

Louise Carbert

“The hidden rise of new women candidates seeking election to the House of Commons, 2000 – 2008”

***Canadian Review of Political Science.* (6:2-3)2012, 143-157.**

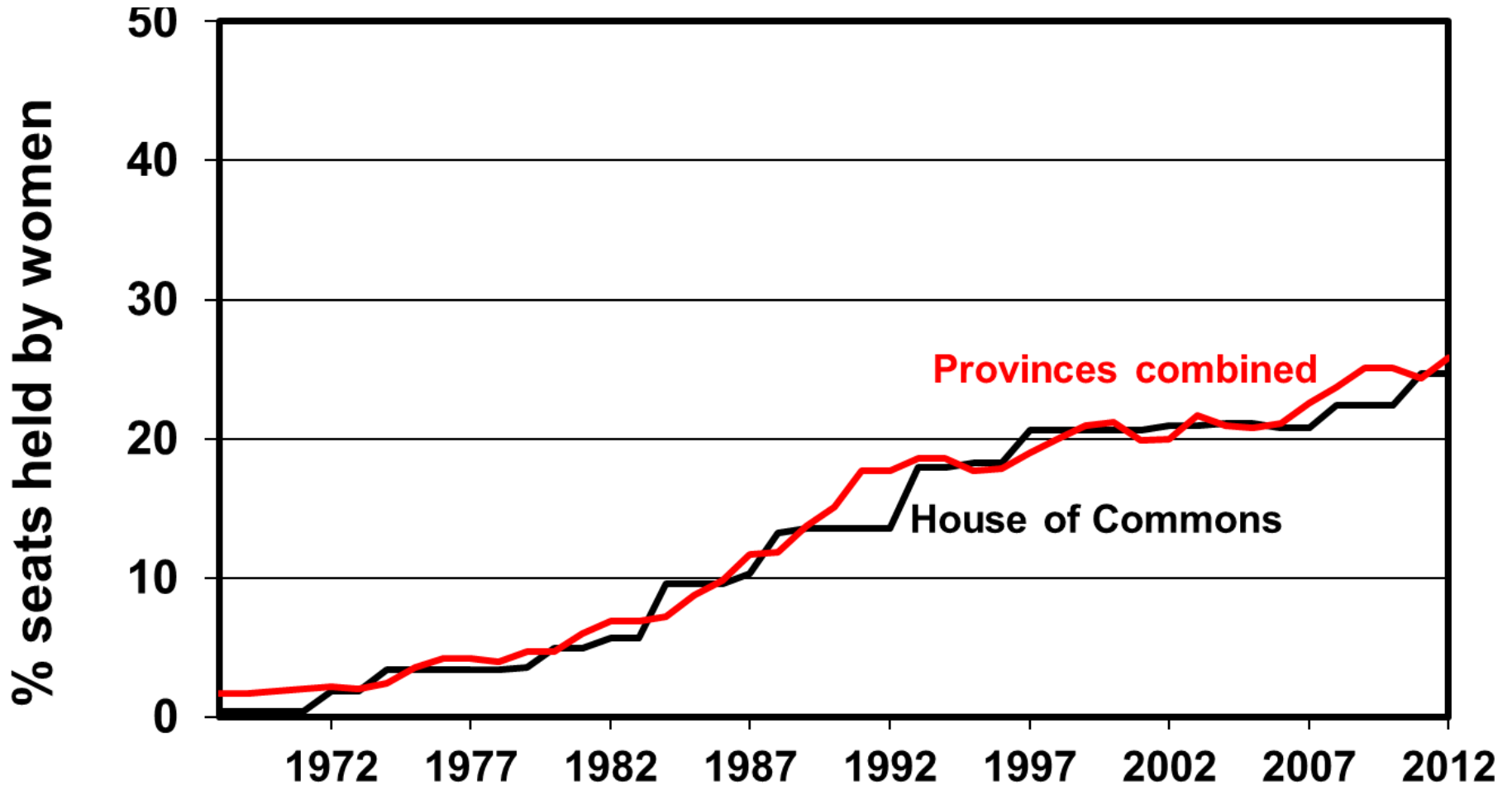
**Slide presentation to accompany
publication.**

Six women are First Ministers

Temporary fluke, or sign of change?



