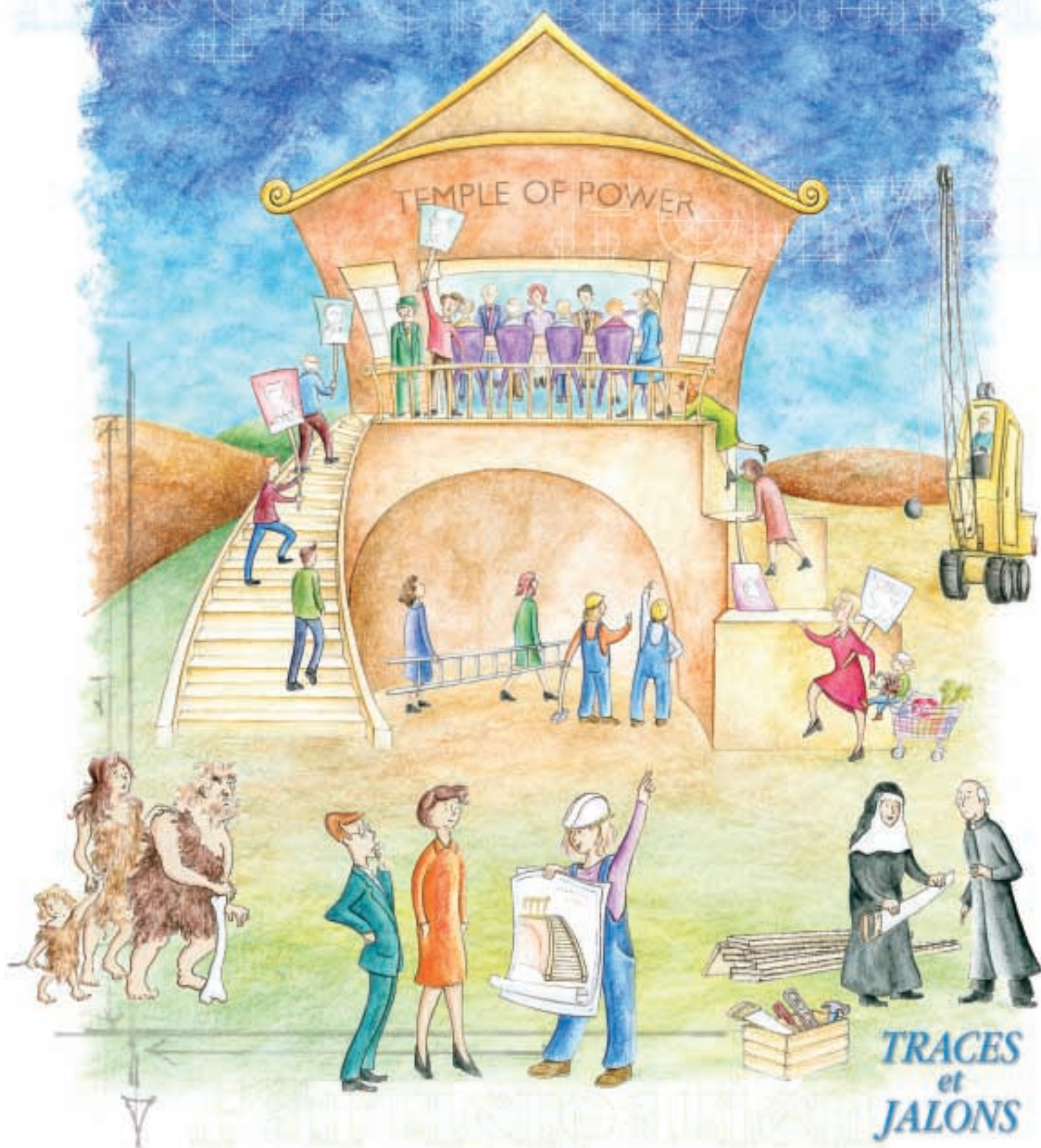


WOMEN'S POLITICAL EQUALITY

The project of the century



Editorial



Equality undermined

After millennia of not being citizens, a century of struggle and small victories, and thirty years of acquiring and increasing their rights, women achieved equal status with men in the 20th century. They have, step by step, gained citizenship and civil autonomy, staking their claim in the past several decades as potential and actual players in the democratic process.

Enter the year 2000: it may have rung in a new century and new millennium, but progress to advance women's equality within one of the last bastions of male domination – political power – has slowed. Opposition to women's gains in this arena are visible, and setbacks are subtle but real. While women's presence may be accepted and their participation tolerated, their equality as power-wielders is neither. In 2005, women seem to have met their Waterloo on parliamentary benches and in democratic assemblies.

Any excuse to settle for 20 to 30 percent female representation in key democratic institutions is good enough: family, motherhood, lack of killer instinct, rare business experience and so-called lack of interest in politics. While women now have greater access to lower offices, such as councillor and parliamentarian, they remain scarce in the upper echelons of power. In fact, in executive and government circles – the real corridors of power – 30-percent female representation seems to constitute a saturation level.

As a result, women's real influence on the important issues in their lives and communities is hitting a glass ceiling. However, if they are to inform, reverse or dictate societal choices, they need to multiply their numbers within the ranks of leadership. Women still have very limited access to the inner sanctums of decision making, which is exactly where equality is being undermined.

