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MISS-REPRESENTED: FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS

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## ABSTRACT

*This thesis examines why women are and are not elected, appointed, or temporarily positioned as heads of government. I use four factors –the structure of the government, the proportion of women already in the legislature, the political ideology of the candidate, and the year full women’s rights were granted- to determine what influences women’s arrival at their country’s top political position. When predicting whether or not women were made heads of government in a particular election period, most factors have a modest and statistically significant effect. The parliamentary system of government had a particularly large impact. This suggests that the structure of government plays a very important role on whether or not a woman is made a head of government, and proportion of women has less of a role, despite popular belief. From the results of my analysis, I can determine that my model is a good predictor for the occurrence of a women becoming a head of government.*

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## Chapter 1

### **Introduction**

All around the world, women are grossly underrepresented in political office, only contributing to 20% of elected officials on regional and national levels of governments (World 2012). Though women comprise, roughly, half the world's population (CIA 2013), how is it that 50% of the world is being ignored in selection of heads of government. Why are women elected as a head of government in some highly developed democratic countries and not others? Why, on this measure, does the United States, for example, lag behind some other equally modern countries and some countries where women's rights are not as secure as in the U.S.?

Some countries have managed the social leap of electing a female as head of government but, surprisingly, other countries that are very similar have not. Several potential explanations come to mind. Can a government's structure influence the likelihood of a woman being elected as head of government? Does a woman's successful election into office have anything to do with her political ideology? Will higher proportions of women already in government encourage future female involvement in politics? Can public opinion about women in politics predict whether women are elected to a leadership role? These questions will help us formulate answers as to why some women are successfully elected to "traditionally male dominated" (Pujari 2012, 2) head of government positions.

With a focus on democratic politics, I will examine the structure of the political system within a country, the proportion of elected women in that political system, the ideology of female candidates, and the public's opinion of women in politics to try to predict why women do and do not get elected into the highest political position. Going from the system itself and working down

to the psychology of the voting public, I will be able to see if the answer to the disproportionate representation of women in politics is due to political structure or if it is far more complex and deep rooted than that.

My research will look at a very specific aspect of social and political advancement for women. The larger picture behind this research is to see whether women actually have a chance at being fully represented on a global scale. This is another measure of women's rights and would represent a major global social transformation, not just for women but for all minorities that are not yet heard on the world stage. If evidence can be found that certain factors influence the chances of a woman being elected as head of government in a particular country, we may be able to predict when a country is ready to have a female executive. If they were to be proportionally represented, women should hold these high positions just as often as men.

My research will discover factors that could increase the probability that women are chosen for the highest political office. The topic is important because "empowerment of women is essentially the presence of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society" (Pujari 2012, 2). Has a country extended those privileges to all of its citizens regardless of sex? Essentially, failure in equal representation could mean the failure of a true democracy.

I will first look at the existing literature to build an intellectual foundation about women in politics, the female struggle with representation, and what can help or hinder their quest for equal representation at the highest level of office. This literature will help me to formulate a theory regarding the relationship between certain factors that may influence a woman's representation in democracies. Many of the current theories about female representation focus on just a few countries, so I would use their research to expand the theory to an international scale.

Next, I will present my theory on what factors influence female representation in highly developed democracies.

After the theory section, I will operationalise theoretical concepts so that my theory can be tested. I will identify independent and dependent variables and how they will be measured, while considering the reliability and validity of the measures. Moreover, I will define a few control variables that I use when testing my hypotheses about the influences on female representation in highly developed democracies.

I will then analyse the results of the tests I perform on the data to see if political structure, proportion of women in government, ideology of the candidate, and public acceptance of women in politics do have an influence on the amount of female representation in highly developed democracies. In this section, I will discuss these findings and the implications they may have on future female representation and research on the topic. If the theory is appropriate to the cases I chose, I will have a better understanding of the relationship between my chosen factors and the woman's quest for equal representation in highly developed democracies.

## Chapter 2

### **What We Already Know**

I hypothesize that a woman's successful election to the position of head of government in any highly developed democratic country stems from the political system itself, the proportion of women in the government already, the ideology of the candidates, and the public's opinion of the inclusion of women in politics. I will begin my investigation by examining existing literature to explain why I expect these factors to predict the presence of women as heads of government in democratic political systems.

#### **Political Structure**

To find why women are and are not elected as head of government in highly developed democracies, the structure has to be examined. Not all political structures are the same. One key political structural difference that I hypothesize to be strongly related to the opportunity for women to be chosen as head of government is whether or not a country has a presidential or parliamentary system.

Most of the research already done on this topic focuses on the internal processes of a parliamentary system or a presidential system but not both simultaneously. In comparing different types of democracies, we can see if there is a difference in female representation because of the structure of the democracy itself. Venkatesh G. Pujari (2012), after discussing how the people of India reacted to a seat reservation policy in their government to increase female representation, concludes that despite the change they made to internal policy, "institutional changes are needed in... political parties, legislatures and the judicial system in order to support women's policy agendas and to make the transition from policy to practice" (Pujari 2012, 8). Although both can

be found in democracies, parliamentary and presidential systems have political parties, legislatures, and judicial systems that interact differently. Elijah Ben-Zion Kaminsky (1997) provides a more concrete definition of the actual difference between parliamentary and presidential political structures. The main difference between the two systems is that “the executive must be supported by a parliamentary majority... [and] ultimately must agree on policy” (Kaminsky 1997, 221) with the legislature in a parliamentary system. On the other hand, “Presidents are chosen through national election... [and] the executive and legislative branches are free to disagree with each other; any prolonged domination of one branch by the other, normal in parliamentary regimes, is exceptional and abnormal” (Kaminsky 1997, 221).