Counting seats alone suggests a gloomy picture of women's representation in Canada

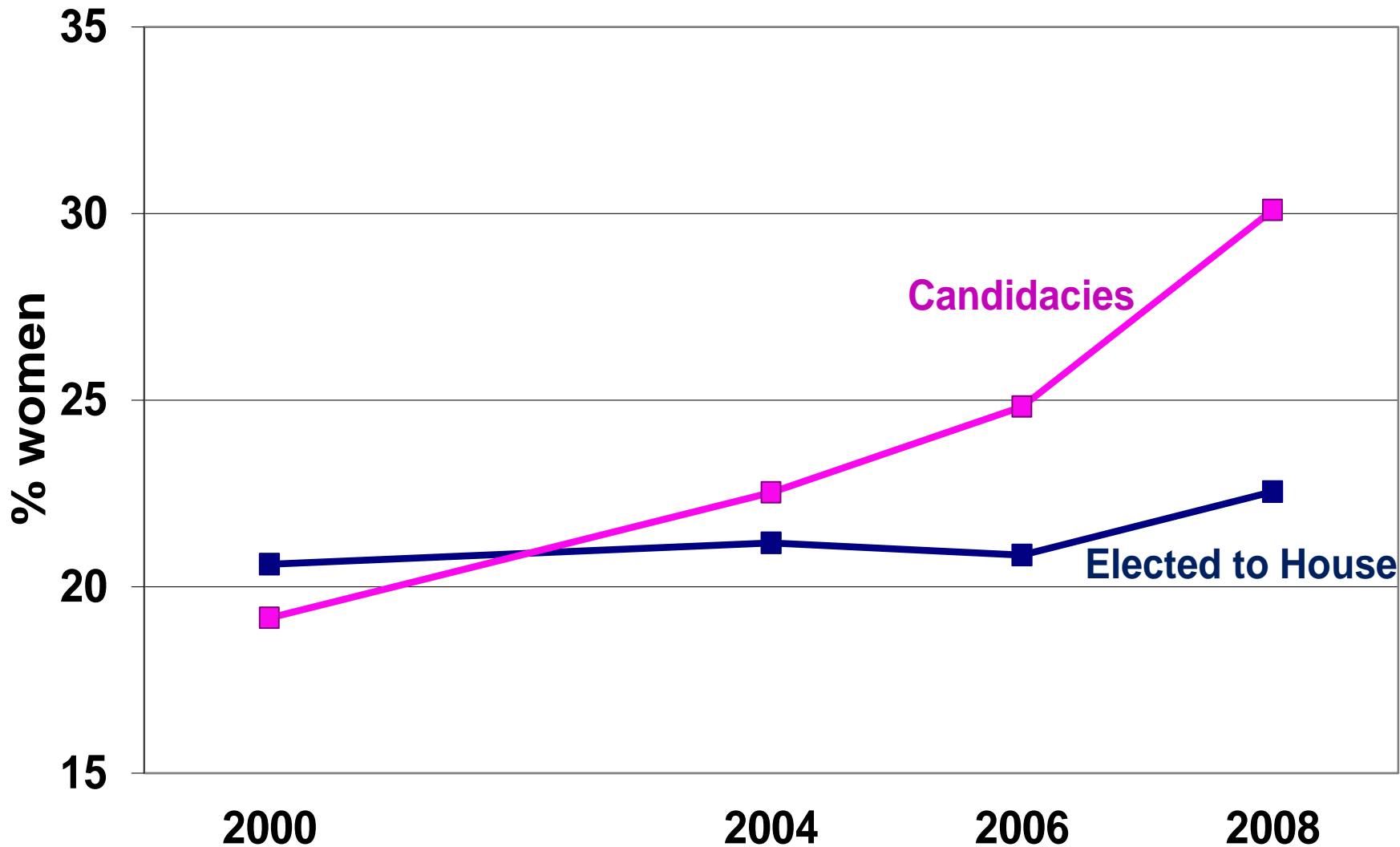


New evidence on federal candidacies strongly refutes that gloomy outlook:

