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WOMEN, POLITICS, AND IDEOLOGY: A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY OF WOMEN IN
PARLIAMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes new research about whether political, structural, and, most importantly, ideological factors have an impact on the proportion of women in parliament across 53 countries, ones that vary in region and development level. Gender equality is an issue nations all over the world are struggling to address, especially issues concerning women's formal participation in politics, the issue which motivates this study. I use data from the World Values Survey, the Inter-Parliamentary Union Survey, the Quota Project, the Quality of Government, and the World Bank to evaluate how political, structural, and ideological factors are related to women's formal political participation. My results reveal that when controlling for all other factors, including political and structural factors, religiosity and attitudes about women as political leaders are significantly related to the proportion of women in parliament across these 53 countries. These results indicate that changing governmental policies and widening the pool of eligible female candidates are not the only steps that are likely to lead to greater gender equality in parliaments around the world. Gender attitudes and cultural beliefs about gender equality also need to change before greater equality in parliamentary representation of women can become a reality.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapter 1 **Introduction**

Although women have been making progress toward greater gender equality around the world, there are still relatively low proportions of women in parliaments worldwide. There is a wide variation ranging from less than 1 percent of women in parliament seats to almost half. The countries with half of the seats filled by women are few—the majority of countries have less than a quarter of women parliamentarians (IPU 2013). Multiple factors, including political, structural, and ideological, hold women back from gaining more seats in parliament. Although political and structural factors play an important role, ideological factors such as religion and gender attitudes are at the core of the problem. Ideology cannot simply be changed by a new law. Studies in the past have focused on political and structural variables because these factors are amenable to change. History, culture, and tradition are not as easy to change. Nevertheless, it is an important topic that needs to be addressed and taken seriously when formulating solutions for change.

Gender equality is a hot topic across the world, prominently in the political field. I define gender equality as every person, no matter their gender, having equal rights and opportunities in all aspects of life. These aspects include home life, workplace, and especially the political sphere. One should not be judged or discriminated against based on their gender. One of the most prominent but complicated factors holding the world back from gaining complete gender equality is cultural values and beliefs. Laws can change, quotas can be implemented, and social movements can bring awareness to the problem, but in the end culture, tradition, and history are very much engrained in societies around the world and may be a hindrance to change.

Across the world women are making progress towards equality. More women are working outside of the home and are not expected to be housewives. Women are gaining power

in the workforce and are attending and graduating from universities at a higher rate than ever before. Women are also gaining political power, but gains in political power seem to be lagging compared to gains such as employment, education, and women's rights. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Global Parliamentary Report in 2012, only 19 percent of parliamentarians across the world are women. And only 17 percent of chambers around the world have at least 30 percent of parliamentarian seats filled by women (Power 2012). These are extremely low numbers compared to the proportion of women eligible to run for parliamentary positions.

So what is going on here? Why are women either not running for these positions, or not being elected to these positions? Past research has found that political, structural, and ideological factors all come into play. Although political and structural changes are indispensable when working towards gender equality in the political world, ideological variables like religion and traditional gender attitudes play a significant role in maintaining the oppression of women, and therefore need to be addressed as a potentially serious obstacle to gender equality. The purpose of this research is to better understand how significant these ideological factors are and how they differ from culture to culture.

Chapter 2 **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The purpose of this research is to look at how political, structural, and ideological variables are related to the proportion of women in national legislatures across 53 countries. Specifically, I want to know how powerful ideology is when controlling for political and structural factors. I am predicting that all three of these factors will be significant, and even after political and structural factors are controlled for, ideological factors will remain significant.

Political variables such as type of electoral system and implementation of gender quotas will be positively correlated with the proportion of women in parliament. Countries with at least one proportional representation (PR) electoral system will have a higher proportion of women in parliament because PR systems are likely to lead to more diversity since parties are elected instead of individuals. Women have a greater chance of being elected if they are in a party with other candidates rather than running individually. Countries with gender quotas will have a higher proportion of women in parliament because there are set and enforced requirements for the percentage of seats filled by women. Countries with gender quotas will make a greater effort to promote female candidates in order to meet their quota.

Structural variables such as gross domestic product (GDP) and the women's education level will also be positively correlated to the proportion of women in parliament. More developed countries will have more women in parliament because these countries are generally more modernized and therefore have less traditional values about gender roles and are more open to having women in political positions. Countries with higher education levels for women will have more women in parliament because there is a larger pool of eligible women if women are educated and qualified to run.

Most important, I will be looking at ideological variables such as religiosity—which I predict will be negatively correlated to the proportion of women in parliament—and positive gender attitudes towards women—which I predict will be positively correlated. Countries with higher religiosity will have fewer women in parliament because religion promotes traditional gender roles. The more strictly people follow a certain religion, the more likely they are to be against women participating in politics. Countries with negative gender equality attitudes will have fewer women in parliament because people will be less likely to elect women if they do not agree that it is okay for a woman to be involved in politics.

I am predicting that type of electoral system and gender quotas will be significant because they have a direct effect on the proportion of women in parliament, especially gender quotas. If a country has a quota they must meet, they are going to elect women to meet that quota. PR electoral systems are a little less directly related but they are more inducive to gender quotas and higher chances of women being elected because of the structure of the system. Structural factors will be not as significant as political variables because they are not directly related, but still have an effect on the pool of women eligible to be parliamentarians. Looking at the proportion of women who have finished tertiary education gives a general scope of the opportunities for women in terms of education and employment. The GDP of a country is important to look at because it tells us about the amount of resources a country has. And lastly, ideology will have the highest significance because without support for gender equality in parliament by the people, women will not be elected into parliament. Ideology is the backbone of gender equality because change in the mind needs to be made before the idea of political and structural change can come to surface.

