The Glass Ceiling on Women in Canadian Government and Politics

Katelynn Renaud

Athabasca University

Introduction

Gender parity in Canadian government and politics has been a challenge facing the country at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels since Canada was conceived. While women have participated consistently at each of these levels in recent decades, they participate at rates much lower than men. Perhaps even more significant is that women who do participate in politics face obstacles obtaining powerful and prestigious positions. Women comprise half of the population, but they do not have an equal voice in government and politics. The purpose of this paper is to assess the existence of a 'glass ceiling' in Canadian government and politics, its causes, and how the situation can be remedied. The glass ceiling can be defined as "a[n] [invisible] barrier that applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing as quickly or as high in the organisation as their male counterparts because they are women" (Bradshaw & Wicks, 2000, p. 229). Understanding the glass ceiling, its causes, and how it can be remedied will allow for gender equality in government and politics to be strengthened and for the glass ceiling to be broken. There is a glass ceiling on the participation of women in Canadian government and politics, and this is due to the electoral system, media coverage of women politicians, and gender roles and perceptions. To remedy the situation, it is necessary to consider changing the electoral system and creating a more women-friendly political environment.

The Glass Ceiling

There is a glass ceiling on the participation of women in Canadian government and politics. As aforementioned, the glass ceiling pertains to the invisible barrier that limits women's ability to progress in their careers, particularly due to systemic obstacles (Bradshaw & Wicks, 2000, p. 229). To clarify, the glass ceiling does not mean women never attain powerful positions; rather, it means they do so at rates lesser than men. It is evident that the glass ceiling exists when

looking at the number of women across Canada who hold or have recently held one of the following positions: city councillor, mayor, member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), premier, member of Parliament (MP), senator, cabinet minister, or prime minister. These positions at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels are overwhelmingly filled by men, especially those considered to be top leadership positions, which are the positions of mayor, premier, cabinet minister, and prime minister. For the purpose of this paper, achieving the position of city councillor, MLA, or MP is considered a 'crack' in the glass ceiling since many women are candidates for these positions but are never elected. As Anne Kingston (2015) points out, "…analysis of female representation in Parliament and cabinet makes clear, size (as in total number of women running) doesn't matter. What does is performance: electability and, more crucially, power conferred once in office". It can be acknowledged that women face the glass ceiling in other positions in Canadian government and politics as well, especially in the public service, but due to the scope of this paper, only the aforementioned positions will be considered to substantiate the existence of the glass ceiling. Examining the number of women in Canadian government and politics and the positions they hold will demonstrate that the glass ceiling exists in Canadian government and politics.

At the municipal level, far less women are city councillors or mayors than men. In 2012, women constituted 25 percent of city councillors and 16 percent of mayors across Canada. This is hardly close to equal representation and still does not reach the target level set by the United Nations of 30 percent women in decision-making positions. However, there is a large discrepancy across provinces and territories when it comes to electing women at the municipal level. For example, in 2012, Saskatchewan had the lowest amount of female city councillors elected at only 16 percent, while Nova Scotia had the highest at 43 percent. In regard to mayors,

the Northwest Territories elected only 6 percent while the Yukon Territories elected the highest

amount at 50 percent (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, n.d., pp. 2, 4). These numbers

demonstrate that some provinces and territories have better gender equality at the municipal level

of politics than others, but the above-mentioned averages of city councillors and mayors across

Canada show the majority of provinces and territories are not coming close to achieving equal

representation at the municipal level. In 2015, the numbers improved slightly as the percent of

female city councillors across Canada rose to 28 percent and the percent of female mayors rose

to 18 percent (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2015, p. 1). However, such a small

increase proves that at this rate, it would take decades to even approach gender equality at the

municipal level of politics. It is evident a glass ceiling exists at the municipal level of politics

since men secure decision-making positions at the municipal level in far greater numbers than

women in the majority of provinces and territories, and when women do achieve a decision-

making position, it is usually that of city councillor rather than the more powerful position of

mayor.