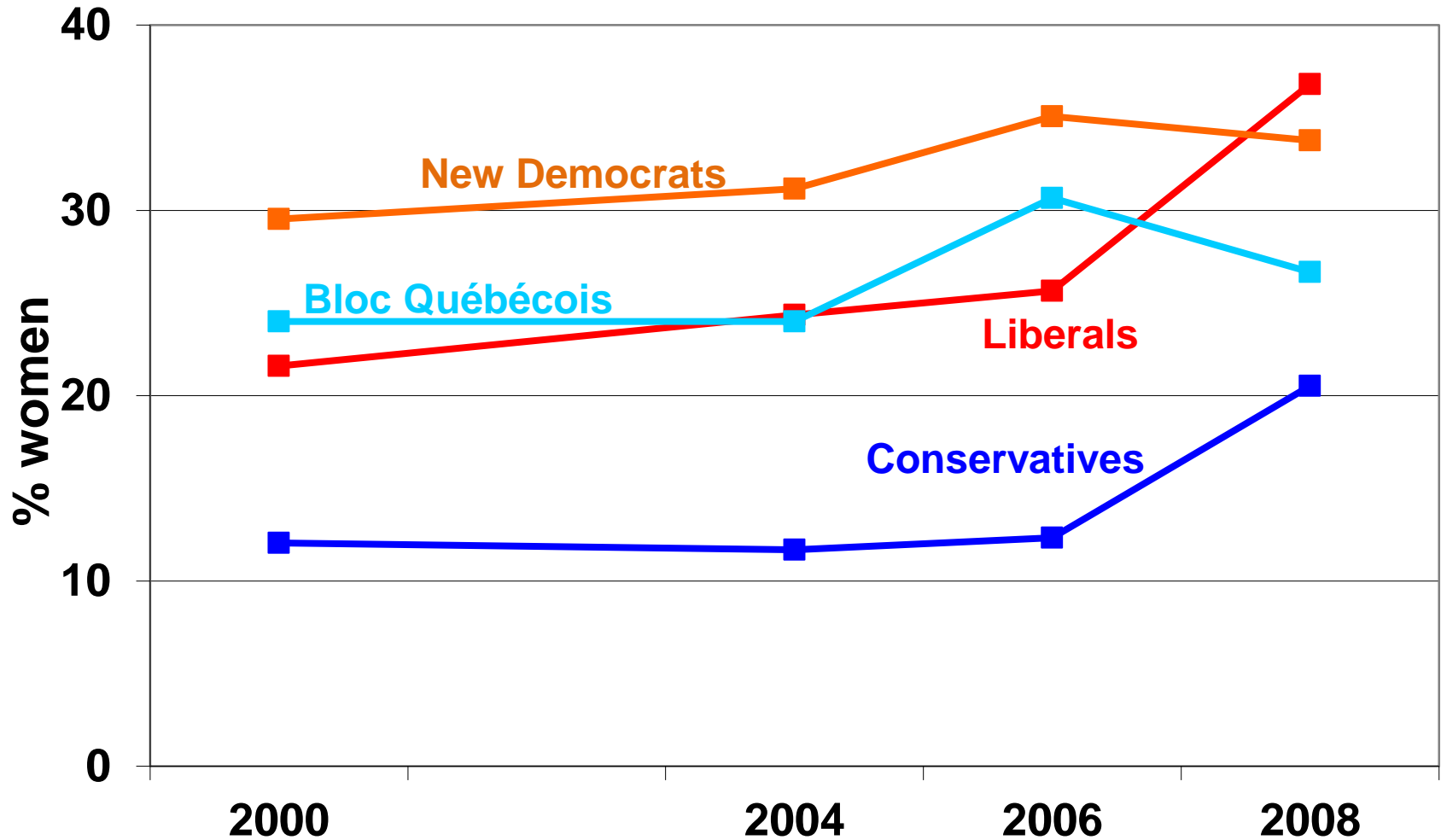
- All of the major parties increased their recruitment of women greatly since 2000.
- Women candidates won their fair share of seats - voters are gender blind.
- 35% of new candidates & turned-over seats.
- No shortage of supply of potential candidates who are “recruitable.”
- Parties have enormous power to effect rapid increases in women’s candidacy.
- The only real barrier is party motivation.

An apparent paradox

Why so few elected if so many more candidates?



Was it because women were shut out by shifting party fortunes?



Liberal leader Stéphane Dion delivered a slate of candidates of > 30% women



What's the Conservative position?

“While we recognise the importance of having men and women of diverse backgrounds in our party, we are firmly committed to ensuring that responsibility for selecting candidates in the ridings remains with our grassroots members.

As a result, the women who are successful in our party owe their success to their own hard work”

(Stephen Harper, personal correspondence to Rosemary Speirs, 29 March 2004.)