As far as regional difference, I am predicting Middle Eastern and Sub-Saharan African countries will have the highest religiosity and the least positive attitudes toward women in politics and therefore have the lowest proportions of women in parliament. These regions are among the least-developed countries in the world and therefore have more structural obstacles to gaining gender equality as well. I predict European and American countries will have less religiosity and more positive attitudes toward women in politics than the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa because they are generally more modernized and progressive. Although Nordic countries may have a lower GDP than North American and some European countries, I predict they will have very positive attitudes about women in politics and therefore have the highest proportion of women in parliament. Countries with Scandinavian background have been found to be very passionate about gender equality beliefs and have a strong focus on implementing gender equality laws and quotas.

Chapter 3 **Literature Review**

Previous research on the influences of female representation in parliament focuses on three topics: political/institutional factors, structural factors, and ideological factors. Political or institutional factors refer to how the parliaments and electoral systems are set up to create diversity in PR systems, and gender quotas are put into effect to assure a certain amount of parliamentary seats filled by women. Structural factors take into account the pool of qualified women for parliament positions. In most countries, fewer women than men are eligible to run for political positions because they do not have the necessary education or work experience. Ideological factors include religiosity, tradition, cultural beliefs, and gender attitudes. There has been a substantial amount of cross-national research on women in politics, especially research concerning ideology and gender attitudes in diverse cultures around the world. Two of the most widely-used data sets in previous research are the World Values Survey (WVS) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) data set. The WVS collects data on countries all over the world and asks participants a wide variety of questions, including questions about religion and gender equality. The IPU tracks parliamentary activity in nearly every country in the world by conducting surveys and creating reports. I will be using both of these data sets to compare how ideological factors and the proportion of women in parliament are related.

Current Statistics on Women in Parliament

The IPU conducts a wide variety of surveys and tracks and collects parliamentary data on 189 countries varying in region, development and economic status, culture, and religion. According to the most recent IPU data on women in parliament across nations, the world average makeup of

parliament is 21.4 percent women and 78.6 percent men. Rwanda actually has the highest

percentage of women in parliament with women making up 63.8 percent of parliament—the only

country with women being the majority. Andorra follows behind in second with 50.0 percent of

women in parliament (IPU 2013). The few countries with no women in parliament are

Micronesia, Palau, Qatar, Vanuatu, and Argentina. To get a better picture, the IPU breaks down

the percentages across regions with the Nordic countries averaging 42.1 percent women in

parliament, the Americas averaging 25.0 percent, Europe (excluding Nordic countries) averaging

23.1 percent, Sub-Saharan Africa averaging 22.4 percent, Asia averaging 18.2 percent, Arab

states averaging 17.8 percent, and the Pacific averaging 13.1 percent (IPU 2013). Nordic

countries are making the most progress towards gaining gender equality in parliament while

most other nations still have less than a quarter of women filling parliamentary seats.

Political Factors

According to the IPU survey in 2012, the percentage of women in parliament has increased by 1

percent since 2011. Although this may not seem like very much, compared to the percentage of

women in parliament as a whole, this is a substantial improvement. Part of the reason for this

increase is gender quotas that certain countries must meet. Gender quotas are implemented in a

variety of countries, with European and Sub-Saharan African countries benefitting most.

Countries that are currently setting a successful gender quota example for the world are France,

Serbia, and Kazakhstan. In the past ten years these countries have experienced an 8 to 10 percent

increase of women in parliament. Also setting a good example are Senegal, Sierra Leone, and

Somalia, contributing substantially to the 7 percent increase of women in parliament in all Sub-

Saharan African countries in the past ten years (IPU 2012).

Electoral systems have also played a part in the increase of women in parliament over the past few decades. The average proportion of women elected into parliament under PR systems was 25 percent in 2012. PR systems turn out the greatest results for women in parliament because political parties are able to broaden their appeal to wider audiences by having women in their party. Majority systems do not turn out as notable results because the incentives to include women are lacking. People see no need to elect women when men have been running parliament since the beginning of time. Also, quota laws are difficult to enforce in majority systems and normally accompany PR systems. Countries that implemented majority systems in 2012 had an average of 14 percent women elected into parliament. Mixed systems are slightly better, electing an average of 17.5 percent women into parliament, but PR systems are in the lead (IPU 2012).

The implementation of the quota system plays a major role in a country's level of success in electing more women into parliament. Drude Dahlerup and Lenita Freidenvall argue that scholars need to pay close attention to gender quotas when looking at women's involvement in politics. Gender quotas have been introduced in many countries around the world and have had a wide variety of results. In successful cases, Dahlerup and Freidenvall found that these quotas speed up the process of gaining gender equality in parliament dramatically, but the system needs to be implemented properly in order for it to be successful (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2006).

