Women Candidates

and

Edmonton Municipal Politics

by

LETICIA NADLER GOMEZ

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In

LEADERSHIP

Royal Roads University
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Supervisor: NIELS AGGER-GUPTA
JANUARY 2020

COMMITTEE APPROVAL

The members of LETICIA NADLER GOMEZ's Thesis Committee certify that they have read the thesis titled Women Candidates and Edmonton Municipal Politics and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP:

DR NIELS AGGER-GUPTA [signature on file]

DR VIRGINA MCKENDRY [signature on file]

Final approval and acceptance of this thesis is contingent upon submission of the final copy of the thesis to Royal Roads University. The thesis supervisor confirms to have read this thesis and recommends that it be accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirements:

DR. NIELS AGGER-GUPTA [signature on file]

Creative Commons Statement

Abstract

This inquiry explored the issue of the under-representation of women in local politics in Alberta. Drawing on action-oriented research, feminist work, and intersectionality, this project addressed the research question: "How might the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women (CMSW) support female candidates in the 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections?" Participants in this inquiry were women who ran for office in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election. The opinions and experiences they relayed suggested that these women faced multiple challenges during their election campaigns, the greatest of which revolved around difficulties in fundraising, being a new candidate, and building a team of skilled and committed volunteers. Recommendations for the sponsor, CMSW, were (a) to help women candidates overcome the fundraising challenge and (b) to revise the content of the *Ready for Her* resource guide according to women candidates' need and hosting events relevant to them.

Key words: women in local politics; under-representation; women in leadership; *Ready for Her* online resource guide; Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women; Women in Alberta politics.

Acknowledgements

Over the few months it has taken me to write this thesis, I have been fortunate enough to work with some superb people. The first of these people whom I would like to thank are my capstone partners[1] from the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women: H. A. and K. B.; their help and advice have been invaluable. I would also like to thank my inquiry team, especially Dr. ElAtia, for their feedback and support from the initial stages of this project to the end. My thanks go to the participants in this inquiry—six strong and determined women who took time out of their busy lives to help a lowly social sciences student with her studies.

I am genuinely grateful to my former professors, in particular, Dr. Alice MacGillivray, and my supervisor, Dr. Niels Agger-Gupta, for their continual support and guidance. Thanks also to my second committee reviewer, Dr. Virginia McKendry, for her valuable feedback on my work. I would like to acknowledge my editors, Bill Rankin, Dr. Carly Kenny, and Karen Graham for their advice and availability when writing this thesis, and my family, whose love and encouragement give me the drive and courage to fight for what I believe in. I am particularly thankful for the support I received from my friends Épiphanie Dzoussi Boukama and Malaïka Ogandaga. Finally, I am entirely indebted to my dear friend Dr. Svetlana Pavlenko, who supported me throughout this journey—without her, none of this project would have been made possible.

This project was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Canada Graduate Scholarship and the Mayor Andrée P. Boucher Memorial Scholarship; the CMSW did not need to support this inquiry financially.

---

[1] Capstone partner: my mentor for this capstone project, and representative of the CMSW.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter One: Focus and Framing

The struggle for equal representation and positions of authority for women in political circles endures at the municipal, provincial and federal level in Canada, despite a plethora of programs to achieve gender parity in political representation, such as Daughters of the Vote, Systemic Change, and Getting to the Gate programs provided by Equal Voice (n.d.), Toward Parity in Municipal Politics (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2018), Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton Committee (City of Edmonton, n.d.-d), Parity YEG (n.d.-a). With this inquiry, I investigated how and why women are still underrepresented, particularly at the municipal level, by looking at the case of Edmonton, Alberta. I then present suggestions on what steps could be taken to better support women taking their rightful place in public office.

Women have made significant advancement in accessing political power during the last few decades (Bherer, Breux, & Collin, 2008; Jalalzai & Krook 2010; Paxton & Hughes 2014; Paxton, Hughes, & Painter, 2010). However, they continue to be a minority in public office (Lammers, Gordijn, & Otten, 2009, p. 186), struggling to break the glass ceiling in the political sphere, with no guarantee that they will succeed in the future (Bashevkin, 2009; Jalalzai & Krook, 2010; Maillé, 2015). In other words, tens of years of efforts by international and regional organizations and national governments have not overcome the under-representation of women in elected office (Chaban et al., 2017, p. 10).

Women's political representation is a democratic matter. According to the United Nations, "Women's political participation is a human right" (Berevoescu & UN Women, 2019, p. 2), and their equal participation is key to the consolidation of democracies (United Nations, n.d.). Put simply, from a normative democracy perspective (Tremblay, 2007, p. 533), since women make up 50% of the population, they should have equal access to political power, at least

in a democratic system. However, in reality, things are much more complicated. Only through an

empirical examination of democracy, which "encompass[es] a complex range of practical

realities, including cultural, socio-economic, and political factors" (p. 533), can one deepen one's

understanding of the continuous under-representation of women in elected office and other

gender parity matters. In Alberta, this topic was a serious concern of the previous government.

This present work focused on local politics, and the locality of interest is Edmonton,

which is the capital city of Alberta. Gender parity was a serious concern for the New Democratic

Party (NDP) government during 2016 to 2019, who developed an online resource guide for

potential women candidates standing for municipal office entitled *Ready for Her* (Government of

Alberta, n.d.-e). This guide was developed under the leader Rachel Notley, who had won the

provincial elections between 2015 and 2019. Equal Voice North Chapter, a local group located in

Edmonton and part of a nationwide organization called Equal Voice, built on this platform and

hosted various events in Edmonton to help women run for city council. Equal Voice (n.d.) is

dedicated "to electing more women to all levels of political office in Canada" (para. 1). Although

the local Edmonton group "focuses on getting more women elected to public office in Northern

Alberta" (Equal Voice, Alberta North, n.d., para. 1), it seems currently inactive. Therefore, in

Alberta, the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women remains the

leading advocate for gender parity in local politics.

In 2016, Premier Rachel Notley, leader of the NDP and Alberta premier from 2015 to

2019, appointed Alberta's first gender-balanced cabinet and created the Alberta Status of

Women ministry (Alberta's New Democratic Party, n.d.). Notley's focus was local politics, an

area where women remain substantially under-represented (Berevoescu & UN Women, 2019;

Breux, Couture, & Koop, 2019; Briggs, 2008; Brown, 1994; Cowper-Smith, Kopec, Sutton, &

Nelson, 2017; Crosby, 2005). Paradoxically, this domain of politics is often perceived to be

"women friendly" (Thomas, 2013, p. 219) and to provide "greater opportunities for women to

acquire office" (LeSage & McMillan, 2010, p. 64), as women running for municipal office are

thought to face fewer challenges than those running at the provincial or federal level

(Lovenduski & Norris, as cited in Kushner, Siegel, & Stanwick, 1997). However, recent research

has demonstrated that women face similar challenges at all three levels of government (Tolley,

2011, p. 588), and there is no evidence that local politics presents any form of advantage for

women (p. 558). In fact, almost half of all mayoral elections in Canada include no women

candidates (Breux et al., 2019, p. 177).

My interest in the under-representation of women on city council started when I worked

as a campaign manager for Dr. Pavlenko, a female candidate running for office in the 2017

Edmonton Election. Thanks to this position, I witnessed the considerable efforts deployed by the

government and local organizations to support women and gender parity on Edmonton City

Council. I also witnessed the disappointing outcomes of these initiatives. The imbalance between

the efforts deployed and the outcomes achieved motived me to investigate this matter further, by

working hand-in-hand with the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of

Women (CMSW; formerly Status of Women Alberta). Responsible for Alberta's cultural

industries, arts, and heritage, the CMSW is a strong advocate for the promotion of gender

equality[2]. The importance and relevance of gender equity will be built upon and explained later

---

[2] Gender equality implies an equal enjoyment of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities by both women and men (Cameron, 2018, p. 152). In other words, it means that both women and men have "access to opportunities and life changes [that] is neither dependent on, nor constrained by, their sex. Achieving gender equality requires women's empowerment … so that both women and men can fully participate as equal partners in productive and reproductive life" (United Nations Population Fund, 2020). Gender equality differs from equity in the sense that "equity leads to equality" (para. 2). Said simply, equality is the end goal whereas equity is the means to get there (Pipeline, 2018).

in this chapter, under the section, Significance of the Inquiry, and in Chapter Two, under the section, Key Theoretical Concepts.

My role as an external key player in this current inquiry was to conduct research pertaining to the female candidates who ran for office on Edmonton City Council in 2017, in order to provide the CMSW with insights to facilitate the decision-making process regarding the Government of Alberta's (n.d.-e) *Ready for Her* online resource guide and any potential upcoming initiatives. This capstone project[3] was designed with intention to enhance knowledge on three different issues: (a) the perceived challenges women candidates faced in the 2017 Edmonton Election, (b) the effectiveness and relevance of the *Ready for Her* resource guide, and (c) the generation of new insights and recommendations to the CMSW regarding ways to support women intending on running in the 2021 municipal elections.

To address these issues, the research question for this inquiry was set as: "How might the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women (CMSW) support female candidates in the 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections?" Three subquestions allowed for further in-depth research into the inquiry question:

1. What were the challenges in their candidacy as identified by women who ran as a candidate in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election?

2. What recommendations do women candidates who ran in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election have for women running in the 2021 municipal election?

3. What do women candidates who ran in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election think of the resources that were provided by Status of Women Alberta and Equal Voice North Chapter, and that they accessed during their campaign?

---

[3] A capstone project is a multifaceted study that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students often connected to community issues or problems.

Significance of the Inquiry

Gender parity in municipal council was a notable concern for the previous government and still is for the current one. In the 2019 provincial elections, the United Conservative Party (UCP) became the majority government, and the Status of Women ministry created by the previous government (the NDP) was amalgamated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to become the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women (CMSW). This new ministry welcomes community-based insights to reflect on ways to increase gender equality in the political arena (H. A., personal communication, July 19, 2019)[4]. Indeed, the gender gap on city councils in Alberta is a concern of the CMSW, as is the relevance and effectiveness of Notley's *Ready for Her* online resource guide. The significance of this inquiry is further detailed under the organizational and individual levels.

Organizational level. My research inquiry with a group of women who were former municipal candidates enabled the CMSW and the Advancement and Training Unit (part of the CMSW) to reflect on how CMSW could support Albertan female candidates in the 2021, including, as only one of many possiblities, the use of the Government of Alberta's (n.d.-e) *Ready for Her* online resource guide. These changes may lead to positive outcomes for women running in the 2021 municipal elections. The benefit for the CMSW in becoming the partnering organization of this project was two-fold: (a) gaining knowledge leading to organizational change, and (b) hearing from women candidates about the challenges they faced in the 2017 Edmonton election and the winning strategies they would recommend for the next municipal election. This partnership was a cost-effective collaborative project that now has the potential to result in fruitful insights that could lead to positive changes within the ministry and beyond.

---

[4] Former capstone partner, CMSW.

Individual level. This capstone project was significant to me for several reasons: First, my own life experiences as a woman motivated me to help other women getting ahead, and to some degree, this research project was my way of contributing to a local movement encouraging women to run for City council. Second, it was a great opportunity to implement the theoretical knowledge studied throughout my Master of Arts in Leadership program. Third, it served as a catalyst project, connecting what I experienced and witnessed as a campaign manager in the 2017 Edmonton election, and the process enhanced my understanding of the challenges women face in municipal politics and what is needed to overcome them. Finally, the inquiry process gave me the opportunity to meet incredible women who inspired me and sparked a desire to run for school trustee in the 2021 Edmonton election.

Organizational Context and System Analysis

The Government of Alberta (public sector) is a large establishment with multiple sites throughout the province, with both internal and external stakeholders. Alberta's CMSW is accountable for ensuring gender equality by working with ministries to make sure gender and other identity factors are reflected in Alberta's government policies, programs, and legislation. The decision-making model is centralized. However, the Status of Women division leads the work related to women in leadership and democratic participation, through the *Ready for Her* online resource guide (Government of Alberta, n.d.-e) and beyond. This initiative was developed to provide women with the resources to help them appreciate the importance of all diversity in decision-making bodies, learn about the municipal system and the role of municipal officials, and start planing their political campaign (H. A, personal communication, August 2, 2019[5]).

---

[5] Former capstone partner, CMSW.

The CMSW can contribute to the overall change process of supporting gender equality inside and outside the Government of Alberta as a catalyst for change. It is anticipated that this would bring more women onto city councils across the province by looking at the usefulness of the *Ready for Her* platform and surveying former female candidates about their experiences. More generally, the data collected from engaging members of the system outside the organization (i.e., former women candidates) will inform ministry planning and could identify new actions, strategies, and initiatives to advance gender equality in local political circles.

Since the 2017 provincial election, the government has undergone significant internal restructuring. From the newly consolidated CMSW came the creation of two new units: (as) the Violence Against Women and Girls Unit, and (b) the Gender Equality and Advancement and Training Unit. These units are part of the Status of Women, Multiculturalism and Inclusion branch and form part of the Status of Women and Strategic Integration Division (Director,[6] personal communication, November 29, 2019). Generally, the CMSW's focus is to work "to improve Albertans' quality of life through support of cultural development, historical preservation and increased gender equality" (Government of Alberta, n.d.-c, para. 1). The recently released *Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women Business Plan 2020–23* presented three primary outcomes, the third of which stated that "all Albertans are inspired to celebrate diversity and can fully participate in, and contribute to, the economic and social development of the province" (Government of Alberta, 2020a, p. 33). The political under-representation of women was addressed in the government's own literature review in the five-year business plan, where the Government of Alberta (2019c) stated their goal to "Develop and promote resources to support women's presence, participation, and decision-making in the

---

[6] Capstone partner, director of the Gender Equality and Advancement and Training division of the Ministry of CMSW.

leadership of private and public organizations" (p. 21). The representation of women in office continues to be an essential topic on the table of government bodies and in public and private circles.

Despite this good intention and apparent urgency, the government appears to have no measures in place to support and make real what they have referred to as "essential." Indeed, CMSW's objectives, as one clear example, stated that it is working towards improving "Albertans' quality of life through support of cultural development, historical preservation and increased gender equality" (Government of Alberta, n.d.-d, para. 1). However, its mandate did not mention any specific desired outcome for the 2021 municipal elections, nor did that of the *Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women Business Plan 2019–23* (Government of Alberta, 2019a). Similarly, the webpage of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, which "assists municipalities in providing well-managed, collaborative, and accountable local government to Albertans" (Government of Alberta, n.d.-e, para. 1), and its business plan (Government of Alberta, 2019b) did not mention matters or specific outcomes related to the under-representation of women on city councils for the next municipal elections. In other words, neither of these two ministries has made gender equity on municipal city councils a priority for the 2021 elections. The particular desire to overcome the under-representation of women may solely be expressed by few non-profit organizations and other local groups (as described earlier), and by default, Women and Gender Equality Canada and Canada Heritage, as they both provide funding to some of these organizations. However, this a separate research topic and will not be be adressed further in this thesis project.

The systems implications of this inquiry are expanded upon in Chapter Five as part of the recommendations under the section Practical Suggestions. These suggestions use system

thinking, which differs from conventional thinking (Stroh, 2015, p. 26) and are organized

according to Stroh's (2015, p. 26) five "System Thinking Principles for Social Change":

1. The relationship between problems and their causes is indirect and not obvious.

2. We unwittingly create our problems and have significant control or influence in solving them by changing our behaviour.

3. Most quick fixes have unintended consequences: They make no difference or make matters worse in the long run.

4. To optimize the whole, we must improve *relationships* among the parts.

5. Only a few key coordinated changes sustained over time will produce large systems change.

Stakeholders

Internally, the CMSW is a key governement body for the Government of Alberta's (n.d.-b) *Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)* and leads the Cross-Ministry Committee for Gender Equality. Externally, CMSW has over 600 stakeholders, all of which address issues affecting women, with whom they have had some kind of interaction or relationship, such as the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services, World Young Women's Christian Association, and other equality-seeking organizations. The CMSW also works in partnership with other orders of government (i.e., municipal and federal), including a Federal/Provincial/Territorial Forum of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, which has been meeting annually for 37 years (Director, personal communication, November 29, 2019[7]).

---

[7] Capstone partner, Director of the Gender Equality and Advancement and Training division of the Ministry of CMSW

This research inquiry focused on the under-representation of women on Edmonton City Council through the lens of the CMSW and women candidates. Within this area, three specific stakeholder groups were targeted:

- The Alberta CMSW ministry.

- The Gender Equality and Advancement and Training Unit (Organizational partner and part of the CMSW).

- Female candidates who ran in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election for the positions of City Councillor.

Voters and media, though essential components of the system, were omitted from this research as the Government of Alberta's (n.d.-e) *Ready for Her* online resource guide was mainly designed for female candidates intending to run for office. Nevertheless, the voices of voters and media emerged during the interviews conducted and in various commentaries throughout the surveys. Of course, participation and running in elections to gain a seat in office is controlled by various government regulations, and the stakeholders must be aware of and adhere to all of them.

Alberta's Electoral System and Municipalities Structures

Municipal elections are regulated by Alberta's Local Authorities Election Act (2001) and its Municipal Government Act (2000). Local elections take place every four years (City of Edmonton, 2020). The next ones will be held on October 18, 2021, and nominations will be open between January 1, 2021, and September 7, 2021 (Government of Alberta, 2020b). Furthermore, in Alberta, municipal elections "are putatively non-partisan, … However, in the largest cities, and even in many smaller centres, the political affiliations of candidates are often well known" (LeSage & McMillan, 2010, p. 64). For example, "the 2004-2007 Edmonton City Council

contained three former opposition MLAs" (p. 64). In this research, the matter of political

affiliations is not addressed, as municipal politics in Alberta is officially non-partisan.

In Alberta, there are several types of municipalities. These are described by LeSage and

McMillan (2010) as being,

> Formally divided into four urban classifications (cities, towns, villages, and summer
>
> villages); one rural classification (municipal districts); and a special form (specialized
>
> municipality). There are [also] three quasi-municipal forms (Improvement Districts,
>
> Special Areas, Hamlets) and an allied form (Métis Settlements) that are not formally part
>
> of the municipal system. (pp. 5–6)

While these different forms of municipalities have authority in the making of bylaws in nine

areas (p. 19), there is no reference in the legislation relating to municipalities about matters

specifically related to women, gender equity, and equality.

The City of Edmonton. Incorporated in 1904, Edmonton is the capital city of Alberta.

Until 2010, the City of Edmonton was divided into six wards, with two elected officials in each,

which was a unique configuration for Alberta and Canada (Bozakaya, Erku, Haight, & Laporte,

2011, p. 534). In 2010, Edmonton reconfigured its ward system into 12 wards, with a "City

Council … made up of 13 elected representatives, including one Mayor and twelve City

Councillors, one in each ward. The mayor is elected by all Edmontonians' [voting] in the civic

election [whereas] Councillors are elected by voters in the wards they represent" (City of

Edmonton, n.d.-c, para. 1–2). Currently, there are only two women councillors: (a) Bev

Esslinger, a former school trustee, now in her second term in council (Graney, 2017), and

(b) Sarah Hamilton, new to politics (Morison, 2019).

Edmonton election. Recent research showed that "only 15.69% of candidates who contested mayoral races between 2006 and 2017 were women, … [and] close to half of all mayoral elections include[d] no women candidates" (Breux et al., 2019, p. 177). In the 2017 Edmonton Election, 83 individuals filed for nomination at a municipal level, and 24 of them were women, showing a 26% increase from the previous election (Male, 2017). Despite the considerable efforts of local organizations and the former Status of Women, only two women were elected to the Edmonton City Council (one of the two had sought re-election).

Research on local politics. Published research on local politics in Canada is rare (Grenier & Mévellec, 2016). Therefore, searching for data on the under-representation of women in municipal offices in Alberta was problematic, due to a lack of academic work that has been conducted on this specific matter (Breux et al., 2019, p. 165; Cowper-Smith et al., 2017, p. 5). Yet, research is essential to inform decision makers and to develop cost-effective solutions to this problem. In that regard, at the 37th Annual Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women in 2019: "Ministers also highlighted collective progress in strengthening data collection and information sharing regarding women and girls and LGBTQ2S Canadians" (Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat, 2019, para. 3). To highlight the progress made, and shed light on the process of the need for data, ministries could work towards enabling "community-university partnership research [which] is specifically tailored to respond to the direct needs and challenges of the community, in an approach that values their knowledge and culture" (Tremblay & Hall, 2014, p. 389). In fact, communities, universities, and governments should, according to Tremblay and Hall (2014), work with and learn from each other and focus on developing "solution-oriented knowledge [which] is the gold

standard for community impact" (p. 402). This thesis aims to contribute to the creation of such knowledge by working hand in hand with CMSW and the community.

Thesis Overview

Chapter One has introduced the main research question and sub-questions on the issue of under-representation of women in the political arena in Alberta and the view that the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women (CMSW) has on women's struggle to gain seats in office. The main stakeholders were identified and discussed, as was Alberta's electoral system, whereafter, the focus was directed to the City of Edmonton's elections in 2017 and the upcoming elections in 2021.

Chapter Two presents core literature related to key theoretical concepts, more specifically, democratic representation and gender, women's challenges in politics, current ways of overcoming the under-representation of women in politics, and women's diversity.

Chapter Three describes the methodology employed for this study, drawing on action-oriented research, feminist theory, and intersectionality. The data collection methods are presented as are the project participants. Following this, the nature of the study conduct is described as are the methods of data analysis used and the validity of the research, the ethical implications, and the proposed outputs of the inquiry. The chapter ends by detailing the potential contributions and application of the results of this study.

Project findings from interviews and surveys completed by the participants are presented in Chapter Four. These are linked with the inquiry's main topics of gender parity in public office: overcoming under-representation of women and the CMSW. The scope and limitations of the study, which arose from the analysis of the data, close the chapter.

Chapter Five summarises the findings and conclusions to address the main research question, as well as the sub-questions, and presents recommendations for stakeholders based on participants' answers and conclusions from the literature review. The implications of this inquiry are also discussed within the organizational context of the CMSW and the academic community. The chapter ends by making suggestions for future studies to tackle the issue of the under-representation of women in local politics. The next step in this inquiry is the presentation of the literature review.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Theoretical perspectives about gender, women's leadership roles at all levels of Canadian politics, instances involved in advancing women's participation in politics, and women's diversity and equitable representation are synthesized in this literature review. The purpose of this was to seek lessons learned from the literature that can help address the main research question: "How might the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women (CMSW) support female candidates in the 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections?"

Although this review was initially meant to focus solely on Canadian women in municipal politics, the relative absence of scholarly work on this topic led to the need to extend the parameters of the database search to women at all levels of politics across North America and, in some cases, worldwide. For this literature review, I examined peer-reviewed articles and foundational books. I also targeted recent professional literature (i.e., websites and reports) and online newspapers.

Key Theoretical Concepts

The key theoretical concepts followed in this research are discussed in this section. The two concepts addressed were (a) descriptive, substantive, and democratic representation; and (b) gender, gender parity, gender balance, gender equality, and gender equity.

Descriptive, substantive, and democratic representation. Discussing the under-representation of women in politics starts by distinguishing descriptive and substantive representation. Arscott et al. (1997) respectively defined these terms as the representation by women that can only be done by women and the representation for women, which can be put forward regardless of one's gender (p. 4). Secondly, a clarification identified by Tremblay and Pelletier (2000) stated that electing women may not necessarily lead to women's issues and

needs being addressed, but electing feminist-oriented women, or men, however, can (p. 397).