Women who manage to penetrate those sanctums tend to dominate the spotlight, but most often we want to see them fulfilling their traditional role. Boys' clubs, like the practice of toeing the party line, are still the norm and fail to woo women. As for power-sharing equality between the sexes, it is following the pattern of one step forward, one step back, even as women demonstrate remarkable leadership and democratic vision. If the vast majority of women, at least in Canada, can get an education, become mothers, and take up virtually all occupations, why are the reins of power still out of their reach?

One hypothesis is that women do not make any efforts to seize those reins. Another assumption is that the way women work and communicate disrupts male-dominated environments. Finally, there is a presumed lack of political will to accept women into the ruling class.

Let us adopt the third hypothesis, which does not deny the relevance of the

other two. The lack of strong support among the power-brokers for gender equality within their ranks betrays a definite fear. Maintaining the number of women below parity ensures compliance with the rules of the game. However, there is no longer unanimous agreement about these rules – and not only among women: A survey conducted in November 2004 by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada showed that 55 percent of Canadians wanted to see major changes to political institutions to make them more open and democratic. Among the proposed changes, increasing the number of elected women representatives received the most support (9 out of 10) because, according to survey results, Canadians associated it with a well-functioning political system.

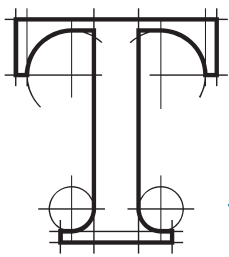
The goal pursued by Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie is this enhancement of democracy. Our public education organization is calling on everyone to contribute to the *project of the century*, namely, the achievement of women's full political participation.

Enjoy reading this edition of *Traces et Jalons!*

Élaine Hémond

Executive Director
Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie





The ABCs of women's citizenship

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION. This concept, which underlies proactive measures, was first introduced in the United States in the 1960s to fight discrimination against African-Americans and to improve their living conditions, including greater access to education and jobs.



As a teenager, Colin Powell benefited from affirmative action that facilitated access to education for young African-Americans.

ANDROCENTRISM. An ideological system whose referent and standard is the male human being. So-called universal citizenship is predicated on this system.

CITIZENSHIP. Citizenship is not determined solely by membership in a nation. It also, and perhaps most importantly, refers to equal legal rights and equal chance to exercise those rights (political, civic, economic, social, etc.).

DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT. The unequal representation of men and women in elected positions. This reality undermines the legitimacy of the democratic system.



DISCRIMINATION. Discrimination occurs when people are treated differently because of their sex, sexual orientation, or membership in an ethnic, linguistic, national, racial or religious group.

EMPOWERMENT. The action of giving or returning political power, as well as the ability to act, to minority groups or groups in a minority situation, such as women. The goal of women's empowerment is to increase or reinforce their democratic power.

EQUALITY. The equal right of every person to do what is within his or her power. For women, as for men, this means not only exercising their rights to realize their individual potential, but also contributing to the cultural, economic, political and social evolution of their country. In Canada, the "substantive equality" approach is advocated – an approach that differs from "equality of treatment," which does not address systemic discrimination.

EQUITY. A concept of natural justice in the assessment of what each person is due. This concept is not enshrined in the laws currently in force. The United Nations considers it an open door to discrimination. Equity is achieved by the identical treatment of people in a similar situation and the differential treatment of people in different situations. Efforts to ensure equity have been made for several reasons: e.g. girls and boys have traditionally not had equal access to education and, until the 1960s, it was believed that women, contrary to men, did not carry the responsibility of supporting a family.

GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS (GBA). A management approach used in the development of a policy, program or measure that aims to identify, in a preventive manner, the specific effects that policy, program or measure will have on men and women. The governments of Quebec and Canada are in the process of incorporating GBA into their operations. In a number of countries, notably in Europe, this analysis is referred to as an integrated approach to equality.

GLASS CEILING. Invisible barriers that prevent women from advancing to leadership positions. These barriers are the result of standards, prejudices and values that are grounded in tradition and underlie gender relationships.

HUMAN RIGHTS. Known as the "Rights of Man" during the French Revolution, this term was later renamed "human rights" to include the rights of both women and men.

MENTORSHIP BY WOMEN ("MARRAINAGE")

A situation where a woman who is experienced in a professional or political field supports and guides a younger or less-experienced woman. Mentoring, tutoring and coaching have similar meanings but sometimes entail different practices. The coach in a mentorship endeavour is generally paid for her intervention.



Patriarchy. A deterministic world view grounded in biology that is based on a hierarchic system of masculine and feminine values. This system assigns the public sphere to men and the private sphere to women.

PROACTIVE MEASURES. These measures are actions, interventions or regulations designed to level the social playing field where history, tradition and prejudice have prevented a group or category of citizens from achieving institutional equality.

STEREOTYPE. An opinion on a category of individuals (e.g. women, Africans and homosexuals) which invariably reproduces widespread judgments. Stereotypes always discriminate, even when they appear to promote a given gender or social group.

