desired.

It is recommended however, that should such a study take place, it is undertaken in a period of time that is not an election year as this significantly increases the difficulty

in obtaining data and contacting politicians. It is also recommended to review literature from outside of political science that deals with gender and leadership in other male-dominated fields such as business, law and the military. It is also recommended to follow this study in speaking with past and current MLAs as well as political candidates as it offers a variety of diverse experiences, perspectives on representation and information. The diversity in age, tenure, experience, and era are all valuable in tracking how politics, political structure and political culture in New Brunswick have remained stagnant since the 1980s though they can also account for change if change begins to occur. Interviewing said individuals also provide insight into the way that female attitudes towards politics have evolved and the ways that party ideologies have evolved as well.

In future studies, it is recommended that the survey used to collect data is concise as long surveys are typically not answered and this may have been a factor in the low response rate found in this study. Focusing on one group to be surveyed may also be helpful to ensure data processing is accurate and facilitated. The survey should be structured in a much more close-ended fashion to facilitate completion by the participants and enable effective processing of the data.

Finally, my analysis reinforces the need for political inclusion and empowerment among women in New Brunswick. Establishing female representation in political leadership roles, though extremely important, is a feat that will need to overcome systemic and deeply ingrained barriers and will need certain circumstances in place to create real political change that will have a lasting impact on female representation. This study can act as a catalyst to promote this change in New Brunswick. It could also be used as a catalyst in other jurisdictions that are in need of increased female representation

as well. Foundationally, women must want to attain political leadership roles and want other women to attain them as well. It is conceivable that once New Brunswick's women overcome persistent traditional gender roles, ineffective party recruitment practices, varying party ideologies, and the unwelcoming political climate, there will be a significant increase in the level of female representation in leadership roles.

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Appendices

A) Interview Index

Identifier	Characteristic	Date of Interview
Participant 1	Party Leader, New Brunswick	27 October 2018
Participant 2	Candidate, New Brunswick	6 July 2018
Participant 3	Minister, New Brunswick	6 July 2018
Participant 4	Minister, New Brunswick	16 July 2018
Participant 5	Minister, New Brunswick	9 July 2018
Participant 6	Minister, New Brunswick	14 August 2018
Participant 7	Candidate, New Brunswick	11 September 2018
Participant 8	Minister, New Brunswick	10 July 2018
Participant 9	Member of the Legislative Assembly, New Brunswick	16 July 2018
Participant 10	Minister, New Brunswick	4 July 2018
Participant 11	Minister, New Brunswick	3 July 2018
Participant 12	Candidate, New Brunswick	22 February 2019

B) Consent Form

This study is being conducted by Gabrielle McAdam, a Master of Arts student at the University of New Brunswick and Women for 50%, a New Brunswick community organization that involves a group of female leaders from New Brunswick who have joined forces to inform the public and those in elected office of the need for greater female representation in the provincial Legislature. The interview should take between 20-30 minutes to complete.

The master's thesis will examine women who are currently and previously involved in New Brunswick politics and the factors that inhibit them from pursuing leadership positions within their parties. The data will be based on feedback from female politicians, other elected officials and members of party elites. All data collected in this survey will remain anonymous unless you indicate otherwise. All individual results are kept confidential and will be stored in a secured location for 5 years.

This study has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board at the University of New Brunswick in Saint John. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact Norma Dubé (normadube17@gmail.com), from Women for 50% or Dr. Joanna Everitt (jeveritt@unbsj.ca), the academic supervisor of this thesis for clarification. You may also contact the UNB Saint John Research Ethics Board at (506) 648-5908 or at reb@unb.ca.

By signing below, you will have confirmed that you have agreed to participate in this study.

Please feel at liberty to stop the interview at any time, and to withdraw any data or responses pertaining to yourself without penalty. Thank you for your participation.