This was confirmed by a recent study discussing the differences between Alison Redford, the

first female premier of Alberta, member of the Alberta Progressive Conservative party, from

2011 and 2014, and Rachel Notley, the second female premier of Alberta, who is a member of

the Alberta Neo-Democrat party, from 2015 to 2019. Notley has done far more for women and

gender equity than Redford (Bashevkin et al., 2019, pp. 239). For example, under the NDP

government, the number of women at the legislative assembly caucus and cabinet increased, and

pro-equality policies were adopted (p. 244).

Both descriptive and substantive forms of representation are needed, but for two very

different reasons:

> More women in power are needed to meet the needs for symbolism, justice, political
>
> equality, and legitimization of the political system, but more feminists are also
>
> needed—women and men—so that the needs, demands and interests of women find
>
> expression and satisfaction within the political arena. (Bashevkin et al., 2019, p. 398)

Ultimately, both types of representation relate to a fundamental democratic right embedded in

the "Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees equality of women and men"

in elected office (p. 398). Within the framework of local politics, democracy was described by

Neverauskas and Tijūnaitienė (2007) as "a form of governance based on collective decisions"

(p. 33), of which women have not always been a part. This is even more visible in local politics,

a concern which has been raised over the last two decades (LeSage & McMillan, 2010, p. 87).

Put simply, overcoming the under-representation of women in elected office is essential from a

descriptive, substantive, and democratic perspective. However, as Dahlerup and Freidenvall

(2005) revealed, "Feminist research has shown that women in politics do make a difference, but

also that women politicians, to a large extent, adapt to the existing norms of the political

institutions" (pp. 42-43).

Gender, gender parity, gender balance, gender equality, and gender equity. There

are fundamental distinctions to make among popular terms when discussing gender. First, *gender*

is a social and cultural construct that associates specific roles, responsibilities, expectations, and

privileges with specific gender. These constructions of the ideal woman or man can differ from

one society to another and are re-created over time. Sex, however, is a biological characteristic:

one is born either male or female or, in some rare cases, both (Government of Sweden, 2007,

p. 67). In politics, the term *gender parity* has gained in popularity in recent years, particularly in

countries concerned with the perpetual under-representation of women in leadership positions.

Gender parity and gender balance are used interchangeably (Idowu, Capaldi, Zu, & Das Gupta,

2013, p. 1195). Both terms are associated with the descriptive representation of women in

political office, noted at the beginning of this chapter, as well as gender stereotypes (Dolan &

Sanbonmatsu, 2009, p. 420), which are discussed further under Women's Challenges in Politics.

Gender equality, from a contextual aspect, is a multidimensional concept that varies in

time and space and generates opportunities for women for self-determination, by considering the

broad spectrum of everyday life situations (Wängnerud & Sundell, 2012, pp. 102-103). This term

is concerned with the relationship between women and men and the power they hold to shape

society and their own lives. Practically speaking, this term implies the idea of overcoming the

gender gap by ensuring fair conditions for both groups, based on the ideal that all men and

women are equal (Government of Sweden, 2007, pp. 66-67). Within the context of the Canadian

government, the term gender equality is more commonly used when discussing the effort made,

through a feminist approach[8], to empower women and girls to build a more peaceful and stable

society for all (Affairs Canada Global, 2017, p. 23). Gender equality is about equality of

opportunity, which is held up in opposition to *equity,* as a concept that is about equality of

outcome, and it is in this latter context that one can examine the disparate numbers of women

elected to office versus number of elected counsellors as a whole.

Gender equity is concerned with equality of outcome, and equity is measured by a direct

comparison of the number of women candidates who ran in a given election, and this is

compared with the percentage of elected women, compared with the total number of elected

positions. This is the metric used in the UN SDG 5.5.1b, about improving on the numbers of

women elected to municipal office (Berevoescu & UN Women, 2019). The challenge for

advocates is that women's poor showing in elections can be explained away and interpreted

through the lens of established tradition, custom, religion, culture, and role in the family, usually

to the detriment of women's equity. Thus, as noted in Chapter One, equality is the end goal, but

this can only happen when there are role models in all positions. This is the role of equity as a

necessity and the means to get to equality (Pipeline, 2018). While gender equality has been the

previously preferred terminology with the United Nations since 1995 (Cameron, 2018, p. 152),

the use of the approach of equity has come about in the last year, as it has become clear that

without role models and encouragement, women will continue to lag substantially in being

presented in elected municipal councils (Berevoescu & UN Women, 2019). Furthermore, the end

goal of equality means equal access to the resources (Japaridze, 2012, p. 19). As this study

highlights women's descriptions about their candidacy and election run for local office, the term

"under-representation of women" is used to avoid confusion for the reader.

---

[8] There are many different types of feminism. However, the author of this source, the Governement of Canada, uses the term "feminist approach" in a broad sense (Affairs Canada Global,2017), avoiding to articulate a particular perspective of feminism.

Women's Challenges in Politics

To provide a pertinent and accurate answer to the main research question of this inquiry, it was first necessary to examine the typical challenges identified by scholars. To facilitate the understanding of the many difficulties women faced in entering politics, these were organized under two main sub-topics: (a) intrinsic challenges and (b) extrinsic challenges. However, all difficulties falling in one or the other category were, to some extent, interrelated, because exploring women's political exclusion and/or inclusion focuses on "a combination of social, economic, cultural and political reasons" (Jalalzai & Krook, 2010, p. 11) that are all tied together and influence women, both on the individual and the macro level.

Intrinsic challenges. The under-representation of women on municipal council is due to a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic challenges. This section focuses on the former. Thus, for this literature review, intrinsic challenges refer to numerous factors affecting women, such as mindsets, attitudes, roles, responsibilities, status, family ties, knowledge, attributes, and confidence in their political abilities. Two studies, one conducted in the US in 2001, investigating the continued under-representation of women in US politics, involving 4,000 male and potential female candidates (Lawless & Fox, 2012), and one conducted in Canada in 2013, evaluating the proportion of women elected to the Canadian House of Commons between 1974 and 2011 (Thomas, 2013) indicated that women were less inclined to seek elected positions, as they did not feel adequately qualified to meet the position requirements (Lawless & Fox, 2012; Thomas, 2013). Additionally, they saw politics as "a male-dominated career" (Thomas, 2013, p. 226) and confirmed Megyery's (1991) earlier study that showed women were more likely than men to think that politics was too complicated. In her review article, Thomas (2013) further specified that Canadian women also lacked beneficial attributes, such as self-confidence and

public speaking skills, and they had access to more restricted professional and social networks compared to that of men. As Thomas stated, women were "significantly less likely than men to participate in unions, business associations, and sports associations" (pp. 225), where they could have made valuable, politically-oriented connections.

A shortfall in campaign finances (Tolley, 2011, p. 588) was a recurrent challenge found in the literature and was tied to women's reduced network (Cohen, 2016, p. 37). Yet Thomas (2013) argued that women were as effective at raising campaign funds as men (p. 228). Despite this perspective, seven years later, in Edmonton, fundraising remains a significant challenge for women running for municipal office. The latter view triggered the need to explore the matter among the participants.

Furthermore, not having enough support from a partner (Briggs, 2008) or being a single parent (Thomas, 2013) led women to take on, by default, the role of primary caregiver of children. In several reports, women were indeed still seen too often to be the primary caretakers inside the home (Lawless & Fox, 2012, p. 15; Thomas, 2013, p. 222). As Thomas (2013) continued, women "perceive that family responsibilities pose one of the greatest barriers to their participation in politics" (p. 223). In other words, they were continually facing internal "role conflicts that affect their decision to seek political office" (Newman & White, 2012, p. 110), placing them in a "double bind" (Thomas, 2013, p. 224). Nevertheless, being the primary caretaker of children was deemed a temporary challenge, especially when women have fewer children. In short, according to the available literature, Megyery's (1991) findings remain salient: having children was considered a reason for delaying women's entry into politics (p. 30), but it did not stop them from entering at all.

In summary, these intrinsic challenges could very well explain why women "are less likely than men to consider running for office, … [why they] are less likely than men to run for office … [and why they] are less likely than men to express interest in running for office" (Lawless & Fox, 2005, p. 147). Nevertheless, the studies explored for this literature review mostly discussed federal and provincial politics, not municipal politics. Therefore, there is a need to see if these challenges also apply in a local context, such as Edmonton.

Extrinsic challenges. For this literature review, extrinsic challenges refer to numerous factors coming from "outside" an individual, such as norms, beliefs, cultures, electoral systems, and laws and regulations. Additionally, in this section, research related to the extrinsic challenges specific to municipal political parties have been excluded, as most Canadian cities, including Edmonton, adhere to a non-partisan electoral system (LeSage & McMillan, 2010, p. 65), consequently eliminating quota system-related matters. Indeed, a quota system is only effective from a descriptive perspective (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005, pp. 41-42) and does not present uniform effects on women's substantive representation (Krook, 2007, p. 385).

Gender socialization influenced the political ambition of women (Lawless & Fox, 2012, p. 17). Gimenez, Monson, and Preece (2016) suggested that this was possibly due to the persistence of conventional family structures and dynamics, especially in certain areas of American society, which remain significantly traditional[9] (p. 26). Paxton and Hughes (2014) took this idea further, indicating that when "cultural values, traditions, socialization, and the media imply that men—not women—are the better political actors, then women may come to assume that their political participation is not appropriate" (p. 122). Although "voter attitudes change

---

[9] In this quote, the term traditional is understood as both, sex stereotypes of femininity and masculinity towards political leaders and gender roles in the family sphere, in which women are in charge of child-rearing and running the household.

slowly over time," as affirmed by Brown (1994, p. 8), the traditional values that affect

women/girls in the private sphere persist in the political arena, in the form of election bias and

stereotypes that work against them (Lammers et al., 2009, p. 193). In other words, the gender-

based socialization and views that are still imbedded in North American culture were perceived

to influence women's decisions to consider running for office. Consequently, to further

comprehend this issue within a local Canadian context, the survey included questions about

political ambition, gender socialization and bias, as well as the media.

Provincial political parties and other key stakeholders influencing the democratic

representation of women in municipal politics also play a role in women's political participation.

According to Arscott, Tremblay, and Trimble (2013), a party on the centre-right was unlikely to

open the conversation about the under-representation of women in politics, and a significant

political and cultural shift or an electoral reform would have to happen to obtain gender parity in

politics (p. 51). In Alberta, the Conservatives had been in power for 43 consecutive years

(Gerson, 2015) before being defeated in 2015 by the NDP (The Canadian Press, 2015; Wood,

Henton, & Howell, 2015). Only then did the status of women and their under-representation in

politics become part of the political agenda. More specifically, Alberta's then-new premier,

> [Rachel Notley] appointed Alberta's first gender-balanced Cabinet [and created] the
>
> Alberta Status of Women ministry. [Notley also] established gender parity on
>
> government agencies, boards and commissions [and] launched the *Ready for Her*
>
> campaign [an online resource guide] to encourage more women to get involved in politics
>
> and run for office, [especially at the municipal level]. (Alberta's New Democratic Party,
>
> n.d.)[10]

---

[10] The NDP has recently updated their platform and the quote mentioned here can no longer be found.

While the NDP was in power in Alberta, more women ran for municipal office: There was a 2% increase between the 2013 and 2017 municipal elections. For instance, "In Calgary, the number of women candidates increased by 122 per cent (from nine to 20 women), and Edmonton saw a 41 per cent increase (from 17 to 24 women)" (Government of Alberta, 2019c, p. 22). In other words, the NDP demonstrated a real interest in overcoming the under-representation of women on city councils across the province.

In their *Status of Women 2018-2019 Annual Report*, the Government of Alberta (2019c) indicated that "in the Calgary and Edmonton municipal races, the increased number of women candidates resulted in an additional woman councillor in each city" (p. 22). This, perhaps, misrepresents the actual progress being made. Indeed, no research was available to assert, or argue,) that more women running for office necessarily led to more women winning and sitting in office, at least in the case of the last municipal elections in Alberta. Thus, the high number of women running correlates with the implementation of the *Ready for Her* online resource guide (Government of Alberta, n.d.-e), but no research has investigated the possible correlation between the two. The potential linkage was addressed in the present survey and in the interviews with the candidates, who had a chance to reflect on the utility of the *Ready for Her* online resource guide. However, I was concerned I would find a reiteration of Maillé's (2015) perspective on educational programs to help women access the political sphere. In her report, Maillé argued that in both Canada and the United States, programs have existed for more than a decade, some for more than twenty years. Within the same period, statistics on the election of women to office revealed that little substantial progress has been made. The absence of visible results could bring women's groups, and perhaps ministries who intervene in the field of women and politics, to move in different directions (Maillé, 2015, pp. 16-17). Simply put, my study was

designed to probe beneath the surface of such casual correlations and hear from women candidates themselves about what was useful for them in their candidacy for election, as well as assessing the relevance of the *Ready for Her* online resource guide and other educational initiatives. This allowed for an insider look at the actual progress of women in local politics in Edmonton and, thereby, enlightened the CMSW's future decisions.

The electoral system and regulations can also impact women's chances of accessing political office. Spicer, McGregor, and Alcantara (2017), for example, stated that in a non-partisan electoral system, the size of an electoral district challenges women (p. 16). Kushner et al. (1997) expanded on this, suggesting that "in the absence of regulation limiting the number of terms city councillors can hold, incumbency is often perceived as a challenge for women seeking office because the majority of incumbents who are likely to be re-elected [are] men" (p. 12). However, as Spicer et al. pointed out that the presence of incumbents in the race does not necessarily affect the electoral prospects of women (p. 16). The incumbency obstacle may be overestimated. According to Miller (2013), "Voting for incumbents when well-being is high is [only] a sensible rule-of-thumb for voters who cannot reliably connect the dots between political actions and outcomes" (p. 75). Thus, the advantage of being an incumbent, as said by LeSage and McMillan (2010), may only lie in their ability "to attract funds not usually available to challengers" and in the existing name recognition, which is reinforced during their mandate (p. 63). As there is no firm consensus among scholars regarding the impact of incumbency on women's access to political office, the survey addressed this gap by asking participants if they viewed it as a challenge during their campaign.

Finally, fundraising/donations being regulated by provincial laws is an important aspect of the electoral system in place. For instance, Bill 23: An Act to Renew Local Democracy in

Alberta was passed on December 5, 2018 "to limit campaign contributions, ban corporate and union donations and improve transparency and accountability" (Government of Alberta, 2020b, para. 3). This lack of financing regulation in the electoral system until 2018 may have played a significant role in helping incumbents (LeSage & McMillan, 2010, p. 63). Future research on upcoming elections and the incumbent effects will shed new light on this popular extrinsic challenge.

Besides socialization, provincial parties, and the electoral system and regulations, it is crucial to mention the presence of stereotypes characterizing women, which are reinforced by the media. Stereotypes and gender bias associating men with political leadership persist in politics, whereas women "are evaluated differently than are men in comparable pursuits" (Thomas, 2013, p. 225). Paxton and Hughes (2014) corroborated this, asserting that women faced prejudice because leadership was seen as a masculine skill (p. 90). Thomas (2013) went on to say that "voters tend to prefer masculine to feminine traits when evaluating candidates for high political office … [and still define women] by what they lack: femininity and specific masculine traits" (p. 225). Yet in this critique, Thomas makes sweeping assertions without regard for the specificity of who the voters being referred to are. Nevertheless, this perceived incongruity between men and women's gender roles in leadership positions was unfavourable to the latter and made it more difficult for them to become leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p. 573).

Furthermore, this negativity towards women leaders, which contributed to reinforcement of gender-biased leadership stereotypes, was perpetuated in media coverage of politics (Thomas, 2013, p. 226). Here again, Thomas is making sweeping generalizations of media that have become increasingly polarized and fragmented. At this point in time, it is necessary to identify the specific media market for any given media form, making it more difficult to simply say "the

media" as a whole increase the challenge for women running for office. Put simply, the ability and possibility of women to attain political power was deemed closely related to what people thought about women and their place in society. Therefore, according to various researchers, a culture constituted by gender-based social norms and stigma remained an essential challenge for women to obtain political power (Paxton & Hughes, 2014; Bashevkin et al., 2009). Despite the changes in electoral systems, laws and regulations, and the implementation of Notley's *Ready for Her* campaign, disparity still prevails, and the challenges women face when campaigning to enter office can deter many from trying.

In conclusion, women faced extrinsic challenges at the cultural, ideational, and social levels, as well as at the organizational and institutional levels. Each of these challenges affected both the supply of female politicians: "those that increase the pool of women with the will and experience to compete against men for political office" (Paxton & Hughes, 2014, p. 100), and the demand for female politicians: "characteristics of countries, electoral systems, or political parties that make it more likely that women will be pulled into office from the supply of willing candidates" (Paxton & Hughes, 2014, p. 100). As suggested by Jalalzai and Krook (2010), these challenges showed that gendered power dynamics continue to be at play (p. 18) in all layers of society, in both the private and the public spheres. Overall, intrinsic and extrinsic challenges built upon one another to create complex dynamics that did not impact each woman with the same intensity, but certainly contributed to the under-representation of women as a group. This first part of the literature has provided some points of reference that guided the interviews conducted in this study to fill in the gaps.

Overcoming the Under-Representation of Women in Politics

To continue providing a pertinent and accurate answer to the main research question of this inquiry: "How might the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women (CMSW) support female candidates in the 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections," it was necessary to explore the existing ministries, initiatives, and not-for-profit organizations engaged in overcoming the under-representation of women in politics. To facilitate the understanding of the various stakeholders and their respective actions, these were organized into four contexts: (a) general, (b) federal, (c) provincial, and (d) municipal. Throughout this section, the reader will find brief overviews regarding what is missing from these initiatives, thus, outlining the gaps established by previous peer-reviewed studies.

General context. Canada-wide, there are two critical organizations working towards fair representation of women in elected office: Equal Voice (2019), a well-established non-governmental organization dedicated to having more women elected to office at all three levels of politics); and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (n.d.-b), an advocacy group which is working towards closing the gender gap in municipal office. These organizations have developed what have become immensely popular training programs that are aimed at overcoming the under-representation of women in politics. This is achieved through a mainstream feminism approach that focuses on addressing intrinsic challenges, such as women's lack of confidence, campaign experience, networking skills and exposure, and not political structures that could be the fundamental cause (Maillé, 2015, pp. 16-17). Maillé (2015) pointed out that these organizations should perhaps consider shifting their tactics, as using a feminist approach could imply their programs assume that women do not possess the predisposition for politics (pp. 16-17). Spicer et al. (2017) further stated that the impact of these courses is questionable, considering the fact that women are still under-represented at all three levels of politics (p. 16).

Federal context. At the federal level, Women and Gender Equality Canada, a department formally called Status of Women Canada (Government of Canada, 2020), work towards advancing equality for women, including women's leadership and democratic participation through the government-wide implementation of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) (Government of Canada, 2018), similar to that of the CMSW (Government of Alberta, n.d.-c). Through the 'Funding' link of the Women and Gender Equality Canada website, a Women's Program is mentioned "to achieve the full participation of women in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada" (Government of Canada, 2019, para. 1). However, no calls for proposals were available. Support from local organizations is also needed (Cowper-Smith et al., 2017, p. 12), as the under-representation of women in municipal office is recurrent across Canada (Breux et al., 2019, p. 177; Cowper-Smith et al., 2017, p. 5). Inequality in politics needs to be moved to the forefront of the political agenda in the federal government, not addressed and then set aside as it appears to be now. Without the continued support of the state, the lack of parity for women is likely to persist.

Provincial context. In Alberta, the current initiatives of the CMSW that support gender parity on the city council are limited. Besides the *Ready for Her* online resource guide, an online guide for women running for municipal office (Government of Alberta, n.d.-e), no other resources were found to be available to women running or intending to run, for local office. Furthermore, this guide was not directly accessible through the CMSW website but, instead, was found through a link on the *Elections and Governance* webpage (Government of Alberta, n.d.-a). Moreover, the *Women in Leadership and Elected Office* page indicated that the Government of Alberta works with organizations towards gender parity (para. 1), though it does not explain how and why. The relevance and effectiveness of this resource has not been studied and is, therefore,

addressed in this current survey. In addition to the *Ready for Her* online resource guide, the CMSW was found to offer one-time funding to not-for-profit and charitable organizations through the Alberta Status of Women Community Grant Program for various projects and activities, including those aimed at increasing women in leadership roles and democratic participation (Government of Alberta, 2019c). However, recent changes to the funding criteria have left municipalities out of the grant stream. In other words, future women candidates' challenges and needs are unlikely to be addressed by government programs and funding. Non-governmental organizations may be the key stakeholders in overcoming the under-representation of women in local politics.

Municipal context. In Edmonton, three organizations work towards helping women entering politics: Women's Initiative Edmonton (2019), Equal Voice, and Parity YEG, all of which focus on facilitating educational events for women intending to run for office (Parity YEG, n.d.-b; Stolte, 2016a). Initiatives developed by these bodies address only one of the several solutions identified by the recent studies of Cowper-Smith et al. (2017), which are "encouraging and promoting men to encourage women [to run for office] … applying a gender-lens and intersectional lens to organizations, …Assistance with campaign signs and posters … a 1-800 help line for women running as candidates" (p. 11).

Thus, although the City of Edmonton experienced a record number of women running for office (Stolte, 2016b), only two women were elected for the 12 councillor positions (City of Edmonton, n.d.-b). Therefore, there is a need to assess the relevance and effectiveness of educational programs grounded in problematic assumptions, in which women are perceived as responsible for the challenges that arise, despite their willpower. There is also a need to hear directly from former women candidates regarding what would have helped them get elected.

Such exploration can inform stakeholders, such as the CMSW, and influence the funding

decisions for future educational programs or initiatives.

In summary, while ministries', organizations', and local initiatives' focus were on

popular educational programs, these were not necessarily effective in helping women in getting

elected (Maillé, 2015, pp. 16-17). Overcoming the under-representation of women requires a

different approach, one which distances itself from women's intrinsic challenges (Cohen, 2016,

p. 36) and seeks answers based on the bigger picture. As part of my study, I inquired as to which

solutions the participants saw as being the most effective in ensuring that women are elected to

office.

Women's Diversity

To provide a pertinent and accurate answer to the main research question of this inquiry,

it was first necessary to examine diversity issues facing women candidates in the election

process. The focus of this section is diversity as perceived from a scholarly perspective, which

includes (a) visible minority women and (b) gender-based analysis plus. Each will be discussed

in detail in this section.

Visible minority women[11]. According to a study conducted in Ontario by Spicer et al.

(2017), "Both women and [visible] minorities are systematically under-represented at all levels

of government in Canada … [but] women and visible minorities are no less inclined to run for

office than the rest of the population" (p. 16). In heterogenic countries like Canada, this type of

gender inequality relates to various factors, including multiculturalism, immigration, and

ethnicity (Kovačević & Šehić, 2015, p. 151). A recent study conducted in Edmonton by Khakh, a

graduate student at the University of Alberta, showed that a third of the female population of

---

[11] Often now referred to as BIPOC persons (Garcia, 2020).

Edmonton are members of a visible minority or claim Indigenous status (Parity YEG, n.d.-c).