Structural Factors

In a survey of parliamentarians around the world conducted by IPU, both male and female respondents answered questions concerning gender equality in politics. Forty percent of the respondents were male and 60 percent were female. Interestingly, men and women responded differently when asked what the biggest obstacle of being elected into parliament is. Men stated

that lack of support from society is the biggest obstacle, with lack of financial support following close behind. Women, on the other hand, cited family and domestic responsibilities as the biggest obstacle, followed by cultural attitudes towards women in politics. It is evident here that in addition to women facing the same challenges as men during the election period—recruiting voters and finding financial resources—they also face the challenges before the campaign process even begins with balancing work and family duties as well as handling the stigma and sexism associated with being a woman in politics (IPU 2009).

In Paxton, Kunovich, and Hughes' paper "Gender in Politics" they discuss the supply and demand explanations for the lack of women involved in formal politics around the world. Structural factors, the supply, are difficult to identify because they are intertwined with ideological factors. Part of having a large pool of women for political positions is drawing interest and motivation for women to run. Because of cultural beliefs and traditional gender roles, many women may not feel that they are qualified to run for a position even though they may be perfectly qualified. Or because women have been raised to believe political positions are for men, they may not have any interest in politics or may be afraid to get involved (Paxton, Kunovich, Hughes 2007).

Financial and human capital are also structural factors that will affect how much time, effort, and money countries will put into increasing diversity in the government. If countries have the financial resources to implement education and training programs for women, more women will be eligible for government positions and may be more motivated to do so if they feel it is accepted in society (Paxton et al. 2007).

Ideological Factors

Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris looked closely at gender attitudes, religion, and cultural

beliefs of countries around the world using the WVS as well as the European Values Survey

(Inglehart and Norris 2003). They found that structural barriers are important to take into account

when looking at women's involvement in politics and labor in general, but they do not fully

explain the low number of women in politics in some countries. The United States and a handful

of European countries have much lower levels of women representation than some African

countries such as South Africa and Rwanda. There is a large pool of eligible women to run for

parliament in these developed countries and yet these countries are nowhere near gaining gender

equality in parliament.

Inglehart and Norris also looked at institutional/political factors and found that the level

of democratization, type of electoral system, and gender quotas play a role in women's

involvement in politics but, again, found that there is still something missing. Gender quotas and

PR systems work better in promoting gender quality in some countries but not in others. These

findings led Inglehart and Norris to turn to cultural barriers for the answer. Nordic countries with

Scandinavian backgrounds such as Sweden place substantial value on social justice and equality

and are therefore highly involved in fostering gender equality and diversity in politics. It comes

as no surprise that these countries have the highest numbers of women in parliament. Egalitarian

attitudes are more common in modernized countries than in developing countries, which brings

Inglehart and Norris to believe that culture and traditional beliefs do have a significant influence

on people's willingness to elect a woman into parliament among other factors like the pool of

qualified women and the type of political system that is in place. They also discovered that in

postindustrial societies, the younger generations were more likely to have egalitarian attitudes,

which means progress towards gender equality in the government will keep moving forward in these societies (Inglehart and Norris 2003).

Pamela Paxton and Sheri Kunovich use the 2000 IPU survey of women in politics as well as the WVS to argue that ideology is an essential factor holding women back from running for parliament. Although structural factors such as the supply of educated, qualified women affect the proportion of women parliamentarians, this IPU survey shows that even when there is an abundance of qualified women, there are still very few women in parliaments compared to men. The IPU surveyed countries from all over the world asking respondents to name what they believe to be the largest barrier to women gaining more parliament seats. Having a negative ideology of women was the most frequent response (Paxton and Kunovich 2003).

Paxton and Kunovich use the statement, "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do," as well as five other ideological variables about women. They found that there is a strong positive relationship between the proportion of women parliamentarians in lower house seats and the belief that women should be involved in politics. From these results they argue there is a possibility that the number of women holding government positions has a significant positive effect on people's views of gender equality in politics (Paxton and Kunovich 2003).

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart performed their own research looking at the obstacles women in today's political world face. They used the WVS to look at attitudes about women as political leaders or being politically involved. Cultural beliefs and ideas about what women are capable of have a substantial influence on whether women feel comfortable or safe to run for office. In many countries women will experience hostility when seeking to be involved in politics, and this fear is not only present in developing countries where the majority of the

population holds traditional beliefs about gender roles. Even in developed countries with changing gender roles, such as the United States and European countries, women in politics are harshly criticized by the public (Norris and Inglehart 2001).

When looking at the results from the WVS statement about women and men as political leaders they found Nordic countries and postindustrial countries like the United States answered low on this scale, disagreeing with this statement. On the other hand, developing countries with more traditional beliefs about women, such as in the Middle East and Africa, generally reported high on this scale, agreeing that men are better political leaders. In general, the relationship between the level of support for gender equality and the level of development is positive for most countries. More developed countries have more positive attitudes toward gender equality in politics and vice versa. Norris and Inglehart found a few countries that are exceptions to this rule, including Australia, Spain, and the United States. For scoring fairly high on positive attitudes of gender equality, the proportion of women's representation in these countries is lower than what would be expected. The opposite goes for Jordan, Egypt, and Pakistan, which have less positive attitudes toward gender equality but have more women in parliament than would be expected considering this pattern. This leads us to think that institutional factors such as gender quotas may play an even larger role in equal representation in politics than ideology (Norris and Inglehart 2001).