The provincial level of government has similar statistics to the municipal level, with

MLA and premier positions being occupied mostly by men. In 2012, the Northwest Territories

had the lowest number of legislature seats filled by women at only 10.53 percent, while Quebec

had the highest at 32.80 percent. The average across the provinces and territories was 22.98

percent (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, n.d., p. 3). By 2015, there was a small

improvement in gender equality in the provincial legislatures as the average for seats filled by

women across the provinces was 24.48 percent, with British Columbia leading at 36.14 percent

and Nunavut the furthest behind at 9.52 percent (Parliament of Canada, 2016). Again, these

numbers are approaching a suitable benchmark for women's participation in provincial politics,

but they are not even close to gender equality in the legislature. The situation for women in the top provincial leadership position of premier is even bleaker. Currently, there are only three female premiers out of thirteen: Kathleen Wynne in Ontario, Christy Clark in British Columbia, and Rachel Notley in Alberta (Parliament of Canada, 2015a). Perhaps even more concerning is that Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan have never had a female premier, and no province or territory has ever had more than two female premiers (McCullough, 2016). Since premiers are not elected like MLAs, this points to a glass ceiling potentially due to party politics. It is clear there is a glass ceiling at the provincial level as women are being elected as MLAs at only moderate rates and have rarely filled the most powerful provincial position of premier.

The federal level of government also exhibits a glass ceiling as women are underrepresented in the positions of MP, cabinet minister, senator, and prime minister. For more than a decade, women's representation in the House of Commons has been nearly stalled. In the 1997, 2000, 2004, and 2006 elections, women filled only 21 percent of the seats in the House of Commons, with this number increasing to 22 percent in 2008 and 25 percent in 2011 (Young, 2013, p. 256). Most recently, in the 2015 election, women filled 26 percent of seats (CBC News, 2015). These numbers suggest that women's participation as MPs is stagnated and unlikely to rise significantly in upcoming elections. When it comes to filling cabinet minister positions, women fare slightly better. After the 2008 and 2011 elections, women made up 29 percent of appointees to cabinet minister positions (Young, 2013, p. 262). Following the 2015 election, Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appointed 15 women and 15 men as cabinet ministers, achieving gender parity (Kingston, 2015b). While this is a big step forward, it is important to consider the portfolios that women were given. Perhaps the five most prestigious portfolios are

finance, foreign affairs, justice, defence, and employment. Women were appointed to two of these, but the tradition of the Minister of Finance post being held only by men continued (Kingston, 2015b). The Senate has made perhaps the largest strides in terms of gender equality. During the Jean Chrétien administration between 1993 and 2003, 44 percent of Senate appointments were women, almost achieving gender parity in appointments. From 2003 to 2006, appointments dropped to 35 percent women under Paul Martin and then to 31 percent women from 2006 to May 2012 under Stephen Harper (Young, 2013, p. 280). Currently, there are 83 senators out of a possible 105, with 31 being women, meaning 37 percent of Senate seats are filled by women (Parliament of Canada, 2015b). This is a fair amount, and if currently unoccupied seats are filled by women, there is a chance for gender parity. When it comes to the most powerful position in Canada, the prime minister, Kim Campbell was the only woman to have ever held the position, and she only held it for less than five months (Young, 2013, p. 261). This reflects quite poorly on gender equality in government as Canada has now had 29 prime ministers, with 28 being men. While gender parity is closer to being achieved at the federal level due to cabinet minister and senator appointments, it is still lacking in regard to electing MPs and seeing women as prime ministers in Canada. Overall, it is evident that a glass ceiling exists at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels in Canada as women are underrepresented at each level, especially in positions considered the most influential and prestigious.

Causes of the Glass Ceiling

The electoral system in Canada is one cause of the glass ceiling. The electoral system is "the set of rules and procedures by which the citizens of a given country choose their national legislators" (MacIvor, 2003, p. 22). Canada has a single-member plurality (SMP) system, commonly known as first-past-the-post (FPTP), in which each citizen gets one vote toward a