Khakh noted that there was no evidence to date that Indigenous women or of visible minority

were ever elected to Edmonton City Councils (Parity YEG, n.d.-c). More generally, province-

wide demographic data on municipal candidates are nonexistent (LeSage & McMillan, 2010, p.

65). Both gaps are addressed in my study through several questions. Furthermore, the

methodology of my study takes into consideration the matter of diversity, and it will be discussed

later.

      Gender-based analysis plus (GBA+). Lastly, the GBA+ analytical tool has been used to

advance gender equality since 1995 within the federal and provincial governments (Government

of Canada, 2018), but not outside of government settings. It has also been implemented for two

decades; assessing its efficacy is a key step to ensure that new practices are discussed (Findlay,

2019, p. 521). Although its effectiveness is not formally addressed in my study, the interview

and survey questions I used were all developed through the lens of GBA+ principles, going

beyond biological criteria (i.e., sex) and socio-cultural differences (i.e., gender) and include

various identity characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical

disability (Government of Alberta, n.d.-b).

Chapter Summary

      Presenting findings from the available literature, this chapter offered insights into how to

achieve parity in public office and identified gaps in the knowledge that need to be addressed.

This chapter covered four topics:

1. Key theoretical concepts, in which descriptive, substantive, and democratic

   representation were discussed, as were gender, gender parity, gender balance, gender

   equality, and gender equity.

2. Women's challenges in politics, evaluating both intrinsic and extrinsic challenges.

3. Overcoming the under-representation of women in politics was investigated in a general context of government and non-governmental initiatives that address the problem and then, specifically, in the contexts of federal, provincial, and municipal government.

4. Women's diversity, during which visible minority women and Gender-Based Analysis Plus, were reviewed as well.

In Chapter Three, the methods I used to investigate the under-representation of women in local political circles are presented. The causes of this problem are also examined, and possible solutions to rectify this situation are discussed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, I will begin by presenting the theoretical framework, explain the data collection methods, and discuss the procedure for data collection. I will then explain the composition of my inquiry team and their role in this study. This is then followed by the Study Conduct section, which includes details of the interviews and survey. The final sections cover data analysis, ethical implications, proposed outputs, contribution and application of the findings of this study.

Theoretical Framework and Methodological Approach

The inquiry I have conducted was primarily inspired by action-oriented research and aimed to help the Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women (CMSW) develop new learning and understanding regarding the challenges that deter and hinder female candidates from running for office on city councils. The theoretical framework for this study was informed by the Beckhard and Harris's (2009, p. 2) change management model (CMP) and the action research engagement (ARE) model, which both fall under the umbrella of action-oriented research (AOR). Other helpful lenses in this inquiry included feminist theory[12] and intersectionality, all of which are situated within the field of qualitative research. More precisely, the Beckhard and Harris report, which offered a general and straightforward approach to organizational change, guided the development of the research question and sub-questions, while the "Action Research Engagement model (ARE)" (Rowe, Graf, Agger-Gupta, Piggot-Irvine, & Harris, 2013, p. 20), provided a cyclical structure from which to extract key principles to build and adapt a specific inquiry process. Feminist theory informed the development of questions in both the interview and the survey. Finally, CMO, ARE, and AOR principles enabled this inquiry

---

[12] The author recognizes that Feminist theory this is a huge and diverse field. For the purpose of this thesis, the term "Feminist theory" is used in a broad sense for academic work related to women's equality.

to connect the CMSW to the community, as both stakeholder groups are interrelated through the

Government of Alberta's (n.d.-e) *Ready for Her* online resource guide.

Action-oriented research. Action-oriented research (AOR) is a form of inquiry valuing

deep collaboration among researchers and study participants, using straight forward methods to

collect data (Small, 1995, p. 950). A benefit of AOR is that, all action-oriented researchers not

only make their findings available to the participants but also ensure that these findings are

understandable, by using clear and straightforward strategies (Small, 1995, p. 950). These

researchers use both quantitative and qualitative inquiry methods, but there is a significant

"proclivity toward qualitative methods [because of] [...] the greater ability of these methods to

actively involve participants" (Small, 1995, p. 950).

The ARE model includes the alignment of stakeholder perspectives on what to do next by

involving a cyclical process that leads to organizational change in nine steps, going from

readiness for change to a transition zone and a change action cycle (Rowe et al., 2013, p. 20).

More practically, it enables the identification of an issue, the creation of a vision, goals and

strategies, and the commencement of actions to pursue change collaboratively and

democratically (p. 6). The strength of this approach is the ability it provides to shift the mental

models (i.e., attitudes, perspectives, knowledge, and values) of the members of an organization

by generating "meaningfulness, clarity and commonality of purpose, motivation, and

commitment for change" (p. 19). Through this approach, research participants develop a better

understanding of the need, direction, and strategies for change by initiating the co-creation of an

organizational change action plan, which simultaneously generates a deeper engagement. In the

case of this inquiry, the findings of both the interview and survey were used to inform the

CMSW, with the intention of leading to changes of an internal, yet public, tool: the Government

of Alberta's (n.d.-e) *Ready for Her* online resource guide. Simply put, the ARE model enables change by sparking transformation at three levels: personal, team, and system. In my inquiry, I combined the key principles of this model with a community-focused inquiry to spark change within the organization based on community realities.

This current study was informed by Rowe et al.'s (2013) AOR method to highlight the experiential knowledge of participants considered unique and inaccessible (Small, 1995, p. 950). Therefore, in working directly with former female city councillor candidates, valuable insights were gained regarding the challenges women face in local politics, which may deter them from running and making it to council.

Feminist theory[13]. The theoretical framework of this research was informed by Oren and Press' (2019) contemporary feminism theory, in which feminism was described as a diverse and global social force concerned with women injustices and challenges of today (pp. 1-2). However, it was not solely centred on gender, as "gender is intermeshed with other aspects of social life" (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 156), aspects which were considered in this study. It was indeed essential to add an intersectionality component to the feminist aspect of this inquiry (Oren & Press, 2019, p. 5). This social perspective on feminism echoed the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) policy and research tool used internationally "that helps to identify who benefits and who is excluded from an organization's decisions" (Government of Alberta, n.d.-b, para. 1), which includes factors such as "sexual orientation, ethnicity, geography, faith, income, gender identity and gender expression" (para. 3). In a government's commitment to advancing the equality of all people who identify as women, and with seeing how race, class, and other forms of difference affect women's equality, CMSW adhered to GBA+. More specifically, it worked

---

[13] The author recognizes that Feminist theory this is a huge and diverse field. For the purpose of this thesis, the term "Feminist theory" is used in a broad sense for academic work related to women's equality.

with the Government of Alberta to include it in policies, programs, and legislation across government entities (para. 2).

In summary, this inquiry was framed by feminist theory, intrepretated in a broad sense, and intersectionality, a concept that can be seen "both as an academic frame and … a practical intervention in a world characterized by vast inequalities" (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013, p. 807). The intersectionality aspect of this inquiry was essential as "the notion that gender cannot always be considered as the primary mode of oppression" (hooks, as cited in Oren & Press, 2019, p. 5).

Summary. The hybrid approach to organizational and community change used for this inquiry fell under the theoretical framework of feminist theory, in its broad sense, and intersectionality. It was also informed by action-oriented research principles and, more specifically, two action research models (CMP and ARE). This combination of methodological approaches allowed for a high level of engagement from the organizational partner and the participants, which reinforced the process for personal, team and system change. As Smith, Kempster, and Wenger-Trayner (2019) noted, "the greater the degree of commitment and participation, the more abundant and multifarious are the social-learning engagements" (p. 21). This was also the case for the transformations within oneself and, consequently, that too of the organization and community. Lastly, the engaged aspect common to all these methodologies will be reinforced during the data-sharing phase, which was not included in the scope of the project presented in this thesis and is presented in further detail in Chapter Five.

Data Collection Methods

As Small (1995) stated, "Most action-oriented researchers are interested in sharing their findings with participants and stakeholders, [and that] there is a preference for strategies that are

descriptive, straightforward, and easily understood" (p. 950). In line with this, this project

utilized two conventional investigative research methods: (a) a short, structured one-on-one

interview (see Appendix A); and (b) a paper survey (see Appendix B).

The brief interview served as a prompt for the survey that followed and allowed me to

capture "a more spontaneous exchange between interviewer and interviewee" (Gubrium &

Holstein, 2002, p. 225). Furthmore, this approach enabled me to note spontaneous thoughts and

responses from the participants that would have been harder to document had I only used a paper

survey.

The short, structured, one-on-one interview had five questions (Question 1[14] to 5): three

open-ended and two closed-ended. All answers were recorded during the interview, using a

cellphone recording application, and transcribed at a later time. Rapley (2012) suggested that an

interview was an engaging and (extra)ordinary practical action method, as it could "have strong

resonances on interviewees' lives and can remain strong in people's memories" (p. 17). Rapley

also noted that interviews were highly engaging for the interviewer because they placed them in

a decidedly connective state of mind, whereby, as the interviewer listened, it was possible that

the stories they heard started relating to previous work, interviews, and ideas, and so forth

(p. 18). This helped build a broader trajectory of analytical work in the mind of the interviewer.

In a sense, the interviewer saw "the interview as a center of coordination, as a moment when

different trajectories and social worlds weave together, … [as a] complex space … of cultural,

---

[14] Question 1: Did you run for city councilor or mayor in the 2017 Edmonton Election?
Question 2: During the 2017 Edmonton election process, did you encounter any challenges?
Question 3: Looking back, were there other challenges that you did not identify at the time that, in your opinion, impacted your election results in the 2017 Edmonton election process?
Question 4: In your opinion, do you think that the challenges in questions 2 and 3 were directly related to the fact you are a woman? Please, explain your selection.
Question 5: Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the challenges you faced in the 2017 Edmonton Election?

interactional, political, and theoretical work" (p. 18), but also as an engaging and possibly unique

moment that could leave an unforgettable footprint in the lives of researchers and participants.

Starting with short, in-person interviews echoed the foundational principals of the theoretical

framework and prepared the participants emotionally and intellectually for the survey, enabling

them to ease into the more intense and challenging experience.

To build momentum, the survey immediately followed the interview. It served as "a

simple research design, not for the study of social structures and processes, but for the study of

diversity in a [small] population" (Harrie, 2010, para. 56) to capture the uniqueness of each

participant's journey in their race for municipal office. The survey was divided into five sections:

SECTION 1: Background Information.

SECTION 2: Challenges and learning opportunities during the 2017 Edmonton Election.
SECTION 3: Access to resources and support.

SECTION 4: Demographic background.

SECTION 5: Network opportunities.

Another consideration for this inquiry was where to conduct the interviews and carry out

the surveys. As locations could be meaningful to participants and are part of the knowledge

production (Herzog, 2012, pp. 12-13), the site for both the interview and the survey was chosen

carefully. Hence, the data collection took place at different times and places to accommodate

each participant, to reduce the perception of power-over relationships, and to place them in a

comfortable environment of their choice.

For this inquiry, the answers collected established a baseline understanding of what

participants faced, experienced and thought during the 2017 Edmonton Election period. The

purpose of both methods was data collection through engagement during the inquiry and beyond.

The last section of the survey allowed participants the opportunity to join an exclusive WhatsApp chat group called *I Will Win in 2021*, in which the participants and the researcher would share thoughts, strategies, and events related to the 2021 Edmonton Election. This initiative will continue beyond this initial engagement described here. The intentions for where this will resume will be described in Chapter Five.

Project Participants

   To select participants in my inquiry, I started by establishing a list of women who ran for office (for mayor or as councillors) in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election. As an official list of candidates was no longer available on the City of Edmonton's website, I developed a contact list from the official results of the 2017 Edmonton Election (see Appendix C), which was available online (City of Edmonton, n.d.-b). In total, 24 women ran for either mayor or councillor positions. Twenty-three of these 24 women were found on social media, and only these were able to receive the invitation to participate in the inquiry. The criteria for participants of both methods (interview and survey) are presented in Table 1. After establishing the list of participants, I reached out to them, and only six expressed interest in participating in my study (one of whom was re-elected).

Table 1

Project Participant Selection

Method	Participants	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	No. of participants involved	Selection Criteria
Interview	Former women city councillor	• Have run in the 2017 Edmonton Election for	• Former candidates who ran for any elections other	Min: 5 Max: 23	Be available to join the

	candidates	either mayor or city councillor • Self-identified as a woman when filing for nomination for the 2017 Edmonton Election	than the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election • Not self-identified as a woman in the 2017 Edmonton Election • All individuals who ran for school trustees in the 2017 Edmonton Election		inquiry process between October 29, 2019 and November 12, 2019
Survey	Former women city councillor candidates	• Have run in the 2017 Edmonton Election for either mayor or city councillor • Self-identified as a woman when filing for nomination for the 2017 Edmonton Election	• Former candidates who ran for any elections other than the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election • Not self-identified as a woman in the 2017 Edmonton Election • All individuals who ran for school trustees in the 2017 Edmonton Election	Min: 5 Max: 23	Be available to join the inquiry process between October 29, 2019 and November 12, 2019

Inquiry team members. To facilitate the design of this study, an inquiry team was formed. All members of this team signed the inquiry team member letter of agreement (see Appendix D). Their primary duties consisted of reviewing draft questions and providing an external set of eyes to help recognize research biases in question design. Members were chosen using an intersectionality approach to ensure diversity of gender, social class, religion, and other cultural backgrounds.

The inquiry team comprised Dr. E., a university professor with extensive experience in research using surveys, and a pilot testing team of two individuals: one a school trustee of a francophone school district; the other, a gentleman merely having a particular interest in local politics.

Dr. E. was a Muslim woman from Morocco who came to Edmonton over 10 years ago after obtaining her PhD from an American university. She worked as a professor at the University of Alberta and was also the director of graduate studies of Faculty St. Jean. Mr. T. was originally from Québec and worked as a teacher and later a principal within the francophone school board of Edmonton, of which he then became a school trustee. At the time of the election, he started being secular and, consequently, ran for a school trustee position representing public schools in that same school board. Besides school politics, he worked as an independent contractor. Finally, Mr. P., the third member of the inquiry team, was a Jewish man who studied political science and worked in finance but continued to hold an avid interest in politics.

In the team, Dr. E. was a key member due to her extensive experience in designing qualitative and quantitative surveys as well as in data collection and analysis. Consequently, she provided valuable commentary on the interview and survey questions design and facilitated their improvement.

Pilot testing team. The pilot testing team was deliberately diverse in order to receive valuable feedback from individuals with different backgrounds and perspectives. Both members of this team received a paper version of the survey to complete and critique. The recommendations the pilot team made further helped to improved the survey.

Study Conduct

The inquiry began after receiving approval of the ethics proposal by the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Board and shortly after receiving feedback from the inquiry team.

I, alone, contacted potential participants, accessing their contact information, collecting their responses, and following up on email invitations. All communications and absences of responses were recorded on the contact list. Invitations were sent through social media or, where social media was not an option, by email, where addresses were publicly available. Each invitation contained a short introductory text (see Appendix E) and three attachments: (a) the information letter (see Appendix F), (b) the consent form (see Appendix G), and (c) the withdrawal form (see Appendix H). Those who did not respond were prompted a second time, seven days later. Seven former candidates responded positively to the invitation; of these, only six made arrangements to meet for the interview and survey. The inquiry process took place from October 29 to November 12, 2019. After the inquiry process, another former candidate expressed the desire to participate in the study. However, she was not included in the study, as it was past the initial deadline.

Although I intended the study to be conducted in coffee shops, some participants requested that, for practical reasons, I met them in their offices. Meetings varied in times and went from 15 minutes to one hour. Each session started with an informal discussion, leading to the interview and survey. The interviews were recorded using a cellphone recorder application. Even though the interview was planned to last no more than 10 minutes, some participants became very engaged in the process, and I decided to let them to continue beyond this time and express their thoughts for as long as the needed. The survey immediately followed the interview and took approximately 20 minutes for the participants to complete.

Roughly a month after the interviews and surveys were conducted, I sent each participant a transcript of their recording for them to review. Some participants made clarifications of their previous answers, which were then included during the analyses. Others requested that some parts of the transcript be removed, which I did accordingly. Overall, the iterative process of analysis lasted several weeks. Transcribing the interviews into the data analysis system took, by far, the longest time, which I had not anticipated. Thus, familiarizing myself with NVivo data analysis was, at first, challenging; with this I was most grateful for the support I received from the NVivo librarian specialist. Findings and recommendations were shared with my capstone partner through a written document provided by email and during a phone call meeting, enabling her to consider potential changes regarding the *Ready for Her* online resource guide.

After this thesis defence, findings will be shared during a community conversation event to take place in Edmonton and in collaboration with the participants and my capstone partner. Participants may also be involved in co-authoring articles for local newspapers, magazines, and journals to continue the sharing of knowledge. Moreover, I planned to take further action through the WhatsApp, *I WILL WIN*, chat group, mentioned towards the end of the survey. The intention of this was to maintain communication with participants to help them each build their plan of action to serve as a guide in the upcoming election process[15]. All these post-defence actions are discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

Data Analysis and Validity

To avoid concerns of bias in the data analysis and ensure the validity of my work, I followed a rigorous process as set out by Stringer (2007), who affirmed that "checks for trustworthiness … are designed to ensure that researchers have rigorously established the

---

[15] To avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest, my capstone partner was not added to this chat group.

veracity, truthfulness, or validity of the information and analysis that have emerged from the research process" (p. 57). It was, thus, that Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Stringer, 2007) suggest[ed] that trustworthiness can be established through procedures that assess the following attributes of a study" (p. 57). The validity of my work was established according to these principles in the manner as described under credibility and transferability. Additional discussion in this section will cover dependability and conformability; qualitative analysis: theme coding; and quantitative analysis: building tables.

Credibility (the plausibility and integrity of the study). As Stringer (2007) stated, "A brief interview or conversation does not provide sufficient information to enable people to develop the deep-seated understandings that are the necessary outcomes of the research process … [the process should provide] all participants with extended opportunities to explore and express their experience" (pp. 57-58). Consequently, participants engaged in a short interview followed by a paper survey and then had the opportunity to edit their own interview transcripts. This clarification process ensured that their transcripts represented their perspective and experiences adequately (p. 58).

Transferability (the possibility of applying the outcomes of the study to other contexts): Stringer (2007) also explained that:

> Unlike traditional quantitative or experimental studies that enable the outcomes of
> research to be generalized to contexts and groups other than those involved in the
> research, action research outcomes apply only to the particular people in places that were
> part of the study. (p. 59)

Therefore, under the upcoming section Scope and Limitations of the Inquiry, it is clearly stated that, as Brown (1994) noted, "There are obvious limits to a single city study, … [thus,] in the

traditional sense, statistical generalization to a larger population of cities is not appropriate" (p. 8). Thus, no generalization should be made from this study, which solely focused on six out of the 24 women who ran for Edmonton City Council. However, the collaborative aspect of this study was certainly transferable, as was shown in Cowper-Smith et al. (2017)'s work on women and politics at the local level.

Dependability[16] and conformability.[17] The data analysis followed several steps, starting with the manual transcription of the audio recordings (i.e., interviews). Each transcript was entered onto separate Microsoft Word documents, titled with the date and time of the initial meeting, and sent to the respective participants for review. Participants had the opportunity to modify the content by requesting the addition or removal of information. Answers from the paper surveys were transcribed into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and analyzed according to the nature of the question, as indicated below. Open-ended questions were placed in separate Microsoft Word documents for coding; closed-ended questions led to the making of another Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to ease the counting of answers.

Qualitative analysis: Theme coding. The qualitative analysis process used an iterative method of thematic analysis through an inductive approach. Indeed, Smith and Davies (2010) suggested that for the first cycle of coding, which "involves identifying and categorizing the parts of the data that … [are] believe[d to] … be useful for [the] research" (p. 9), the researcher was to start by reading all transcripts to familiarize themselves with the content prior to assigning any specific coding (p. 9). After reading all the statements, I exported them onto a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis tool, called NVivo (produced by QSR International), and used a systematic inductive approach to coding. This allowed me to collect empirical data with more

---

[16] Research and procedures that are clearly defined and open to scrutiny.

[17] Evidence that the procedures described actually took place.

flexibility, in a sense "that questions can change, and new questions can be introduced at any time, as … the researcher becomes familiar with the context and the phenomenon that is studied. … Contribut[ing] to an understanding of the reality" from the bottom up (Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010, p. 8). I built nodes (a NVivo software term to name theme categories) as I was reading statements from both the survey and the interview answers. Similar ideas were aggregated under the same node. In total, 107 nodes were created, which I then organized into two categories: (a) challenges and (b) strategies (see Appendix I). These two categories were the first broad themes, which were later deconstructed according to their relation to concerns raised in the literature.

I then started to rank the nodes by conducting a frequency analysis of each to form themes, then considered the first nine themes that emerged, spontaneously, for both the challenges and the strategies. In some cases, a theme occupied both categories. More specifically, nodes were placed into an Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and I used a colour-coded method to classify them manually by order of frequency, from the most recurrent to the least recurrent, to discover the most and the least frequent challenges and strategies (see Appendix J). Subsequently, I compared these findings with those from the literature review.

Quantitative analysis: Building tables. For the closed-ended questions, I created tables manually. Where possible, I compared these tables with findings from the literature review as well as tables that I produced using the public data of the 2017 Edmonton Election and computer data analytics of the *Ready for Her* online resource guide, provided to me by my capstone partner.

In summary, to ensure the quality and validity of my data collection and analysis, I focused on the trustworthiness measures reported by Stringer (2007) of credibility,

dependability, and conformability. Allowing full disclosure and the flexibility for the participants

to edit their transcripts further improved the trustworthiness of the study and addressed any

ethical issues that may have arisen from the inquiry. Further ethical considerations are dealt with

in the next section of this thesis.

Ethical Implications

The ethical implications of my study, according to the three Tri-Council Policy

Statement's core principles (Government of Canada, Panel on Research Ethics, 2018) are

presented in this section. With regard to the *concern for welfare*, this study presented no risks for

the participants, and no participants were from obviously vulnerable populations. Participants

who may be considering running in the 2021 Edmonton Elections may benefit from this study.

As for the respect for a person's core principles, all potential participants had read and

understood the information letter before engaging in the inquiry process. I remained at their

disposal by phone, email, or in-person to deal with any concerns or questions they had about the

inquiry process. Those who took part in the interviews and survey signed a consent form on a

voluntary, free, and informed basis, without manipulation, undue influence, or coercion. Before

taking part in the study, all participants received an information package containing the

following documents: an information letter, a consent form, and a withdrawal form. The

participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time in the information letter. In the

event that participants wanted to withdraw, they would have had to complete the withdrawal

form and send it, or hand it in in person, to the researcher, myself. The participants were also

informed that any data collected during the inquiry would not be removed following the

completion of the interview and survey. Lastly, anonymity was guaranteed throughout the entire

study, as the surveys and interview recordings did not contain any form of personal identification.

Proposed Outputs

Beyond this written thesis, and the successful completion of my Master of Arts in Leadership, the inquiry process presented in this chapter has several outputs. Firstly, in accordance with action-oriented and action research principles, a written report (i.e., executive summary), containing a conclusion and several recommendations based on the findings of this inquiry, will be created. This output format is best suited for my capstone partner, the director of the Gender Equality and Advancement and Training division of the CMSW, as it can be easily shared and/or presented internally. I might also be requested by my capstone partner to give an online presentation at the CMSW.