Pamela Paxton is one of the first scholars to study women's involvement in parliament and one of the first scholars to argue the importance of ideology as well. In her study she looks at structural, political, and ideological reasons for the low proportion of women in parliament. Using data from the United Nations and multiple other data sets, she pays close attention to religion, women's movements, and countries with Scandinavian or Marxist-Leninist

backgrounds (Paxton 1997). These two types of countries tend to be very progressive when it comes to gender equality and women's representation in politics so we can expect these countries to be in the lead in both the political and ideological realm of gender equality.

Paxton found that ideology and type of political system were strong indicators of women represented in legislature whereas the supply of qualified women was not. Countries with high levels of Catholicism as well as countries with high levels of Islam in the Middle East were strong predictors of low proportions of women involved in formal politics as well (Paxton 1997). The literature on women's representation in government in relation to political and structural factors is substantial, whereas the research on ideology, while not extensive, has been increasingly gaining interest over the past decade.

Chapter 4 **Data and Methods**

For my data analysis I used data from the World Values Survey (WVS), the Inter-Parliamentary Union Survey (IPU), the Quota Project (QP), the Quality of Government (QOG), and the World Bank (WB). I gathered data on the proportion of women in parliament in each country from the IPU. These percentages are derived from the total number of women in all parliamentary houses for each country. I ran regressions on each variable against the percentage of women in parliament, including a constant variable. All regions of the world are represented in this sample of 53 countries.

Originally, I began the analysis with a larger sample of countries based on the data from the WVS. As I began selecting variables and using other data sets, my sample became limited because I wanted to make sure there were no missing values for any country and the same countries were included in each data set. This process shrunk my sample slightly but the variables in my study were too important to exclude. The smaller sample size limited the number of independent variables I could include but I am confident the variables I chose will be significant and that all regions of the world are represented well. It would have been interesting to have included the two other Nordic countries, Denmark and Iceland, to see if their results for women in parliament and ideology were as positive as the other three. Also, including more African countries may have altered the results. According to my results, ideology is similar across African countries but the percentage of women in parliament varies greatly from the highest worldwide to some of the lowest. It is difficult to predict how a larger African sample would have altered my results.

For my two political variables I use the QP and IPU data sets to identify which countries have PR electoral systems and gender quotas. For type of electoral system, countries with at least one PR system in one of the houses were coded as 1, whereas countries without any PR system were coded as 0. Countries with a gender quota in place were coded as 1 whereas countries without a gender quota were coded as 0.

The two structural variables come from data from the QOG and WB. To measure women's education I used the QOG dataset, which tracks the proportion of women age 15 and over who have completed tertiary education in each country. The missing values in this dataset were coded as the mean. For GDP I used data from the WB and performed a log transformation so the results would not be skewed.

I have chosen two ideological variables from the WVS: a single measure of gender attitudes and religiosity. The gender attitudes variable is measured by the WVS statement "Men make better political leaders than women." The respondents were given four options: agree strongly, agree, disagree, and disagree strongly. I assigned agree strongly a value of 1, agree as 2, disagree as 3, and disagree strongly as 4. I took the average of all of the responses for each country. I am expecting a positive relationship between this variable and the proportion of women in parliament. Religiosity is measured by the survey question "How important is religion?" The respondents are given four choices: very important, rather important, not very important, and not at all important. I have assigned very important as 4, rather important as 3, not very important as 2, and not at all important as 1. Again, I took the average of all of the responses for each country. I am expecting the relationship between religiosity and proportion of women in parliament to be negative.

Chapter 5 **Data Analysis and Discussion**

Descriptive Statistics

First, let us look at the descriptive statistics for each variable. The average score for religiosity across all 53 countries is 3.00, which was the assigned value for "rather important" when asked how important religion is. For attitudes about men being better political leaders than women, the average score was slightly lower at 2.63, a value between agree and disagree, leaning slightly toward disagree. Egypt scored the highest on religiosity at 3.95 and the lowest on gender attitudes at 1.38, while Japan scored the lowest on religiosity at 1.8 and Norway scored the highest on gender attitudes at 3.45. These results are not surprising, seeing as Egypt is a Middle Eastern country and has a large population of Muslims. And Norway is among Scandinavian countries, which are known for their efforts in promoting gender equality, especially in government. Nordic countries have the highest proportion of women in parliament and have very high gender equality approval ratings as well.

The average proportion of women in parliament across the 53 countries is 17.8 percent. This average is lower than the 21.4 percent mentioned earlier because this dataset was taken from 2001 to be consistent with the time period the WVS data was collected. The lowest percentage of women in parliament is 4.14 percent in Iran while the highest percentage is 45.28 percent in Rwanda. Forty-one percent of the countries surveyed have PR electoral systems in at least one house and 28 percent of the countries have gender quotas. Taking a look at the weighted GDP of each country, Norway has the highest GDP and Ethiopia has the lowest. For women's education, the country with the highest percentage of women who have completed

tertiary education is New Zealand with just over 28 percent. Zambia has the lowest proportion of women who have completed tertiary education with only .33 percent (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable		Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Women in Par. (%)		53	17.80484	10.82791	4.137931	45.28302
PR		53	.4150943	.4974536	0	1
Quota		53	.2830189	.4547763	0	1
GDP		53	8.167794	1.644071	4.809392	10.53137
Women's Education		53	9.945208	7.086734	.33	28.04
Gender Attitudes		53	2.625833	.4438762	1.375246	3.449559
Religiosity		53	2.995484	.6829198	1.812757	3.951803

Country by Region

Below I have grouped each country by region. Out of the 53 countries, 10 are American, 17 are European (excluding Nordic countries), 3 are Nordic, 8 are Asian, 7 are Sub-Saharan African, 6 are Middle Eastern, and 2 are Oceanic. I put the three Nordic countries, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, into their own region separate from the European countries because Nordic countries have high levels of support for gender equality and women in politics. Grouping them into the same region as Europe would have thrown off the average for Europe and made their differences less visible.