Sensitivity study: shifting party fortunes had minor impact

Vote sensitivity 2008

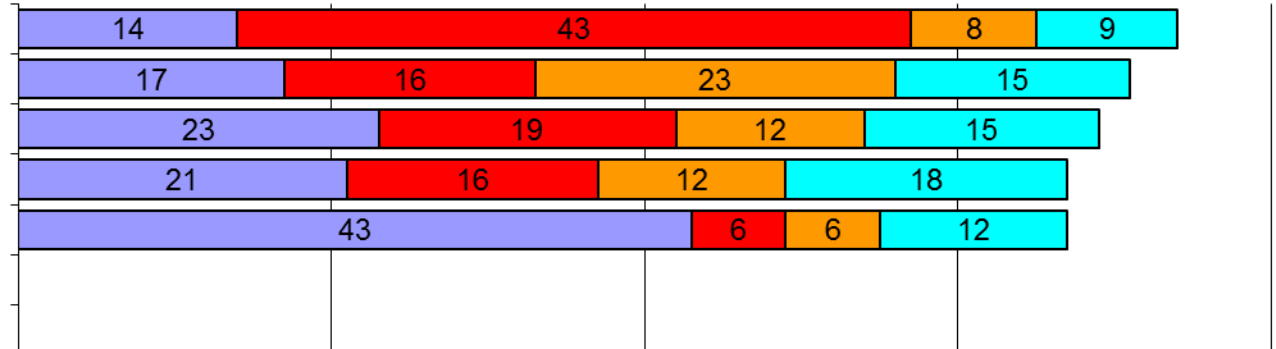
LPC sweep 151 seats: total 74

NDP sweep 68 seats: total 71

Actual 2008 results: total 69

BQ sweep 66 seats: total 67

CPC sweep 231 seats: total 67

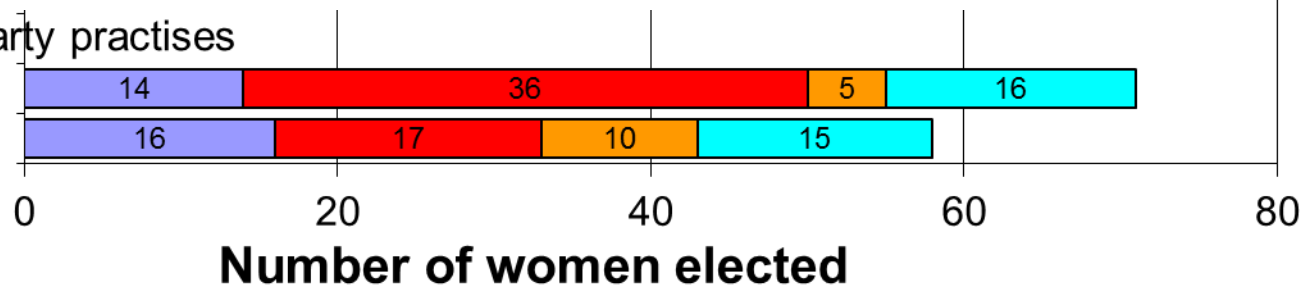


Increasing women-friendliness across parties has had a big impact

Sensitivity to changing party practises

2004 vote, 2008 candidates: 71

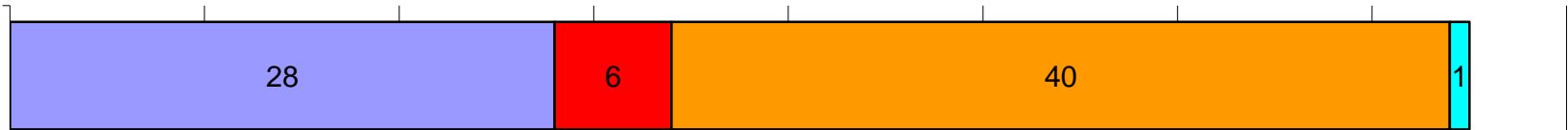
2008 vote, 2004 candidates: 58



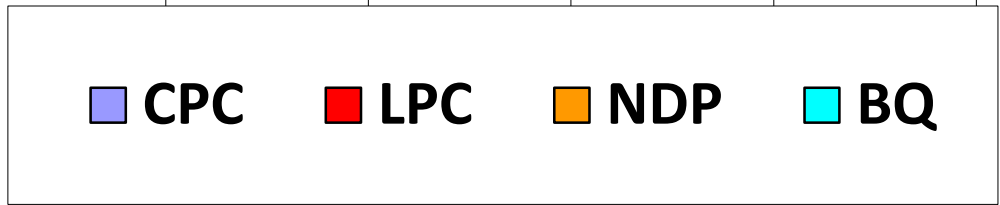
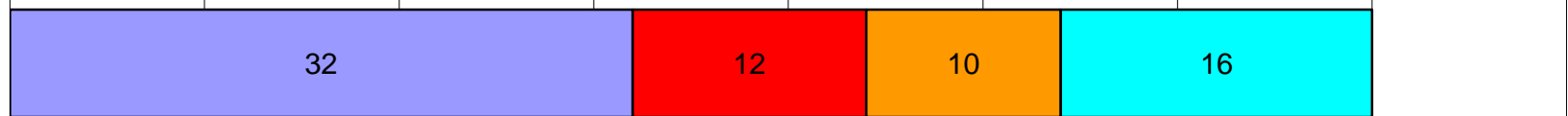
What would have happened without an NDP surge in 2011?