candidate in their riding. The candidate with the most votes is elected to the House of Commons, and the government is formed by the party who has the most seats in the House of Commons. This system is used at the federal and provincial levels and in the majority of municipalities (MacIvor, 2003, p. 25). As MacIvor (2003) points out, the system is "an intervening variable… [that] determines neither the supply of female aspirants nor the demand for female candidates… Canada's SMP system imposes disincentives that militate against female candidates…" (p. 24). This means Canada's electoral system lessens opportunities for women based on its structure. One way the FPTP system does this is by influencing district magnitude, which is the number of seats in a district. The FPTP system supplies a limited number of seats compared to other electoral systems, meaning there are less opportunities for women to win seats (Tremblay, 2009, p. 54). Single-member districts are more likely to have male candidates than female candidates as only one candidate can be supplied. This is further propagated by the incumbency factor as it has been found that incumbents have a distinct advantage over non-incumbents in elections. Since incumbents are mostly men, women have little chance in being elected in their district when there is an incumbent (Tremblay & Mevellec, 2013, p. 28). The electoral system does not allow women to have an equal opportunity to men when running as a candidate in their district.

Another way in which the FPTP system imposes a glass ceiling on women in Canadian government and politics is that it influences parties' strategies for nominating candidates. It does this by encouraging a 'local patronage' model of candidate selection, meaning local parties have control over who they choose as candidates and often follow few rules when choosing candidates (MacIvor, 2003, p. 30). Combined with the single-member district aspect of FPTP, this results in parties nominating men over women as they do not feel compelled nor do they have the option "to 'balance the ticket' by including women on their district lists [that would exist under other

electoral systems]" (MacIvor, 2003, p. 30). The glass ceiling is perpetuated as parties continue to choose men over women because the electoral system only allows for one candidate, and men are historically favoured as being the "'best qualified'" (Young, 2013, p. 268). Localized candidate selection also makes it difficult for parties to enforce guidelines on female candidate targets. For example, in 1991, the NDP set a target of 50 percent female candidates but only achieved 38 percent female candidates. Furthermore, when parties do run female candidates, they are often run as 'ornamental' candidates in constituencies where the party is weak (MacIvor, 2003, pp. 30, 32). Women are simply nominated as a token of diversity for a party. Since the electoral system stresses centralized politics over decentralized politics, parties have little control over local candidate selection, impairing efforts to meet targets for female candidates. Additionally, since the electoral system is focused on local districts, women are unable to run at the national level, perpetuating their 'ornamental' factor in many constituencies.

It is important to draw a connection to the way in which the electoral system affects the glass ceiling on positions discussed in the preceding section. When it comes to elected positions like MLA and MP, it is evident that the electoral system itself directly hampers opportunities for women to be nominated as candidates, especially in competitive constituencies, which means fewer women are actually elected. Indeed, parties do not play a large role in municipal politics, but women are still impacted by the incumbency factor when running for city councillor or mayor. The electoral system does not play a large role in influencing the glass ceiling on the positions of premier, senator, cabinet minister, or prime minister as those that hold these positions are elected at party conventions by party members or are appointed; however, it can be argued that since fewer women are MLAs or MPs as a result of the electoral system, there is a smaller pool of women to fill these positions, usually filled by those who currently hold or

previously held a political position. There is a glass ceiling on the participation of women in government and politics in part because of the electoral system, but it is not the only factor that contributes to the glass ceiling.

Media coverage of women politicians is a second cause of the glass ceiling in Canadian government and politics. It is largely agreed that media is a masculine institution that favours masculine narratives and men in general. Women must work comparatively harder to position themselves to receive balanced and comprehensive news coverage and often fail to achieve this, affecting their chances at being elected or viewed positively in the political realm. To achieve fairer news coverage, women often modify their appearance, speech, and personality to avoid gender stereotypes and even to fit into a more masculine narrative in some cases (Goodyear-Grant, 2009, p. 147). Immediately, this puts women at a disadvantage to men as they must exert effort beyond making their political statement when interacting with the media. Men do not face this level of scrutinizing, with Goodyear-Grant (2009) finding that "women MPs raised the common theme that reporters focused on their physical appearance and personal life… [This] was not matched by similar coverage of men in the House of Commons" (p. 152). This not only puts the extra onus on women to focus attention on their political message, but it also distracts from their political viability. Trimble & Arscott (2003) use the example of a 1997 news article about former Alberta NDP leader Pam Barrett to highlight this: "The article's version of the NDP leader's election strategy was entirely personal and domestic, as it focused on Barrett's bathing rituals and her preparation of gravy for a Sunday dinner with family and friends" (p. 93). It makes it much more difficult for women to be elected if the media coverage of them is largely about their personal lives and appearances rather than their political platform. This does not only apply to female political candidates, as even female cabinet ministers have been portrayed as