Table 2: Country by Region

Country	W. in Par.	PR	Quota	GDP	W. Edu.	Gender Att.	Religiosity
Americas							
Argentina	33.64	Y	Y	8.949	5.37	2.83	2.84
Brazil	9.10	Y	Y	8.215	5.31	2.79	3.40
Canada	24.69	N	N	10.067	23.86	3.08	2.82
Chile	10.12	N	N	8.543	10.21	2.58	2.99
Colombia	10.82	Y	Y	7.825	4.89	2.76	3.02
Guatemala	8.23	N	N	7.451	2.52	2.86	3.78
Mexico	21.18	N	Y	8.804	9.95	2.81	3.41
Peru	18.33	Y	Y	7.625	17.12	2.92	3.22
Trinidad and Tobago	25.37	N	N	8.769	3.44	2.93	3.67
USA	14.79	N	N	10.504	26.12	2.86	3.11
Average	**17.63**					**2.84**	**3.22**

Europe							
Andorra	14.29	N	N	9.760	9.95	3.15	1.97
Bulgaria	26.25	N	N	7.365	11.56	2.52	2.52
France	13.92	N	Y	9.989	8.26	3.20	2.26
Georgia	9.36	N	N	6.540	9.95	2.08	3.77
Germany	31.34	N	N	10.041	8.87	3.15	2.07
Italy	10.35	Y	N	9.872	5.79	2.96	3.04
Netherlands	34.22	Y	N	10.093	12.89	3.12	2.08
Poland	20.71	Y	Y	8.402	10.77	2.54	3.31
Moldova	15.84	Y	N	7.679	9.69	2.39	2.98
Romania	10.87	N	N	7.409	6.91	2.49	3.46
Russia	8.00	Y	N	7.482	19.43	2.20	2.42
Slovenia	12.22	Y	Y	9.215	11.3	2.82	2.32
Spain	30.54	N	Y	9.576	15.26	3.24	2.24
Switzerland	24.80	N	N	10.481	7.47	3.20	2.41
Turkey	4.36	Y	N	8.347	5.49	2.33	3.64
Ukraine	5.33	N	N	6.455	25.02	2.40	2.57
UK	17.94	N	N	10.141	15.94	2.93	2.35
Average	**17.08**					**2.75**	**2.67**
Nordic							
Finland	37.50	Y	N	10.066	10.07	3.03	2.48
Norway	38.18	Y	N	10.531	12	3.45	2.17
Sweden	45.27	Y	N	10.235	15.01	3.31	2.09
Average	**40.32**					**3.26**	**2.25**
Asia							
China	20.23	N	N	6.856	3.96	2.50	1.82
India	9.30	Y	N	6.125	3.09	2.23	3.27
Indonesia	11.27	Y	Y	6.672	1.66	2.26	3.93
Japan	9.28	N	N	10.527	21.42	2.56	1.81
Malaysia	13.15	N	N	8.295	4.66	2.12	3.76
South Korea	13.04	N	Y	9.337	20.4	2.44	2.52
Thailand	9.34	N	N	7.585	10.61	2.48	3.50
Viet Nam	27.31	N	N	6.072	3.31	2.41	2.20
Average	**14.12**					**2.38**	**2.85**
Sub-Saharan Africa							
Burkina Faso	11.71	Y	Y	5.416	9.95	2.20	3.80
Ethiopia	7.80	N	N	4.809	9.95	3.06	3.73
Ghana	10.87	N	N	5.579	1.55	1.90	3.88
Mali	10.20	N	N	5.464	.61	1.81	3.89
Rwanda	45.28	Y	Y	5.331	.85	2.42	3.35
South Africa	32.82	Y	N	8.013	.4	2.50	3.60
Zambia	12.66	N	N	5.775	.33	2.46	3.70
Average	**18.76**					**2.34**	**3.71**
Middle East							
Cyprus	16.07	Y	N	9.505	16.37	2.71	3.21
Egypt	4.32	N	Y	7.320	4.86	1.38	3.95
Iran	4.14	N	N	7.337	11.58	2.02	3.72
Jordan	7.88	N	N	7.475	3	1.71	3.95
Morocco	6.39	Y	N	7.151	3.77	2.28	3.89
Uzbekistan	16.36	N	Y	6.325	7.48	2.95	2.43
Average	**9.19**					**2.18**	**3.53**
Oceania							
Australia	28.32	Y	N	9.984	18.85	2.92	2.29
New Zealand	28.33	N	N	9.509	28.04	2.99	2.19
Average	**28.33**					**2.96**	**2.24**

As seen above, the five countries with the highest proportion of women in parliament are

Rwanda (45.28 percent), Sweden (45.27 percent), Norway (38.18 percent), Finland (37.50

percent), and the Netherlands (34.22 percent). The five countries with the lowest proportion of

women in parliament are Iran (4.14 percent), Egypt (4.32 percent), Turkey (4.36 percent), Ukraine (5.33 percent), and Morocco (6.39 percent).

