Feminist Women in Canadian Politics: A Group Ideologically Divided ?

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the ideological diversity among feminist women in electoral politics in Canada. It shows that feminist political women form a diversified group: some are liberal but others are conservative. Certain feminists even support positions against what are known as traditional demands of the second-wave feminism.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article se propose d'explorer la diversité idéologique parmi les femmes féministes élues en politique au Canada. Il montre que les femmes politiques féministes constituent un groupe diversifié : certaines sont libérales alors que d'autres sont conservatrices. Quelques-unes soutiennent même des positions contraires aux revendications traditionnellement associées à la deuxième vague du féminisme.

INTRODUCTION

Feminism is based on the acknowledgement that "virtually across time and place, men and women are unequal in the power they have, either in society or over their own lives, and the corollary belief that men and women should be equal" (Arnell 1999, 3). Even if the search for *de jure* and *de facto* equality is one of the generally recognized goals of feminism and the feminist movement, one must not, for all that, conclude that it is united in thought and action. Feminism and the feminist movement are not homogeneous entities; they are animated by very diverse ideas, practices, strategies and organizations (Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988; Vickers, Rankin and Appelle 1993). This diversity reflects the wide range of women's collective experiences as they are modulated by their age, class, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, place of residence, political persuasion, and so on.

This diversity also emerges in regards to electoral politics. For Young (2000, 54-81; 132-182), two phases punctuate the relationship between feminists and Canadian political parties during the course of the past three decades. From 1970 to 1985, the liberal or reformist tendency which was then the dominant voice within the feminist movement understood the importance of entering the political arena. Women for Political Action and the Feminist Party of Canada are examples of initiatives aimed at increasing the proportion of women in political institutions. The movement adopted a multipartisan approach and maintained links with the three principal political parties which were then represented in the House of Commons. However, the various parties did not offer feminists the same opportunities. In this sense, the New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP), and, to a lesser extent, the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC), showed themselves to be more welcoming of the feminist movement than the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada (PC). As Young stated, "feminism was at best a nascent force in the Conservative party in the early 1970s," (2000, 146) and although Flora MacDonald was a candidate for the PC leadership in 1976, it was not until the early 1980s that the party seriously took into consideration feminist demands.

From the mid-1980s, a transformation of the structure of political opportunities, as well as the consolidation of socialist and radical feminists within the women's movement caused it to distance itself from the electoral scene and to adopt an apartisan approach. The 1984 Federal Election brought to power a fiscally neo-liberal government. However, the conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney showed a certain open-mindedness towards feminist demands (Bashevkin 1998, 38). Nevertheless, compared to the LPC and the NDP, the PC maintained a more distant relationship with the feminist movement (Young 2000, 162). Paradoxically, the 1984 conservative victory was also the occasion for the election of an important number of women to the House of Commons. This

fact lead a certain number of authors to question the link which is commonly made between descriptive and substantive representations of women in politics (Dobrowolsky 2000-2001).

The 1993 Election marks the emergence of a new partisan system, characterized in part by the advent of more polarized parties (Carty, Cross and Young 2000) as well as by the rejection of two parties traditionally associated with Canadian politics (the PC and the NDP) and the arrival of new political parties (the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party). According to Young (2002), this fourth partisan system is less than favourable for the political representation of women. Firstly, the emergence of the Reform Party (which became the Canadian Alliance in 2000) and of the Bloc Québécois party (BQ) was only made possible with the demise of the PC and the NDP, this latter being a traditional ally of the women's movement. Secondly, the Reform Party constituted the dynamic element of the new partisan system and is not very favourable to the representation of women. Although the BQ's centre-left orientation makes it sympathetic to the feminist movement, the fact that it is solely implemented in Québec limits the impact of its actions at the Canadian level. The 1997 Canadian Election confirmed the position of the Reform Party on the federal political scene as an ideologically right-wing party in line with the conservatism of the Republican Party in the United States. At the other end of the continuum, the NDP improved its position on the political scene, thus allowing for the circulation of left-wing ideas at the federal level. The PC, LPC and BQ locate themselves between these two poles, their positions varying between a more conservative or liberal stance, depending on the issue at hand. Was this ideological diversity echoed among feminist women elected during the 1997 Federal Election?