Give all new NDP seats to 2nd place candidate

Actual 2011 results: total 76



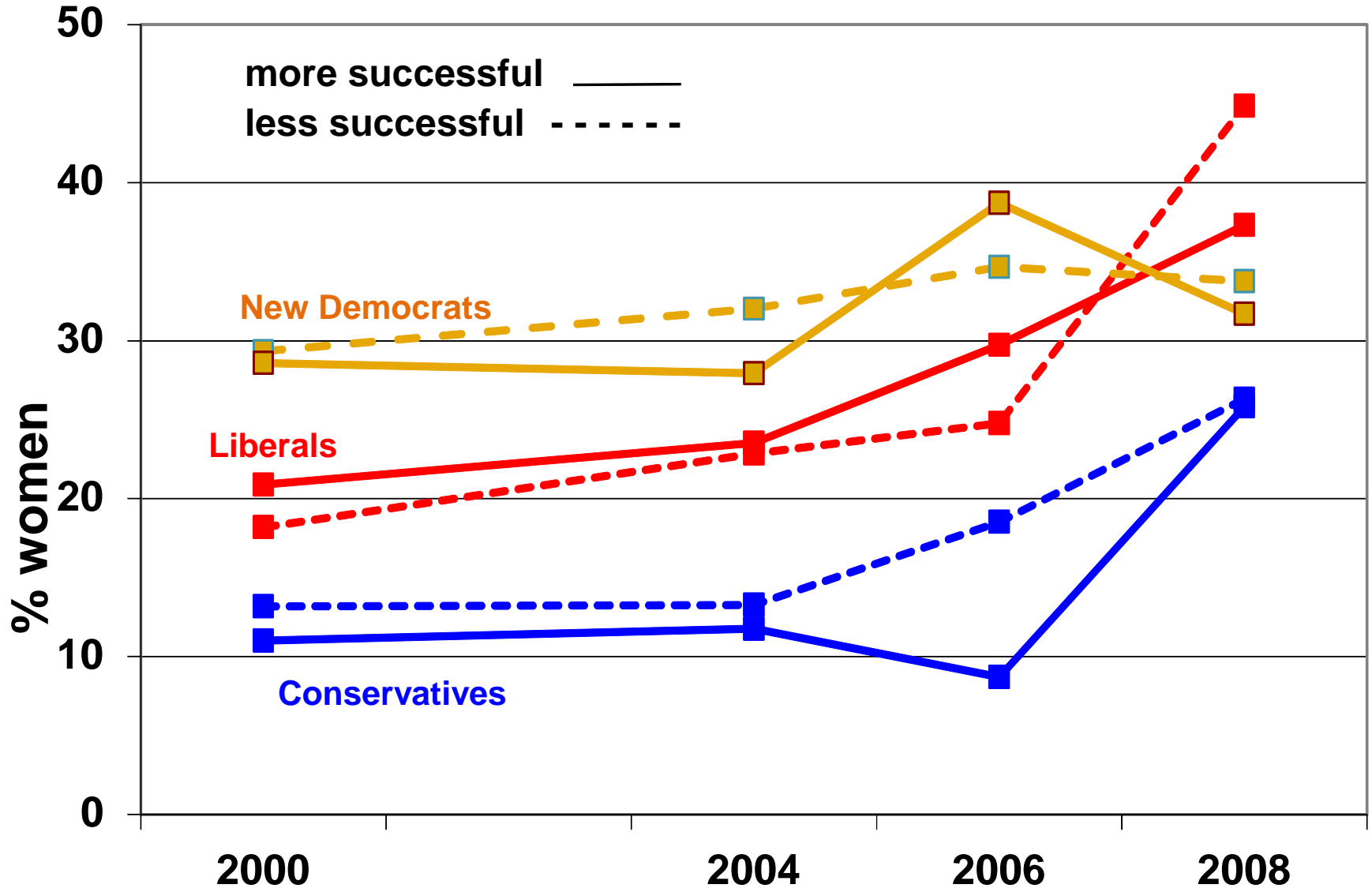
