

# WSSR WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

## Where are all the Women? Understanding the Relevance of Gender in Canadian Politics

**Dr. Joanna Everitt**

Professor, University of New Brunswick in Saint John

September 15, 2017

9:00am – 4:30pm

### **Workshop Outline**

Increasingly, public focus in Canada today is on the mirror representation of diversity in various positions of power, including in legislatures, cabinets and positions of government leadership. In her workshop, Dr. Everitt will draw upon her research findings to take participants through the evolution of female representation in politics, the obstacles still faced by women today and the implications of the democratic deficit resulting from their low representation on Canadian society. She will also explore other challenges of gender politics, including diverse public opinions of men and women, voter orientations toward male versus female candidates and leaders, the role that parties play as gatekeepers and the impact of gendered mediated political coverage. Everitt will conclude by discussing the types of changes necessary for women to enter the political domain through both citizen engagement and in leadership roles.

What is the democratic deficit?

- History of women's political engagement
  - o Grassroots activity versus elite participation

Why does it matter?

- Gender gaps in public opinion and voting behavior
- Policy outputs in more balanced legislatures

Where is this deficit it currently found?

- Elected office/elites (cabinets/leaders)

What factors do or do not produce it?

- Public opinion/support for female candidates/leaders
  - o Stereotyping
- Political parties
- Political structures – (ie. Family unfriendly legislatures)
- Media

What can be done to change it?

- Advocacy – Equal Voice
- Electoral system reform
- Party leadership

### **Required Readings**

CBC. (2015) 50% population, 25% representation: Why the parliamentary gender gap?

<http://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/women-politics/>





Everitt, J. (2016) Where are the Women in Canadian Political Parties. In A. Gagnon and B. Tanguay (Eds.) *Canadian Parties in Transition*, 4th edition, (pp.296-315) Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

<http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EEFAEA>

Everitt, J. (Nov 17. 2005) Uncovering the Coverage: Gender Biases in Canadian Political Reporting. *Breakfast on the Hill Seminar Series*. Sponsored by Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

[https://web.archive.org/web/20100217055204/http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/gender\\_portrayal/uncovering\\_coverage.cfm](https://web.archive.org/web/20100217055204/http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/gender_portrayal/uncovering_coverage.cfm)

Everitt, J., & Gidengil, E. (2013) Chapter 2: Public Attitudes Towards Women's Political Representation. In T. Small and R. Lexier, *Mind the Gaps: Canadian Perspectives on Gender and Politics* (34-47) Black Point NS: Fernwood Publishing. <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EEFE2F>

Blais, A., Fournier, P., Nevitte, N., Everitt, J., & Gidengil, E. (2013) Chapter 3: Explaining the Modern Gender Gap In T. Small and R. Lexier, *Mind the Gaps: Canadian Perspectives on Gender and Politics* (48-63) Black Point NS: Fernwood Publishing.

<http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EEFAF9>

\*If you are registered for non-credit and are unable to locate the readings, please contact us at [wssr@concordia.ca](mailto:wssr@concordia.ca)