"squat and physically unfit compared with relatively trimmer and more athletic male politicians" (Trimble & Arscott, 2003, p. 93). This demonstrates that even once they are in office, women experience the negative effects of media, which can be damaging to their career and future career aspirations.

In addition, the way in which media portrays women perpetuates the glass ceiling. Not only are women's personal attributes and behaviour focused on in different ways than men, but they are also portrayed differently in a more general manner. Everitt & Gidengil (2003) use the example of caricatures in major Canadian newspapers during the 1993 federal election to highlight this difference: "…67 percent of the caricatures of the women portrayed them as dependent, fearful, and powerless, while over half the men in the cartoons were depicted as independent, brave, and assured" (pp. 195-196). These are gendered images being applied to both males and females, but the women's images are overwhelmingly negative compared to the men's images. The negative aspect of these images signals to voters that women are too kind and timid to participate in politics, which is viewed as a man's game to be played in a confrontational manner. When women manage to overcome these images, they are then often portrayed as too aggressive, which is unbecoming of their gender (Trimble & Arscott, 2003, pp. 92-93). This means that when it comes to media, there is often no way for women to overcome barriers as there is very little balanced reporting regarding women politicians; they are either too feminine or too masculine.

Furthermore, there is evidence that journalists do not take women in politics as seriously as men. Often, women are asked questions about their families when they do not have one, journalists stereotype women as rookies even if they have an extensive political background, or journalists just simply ignore female candidates. For example, former NDP leader Alexa

McDonough was often called Audrey, the name of her predecessor, and former Prime Minister

Kim Campbell was the subject of coverage implying she had slept her way into power despite

her broad political portfolio (Goodyear-Grant, 2009, pp. 154-155). This type of coverage

contributes to an atmosphere of insignificance surrounding female candidates and female

politicians that takes attention away from the qualities that could be attractive to voters. Along

this line, women in Canadian government and politics do not tend to have personal relationships

with journalists like men do. According to Goodyear-Grant's (2009) findings, having a friendly

relationship with journalists could often produce favourable media coverage. Men such as

Stockwell Day went out of their way to cultivate these relationships, praising the positive effect

of their efforts, while women negatively commented on their ties with media or were ambivalent

about them (pp. 157-158). The general favouritism for male politicians in the media and the

close relationships they are able to establish with journalists may give them an advantage over

female politicians in favourable media coverage. Moreover, women seem to receive less

coverage in the media than their male counterparts. In a study conducted on national newspaper

coverage of the 2000 federal election, Sampert & Trimble (2003) found that Alexa McDonough

"was *always* mentioned less frequently than her party… [and] [t]he assumption that leaders are

more important than their parties applied to the male leaders in newspaper headlines, but not to

McDonough" (p. 222). Less coverage disadvantages women since exposure is vital to any

successful campaign.

In conclusion, media coverage of women politicians causes the glass ceiling as women

receive less coverage than men, the coverage they do receive is more focused on their personal

lives and attributes, they are portrayed in an undesirable gendered manner, and they generally

have more negative relationships with journalists. This makes it harder for female candidates to

get elected, more difficult for female politicians to retain their positions, and more challenging for females in Canadian government and politics to advance their careers to positions of power and prestige at rates similar to male politicians. Women have a distinct disadvantage in the political realm when it comes to media coverage of their political platforms and careers.