To mobilize action throughout the study, I have communicated regularly with my capstone partner and kept her informed of my progress. To support my capstone partner, I will remain fully available if she wishes to conduct an action-planning event following the conclusion of the study. Secondly, the materials will be developed, and several actions implemented after the thesis defence, which are described in further detail in Chapter Five.

Contribution and Application

The research presented herein, for the purpose of my Master in Leadership, was valuable, primarily, to my capstone partner and my sponsor organization for two reasons: firstly, it enabled them to gain knowledge of the current under-representation of women in Edmonton City Council without any financial cost; and secondly, the findings may have led to some modifications of the *Ready for Her* online resource guide in good time for the 2021 Edmonton Election. The inquiry was also valuable to the research participants, especially those who wish to co-write articles for

local newspapers and magazines as they will have their ideas and names promoted, addressing the lack-of-name-recognition challenge mentioned by certain candidates. Additionally, by joining the WhatsApp chat group, the participants will be entering a network of women candidates intended to help them succeed in the next election. Finally, throughout this research inquiry, the participants have had the opportunity to reflect on their past political experience, a stepping-stone to building a personal action plan tailored to win the next Edmonton Election.

I hope that this research will contribute to the existing, but scarce, knowledge of the under-representation of women in municipal politics in Alberta and will bring a more timely perspective on the challenges female candidates faced in the last Edmonton Election.

Chapter Summary

The theoretical framework and methodology that informed this study, including action-oriented research, feminist theory, and intersectionality, were introduced in this chapter. Issues of data collection and analysis methods, project participants, study conduct, validity, ethical implications, proposed study outputs, potential contributions, and the application of the results were also described.

The findings and conclusions of this inquiry are presented in the next chapter, and the relation to the published literature reported in Chapter Two is explored.

Chapter Four: Inquiry Project Findings and Conclusions

In this chapter, the findings and conclusions of my research inquiry on the challenges women face to enter public office are presented, as well as suggestions as to what can be done to facilitate their success. The scope and limitations of the inquiry are, thereafter, discussed.

To recap, the main research question asked for this study was: "How might the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women (CMSW) support female candidates in the 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections?" Three subquestions allowed for further in-depth research into the inquiry question:

1. What were the challenges in their candidacy as identified by women who ran as a candidate in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election?

2. What recommendations do women candidates who ran in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election have for women running in the 2021 municipal election?

3. What do women candidates who ran in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election think of the resources that were provided by Status of Women Alberta and Equal Voice North Chapter, and that they accessed during their campaign?

To answer the main question, I conducted a short, one-on-one interview (see Appendix A) and a paper survey (see Appendix B), as described in Chapter Three: Methodology. Out of 24 eligible participants for this study, six joined the inquiry process. To respect participants' anonymity, I coded participants' identities on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the letters *A* to *F*. For the interview, I used a template with five questions (Questions 1 to 5). Depending on the participant, I sometimes needed to give clarifications or prompts. All answers were recorded, transcribed as one paragraph, and sent to each participant for them to check, edit, and if they deemed necessary, remove or add information. Two participants asked me to remove either a

sentence or some of their words, which, of course, I did—doing this did not affect the meaning

and value of the transcript. Three participants were satisfied with their transcripts and did not

request any modification. One participant never returned her approval to use her transcript;

therefore, it was not included in the analysis. I then conducted a theme coding analysis of the

remaining five transcripts ($n = 5$) and all open-ended questions from the six surveys ($n = 6$) using

the NVivo software. For the paper survey, each of the 19 questions was identified with numbers

from six to 24[18], for the questions 17, 18, and 24, each had one-sub question coded, respectively,

as 17.1, 18.1 and 24.1.

The findings presented in this chapter come from both the interview and the paper survey

responses. Where possible, I compared my findings with those of other researchers identified in

the literature review, presented in Chapter Two, with a Web Analytics Report, and with

statistical data related to the last three Edmonton elections, which are available on the City of

Edmonton website. This process resulted in the emergence of two main findings, which

correlated with the main question as well as the subquestions. Each of these main study findings

are discussed separately, yet a brief overview is provided in this section. In addition, several

other minor findings emerged, which I grouped under an introductory section named

"Demographics, background information, and future engagement interest." All of these findings

formed the basis of the conclusions of this study and are presented towards the end of the chapter

under the section "Study Conclusions." As this inquiry was primarily action-oriented, these study

conclusions will lead to the write up of an executive summary for my capstone partner, the

Director of the CMSW. This chapter ends by discussing the scope and limitations of this inquiry.

Study Findings

---

[18] Question 1 to 5 refer to the interview questions.

Based on analysis of participant input from the interviews and survey of this research, three main findings are discussed in this section. The findings presented start with the demographic information gathered, followed by the three emergent findings.

1. Participants articulated nine challenges, the top three critical ones being fundraising, being a new candidate, and the volunteers.

2. Participants have eight clear recommendations for future women candidates: (a) focus on fundraising, (b) build a solid team of volunteers, (c) be involved in the community, (d) develop a solid platform, (e) develop strategies for social media, (f) know your allies, (g) be optimistic and persistent in overcoming challenges, and (h) start early.

3. The vast majority of participants accessed the *Ready for Her* online resource guide, which was developed under the NDP governement, and attended the events organized by Equal Voice North Chapter; however, they did not find them very useful.

Demographics, background information, and future engagement interest. In this section, I discuss the results of four questions.[19] All six participants were 25 years old or above, with one falling within the range of 25 to 34 years old, two within 35 to 44 years old, one within 45 to 54 years old, and two being over 55 years old. The highest level of education completed when filing for nomination in 2017 of four of the participants was a bachelor's degree; for one, it was a master's degree; and for one, it was a doctoral degree. While campaigning, all of the women were either married or in a common-law relationship. Two also declared themselves as being a primary caregiver of an elderly parent, a sick partner, or a child. In short, participants

---

[19] Question 19: What was your age range when you filed for nomination in 2017?
Question 20: What was the highest level of education you had completed when you filed for nomination in 2017?
Question 21: What was your marital status while campaigning?
Question 22: While campaigning, were you a caregiver of a family member? (e.g., taking care of an elderly parent, a sick partner, a child…).

were all educated, mature women. Although they were all in a relationship, only a minority (*n* =

2) of them endorsed the role of primary caregiver while campaigning.

Additionally, what were traditionally seen as "women chores" around the home were not

mentioned in any of the five transcripts analyzed, which reduced some of the intrinsic challenges

identified in the literature review with regard to household responsibilities and taking care of

children (Briggs, 2008, pp. 8-13; Lawless & Fox, 2012, p. 15; Thomas, 2013, pp. 222-223).

However, when talking about challenges, Participant *E* ended the interview by emphasizing the

importance of having a supportive partner and said, "They [(women)] need to pick their partners

better … because it is not a woman's responsibility to keep the house running; it's everyone's

responsibility. So, if a woman feels that way, then she should re-evaluate her partner picking."

Although participants were not directly asked if they had children, one participant (*D*)

mentioned having a child while campaigning in 2017 and that "it became part of [her] brand,"

instead of a challenge. Participant *E* had a different experience, referring to a past election. At

that time, she felt discriminated against by individuals, including other women, because she was

also a mother, but she did not give up because, as corroborated by Participant *A*, "the idea that

you have to choose between motherhood and a life in politics is absurd." As described in the

literature review, although being placed in a "double bind" (Thomas, 2013, p. 224) was not fair

to female candidates wanting or having children, these were common "role conflicts that affect

[women's] decision to seek political office" (Newman & White, 2012, p. 110). In conclusion, for

two women candidates, having children did not prevent them from running for office, and none

of the five transcripts showed that women were being challenged by household duties or feeling

placed in a double bind.

In the literature review, intrinsic challenges referred to numerous factors, such as

mindsets, attitudes, roles, responsibilities, status, family ties, knowledge, attributes, and

confidence in their abilities, which I explored in both the interview and the survey. Question 1[20]

of the interview and Section One (specifically, Question 6[21]) of the paper survey looked at the

outcome of the 2017 Edmonton Election as well as participants' mindsets (Questions 2[22], 3[23] and

4[24]). The results of the survey showed that only one of the participants was elected to City

Council, whereas two placed second, one placed third, and two were not in the top three. Yet, all

of them ran with the intention of winning (Question 7[25]). When reflecting on their desire to run in

the 2021 Edmonton Election (Question 8[26]), three of the participants indicated that they were

planning to run again, and two were undecided at the time of this inquiry. Only one of the six

participants specified not wanting to run in that election. Question 4 showed that four

participants would run with the intention of winning.

In summary, most participants ($n = 5$) were above 35 years of age and had at least a

bachelor's degree ($N = 6$). All of them ($N = 6$) were in a relationship, and only a minority ($n = 2$)

stated endorsing the role of primary caregiver while campaigning. Most of these women ($n = 5$)

were planning to run for office again and with the same intention to win, even though most of

them were not elected following their 2017 campaign, which demonstrated a high level of

motivation and a positive mindset towards politics. Nevertheless, their experience during the

---

[20] Question 1: Did you run for city councilor or mayor in the 2017 Edmonton Election?

[21] Question 6: What was the outcome of your 2017 electoral campaign?

[22] Question 2: During the 2017 Edmonton election process, did you encounter any challenges?

[23] Question 3: Looking back, were there other challenges that you did not identify at the time that, in your opinion, impacted your election results in the 2017 Edmonton election process?

[24] Question 4: In your opinion, do you think that the challenges in questions 2 and 3 were directly related to the fact you are a woman?

[25] Thinking back on your campaign, did you file for nomination with the goal of winning the election?

[26] At this point in time, are you thinking of running for office in the 2021 Edmonton Election?

2017 election taught them where they made misjudgements, how to advance their skills and abilities, and how to address other factors which prevented them from winning votes.

This summary concludes the demographics, background information, and future engagement interest section. The upcoming sections provide a detailed qualitative analysis focusing essentially on thematic findings.

Finding One: Participants articulated nine challenges, the top three critical ones being fundraising, being a new candidate, and the volunteers. To explore the first sub-question related to the challenges participants experienced in their candidacy during the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election, they were asked three questions during the interview and three in the survey about the challenges they perceived having faced while campaigning. To help the reader navigate this complex section, I start by presenting briefly the nine most recurrent challenges experienced, and then I dive further into the top three critical ones.

Most recurrent challenges. Participants experienced many challenges. This section discusses the nine most recurrent ones. Questions 2[27], 3[28], 5[29], 10[30], 11[31], and 12[32] explored challenges faced by the participants. Question 10 served as a prompt in view of Questions 11 and 12 and showed that all participants, save one ($n = 5$), who did not answer that question, believed that they had, indeed, faced challenges that all candidates had to deal with, regardless of their gender. When asked for examples of this, participants reported challenges, such as "compet[ing]

---

[27] Question 2: During the 2017 Edmonton Election process, did you encounter any challenges?Please, specify.

[28] Question 3: Looking back, were there other challenges that you did not identify at the time that, in your opinion, impacted your election results in the 2017 Edmonton Election process?

[29] Question 5: Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the challenges you faced in the 2017 Edmonton Election?

[30] Question 10: When running in the 2017 Edmonton Election, did you face challenges that you believe(d) any candidates, regardless of their gender, would have faced?

[31] Question 11: Below is a list of possible challenges you might have faced during the 2017 Edmonton Election; please, check all that applied to you.

[32] Question 12: Are there any other challenges that you would like to add?

with incumbent" (Participant *A*); "building [a] team [of volunteers], raising money [and] raising [a] profile" (Participant *B*); and facing "universal challenges [for] new candidates," like "fundraising" (Participant *D*). Question 11 presented a list of 29 challenges developed through the lens of intersectionality, 10 were check-marked once, 10 were check-marked twice, and two were checked three times. These two challenges were checked by half of the participants ($n = 3$) and can be combined, as they both refer to fundraising. Therefore, fundraising is the most important challenge they faced.

Included in Table 2 are these most frequent challenges checked marked by the participants from this list and are organized into two categories: (a) intrinsic challenges and (b) extrinsic challenges. Intrinsic challenges presented in Column 1 show that fundraising was a significant issue and that participants presented a negative perception of themselves, in terms of their abilities and competencies, echoing the work of Lawless and Fox (2005, 2012) presented in the literature review. Three types of dominating extrinsic challenges were identified, as shown in Column 2: (a) Presenting attributes commonly associated with minorities, (b) Being "too" young or "too" old, and (c) Belonging to a lower or middle social class. As noted in the literature review, there is much to be done in Alberta to get women from minority groups into municipal politics (Parity YEG, n.d.-c). On the other hand, the literature covered to build Chapter Two did not come across any age or social class-related challenges, thus, perhaps there is a gap in the literature that warrants further exploration.

Table 2

Most Frequent Challenges Check Marked by the Participants During their 2017 Campaign

Intrinsic Challenges	Extrinsic Challenges
Not being able to self-fund my campaign	Having a country of origin other than

(*n* = 3)	Canada (first generation of immigrants) (*n* = 2)
Not having enough connections in the business world who could help me fund my campaign (*n* = 3)	Having a noticeable ethnic, cultural or religious background (*n* = 2)
Not having a comfortable financial situation (*n* = 2)	Having a first and/or last name that is not appealing to voters (*n* = 2)
Not feeling confident enough to become a city councillor (*n* = 2)	Ageism (*n* = 2)
Not feeling qualified enough (*n* = 2)	Belonging to a middle or lower social class (*n* = 2)
Being inexperienced (*n* = 2)	
Believing that, as a woman, I have very little chance of winning against a male incumbent (*n* = 2)	

To this list of 29 challenges, participants had the opportunity to add other challenges (Question 12[33]), half of the participants did and mentioned the following difficulties. For Participant *B*, it was mainly the physical appearance, the lack of "a clear career trajectory," and "not being taken seriously." For Participant *E,* it was the difficulty "for non-incumbents to get media coverage;" and for Participant *F,* it was the lack of "experienced volunteers" and "not [having a] large enough pool of donors and volunteers." Qualitative data from Question 12 were used in the NVivo data analysis as well as all the other open-ended answers of the paper survey and the interview transcript (Questions 2, 3, and 5). Through this analysis and through different methods, I was able to capture the most recurrent challenges faced by the participants.

The results of these analyses, displaying, respectively, the first nine most recurrent challenges experienced by the participants are presented in Table 3.

---

[33] Question 12: Are there any other challenges that you would like to add?

Table 3

Recurrent Challenges Faced by Participants

Challenges	Frequencies of Occurrence in the Narrative
Fundraising	21
Being a new candidate	14
Volunteers	13
Media favouring candidates	9
Negative self-talk	9
The presence of incumbent	7
Public perception of leadership competencies	7
Branding as family friendly, baby	5
Being a woman of ethnic minority	4

A frequency of occurrence in the narrative of at least four was the cut-off point for the challenge

to be included in the top nine list. A frequency of three or less suggested that it was identified by

less than half of the participants and was, therefore, not considered a recurrent challenge.

Overall, as shown in Table 3, the top nine most recurrent challenges were related to difficulties

linked to fundraising, being a new candidate, finding skilled and committed volunteers, getting

media coverage, having negative self-talk, running against an incumbent, facing public

perception of leadership competencies, branding as family friendly, and being a woman of ethnic

minority. Most of these challenges echo the results presented in Table 2.

The main three challenges experienced in 2017 should be addressed as a priority by 2021

by developing and implementing efficient strategies. This suggestion is discussed further under

the recommendation section in the next chapter. These challenges are discussed in more detail in this section.

   Fundraising challenge. The number one challenge identified, fundraising, was linked to Question 15,[34] which addressed participants' views on the correlation between money, gender, and being elected. Although fundraising was a significant issue for the participants, none of them believed that in a non-partisan electoral system a woman running for municipal office in Edmonton could automatically win, if she was to raise more money than any of her competitors. However, half of the participants ($n = 3$) believed it might be possible. In 2017, winning candidates had raised between approximately $50,000 and $110,000, except for two candidates who raised roughly $17,000 each. In nine out of 12 wards, elected candidates were those who showed the highest total campaign revenue; these included the two successful women candidates. The same trend was observed in the 2013 and 2010 Edmonton Elections (see Appendix K). In other words, for the last decade, women who made it to City Council were those who were able to raise the highest amount of money, yet the participants did not necessarily recognise the link between money, gender, and being elected.

   In conclusion, the Campaign Period Revenue disclosure of 2017, 2013 and 2010 Edmonton Elections (see Appendix K) suggested that the success of the female candidates elected was strongly influenced by the fact that they raised more money than any of their competitors in their respective wards. Interestingly, male candidates have sometimes been elected without having to raise more than their competitors. For now, it is possible to conclude that fundraising, the number-one challenge that emerged from the NVivo analysis and Question 15, aligned with both the literature (Tolley, 2011, p. 588) and the data analysis focusing on

---

[34] Question 15: Regardless of the challenges you selected, do you believe that you would have still won had you raised more money than any of your competitors?

campaign revenue of the last three Edmonton Municipal Elections, and showed that, to win an election, female candidates need to fundraise more than anyone else in their ward, at least in Edmonton. Thus, this finding calls into question Thomas' (2013) broad brush generalization argument that "women candidates are as good as their male counterparts at securing campaign funds" (p. 228) and suggests that context differences exist among candidates when it comes to fundraising.

Being a new candidate. When asked about the challenges they experienced during the 2017 Edmonton election, pariticipants had the opportunity to explain their answers in further detail. In these sections, they reported various barriers linked to being a new candidate running for municipal office. Participant *D* was very clear about that fact that:

> There are universal challenges [a] new candidates entering the arena would face, [such as] name recognition, fundraising, etc. [Then she stated] that there are additional challenges for women, and even more so, for women of colour which relates to the public perception of her leadership and competency.

Participant *B* added, "Any newcomer facing an incumbent is going to have issues with building their team, raising money [as well as] their profile." Participant *A* was less specific and simply mentionned, "If you are new in the election process you have to read, learn and understand many new rules and regulations." Overall, participants noted that being a new female candidate leads to more difficulties while campaigning and requires extra efforts to familiarize one's self with all the information related to the campaign. To these difficulties, participants have also mentioned the struggle they experienced with volunteers.

Volunteers. When asked about the challenges they experienced during the 2017 Edmonton election, pariticipants had the opportunity to explain their answers in further detail.

The third most important challenge experienced relates to volunteers. Participant *F* noticed a

"lack of experienced volunteers … [and] not a large enough pool of donors and volunteers." For

Participant *A*, volunteers were key, and she affirmed, "If the team will do an excellent work for

the candidate's name recognition, it [winning the election] may happen." For Participant *E*,

having a strong team of volunteers was crucial, affirming that "money helps, but volunteers

matter more." Although she did not win, she affirmed that her "team had a lot of experience."

   Finding Two: Participants have clear recommendations for future women

candidates. These eight suggestions include: (a) focus on fundraising, (b) build a solid team of

volunteers, (c) be involved in the community, (d) develop a solid platform, (e) develop strategies

for social media, (f) know your allies, (g) be optimistic and persistent in overcoming challenges,

and (h) start early. To explore the second sub question related to recommendations, participants

were asked in Question 13[35] if they had developed strategies to overcome these challenges. Then

Question 14[36] asked them to discuss the top five winning strategies they would share with their

best friend should she intent to run in the next Edmonton election. In this section, I present these

strategies.

   The eight most recurrent winning stategies participants would recommend to their best

friend should she decide to run in the next Edmonton election are discussed in this section (see

Table 4). Answers to Questions 13 and 14 showed that all participants (*n* = 6) have a good

understanding of what needs to be done to overcome the challenges identifed earlier. When

asked for examples of this, participants mostly reported strategies linked to the importance of

focusing on fundraising, building a solid team of volunteers, and being involved in the

---

[35] Question 13: Did you develop strategies to overcome some or all of the selected challenges?

[36] Question 14: Based on your experience, should your best friend run for office in the next Edmonton Election, what are the top five winning strategies you would share with her?

community which aligns with the top three challenges idenfied. In the sections below, I

described the top three strategies in more detail.

Table 4

Strategies Suggested by Participants to Overcome Challenges Faced

Strategies	Frequencies of Occurrence in the Narrative
[Focus] on fundraising	13
[Ensure you have a solid] team of volunteers	11
Be involved in the community	7
[Strategies for] use of social media	5
[Develop] a great platform	5
Know your allies	4
[Develop a] personal willingness to overcome the challenges	4
Start early	4

Focus on fundraising. When asked about the strategies they would share with their best

friend shoulf she run in the 2017 Edmonton election, all pariticipants but one mentionned the

importance of focusing on fundraising. Participants *B* and *E* both respectively stated the need to

"ask everyone for money all the time," "Everyone," and most importantly, to "identify

committed donors early" (Participant *F*). Participants *A's* and *D*'s answers were more detailed.

Participant *A* suggested, "Raise as much money as possible [as] the budget of the winning

candidate in [her ward was around] $80,000." Participant *D* affirmed that "there is research

showing that candidates who raise 3x the funds as their competitors they're likely to win. Funds

are important for a campaign." Participant *F* also suggested that women candidates should "have

savings to contribute [financially]" to their own campaign. To the importance of raising funds

towards their political campaign, participants ackowledged the crucial role of volunteers.

Build a solid team of volunteers. For all participants save two, *B* and *E*, volunteers were

identified as vital to win an election at the municipal level. Participant *A* would recommend her

best friend to "insure [she] can recruit a very high functioning volunteers," and Participant *C*

would suggest to "gather a team of volunteers & advisors in a variety of skills". For Participant

D, the most important is to "have a solid team of people who are willing to do the actual work,

and not just 'strategic' work." Finally, Participant *F*, who had run before, said that her best friend

would need to "identify [who] would be [the] volunteers and get them interested and motivate

them to stay motivated."

Be involved in the community. Except for Participant *F*, all of them would suggest their

best friend to be involved in the community. For Participant *A*, this means "approach[ing] [her]

network [and] to widen its boarders, [and not to hesistate to] approach many strangers."

Similarly, Participant *B* tied community to networking and suggested to "build networks

[through] one to one conversations [doing it] early, often [and in] house meetings." She would

even suggest to "spend time in Council, meeting Councellors [and] in the community." For

participant *C*, "connectedness prior to running [and] get[ing] involved in a variety of community

groups" are key. The importance of being "active in the community" is for Participant *D* a great

way to "build [a] name [as well as an] extensive network." Participant *E*'s answer was also very

practical and stated that being active in the community is a way of "find[ing] an ally to

commiserate with [as having] another woman candidate is very helpful)."

Finding Three: The vast majority of participants accessed the *Ready for Her* online

resource guide, which was developed under the NDP government, and attended the events

organized by Equal Voice North Chapter; however, they did not find them very useful. To explore the third sub question related to educational resources and events offered by two groups of stakeholders, CMSW and Equal Voice North Chapter, participants were asked in Questions 17[37] and 18[38] to discuss the relevance of the *Ready for Her* resource guide and the numerous events organized by Equal Voice North Chapter.

Question 17[39] demonstrated that most participants ($n = 5$) remembered hearing about or accessing the *Ready for Her* online resource, but sub-Question 17.1[40] indicated that half of the participants ($n = 3$) did not find it very useful. Two participants (*C* and *D*) clearly stated that they "didn't use it." According to a Web Analytics Report provided to me by the CMSW, "Google Analytics report[ed] 10,887 filtered (non-GOA traffic) page views for the period of Oct 1/16—Nov 18/19. [The] average time on page [was] five minutes and 16 seconds, [and] traffic has [now] levelled off" (Director, personal communication, November 21, 2019[41]). The limited average time spent on the page suggested that visitors were skimming the page and its resources rather than reading it carefully. No information was provided to me as to how many times the online resource guides were opened or downloaded from the webpage. Participants' opinions on this online resource are discussed in detail in this section.