Erase NDP surge: total 71



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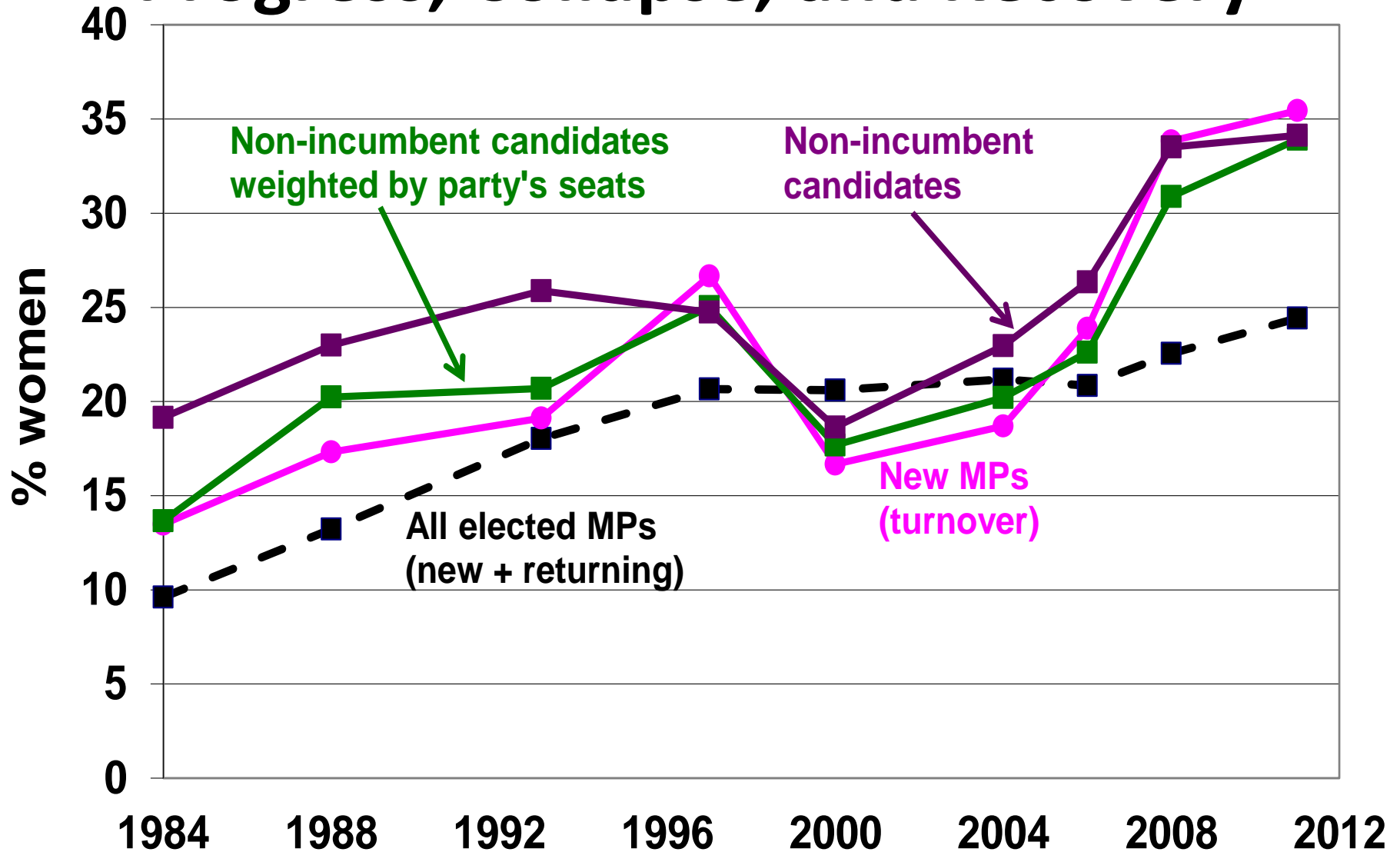
Number of women elected

