



UNDERSTANDING POWER AND HOW TO BE INFLUENTIAL

Ms Rosette Côté, Political Power and Strategies Consultant and educator associated with the *Groupe Femmes, Politique et Démocratie* (GFPD), presented a feminist look at the social issues and encouraged the members of the network to understand how power operates, to update their potential to influence and to equip themselves with the keys for strategic behaviours in order to influence power within the values of the organization and in accordance with their own values.



Rosette Côté, Political Power and Strategies Consultant

“HOW TO SEE FEMINISM IN RELATION TO THE SOCIAL ISSUES?”

According to Rosette Côté, the dominant discourse on women reinforces the myths that:

- Women are different and don't want to be equal to men;
- Equality of women has been more or less attained, feminism is a thing of the past;
- Politics are as difficult for men as for women;
- Recourse to freedom of choice remains rare;
- The problems come from working women lacking organization between work and the home;
- Women have the choice of staying home to look after their children;

- Women are not in positions of power because it doesn't interest them and politics are perverted;
- The family is the primary source of fulfillment for women;
- Feminine charm must be cultivated!

Ms Côté stated that the family and the internet are still places of socialization with great influence that create self-image, sexual behaviours, concepts of appearance, seduction and conformity. Organizations and institutions take on this family-minded logic. Moreover, the trajectories of women's life cycles will adapt these influences, force social changes and changes in mentality.

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THE NETWORK IN A NUTSHELL

A meeting of the Women's Network of the Federation was held on March 28 and 29, 2012 with the theme « *Le pouvoir au féminin* » (“Power, Women's Way”). In order to kick start the discussions and reflections on the theme of this network, the members watched the film « *La domination masculine* » by Patric Jean. Then, Rosette Côté, Political Power and Strategies Consultant, came to equip the members on feminism and the social issues as well as on the power and influence they can have. Ms Côté has actively worked for gender equality on several platforms.

During these two days, a quiz on feminism, organized by the Status of Women Committee, was also on the agenda. Entitled, « *On connaît la réponse!* » (We know the answer!), this activity humourously tested the knowledge of the members of the network. In short, a highly successful meeting in which each person was able to become aware of her power. Power is mastered, learned and takes root where we want it to.

By Line Mercier, member of the Status of Women Committee

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Despite this, women are still perceived as inseparable from this relationship with the other sex, with maternity and with a certain inferiority, in particular in public life and the corridors of power.

Notwithstanding this finding, the positive elements of change must be noted. There has been an increase in the level of education of women, in higher education, in the workforce and financial independence. Women have more control over their bodies and their pregnancies. A beginning, however small, of a certain distance from domestic responsibilities, new family and sexuality models and greater representation of women in certain intellectual or administrative professions.

Ms Côté recalled that the visible changes which have improved the status of women leave the structures and practices which continue to distribute the tasks according to gender in both the domestic area and the work one or in public life invisible. To be successful in their professional life, women must still accept sacrifices and constraints linked to the home: time between pregnancies, delays or waiving their careers, breakups of all kinds, rare leisure time, less availability. Feminism still remains the best approach for analyzing the overt or hidden intentions of the male social order.

“HOW TO UNDERSTAND POWER AND PRACTICE ITS INFLUENCE?”

The experience of women in power demonstrates that there is an under representation that continues, a glass ceiling that doesn't want to break, insufficient models, competencies that must be demonstrated, confidence and credibility difficult to achieve, an inflexibility or lack of social confidence, myths about power and about women, harmful women's movement as well as less availability.

Furthermore, female representation in the public domain demonstrates this quite well:

- In the world: Heads of State: 10%, In Parliament: 19.5%;
- 3% at the head of the 100 largest world financial groups;
- In Québec: In Parliament: 30%, Mayors: 13.8%;
- Boards of the 50 largest Québec private corporations: 13%;
- Boards of the 500 largest American corporations: 13%;
- Boards of large corporations: Norway: 36%, European Union: 13%, Canada: 14%, Japan: 1%;
- At the head of the largest European corporations: 3.4%.

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At the microphone:

1. Krystelle Jacques, CSSS - Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Sherbrooke
2. Shirley Dorismond, CSSS Jeanne-Mance
3. Rita Lamothe, CSSS de la Vieille-Capitale