Overall, the *Ready for Her* online resource guide was deemed not very useful to participants. According to Participant *A*, "The platform gave a basic structure of election process [but] the reading was a bit complicated," while Participant *B* stated, "The resources were good,

---

[37] Question 17: Looking back at the 2017 Edmonton Election, do you remember hearing about or accessing the resources on the *Ready for Her* online resource guide developed by (then) the Status of Women Alberta Ministry?

[38] Question 18: Numerous events were organized by Equal Voice North Chapter and other local organizations to encourage and empower women to run in the 2017 Edmonton Election.

[37] How many of these events did you attend? 18.1. If you attended one or more, how useful were they to you? Please, explain your answer

[40] Question 17.1: If you selected "yes", how useful was it to you?

[41] Capstone partner, CMSW.

… but there were [already] a lot of resources [offered by] Equal Voice [such as] 'Opening the potential,' and much of it was repetitive, focused on process, logistics versus politics. [In fact] nothing talked about navigating [and] organizing power." However, as indicated by Participant *E*, who had campaigned before, this online resource should probably not be removed: "It was a great resource! [and] was useful for newcomers to politics."

Question 18[42] indicated the number of events attended by the participants that were mainly arranged by this organization to encourage and empower women to run in the 2017 Edmonton Election. Four of them attended between one and three events, and two of them attended between four and seven. According to Question 18.1,[43] from this same group, two participants found these events useful, and four of them did not. Although the overall participants' attendance was high ($N = 6$), most of them ($n = 4$) did not find it beneficial, and only one out of the six participants was elected. Overall, their attendance at the event did not help women achieve their goals, though the participants did find that some events were marginally more helpful than the *Ready for Her* online resource guide.

The outcome of these initiatives echoed the perspective of Maillé (2015) on mainstream feminism programs, which supported the development of training programs based on intrinsic challenges, assuming that the fundamental issue lay in "women's individual characteristics (confidence, campaign experience, networking skills, and exposure) rather than … [in] the political structures that might generate exclusion" (pp. 16–17). As Maillé noted, this type of training was popular, but did not play a significant role in helping women get elected. Consequently, it may be necessary to explore other methods and possibly other feminist

---

[42] Question 18: Numerous events were organized by Equal Voice North Chapter and other local organizations to encourage and empower women to run in the 2017 Edmonton Election. How many of these events did you attend?

[43] Question 18.1: If you attended one or more, how useful were they to you?

frameworks to have more women in municipal office.

Study Conclusions

This section is linked to the main question and sub-quesyions of the study, which were centred on findings from the interviews ($n = 5$)[44] and paper surveys ($N = 6$), as well as various components of the literature review. Overall, the study conclusions are aimed at answering the main research question: "How might the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women (CMSW) support female candidates in the 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections?" In this section, each of the two conclusions is supported by a summary comparing participants' experiences and findings from the literature.

Conclusion One: Women candidates face many challenges running for municipal election. Participants noted that due to their inexperience, they faced a mountain of challenges in running for election, particularly for the first time. This includes a lack of a structure or system to help them fundraise, find volunteers, and help them build the critical community network and media profile they need to become elected. The lack of structure, combined with inexperience, is made more complex by social media and internal, self-confidence messages questioning their competency to be running in the first place.

Conclusion Two: Women candidates suggested future strategies to overcome the challenges identified based on their 2017 Edmonton municipal election experience. Focusing on fundraising, but also ensuring to have a few other critical elements in place for their campaign, such as a solid team of volunteers, being involved in the community and knowing your allies, developing a solid platform and strategies for social media, being optimistic and persistent in overcoming challenges, and starting early

---

[44] Six participants did the interview, but only five of them gave me their written consent to use their transcripts for data analysis. Said simply, the transcript of one of the six participants was not analyzed.

Conclusion Three: Current supports need to be improved. Status of Women Alberta (Women's Ministry under the NDP government) and Equal Voice North Chapter did not provide educational resources that met the needs of the majority of the participants.

Participants' Experiences in Comparison to the Literature and Conclusions

Experience One: Women candidates running for municipal election, particularly for the first time, face a mountain of challenges due to their inexperience. This includes a lack of a structure or system to help them fundraise, find volunteers, and help them build the critical community network and media profile they need to become elected. The lack of structure, combined with inexperience, is made more complex by social media and internal, self-confidence messages that question their competency to be running in the first place. As noted in the topic of Women's Challenges in Politics of the literature review, the data collected overall suggested that the under-representation of women is due to a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic challenges. Participants seemed to lack the finances and network, which was identified by both Cohen (2016) and Tolley (2011). However, unlike Thomas (2013) suggested in his study, participants were not constrained by family obligations, low self-esteem, or self-confidence. In fact, the youngest participant saw being a mother as an opportunity to brand herself as a family friendly candidate, which counter argues Megyery's (1991) views on children as a reason for delaying women's entry into politics. Although "voter attitudes change slowly over time," as affirmed by Brown (1994, p. 8), some participants felt that belonging to a visible minority group was a barrier, which echoes the view of Lammers et al. (2009) on election bias and stereotypes that work against women candidates running for office (p. 193). The struggle to find committed volunteers to build a solid campaign team was absent in the literature and perhaps a gap to be addressed in future research.

Experience Two: Women candidates were able to suggest strategies to overcome challenges identified in their 2017 election campaign. Based on their 2017 Edmonton municipal election experience, participants identified the need to focus on fundraising, but also the need to ensure other critical elements are in place for their campaign. Unsuccessful campaign finance efforts were a recurring challenge (Tolley, 2011, p. 588) reported in the literature and was the top challenge experienced by the participants of this current inquiry. Although Thomas (2013) maintained that securing campaign funds was not challenging to women, but the perception that it was persisted. Thus, "women active in municipal politics in Canada argue that increasing resource supports would help increase the number of women in local politics" (p. 228). Campaign revenues of successful women candidates of the last three Edmonton Municipal Elections may show otherwise. Indeed, since 2010, only women fundraising a substantial amount of funds made it to office in Edmonton (see Appendix K).

Fundraising was a complicated matter that was more than a perceived intrinsic challenge; it was also an additional challenge over which the women had little control. As stated in Chapter Two, fundraising and donations are regulated by provincial laws and, until Bill 23 was passed on December 5, 2018, "there [were] no spending limits and no limits to personal donations tendered in municipal elections [in Alberta] (Government of Alberta, 2020b, 2018 Changes section, para. 4), and "this lack of regulation in the electoral system may have] play[ed] a [significant] role in supporting incumbents" (LeSage & McMillan, 2010, p. 63). As outlined in Chapter Two, also several federal, provincial, and local stakeholder groups have been working towards adressing intrinsic challenges through an educational approach (Equal Voice, 2019; Federation of Canadian Municipalities, n.d.-a; Government of Alberta, n.d.-a; Parity YEG, n.d.-b), which is

deemed questionabled by Spicer et al. (2017) and considered inefective by Maillé (2015). Two educational resources accessed by female candidates are also discussed in this section.

Experience Three: Status of Women Alberta (Women's Ministry under the NDP government) and Equal Voice North Chapter did not provide educational resources that met the needs of the majority of the participants. Although the *Ready for Her* online resource guide is an educational tool to help women running for municipal office in Alberta, it targeted the wrong audience. Indeed, it contained basic civic information that was not particularly useful at the level of an actual candidate, especially when candidates are highly educated individuals. As noted in Chapter Two, this tool, like many other programs, focused on developing solutions to address intrinsic challenges, assuming that the fundamental issue lay in "women's individual characteristics (confidence, campaign experience, networking skills, and exposure,) rather than … [in] the political structures that might generate exclusion" (Maillé, 2015, pp. 16-17). Consequently, the impact of such tool was questionable, as women were still under-represented at all three levels of politics (Spicer et al., 2017, p. 16). However, this type of program should not be fully abandoned, as they were seen to encourage the development of political interest and political self-confidence (Thomas, 2013, p. 223), especially among women new to politics. In other words, they contributed to increasing the number of women running for office.

Similarly, participants noted that the *Ready for Her* online resource guide was not necessarily useful to them, which correlated with the average time spent on the page of approximately five minutes (Director, personal communication, November 21, 2019[45]). However, participants saw the value of this online resource for women new to politics, echoing the work of Thomas (2013) about sparking political interest and boosting political self-confidence to

---

[45] Capstone partner, CMSW.

overcome intrinsic challenges (p. 223). Simply put, the *Ready for Her* online resource guide, or

any other educational programs, may be useful to women by encouraging them to run and

facilitating their efforts. Such initiatives may increase the number of candidates, but not

necessarily lead to gender parity on city council, at least in Edmonton.

Scope and Limitations of the Inquiry

This study focused on six out of the 24 women who ran for city council and, as Brown

(1994) noted, "There are obvious limits to a single city study, … [thus,] in the traditional sense,

statistical generalization to a larger population of cities is not appropriate" (p. 8). Therefore,

findings from this study may be neither considered to establish general patterns nor generalized

to represent all women running for city council in Alberta. Instead, this study provided only a

partial and limited understanding of the current under-representation of women on Edmonton

City Council.

Even though the scope of the study was rather small, comparing findings with the

literature review shed new and more local light on what some women candidates experienced

during the 2017 Edmonton Election. Those new insights can be of interest to many stakeholders

involved in the matter, they may open new conversations and, possibly, lead to profound changes

within the CMSW and beyond.

To gain further insight into this phenomenon, this study may be compared with other

studies recently led by two graduate students. One had already published some of her findings on

the Parity YEG website (Parity YEG, n.d.-c), and the other conducted interviews with the same

group of participants as mine and at the same time through the Women's Initiative Edmonton

(2019). Although I reached out to her to meet and share findings, we were not able to find a

suitable date and time for a meeting. Nevertheless, connecting student researchers and

stakeholders is vital to enhance understanding and enact change.

Finally, participants expressed challenges and recommendations that were not always

addressed in the material covered to build this study's literature review. Therefore, it was not still

possible to compare every single question outcome to making a firm deduction.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings of the inquiry and drew conclusions from the five

interviews and six surveys completed by female participants who were former candidates

running for office in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election. The data collected herein were then

linked with those reported in the literature, starting with a section called "Demographics,

background information and future engagement interest" to provide the reader with the

participants' profiles. To ease the understanding of this chapter, several tables were presented to

show the most frequent challenges and winning strategies identified by the participants. Overall,

the results indicated three important findings:

1. Participants articulated nine challenges, the top three critical ones being fundraising,

   being a new candidate, and the volunteers.

2. Participants have eight clear suggestions for future women candidates.

3. The vast majority of participants accessed the *Ready for Her* online resource guide,

   which was developed under the NDP governement, and attended the events organized

   by Equal Voice North Chapter; however, they did not find them very useful.

The implications of this inquiry in the context of the stakeholders and partner

organization are introduced in the next chapter. The recommendations and proposed actions to

move forward towards gender parity in local politics are also presented. The inquiry's

contribution to scholarly learnings and literature are identified, and the future role the project outcomes may play in facilitating women in running for office are described.

Chapter Five: Inquiry Implications

Chapter Five begins with the restatement of this inquiry's main question and sub-questions. Following this, two immediate recommendations, based on the participants' answers and findings backed-up in the literature review, are suggested and discussed. Then, several systems thinking in action were presented to the CMSW and describe possible steps to take, which could facilitate women running for and winning elections to office. These suggested actions are made through the lense of systems thinking as initially mentionned in Chapter One. Practical suggestions to produce a large system change are also presented. The implications of this study are discussed within the organizational context and the academic community. Finally, suggestions in action to the CMSW are made for future inquiries into the under-representation of women in local politics. The chapter ends with a thesis summary.

The main research question asked for this study was: "How might the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women (CMSW) support female candidates in the 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections?" Three subquestions allowed for further in-depth research into the inquiry question:

1. What were the challenges in their candidacy as identified by women who ran as a candidate in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election?

2. What recommendations do women candidates who ran in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election have for women running in the 2021 municipal election?

3. What do women candidates who ran in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election think

    of the resources that were provided by Status of Women Alberta and Equal Voice

    North Chapter, and that they accessed during their campaign?

The interviews and surveys conducted during this inquiry answered the main question as

well as the sub-questions. From the collected data, three immediate findings, conclusions, and

experiences were drawn, and recommendations were made. Finally, this chapter ends by

presenting suggestions in relation to a system-thinking approach to social change. These

practical suggestions were solely based on literary research and communications with my

capstone partners, which enabled me to build a richer executive report. This report was intended

to spark new conversations and possible actions within the CMSW. For confidentiality reasons,

this report was not added to the appendices of this thesis.

Recommendations

I now present the immediate recommendations that stemmed from the findings,

conclusions, and experiences of the issues behind the under-representation of women in local

office. Two recommendations are presented for the organization to consider, which are supported

by suggestions put forward by this study's participants.

Recommendation One: CMSW make it a priority to find a way to help women

candidates address their biggest challenge: fundraising. Fundraising was the number one

challenge identified by the study participants. While local stakeholder groups identified in

Chapter Two can continue to support women candidates at the individual level, CMSW's

(Capstone partner for this project and also key provincial stakeholder) involment with the

fundraising challenge can be at the systemic level. More specifically, CMSW should find ways

of monitoring the effect of Bill 23, which was implemented in the aftermath of the 2017

municipal election and addresses, among other things, fundraising issues that women face when running for office. Perhaps there should be a fundraising limit for all candidates, and/or the province should provide a minimal amount of campaign support to all candidates to ensure candidates' messages are able to be promoted. In line with this challenge, further research to compare the campaign revenues and expenses of candidates of both genders is needed. Additionally, this research needs to focus on a broad range of Albertan municipalities, if not all, in order to build a more comprehensive understanding of the fundraising challenge across the province. More generally, local research is needed in this field.

   Recommendation Two: Revise the content of the *Ready for* Her resource guide according to women candidates' needs and host events relevant to them. Educational tools, such as the *Ready for Her* online resource guide or educational programs ran by Equal Voice, may be useful to women new to local politics and should not be fully abandoned. This is because "leadership programs that target the development of political interest and political self-confidence may help some women overcome an individual level barrier to political participation" (Thomas, 2013, p. 223) and possibly increase the number of women running for office. Nevertheless, further research is needed to explore the real applicability and effectiveness of the law-of-average principals in the field of women and politics. One matter that is still very much relevant is "the [past] push … to recruit more female candidates for the 2017 Municipal Election in Edmonton" (Stolte, 2016b, para. 2), in order to overcome the gender imbalance in Edmonton City Council. This initiative for the 2017 election poses the question for the future: Do educational tools lead to more women running for office, and if so, does having more women candidates automatically lead to more women being elected?

In the system analysis section of Chapter One, I indicated that CMSW was my capstone partner for this research project. The inquiry framework presented in Chapter Three was about engaging subject-matter experts (i.e., the women who ran for election the last Edmonton Municipal Election) in action-oriented methods (i.e., survey and interviews). The inquiry was aimed at helping the CMSW develop new learning and understanding regarding the challenges that deter and hinder female candidates from running for municipal office and the aspects of the election campaign that women candidates would change in future. The process of this inquiry involved both engagement of participants and a review of the literature on women running for public office. The combination of the empirical findings and recommendations from my research participants combined with elements based on my literature review and my reading of the systems literature. In the section below, I discuss suggested actions, for which I had to dive in the philosophical aspects of conducting change.

System Thinking in Action

The CMSW may want to consider supporting female candidates in the 2021 Municipal Election by working towards change at both the individual and the systemic level. Each is discussed in detail in this section

At the individual level. As noted in the study findings presented in Chapter Four and the literature review presented in Chapter Two, intrinsic challenges on city council were mostly addressed by non-profit and charitable organizations, subject to funding availability. If the CMSW wishes to support these stakeholders, it must avoid providing funding to mainstream North American programs that "have existed for more than a decade and some for more than twenty years… [and for which the] absence of visible results" is a fact (Maillé, 2015, pp. 16-17).

At the systemic level. It is important to avoid supporting solutions that "address symptoms rather than the underlying problems" (Stroh, 2015, p. 24) or that focus on "conventional or linear thinking [because it] is not suited to address the complex, chronic social and environmental problems [that leaders] want to solve. These problems require system thinking, which differs from conventional thinking in several important ways" (Stroh, 2015, p. 26). Consequently, the suggestions below, which take place at the systemic level, have been organized according to Stroh's (2015, p. 26) five System Thinking Principles for Social Change:

1. The relationship between problems and their causes is indirect and not obvious.

2. We unwittingly create our problems and have significant control or influence in solving them by changing our behaviour.

3. Most quick fixes have unintended consequences: They make no difference or make matters worse in the long run.

4. To optimize the whole, we must improve *relationships* among the parts.

5. Only a few key coordinated changes sustained over time will produce large systems change.

Senge (2006) stated, "All organizations sit within larger systems—industries, communities, and larger living systems" (p. 342). Consequently, organizations need system-thinking leaders, and followers, who can see "the larger patterns and [their] own part in creating these patterns" (p. 343) by shifting their mental models, including their attitudes, perspectives, knowledge and values. For the CMSW, this means that they must start looking at solutions to the under-representation of women through four different lenses and doing so with Stroh's (2015, p. 26) specific questions in mind.

The relationship between problems and their causes is indirect and not obvious. As noted under Recommendation Two, local stakeholders and the NDP, through the *Ready for Her* online resource guide, worked towards encouraging women to run for local office to overcome the gender imbalance on City Council, based on an assumption that more women running for office automatically led to more women being elected. Not only does this approach need to be questioned and further investigated, the CMSW needs to also consider the following questions when reflecting on the desired outcome of the 2021 local elections:

1. How might Alberta reach an equitable outcome of women elected to municipal civic office at the optimum UN SDG 5.5.1b proportion of 33% of elected officials as women?

2. How might a more equal gender representation of elected officials advance gender equality in Alberta?

3. How does an equity focus on helping women become elected help advance gender equality in Alberta?

4. How might developing civic engagement skills and competencies in local politics aimed at visible minority women advance gender equity and, ultimately, equality in Alberta?

We unwittingly create our problems and have significant control or influence in solving them by changing our behaviour. The sparse and often out-dated academic knowledge about women and municipal politics and the limited research conducted in Alberta suggests that past initiatives to overcome the under-representation of women in politics did not take advantage of social research done on the role and representation of women in politics. Most importantly, "no demographic, province-wide data exist on municipal candidates, making it difficult to

comment on who gets elected and who does not" (LeSage & McMillan, 2010, p. 65). By

focusing on encouraging research on demographics of municipal candidates, the CMSW could

develop adequate future directions, actions, and strategies and reduce the perpetuation of

traditional assumptions regarding challenges that deter women from accessing elected office

positions. However, demographic research on municipal candidates would probably not be in the

CMSW's scope (S. G[46]., CMSW, personal communication, March 2, 2020).

Most quick fixes have unintended consequences: They make no difference or make

matters worse in the long run. Instead of supporting financial quick-fixes, such as those of the

educational programs led by non-profit organizations, the CMSW may want to consider

enhancing collaborative research opportunities, in line with a key message delivered at the 37th

Annual Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women

in 2019. During this assembly, "ministers also highlighted collective progress in strengthening

data collection and information sharing regarding women and girls and LGBTQ2S Canadians"

(Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat, 2019, para. 3). To do so, the CMSW, and

perhaps other ministries, could work towards enabling "community-university partnership

research [which] is specifically tailored to respond to the direct needs and challenges of the

community, in an approach that values their knowledge and culture" (Tremblay & Hall, 2014,

p. 389). In fact, communities, universities, and governments will need to work with and learn

from each other and focus on developing "solution-oriented knowledge [which] is the gold

standard for community impact" (Tremblay & Hall, 2014, p. 402). This type of collaborative

research would emerge from community-based research, which, in turn, would help the CMSW

---

[46] For confidentiality reason the full name and position of this individual cannot be provided.

offer more nuanced support, as the ministry would gain a better understanding of the very

different municipal cultures within the province of Alberta.

In order to optimize the whole, relationships among the parts must be improved.

Collaborative research initiatives can be the glue that would bring stakeholders together. To do

so effectively, the CMSW can bring forward incentives to key stakeholders, such as graduaate

student researchers and the UCP government's philosophy.

Graduate student researchers. The CMSW can develop, on its webpage, a section that

promotes current funding opportunities available to student researchers to support inquiries on

women and politics, such as the Persons Case Scholarship (Alberta Student Aid, 2019), the

Mayor Andrée P. Boucher Memorial Scholarship, or the Canadian Women in Municipal

Government Scholarship (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, n.d.-a). Thus, this may be done

in partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education, which can suggest a more visible

location to promote these opportunities as the CMSW's website is not often seen by graduate

students (S. G.[47], personal communication, March 2, 2020).

To avoid duplication of work and to enable student researchers to build upon each other's

work, this webpage could let the students upload brief descriptions of their work and later video

presentations as well as infographic material, based their graduate or post-graduate research

work, along with a list of recommendations intended to inform decision makers. This

informative material could also take the form of a series of student research presentations.

The UCP government's philosophy. Being financially responsible is one of the core

principles of the UCP government (Alberta's United Conservative Party, n.d.), and in that

prospect, limiting human resources and financial costs are key to moving forward. Therefore,

---

[47] S.G. is a colleague of ▮▮▮▮▮▮, capstone partner.

opting to support research, as presented in this chapter, would enable key stakeholders to envisage long-term and innovative solutions through the lens of recent local Canadian research and prevent the CMSW from financially supporting initiatives for which results are not guaranteed or have not yet been proven successful.

Practical Suggestions to Produce Large System Change

Only a few key coordinated changes sustained over time will produce large systems change. Based on participants' input and the literature review, six practical suggestions are put forward for the organization to consider.

1. Make background profiles of candidates public and investigate ways to carry the GBA+ tool into media organizations.

2. Implement a short, ongoing online survey for visitors to take when visiting the *Ready for Her* online resource guide.

3. Limit the number of terms of city councillors or decreasing the length of their terms.

4. Encourage women, through the *Ready for Her* online resource guide, to build a network in the non-profit sector and in small parties.

5. Support the size of electoral districts revision to overcome the under-representation of women on city councils.

6. Encourage the general public to volunteer for women running for city council.

Practical suggestion 1. As noted in the literature review and also by some participants ($n = 2$), "Both women and minorities are systematically under-represented at all levels of government in Canada, … [but] women and visible minorities are no less inclined to run for office than the rest of the population" (Spicer et al., 2017, p. 16). In this regard, two practical actions can be considered: (a) Request that the background profiles of future candidates running

in municipal elections be publicly available, to allow student researchers to conduct further investigations about intersectionality and local politics; and (b) Explore ways to carry the GBA+ tool into media organizations. As Breux et al. (2019) affirmed, "Gender bias exists in the media treatment of candidates" (p. 169), despite study participants referring to media for favouring certain candidates over others, and social media was only mentioned as a strategic tool, not a challenge.

Practical suggestion 2. It would be helpful for student researchers, stakeholders, and, possibly, decision makers to have access to data revealing the effectiveness of educational tools implemented in Alberta to overcome the under-representation of women in local politics. Such data could be collected through the *Ready for Her* online resource guide by applying a short, ongoing online survey for visitors to take.