Interviewer signature _____ Date _____

Participant signature _____ Date _____

C) Key Interview Questions

1. Do you think there is a lack of female representation in NB politics?
2. Did you decide on your own or did someone else (member of your party, member of party executive, member of riding association, or other) encourage you to submit your nomination?
3. Did you feel intimidated by putting your name forward, as a woman?
4. What barriers do you feel are stopping women from pursuing politics?
5. Did you feel your chosen political party was accepting of you?
6. Do you think that community organizations are useful in increasing female representation?
7. Would you feel comfortable running as a party leader?
8. Would you consider running for political leadership?
9. What contributed to your interest in pursuing an elected role in politics?
10. Did you have any comments, beliefs or feelings towards the debated issue of women and politics?

D) Survey Questions

This study is being conducted by Gabrielle McAdam, a Master of Arts student at the University of New Brunswick and *Women for 50%*, a New Brunswick community organization that involves a group of female leaders from New Brunswick who have joined forces to shine a light on the need for greater female representation in the provincial Legislature.

The master's thesis will examine women who are currently and previously involved in New Brunswick politics and the factors that inhibit them from pursuing leadership positions within their parties. The data will be based on feedback from female politicians, other elected officials and members of party elites. All data collected in this survey will remain anonymous unless you indicate otherwise. All individual results are kept confidential and will be stored in a secured location for 5 years.

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Clicking the "I agree" button below will confirm that you have agreed to participate in this study.

Feel at liberty to abandon this survey at any time. Thank you for your participation.

The following are some questions about your views regarding the status of women in New Brunswick politics.

1. Do you think that there is a lack of female representation in New Brunswick politics? Why or why not?
2. Do you think that gender parity is an important issue in New Brunswick politics? Why or why not?
3. Do you think that New Brunswick voters are concerned with women's representation in the province? Why or why not?
4. Using a scale from 1 to 10, where one means not concerned at all and ten means extremely concerned, how concerned are you personally with ...

The number of women running for election as your party's candidates?

The number of women being elected to represent your party as provincial politicians?

The number of women in leadership/executive positions within your party?

The number of women running for party leadership within your party?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. What challenges exist to discourage women from running for elected politics? Please explain.
6. What opportunities exist to encourage women to run for elected politics? Please explain.
7. Is your party doing anything to encourage women to run for elected politics? Please explain.
8. Do you think that your party could be doing more to increase female representation in New Brunswick? Why or why not?
9. Do you feel any sense of responsibility to encourage more women to be involved in politics in New Brunswick? Why or why not?
10. Do you think male politicians, in general, encourage the participation of women in New Brunswick politics? Why or why not?
11. Do you think that community organizations like Women for 50% are useful to increase female representation? Why or why not?

Now we have some questions about your personal experiences with politics.

12. What party do you identify with?
 - 1) Liberal
 - 2) Conservative
 - 3) N.D.P
 - 4) Green
 - 5) other
13. Have you ever held a position on your riding association executive?
 - 1) yes
 - 2) no
14. Have you ever held a position on your party's provincial executive?
 - 1) yes
 - 2) no
15. Have you ever held a seat in the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick?
 - 1) yes
 - 2) no

16. [if q15= 1] Are you currently a member of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick?

- 1) yes
- 2) no

17. [if q15 = 2] If you are no longer a member of the Legislative Assembly what were the years you held office?

18. [If q15 = 2] Did you ever run as a candidate for your party in a provincial election?

- 1) yes
- 2) no

[If q15 = 1 or If q18 = 1]

19. Did you decide on your own or did someone encourage you to run for politics?

- 1) decided on my own
- 2) someone encouraged me to run.

19. Did you ever consider running for the leadership of your party? Why or why not?

20. Do you think you are personally capable of holding a leadership position in New Brunswick politics?

21. Are there things that turned you on or turned you off from elected politics in New Brunswick? If so what are they?

22. Do you have a comment related to this issue of women in politics that you would like to add?

23. What gender do you identify as?

- 1) male
- 2) female
- 3) other

24. In what year were you born? ()

25. Do you wish that your information remains anonymous, or can we attribute your responses to you?

26. If you do not wish to remain anonymous, what is your name?

Curriculum Vitae

Candidate's full name: Gabrielle M. McAdam

Universities attended: The University of New Brunswick, Bachelor of Arts, 2017

Publications: N/A

Conference Presentations: N/A