These different interactions between branches within the two regime types mean that women have to operate and communicate differently in order to progress through political ranks. Parliamentary systems focus mainly on the political party, taking away from the characteristics of the individuals in the party, making it easier for a woman to be elected head of government because she may be a political party leader. However, presidential systems focus on the candidate, which puts female candidates head to head with male candidates, regardless of the fact that women may have less resources, money, and the power of incumbency (Webster 2000, 6).

The heads of government have different duties and responsibilities because in parliamentary systems, the voter is voting for the party rather than the individual. When voting for the party, the characteristics of the party leaders are not as centre stage as in presidential systems. Voters are more likely to vote for their party regardless of the leader because they agree with the party in parliamentary systems and party leaders are easily removed. But presidents are individual and separate from the legislative and executive branches, which leads to more scrutiny of the candidate in the election process and a higher likelihood of gender bias in presidential systems. Therefore, I theorise that a female candidate is more likely to be elected to office in a parliamentary system than a presidential system.

### **Proportion of Women in Government**

There has been something of a snowball effect of women running for office when more women run and are elected, others are inspired to run too. Several analysts agree that women running for office and being elected increase the chances of more women running for office and being elected in the future. For example, the number of women in state legislatures predicted the number of women running for higher office even in the 1970s (Ondercin and Welch 2009; Furlong and Riggs 1996; Newland 1979). When women elected to office increases the likelihood of more women being voted in, social change is accelerated. Those countries that are yet to have elected women in their legislatures can be assumed as still having social inequalities for women.

Pujari (2012) suggests that women need to educate and train other women to pursue politics to increase their representation because institutions are not forgiving enough to help them succeed alone (8). Just letting women try to struggle for their own representation is not enough to help them succeed. They have to be put on a more level playing field with men, who have had a legacy of experience in the field. Pujari (2012) says that “among impediments to women gaining access to elected office are residual sexism, the power of incumbency, experience, and money” (Webster 2000, 6). Many of these issues affect men too, but they have a disproportionate effect on women who are in a position of under representation. In fact, “it has been argued that one way to get more women interested in politics is to get more women into [government]” (Gardner, Rees, and Tsianti 2001, 1008). Thus a vicious circle appears. To get more women in Parliament, there need to be more women in Parliament. But to get them there in the first place is very difficult when there have been very few to break into that career path and be successful at it.

Hence, I propose that the higher proportion of elected women in legislatures already, the more likely a female candidate will be elected as head of government. One might expect that women are voted head of government in places where many women have served in the legislature. In the United States, “districts represented by women will be more likely to have

women representatives in the future” (Ondercin and Welch, 2009) and the extent of women’s representation in state legislature predicts their representation in future years (Welch, 2014). By extension, the likelihood of a female executive elected in states is increased if they have a history of electing females. I will look at the specific numbers and proportions of women in political systems across time. The proportion of women also indicates how many qualified candidates could have the potential of being voted as head of government. It is obvious that if there are no women in elective office, the likelihood of a woman being voted head of government is very slim. Increasing the exposure of women in politics, however, would increase the number of women who pursue careers in politics. Elected women are now role models for young women and girls who can see women in political careers.

### **Ideology of the Candidate**

My hypothesis is that women are more likely to be elected if they are running on the more left or liberal ticket. There is significant evidence for this in the U.S. currently where the “unreformed” nature of the Republican Party has contributed significantly to the underrepresentation of women within the party (Baer 1993). Democratic women are more likely to be voted into office, but Republican women struggle for the vote and have a hard time even getting onto the ballot. In fact, some analysts have pointed out that “woman friendliness” of a district is correlated with Democratic areas (Palmer and Simon 2006; Ondercin and Welch 2009). As to why more “women-friendly districts characteristics include [among other things] being strongly Democratic, more urbanized..., older, more educated, [and] higher income populations” (Ondercin and Welch 2009, 597; Palmer and Simon 2006) is not clear nor is it a universal principle. In the middle of the twentieth century, Republicans elected far more women to the U.S. state legislatures than did Democrats (Werner, 1968), suggesting that context matters. Even today, sometimes Republican women can be voted into office in these areas because of their high levels of “woman friendliness” (Ondercin and Welch 2009). Ondercin and Welch (2009) believe

that “woman friendliness” of a district, opportunity structures within a district, and voters’ decision to innovate, are major factors that explain why women are successfully elected into political offices all over the United States.

The success of women in the Democratic Party leads to more women running as Democrats. There is also a partisan difference in gender nominations. Republican women are more likely to run against incumbents and thus have low probabilities of winning (Stambough and O’Regan 2007). Candidates running against entrenched incumbents are indeed “sacrificial lambs,” and women Republicans are a disproportionate percent of them. This “sacrificing”, therefore, may drive women to the Democratic Party, regardless of actual ideology.

As we know from the U.S., the connection between women and the left is not universal. For example, in Australia, women traditionally have voted for conservative parties (Rodgers-Healey 2013, 18). In Britain, during the Thatcher era, it was Conservatives, not Labourites, who were most positive about women office holders (Welch and Studlar, 1986). Therefore, ideology is not a perfect indicator as to why women hold the highest political office.