Practical suggestion 3. Although researchers have debated about the negative impact on incumbency, study participants identified it as a challenge. Therefore, if the CMSW were to take the side of Kushner et al. (1997), who suggested, "In the absence of regulation limiting the number of terms city councillors can hold office, incumbency is often perceived as a challenge for women seeking office, because the majority of incumbents who are likely to be re-elected [are] men" (p. 12). Therefore, limiting the number of terms of city councillors needs to be considered, as that could improve the quality of representation (Mitchell, 1991, p. 745). Decreasing the length of the term to change the number of years served (McNitt, 2010, p. 41) may be another potential solution. Although such a decision would be out of the scope of the CMSW, it could advocate for it with their Municipal Affairs colleagues (S. G., CMSW, personal communication, March 2, 2020) or by supporting municipalities to open the debate among its councillors, as the City of Calgary recently did (Meghan, 2018).

Practical suggestion 4. Networks and financial support are key to entering politics. In fact, as Cohen (2016) inferred, "It is the close-knit and male-dominated networks that lead one to the halls of power ... a dominant political culture ... that does not reflect right now [women's] values nor their preoccupations" (p. 37). Until a major cultural shift occurs, perhaps the *Ready for Her* online resource guide should encourage women to build a network in the non-profit sector and in small parties.

Furthermore, this would help women see these opportunities as training grounds, preparing them for future political endeavours (Cohen, 2016, p. 37). As noted by a colleague of my capstone partner, the challenge with this type of initiative is that there are so few women in positions of power to support, mentor, and/or provide an entrée into the halls of power. It may be more effective to introduce companion materials that encourage men and existing institutions to support women candidates.

Practical suggestion 5. The electoral system and regulations impact women's chances of accessing political office. Spicer et al. (2017), for example, stated that in a non-partisan electoral system, the size of an electoral district presentes challenges to women (p. 16). In early January 2020, the City of Edmonton undertook a community consultation asking Edmontonians to share their thoughts on Edmonton's ward boundaries, as "recent growth in the City of Edmonton caused some ward populations to become unbalanced. [Therefore,] a review is underway to ensure that Edmontonians are represented effectively on City Council in advance of the 2021 Municipal Election" (City of Edmonton News Distribution, personal communication, January 3, 2020[48]). Perhaps the CMSW could offer some input as to how it may be beneficial to female candidates.

---

[48] City of Edmonton News Distribution: PSA - Share your thoughts on Edmonton's ward boundaries, received by Leticia Nadler.

Practical suggestion 6. Women's Initiative Edmonton, helped by the Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton Committee, presented on its webpage a valuable suugestion to the general public of how to overcome the under-representation of women. This suggestion is in line with the second most crucial challenge identified by the study participants: recruiting reliable, committed, experienced, and knowledgeable volunteers. Indeed, it suggested "volunteer[ing] for a candidate or a party … [to] encourage women who are running" (Women's Initiative Edmonton, 2019, "So what," para. 4 & 6). The CMSW, through the *Ready for Her* online resource guide, could help to spread the word by starting a similar message.

Organizational Implications

How I engaged my capstone partner(s), stakeholders, decision makers, and participants in the formulation and development of my inquiry and the findings and draft recommendations produced therein is detailed in this section. Also presented are the processes required and organizational implications for the CMSW, and other stakeholders, to implement the study recommendations.

Stakeholders and the inquiry process. For the duration of this inquiry, I worked with two capstone partners. I met my first capstone partner in person to discuss ideas and formulate the main question and sub-questions of my research. From here, we continued to communicate by email to discuss concepts, strategies, and methodologies, and such until she moved to a different department. Prior to her departure, my former capstone partner introduced me (via email) to her successor, who became my current capstone partner. My new mentor and I communicated mainly by email, but have discussed possible recommendations and organizational implications of my inquiry over the phone. During our conversations, we also discussed what would happen after this inquiry was completed to carry forward this work. We

agreed that I would submit to her an executive summary report containing my findings and

recommendations for her to share with the current Deputy Minister of the CMSW, Lora Pillipow.

This report is to be submitted by the end of the summer of 2020.

　　We also agreed on a "Make it Happen" event (i.e., community conversation), to which it

was decided that the minister of the CMSW could be invited. This public event will be an

opportunity for data-sharing inspired by World Café principles, a collective way of sharing

findings and enabling new conversations through a stimulating democratic process (Jorgenson &

Steier, 2013, p. 390). Additionally, all three groups of stakeholders will be given the opportunity

of co-writing articles for local newspapers, magazines, and journals. Both of these initiatives will

take place after the defence of this thesis.

　　For the community conversation, I have chosen a "Fishbowl liberating structure."[49] This

activity will be facilitated by the researcher, research participants, and possibly, my capstone

partner, to allow everyone involved to openly reflect on their own experiences and journeys as

participants and partner organizations. At the end of this event, the research participants will

each receive a diary journal to help them develop a personal action plan, based on the inquiry

findings, to record their thoughts and experiences regarding their race for municipal office. The

hope is that they will use this journal to continue to reflect on their past—and, perhaps,

future—political journey. For the community conversation attendees, the event will be an

opportunity to gain new insight on women's challenges to access office, by hearing others'

perspectives on these matters, as well as underlining the complexity of those perspectives

(Bunker & Alban, 1997, p. 104). Finally, as the time frame of this study did not allow for a full

---

[49] A Fishbowl liberating structure is "a collection of interaction patterns that allow […] to unleash and involve everyone in a group — from extroverted to introverted and from leaders to followers […]. It is one of 33 Liberating Structures by Leipmanowicz and McCandless that is ideally suited for unleashing […] local wisdom, to identify patterns and to build on them" (Verwijs, 2018, para. 1-2).

cycle of action research (this academic work stopped after the data analysis), after the defence of this thesis and the community conversation, the capstone partner (the director of the Gender Equality and Advancement and Training division of the Ministry of CMSW) will be responsible for the taking actions within the CMWS and for evaluating these actions.

Finally, to further support change, a *WhatsApp group* will be set up by the end of summer 2020 to continue to engage the participants who intend to run for office in the 2021 Edmonton election and to help each of them build their plan of action to serve as a guide in the election process. Participants may also be involved in co-authoring articles for local newspapers, magazines, and journals to continue the sharing of knowledge.

In summary, following on the conclusion of this thesis, this work will continue in numbers of ways: a community conversation event, an executive summary report, a WhatsApp group, and co-authored articles[50].

Implications of recommendations. The main stakeholder in this inquiry, the CMSW, is a department in the Government of Alberta. As such, any decisions or policy/legislative changes suggested by this research would need to be supported and approved by the Province of Alberta Premier and Cabinet.

At this point, the *CMSW's Business Plan 2019–23* (Government of Alberta, 2019a) cannot support most of the recommendations made in this inquiry. However, the business plan is developed annually on the April-March fiscal calendar and is generally released after the budget. The executive summary that will be submitted to my capstone partner in June 2020 could be used to inform the organizational stakeholders prior to any revisions being finalized.

---

[50] If possible, I will present my findings at conferences across Edmonton, in both English and French (at TedX Ualberta (University of Alberta), *Journée du Savoir* (Acfas Alberta), the Forward-Thinking Speaker series (Peter Lougheed Leadership College Lecture Series)), and at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Annual Conference and Trade Show.

In summary, the first recommendation proposed by this inquiry for the CMSW to overcome the underrepresentation of women in local coucils is to make it a priority to find a way to help women candidates address their biggest challenge: fundraising. The second recommendation proposed was to revise the content of the *Ready for Her* resource guide according to women candidates' needs and hosting events relevant to them.

The underlying philosophy upon which these recommendations and suggestions are built does not align with that of the current government. Thus, the leadership implications for organizational change that this recommendation requires cannot be implanted by an executive director unless it is requested by the minister and or the deputy minister (i.e., any changes at the CMSW would primarily require the approval of leaders at the Cabinet level). To optimize successful implementation of any recommendations and suggestions presented in this chapter, this study should have been conducted differently. However, minor structural changes can be made now to support future action, if an opportunity arises. For example, increasing the accessibility of research funding for graduate students and collecting more information about candidates (S. G.[51], personal communication, March 2, 2020), their constituencies, networks, cultural analysis of municipalities, and their political traditions.

Integrative inquiry. This integrative, third-person research inquiry brought together previous and newly acquired knowledge and aimed to put this knowledge into practice through recommendations for action. According to Trullen and Torbert (2017), "in third-person research, people come together to create an organization that provides the necessary conditions for people to engage in first and second-person research" (para. 9). First-person research is the study of ourselves; that is, the action of self-awareness and reflection with regard to our speech, our body

---

[51] S.G. is a colleague of ███████, capstone partner.

language, the way we respond to others, and how others respond to us (para. 2). From observing

ourselves and how our speech and actions affect others, we can make judgements on ourselves

and, if we deem it necessary, adjust our behaviour in the future (para. 2). For the participants,

this meant reflecting on their past campaign during the inquiry process and deciding on

adjustments to make for their future political career. In second-person research, participants

"learn[ed] about themselves, the others present, and the team culture [and] … delve[d] into how

to generate mutual transformation, if it is warranted" (para. 7). This phase of the process will

take place during the community event conversation following my defence.

From the perspective of Torbert's "Third-Person Research" methodology, the outcome of

this inquiry was aimed at "generating new ideas that redefine the whole organization and the way

people work together" (Trullen & Torbert, 2017, para. 10) to assist women in entering city

council. It is deemed as third-person research as it involved myself, the women candidates who

communicated their thoughts and experiences in an interview and survey (i.e., first-person) to be

shared with me (i.e., second-person) and the CMSW (i.e., second-person). We all learned from

each other, and all benefited from the findings (i.e., third-person) from recommendations made

to direct a change in practices (para. 9).

Contribution to scholarship and the literature. This research contributed to the rare

and mostly out-dated academic knowledge about women and municipal politics and the limited

research conducted in Alberta about municipal politics. It contested main-stream strategies to

overcome the under-representation of women in the political arena, which aligned with the work

of Maillé (2015) and Spicer et al. (2017), affirming that supporting educational programs or

initiatives that encourage women to run for municipal office may not be an effective solution to

this problem. Nevertheless, this research study did not probe why these educational programs

were ineffective, and the findings suggested that more research is needed in this area. Instead, this inquiry showed that fundraising was a significant challenge for women running for City Council in Edmonton, echoing the work of Tolley (2011).

        Recommendations and suggestions in action. As the organizational structure and philosophy of the present government do not align with the underlying recommendations and suggestions made based on the findings of this inquiry, it is not currently possible for my capstone partner to go further with my work. However, she has accepted that I provide an executive report summary, which might be useful for the future. In that regard, I will remain available to respond to any questions the CMSW may have about this report and the community event, which I will co-lead with some of the participants. The response of the CMSW and the people attending the community conversation will hopefully give rise to new ideas and strategies to be examined in future inquiries that promote equality in the municipal council.

Implications for Future Inquiry

        This research inquiry has enhanced knowledge on three different issues: (a) the perceived challenges women candidates faced in the 2017 Edmonton election, (b) the generation of new insights regarding ways to overcome the under-representation of women on the city council, and (c) the effectiveness and relevance of the *Ready for Her* online resource guide and other educational events hosted in Edmonton. However, there is much more to be studied, such as the efficacy and place of educational programs and organizations in advancing female presence on council, other pools of participants to be focused on, and research fine-tuned. According to Khakh, "even more efforts must be directed towards getting Aboriginal and minority women into these roles" (Parity YEG, n.d.-c). Looking at challenges faced by women, there are also race-related challenges in addition to those that are gender related. The scope of this study was

limited, and I was not able to explore several possible extrinsic challenges, such as how the dominance of a masculinized and male-dominated oil industry has affected female political participation, how a petroleum-dominated region like Calgary may produce barriers that Edmonton will not, or the reasons as to why female Albertans are mostly working in the healthcare system and the social assistance industry (Government of Alberta, 2018).

Finally, in the study recommendations, I suggested reflective questions to put to the CMSW that could also serve future researchers. These questions relate to CMSW's intention to increase gender equality (Government of Alberta, n.d.-c), with the hope of allowing the CMSW an opportunity to think about what services are needed and how to better reach out to potential candidates outlining the services they can provide, with questions such as:

1. How might Alberta reach an equitable outcome of women elected to municipal civic office at the optimum UN SDG 5.5.1b proportion of 33% of elected officials as women?

2. How might a more equal gender representation of elected officials advance gender equality in Alberta?

In other words, CMSW may want to explore further the link, if any, between women's participation in politics and the advancement of gender equality as a whole by way of affecting the range of policy issues that are considered in government and the types of solutions that are proposed. A potential question to address this issue is: How does an equity focus on helping women become elected help advance gender equality in Alberta?

Substantive-oriented initiatives are likely to be more inclusive, less biased in their design, and advocate fairness, including gender equality. Descriptive-oriented initiatives, however, may be more likely to lean towards particular groups to the exclusion of others. Understanding the

differences and impact of these two types of inititiatives is key for CMSW when developing funding opportunities for non-profit organizations.

Considering the demographics of Edmonton with women and men in the population being almost on a par with each other and low voter turn out at the 2017 Municiple Election, it is logical that the more people go to cast their vote, the more supporters of women candidates there would be. This approach could very likely lead to more women being elected to office, yet it needs to be explored further, with questions such as: How might developing civic engagement skills and competencies in local politics aimed at visible minority women advance gender equity and ultimately, equality, in Alberta?

Similar to substantive-oriented initiatives, intersectionality-oriented initiatives can provide support for people in any social group, but take it that one step further through understanding and recognition of how aspects of a person's social and political identity (i.e., gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, age, height, colour, etc.) might combine to create unique modes of discrimination. These challenges can then be addressed holistically, through governemental grants, to support visible minority women entering the political arena.

Future research on municipal councils in Alberta should focus on a broad range of Albertan municipalities, if not all, to build a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges female candidates face when campaigning for office at the municipal level.

The under-representation of women on city councils across Alberta is a systemic issue that cannot be tackled by solutions that "address symptoms rather than the underlying problems" (Stroh, 2015, p. 24) or that focus on "conventional or linear thinking.... These problems require [a] system thinking [approach]" (p. 26), as well as "leaders [who], must see what is happening over what they want to see happen" (George & Reed, 2018). In other words, the key is to look at

the whole as a complex system to comprehend its manner of operating, rather than the cause-and-effect patterns.

By implementing the actions recommended by this inquiry, the underlying problems will be dealt with (i.e., overcoming the challenges women face when entering politics) and not the symptom of the under-representation of women on city councils (i.e., women running for office but not winning).

Thesis Summary

The main research question examined by this inquiry was: "How might the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women (CMSW) support female candidates in the 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections?"

To address this question, I undertook a literature review to put into context the challenges women face going into municipal office and the solutions that have been documented. From this review, I identified four topics for further study: (a) key theoretical concepts, (b) women's challenges in politics, (c) overcoming the under-representation of women in politics, and (d) women's diversity.

Stakeholders and participants were gathered, an interview and survey devised and undertaken, and findings and conclusions derived and shared with all those involved. Recommendations were also made based on the findings of the interviews and surveys, which were substantiated by evidence from studies in the literature review.

The key findings of this inquiry were:

1. Participants (women candidates in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election) articulated nine challenges, the top three critical ones being fundraising, being a new candidate et the volunteers.

2. Participants have eight clear recommendations for future women candidates: focus on fundraising, build a solid team of volunteers, be involved in the community, develop a solid platform and strategies for social media, know your allies, be optimistic and persistent in overcoming challenges, and start early.

3. The vast majority of participants accessed the Ready For Her online resource guide (which was developed under the NDP government) and attended the events organized by Equal Voice North Chapter, however they did not find them very useful.

From these findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Women candidates running for municipal election, particularly for the first time, face a mountain of challenges: a lack of a structure or system to help them fundraise, find volunteers, and help them build the critical community network and media profile they need to become elected, all of which is made more complex by social, media, and internal, self-confidence messages questioning their competency to be running in the first place.

2. Focus on fundraising, but also ensure to have a few other critical elements in place for their campaign, such as a solid team of volunteers, be involved in the community and know your allies, develop a solid platform and strategies for social media, be optimistic and persistent in overcoming challenges, and start early.

Building on the literature review and the findings and conclusions of the primary research of this inquiry, two recommendations as well as suggested actions to achieve the recommendations were put forward:

1. CMSW make it a priority to find a way to help women candidates address their biggest challenge: fundraising.

2. Revise the content of the *Ready for Her* resource guide according to women candidates' needs and hosting events relevant to them.

The organizational implications of these recommendations were then discussed, as was the contribution this thesis makes to scholarship and the literature, and suggestions for future inquiry concluded this chapter.

The objective of this research inquiry was to acknowledge the struggles women have when running for office and to promote equal representation of women therein. I believe that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations reported in this thesis are sufficiently compelling to support women candidates entering municipal council and can facilitate in making gender parity in local government a reality.

References

Affairs Canada Global. (2017). *Gender equality: A foundation for peace.* Retrieved from

    https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/cnap-eng.pdf

Alberta's New Democratic Party. (n.d.). *Our progress*. Retrieved Jun 1, 2020, from

    https://rachelnotley.ca/our-progress

Alberta Student Aid. (2019, September). *Persons case scholarship value - $2500*. Retrieved from

    https://studentaid.alberta.ca/media/165888/scholarship-personscase.pdf

Alberta's United Conservative Party. (n.d.). *Stand up for Alberta*. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from

    https://unitedconservative.ca/

Arscott, J., Trimble, L. J., Arnott, J., Brock, K., Burt, S. D., Crossley, J., & … Young, L.

    (1997). In J. Arscott, & L. J. Trimble (Eds.), *The presence of women: Representation in*

    Canadian governments (pp. 1-46). Toronto, ON, Canada: Harcourt Brace & Company

    Canada.

Arscott, J., Trimble, L. J., & Tremblay, M. (2013). *Stalled: The representation of women in*

    Canadian governments. Vancouver, BC, Canada: UBC Press.

Bashevkin, S. B. (2009). *Women, power, politics: The hidden story of Canada's unfinished*

    democracy. North York, Ontario, Canada: Oxford University Press.

Bashevkin, S. B., White, G., Forrest, M., Dalseg, S. Kennedy, Desserud, D., … Thomas,

    M. (2019). Women and politics in Alberta under Alison Redford. In S. Bashevkin (Ed.),

    Doing politics differently? Women premiers in Canada's provinces and territories (pp.

    225-245). Vancouver, BC, Canada: UBC Press

Beckhard, R., & Harris, R. T. (2009). The change process: Why change? In W. W. Burke, D. G.

Lake, & J. W. Paine (Eds.), *Organization change: A comprehensive reader.* (pp.

687–698). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Berevoescu, I., & UN Women. (2019, May). *Introducing SDG indicator 5.5.1b on women's*

representation in local government: rationale and methodology [PowerPoint

presentation]. Retrieved from

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.30/2019/mtg2/WS3-

1_Berevoescu_ENG.pdf

Bozakaya, B., Erku, E., Haight, D., & Laporte, G. (2011). Designing new electoral districts for

the City of Edmonton. *Interfaces*, *41*(6), 534-547.

http://dx.doi.org.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/10.1287/inte.1110.0544

Bherer, L., Breux, S., & Collin, J.-P. (2008). *La participation et la représentation politique des*

femmes au sein des instances démocratiques municipales. Institut national de la

recherche scientifique, Centre, Urbanisation, Culture, Société. Retrieved from

http://espace.inrs.ca/id/eprint/2736/1/RepresentationFemmes.pdf

Briggs, J. (2008). "What's in it for women?" The motivations, expectations and experiences of

female local councillors in Montreal, Canada and Hull, England. *Local Government*

Studies, *26*(4), 71–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930008434009

Breux, S., Couture, J., & Koop, R. (2019). Influences on the number and gender of candidates in

Canadian local elections. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *52*(1), 163–181.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423918000483

Brown, C. (1994). Judgments about the capabilities of city councillors and support for female

representation on City Council. *Social Science Journal*, *31*(4), 355.

https://doi.org/10.1016/0362-3319(94)90029-9

Bunker, B., & Alban, B. (1997). *Large group interventions: Engaging the whole system for rapid

change.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cameron, V. (2018). *Women in politics: Gender, power and development.* New Orleans, LA:

White Press Academics.

Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat. (2019). *37ᵗʰ Annual federal-provincial-

territorial meeting of ministers responsible for the status of women*. Retrieved from

https://scics.ca/en/product-produit/news-release-status-of-women-ministers-meet-in-

victoria-to-chart-the-way-forward-and-advance-gender-equality/

Canadian Press, The. (2015, May 5). NDP sweeps Alberta to form majority government.

Maclean's. Retrieved from https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/ndp-wins-a-majority-

in-alberta/

Chaban, S., Consuegra, L. J., Elten, H., Gardes, K., Greymond, O., & Gonzalez, O. M., (2017).

Regional organizations, gender equality and the political empowerment of Women.

Retrieved from http://ideadev.insomnation.com/sites/default/files/publications/regional-

organizations-gender-equality-and-the-political-empowerment-of-women.pdf

Cho, S., Crenshaw, K., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory,

applications, and praxis. *Signs*, *Journal of Women in Culture & Society, 38*(4).

Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/669608

City of Edmonton. (n.d.-a). *City councillors*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from

https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_organization/city-councillors.aspx

City of Edmonton. (n.d.-b). *Filed campaign disclosures*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from

   https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/municipal_elections/filed-disclosure-

   statements.aspx

City of Edmonton. (n.d.-c). *Mayor and city council*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from

   https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/mayor-city-councillors.aspx

City of Edmonton. (n.d.-d). *Women's initiative*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from

   https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/initiatives_innovation/womens-

   initiatives.aspx

City of Edmonton. (2020). *Edmonton elections*. Retrieved from

   https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/edmonton-elections.aspx

Cohen, Y. (2016). The integration of women in political life in Canada: From representative

   democracy to participative democracy. *Canadian Issues*, 33-37. Retrieved from

   https://search.proquest.com/openview/19f0f92f59bebd141a30a9d14d980911/1?pq-

   origsite=gscholar&cbl=43874

Cowper-Smith, Y., Kopec, A., Sutton, T., & Nelson, K. (2017). *Women and politics:

   Overcoming barriers to participation in leadership*. Retrieved from

   https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/handle/10214/8902

Crosby, T. (2005, June). The participation of women in municipal politics. *Canadian Issues*,

   Summer, 31-34. Retrieved from

   https://search.proquest.com/openview/a9343714813538295d8a71fa0a88a2c7/1?pq-

   origsite=gscholar&cbl=43874

Dahlberg, L., & McCaig, C. (2010). Introduction to research and evaluation basics. In L.

    Dahlberg & C. McCaig (Eds.), *Practical research and evaluation: A start-to-finish guide*

    for practitioners (pp. 13-28). https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446268346

Dahlerup, D., & Freidenvall, L. (2005). Quotas as a 'fast track' to equal representation for

    women: Why Scandinavia is no longer the model. *International Feminist Journal of*

    Politics, 7(1), 26-48. doi:10.1080/1461674042000324673

Dolan, K., & Sanbonmatsu, K. (2009). Gender stereotypes and attitudes toward gender balance

    in government. *American Politics Research*, *37*(3), 409–428.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X08322109

Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders.