Although the fourth partisan system allowed for a greater number of political parties to be represented in the House of Commons, it did not alter one pillar of Canadian parliamentarism: that of party discipline, which is perceived by many observers to be an impediment to the substantive representation of women (Maillé 1991; Trimble 1997). Party discipline, a convention of Canadian parliamentarism, consists of one common position imposed to all members of a party relative to policies and voting. Party discipline frames the role

of political representation: it not only determines the vote in the House, but also inspires the speeches made, the ideas expressed in Parliamentary Committees or even outside the parliament, such as in the media. Women's political representation does not escape party discipline. For instance, a study conducted with women elected to the Canadian parliament in 1993 showed that party discipline can limit the substantive representation of women (Tremblay 1999). It must also be added that party discipline is even more restrictive for members of the governing party than for members of the opposition; it is a question of government stability.

Furthermore, the question that arises is: do feminist women engaged on the electoral scene express diverse feminist ideological positions or do they form a consensus in accordance with the party discipline rule which sets the tone to Canadian parliamentarism and party system? The purpose of this paper is to explore ideological diversity among feminist women in electoral politics in Canada. We believe that feminist women in Canadian electoral politics constitute a very diversified group even when they belong to the same political party. This hypothesis leads to a discussion of the objectives behind the election of women in politics.

METHODS

The results presented here stem from a questionnaire survey done in 1997-98 among female and male candidates in the 1997 Federal Election (N=1,205)[1] as well as female and male local riding presidents (N=1,102). These people belonged to the five political parties represented in the House of Commons at the time: the Bloc Québécois (BQ), the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC), the New Democratic Party (NDP), the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada (PC) and the Reform Party (RP). The overall response rate was 42.9 percent (973/2,269); 52.6 percent (270/513) for women and 39.7 percent (698/1,756) for men.[2]

There are two dependent variables: a. "social liberalism," which is measured by the Self-Identification Liberalism Index (SILI) and the Multi-Statement Liberalism Index (MSLI); b. "women in the political arena," measured by the Explanation Index (EXI) and the Measure Index (MI).[3] The political party (those being the BQ, LPC,

NDP, PC and RP), the political philosophy (conservative or liberal) and feminist consciousness are the main independent variables. Cook (1989, 74) defines feminist consciousness as a "gender consciousness based upon a set of political beliefs about equality of the sexes." In an empirical and quantitative perspective, the feminist consciousness is usually measured by the interaction among three components: power discontent (the feeling that women are discriminated against or are not equal to men), system blaming (the rationale for explaining group disadvantage as being individual or societal), and collective orientation (recognizing the need for group solutions).[4]

Data analysis consists of cross-tabulations, Pearson chi-squares, variance analyses (i.e., independent-samples T-test), Pearson correlations, multivariate analyses (OLS regressions) and coefficients of variation.[5]

RESULTS

Two hypotheses inspire this analysis. The first suggests that feminist women engaged in electoral politics do not constitute a homogeneous group as relates to their ideas concerning social liberalism and the integration of women into the electoral arena. This hypothesis is confirmed. Two hundred and twelve women have been defined as feminists based on the characteristics mentioned above. Thus, the coefficient of variation for the Multi-Statement Liberalism scores of the feminist women is 16.29 percent (a value distribution is said to be homogeneous if the coefficient of variation is equal or inferior to 15 percent). The coefficient of variation of the Explanation and Measure scores are even more convincing: 27.72 percent and 23.31 percent respectively.