Still, I hypothesise that a left-wing female is more likely to be elected than those from more conservative parties. Women are more likely to be in left-wing parties due to personal ideology and previous success of women in that party. The more women that are elected by the left-wing party, the more women are likely to be in that party. This leads me to propose that women are more likely to be voted head of government when they are part of left-wing parties because of the success rate women in left-wing parties tend to have. Very few people who have a passion for politics want to be in a party where they know their chances of winning are slight. Also in some countries, women are more likely to vote for a woman, which considering women are more likely to be from the left, means they will be far more supportive of a female left-wing party member. Overall, in many systems, left-wing parties are more supportive of women as the “woman friendliness” variable (Palmer and Simon 2006; Ondercin and Welch’s 2009).

### **Public Acceptance of Women in Politics**

I propose that women are more likely to be elected where there is public support. Much research assesses public opinion toward female candidates running for office. One study examined how the British public viewed the possibility of a female member of parliament, or a female prime minister. There was no evidence of opposition to women leaders by either party leaders or the public (Welch and Studlar 1986). But “women do not seek to become parliamentary candidates” (Welch and Studlar 1986, 138). They tentatively concluded that people would rather have a female member of parliament because there are many seats available for that position, instead of a female prime minister, because the woman would then become the sole governmental leader of Great Britain. Of course, the survey was conducted during the prime minister ship of Margaret Thatcher and was likely affected by opinions of her. Overall, though, they find that there is no significant preference for a male or female candidate. Similarly, at least fifteen years ago, people in the United States prefer women in the House and not as much for the Senate (Smith and Fox 2001). These studies suggest that the people are open to the idea of a woman in politics, but context matters, and there is still an amount of sexism in political careers even in highly developed democracies. The more exclusive positions may stimulate more gender bias.

Other analyses find little public preference for female or male candidates. A national survey in the 1970s showed that there was no major difference in public opinion of female candidates in the public neither as a whole nor among different gender, age, and racial subgroups (Welch and Sigelman 1982). It is also true that over time, voters had become more favourable to women in politics.

Other studies have assessed whether gender influences voting behaviour towards a party led by a female candidate and if media portrayals of women candidates influence voter preferences for female leaders (Rodgers-Healey 2013). Whether we like it or not, media control a

significant portion of our perceptions of people in the limelight, especially politicians and new candidates. An online survey, used for pre-election analysis, concluded that there is no significant influence of gender on voting behavior, but that women of some groups are more likely to vote for a woman based on several factors like policy, vision, leadership style and achievement rather than their gender (Rodgers-Healey 2013). So there is still some significance in the gender of the voter and the gender of the candidate.

Surveys should be used with caution because they may not reflect actual voting behaviours and their finding may quickly become outdated. Past research using survey data already had an ingrown gender bias, thus the results cannot be deemed trustworthy. One can observe different degrees of gender bias looking at surveys at different points in time (Baer 1993). Especially in the past, these surveys are worded in such ways that even when answered by females, do not fully represent the female view (Baer 1993) “The survey method itself is incapable of studying new groups, especially social movement groups. The organizational requirements of large survey organizations tend to oligarchy, and oligarchies are largely insensitive to emergent groups” (Baer 1993, 552). This masculine bias in research is perhaps a way in which data on gender in politics is inaccurate (Baer 1993). And of course, there is a certain amount of social desirability that plays into the results of surveys, especially when being asked about gender and race, which are delicate topics (Sigelman and Welch 1984; Streb, Burrell, et al. 2008). Therefore, surveys are not the most dependable form of finding results in gender biases.

In Spain, research finds that women attract more votes than men, which indicates that there may not be a voter bias against Spanish women in politics, thus complete acceptance of women in politics (Esteve-Volant and Bagues 2012). However, when political competition is low, women are assigned to poorer positions by the party in multi member district balloting. They also found that political parties choose women with last names lower down on the alphabet because

name are alphabetised on ballots, and voters tend to pick people higher on the list because they are sometimes don't read all the way down the list. Again, context matters and even votes are not always a good indicator of public opinion on women in politics. The structure of the party and voting systems influence the way people vote.

In an ideal study, I could draw on surveys already done in each country, asking the same questions, and about the same time. That, of course, is not possible. My indicator of public support for women and politics, then, is something different. I use the date at which each nation granted women the right to vote and run for office. The year that women's suffrage (the woman's right to vote and run for office) was established completely in a given country is a measure that can be collected with a high level of reliability because countries have reported that information through the passage of legislation. Although not a perfect measurement, the people that voted on these new laws that include women in politics are popularly elected, thus in an indirect way, the legislation is a reflection of public opinion. This is not a measure of contemporary attitudes, but it does provide an indication of some historical values about women's role.

I hypothesise that the earlier a country allows for full political rights for women (both running for election and the right to vote), the likelihood of a female being elected as head of government increases. In the extent that a supportive public influences the choice of a woman head of state, I need a good measure of public opinion

## Chapter 3

### **Data and Research Design**

My unit of analysis is country year and my design is a cross-sectional time-series analysis. Forty seven democracies formed the basis of my study. The total number of cases is 297 because my original sample of 301 included four\* cases without information on the dependent variable (See Appendix A). This cross sectional time series approach enables me to get a better look at how these highly developed democratic countries have changed over time in female representation. I will start from the beginning of the 1990's to get twenty years or so of data points from each variable, which allows for variance in my dataset. Unfortunately, data before 1990 is not readily available.

I compared only developed democracies so my country selection was done by using data from the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI). Using a scale of education level, health, GDP and average income, all characteristics on “women-friendly districts” (Ondercin and Welch 2009, 597), the Human Development Index helps control for these characteristics. Therefore, in choosing countries with an HDI above 0.8 on the Human Development Scale, I have chosen countries with relatively high levels of education, health, GDP, and average income. However, these countries do differ in location and population so these variables were added. Appendix A has a complete list of the countries used in this study.