    Psychological Review, *109*(3)*,* 573–598. Retrieved from

    http://web.pdx.edu/~mev/pdf/Eagley_Karau.pdf

Equal Voice. (n.d.). *About Equal Voice*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from

    https://www.equalvoice.ca/about

Equal Voice, Alberta North. (n.d.). *About*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from

    https://www.equalvoice.ca/alberta_north

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (n.d.-a). *Awards*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from

    https://fcm.ca/en/about-fcm/awards

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (n.d.-b). *Women in local government: Closing the gender*

    gap in municipal governments. Retrieved from June 1, 2020,

    https://fcm.ca/en/programs/women-in-local-government

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2018, November 5). *FCM and Status of Women Canada launch Toward Parity* [News release]. Retrieved from https://fcm.ca/en/news-media/news-release/fcm-and-status-women-canada-launch-toward-parity

Findlay, T. (2019). Revisiting GBA/GBA+: Innovations and interventions. *Canadian Public Administration*, *62*(3), 520–525. https://doi.org/10.1111/capa.12341

Garcia, E. S. (2020, June 17). Where did BIPOC come from? *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-bipoc.html

George, C., & Reed, E. (2018). *Both the parts and whole: Leadership and systems thinking*. Retrieved from https://thesystemsthinker.com/both-the-parts-and-whole-leadership-and-systems-thinking/

Gerson, J. (2015, April 13). PCs have ruled for last 43 years—Predecessor served for 36: Here's why political dynasties thrive in Alberta. *National Post*. Retrieved from https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/alberta-pcs-have-been-in-power-43-years-predecessor-served-for-36-why-the-province-rewards-political-dynasties

Gimenez, T. A., Monson, J. Q., & Preece, R. J. (2016). *The double bind still constricts: Gendered self-presentation and electoral success in republican neighborhood caucuses*. Retrieved from http://gcel.byu.edu/Content/Publications/Double-Blind-SPSA-Manuscript.pdf

Government of Alberta. (2018). *2017 Alberta labour force profiles women*. Retrieved from https://work.alberta.ca/documents/labour-profile-women.pdf

Government of Alberta. (n.d.-a). *Elections and governance*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from https://www.alberta.ca/elections-governance.aspx

Government of Alberta. (n.d.-b). *Gender-based analysis plus* (GBA+). Retrieved June 1, 2020, from https://www.alberta.ca/gender-based-analysis.aspx

Government of Alberta. (n.d.-c). *Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women.* Retrieved June 1, 2020, from https://www.alberta.ca/culture-multiculturalism-and-status-of-women.aspx

Government of Alberta. (n.d.-d). *Ministry of Municipal Affairs*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-affairs.aspx

Government of Alberta. (n.d.-e). *Ready for her: A guide for women running for municipal office*. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from https://www.alberta.ca/ready-for-her.aspx

Government of Alberta. (2019a). *Culture, multiculturalism, and status of women business plan 2019–23*. Retrieved from https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/d05953dd-22d9-4d53-b97b-147f08aa0e0c/resource/730d5e7a-2499-4ed5-a8d9-88fe14272be1/download/culture-multiculturalism-and-status-of-women.pdf

Government of Alberta. (2019b, October 24). *Municipal affairs business plan 2019–23*. Retrieved from https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/5d49d04c-a1d7-4962-873b-149a193617af/resource/34a30674-6161-4f18-a810-7a02ee8151c8/download/municipal-affairs.pdf

Government of Alberta. (2019c). *Status of women: Annual report, 2018-2019*. Retrieved from https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/723a2178-45b3-4280-b2bc-506dec99c300/resource/9202b605-935e-44de-b116-c705d1984fb8/download/status-of-women-annual-report-2018-19-web.pdf

Government of Alberta. (2020a). *Culture, multiculturalism and status of women business plan 2020-23*. Retrieved from https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/d05953dd-22d9-4d53-b97b-

147f08aa0e0c/resource/66639563-f914-477d-a88f-05056c6b82d8/download/culture-

multiculturalism-and-status-of-women-business-plan-2020-23-english.pdf

Government of Alberta. (2020b, June 24). *Local election rule change*. Retrieved from

https://www.alberta.ca/local-election-rule-changes.aspx

Government of Canada. (2018, December 4). *Status of Women: What is GBA+?* Retrieved from

https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acs/index-en.html

Government of Canada. (2019, October 24). *Status of Women Canada: Women's program*.

Retrieved from https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/fun-fin/wcf-fcf/index-en.html

Government of Canada. (2020, June 16). *Status of Women Canada*. Retrieved from https://cfc-

swc.gc.ca/index-en.html

Government of Canada, Panel on Research Ethics. (2018). *TCPS 2 (2018)—Chapter 1 ethics

framework*. Retrieved from http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-

politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter1-chapitre1/

Government of Sweden. (2007). *Gender mainstreaming manual: A book of practical methods

from the Swedish gender mainstreaming support committee.* Retrieved from

https://www.includegender.org/wp-

content/uploads/2014/02/gender_mainstreaming_manual.pdf

Graney, E. (2017, September 29). Ward 2: Three declared candidates to represent diverse slice of

northwest Edmonton. *Edmonton Journal*. Retrieved from

https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/ward-2-three-declared-candidates-to-

represent-diverse-slice-of-northwest-edmonton

Grenier, F., & Mévellec, A. (2016). Training local elected officials: Professionalization amid tensions between democracy and expertise. *Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government*, *14*(1), 33–52. https://doi.org/10.4335/14.1.33-51(2016)

Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (2002). *Handbook of interview research: Context & method.* Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.

Harrie, J. (2010). The logic of qualitative survey research and its position in the field of social research methods. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 11*(2). Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1450/2946#g21

Herzog, H. (2012). Interview location and its social meaning. In J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, & K. D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 207-218). https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218403

Idowu, S. O., Capaldi, N., Zu, L., & Das Gupta, A. (2013). *Encyclopedia of corporate social responsibility*. Berlin, Germany: Springer.

Jalalzai, F., & Krook, M. L. (2010). Beyond Hillary and Benazir: Women's political leadership worldwide. *International Political Science Review*, *31*(1), 5–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512109354470

Japaridze, E. (2012). *Assessment of the gender equality policy in Georgia by women's organizations.* Retrieved from: http://css.ge/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/elene_gender_eng.pdf

Jorgenson, J., & Steier, F. (2013). Frames, framing, and designed conversational processes: Lessons from the world café. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *49*(3), 388–405. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886313484511

Kovačević J., & Šehić, D. (2015). The pursuit of a remedy for gender inequality in wider

    Europe: Comparison of policies and indices in the EU, Nordic countries, and south east

    Europe. *Ekonomski Anali*, *60*(204), 127–156. 10.2298/EKA1504127K

Krook, M. L. (2007). Candidate gender quotas: A framework for analysis. *European Journal of*

    Political Research, *46*(3), 367–394. https://doi-

    org.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2007.00704.x

Kushner, J., Siegel, D., & Stanwick (1997). Ontario municipal elections: Voting trends and

    determinants of electoral success in a Canadian. *Canadian Journal of Political*

    Science, *30*(3), 539-553. https://doi-

    org.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/10.1017/S0008423900016000

Lammers, J., Gordijn, E. H., & Otten, S. (2009). Iron ladies, men of steel: The effects of gender

    stereotyping on the perception of male and female candidates are moderated by

    prototypicality. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *39*(2), 186–195.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.505

LeSage, E. C., & McMillan, M. L. (2010). *Alberta: Municipal system overview*

    update. Edmonton, AB: Western Centre for Economic Research, University of Alberta.

Lawless, J. L., & Fox, R. L. (2005). *It takes a candidate: Why women don't run for office.*

    England, UK: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511790898

Lawless, L., & Fox, R. L. (2012). *Men rule. The continued under-representation of women in*

    U.S. politics. Retrieved from https://www.american.edu/spa/wpi/upload/2012-men-rule-

    report-final-web.pdf

Local Authorities' Election Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta, 2000, c. L-21. Retrieved from

    Queen's Printer website: http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/L21.pdf

Maillé, C. (2015). Feminist interventions in political representation in the United States and

    Canada: Training programs and legal quotas. *European Journal of American*

    Studies, 10(1). https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.10502

Male, M. D. (2017, October 4). Re: Edmonton election 2017: Nomination day recap [Web log

    message]. Retrieved from https://blog.mastermaq.ca/2017/10/04/edmonton-election-

    2017-nomination-day-recap/

McNitt, A. D. (2010). Tenure in office of big city mayors. *State & Local Government Review*,

    42(1), 36-47. https://doi.org/10.1177/0160323X10364747

Meghan, P. (2018, January 30). Council rejects motion to introduce term limits to city hall after

    testy debate. *Calgary Herald*. Retrieved from https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-

    news/council-rejects-motion-to-introduce-term-limits-to-city-hall/

Megyery, K. (1991). *Women in Canadian politics: Toward equity in representation.* Toronto,

    ON: Published by Dundurn Press Limited in cooperation with the Royal Commission on

    Electoral Reform and Party Financing and Canada Communication Group-Publishing,

    Supply and Services Canada.

Miller, M. K. (2013). For the win! The effect of professional sports records on mayoral

    elections. *Social Science Quarterly (Wiley-Blackwell)*, *94*(1), 59–78.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2012.00898.x

Mitchell, C. (1991). Limiting congressional terms: Return to fundamental democracy. *Journal of*

    Law & Politics, *7*(4), 733-746.

Morison, S. (2019, April 1). The favourite. *Avenue Magazine Edmonton*. Retrieved from

    https://www.avenueedmonton.com/city-life/the-favourite/

Municipal Government Act: Revised statutes of Alberta 2000, c. M-26. Retrieved from Queen's

   Printer website: http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/m26.pdf

Neverauskas, B., & Tijūnaitienė, R. (2007). Public participation in city governance decision-

   making: Theoretical approach. *Engineering Economics*, *54*(4), 27–35. Retrieved from

   https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=120726

Newman, J., & White, L. A. (2012). *Women, politics, and public policy: The political struggles

   of Canadian women*. England, UK: Oxford University Press.

Oren, T. G., & Press, A. Lee. (2019). *Routledge handbook of contemporary feminism*. Abingdon,

   UK: Routledge

Parity YEG. (n.d.-a). *A doorway for women into politics*. Retrieved June 5, 2020, from

   https://parityyeg.ca/

Parity YEG. (n.d.-b). *Events*. Retrieved June 5, 2020, from https://parityyeg.ca/events/

Parity YEG. (n.d.-c). *Intersectional analysis of women in politics: Edmonton, Alberta*. Retrieved

   June 5, 2020, from https://parityyeg.ca/anita-khakh/

Paxton, P. M., & Hughes, M. M. (2014). *Women, politics, and power: A global perspective* (2nd

   ed.). Los Angels, CA: SAGE Publications.

Paxton, P., Hughes, M. M., & Painter, M. A. (2010). Growth in women's political

   representation: A longitudinal exploration of democracy, electoral system and gender

   quotas. *European Journal of Political Research*, 49(1), 25–52.

   https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2009.01886.x

Pipeline. (2018). *Gender equity vs. gender equality: What's the distinction?* Retrieved from

   https://www.pipelineequity.com/voices-for-equity/gender-equity-vs-gender-equality/

Ramazanoglu, C., & Holland, J. (2002). *Feminist methodology: Challenges and choices*.

London, UK: Sage.

Rapley, T. (2012). The (extra)ordinary practices of qualitative interviewing. In J. F. Gubrium, J.

A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, & K. D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (pp. 541-554).

https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218403

Rowe, W. E. A., Graf, M., Agger-Gupta, N., Piggot-Irvine, E., & Harris, B. (2013). Action research engagement: Creating the foundations for organizational change. *ALARA Monograph Series* (Action Learning Action Learning Association Inc.), (Monograph No. 5), 44.

Royal Roads University. (2011, February). *Royal Roads University research ethics policy*.

Retrieved from

http://research.royalroads.ca/sites/default/files/web_files/RRU_EthicsPolicy_16Feb2011r

.pdf

Small, S. (1995). Action-oriented research: Models and methods. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *57*(4), 941-941. https://doi.org/10.2307/353414

Smith, K., & Davies, J. (2010). Qualitative data analysis. In L. Dahlberg & C. McCaig (Eds.), *Practical research and evaluation: A start-to-finish guide for practitioners* (pp. 145-158). https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446268346

Smith, S., Kempster, S., & Wenger-Trayner, E. (2019). Developing a program community of practice for leadership development. *Journal of Management Education*, *43*(1), 62–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562918812143

Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday.

Spicer, Z., McGregor, M., & Alcantara, C. (2017). Political opportunity structures and the representation of women and visible minorities in municipal elections. *Electoral Studies*, *48*, 10–18. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2017.01.002

Stolte, E. (2016a, October 17). Helping women find their political feet: Equal Voice launches push to recruit women for Edmonton council race. *Edmonton Journal*. Retrieved from https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/helping-women-find-their-political-feet-equal-voice-launches-push-to-recruit-women-for-edmonton-council-race

Stolte, E. (2016b, July 4). Wanted: More women to run in Edmonton's 2017 municipal election. *Edmonton Journal*. Retrieved from https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/wanted-more-women-to-run-in-edmontons-2017-election

Stringer, E. T. (2007). *Action research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Stroh, D. P. (2015). *Systems thinking for social change*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.

Thomas, M. (2013). Barriers to women's political participation in Canada. *University of New Brunswick Law Journal, 64*, 218-233. Retreieved from https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/unblj64&div=13&id=&page=

Tolley, E. (2011). Do women "do better" in municipal politics? Electoral representation across three levels of government. *Canadian Journal of Political Science-Revue Canadienne de Science Politique*, *44*(3), 573–594. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423911000503

Tremblay, C., & Hall, L. B. (2014). Learning from community-university partnerships: A

Canadian study on community impact and conditions for success. *International Journal

of Action Research, 10*(3), 376-404. https://doi.org/10.1688/IJAR-2014-03

Tremblay, M. (2007). Democracy, representation, and women: A comparative analysis.

Democratization, *14*(4), 533-553. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340701398261

Tremblay, M., & Pelletier, R. (2000). More feminists or more women? Descriptive and

substantive representations of women in the 1997 Canadian federal elections.

International Political Science Review/Revue Internationale de Science Politique, 21(4),

381-405.

Trullen, J., & Torbert, W. (2017). First-, second-, and third-person research in practice. *The

System Thinker.* Retrieved from https://thesystemsthinker.com/first-second-and-third-

person-research-in-practice/

United Nations. (n.d.). *Peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet*. Retrieved July 22, 2020,

from https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/democracy/index.html

United Nations Population Fund. (2020). *What is meant by gender?* Retrieved from

https://www.unfpa.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions-about-gender-equality

Verwijs, C., (2018). *Unleash local know-how with a 'user experience fishbowl.'* Retrieved from

https://medium.com/the-liberators/unleash-local-know-how-with-a-user-experience-

fishbowl-rather-than-relying-on-external-experts-6500d5454a80

Wängnerud, L., & Sundell, A. (2012). Do politics matter? Women in Swedish local elected

assemblies 1970–2010 and gender equality in outcomes. *European Political Science

Review, 4*(1), 97-120. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773911000087

Women's Initiative Edmonton. (2019, October 11). *Your vote matters* [Press release]. Retrieved

from https://womensinitiativeedmonton.ca/your-vote-matters/

Wood, J., Henton, D., & Howell, T. (2015, May 7). Rachel Notley's NDP puts an end to PC

dynasty, claims majority. *Calgary Herald*. Retrieved from

https://calgaryherald.com/news/politics/polls-now-closed-in-alberta-election-that-could-

upend-provincial-politics

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview date: _____

1. Did you run for city councillor or mayor in the 2017 Edmonton Election?

    ☐ Yes I ran for city councillor

    ☐ Yes I ran for mayor

    ☐ No I ran for school trustee

2. During the 2017 Edmonton Election process, did you encounter any challenges? Please,

    specify.

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Looking back, were there other challenges that you did not identify at the time that, in

    your opinion, impacted your election results in the 2017 Edmonton Election process?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. In your opinion, do you think that the challenges in questions 2 and 3 were directly

     related to the fact you are a woman?

          ☐ Yes

          ☐ No

          Please, explain your selection:

     _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

5. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the challenges you faced in the

     2017 Edmonton Election?

     _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Date:

Time:

Location:

This survey is conducted for the purpose of a master's degree thesis at Royal Roads University. The study focuses on women who ran in the 2017 Edmonton Election and will help understand why women are still under-represented on the Edmonton City Council, and how we can overcome this disparity. The survey has five sections and a total of 19 questions. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey. Your responses are completely anonymous (see consent form).

If you have any questions while filling out the survey, please ask for clarification at anytime.

SECTION 1: Background Information

6. What was the outcome of your 2017 electoral campaign?

     ☐ I won

     ☐ I placed second

     ☐ I placed third

     ☐ I was not in the top three

7. Thinking back on your campaign, did you file for nomination with the goal of winning the election?

     ☐ Yes

     ☐ No

Please, explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. At this point in time, are you thinking of running for office in the 2021 Edmonton Election?

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

    ☐ Undecided

9. Should you run in the 2021 Edmonton Election, what would be your ideal desired outcome?

    ☐ Winning

    ☐ Placing second

    ☐ Placing third

    ☐ Other

    Please, explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 2: Challenges and Learning Opportunities During Your 2017 Edmonton Election

10. When running in the 2017 Edmonton Election, did you face challenges that you believe(d) any candidates regardless of their gender would have faced?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please, explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Below is a list of possible challenges you might have faced during the 2017 Edmonton

　　Election; please, check all that applied to you.

☐ Not feeling confident enough to become a city councillor

☐ Not feeling qualified enough

☐ Believing that politics is a man's world

☐ Having a partner who would not be supportive enough if you were to run and win

☐ Being mostly responsible for your children and/or your partner's children

☐ Having young children

☐ Being a single parent

☐ Not having a supportive extended family

☐ Campaigning would be just too much given your current career and family commitments

☐ Not having an extensive network

☐ Having very little knowledge about municipal politics

☐ Not being involved enough in the community

☐ Lacking public speaking skills

☐ Lacking education

☐ Believing that as a woman you have very little chance to win given that your ward incumbent is a man

☐ Not being able to self-fund your campaign

☐ Not having enough connections in the business world who could help you fund your campaign

☐ Having a first and/or last name that is not appealing to voters

☐ Having a noticeable ethnic, cultural or religious background

☐ Belonging to a lower or middle social class

☐ Having a country of origin other than Canada (first generation of immigrants)

☐ Not speaking English as your first language

☐ Having a "distinguishable" accent

☐ Not having a comfortable financial situation

☐ Being inexperienced

☐ Being "too" young or "too" old

☐ Having an unsavoury past

☐ Belonging to the LGBTQ2SA+ community

☐ Having a disability

12. Are there any other challenges that you would like to add?

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Did you develop strategies to overcome some or all of the selected challenges?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please, explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Based on your experience, should your best friend run for office in the next Edmonton

Election, what are the top five winning strategies you would share with her?

1)_____

2)_____

3)_____

4)_____

5)_____

SECTION 3: Access to Resources and Support

15. Regardless of the challenges you selected, do you believe that you would have still won had you raised more money than any of your competitors?

     ☐ Yes

     ☐ No

     ☐ Maybe

     Please, explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. Do you feel that you received equal media coverage and opportunities as the other candidates in your ward?

     ☐ Yes

     ☐ No

Please, explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. Looking back at the 2017 Edmonton Election, do you remember hearing about or

accessing the resources on the *Ready For Her* online resource guidedeveloped by (then)

the Status of Women Alberta Ministry?

☐ Yes

☐ Very useful

☐ Useful

☐ Not very useful

☐ No

17.1 If you selected "Yes", how useful was it to you?

Please, explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

18. Numerous events were organized by Equal Voice North Chapter and other local

organizations to encourage and empower women to run in the 2017 Edmonton Election.

How many of these events did you attend?

☐ 1 - 3

☐ 4 - 7

☐ More than 8

☐ I did not attend any of them

18.1. If you attended one or more, how useful were they to you?

☐ Very useful

☐ Useful

☐ Not very useful

☐ Not useful at all

Please, explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 4: Demographic background

19. What was your age range when you filed for nomination in 2017?

       18 – 24 years old

       25 – 34 years old

       35 – 44 years old

       45 – 54 years old

       Over 55

20. What was the highest level of education you had completed when you filed for nomination in 2017?

    ○ Less than high school diploma

    ○ High School diploma or equivalent

    ○ Bachelor's degree

    ○ Master's degree

    ○ Doctorate

    ○ Other (please specify)

_____

_____

_____

_____

21. What was your marital status while campaigning?

    ○ Single (never married and not in a relationship)

    ○ Dating/relationship

    ○ Married/common Law

    ○ Divorced/separated

    ○ Widowed

22. While campaigning, were you a caregiver of a family member? (e.g. taking care of an

    elderly parent, a sick partner, a child…).

    ☐ Yes (Please specify)

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    ☐ No

SECTION 5: Network Opportunities

23. Joining a community network of women interested in municipal politics is a key access to

    valuable information. Therefore, would you be interested in joining a WhatsApp Group

    called *I WILL WIN in 2021,* which is made up women considering running in the 2021

    Edmonton Election? If so, please indicate your phone number:

    (……..) ……. ……. …….

24. By participating in this survey, you have engaged in a research inquiry that was inspired

by community-based research principles. Consequently, the data collected should be

shared with the community in a collaborative manner. Would you be interested in sharing

the findings by co-leading a community conversation inspired by World Café principles

and/or co-writing and publishing articles?

☐ Yes (Please specify)

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐ No

24.1 If "Yes", please indicate the best way to reach you?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C: Contact List Form

Contact Name	Position sought	LinkedIn	Facebook	Email	Phone No.	First Attempt	Response 1	Second Attempt	Response 2	Participation Status	Notes
1_ Bouchier, Taz	Mayor										
2_Frost, Carla	Mayor										
3_Esslinger, Bev	City Councillor Ward 2 (elected)										
4_Tupper, Shelley	City Councillor Ward 2										
5_Principe, Karen	City Councillor Ward 3										
6_Ghettuba, Beatrice	City Councillor Ward 4										
7_Poste, Alison	City Councillor Ward 4										
8_Velthuizen, Tricia	City Councillor Ward 4										
9_Bowen, Nafisa	City Councillor Ward 5										
10_Hamilton, Sarah	City Councillor Ward 5 (elected)										
11_Jimmy, Miranda	City Councillor Ward 5										
12_Newton, Dawn	City Councillor Ward 5										
13_Pavlenko, Svetlana	City Councillor Ward 5										

14_John-West, Liz	City Councillor Ward 7											
15_Williams, Mimi	City Councillor Ward 7											
16_Goa, Kristen	City Councillor Ward 8											
17_Workman, Heather	City Councillor Ward 8											
18_Pon, Sandy	City Councillor Ward 9											
19_Hees, Samantha	City Councillor Ward 10											
20_Senol, Sim	City Councillor Ward 10											
21_Williams, Glenda	City Councillor Ward 10											
22_Burdeniuk, Brandy	City Councillor Ward 11											
23_Tang, Keren	City Councillor Ward 11											
24_Wright, Jo-Anne	City Councillor Ward 12											

Appendix D: Inquiry Team Member Letter of Agreement

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Arts in Leadership Degree at Royal Roads University, Leticia Nadler will be conducting an inquiry study in Edmonton to engage former women city councillor candidates in a community-based research process. This project is endorsed by the ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women and aims to answer the following research question: "How might the ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women support Albertan female candidates in the 2021 municipal elections?[52]"

This Student's credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by calling Dr. Neils Agger Gupta, Director, School of Leadership, at [phone #] or email [email address].