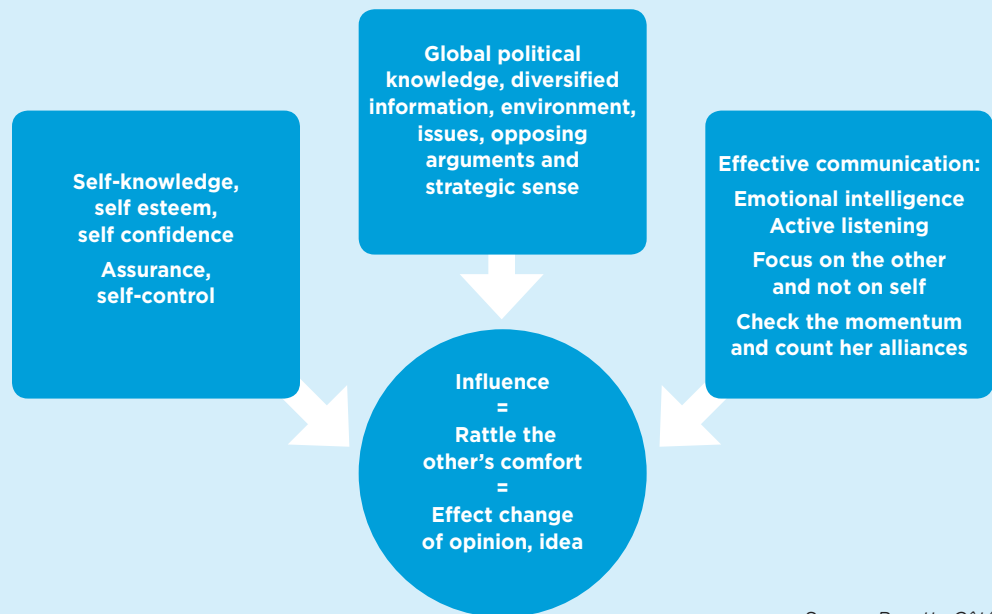
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THE CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE



Source: Rosette Côté

Influence is the capacity to weaken another person's opinion.
Influence is learned by knowledge, such as:

- Knowing how to create boundaries;
- Knowing how to appreciate the element of influence;
- Knowing how to prepare;
- Knowing one's place in a group;
- Knowing how to communicate so that it counts;
- Knowing how to work as a team and to make decisions (forge alliances);
- Knowing how to practice self-criticism.

Lastly, power and influence presuppose knowing our values, that we know the group dynamics, that we have cleaned house in our own emotional and relationship universe, that we have changed certain inappropriate behaviours, that we remain concentrated on the objective of influence, on counting our alliances, on using the group's strength, on learning to communicate one's emotional intelligence, to work as a team and for the team and, lastly, on developing strategic skills based on the context.

The presentation of Rosette Côté was well received by the members of the network. Her frankness, her vitality and her simple explanations allowed everyone to acquaint themselves with the notion of power and, in particular, with the different strategies to use in order to improve their relationship of influence. Every person has the power to act on herself and those around her. ■

BOOKS TO BE CONSULTED:

BOURDIEU, Pierre. *La domination masculine*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1998.

BRADBERRY, Travis et Jean GREAVES. *Intelligence émotionnelle*, Montréal, Éditions Transcontinental, 2009.

KETS DE VRIES, Manfred. *Les mystères du leadership*, Paris, Éditions Village mondial, 2002.

LABORDE, Génie Z. *Influencer avec intégrité*, Interéditions, 1987.

LANDRY, Simone. *Travail, affection et pouvoir dans les groupes restreints*, Québec, PUQ, 2008.

LANDRY, Simone. *Le pouvoir, c'est pas sorcier; Il suffit d'en avoir les clés*, Québec, PUQ, 2011.

LANGLOIS, Lyse. *Anatomie du leadership éthique*, Québec, PUL, 2008.

LUC, Édith. *Le leadership partagé*, Montréal, PUM, 2004.

NAVARRO, Pascale. *Les femmes en politique changent-elles le monde?*, Montréal, Les Éditions du Boréal, 2010.

VÉZINA Jean-François. *Se réaliser dans un monde d'images*, Montréal, Éditions de l'homme, 2004.



Rosette Côté has acted for the advancement of women and the attainment of their economic autonomy for more than 25 years. First and foremost a teacher, she actively fights for paid maternity leaves and the implementation of work-family balance measures. Over the course of her career, and in different settings, she has pursued her commitment as a union activist, a manager of human resources, director of politicians' offices and holding several positions of senior civil servant. Appointed president of the *Commission de l'équité salariale* (Pay Equity Commission) in February 2002, she succeeded, through her leadership and her vision, in establishing the credibility of this body which has now become a reference both here in Québec and abroad.

NEWS FROM THE STATUS OF WOMEN SECTOR



56th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

Representatives from the FIQ attended this global event and promoted the development of women's economic and political autonomy. Representations were also made in order that decent work and access to public services, including education and health care, would be integrated into the conclusions of the CSW-UNO-2012 report.

ÉTATS GÉNÉRAUX DE L'ACTION ET DE L'ANALYSE FÉMINISTES

The États généraux de l'action et de l'analyse féministes (Estates-General on feminist action and analysis) have been in consultation on an assessment of the last 20 years. To do this, a workshop approach was designed to recall the memorable moments in feminist struggles, to identify the progress as well as the burdens that women must face.