Some American studies have shown that feminist women in electoral politics cover a large range of ideological positions going from very conservative to very liberal opinions (Carroll 1994, 138-156; Dolan and Ford 1998; McGlen and Sarkees 2001). While the link between feminism and liberalism have largely been explored and demonstrated (Cook 1989; Cook and Wilcox 1991; Klein 1984, 115-117; Reingold and Foust 1998; Rhodebeck 1996), the relation between feminism and conservatism has had much less attention. Yet the relations between feminism and conservatism do

exist: in her 1987 survey, Kelly (1987) noted an odd mixture of feminism and conservatism among female Arizona legislators. In Canada, Everitt (2002) obtains results that allow one to suspect that feminists do not blindly endorse liberal positions. Based on the 1997 Election Study, she finds that feminist women in the Canadian population do not necessarily see social welfare issues as a political priority. In fact, some favored themes such as jobs and unemployment, which sailed to the beat of neo-liberalism in Canada at the end of the 1990s. Another indication that feminism and conservatism may be linked in Canada is the fact that some conservative MPs have worked with women's groups in order to change and improve women's lives. For instance, after the Supreme Court struck down the rape shield law, the then Conservative Minister of Justice Kim Campbell consulted women's groups in order to develop a more women's friendly legislation (Dobrowolsky 2000-2001).

Does the federal electoral scene in Canada also hold such diversity between feminist women with liberal and conservative orientations? Theoretically, there is reason to believe so. In fact, while the American and Canadian political regimes are different in many regards, their partisan systems concur on some points, particularly as relates to conservative and liberal ideological orientations. As mentioned previously, we can rank Canadian political parties from the 1990s on a conservatism-liberalism axis (Carty, Cross and Young 2000; Tremblay and Pelletier 2000). In the American tradition, liberalism was and usually still is associated with left wing, more advanced, and some form of egalitarian ideas, especially on the social plane. Liberalism presented as such calls on possible mentality changes concerning cotemporary situations and problems. It is also from this that social liberalism ensues in Canada and which tints the partisan system.

From an ideological perspective, the feminist women engaged in the 1997 Election did not form a homogeneous group: unsurprisingly, several were liberal but others were also conservative. This first observation emerges from the analysis of the two social liberalism indexes: the Self-Identification Liberalism Index (SILI) and the Multi-Statement Liberalism Index (MSLI). Of the 212 feminist women, 202 agreed to define their own

ideological orientation: 20 (9.9 percent) identified themselves as having conservative ideas, 116 (57.4 percent) as having liberal ideas, and 66 (37.2 percent) as having ideas between these two poles. We obtain the same result when we resort to the Multi-Statement Liberalism Index: 24 (11.7 percent) of the feminist women are conservative, 115 (55.8 percent) are liberal and 67 (32.5 percent) are between the two.

To illustrate this, many of these conservative feminist women - in terms of the MSLI - hold positions considered contrary to traditional demands of second-wave feminists: 54.2 percent (13/24) object to the idea of State intervention in matters of domestic violence, especially since that would mean interfering in families' private lives; 66.7 percent (16/24) are opposed to the idea of installing condom dispensers be in schools starting at first year of high school; 29.2 percent (7/24) believe that the government should invest a lot less money in social programs; 41.7 percent (10/24) support the idea that everybody is entitled to own a firearm. In brief, feminist women engaged in the 1997 Federal Election did not constitute a monolithic group in terms of social liberalism: some were conservative, others were liberal, and others adopted a position somewhere between the two. It would thus be misleading to associate feminism and liberalism too closely as some studies have done until now: although feminism and liberalism are clearly associated (Pearson correlation=0.539, P=0.01), being a feminist does not automatically imply a liberal political orientation on social matters.

From this observation, we subsequently divided the feminist women in two categories in order to give further strength to our analyses: conservative feminist women and liberal feminist women.[6] The gap between conservative and liberal feminist women is very clear. Liberal feminist women had statistically higher Explanation and Measure scores than conservative feminist women: 3.90 vs 3.39 for the former and 3.95 vs 3.02 for the latter. The reasons for this cleavage still remains to be understood.

A closer look at numbers in Table 1 suggests some conclusions. First, the distribution of responses of the liberal and conservative feminist women indicates that they adopt the same orientations, more or less. In fact, for six out of the nine propositions examined, the distributions of responses for each feminist category share the same mode. Furthermore, beyond ideological cleavages on the basis of social liberalism, feminist women share a certain community of thought. This constitutes interesting data which leads us to believe that some ideas generally associated with feminism and notably women in the political arena may also resonate among conservative groups on the Canadian political landscape.