I calculated the average gender attitude and religiosity scores by region to get a better idea of how the ideological variables varied by region, as well as the average percentages of women in parliament by region. The Americas have a gender attitude score of 2.84, slightly above the total country average of 2.63, and a religiosity score of 3.22, again slightly above the total average. The average percentage of women parliamentarians in the Americas is 17.63. Europe scored a little lower on the gender attitudes question with 2.75 and scored a 2.67 on religiosity, falling below the total average, with 17.08 percent women in parliament. Asia scored below the total average in gender attitudes with a 2.38 and religiosity with a 2.85 and 14.12 percent women in parliament. Sub-Saharan Africa scored a 2.34 in gender attitudes and a 3.71 for religiosity 18.76 percent women in parliament. This average is significantly higher compared to most African countries due to Rwanda and South Africa pulling up the average. The Middle East scored a 2.18 in gender attitudes and a 3.53 for religiosity with 9.19 percent women in parliament. Oceania scored a 2.96 for gender attitudes and the lowest score for religiosity at 2.24 with 28.33 percent women in parliament. Lastly, the Nordic countries also scored fairly low in religiosity with a 2.25 but had the highest score for gender attitudes with a 3.26 and the highest average of women in parliament at 40.32 percent. Again, this is not surprising since Nordic countries have the highest proportion of women in parliament with the exception of Rwanda. Below is a graph with these results as well as a graph with the average percentages of women in parliament in each region.

Figure 1: Average Gender Attitudes and Religiosity by Region
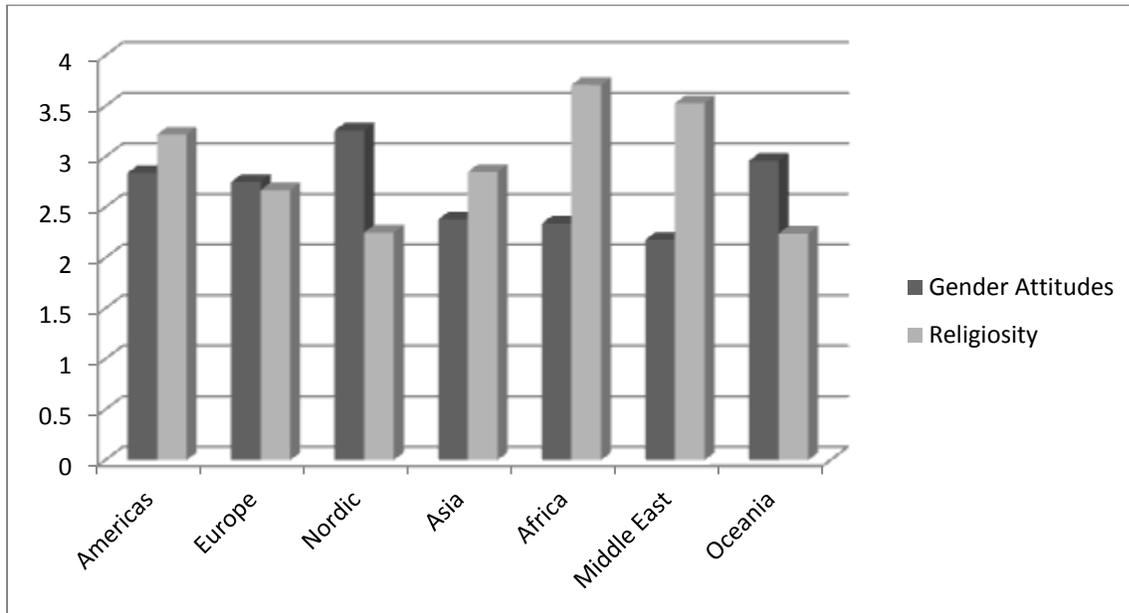
Figure 2: Average Percentage of Women Parliamentarians by Region
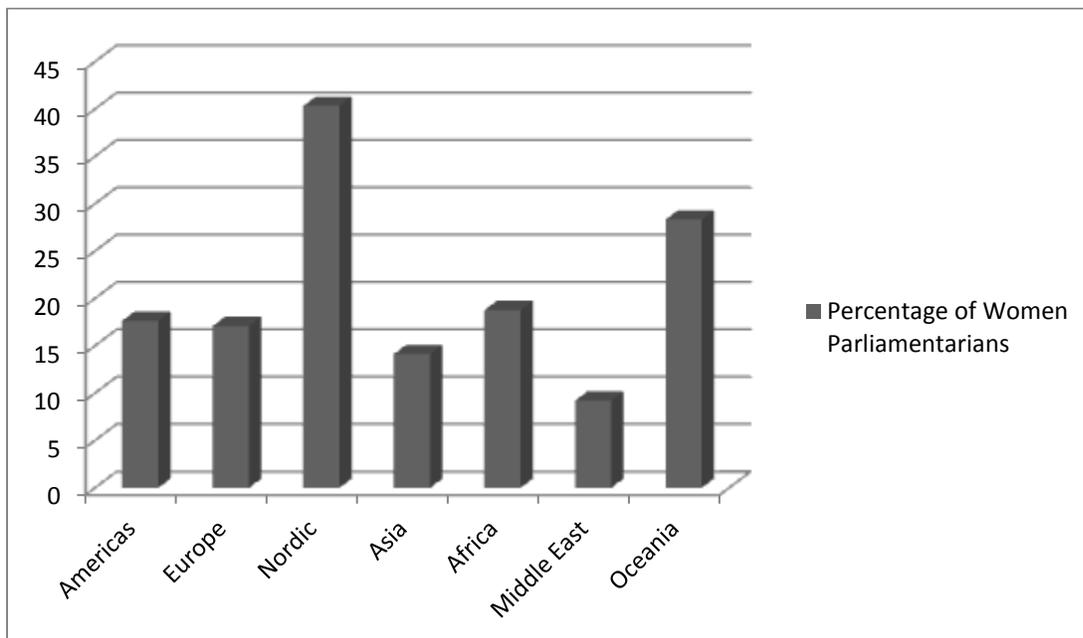
Regression Models

Let us now look at the results of the regression model of the six independent variables overall.