The dependent variable in this study is the successful election or appointment of a female head of government in a given system in these democratic countries, coded as a dummy variable, 1 if the head of government is a woman, 0 if a man. If a woman is named the head of government after a public election, then it is considered that she was successfully elected into that position

democratically. However, I also included female heads of government who were appointed and put in place temporarily (“acting” heads of government”). Although not elected, the fact the woman was next in command means they were far enough up on the political hierarchy to gain the position through individual circumstances, means they should be recognised in the data. In these circumstances, most times the appointment is made by someone who was popularly elected. There are a total of 43 of these occurrences.

This variable is measured by using each country’s election results. Election results over time are the perfect measure for the dependent variable because they observe the exact moments in time when women were elected as heads of government and they indicate whether a woman won or lost the election. The measure is valid and reliable because it comes from pre-existing records of the national governments of the countries I observed. Since I am looking into highly developed democratic countries, I can safely assume that the election results they post are relatively void of deception or fraud.

The independent variables are the regime type, the proportion of women in the national legislature, the party that the woman affiliates with, and public acceptance of women in politics. The regime type is the structure of the government, defined as parliamentary, semi-presidential, or presidential. This will be measured through a coding system created by Jose Antonio Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland (2010); and updated through 2011 by Nils-Christian Bormann and Matt Golder (2013). All countries meet the definition of a democratic system: “(i) the chief executive is elected, (ii) the legislature is elected, (iii) there is more than one party competing in elections, and (iv) an alternation under identical electoral rules has taken place” (Bormann and Golder 2013, 360; Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010, 69). The three regime types: (i) systems that can be removed by an assembly and where “the head of state is not popularly elected, [are] considered parliamentary,” (81) (ii) systems that can be removed by an assembly and where “the head of state is popularly elected... [are] considered mixed or semi-

presidential,” (81) and (iii) “systems in which governments cannot be removed by the assembly [“and where the head of state is popularly elected” (81)] are ‘presidential’” (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010, 80). The three democracy types will be coded as two dummy variables: “1” for Parliamentary and “0” otherwise, and “1” for Presidential and “0” otherwise.

The proportion of women in the national legislature is the number of women legislators divided by the total number of legislators after each election year. This is both reliable and valid because it measures exactly the proportion of women in the legislatures, and it is from the national governments directly, so I can determine that the results are accurate and consistent from year to year. These data are provided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and provide a breakdown of the number of women and men in the upper and lower house of the democratic regime by year. Many governments only have one popularly elected house. Thus, in bicameral systems, only the lower house is used in my analysis in order to preserve the maximum number of cases.

There have been numerous surveys done over the last several decades to “describe and to explain why people vote, why they vote as they do, what affects the election outcome, and what are the consequences of elections for democracy in Britain” (British, 2012). However, comparable survey data for all the countries I observe is non-existent: surveys differ in terms of timing and questions asked. In the absence of comparable public opinion surveys about women office holders, I will measure public opinion indirectly by using the year each nation adopted legislation for full women’s political rights. This information was provided by the Inter Parliamentary Union, which indicates both the year when women were allowed the right to vote, and the year when they were given the right to run for office. I will only use the first year when both of these were allowed for women, meaning all restrictions on women’s political rights were removed. These data are somewhat valid because the passage of this legislation is usually passed by a majority vote within the national legislature. The legislators who have the authority to vote on these bills are elected into office via a popular public election. Indirectly the votes they cast on

these bills supporting women's liberation is a reflection of the public opinion on this issue. Also, because of the inconsistency of actual public opinion research, this is a good alternative. This measure is reliable unless there is a mistake as to when full women's rights were given to women in each country. I can safely assume that for highly developed democratic countries within Europe, political information is recorded correctly.

These are the three key variables I used in my multivariate analysis. However, I also examined the ideology of women heads of government. I could not use this variable in my multivariate analysis because I do not have similar data for male heads of government.

A dichotomy is not ideal to measure ideology. Ideology is not one-dimensional. Moreover, to the extent that political party affiliation is a surrogate for ideology, this too has limits. Some democracies have far more than just two parties so making political ideology a dichotomous variable is misleading. Therefore, I measured political ideologies of heads of government on a continuum from -100 being far leftist to +100 being far rightist. This information was provided by the Manifesto Project Database, which codes party Manifestos in order to determine their political ideology (Volken et al. 2013). From this, I classified the -100 to +100 scales into three categories: -100 to -21 is "leftist", -20 to +20 is "centrist", 21 to 100 is "rightist". The measure isn't specific to the language in the manifesto but merely a representation of the approximate orientation of that particular political party. This grouping made it easier to find connections and patterns among female country leaders and party affiliation, and provided a systemic way of predicting party affiliations for parties that weren't yet coded. Although this measure does not perfectly measure specific affiliations, it does indicate a general political affiliation and the degree to which they are oriented, which makes it valid in the sense that manifestos are a major way of political parties indicating what they believe and how strongly they believe in a particular matter. It is reliable too because it all comes from the same source, which is

coded according to a particular set of rules, and all the manifestos are produced by the political party themselves.

## Chapter 4

### Findings

My analysis examines the effect of four independent variables on the number of women who have been elected, appointed, or made acting country leaders. I first try to see if there are any patterns that emerge from each variable independently and then I will assess how much effect the independent variables have collectively.

#### Univariate Analysis

The dependent variable in my study is whether or not a woman was elected head of government in a country. Out of 297 total observations, only 12.8% (38) were of a woman. However, when looking at the individual countries in my study, more than 50 percent (22 countries) have had a female head of government since 1990. Thus, over half of highly developed democracies have seen at least one woman lead their country since 1990, which means they are no stranger to the abilities of a woman running that office.