The Stone Age of women's citizenship

Democracy – a recent concept in the history of civilization

Roughly 400,000 years ago, *Homo sapiens* learned to master fire, transforming the species' social life and separating it from the animal kingdom. Several hundred millennia later, this group of humans set out to conquer all of the earth's regions, invented agriculture and began practising animal husbandry. These breakthroughs were followed by the development of social structures, such as the city, and communication tools, such as writing.

In the process, various forms of social organization, including tribes, clans and the feudal system, succeeded one another. At first, the leader of a group would be its strongest, most aggressive male who could best protect the group against predators. With time, humans became more sophisticated and began choosing a leader on the basis of his superiority over rival contenders.

Later still, monarchs, claiming legitimacy through lineage and divine right, ruled nations the world over. There have been kings and princes in Mesopotamia since 4000 BC.

It was not until the 7th century BC that the first basic principles of democracy, e.g. that the city be governed by the people, surfaced in Greece.

Women's citizenship in 2005 – the Stone Age

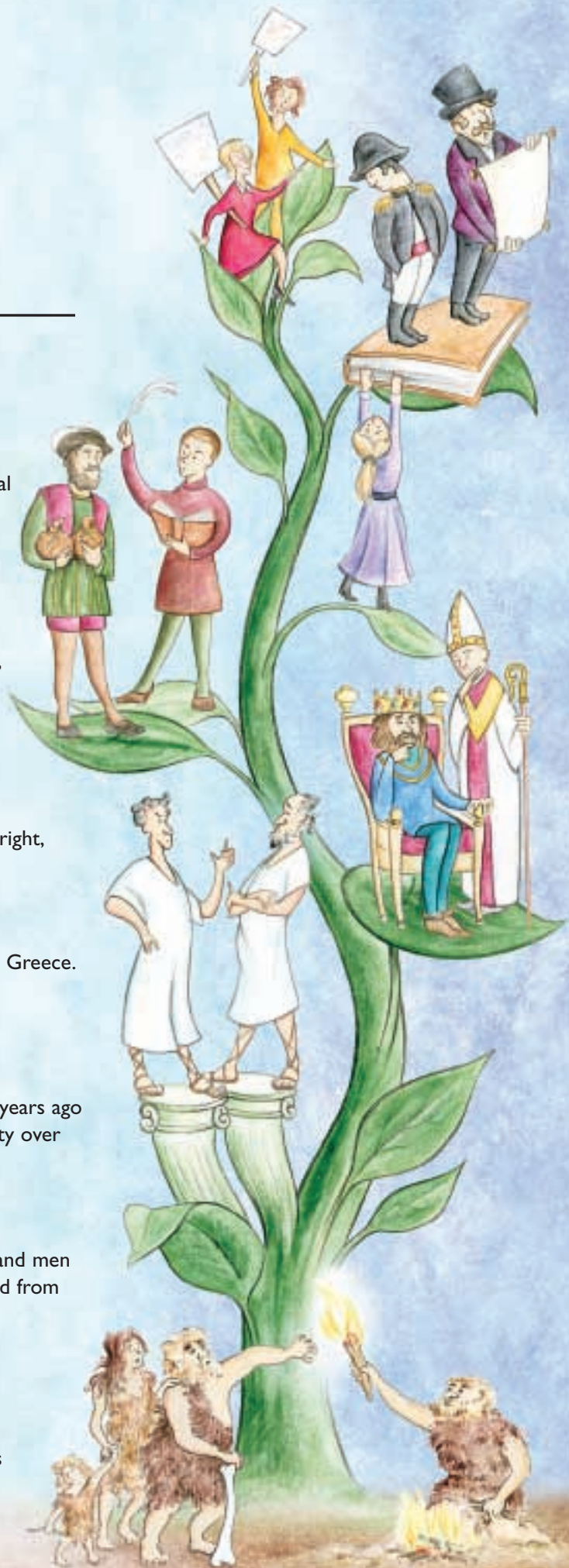
The concept of democracy, which originated in Greece over 2,000 years ago and excluded women at the time, has progressed toward universality over 19 centuries – still without granting women full citizenship.

Antiquity – 700 BC

Of the 30,000 people living in Athens at the time, only a few thousand men participated in debates. Women, foreigners and slaves were excluded from the process.

The Middle Ages – 5th century to 15th century

Citizenship, as proposed by the Greeks, was eclipsed by the various feudal regimes of the Christian West. Kings, who grounded their legitimacy in divine heritage, were subordinated to the government of Rome.



The Renaissance – 15th and 16th centuries

The Greco-Roman culture inspired an era of rebirth – the Renaissance – which saw the revival of the concept of the autonomous city. Although one cannot speak of real democracy, gentry and merchant groups were involved in managing the affairs of the city. Women, however, were still on the sidelines. In their writings, contemporary philosophers dismissed women's ability to participate in public decision making. Machiavelli, for his part, associated civic virtues with masculinity and virility; similarly, Jean Bodin claimed that letting women govern was akin to transgressing the natural and divine order of things.

The Enlightenment and beyond – from the 18th century to our day

United States

In 1776, the American Declaration of Independence excluded women as citizens. In fact, despite the active participation of women and African-Americans in the American Revolution, these groups were forgotten when the Constitution was drafted. While women could run in legislative elections as early as 1788, they had to wait until 1920 to be able to vote.