A second conclusion - consequent to the first - suggests that even though the responses of each feminist category reflect similar general orientations, in their responses liberal feminist women constitute a more homogeneous group than conservative feminist women. In effect, conservative feminist women's distributions of responses more often tend to be bi-modal, even multi-modal, which is not true of liberal feminist women' responses. This greater tendency among liberal feminist women to homogeneity is confirmed by their lower coefficient of variation: as for the Explanation Index, they obtained a coefficient of variation of 24.10 percent against 35.51 percent for conservative feminist women; as relates to the Measure Index, the numbers are 18.68 percent and 26.99 percent respectively. The political party certainly has something to do with this result. Indeed, the conservative group has in its ranks women from the five political parties retained for this study, while more than four out of five liberal feminist women come from the LPC or the NDP. These two parties, in fact, also provide the grounds for a feminist militancy aiming to increase the number of women in politics (Young 2000, 54-81 & 132-182).

One last conclusion to be drawn from Table 1 implies that certain feminist women adopt positions contrary to traditional demands of the second-wave feminist movement. This holds particularly true for the propositions of the Measure Index. Thus, 43.1 percent of conservative feminist women do not think that political parties should adopt affirmative action measures for women and 29.8 percent reject the idea that political parties provide special financial support to female candidates (a measure which, incidentally, already exists in some Canadian political parties). The question of quotas is one which deeply divides the feminist movement and even liberal feminists, as

shown in the bi-modal distribution of their responses on this issue: almost two liberal feminists out of five do not agree with the adoption of quotas by political parties. As for conservative feminists, almost three out of four also object to quotas.

In sum, the analyses conducted so far show some of the diversity among feminist women involved in the 1997 Canadian Federal Election, particularly on the ideological front: in terms of social liberalism, some were conservative, others were liberal, and others fell somewhere between the two. As well, feminist women of a given ideological orientation did not present homogeneous opinions regarding some feminist claims, this being the case for conservative more than liberal feminists. This observation leads us to believe in the existence of other forces which work to divide the so-called feminist unity; of which the political party must not be overlooked.

The second hypothesis of this research implies that all Canadian political parties have conservative and liberal feminists within their ranks who, despite their different ideological beliefs, at least in regards to demands generally associated with feminism, represent no threat to the principle of party unity.

It is wrong to maintain that every Canadian political party has conservative and liberal feminists within its ranks: the Reform Party only has conservative feminists, which is consistent with the strong social conservatism and economic (especially fiscal) neo-liberalism message the party conveys. Moreover, conservative and liberal feminist women are not randomly distributed among other Canadian political parties. Generally, some parties are, for the most part, composed of conservative feminist women (the Reform Party has only conservative feminist women, and 61.1 percent of the feminist women in the PC are conservative) and others which have mostly liberal feminist women (such as the BQ where 76.5 percent of feminist women are liberal, the LPC and the NDP with respectively 75 percent and 93.3 percent of liberal feminist women). In brief, no political party has a well-balanced proportion of conservative and liberal feminist women within its ranks. This might explain why, in many cases, the coexistence of conservative and liberal feminist women within a given party does not constitute a serious threat to party unity.

Even so, Table 2 needs to be qualified. Generally speaking, it is true that there are no significant differences between the Explanation Index (EXI) and the Measure Index (MI) of conservative and liberal feminist women from the same political party. However, contrary to the EXI, the MI does generate conflicts within the LPC and the NDP. In fact, the MI induces more conflicting questions than the EXI; while the latter concerns explanations for the small number of women in politics, the former challenges the entitlements of some and the backwardness of others, and even offers solutions to make up for the democratic deficit suffered by women. Moreover, the fact that the MI generates conflicts within the LPC and the NDP is very much revealing of the tensions aroused by the idea of adopting strategies to increase the number of women in politics, precisely because these two parties are the only ones on the political scene to have adopted certain measures in this regard. In the 1997 Federal Election, the NDP had endowed itself with an affirmative action policy saying, among other things, that female candidates could benefit from a reimbursement of up to $500.00 for child care fees incurred during the campaign. Moreover, the LPC and the NDP both have special funds to help female candidates during an election campaign funds which, as shown in Table 1, do not lead to a consensus even among feminists.[7] The following question is now brought forth: why does the idea of adopting special measures to increase the number of women in politics divide feminist women in parties where liberal feminists dominate (with the exception of the Bloc Québécois) but not in parties where conservative feminist women are more numerous?

