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**Gender and governance
in the Pacific media:
Media representation of women in politics
in New Caledonia**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Philosophy in International Development at
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Abstract

The Pacific region ranks lowest in the world in terms of the proportion of female representatives in national legislative bodies. The media, amongst other factors, plays a role in women's political representation. This thesis focuses on the relationship between the media and women's political representation in the Pacific.

Research identifies the media as a key factor in the formulation of public opinion. Gender-related aspects of media political coverage can influence gender equality in the political sphere. My research contributes to the discussion on gender and politics by exploring how female politicians in New Caledonia perceive media portrayals of women in politics, and how these perceptions influence their approach to politics.

My study applies a feminist theoretical framework and uses qualitative research methods. Through semi-structured interviews I undertook a thematic analysis of the perceptions of female members of the New Caledonian Government and Congress regarding their portrayal by the media and the influence this has on them.

The findings of my research indicate that in New Caledonia women in politics lack visibility in the media. Female politicians who took part in the research observed that this poor media visibility was exacerbated by political structures which do not encourage women's access to decision-making roles. In general, the media accepts the status quo regarding gender equality in the political sphere, which results in the reinforcing of masculine dominance of the political sector through the media. The interviews further indicated that, while most female politicians recognise the potential of the media for gender equality in politics, their position on the significance of the media is not homogenous. Loyalist politicians maintained that the media is a critical element in politics, whereas pro-independence politicians downplayed its importance. Highly-ranked politicians also noted a greater degree of gender stereotyping than junior politicians.

My research concludes that political affiliation and experience are two key elements that affect the media's influence on female politicians in New Caledonia. However, generally, the media appears to have limited influence on female politicians.

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Acronyms

AFP	Agence France Presse
APJC	Asia Pacific Journalism Centre
BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
CBA	Commonwealth Broadcasting Association
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CESE	Economic, Social and Environmental Council
CID	Council for International Development
CSO	Civil society organisation
DNC	Demain en Nouvelle-Calédonie
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FLNKS	Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GDP	Gross domestic product
GMMP	Global Media Monitoring Project
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
ISEE	Institut de la statistique et des études économiques de la Nouvelle- Calédonie (New Caledonia Institute of Statistics and Economic Surveys)
LNC	Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MP	Member of Parliament
NC1 ^{ère}	Nouvelle-Calédonie Première
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PACMAS	Pacific Media Assistance Programme
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PINA	Pacific Islands News Association
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPA	Pacific Platform for Action
RRB	Radio Rythme Bleu
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SPC	Pacific Community
SPREP	Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organisation
TSMs	Temporary Special Measures
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WAVE	Women Advancing a Vision of Empowerment

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Glossary

A glossary of French terms and local expressions used in the thesis:

La brousse	<i>the bush</i> ; designates everywhere on the mainland north of the capital Noumea
Calédonien/nne	<i>Caledonian</i> ; a New Caledonian-born person usually of European origin although it can also refer to the general population of New Caledonia regardless of cultural origin
La coutume	a traditional custom ceremony or customary protocol
Les Evénements	a period of political unrest verging on civil war in the 1980s commonly translated as <i>the Troubles</i> in English
La Grande Terre	the main island of New Caledonia
L'invité politique du dimanche	<i>Sunday's political guest</i> ; a television news segment on NC1 ^{ère}
Kanak	Indigenous Melanesian from New Caledonia
Popinée	a traditional dress worn by Kanak women
Tribu	a Kanak community or village
Tricolore	the tricolour French national flag