France

With the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* in 1789, French women acquired civil status (marriage, heritage and divorce), only to lose it 15 years later with the adoption of the Napoleonic Code, which stripped them of any civil rights whatsoever. The denial of women's rights was further cemented in 1848, when universal suffrage was extended only to previously excluded categories of men. Women were enfranchised and granted eligibility rights in 1944.

Great Britain

In Great Britain, universal suffrage was introduced in 1918 and extended to women at the same time. However, this “progressive” measure allowed men to vote as of 21 years, whereas women had to wait until they reached 30 – a disparity that was eliminated in 1928.

Canada

Canada's *Constitutional Act* of 1791 enfranchised certain householders and tenants, regardless of sex, enabling women in Lower Canada to vote. In 1849, the Act was amended to correct this “historical irregularity” by officially prohibiting all women from voting. Seventy years and countless battles later, the right to vote in federal elections was extended to women in 1918. A year after that, women won the right to run for office. However, it was not until 1960, when the last race-based restrictions were lifted, that Aboriginal women, and men, could vote freely. Given the powerful religious opposition in Quebec, women in that province had to wait until 1940 to vote in provincial elections.

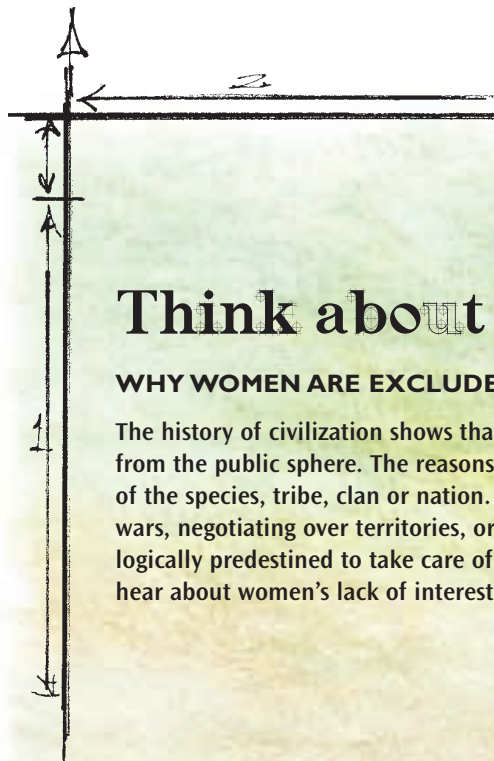
Women's Representation in Parliament in 2005

Inter-Parliamentary Union – www.ipu.org

RANK	COUNTRY	% OF WOMEN
1	Rwanda	48.8
2	Sweden	45.3
3	Norway	38.2
4	Finland	37.5
5	Denmark	36.9
6	Netherlands	36.7
7	Cuba	36.0
7	Spain	36.0
8	Costa Rica	35.1
9	Mozambique	34.8
10	Belgium	34.7
11	Austria	33.9
12	Argentina	33.7
13	South Africa	32.8
13	Germany	32.8
14	Iraq	31.5
15	Guyana	30.8
16	Burundi	30.5
17	Iceland	30.2
	[...]	
26	Switzerland	25.0
27	Australia	24.7
28	Mexico	24.2
29	Liechtenstein	24.0
30	Uganda	23.9
	[...]	
33	Tunisia	22.8
	[...]	
39	Pakistan	21.3
39	Portugal	21.3
40	Canada	21.1

- Unicameral or lower house
- Current situation as at August 31, 2005
- IPU provides figures for 150 countries

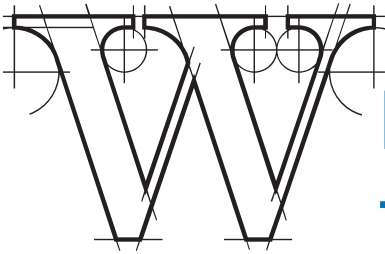
A number of countries have no women representatives in parliament (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates).



Think about it. Talk about it.

WHY WOMEN ARE EXCLUDED FROM PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The history of civilization shows that, until very recently, women were excluded from the public sphere. The reasons most often cited are survival and protection of the species, tribe, clan or nation. While men were away hunting, fighting in wars, negotiating over territories, or making decisions, women appeared biologically predestined to take care of the family and home. Today, we frequently hear about women's lack of interest in politics. What do you think?



What prevents women from entering politics?

Civilization and tradition

The **history** taught in schools is based on the advancements, triumphs, inventions and political actions of men, and the wars they have fought. As for **religions**, regardless of their divergences or the progress of certain churches, all agree that women should not be ordained priests. In addition, many **languages**, including French, have made the male gender the neutral and universal gender. The result is that, from birth, women are condemned to be part of humanity's invisible class.



Women's citizenship: a work in progress

Not until the beginning of the last century were **women** declared *people in the same right as men* and, in that regard, granted the right to vote. The door to women's citizenship had been opened. But only a crack. The proof is that, in 1975, International Women's Year, there was not a single study or statistic that

took gender into account. A global plan devised in Mexico to recognize the particularities associated with the female gender was subsequently developed, giving rise to such concepts as *gender*, *empowerment* and *glass ceiling*. That was yesterday. Today, in 2005, the concept of universal male citizenship still overwhelmingly dominates.