Out of my 287 valid observations, nearly 60 percent are from parliamentary systems, with about one quarter from semi-presidential systems, and less than twenty percent are from presidential systems (See Table 1). Ten observations, from both Seychelles and Singapore, do not have data for this variable.

**Table 1: Distribution of Regime Type by Country**

Independent Variable	Countries	Percent of Countries	Number of Observations
Presidential	6	17.4	50
Semi-Presidential	10	23.7	68
Parliamentary	25	58.9	169
Total	41	100	287

The fact that a significant majority of observations are of parliamentary systems suggest that we may find more women chosen in those systems. Therefore, at least in highly developed democracies, the chances of a female becoming a country leader in a parliamentary system is higher.

The proportion of women in the upper and lower houses of a country's legislature also illustrates an observable pattern. In graphic form, I show how the proportion of women in both houses has changed over the years.

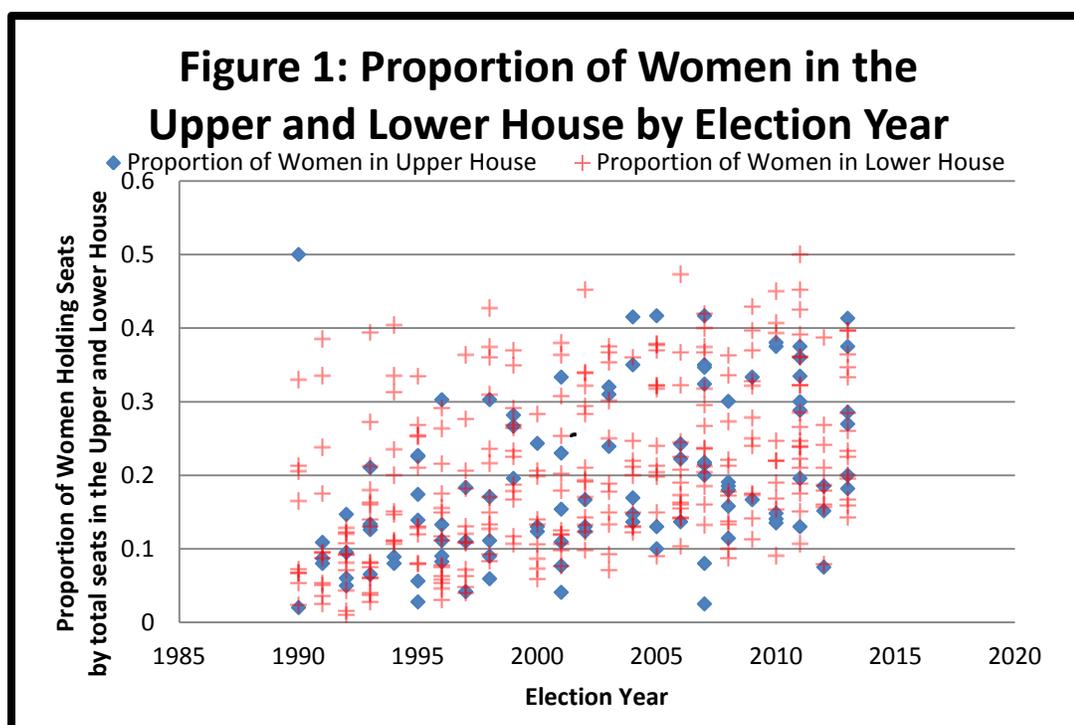


Figure 1: Proportion of Women in the Upper and Lower House of a Country's Legislature

Figure 1 shows that women's representation in both the upper and lower houses of legislatures has had a slightly positive incline in the last 20 years. The upper house has had a more significant increase in the proportion of women holding seats than the lower house. However, the lower house still has some of the highest proportions of women. Women still have less than 50% of the seats, apart from Australia in 1990 and Andorra in 2013. The Australian

election is explained by an apparent “disillusionment with the major parties by the electorate” which allowed for “a large number of independent and special interest candidates [to stand] for election to both Houses” (Parline, 2014). This disorganization of the major parties could have helped women from independent and special interest groups find their way into the upper house, and explain why 50% of the candidates elected into the Australian Senate were women, and why that phenomenon has not occurred in any election year since.

The proportions of women in the upper and lower houses are correlated only very slightly with women heads of government at 0.0067 for the upper house and 0.0066 for the lower. The upper house has had a more significant increase in the proportion of women holding seats than the lower house, although the lower house still has some of the highest proportions of women.

Table 2 shows the proportion of women heads of government in parties of the left, centre, and right. Examining the ideology of the country leader may reveal a possible explanation as to why women become country leaders in the first place. If a party is more accepting of women more than their opponent, then surely women would run under that party. The data show that most women who were (or are currently) country leaders were actually from the centrist parties. But there are also more women from the leftist political parties compared to the rightist ones. Out of a total of 44 female country leaders, more than half are centrist, about one-third are leftist, and only about ten percent are from the right. Although only women leaders are assessed, the pattern is clear. What this analysis can't tell us is whether women are overrepresented in the centre parties and underrepresented in the other parties. To determine this, we would have to know the overall distribution of party affiliation of heads of government. Moreover, this measure does not take into account what is considered leftist or rightist within a country. For example, Finland's Centre Party is on the leftist side of the centrist scale, only missing out on being indicated leftist by 4 points, but is considered centrist in comparison to the other political parties in that country.

Therefore, whether or not the country is very leftist leaning may also be an indicator as to why women are and are not voted into country leader positions.