New women candidates won their fair share of seats: increases across the board

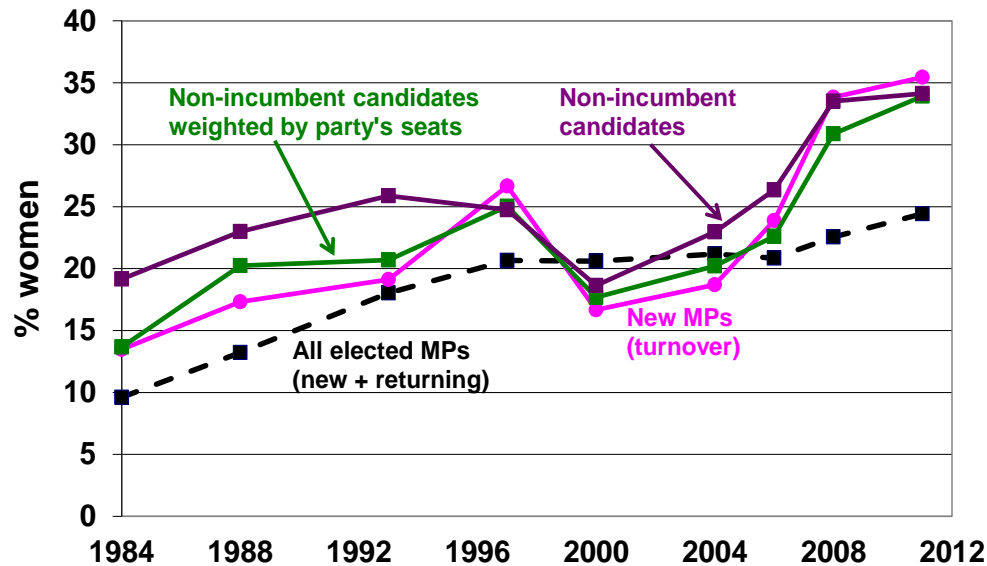


- Did shifts in party popularity shut women out?
 - Yes but only a few. NDP gains offset Liberal losses, then CPC stepped up.
- Did parties shunt women to lost-cause FEDs?
 - No. Women fared as well as men in their party.
- Did voters exhibit gender bias?
 - No evidence of voter hostility to women candidates when controlling for incumbency & party.
- Genuine increase in women-friendliness among Canada's major parties from 2000 to 2011.
- Initial impression of a discrepancy between candidacies and seats was wrong.