Double and triple duty

The latest Statistics Canada figures show that women continue to take on **most of the domestic labour** in their families. For example, in 1998, in a couple with children ranging in age from 5 to 19 years old, the woman took on an average of 66 percent of the domestic labour, compared to 34 percent for her partner. Women choosing to get politically involved face an even greater challenge of reconciling domestic labour with job-related duties, which may explain why so few young mothers run for office.

Virtual absence of female political role models

"We dream only of what is possible," or so some psychologists claim. Contrary to their male counterparts, few women dream of becoming generals, popes or prime ministers as children. Today, many women have made their mark in politics and, although all may not have reached the higher echelons, some have left a permanent stamp on society. We need only think of Claire Kirkland-Casgrain in Quebec, Melina Mercuri in Greece and Indira Gandhi in India. In 2005, Quebec and Canada boast dozens of women in positions of power. On top of the government responsibilities they share with their male colleagues, these women carry the additional responsibility of inspiring young women. There is no getting around it: being in power automatically charges women with a role model function.



Lack of financial means and business networks

In 2001 in Quebec, women working full time earned **an average of 77.9 percent of the wages men in the same situation were earning**. One year later, women still represented less than 30 percent of the membership in over one third of Quebec's professional associations. Getting involved in politics costs time and money, and poses career-related risks. These factors, already an issue in women's daily lives, prevent them from becoming politically active.



A political culture based on power relationships

The practices of parties and legislative assemblies send the message that, in politics, **the ends justify the means** and that there is little room for constructive debate. Women, who generally have not been socialized to adopt belligerent or clannish attitudes, wonder just how much influence they will be permitted to wield upon entering the political stage.



Party resistance to new approaches

Political parties are real institutions in our countries. They each have their own culture, history, gurus, factions, hierarchic practices and official rules, not to mention unwritten rules. As such, they represent **extremely fascinating forums of power and passion**, even for women. However, the parties' rootedness in a male tradition associated with political ambition makes them bastions of resistance against women's influence.

Lukewarm government willingness

Governments, which issue from parties, generally **balk at establishing rules and regulations** that promote women's access to power. While goodwill is frequently expressed in speeches, fear of changing the rules seems to prevail. To date, both Canada and Quebec have ruled out any legislation obliging parties to run as many female candidates as male candidates, or even a certain percentage of women, in elections.

Think about it. Talk about it.

PEOPLE WANT TO VOTE FOR WOMEN

Electors are not sexist. Women are in fact winning candidates. Quebec's most recent elections have shown that women are as likely as men to get elected. We need to ask who is causing the blockage? Women themselves? Party executives? The party members who appoint women nomination contestants? Others?

nroads towards progress

The measures implemented in some 100 countries to that end range from quotas, through increased funding of parties and female candidates, to designated seats and mandatory parity.

The political and legal path

Most constitutions already include the principle of equality of citizens, and an increasing number of states and federations are passing laws that foster women's political participation. Over half (13/25) of Europe's countries have adopted quotas or parity laws. Similarly, Rwanda ratified a constitution that

provides for equal access to elected office for men and women.

Both the United Nations (UN) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) lobby their member countries to support women's involvement in government. Under the auspices of the IPU, 500 parliamentarians representing over 102 countries signed an undertaking to implement measures that promote women's representation in power structures.



How can governments ensure a continued increase in the number of female candidates and elected women?

• Regulations and legislation

– Reimbursing a larger share of election expenses to parties that send a certain percentage of women to office (35 percent and over)

– Accommodating the needs of elected officials with family responsibilities, notably through child care and dependant care services

– Limiting pre-election expenses. The government of Quebec has already set benchmarks in this regard.

– Limiting nomination expenses for parties. Women generally have less money available for this process and are often unwilling to depend on money to get elected. It should be noted that, in 2004, Canada amended its electoral law to impose a limit on nomination expenses for federal parties.

– Obliging parties to select female candidates to replace retiring MPs



– Obliging parties to run a certain percentage of female candidates in elections (quotas or parity)

– Encouraging parties to ensure parity within all of their structures

– Creating a public body for monitoring equality with the mandate of overseeing the division of labour and power, and ensuring progress in this area. Oversight. Monitoring. Recommendations.



Proactive measures

In addition to the regulations and legislation outlined above, other proactive measures could help to reach young people, women about to enter politics and women holding office. In Canada and Quebec, such measures could target a variety of populations and take on different forms. However, political will is key to the implementation of even the most simple measures.

- **Schools.** We should educate young people on citizenship by focusing on the essential and equitable participation of women and men in political and social decision-making spheres. This would include courses, workshops and assistance during school elections.
- **Living environments.** We should foster women's interest in citizen engagement by emphasizing how important their often differing experiences and visions are for social progress. We should further support – both individually and as a group – those women who want to get involved in the school system, environmental issues, consumer protection, etc.
- **Parties.** We should create women's groups and committees in all parties. There should be an openness for women's often differing socio-political views. Funds and materials should be made available, and female party activists should be supported, even if they do not share the creed of the party leadership.