**Table 2: Distribution of Candidate Ideology by Female Country Leader**

Ideology of Female Leader	Number of Female Leaders	Percentage of Female Leaders
Leftist (-60 to -21)	12	32.4
Centrist (-20 to 20)	21	56.8
Rightist (21 to 60)	4	10.8
Total	37	100

To test public opinion, I use the year voters granted suffrage and the right to run for office. These data show that many women's suffrage bills were passed around World War I and World War II, suggesting that social upheavals caused by war promoted this movement for equality. Before 1914, only two countries in my sample gave women unrestricted political rights out of a total of 43 observed countries, yet between 1914 and 1939 during the aftermath of World War I, one half of those gave women the same rights. Most of the rest of the countries passed this legislation during or after World War II, and the remaining 4 countries (Brunei, Hong Kong, Qatar, and UAE) either have yet to give women these rights, or have missing data. But more interestingly, this data indicates that even some of the most highly developed democracies in the world did not give full political rights to women until after the 1970's, as is evidenced by Andorra, Liechtenstein, Portugal, and Switzerland.

**Table 3: Country by Year of Suffrage**

Years of Suffrage	Year of Suffrage
1906	Finland
1913	Norway
1915	Denmark
1918	Austria, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland
1919	Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand,
1920	Czech Republic, Iceland, Slovakia, United States
1921	Sweden
1928	Ireland, United Kingdom
1931	Spain
1944	France
1945	Croatia, Italy, Slovenia
1947	Argentina, Japan, Malta, Singapore
1948	Belgium, Israel, Seychelles, South Korea
1949	Chile
1950	Barbados
1952	Greece
1960	Canada, Cyprus
1962	Australia
1971	Switzerland
1973	Andorra
1976	Portugal
1984	Liechtenstein

The year of suffrage and whether a country has had a female head of government or not does have a slight relationship. It looks like both of the early suffrage countries have had women heads of government, but other countries have had more, like Switzerland, which granted suffrage in 1971 yet has had five heads of government. Since there are only two countries that fall into the time period pre-World War I, it is more significant to examine the linkage between the Mid- and Late suffrage results. Mid-suffrage has twenty cases, eleven of which have had a head of government since 1990. Late suffrage has twenty-one cases, where only nine of which have had heads of government since 1990. So the results show that countries that granted suffrage to women earlier have had more women heads of government. However, the difference is only very

slight, which suggests that other factors influence when women are granted suffrage and when women are elected heads of government.

**Table 4: Relationship between Date of Suffrage and Head of Government**

Had a Female Country Leader	Early Suffrage (Before 1914)	Mid-Suffrage (Between 1914 and 1939)	Late Suffrage (After 1939)
Yes	100%	55%	42.9%
No	0%	45%	57.1%
Total	2	20	21

### Multivariate Analysis

In this section I explore whether these factors significantly contribute to whether or not women are elected, appointed, or made acting country leaders. A woman is elected, appointed, or acting as a country leader after each election. In this case, I coded “1” if a woman was made a country leader and “0” if a woman was not made a country leader. This dichotomous variable allowed me to analyse the independent variables on the basis of successful female country leader election occurrence rather than frequency. The following analyses illustrate the unstandardised regression coefficients of my independent variables on the whether a woman has been a country leader and the statistical significance they have on the results.

**Table 5: Logistic Regression Analyses Predicting Women Heads of Government**

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Parliamentary (Dummy)	1.094	1.281	-	-	-	1.288	1.417
Standard Error	0.251	0.3	-	-	-	0.311	0.322
p-Value	***	***	-	-	-	***	***
Presidential (Dummy)	-	0.437	-	-	-	0.654	0.909
Standard Error	-	0.375	-	-	-	0.403	0.442
p-Value	-	-	-	-	-	*	**
Women in Upper House	-	-	2.256	-	-	X	X
Standard Error	-	-	1.932	-	-	X	X
p-Value	-	-	-	-	-	X	X
Women in Lower House	-	-	-	-0.006	-	-0.005	-0.005
Standard Error	-	-	-	0.024	-	0.022	0.02
p-Value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Women's Unrestricted Rights (Yr)	-	-	-	-	0.005	0.008	0.007
Standard Error	-	-	-	-	0.006	0.007	0.007
p-Value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Population	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.003
Standard Error	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.071
p-Value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Country Region	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.128
Standard Error	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.072
p-Value	-	-	-	-	-	-	**
Constant	-0.925	-1.361	-1.182	-0.0574	-9.595	-16.31	-13.72
<i>n</i>	287	287	102	287	297	277	277
R-squared	0.051	0.054	0.011	0.002	0.002	0.054	0.063
One Tailed: *** = $p < 0.01$ , ** = $p < .05$ , * = $p < .1$							
X refers to omitted data							

In order to find a relationship between parliamentary, semi-presidential, and presidential systems, as noted above, I created dummy variables for parliamentary and presidential systems. Using dummy variables allows me to control for the other two types of political system without assuming linearity. The semi presidential systems are the omitted, comparative category. Parliamentary systems are significantly more likely to have women heads of government than other systems. Presidential systems are more likely to have women heads of government than semi presidential systems, but not significantly so (Table 4-Model 1 and 2). From this I can assume that the structure of a parliamentary system of government either aids or does not inhibit the flow of women to the highest political position in a country, which is as predicted.