Inquiry Team Member Role Description

As a volunteer Inquiry Team Member assisting the student researcher with this project, your role may include one or more of the following:

☐Reviewing written material.

☐Giving suggestion to improve the data-gathering methods.

☐Reviewing the data analysis.

☐Taking part in the pilot testing team (testing the interview and survey and providing

feedback).

---

[52] It was then revised by my supervisor and changed to "How might the Alberta Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women (CMSW) support female candidates in the 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections?"

Please, check mark the voluntary role(s) you would like to accept for this study. In the course of this activity, you may be privy to confidential inquiry data.

Confidentiality of Inquiry Data

In compliance with the Royal Roads University (2011) *Research Ethics Policy*, under which this inquiry project is being conducted, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated or accessed by the inquiry team advisor will only be used in the performance of the functions of this project, and must not be disclosed to anyone other than persons authorized to receive it, both during the inquiry period and beyond it. Recorded information in all formats is covered by this agreement. Personal identifiers include participant names, contact information, personally identifying turns-of-phrase or comments, and any other personally identifying information.

Personal information will be collected, recorded, corrected, accessed, altered, used, disclosed, retained, secured, and destroyed as directed by the Student, under direction of the Royal Roads Academic Supervisor.

Inquiry Team Members who are uncertain whether any information they may wish to share about the project they are working on is personal or confidential will verify this with Leticia Nadler, the student.

Statement of Informed Consent:

I have read and understand this agreement.

_____   _____ _____

Name (Please Print)   Signature   Date

Appendix E: Short Introductory Text (email)

Subject: Research Study: Seeking Your Participation

Good afternoon,

I would like to invite you to be part of a research project that I am conducting. This project is part of the requirement for my Master of Arts Degree in Leadership at Royal Roads University, and I have been given permission to contact potential participants for this purpose.

This study focuses on the 24 women who ran in the 2017 Edmonton Municipal Election and has three objectives:

- Identifying gaps in resources to support women running for office at the municipal level.

- Being a window into participants' experience regarding their 2017 Edmonton Election campaign.

- Being an incentive for study participants to run in the 2021 Edmonton Election.

Your name was chosen as a prospective participant because you ran for city council in that election. This phase of my research project will consist of a one-hour meeting that will start by a short one-on-one interview and will be immediately followed by a paper survey to fill out on the spot. The study will take place between October 29, 2019 and November 12, 2019 at the time and coffee shop location of your choice.

The attached documents (information letter, consent form and withdrawal form) contain further information about the study and will enable you to make a fully informed decision on whether or not you wish to participate. Please review this information before responding.

You are not required to participate in this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw without prejudice as stated in the withdrawal form attached.

If you wish to participate in this study, please return via email the consent form signed by October 29, 2019.

Should you have any question, please contact me by email at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or by phone at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

I am looking forward to hearing from you,

Leticia Nadler

Appendix F: Information Letter (email attachment)

Finding a Seat at the Table: Women Candidates and Edmonton Municipal Politics

Leticia Nadler: student researcher and Master of Arts in Leadership Candidate, Royal Roads University, Victoria, BC. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by contacting Dr. Catherine Etmanski, Director, School of Leadership Studies: [email address] or [phone #].

Sponsoring organization:

███████████: Capstone partner and Director of Gender Equality and Advancement and Training division within the Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women Ministry (CMSW).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to engage a group of former women city councillor candidates in a community-based research process to encourage reflections on their 2017 political experiences and allow the CMSW ministry to gain knowledge and understanding in terms of gender inequality on municipal councils.

Project's description

This project is both action-oriented, and community-centred. It is endorsed by the CMSW ministry but is conducted by an external student researcher whose responsibility and motivation is to bring positive change through research and actions in collaboration with the study participants and the CMSW ministry. This project relies on three core principles:

- Research in action, rather than research about action. While being engaged in the inquiry process you are learning, reflecting, and changing.

- Research in a democratic and collaborative partnership. You are more than just a participant.

- Research for organizational and community change.

The research-in-action approach to lead change is at the centre of the Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences at Royal Roads University, BC. Furthermore, this project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, which supports postsecondary-based research, research training, and knowledge mobilization activities in the social sciences and humanities. It is also funded through the Mayor Andrée P. Boucher Memorial Scholarship.

Your participation and how information will be collected

The study will take place from October 29, 2019 to November 12, 2019 at your most convenient time and coffee shop location. The research will consist of attending a one-on-one meeting that might last up to one hour. It will start with a short interview and will be immediately followed by a paper survey to be completed and returned on the spot. In the following weeks, you will receive, by email, the transcript of the interview to check/edit it. You will have 10 business days to return it, along with your written confirmation stating that it can be used for this study.

What can you gain from participating in this research project?

- Reflecting on your 2017 political experience.

- Starting to think about your next step for the 2021 municipal election.

- Contributing to the advancement of knowledge regarding municipal politics and gender equity.

- Receiving a short summary of this study's findings in the spring of 2021.

Inquiry team

Forming an Inquiry Team as is common practice for Royal Roads University research projects. For this study, the team is in charge of pilot-testing the interview and survey questions as well as providing feedback for improvement.

Real or Perceived Conflict of Interest

There is no real conflict of interest identified for this study.

Confidentiality, security of data, and retention period

I will work to protect your privacy throughout this study. All information I collect will be maintained in confidence with hard copies (e.g., consent forms) stored in a safe in my home. Electronic data (such as transcripts or audio files) will be stored on a password-protected document on my personal laptop. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed in writing in anonymous format. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential. The data collected will be stored for one year following my graduation and then destroyed. There will not be any identifying names on the paper surveys and interview recordings and transcripts.

Sharing results

In addition to submitting my thesis to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts in Leadership, I will be sharing my research findings as indicated below:

- The study participants will receive a summary of the findings.

- I will provide my sponsoring organization with a written report containing recommendations.

- The findings will be presented at a community conversation event to which you will be invited to co-organize and/or attend.

- The findings might be published in journals, presented at professional meetings or at public events such as conferences and workshops, and possibly during interviews with media.

Procedure for withdrawing from the study

You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time by signing and returning the "withdrawal form" to the researcher. Ending your participation means that you will no longer be contacted about this study. Consequently, you will not be participating in the community conversation event, nor will you be contributing to any co-writing material or joining the group chat. Please note that all the data collected prior to your withdrawing will be kept and used. Finally, know that you are also free to refuse to answer any question you might be asked during the interview and on the paper survey.

Ethical concerns

The School of Leadership Studies (SoLS) and Research Ethics Board (REB) have reviewed this research project. The Office of Research of Royal Roads University, Victoria, BC has approved it. There is no anticipated risk or discomfort from participating in this research project. You are welcome to ask the researcher any questions that occur to you during the process. You can contact the researchers using the following contact information: [email address]; [phone #]. If you have any ethical concerns about this project, please contact the Office of Research Ethics at Royal Roads University: ethicalreview@royalroads.ca; (250) 391-2600 ext. 4425.

Please keep a copy of this information letter for your records.

Appendix G: Consent Form (email attachment)

Finding a Seat at the Table: Women Candidates and Edmonton Municipal Politics

By signing this form, you agree that you are over the age of 18 and have read the **information letter** for this study. Your signature states that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this project and allow your data to be used in the final report and any other knowledge outputs (community event, articles, conference presentations, newsletters, etc.).

Please check the following boxes:

☐   I consent to the audio recording of the **one-on-one interview**

☐   I consent to quotations and excerpts expressed by me through the **one-on-one interview** and the **paper survey** to be included in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed

☐   I consent to the material I have contributed to and/or generated through my participation in the **one-on-one interview** and the **paper survey** being used in this study

☐   I understand that I am free to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw from the study at any time

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H: Withdrawal Form (email attachment)

You have the right to withdraw from the study **Finding a Seat at the Table: Women**

Candidates and Edmonton Municipal Politics at any time by signing and returning this form

to the researcher.

I, _____want to end my participation in this study.

Name of Participant

Ending my participation means:

- I will no longer be contacted about this research study

- I will not be participating in the community conversation event

- I will not be contributing to any co-writing material

- I will not be joining the group chat

I understand that any data collected as part of my participation in the study will remain as

part of the study records and cannot be removed.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Appendix I: Second Round of Coding

First round of coding was done over a 3-day period and led to the tables below. In this table, the absence of a number means that no commentary was found for that node on the day of the data analysis. A zero (0) means that a node was created based on one commentary. A zero (0) being carried on to the next column means that no other commentary fell under that category on the second or third day of the analysis. The number one (1) means that a node was already created based on a commentary and another commentary was placed under the node. The most frequent nodes are highlighted in yellow.

Challenges

Nodes	Dec 4 Open-ended response from the survey	Dec 20 Interview transcript	Dec 23 Interview transcript	Total of nodes
1. Understand new rules and regulations			0	1
2. Appearance		1		2
3. Get name recognition prior to campaigning	1			2
4. **Being a new candidate**		4	9	14
5. Being a woman of colour		1	2	4
6. Branding as family-friendly, baby		1	3	5
7. **Fundraising**		6	14	21
8. Having the imposter syndrome		1		2
9. Incumbent		1	5	7
10. Media favouring candidates		3	5	9
11. Name recognition		2		3
12. Nonpartisan system		1	1	3

13. Not being taken seriously		1	2
14. People, voters		1	2	3
15. Politics is a man's world		1	2	3
16. Lack of knowledge			2	3
17. Presence of not very serious women		1	1	3
18. Discouraged by others			2	3
19. Negative self talk			8	9
20. Having young kids			2	3
21. Negative perception			1	2
22. One councillor per ward			1	2
23. Building a public figure			1	2
24. Not having campaigned before			2	3
25. Hard to ask for money			1	2
26. Cannot get money			1	2
27. Judgmental commentaries when door knocking			1	2
28. Nothing is done to deal with the post-election phase			2	3
29. Struggles with partner after the election			2	3
30. Experienced gender discrimination			1	2
31. Name recognition			2	3
32. Public perception of leadership competencies		2	4	7
33. Skin colour		1	1	3
34. Too many women running the same ward		1	1	3
35. Volunteers		4	8	13

36. Get support from a party	1			2
37. Having (getting) support	1			2
38. No media coverage	1	1		3
39. Pre-selection of candidates by media	1			2
40. Professional background	1			2

Strategies

Nodes	Dec 4 Open-ended response from the survey	Dec 20 Interview transcript	Dec 23 Interview transcript	Total of nodes
1. Equal Voice	1			2
2. Action from stakeholders: repetitive information	1			2
3. Advisors		1	1	3
4. Appearance	1			2
5. Approach & increase network	2			3
6. Be proactive everyday	1			2
7. Be supported emotionally		1	1	3
8. Being an incumbent		1	1	3
9. Encouraged by others			1	2
10. Meeting with the incumbent			1	2
11. Getting money early			1	2
12. Asking for money from random individuals			1	2
13. Realizing internally that I am at the right place			1	2
14. Getting help from your own children			1	2
15. Spending your own money			1	2
16. Personal willingness to overcome the challenges			3	4
17. Being a female candidate			1	2
18. Being realistic about the race			1	2
19. Being a 50+ female candidate			1	2

20. Will be supporting other women in 2021			1	2
21. Branding as independent candidate			2	3
22. Being involved in the community		3	3	7
23. Being known in the community	1	1		3
24. Being organized		1	1	3
25. Branding	1	1		3
26. Branding as independent candidates		1		2
27. Clear communication		1	1	3
28. Door knocking		1	1	3
29. Building reputation and/or name recognition	1	0		3
30. Fake it	1			2
31. Fundraising	1	4	7	13
32. Get donation from random individuals	2			3
33. Get name recognition prior to campaigning		0		1
34. Get support from a party		0		1
35. Good communication	1			2
36. Great platform		2	2	5
37. Have the right resources	1			2
38. Having knowledge in municipal affairs	1			2
39. Having savings		1	1	3
40. Having support		1		2

41. Keep doubt for the private sphere		1	1	3
42. Know your allies	1	1	1	4
43. Learning experience	1			2
44. Look professional	1			2
45. Malpractice from other candidates and their team	1			2
46. Media coverage		1	1	3
47. Local event for women running		1	1	3
48. Missing information (navigating and organizing)	1			2
49. No strategies developed about election		1	1	3
50. Positive mind set		1	1	3
51. Prepare		1	1	3
52. Professional background		0		1
53. *Ready For Her* - educational	1	1		3
54. *Ready For Her* - complicated	1			2
55. Recognition is key		1	1	3
56. Running more than once to get name recognition		0		1
57. Stakeholders focused on process	1			2
58. Start early	1	1	1	4
59. Supportive partner	1	1		3
60. Supportive friends	1			2
61. Take time to campaign	1			2

62. Track data	1			2
63. Target unions, corporations and organizations soon	1			2
64. Recruit efficient volunteers	1			2
65. Team of volunteers		4	7	11
66. Turn challenges into strengths		1	1	3
67. Use of social media		2	2	5

Appendix J: Third Round of Coding

	Challenges	Frequency
1	Fundraising	21
2	Being a new candidate	14
3	Volunteers	13
4	Media favouring candidates	9
5	Negative self talk	9
6	Incumbent	7
7	Public perception of leadership competencies	7
8	Branding as family friendly, baby	5
9	Being a woman of colour	4
10	Name recognition	3
11	Non-partisan system	3
12	People, voters	3
13	Politics is a man's world	3
14	Lack of knowledge	3
15	Presence of not very serious women	3
16	Discouraged by others	3
17	Having young kids	3
18	Not having campaigned before	3
19	Nothing is done to deal with the post election phase	3
20	Struggles with partner after the election	3
21	Name recognition	3
22	Skin color	3

23	Too many women running the same ward	3
24	No media coverage	3
25	Appearance	2
26	Get name recognition prior to campaigning	2
27	Having the imposter syndrome	2
28	Not being taken seriously	2
29	Negative perception	2
30	One councillor per ward	2
31	Building a public figure	2
32	Hard to ask for money	2
33	Cannot get money	2
34	Judgmental commentaries when door knocking	2
35	Experienced gender discrimination	2
36	Get support from a party	2
37	Having (getting) support	2
38	Pre-selection of candidates by media	2
39	Professional background	2
40	Understand new regulations	1

	Strategies	Frequency
1	Fundraising	13
2	Team of volunteers	11
3	Being involved in the community	7
4	Use of social media	5
5	Great platform	5
6	Know your allies	4
7	Personal willingness to overcome the challenges	4
8	Start early	4
9	Advisors	3
10	Approach & increase network	3
11	Be supported emotionally	3
12	Being an incumbent	3
13	Branding as independent candidate	3
14	Being known in the community	3
15	Being organized	3
16	Branding	3
17	Clear communication	3
18	Door knocking	3
19	Building reputation and or name recognition	3
20	Get donation from random individuals	3
21	Having savings	3
22	Keep doubt for the private sphere	3

23	Media coverage	3
24	Local event for women running	3
25	No strategies developed about election	3
26	Positive mind set	3
27	Prepare	3
28	*Ready For Her* - educational	3
29	Recognition is key	3
30	Supportive partner	3
31	Turn challenges into strengths	3
32	Equal Voice	2
33	Action from stakeholders: repetitive information	2
34	Appearance	2
35	Be proactive everyday	2
36	Encouraged by others	2
37	Meeting with the incumbent	2
38	Getting money early	2
39	Asking for money to random individuals	2
40	Realizing internally that I am at the right place	2
41	Getting help from your own children	2
42	Spending your own money	2
43	Being a female candidate	2
44	Being realistic about the race	2
45	Being a 50+ female candidate	2
46	Will be supporting other women in 2021	2
47	Branding as independent candidates	2

48	Fake it	2
49	Good communication	2
50	Having knowledge in municipal affairs	2
51	Having support	2
52	Learning experience	2
53	Look professional	2
54	Mal practice from other candidates and their team	2
55	Missing information (navigating and organizing)	2
56	*Ready For her* - complicated	2
57	Recruit efficient volunteers	2
58	Stakeholders focused on process	2
59	Supportive friends	2
60	Take time to campaign	2
61	Track data	2
62	Have the right resources	2
63	Target unions, corporations and organizations soon	2
64	Get name recognition prior to campaigning	1
65	Get support from a party	1
66	Professional background	1
67	Running more than once to get name recognition	1

Appendix K: Campaign Disclosure Tables

The following three tables were built on the City of Edmonton's public data (City of Edmonton, n.d.-a) presenting past candidates' total campaign period revenue for the 2010, 2013, and 2017 Edmonton Elections. Candidates are organized into four different groups according to their campaign revenues (e.g. candidates raising the least fall under group 1 whereas candidates raising the most fall under group 4). Elected candidates are represented in yellow, the names of elected female candidates are in bold, and top revenues for these candidates are in red.

Total Campaign Period Revenue 2010

In 2010, four women were elected to Edmonton City Council and all of them have raised more revenue than any of their competitors in their respective wards.

Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4	
Slemko, Al	$1,171.46	Kapitza, Bryan	$14,010.01	Loken, David	$40,935	Krushell, Kim Ward 2 top revenue	$73,145.76
Maglalang, Roberto	$1,500	Knack, Andrew	$15,336.44	Batty, Jane Ward 6 top revenue	$42,233.21	Anderson, Bryan	$84,687.46
Pirbhai, Adil	$2,050	Okelu, Chinwe	$16,387.03	Iveson, Don	$47,336.13	Sohi, Amarjeet	$114,897.70
Malone-Richards, Roxie	$2,083.75	Johnson, James	$16,757.62	Diotte, Kerry	$48,638.57		
Tupper, Shelley	$37,66.01	Razga, Hana	$17,950.21	McKeen, Scott	$53,395.88		
Bergdahl, Shane	$4,800	Naboulsi, Hatem	$18,099	Sloan, Linda Ward 1 top revenue	$54,184		
Bergeron, Steve	$4,800.67	Jeffery-Heaney, Lori	$20,222.39	Henderson, Ben	$65,451.02		
Van Alstine, Brendan	$5,014.14	Demers, Terry	$24,899	Gibbons, Edward	$66,474		
Basualdo, Cristina	$7,728.4	Post, Jamie	$27,234.96	Leibovici, Karen Ward 5 top revenue	$67,698.38		
Luthra, Vishal	$9,166	Koziak, Don	$37,964	Caterina, Tony	$69,799		
0 Candidates elected		0 Candidates elected		9 Candidates elected		3 Candidates elected	

Total Campaign Period Revenue 2013

In 2013, only one woman was elected to Edmonton City Council and she had raised more revenue than any of her competitors in Ward 2.

Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4	
White, Alfie	$100	Williams, Dexx	$11,820	Ali, Mustafa	$25,490.55	Anderson, Bryan	$68,836.47
Bessel, Ray	$493.35	Bernshaw, Rob	$12,232	Colburn, Dave	$25,521.99	Oshry, Michael	$82,587.85
Deacon, Brian A	$580.41	Okelu, Chinwe	$12,991.06	Demers, Terry Diane	$29,800	Caterina, Tony	$87,950
Prouse, Tish	$1,132.12	Tupper, Shelley	$14,563.64	Sandilands, Bryan	$31,350	Gibbons, Ed	$93,461.44
Johnstone, Dan	$4,100	Gane, Dennis John	$15,595	Dodge, David	$32,690	Loken, Dave	$97,054.50
Pirbhai, Adil	$4,410	Grand, Ted	$15,700.63	Esslinger, Bev Ward 2 top revenue	$34,044.28	McKeen, Scott	$105,863.80
Amato, Sean	$4,900	Maclise, Sharon	$16,069.87	MacKenzie, Heather	$37,603.39	Walters, Michael	$107,198.85

Santos, Allan	$6,517	Jalkanen, Nita	$16,139	Knack, Andrew	$43,143.06	Sohi, Amarjeet	$130,840.99
Parada, Terry	$8,833.20	Gibbon, Jim	$16,360	Feehan, Richard John	$45,699.19		
Millar, Jason	$9,559.38	Post, Jamie Kenneth	$16,521.39	Chak, Mujahid	$47,110		
Hachem, Sam	$10,208.25	Williams, Mimi	$17,394.63	Panesar, Harvey	$52,445		
Dorsey, Candas Jane	$10,243.26	Forsythe, Derrick	$17,923.57	Henderson, Ben	$59,355.06		
Koziak, Don	$10,800	Hennigar, Rob	$19,870	Devji, Hafis	$63,950		
Hollis, Melinda	$11,479.30	Bitar, Sonia	$20,631	Nickel, Mike	$65,199		
0 Candidates elected		**0 Candidates elected**		**4 Candidates elected**		**8 Candidates elected**

Total Campaign Period Revenue 2017

In 2017, two women were elected to Edmonton City Council both of them had raised more revenue than any of their competitors in their respective wards.

Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4	
Williams, Glenda	$210.00	Velthuizen, Tricia	$7,066.62	Newton, Dawn	$18,169.72	Caterina, Rocco	$60,648.00
Izzard, Wade	$742.71	Kleywegt, Matthew	$7,685.00	Parseyan, Payman	$18,246.47	HendersonBen	$61,789.83
Christianson Chris	$1,459.45	Haymour, Ali	$8,300.00	Prouse, Tish George	$19,667.42	Esslinger, Bev Ward2 top revenue	$63,141.40
Hees, Samantha	$1,844.98	John-West, Liz	$10,433.00	Kosowan, James	$21,398.00	Agostinis, Rob	$67,409.10
Pavlek, Troy	$2,714.68	Bowen, Nafisa	$11,328.07	Williams, Mimi	$22,359.85	Caterina, Tony	$67,873.00
Hope, Mark	$3,057.02	Hachem, Sam	$11,665.17	Tang, Keren	$25,723.00	McKeen, Scott	$77,401.63
Bernshaw, Rob	$4,464.00	Ghettuba, Beatrice	$14,214.59	Rasheed, Sarmad	$29,990.00	Knight, Bill	$85,591.19
Logan, Nigel	$4,735.12	Wright, Jo-Anne	$14,400.58	Schrader, Eli	$31,291.50	Banga, Moe	$89,241.00
Principe, Karen	$4,941.5	Amenaghawon,	$14,998.7	Goa, Kristen	$31,343.2	Haymour, Hassan	$92,800.00

	4	Felix	1		2		
Olivier, Dave	$5,600.32	Xiao, David	$16,188.26	Andreychuk, Kris	$33,411.77	Cartmell, Tim	$95,188.54
Pavlenko, Svetlana	$5,956.26	Dziadyk, Jon	$17,070.00	Jimmy, Miranda	$37,065.15	Hamilton, Sarah Ward5 top revenue	$95,592.00
Senol, Sim	$6,078.50	Burdeniuk, Brandy	$17,383.83	Berretti, Vieri	$41,666.00	Walters, Michael	$96,119.06
Draper, Justin	$6,917.56	Knack, Andrew	$17,772.95	Pon, Sandy	$51,630.33	Nickel, Mike	$110,086.17
Tupper, Shelley	$6,967.02	Poste, Alison	$17,972.00	Paquette, Aaron	$56,521.04	Loken, Dave	$119,937.69
0 Candidates elected		**2 Candidates elected**		**1 Candidate elected**		**9 Candidates elected**	