- **Mentorship.** Personalized guidance services should be offered to aspiring female candidates, women who are already candidates and women in office. We should pair up men or women with political experience with women interested in getting involved.
- **Training of aspiring female candidates.** Universities in more than 20 countries are partnering with local organizations to offer training courses and workshops to aspiring female candidates and to women seeking to develop political leadership skills. The only francophone program of this kind in Canada is the **École d'été Femmes et Démocratie municipale**, which was launched in 2004 by Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie in collaboration with the École nationale d'administration publique in Québec.



English Canada also presents a number of interesting initiatives: the **Women's Campaign School** in Vancouver associated with Simon Fraser University; the

Parity – a proven measure

In France, a comparative analysis of women's representation in municipal governments before and after the passing of a parity law revealed the merits of obliging parties to make gender parity a part of their recruitment practices. The main achievement of this law has been the large-scale entry by women into municipal councils. The 30-percent threshold considered by the European Union to be a minimum requirement for women to exercise adequate influence was exceeded in the first municipal elections following the passage of the new law (2001), regardless of municipality size. In municipalities with populations of 3,500 or more, the proportion of elected women doubled in 2001, reaching 47.5 percent. On the other hand, the ineffectiveness of the law in subsequent legislative elections is not surprising, as it did not provide for any sanctions other than a reduction in government funding. Most parties were willing to endure those sanctions and chose to promote their male candidates.

See Jane Run conference in Winnipeg, organized jointly by Manitoba Women and the University of Winnipeg; and the first **Campaign School for Women**, founded in Halifax in November 2004 by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and Mount Saint Vincent University.

These training activities and programs are largely based on Yale University's **The Women's Campaign School** in Connecticut, U.S.A.



• Foundations

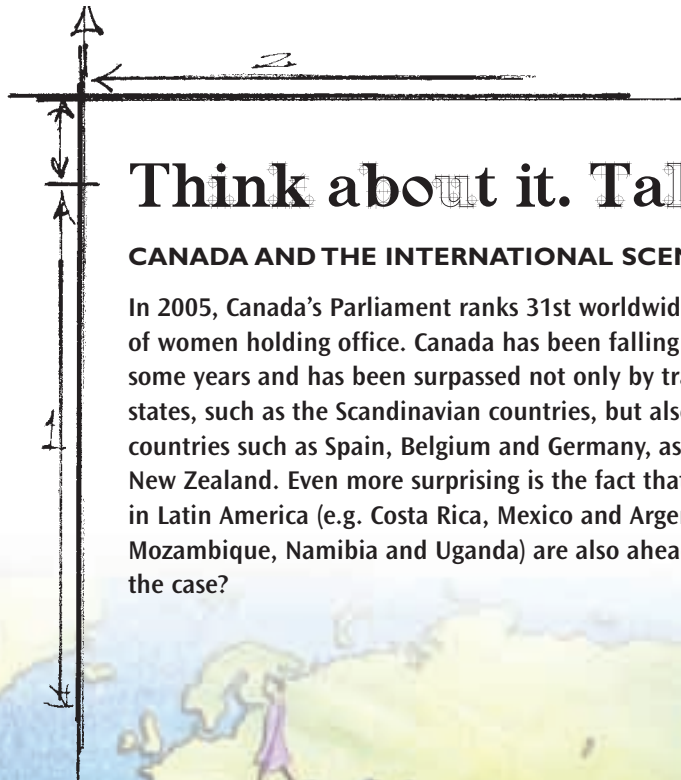
A number of foundations were created to cover the costs of mentorship and training activities for women. Most of them were established by political parties to support their female candidates. For example, there is Emily's List (Democratic Party of the United States) and the Judy LaMarsh Fund (Liberal Party of Canada). To our knowledge, the only existing non-partisan fund is Fondation Femmes, Politique et Démocratie.

• Changing social and cultural attitudes

- Looking for political profiles and candidates outside of traditional recruitment pools, such as the business, sports and media sectors
- Condemning the general complacency with respect to 30-percent female representation in elected offices in Quebec
- Educating citizens on enduring gender disparities in politics and socio-economic spheres