Together, all of the independent variables explain 41 percent of the variance of the proportion of

women in parliament worldwide. This value is not as high as expected, but it is still significant.

The two ideological variables are the most significant. Having a small sample size of 53

countries may have limited the overall findings, making some of the variables insignificant.

Below is the linear regression model of the political, structural, and ideological variables

individually, followed by the linear regression model of all six independent variables.

Table 3: Regression Models Blocked

	(1) P. of Women	(2) P. of Women	(3) P. of Women
PR System	5.482 (1.62)		
Gender Quota	-0.913 (-0.26)		
GDP		2.957** (2.95)	
Women's Edu.		-0.212 (-1.11)	
Gender Att.			10.26** (3.23)
Religiosity			-3.432 (-1.51)
Constant	15.79*** (9.71)	-4.235 (-0.52)	1.147 (0.08)
Countries	53	53	53
R-squared	0.0603	0.1584	0.3379

t statistics in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 4: Regression Models Nested

```
                         (1)              (2)              (3)
                    P. of Women      P. of Women      P. of Women
------------------------------------------------------------------
PR System              5.482            4.405            4.238
                      (1.62)           (1.44)           (1.60)

Gender Quota          -0.913           0.0331          -0.604
                     (-0.26)           (0.01)          (-0.21)

GDP                                    2.739**          0.187
                                      (2.86)           (0.16)

Women's Edu.                          -0.155           -0.322
                                     (-0.84)          (-1.75)

Gender Att.                                            9.385**
                                                      (2.84)

Religiosity                                           -5.248*
                                                     (-2.36)

Constant              15.79***         14.06***        10.26
                      (9.71)           (6.15)          (0.80)
------------------------------------------------------------------
Countries                53               53               53
R-squared            0.0603           0.1982           0.4124
------------------------------------------------------------------
t statistics in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001
```

Surprisingly, the results for the political variables, PR electoral systems and gender quota implementation, were not significantly correlated to the proportion of women in parliament in this study. The coefficient for electoral system is 5.482 with a t-value of 1.62, rendering a positive relationship but insignificant. This means that according to these results, if a country has a PR electoral system, their percentage of women in parliament should increase by 5.5 percent. The gender quota variable has a coefficient of -.913 with a t-value of -.26. This is surprising because I predicted the relationship between gender quotas and proportion of women in

parliament to be positive, but due to a small t-value, the relationship is insignificant. The political variables have an r-squared of .0603, meaning they explain only 6 percent of the variation of the proportion of women in parliament. This value is very small compared to when the structural and ideological variables are added into the model.

For the structural variables, GDP came out as significant in correlation to the proportion of women in parliament when standing alone with a coefficient of 2.957 and a t-value of 2.95. For every one unit in GDP increase, the percentage of women in parliament increases by 3.0 percent. GDP also remained significant when included in the regression model with political variables. However, the relationship is not significant when the ideological variables are added into the regression model. No significant relationship was found between women's education and the proportion of women in parliament. The structural variables have an r-squared of .1584, explaining about 16 percent of the variance of the proportion of women in parliament. This r-squared is slightly higher than the political variables rendered, but not still not significant.

For the ideological variables, both gender attitudes and religiosity were found to be significant when included in a regression model with all other variables. The relationship between gender attitudes and the proportion of women in parliament is positive, as predicted, with a coefficient of 9.385 and a t-value of 2.84, meaning that for every one unit increase in positive gender attitudes, the country's percentage of women in parliament will increase by almost 10 percent. The relationship between religiosity and the proportion of women in parliament is negative, as expected, with a coefficient of -5.248 and a t-value of -2.36, meaning that for every one unit increase in religiosity, a country's percentage of women in parliament will decrease by 5.25 percent. When gender attitudes stand alone in the regression model, it is even more significant whereas religiosity is not significant at all. The ideological variables have an r-

squared of .3379, explaining about 34 percent of the variance in the proportion of women in parliament. This a substantial jump from the political and structural variables.

As predicted, the ideological variables, attitudes toward gender equality and religiosity, are significantly related to the proportion of women in parliament across the 53 countries. Interestingly, a country's GDP is significant when standing alone, but loses its significance when the ideological variables are included. It may appear that GDP is correlated to the proportion of women in parliament but actually ideology is just a common variable between the proportion of women in parliament and GDP. Countries with positive gender attitudes are likely to have high GDPs as well as more women in parliament. A country's GDP is not a predictor of the proportion of women in parliament—ideology is.

The constant variable tells us about the significance of the independent variables as well. Below is a regression model including all six variables plus a constant variable. The constant variable calculates the value of the dependent variable when all other values are 0. When looking at the political variables alone, the constant is significant and has a value of 15.79, meaning that there is something else going on that causes change in the proportion of women in parliament. The constant remains significant even when the structural variables are added into the regression model, but when the ideological variables are added the constant loses its significance.