This question leads us to refine our second hypothesis by suggesting that the forces which influence feminist women's MI are not the same for center and left-of-center parties on the one hand, and right-wing parties on the other: feminist consciousness and social liberalism play an active role in the definition of the MI within the former parties but not so within the latter. However, before we move farther, many studies have shown that support for feminism could be influenced by socio-demographic variables such as age, education, occupation, region of residence, experience within the party, or having been a member of a women's group (Carroll 1992; Klein 1984; Sigel 1996). We

have therefore conducted a few Pearson correlations by retaining six sub-groups: conservative feminist women, liberal feminist women, the conservative feminist women in both the LPC and the NDP (the two parties which show statistically significant gaps), the conservative feminist women in both the Conservative Party of Canada and the Reform Party (the two parties which do not show such gaps), the liberal feminist women in both the LPC and the NDP, and the liberal feminist women in both the Conservative Party of Canada and the Reform Party.[8] Socio-demographic variables hardly influence the MI, except the fact of having been a member of a women's group in the case of the liberal feminist women ($r=.197$, $P \le .05$), and region for liberal feminist women in the PC and the Reform Party ($r=.828$, $P \le .01$). The strength of this last correlation can be attributed to the fact that, as shown in Table 2, only the PC (and not the Reform Party) had liberal feminist women and, for all that, ten out of these fourteen women were in Ontario and Québec - the two regions where, all parties put together, there is the strongest concentration of liberal feminist women, i.e., the ones more likely to support measures to increase the number of women in Canadian politics.

As well, the Measure Index (MI) is more likely to be influenced by variables of an ideological nature: the political party, the feminist consciousness and the Multi-Statement Liberalism Index (MSLI) for conservative and liberal feminist women and, more specifically, for liberal feminist women within the LPC and the NDP. As for the conservative feminist women in the LPC and the NDP, their MI is clearly influenced by the feminist consciousness, whereas in the PC and the Reform Party it is influenced by the MSLI. If, generally speaking, the factors that influence the MI of conservative and liberal feminist women are essentially the same, their role considerably varies when the ideological orientation of their party is taken into account. In other words, the driving factors behind the MI of feminist women differ according to the ideological positioning of their party. For example, while the feminist consciousness in the LPC and the NDP exerts an influence on the MI of feminist women, be they conservative or liberal, nothing of the sort can be said of the PC or the Reform. This dichotomy reflects the historical link between feminists and the

NDP and, to a lesser extent, the LPC (Young 2000: 54-81).

After establishing the relevance of the party, of the feminist consciousness and of the MSLI on the MIs of conservative and liberal feminist women, we conducted a few regression analyses in order to better understand the simultaneous role of these three independent variables on the MI in accordance with the ideological positioning of the parties. It appears that right-wing parties are represented as unified entities of which the internal cohesion is not at all threatened by the variables retained, with the possible exception of social liberalism as concerns certain measures to increase the number of women in politics. In fact, conservative feminist women with the highest MSLI are more likely to agree with the idea of special measures to increase women's political representation than those with a lower MSLI (but $P \le .10$). The opinions of feminist women within center and left-of-center parties regarding these special measures are jolted by a variety of factors, such as the party, feminist consciousness and social liberalism. This is particularly true for liberal feminist women. It is important to note that the feminist consciousness plays a more prominent and consistent role within center and left-of-center parties than right-wing parties. While in the realm of the Canadian right the feminist consciousness does not influence the MI of conservative and liberal feminist women, it is the only variable to have an influence on the MI of both liberal and conservative feminist women in the LPC and the NDP. However, this influence is hardly noticeable among liberal feminists ($P \le .10$). If the MI is, at least partly, a matter of the political party, feminism and liberalism within center and left-of-center parties, we still need to grasp the variables that influence the MI in right-wing parties. The influence of the MSLI among conservative feminist women within these parties suggests that it might be fruitful to explore other attitudes often associated with social conservatism - such as moral traditionalism - in order to better understand the forces which inspire the reactions of right-wing political élites to certain measures aimed at increasing the number of women in politics.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to explore the ideological diversity among feminist women in electoral politics in Canada. Feminist women in Canadian electoral politics constitute a diversified group in that some are liberal, others are conservative and others are between these two poles. Moreover, conservative and liberal feminist women are not randomly distributed across the Canadian political spectrum: no political party has a well-balanced proportion of conservative and liberal feminist women within its ranks. Nevertheless, in most cases, the coexistence of conservative and liberal feminist women within a given party does not constitute a serious threat to internal party unity. Finally, this study has enabled us to show that the factors that influence feminist women's support for special measures to increase the number of women in politics vary according to the ideological orientation of the parties.