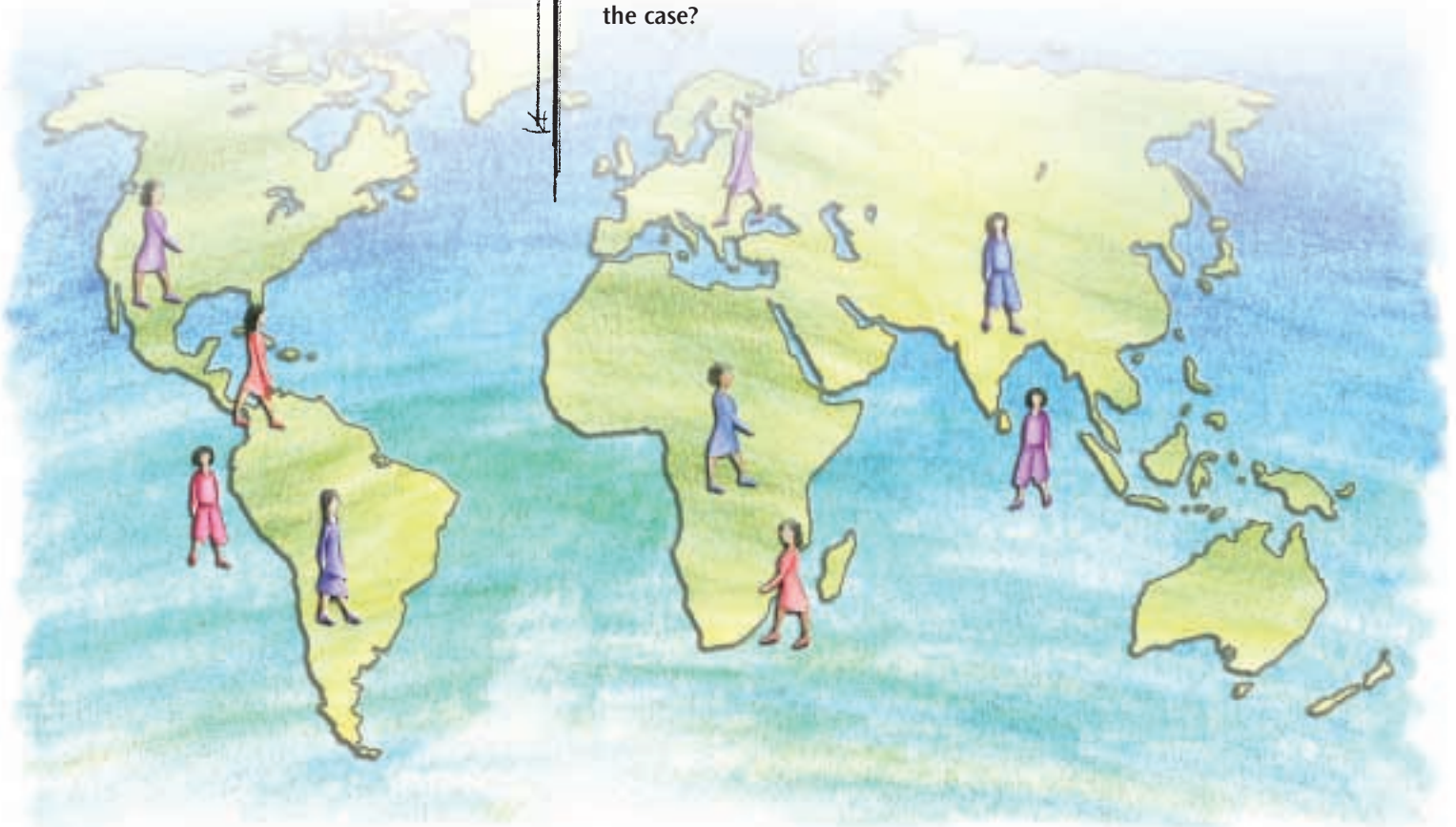
- Conducting objective studies on parity issues that make a point of challenging certain privileges acquired by men and achieved in certain environments
- Agreeing to change certain *modi vivendi* in the political sphere, as has been done in the private sphere for thirty years
- Accepting that the culture of power will not change simply through a shift in mentalities

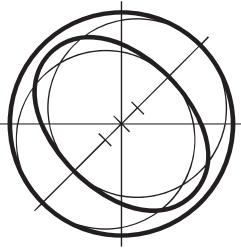


Think about it. Talk about it.

CANADA AND THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

In 2005, Canada's Parliament ranks 31st worldwide in terms of the number of women holding office. Canada has been falling back in this regard for some years and has been surpassed not only by traditionally progressive states, such as the Scandinavian countries, but also by other European countries such as Spain, Belgium and Germany, as well as by Australia and New Zealand. Even more surprising is the fact that a number of countries in Latin America (e.g. Costa Rica, Mexico and Argentina) and Africa (Rwanda, Mozambique, Namibia and Uganda) are also ahead of Canada. Why is this the case?





ne group. Multiple resources.

Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie

Our mission is to contribute to public education, with a focus on women's democratic and citizen action.

The purpose of this mission is to foster women's increased involvement in politics and to support all citizens in exercising the full extent of their citizenship.

For strictly educational and non-partisan purposes, our mission is organized around various actions:

- Coordinating information and training activities, including symposia, forums, workshops, conferences and other forms of communication
- Developing information and training tools such as books, videos, and print and electronic publications
- Staging and broadcasting plays and other cultural activities
- Developing and offering courses as part of a summer school or other training programs
- Carrying out any ancillary activities that support our mission