A third cause of the glass ceiling on women in Canadian government and politics is gender roles and perceptions. This can cause the glass ceiling in two ways: women have gendered perceptions about themselves and their own roles or others view women with a gendered lens. Women's perceptions about themselves and their roles has perhaps the greater effect on perpetuating the glass ceiling. Bashevkin (2009) presents a 'stage' versus 'actor' argument which posits that women as 'actors' may not enter politics due to their own personal traits and ambitions rather than because of a negative setting offered by the 'stage' of politics. Women often have less financial resources, less political ambition due to gender socialization, and greater family responsibilities than men (pp. 108-111). This impedes their political careers as a result of gender socialization and roles in society. O'Brien (2013) furthers this view as she interviews women in government about their experiences of 'bumping' their heads on the glass ceiling. The participants expressed few career aspirations or goals, could not pinpoint female role models in government, believed they had different values than men, and felt excluded in the workplace. This led to stagnation in their careers, a lack of confidence in attaining a promotion and thriving in a new position, and valuing family and stability as compared to career success (pp. 100-104). Women are socialized to value political careers and success less than men and impose limits on themselves in this field as a result, and since so few women do achieve success in government, it makes women feel as if achieving prestigious government positions is nearly impossible. Young (2013) supports this view as well, stating that "women are less likely than

men to express political ambitions… and less likely than those 'self-selected' candidates who ran without being recruited by their party" (p. 267). The reasons for this may vary as women may perceive politics as a hostile environment or they might simply prefer to be politically active in informal ways (p. 267). The hostile environment of politics is reflected in Question Period, which women have described as conflictual and rowdy, often making them uncomfortable with participating in it (Goodyear-Grant, 2009, pp. 156-157). Women's gendered perception of themselves and their roles as well as of the political environment affects their political career aspirations and success, as does their roles that burden them with less financial stability and more family responsibilities.

Additionally, society's perceptions of women and their roles contributes to the glass ceiling on women in Canadian government and politics. Even when women are determined to succeed, have strong political ambitions, and have socio-demographic characteristics that will allow them to succeed, they still face obstacles in success in Canadian government and politics. To begin, there are still some traditional views that exist in Canada when it comes to gender roles. Across Canada, some people still favour women's roles as homemakers and mothers. This is especially true in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan (Berdahl, 2013, p. 226). Favouring traditional roles for women discourages women from pursuing roles in government and politics as they may face opposition and ridicule from their community and family and have little support from their community to obtain elected positions. There is also negative gender perceptions within government and political workplaces. O'Brien (2013) found that women feel they are "viewed as less valuable or capable and therefore less viable candidates particularly for senior leadership positions" (p. 103). This is discouraging for women who may be in low-level government or political positions and seeking to break the glass ceiling. Particularly in politics,

some parties are less welcoming to women. Right-leaning parties that are not egalitarian and are hostile to organized feminism tend to be less accepting and supportive of women (Bashevkin, 2009, p. 109). In particular, the Conservative Party, followed by the Liberal Party, have historically lagged far behind the NDP in their share of female MPs (Kingston, 2015a). This puts women who share the views of these parties at a disadvantage as they may want to run for an MP position or advance within the party, but these parties tend to favour men over women. In addition, women find they are judged and criticized for behaving either too feminine or too masculine and that it is impossible to achieve a balance (O'Brien, 2013, p. 106). This leads to women being viewed as not having the right skillset required to succeed in influential and high-level positions. Furthermore, there is the idea that Canadian government and politics is an 'old boys' club' that favours men since men hold the majority of the power and tend to support other men in achieving their career aspirations. Former MP Laurin Liu noted that she had to work hard "to win credibility" in the old boys' club and that her appearance was commented on during the first televised panel she participated in (Taber, 2012). The old boys' club in Canadian government and politics poses barriers to women's advancement and may make them feel uncomfortable with the political environment or less competent due to their exclusion from male networks.

In summary, women in Canadian government and politics are affected by a glass ceiling that is in part a result of gender roles and perceptions. Women may view themselves and the political environment with a gendered lens, making them less apt to seek success in a career in government and politics. They may also have socio-demographic characteristics as a result of their gender that lead them to be less able to pursue a career in government and politics than men. Additionally, society and men working in politics and government may have gender

perceptions that directly impact a woman's ability to advance her career in government in politics or may affect a woman's comfort level and feeling of suitability for the political realm. Overall, the electoral system, media coverage of female politicians, and gender roles and perceptions cause the glass ceiling that prevents women from attaining positions of influence and prestige in Canadian government and politics at the same rates and with the same swiftness as men.