I looked at both the proportion of women in the upper house and lower house. There is no significant relationship between the proportion of women in the upper and lower house and whether women are country leaders (Table 4 –Model 3 and 4). The upper house does have a strong positive regression correlation with the dependent variable but it is not significant. However, because only a minority of democracies has upper houses, I am not using the upper house in my multivariate analysis. However, even when regressed with other factors, the lower house has no significant relationship with whether women are country leaders or not. In fact, the data shows that there may even be a slight negative relationship between the proportion of women in the lower house and whether there are female country leaders in that country at the time. This disconfirms my hypothesis that an increased proportion of women in national legislatures will increase the likelihood of a female country leader and suggests that other factors come into play in explaining this phenomenon. Future analyses of legislature have to take into account the difference between upper and lower houses when analyzing the proportion of women.

The year women were granted full political rights does not affect whether women become country leaders (Table 4-Model 5). The relationship between whether women have been country leaders and the year a country granted full political rights is insignificant, with a

regression coefficient of almost 0. This may be because other factors came into play when the passage of political rights for women legislation occurred. For example, the World Wars may have necessitated women's rights in order to fulfill the function of all the men at war. Therefore, the year of full political rights may not have been because the people had finally opened up to the idea, but that it was necessary for the function of society before, during, and after the wars. This does not explain, however, why four countries passed political rights legislation for women after 1970, and what effects this had on the countries that were neutral during the wars. Perhaps because the year of full political rights for women is a historical fact rather than a current reflection of public opinion, it is not a valid indicator of public opinion.

I have examined each of our variables in isolation, but my final analysis looks at the independent effect of each factor when all are taken into account simultaneously (Model 6). In model 7, I included two control variables, the country's region and population. The country region is coded from 1 to 10 from sub-Saharan Africa (1) to Western Europe (10). Although not a scale, the higher the number of a region represents the more "western" cultures, with the lower regional numbers being more indigenous and tribal (Bormann and Golder, 2013).

When all of the factors –parliamentary, presidential, women in the lower house, and suffrage year- are taken together, only the parliamentary and presidential factors have any significance (Table 4-Model 6). Parliamentary systems have significantly more women heads of government. Presidential systems also have more women heads of government than semi-presidential systems, but the significance level is only 0.1. Both proportion of women in the lower house and year of full political rights for women have minimal or no effect, with regression coefficients close to 0.

When including the country's region and population, the findings remain constant except that region is significant (Table 4-Model 7). Parliamentary and presidential systems are still significant but a country's region is also significant. The least westernized the nation, controlling

for the other factors, more women heads of government have been chosen. It could be that western cultures have been so successful politically with men that they do not feel they need to experiment with a female candidate. Or it could be that countries that are not considered western are more likely to see revolution and upheaval, which creates opportunities for independent candidates to rise through the ranks.

These models are rather poorly fitting, explaining at most only a little more than 6 percent variation. Although some of the independent variables have a significant relationship with whether women are country leaders or not, the results suggest that there are other variables that haven't been taken into account in this study. Clearly, factors not considered here are more important than those that are.

## Chapter 5

### **Conclusion**

My study examines four potential explanations as to what influences the election, appointment, or temporary assignment of a female country leader, head of government, or head of state. These factors were tested by observing all the elections in highly developed democratic countries since 1990. My research is an addition to the literature in that it focuses on heads of government, not legislatures, and is global in scope.

When testing the relationship between each individual variable and whether or not a woman is made head of government, some significant findings emerge. Women are more likely to serve as heads of government in parliamentary systems than other systems. This finding confirms what I hypothesized and supports previous literature. Women are also more likely to serve compared to semi presidential systems.

On the other hand, the proportion of women in the lower house and the year of women's full suffrage and right to run for office have no impact on women's presence as heads of government. It may be that year of suffrage is a weak measure of public opinion toward women and because of that has no link. It also may be that women's lower house membership affects heads of government choice in parliamentary but not presidential systems.

When country region has a small impact on women's presence as heads of government, taking into account region and population, the significance of the findings remains constant for all factors and slightly increases the significance of presidential systems. Parliamentary systems is the only factor that remains significant to the .01 level on a one-tailed test through all logistic regression models, making it one of the more probable explanations as to why women are and are

not elected as country leaders. This is a new finding in the women and politics literature. Many studies concentrate on individual countries or a group of political structures that are similar, but hardly any take into account political structural differences.

These results, although not altogether astonishing, suggest that women do indeed have a better chance of becoming a country leader through a parliamentary system than all other democratic political structures. This could be because of many reasons, like voter turnout, representation area per seat, multi member districts found in many parliamentary systems, or even political hierarchy. Either way, the distribution of countries that are parliamentary systems in this analysis leads me to believe that a lot of countries have the parliamentary political structure, so have the capabilities of having a female country leader, which is a positive sign for aspiring female politicians.

My analysis also found some inconclusive results. The proportion of women in a country's legislature is a difficult factor to analyse. I split it up into upper and lower houses, which I think is where some ambiguity came into play. Instead of looking at the legislature as a set unit, splitting it up into upper and lower houses meant that the results showed no relationship between both houses and whether women become heads of government. The upper house also had to be removed from the analysis because of its drastic reduction in the number of cases I could observe in my multivariate analyses. To get a better idea of what the relationship between proportion of women in the upper and lower houses is with the appearance of a woman as a country leader, future research would have to take into account more cases. This could be done by adding together the membership of the lower and upper house where relevant. It may also be that the proportion of women in legislatures has a lagged effect, where legislatures with more women would produce more women heads of government in future.

The results do, however, contradict some of the existing literature because it brings an opposing perspective to the 'pipeline' effect that many researchers believe aids women into those higher political positions.