Our means and tools

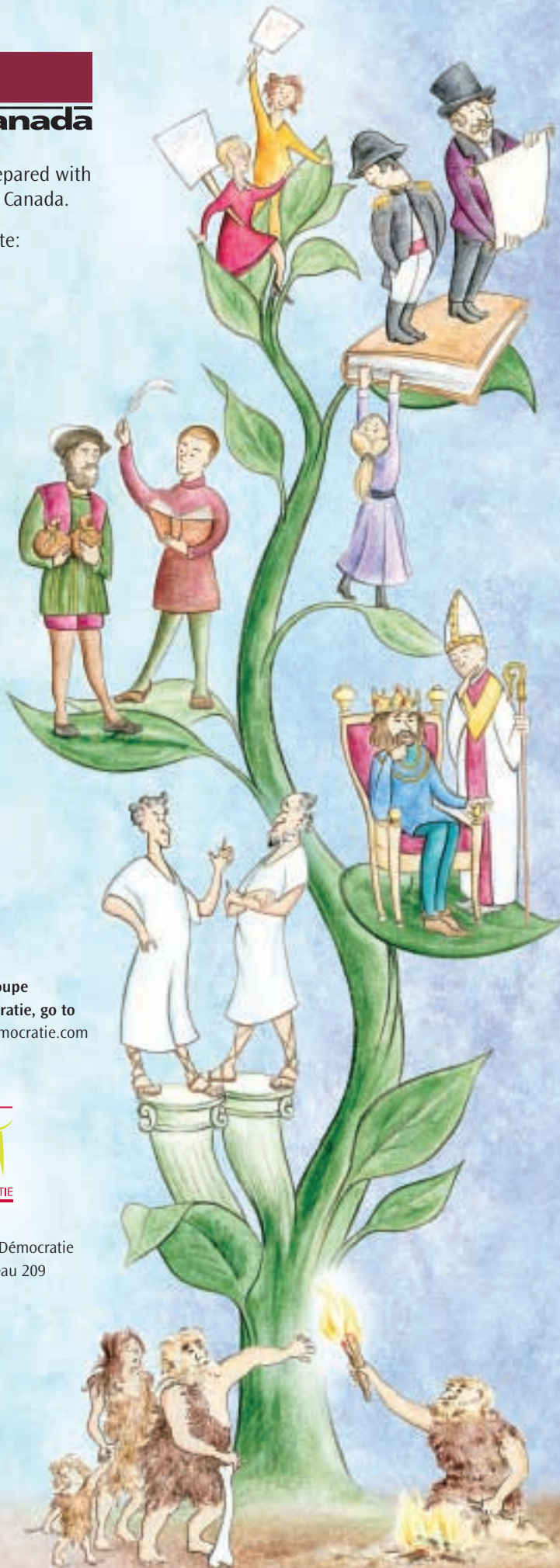
Founded in 1998, Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie launched its first initiatives in 1999. We are currently realizing our objectives through a variety of means, including the summer school program "Femmes et Démocratie municipale," offered jointly with the École nationale d'administration publique; "École citoyenne sur Internet," a series of training video clips; and the educational theatre initiative "L'esprit des femmes."

Web sites

- Agence intergouvernementale pour la francophonie : www.agence.francophonie.org
- Assemblée des femmes (France) : www.assemblee-des-femmes.com/dossiers/election.htm
- International Centre for Municipal Development : www.icmd-cidm.ca
- Chaire d'étude Claire-Bonenfant : www.fss.ulaval.ca/lef/chaire
- United Cities and Local Governments : www.cities-localgovernments.org/uclg
- Collectif Féminisme et Démocratie : www.feminismeetdemocratie.ca
- Status of Women Canada : www.swc-cfc.gc.ca
- Conseil du statut de la femme : www.csf.gouv.qc.ca
- Directeur général des élections du Québec : www.electionsquebec.qc.ca
- Elections Canada : www.elections.ca
- Fédération des femmes du Québec : www.ffq.qc.ca
- Femmes et politique municipale : www.femmespolitiquemunicipale.org
- Femmes et ville/Ville de Montréal: www.ville.montreal.qc.ca/femmesetville
- Women in Cities International: www.femmesetvilles.org
- Institut de recherches et d'études féministes : www.unites.uqam.ca/iref
- Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions : www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca
- Observatoire de la parité (France) : www.observatoire-parite.gouv.fr
- Programme À égalité pour décider : www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/politique/egalite.asp
- Réforme des institutions démocratiques : www.pouvoircitoyen.com
- Secrétariat à la condition féminine du Québec : www.scf.gouv.qc.ca
- Women's Campaign School : www.wcsyale.org
- Women Space : www.womenspace.ca
- YWCA Québec : www.ywcaquebec.qc.ca

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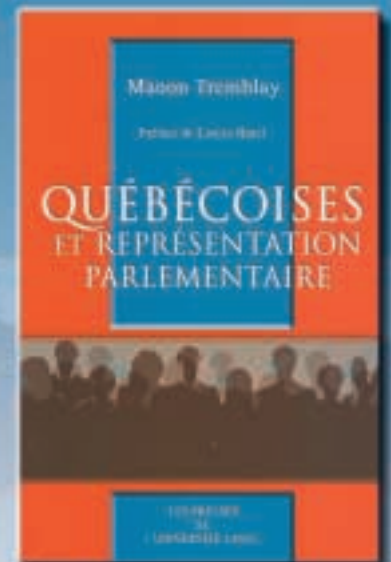
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**QUÉBÉCOISES
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Manon Tremblay

Préface de Louise Harel

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« Cet ouvrage transcende les modes et les engouements de notre époque, notamment à l'égard du mode de scrutin proportionnel souvent présenté comme une panacée pour remédier à la sous-représentation des femmes dans les Parlements. »

(Extrait de la préface de Louise Harel)



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