Methods to Break the Glass Ceiling

One method that may help to remedy the issue of the glass ceiling is reforming the electoral system. A mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system is perhaps one of the best electoral systems for promoting gender parity in government and politics. In this system, "[e]ach voter casts two ballots: one for a candidate in an SMP constituency and one for a [regional or national] party list" (MacIvor, 2003, p. 25). The MMP system would address the main issues that discourage gender parity in the SMP system. First, district magnitude would change as more seats would be available due to the availability of a seat in the local constituency and seats through party lists. This means that while parties would still have to choose whether to run a man or a woman in local constituencies, they could have more female candidates on party lists (MacIvor, 2003, p. 34). Young (2013) points out that parties would be likely to nominate more women since they would be accused of sexism if they did not due to the fact that "…the decision to nominate five men and no women (for example) lays bare the inequities in representation" (p. 268). Second, the MMP system would address local patronage as only local constituencies would have candidates selected locally. MacIvor (2003) suggests that women's groups would pressure parties to fill party lists with gender parity in mind (p. 34). Parties would have the ability to do this under MMP since they would have control of party lists centrally

rather than having local party groups choosing candidates for party lists. Third, the MMP system could prevent women from simply being nominated as 'ornamental' candidates in ridings in which they have no real chance of winning a seat. Parties would likely run more female candidates in competitive ridings since male candidates could still be represented on party lists, and voters could vote for both a man and a woman if they choose (MacIvor, 2003, p. 34). Of course, the issue of incumbency might still be present in the electoral system, but if enough women are placed on party lists initially, they will become incumbents in the subsequent elections.

The MMP system also presents the opportunity for gender quotas. Currently, parties have gender targets, but Trimble & Arscott's (2003) findings suggest that once parties reach a level of 25 percent female candidates, they become complacent (pp. 60-61). Implementing gender quotas would mean parties would have to run a proportion of women as candidates. While there would perhaps be a large amount of resistance to quotas in Canadian society due to notions that merit should dictate candidacy opportunities, implementing gender quotas only for party lists and making party lists open would help stem this resistance (Young, 2013, p. 269). An open party list system in which voters could rank candidates would allow voters to maintain autonomy in their voting preferences while ensuring that women have equal opportunity in candidacy and being elected. Reforming the electoral system by implementing an MMP system and gender quotas would directly impact women seeking elected positions at the provincial and federal levels such as MLA and MP while it would indirectly impact other positions such as mayor, city councillor, premier, and prime minister by widening the supply of women in government and politics and mainstreaming gender parity in Canadian government and politics.

A second method that would contribute to breaking the glass ceiling on women in Canadian government and politics is creating a more women-friendly political environment. Gendered attitudes and stereotypes in the media, in communities, and in the political realm perpetuate the glass ceiling. There are many ways these attitudes and stereotypes can be addressed to help break the glass ceiling on women in Canadian government and politics. One way is to set up women already in government or politics for advancement in their careers through succession planning practices. Succession planning is "an overt and systematic effort of ensuring potential successors are identified and developed to be able to fill key leadership positions" (O'Brien, 2013, p. 100). This involves goal setting, performance development, and planning practices to ensure women are aware of their career opportunities and prepared to advance into high-level positions as they become available (O'Brien, 2013, p. 100). Often, women do not have the confidence or the skillset to advance into leadership positions, but succession planning can ensure that women in government and politics are encouraged to advance to high-level positions by making women feel ready and eager for those positions. Another program that can be implemented in society and in the workplace is a mentorship program by which women in positions of influence in government and politics would mentor women seeking to advance their careers. This would serve to provide role models for women, encouraging them to aspire to obtain high-level positions and ascertaining that achieving these positions is realistic (O'Brien, 2013, pp. 101-102). Educating women about the various career paths they can take to advance in Canadian government and politics and providing them with examples of other women's success may help break the glass ceiling and assist them in overcoming their own gendered feelings and obstacles.