The conference of the Estates-General will take place the evening of May 25 and all day on May 26 at the Université Laval, in Quebec City. A very interesting programme is being prepared. On May 27, the day after the conference, the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) will hold its general meeting in the same location.

Video clip on the rise of the social and economic right: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-u8mdwPMYY>

The session, which started in New York City on February 27, 2012, was supposed to end in March. However, the negotiations on the conclusions were extended. Ms Michelle Bachelet, UN Women's Executive Director, stressed that the delegations were not capable of overcoming "a disappointing failure to reach a consensus". The session concluded on March 16, 2012 without a negotiated agreement on the conclusions contained in the final report.

The FIQ is very disappointed that the session concluded without an agreement on the conclusions. However, it is obvious that the extreme Right is well organized and this backlash, for the status of women coming from rural areas, certainly constitutes a sign of what awaits us in the coming year when an enormous battle will be on the agenda, because the issue of violence against women will be tackled. ■

Motion M-312

At the end of April the Canadian Parliament will study Motion M-312, tabled by Conservative MP, Stephen Woodworth. This motion calls for the convening of a special parliamentary commission, composed of a majority of Conservative MPs, who would review the definition of "human being".

This motion, presented as being simply a "scientific updating" exercise, in fact, is an attempt to extend legal rights of personhood to fetuses. The current definition in the Criminal Code of Canada is the following: "A child becomes a human being [...] when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother." The vote on this motion will be held at the end of spring or soon after.

Thus, this motion threatens abortion rights, the rights of all pregnant women and, lastly, the right of equality for women. It is supported by ideology and anti-abortion groups. Moreover, similar legislation has already been passed in several American states and led to the criminalization of pregnant women, under the pretext that they did not pay enough attention to their health during their pregnancies.

You will find a petition online to sign, a model letter to send to your MP as well as an argument against Motion M-312 on the website of the Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances (FQPN): <www.mobilisationpro-choix.yolasite.com> ■



THE FIQ, A STRONG VOICE, ACTIONS THAT COUNT

SEXIST IMAGES AND PUBLICITY, IT'S ENOUGH!

The *Coalition nationale contre les publicités sexistes* (CNCPS) is organizing a day of reflection and mobilization on April 26 on the issues linked to sexist publicity, one of the factors that contributes to the sexualization of public space.

The mandate of the CNCPS is to publicly denounce sexist publicity and demand its removal. The CNCPS aims to act as an information and mobilization network. You can support this coalition by becoming a member for \$10 for individuals and \$20 for local unions.

For more information about this activity or the work of this coalition, contact Nancy Miller at 1 877 850-0897, ext. 3123, or write to info@coalition-cncps.org.

To access the coalition's website:
<www.coalition-cncps.org>



COALITION NATIONALE CONTRE LES PUBLICITÉS SEXISTES

FAVOURITE OF THE NETWORK

In this film, the director, Patric Jean, invites the viewer to challenge herself and to observe the situation and the behaviour of the men and women in today's society.

Despite progress on the situation of women, men have retained patriarchal type behaviours and dream of ancestral values. They still dream of a woman who stays at home and looks after the domestic responsibilities and the education of the children. They talk about the size of their penis, which is a symbol of virility and satisfaction, like buying a big car. The historical roles of men and women are still present in this film. The places of power (political parties, the boards of directors of major corporations) are still dominated by men, few women have advanced to these positions to date: the "glass ceiling".

On the other hand, despite the fact that women are more and more educated, they still want a dominant and protective companion (look at France). They will try and please, by using makeup and diets, in order to look like the ideal women of men's dreams instead of letting their natural beauty show. The style magazines for women show an esthetic image of the "ideal" woman which does not reflect the reality!



The world of work and its surroundings are created for men and women are told to adapt to it. Women have to show male characteristics: aggressiveness and power over others, not getting caught up in her emotions, not taking remarks and criticism personally, not being hurt by the disparaging comments that men often say to each other... Demeaning behaviour towards women still exists.

This film demonstrates that, despite many years of feminism, under the guise of equality, there are a lot of behaviours of both men and women that have not changed. The speeches made by women are not always followed up by everyday attitudes. This film forces us to review our ideas and our behaviours, and those of the people around us. ■

By Caroline Flageol, member of the Status of Women Committee

NEW WEB PAGE OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE

The FIQ Status of Women Committee web page is sporting a new look. In addition to a new visual presentation, there is information on the members of the committee as well as a monthly feature entitled « *Réflexions féministes* » (Feminist Reflections). A must read!

To access the committee's web page:
<www.fiqsante.qc.ca/comite-condition-feminine>