However, even with high numbers of female representation in a political system, it does not mean that women have full political power (Janova and Sineau 1992). For example, in the Soviet Union, the female presence within government was quite high but the amount of political power, or actual representation, they could exercise was very limited; thus the voices of the large numbers of women in office in the Soviet Union were almost as negligible as the opinions of the relatively low numbers of women in political offices in the rest of Europe (Janova and Sineau 1992). Some governments may seem politically fair, by holding elections, but the results are more symbolic than substantive, though in democracies, there is less of a chance that legislative representation is a sham.

The greatest weakness in this study was the measurement of ideology. Because I only collected data on the ideology of the candidate after she had assumed the head of government office, and I did not collect it on male heads of government, ideology could not be used to predict whether a man or woman held office. This ex post facto data meant that ideology could not be analysed in the multivariate analysis. However, it could be examined in a bivariate analysis. Twenty-one out of 37 (56.8%) politically affiliated female heads of government were considered centrist in ideology. This suggests that in order to win candidacy, women are more likely to run on the more moderate side of the ideological continuum. No women who have become heads of government in history were extreme leftists or extreme rightists (data not shown). However, about one third of the female heads of government had a leftist ideological platform, compared to only about ten percent who were members of rightist parties. Thus, there is still some validity that women are slightly more leftist than rightist, though the same may be true of men. Future

research could take into account the ideologies of the men who have become heads of government and do a comparative analysis on political ideology that way.

Another surprising result was that the year a country granted full political rights to women had almost no effect on the dependent variable. A reason as to why there is little association between this variable and the occurrence of women country leaders is because they were influenced by other means, like the World Wars. There is a large cluster of countries passing political rights laws for women around the time of World War I, and a similarly large cluster around the time of World War II. This could mean that instead of measuring for public acceptance of women in the political realm, instead it shows when a country's government was perhaps weakest; it gave into this suffrage request. Perhaps that was because countries had to rely on women in wartime, like the famous "Rosie the Riveter" in the United States. It is also possible that this measure reflects public opinion of the past and not the present, so it is not too relevant predicting current elections of women.

My study had limitations, of course. I could not find information on four of the highly developed democracies, Brunei, Hong Kong, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates for this study, although they are in the United Nations' Development Index. The loss of Qatar and the UAE eradicated any Middle Eastern representation, and the omission of Hong Kong made Japan the only Asian representative. Future work may be able to look deeper into regional relationships and see if patterns emerge for female representation in accordance to a country's geography.

Another limitation on this study is that I could not find reliable data that could be easily accessed before 1990. Although this was the original scope of my study anyway, to try and capture the last 20 years of trends, it would be interesting to compare with earlier trends. Future research could definitely expand upon what I have done here to incorporate more countries and a longer time frame to see if the findings are consistent on bigger scales.

Probably the biggest limitation on my study was the compilation of all heads of government and heads of state under the term “country leader”. This is a limitation because there was no accurate way of distinguishing the political and ceremonial powers of one country’s head of government/state from another. Some Presidents and Prime Ministers hold both ceremonial and governmental leadership positions, depending on the country, so in order to make sure all different country leadership types were accounted for, I included both heads of government and heads of state. I did not, however, include any country leader who had been passed the title through lineage, like royalty, for example, because the public has no influence over that person receiving the title. I decided that both heads of state and heads of government were prestigious enough offices that they both should be recognized, regardless of actual powers. For a woman to be willingly elected, appointed, or temporarily placed as a head of government or state means they were in a high enough position politically to get there. It would be interesting to see what the actual differences between these heads of government and heads of state are and whether or not there are significantly more women as one or the other. This could be another example as to how women are in a seemingly powerful position, but actually have no power at all. The only way to determine that would be for future research to establish the distinct powers that each of these country leaders had or did not have.

Overall, my results suggest that there is significance in the relationship between the structure of the government and whether women become country leaders or not, but the proportion of women in the national legislature and the year of full political rights for women do not hold any significance. These latter factors are widely believed to be true, yet my research does not support the link. My research design did not allow for an adequate test of the impact of the political ideology of the candidate though it does show that most women heads of government are from centrist parties.

I think that the public in many democracies are becoming more positive about the idea of women in politics, and have seen the many successes of women who have made those great social leaps. Now the only thing left to do is to keep encouraging and highlighting the importance of politics to women and girls so that they can continue the already strong legacy that has developed all over the world.

## Appendix A

### Country Selection: HDI Above .8

Countries used in this study:

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Andorra         | 25. Japan                 |
| 2. Argentina       | 26. Latvia                |
| 3. Australia       | 27. Liechtenstein         |
| 4. Austria         | 28. Lithuania             |
| 5. Barbados        | 29. Luxembourg            |
| 6. Belgium         | 30. Malta                 |
| 7. Brunei*         | 31. Netherlands           |
| 8. Canada          | 32. New Zealand           |
| 9. Chile           | 33. Norway                |
| 10. Croatia        | 34. Poland                |
| 11. Greek Cyprus   | 35. Portugal              |
| 12. Czech Republic | 36. Qatar*                |
| 13. Denmark        | 37. Seychelles            |
| 14. Estonia        | 38. Singapore             |
| 15. Finland        | 39. Slovakia              |
| 16. France         | 40. Slovenia              |
| 17. Germany        | 41. South Korea           |
| 18. Greece         | 42. Spain                 |
| 19. Hong Kong*     | 43. Sweden                |
| 20. Hungary        | 44. Switzerland           |
| 21. Iceland        | 45. United Arab Emirates* |
| 22. Ireland        | 46. United Kingdom        |
| 23. Israel         | 47. United States         |
| 24. Italy          |                           |

\* = No data on the dependent variable was available for this country so it was excluded from the analysis.

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