

“The ability to make decisions and implement them is not a gender-specific trait, but a common human one; in other words, it is as natural for a woman to hold power as for a man to hold power.”⁸⁰

The diversification of masculinity, or the breakdown of hegemonic masculinity to be inclusive of other forms of masculinity, is important for women’s access the political sphere. This is because “hegemonic masculinity...guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women”⁸¹, thus the removal of hegemonic ideals would imply that women, and men, would no longer be oppressed by androcentric systems. Democratic theory dictates that “citizen participation in all aspects of public affairs is essential to the full development of individual capacities”⁸², thus, the representation of not only hegemonic masculinity, but a spectrum of masculine and feminine identities, is required for a full democracy to be reached. Therefore, the redefinition of gender constructs needs to occur in society. When neither gender has to conform to traditional gender constructs and fluidity between the two is allowed, “then we will see real change”⁸³. This chapter will examine the likelihood of the diversification of masculinity, or the continuity of hegemonic masculinity in politics, as well as whether women’s representation in politics will increase.

The increasing acceptance of femininity in masculine identities could encourage the acceptance of the feminine identity in politics. Societies “development leads to a weakening of traditional values...in perceptions regarding the appropriate role for women”⁸⁴ allowing women to overcome social barriers that prevent them from accessing macro level institutions. The continuing shift in the culture of gender roles would mean that both men and women would be able to fluidly adopt

⁸⁰ Shvedova, N. (2005). *Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). p. 45.

⁸¹ Connell, as cited in, Ashe, F. (2007). *The new politics of masculinity*. London: Routledge. p. 146

⁸² CLARK, J. (1991). Getting There: Women in Political Office. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 515(1), p. 65.

⁸³ Birgitta Dahl, as cited in, Shvedova, N. (2005). *Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). p. 36

⁸⁴ Shvedova, N. (2005). *Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). p. 40

characteristics from either masculinity or femininity. Only through the breakdown of hegemonic masculinity and acceptance of feminine characteristics, will women be able to integrate fully into the political sphere.

Forms of masculinity are evolving, particularly seen in the rising prominence of the ‘family man’ in politics⁸⁵, as this shift in focus from hegemonic ideals to alternative masculinities in the media is indicative of societies changing values⁸⁶. Whilst emerging alternative masculinities are becoming visible in politics, the ideals that hegemonic masculinity entails could mean that it becomes favourable in the future. Previously, threats to countries, such as that of terrorism, have meant that female candidates are disadvantaged, as “a clear bias favouring male candidates and elected officials accompanies the ‘war on terrorism.’”⁸⁷. Societal trends, like those seen in periods of international conflict, also tend to indicate that hegemonic masculinities are often ‘fall-backs’ as they are far more conservative than other identities, and therefore tend to be the safer option in times of stress, as they are “tough, aggressive and uncompromising”⁸⁸.

The representation of women in government is set to increase, however, if hegemonic masculinity continues to prevail in politics, women’s access to the political arena will depend on strategies to increase their representation. The increase of women in politics is supported by my questionnaire conducted, where 88% of respondents agreed that female representation will increase in the future⁸⁹. However, the inclusion of the graph image may have led respondents to select the option that looked to be true. Implementation of quotas as a way in which the government can increase the representation is becoming common practice⁹⁰, as existing social barriers prevent women from accessing the political sphere freely. In the primary research conducted, interviewee Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney, stated that quotas could be implemented in the future to “push to have more gender balance in politics”⁹¹, however, due to the nature of the interview being over email, follow up questions on the how quotas would achieve the gender balance in long term and adverse affects of quotas could not be explored from a politician’s perspective. The presence of female politicians

⁸⁵ Jackson, P. (1991). *The Cultural Politics of Masculinity: Towards a Social Geography*. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, [online] Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/622614?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents 16(2) [Accessed: 24/01/2016] p. 206

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Lawless, as cited in, Drutman, L. (2015). *How anxiety about terrorism impacts female candidates in elections*. [online] Quartz. Available at: <http://qz.com/503667/how-anxiety-about-terrorism-impacts-female-candidates-in-elections/> [Accessed 18 Jun. 2016].

⁸⁸ Lawless, J. (2004). *Women, War, and Winning Elections: Gender Stereotyping in the Post-September 11th Era*. *Political Research Quarterly*, 57(3), p. 487

⁸⁹ See Appendix A

⁹⁰ Lenoir, N. (2001). *The representation of women in politics: from quotas to parity in elections*. *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 50(2), p. 220

⁹¹ See Appendix D

within politics will “serve as role models and provide political experience for other women who may seek office in the future”⁹² therefore increasing the frequency of the feminine identity in the political arena, creating “an environment enabling women to assume and sustain political leadership”⁹³. The acceptance of female identity in the macro sphere would also lead to an acceptance of alternative masculinities. However, quotas could present an issue of ‘tokenism’, that women are being elected to seats so that the quotas can be filled, which would be problematic in legitimising the authority of women in government, perpetuating masculine dominated structures in macro sphere.

*“Women have tried to enter politics trying to look like men. This will not work. We have to bring our differences, our emotions, our way of seeing things, even our tears to the process.”*⁹⁴

⁹² CLARK, J. (1991). Getting There: Women in Political Office. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 515(1), p. 76.

⁹³ Tadros, M. (2014). "Women in politics: gender, power and development". London: Zed Books. p. 6

⁹⁴ Shvedova, N. (2005). *Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). p. 44