Our first conclusion confirms that there is no one way to be a feminist, just as feminist thought cannot be limited to a set of precepts firmly fit one into the other. It must be added that this diversity within feminism is not new; it has animated the second-wave feminist movement while liberal, radical, socialist, Marxist, and psychoanalytic feminists, among other tendencies, cohabited.

A second conclusion interprets this diversity among feminist women not as a limit, but as an asset for a political representation of women. Diversity among feminist women allows feminism to manifest itself in different forms and according to various intensities. Although conservative feminist women are more hesitant than liberal feminist women in their engagement toward certain ideas generally associated with feminism (and notably regarding women in the political arena), they have nonetheless enabled these ideas to enter the conservative circles of the Canadian political landscape - areas where in the absence of feminist women, these ideas could not even filter their way through. In other words, the messengers adapt the message to the environment in which it will be expressed. It remains to be seen whether conservative feminist women effectively express those ideas generally associated with a feminist view of electoral politics within their stronghold of Canadian conservatism and, if need be, act accordingly.

Finally, our study has shown that within a given party, conservative and liberal feminist women coexist and, in most cases, do not seriously jeopardize party unity as a result. However, this is not always the case, especially in the LPC and the NDP in regards to strategies to increase the number of women in politics. This finding is particularly interesting because these two parties are the most involved in strategies to increase women's political representation. The existence of this cleavage within the LPC and the NDP illustrates the main lesson to be drawn from the study: more than a question of knowing whether we must elect more women or even more feminists in politics, it is through the election of feminist women of liberal political orientation that a project of women's political representation which links presence and ideas can be carried out (Phillips 1995). Feminism does not exist in seclusion: when the time comes to elect women in politics, the positions defended in relation to other themes (e.g., social liberalism) must also be taken into account. The Canadian feminist movement and particularly the feminists who believe it is important to invest in formal political institutions should consider this finding and, in parallel, look to strengthen the links between women elected in politics and women's groups that act outside conventional political life (Dobrowolsky 2000-2001). Feminists would be better prepared to counter the conservative wave that is increasingly taking hold of Canadian federal politics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ENDNOTES

1. Initially 1205 forms were sent but 38 were returned because of incorrect addresses, thus reducing the population to 1167 units.

2. Five people did not mention their gender, which explains a total of 968 rather than 973.

3. The SILI relates to self-identification as "someone with mostly liberal ideas," "someone with mostly conservative ideas" or "someone falling somewhere between these two positions." It varies between 1 and 3. The MSLI, which is linked to social liberalism, concerns the laying-out of civil rights and liberties and the role of the State. Made up of eleven statements, it varies between 1 and 5, and has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.6827. The EXI deals with some of the explanations of why there are so few women in politics. Based on five statements it varies between 1 and 5 and has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.6388. The MI, which varies between 1 and 5, rests on four strategies to increase the number of women in politics. The Cronbach's Alpha for the MI is 0.6262.

4. Each of these components was given a code 1 when the answer matched the feminist movement and its ideologies (otherwise 0). Political women and men were then categorized into four analytic groups: "Strongly Feminist," who endorsed all propositions used to measure the feminist consciousness; "Slightly Feminist," who supported two questions out of three; "Potential Feminist," who gave only one feminist response; and "Non-Feminist," who agreed with none of the feminist statements. In order to strengthen our analysis, we combined the "Slightly Feminist" and "Strongly Feminist" categories together.