Additional Findings

Looking at the five countries with the highest proportions of women in parliament, each of those countries has at least one PR electoral system but no gender quota, with the exception of Rwanda, which does have a gender quota system. This could explain why Rwanda has the highest proportion of women in parliament (and significantly higher proportion than the other

Sub-Saharan African countries) even though its average gender equality score is lower than the average. More research needs to be conducted on Rwanda specifically to identify why female parliamentarian representation is so high compared to other African countries.

Interestingly, the nine countries that have both at least one PR system and a gender quota—Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Indonesia, Peru, Poland, Rwanda, and Slovenia—are inconsistent in every way. They have variable proportions of women in parliament, GDPs, women's education, gender attitudes, and religiosity. Political factors do not have as strong as an effect as I predicted. In fact, the political variables are not significant at all in correlation to women in parliament. Perhaps if I were to measure political factors in a different way the results may have been different. But by my measures, electoral system and gender quotas are poor predictors of the proportion of women in parliament.

As predicted, generally countries with positive attitudes towards gender equality and lower religiosity have a higher proportion of women in parliament. A few exceptions to this rule are Rwanda, as mentioned before; Guatemala, which has only 8.23 percent women in parliament but scored above the total average on gender attitudes with a 2.86; the Ukraine, which has 5.33 percent women in parliament but scored below the total average on religiosity with a 2.57; Japan, which is similar to the Ukraine with 9.28 percent women in parliament but scored the lowest on religiosity with a 1.81; Ethiopia, with only 7.80 percent women in parliament but a score of 3.0 in gender attitudes; and South Africa, with 32.82 percent women in parliament but a high religiosity score of 3.60. An in-depth look into these countries may further our knowledge on how ideology, specifically gender attitudes, plays a role in relation to the political world and how ideology operates in different cultures.

Chapter 6 **Conclusion**

This study has contributed to the previous literature concerning the factors influencing the proportion of women in parliament around the world. It is important to take into account all factors when looking at how women in politics across a wide variety of regions and cultures are influencing and being influenced by changing gender attitudes. We can make assumptions that changing ideologies are having an effect on the proportion of women in parliament but we also must keep in mind that the relationship is not moving in one direction. Looking at the relationship between ideology and women in parliament, it makes sense that each influences the other. People are electing more women because they believe in gender equality, and in return when people see successful and capable women parliamentarians, they may be more willing to accept that women are good political leaders. There is no way of determining which factor is influencing the other more, but either way change in one leads to change in the other.

A change in gender equality and gender attitudes is happening around the world and is something we need to pay close attention to. In general, gender equality in political leadership is lagging in relation to other aspects of life such as employment and equal pay, voting and women's rights, and general attitudes about traditional gender roles. This study reveals that ideological factors such as religiosity and attitudes about women as political leaders are the most significant indicator of having a higher proportion of women in national legislatures. Political factors such as type of electoral system and gender quotas, and structural factors such as GDP and women's education, are not necessarily indicators of the proportion of women in parliament worldwide. Across the 53 countries—with a few exceptions—positive gender attitudes were positively correlated with more women in parliament whereas religiosity was negatively

correlated with women in parliament. This was expected because countries with higher rates of approval for gender equality in politics are going to have more women elected into parliament than countries with lower rates of approval. As for religiosity, countries with high rates of religiosity will generally have more traditional ideas about gender roles and therefore provide less support for women pursuing political careers. As for region, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East fell in the bottom half of positive gender attitudes while the Americas, Europe, Nordic countries, and Oceania fell in the top half. Africa and the Middle East were the two most religious regions and the Nordic and Oceanic countries were the least.

There were a few limitations to my study. One was the sample size. Because of the use of five separate datasets, it was impossible to include more than the 53 countries because I was limited to the countries represented in each dataset. Still, I believe a variety of regions, development levels, and political systems were included in my sample to make my results generalizable to a global perspective. Also, if the sample size would have been larger I would have been able to include more variables such as type of religion and multiple variables about gender attitudes. Although I believe the question I chose for the gender attitudes variable was the best measurement considering this study is looking at gender equality specifically in formal politics, the WVS has eight to ten questions about gender equality which would be valuable to look at.

This study proposes areas for future research on this topic. One area I would suggest is to look carefully at the countries that do not fit the positive correlation model for ideology. Ethiopia, Guatemala, Japan, Rwanda, South Africa, and the Ukraine are exceptions to this model. It would be interesting to look at these countries individually in attempt to see what factors might be contributing to these inconsistencies. Ideological and in-depth studies are scarce

in research because of fear of credibility or generalizability, but in this field I believe we would benefit greatly from taking a closer look at how ideology operates in diverse countries and how that affects the political world. As this study shows, ideology is a significant indicator of the proportion of women in parliament worldwide today. Although countries can change laws, implement quotas, and work to increase awareness of the issue, the greatest challenge is trying to understand the cultures, traditions, and history that are tightly woven into societies around the world. Change can only happen by digging a little deeper and gaining a fuller understanding of this global diversity.

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- o "Gendered Justice: Intimate Partner Violence and the Criminal Justice System," by Venessa Garcia and Patrick McManimon
- o "Kenyan Immigrants in the United States: Acculturation, Coping Strategies, and Mental Health," by Lilian Odera
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