Furthermore, increasing access to training schools for women seeking a career in government and politics could be helpful. For example, women who attended campaign schools "said this training had markedly improved their media skills… [including] public speaking and networking skills" (Goodyear-Grant, 2009, p. 156). Providing women with the skillsets they need to succeed in their careers in government and politics including skills to interact with the media, manage a campaign, or achieve a promotion will help them break the glass ceiling. Additionally, it is important to address the masculine nature of the political environment. Institutions like Question Period and the old boys' club persist in causing women to feel uncomfortable in the political realm and unwelcome. While it is hard to address the masculine culture of the political realm, it can be addressed gradually through things like networking events designed to engage both genders and build relationships between them or restructuring question period to be more orderly and less aggressive (O'Brien, 2013, p. 104; Goodyear-Grant, 2003, p. 156). Initiatives like these would make politics more inviting to women and would also make it easier for some women to advance their careers by giving them a more active role in their positions. Lastly, increased women's activism can change attitudes and stereotypes involving gender. Organizations like Equal Voice are advocates for women, creating dialogue between genders and about gender and reaching out to parties to promote gender equality within their ranks (Young, 2013, p. 267). It is important that resources be allocated to women's organizations seeking to increase women's representation in Canadian government and politics. The methods of electoral reform and initiatives to make the political environment more women-friendly will help break the glass ceiling on women in Canadian government and politics. They will assist women in entering careers in government and politics and assist those who are already in

government and politics in advancing their careers at the same rates as men and in moving into powerful and prestigious positions currently dominated by men.

Conclusion

There is a glass ceiling on the participation of women in Canadian government and politics, and this is due to the electoral system, media coverage of women politicians, and gender roles and perceptions. To remedy the situation, it is necessary to consider changing the electoral system and creating a more women-friendly political environment. It is evident that the glass ceiling exists in Canadian government and politics when looking at the number of women who fill influential positions at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government. Men overwhelmingly outnumber women in the positions of city councillor and mayor and are overrepresented in MLA and premier positions, with the proportion of women filling these positions increasing at an alarmingly slow rate. At the federal level, women are underrepresented in MP positions and only one woman has ever been prime minister, though they fair better in the appointed positions of cabinet minister and senator. Judging by these statistics, gender parity in powerful municipal, provincial, and federal positions will not be achieved in the near future. Three main causes of the glass ceiling in Canadian government and politics are the electoral system, media coverage of women politicians, and gender roles and perceptions. The FPTP electoral system allows for a low district magnitude, moderate incumbency rates, local patronage practices, and 'ornamental' candidates that hamper women's attempts to get elected and move forward in politics. In the media, female politicians often have their appearances and personal lives emphasized, and they must work harder than men to present a suitable image of themselves to the media. Additionally, the media presents gendered images of women and uses stereotypes that negatively influence society's view of their political viability. Gender roles and perceptions

may affect women's personal choices, socio-demographic characteristics, and ambitions in a way that makes seeking a career in government and politics less attractive or difficult. Additionally, the hostile environment of politics can make some women uncomfortable, and in some communities, traditional gender roles still hold that government and politics is not a suitable place for women. Examining these causes of the glass ceiling allow for methods to break the glass ceiling to be identified.

Two methods to break the glass ceiling are electoral reform and creating a more women-friendly political environment. An MMP electoral system would address the issues associated with district magnitude, local patronage, incumbency, and 'ornamental' candidates under the FPTP system. Moreover, it would allow for gender quotas that would ensure women have an equal chance to men at being elected. Creating a more-women friendly political environment can be achieved through methods like succession planning, mentorship programs, and training schools to help women become more confident in their government and political careers. In addition, initiatives like networking events, restructuring Question Period, and increased women's activism could address the masculine nature of the political environment, allowing for women to participate more comfortably and actively in government and politics. While the glass ceiling on women in Canadian government and politics is not as strong as it used to be, it still exists as women are not advancing their careers to influential positions at the same rates and with the same speed as men. Women will continue to 'bump their heads' on the glass ceiling if causes like the electoral system, media coverage, and gender roles and perceptions are not addressed. However, progress can be made and the glass ceiling can be broken through systematic efforts to address the causes and with a genuine societal belief that women and men should be afforded the same opportunities in all aspects of society, including in government and politics.

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