5. The coefficient of variation is a measure of relative dispersion. It outlines the importance of the data dispersion in relation to the mean's value. It is measured as: (standard deviation/mean) X 100.

6. We proceeded to identify the median of the MSLI scores of the middle-of-the-road feminist women category and to group the bottom half with the conservative feminist women category, and the top half with the liberal feminist women category.

7. The PC's Ellen Fairclough Fund was not active at the 1997 Election.

8. The Bloc Québécois was not considered for this analysis. In our view, it would have had to be associated with the Conservative Party of Canada and the Reform Party because its feminist women do not have MIs that polarize them. Ideologically, however, the Bloc Québécois is clearly a center or a left-of-center party, whereas the Conservative Party and the Reform Party are at the right end of the political spectrum (Tremblay and Pelletier 2000). As well, the Conservative and Reform parties were merged strictly on the basis of the fact that they do not show gaps in regards to MIs. This choice does not imply that we consider these parties to be identical from an ideological perspective.

TABLE 1
The Positioning of Conservative and Liberal Feminist Women for each of the Statements which Make Up the Explanation and Measure Indexes

Explanation Index :		Conservative Feminist Women	Liberal Feminist Women
Political parties don't encourage women to run[c]	Agree	31.0 (18)	53.4 (78)
	Neither	19.0 (11)	17.8 (26)
	Disagree	50.0 (29)	28.8 (42)
The rules of the political game put women at a disadvantage[a]	Agree	56.9 (33)	74.0 (108)
	Neither	12.1 (7)	7.5 (11)
	Disagree	31.0 (18)	18.5 (27)
Women don't have the necessary support within political parties[b]	Agree	47.4 (27)	68.5 (100)
	Neither	21.1 (12)	15.1 (22)
	Disagree	31.6 (18)	16.4 (24)
Some party workers don't want women candidates	Agree	55.2 (32)	53.4 (78)
	Neither	15.5 (9)	20.5 (30)
	Disagree	29.3 (17)	26.0 (38)
Women don't have the financial means to assume the cost of a riding nomination campaign[b]	Agree	67.2 (39)	78.4 (116)
	Neither	12.1 (7)	13.5 (20)
	Disagree	20.7 (12)	8.1 (12)

Measures Index :			
That political parties set up training programs for women	Agree	77.2 (44)	84.5 (125)
	Neither	12.3 (7)	9.5 (14)
	Disagree	10.5 (6)	6.1 (9)
That political parties adopt quotas so that the number of female and male candidates reflects the proportion of women and men in society[d]	Agree	13.8 (8)	42.9 (63)
	Neither	12.1 (7)	18.4 (27)
	Disagree	74.1 (43)	38.8 (57)
That political parties adopt affirmative action measures for women[d]	Agree	39.7 (23)	82.4 (122)
	Neither	17.2 (10)	8.1 (12)
	Disagree	43.1 (25)	9.5 (14)
That political parties provide special financial support to women candidates[d]	Agree	47.4 (27)	84.5 (125)
	Neither	22.8 (13)	7.4 (11)
	Disagree	29.8 (17)	8.1 (12)

a $P \leq .10$
b $P \leq .05$
c $P \leq .01$
d $P \leq .000$

TABLE 2

Explanation and Measure Scores, by Types of Feminist Women and Political Party

	Conservative Feminist Women	Liberal Feminist Women
Explanation Index		
BQ*	3.30 (4)*	4.08 (13)
LPC	3.75 (16)	3.75 (50)
NDP	4.04 (5)*	4.11 (67)
PC	2.93 (22)	3.31 (14)
RP	3.52 (10)	--
Measure Index		
BQ	3.56 (4)*	3.73 (13)
LPCc	3.18 (15)	3.81 (51)
NDPc	3.60 (5)*	4.26 (69)
PC	2.91 (22)	3.18 (14)
RP	2.50 (10)	--

*The small number of cases invite caution.
a   P≤.10
b   P≤.05
c   P≤.01
d   P≤.000

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