Not stagnation: Progress, Collapse, and Recovery

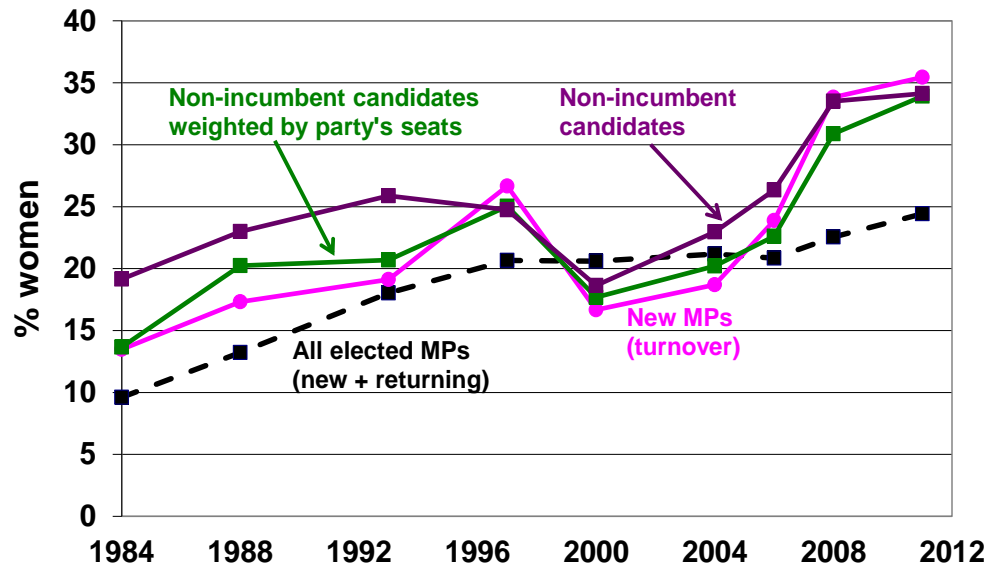


Observations



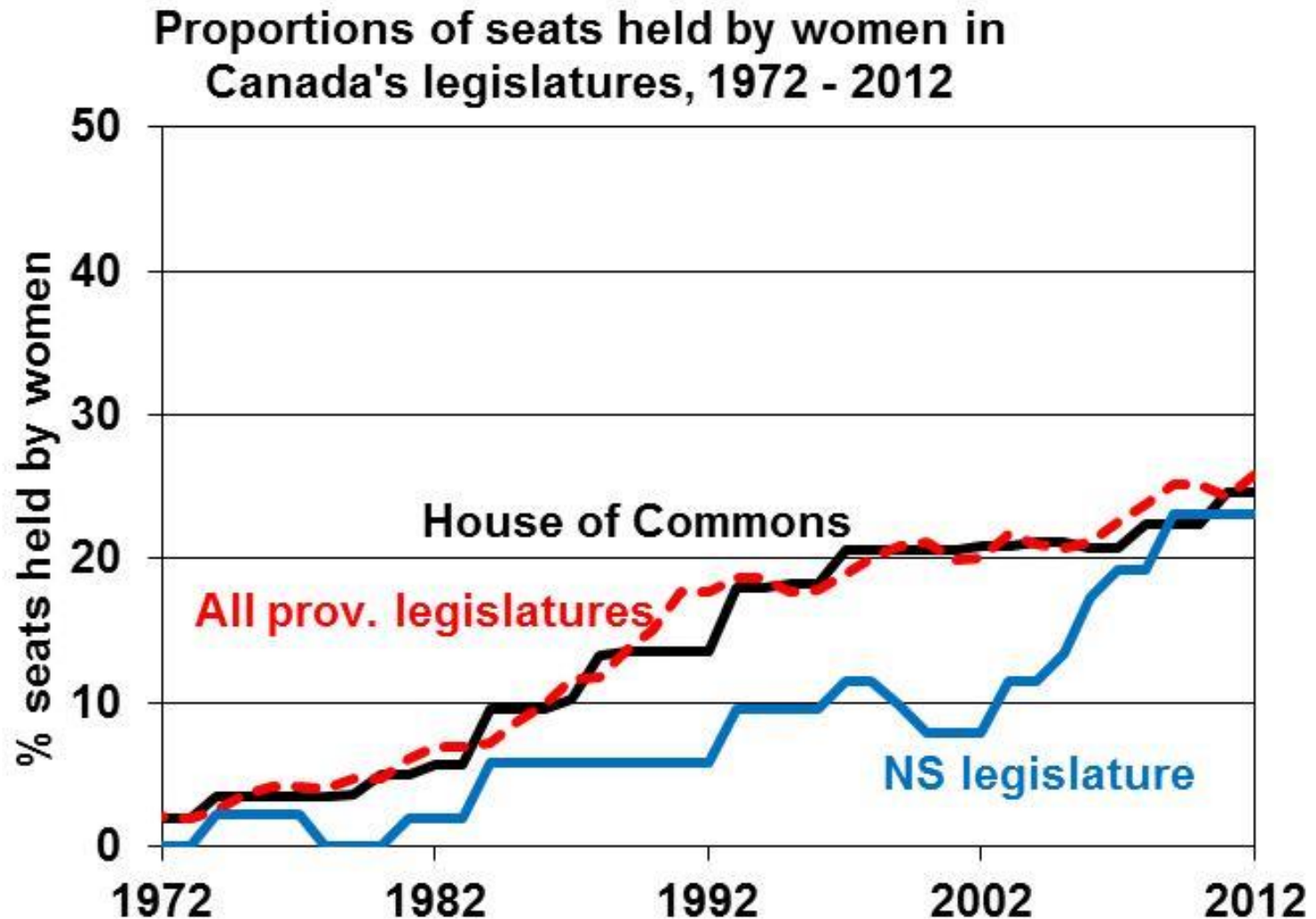
- 1980s and 90s progress: New women candidates well above House level.
- Cross-party collapse in 2000 (esp Liberals).
- Barely enough to sustain status quo in 2004, 2006.
- New high mark in recruitment in 2008, 2011, above 30%.
- Turnover follows new candidacies closely.
- Overall House numbers increase whenever recruitment is higher.

Implications



- Plateau was really just response to sudden collapse in recruitment.
- Recent numbers show real potential for progress.
- No voter bias against women emerged.
- Legislature follows candidacies, with a delay.
- Changes too rapid to be cultural or institutional.
- Changes too large to be random.
- Parties effected change.

Nova Scotia has made rapid progress



GETTING ON THE BALLOT:

A WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN THINKING OF RUNNING
(NOW OR IN THE FUTURE)

Saturday February 16, 2013

9:30am - 3:30pm

Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax

Join us to:

- hear what it takes to win a party nomination
- meet women from the NDP, the Liberal Party, and the Progressive Conservative Party
- explore opportunities for involvement within a political party
- learn about being matched with a campaign coach or advisor

NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OR
PARTY AFFILIATION IS REQUIRED.

ALL ARE WELCOME.

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REGISTRATION
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If parties can and did effect rapid change, then the only barrier is motivation. What motivated the parties over the past decade?