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Gendered Legislation: Effects of Percentages of Females in Legislatures on Policy

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GENDERED LEGISLATION:
EFFECTS OF PERCENTAGES OF FEMALES IN LEGISLATURES ON POLICY

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Bachelor of Arts with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

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2015

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ABSTRACT

Does the amount of women in the legislature have an effect on the type of legislation passed? Wide variation exists in gender parity across countries; however, whether or not the amount of women in legislatures has an effect on the type of policy that is proposed and/or passed by the government is largely overlooked. In this analysis, I analyze the percentage of women in the legislature and six measures of women's rights in 139 countries. I have found that there exists a small positive statistical relationship between the percentage of women in the lower legislature and the more legislation passed that benefits women in the country.

Keywords: Gender, Parity, Policy, Female Legislators

Dedicated to my parents for their relentless support, unconditional love, and instillation of my drive to pursue what makes me happy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although women remain underrepresented in elected offices, the current trend shows that more women are being elected to political positions, even to the highest office in a given state. There are currently fifteen elected female leaders in the world, but only two countries (i.e., Rwanda and Andorra) have met or exceeded gender parity (50%+ women) in legislatures. Indeed, it is important to examine the factors that enable or deter women from becoming members of the legislature, but it is also critical to analyze the influence female officeholders have on policy outcomes. Thus, my research question asks: Does the percentage of women in the legislature have an effect on the type of legislation passed? Women's issues are discussed in this paper and are defined more specifically in my analysis in terms of policy which addresses domestic violence, sexual harassment, maternity leave, gender discrimination in the workplace, and equal pay for equal work. These measures are crucial to this work as they overwhelmingly affect women yet are global and somewhat diverse.

In this paper, I focus on specific issues that affect women around the world. Not only do I wish to discover whether or not legislation is gendered, but I also aim to see how this gendering affects the general population. While there is much disagreement about whether or not women in government help their female constituents, this research looks directly at policy that target problems women overwhelmingly face as a part of

their daily lives without generalizing about female politicians. Professor of Political and Gender Theory Anne Phillips studies the effects that women have on policy making along with how gender quotas affect female political participation. She writes in “Quotas for Women,” (2010, 186) that “women occupy a distinct position within society...there are particular needs, interests, and concerns that arise from women’s experience, and these will be inadequately addressed in a politics that is dominated by men.” Phillips’ main argument is that because women face unique experiences and are an oppressed group world-wide, they do have different ways of thinking and if involved in politics, different ways of policy-making. “As society is currently constituted,” she writes (186-187), “[women] also have particular interests arising from their exposure to sexual harassment and violence, their unequal position in the division of paid and unpaid labor, and their exclusion from most arena of economic or political power.” My research focuses specifically on policy that relates to these experiences and oppressions, as they are critical to understanding how women’s gendered experiences play a role in their policy-making.

Some political scientists, such as Caroline J. Tolbert and Gertrude A. Steuernagel, have previously argued that the number of women in leadership positions correlates with the adoption of policies that support women’s rights, especially women’s health (e.g. extended maternity leave). My research shows that there is a positive correlation between the number of women in the legislature and legislation that protects and benefits women, specifically, based on an index of pro-female laws that I have created and will discuss more in detail later. The overall goal of my paper is to examine the amount of women in governments and countries’ institution of policy that strives to fight gender inequality in

direct ways by targeting particular issues. Another important aspect of this research is its cross-national scope. Specifically, this work is not limited to a certain country or region and provides global results. Proponents of gender equality assert that a government representative of its population, in terms of the amount of men and women that occupy its positions (usually 50/50), is more effective in protecting women and promoting gender development. I will examine this assertion more explicitly by measuring percentages of women in lower legislatures and the amount of pro-female policy passed within given countries.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A sizeable amount of literature addresses not only the role of pro-female legislation, but also whether gender parity in political office influences such legislation. Burgess (2011) finds that activists for women's rights and violence against women legislation in Ethiopia must demonstrate that their reforms are "African", fighting back against the trend of "westernization." This demonstrates one key reason that having and studying women in the legislature is vital. Activists often have difficulty gaining ground because successful activism only takes place in the highly-controlled governmental sphere (Burgess 2011). It is crucial to examine the impact that women can have through this sphere, as their civil activism often faces structural barriers. Kerevel and Atkeson (2013) explain that women often face marginalization and structural barriers to being elected and to functioning effectively once elected. Therefore, it is important to examine how overcoming these barriers and increasing female representation can impact the policy outcomes of a legislative body.

While previous research on this issue is generally in line with the views of Difference Feminism and Post-Modern Feminism, suggesting men and women will prioritize different policies in their roles as legislators, the issue is much more complex. Payne (2013) finds that increased numbers of female representatives in U.S. state legislatures made those legislators and legislatures more likely to support a stronger

welfare system, supporting the idea that women take different policy stances than men in general circumstances. More specifically, regarding gendered legislation, Swers (1998) asserts that gender has a significant impact on voting for women's rights legislation, most prominently seeing females vote in larger numbers for abortion and women's health-related issues. Carroll and Dodson (1991) write that in the U.S., female legislators more than males focus policy on problems that more often directly affect women, such as rape, childcare, and spousal abuse. They also point out that even conservative female legislators are more likely to support these efforts than more liberal male legislators. Taylor-Robinson and Heath (2003) agree that female legislators do tend to prioritize issues concerning women's rights, but in addition find that they do not seem to prioritize children and family issues any more than male legislators.

Perhaps most importantly, Thomas (1991, 970) finds that in state legislatures with more women, women are more likely to "introduce and pass more priority bills dealing with issues of women, children and families than men in their states and more than their female counterparts in low representation legislatures". This not only suggests that female representatives vote more for women's issues, but that greater numbers of female legislators will produce more female-oriented legislation. This sets the stage for a strong hypothesis that the number of female representatives affects the outcome of gendered legislation, while still leaving room for further exploration of these findings. Although Thomas' (1991) research provides a strong foundation for my research, it only applies to state legislatures in the U.S.; as an older established democracy, the U.S. example may not set a standard for national level legislatures that vary widely across the globe.

While most of the previous research of female political participation discussed pertains to the U.S., Western Europe, and slightly to Latin America, female politicians are often seen as anomalies in African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries, and therefore, are left out of a broader analysis. This is additionally limited by more Western views of feminism that focus on gender equality and democratic progress in terms of reproductive rights and sexuality, rather than access to land, safe working conditions, and election reform, which are themes commonly found in African feminism (Mikell 1997). Integrating countries from all regions of the world into a data analysis of female political participation is crucial in order to understand more universal factors that play into gender equality and development of the world's women.

As stated earlier, it is important not to generalize about female politicians, especially in a global analysis, where feminism and politics differ greatly. Miranda (2005, 4) writes in "Impact of Women's Participation and Leadership on Outcomes" that "women do not form a homogenous group defined by their sex alone," meaning that female politicians do not always have the same values or views simply because they identify as the same gender. Miranda (2005) also discusses several barriers that women face in politics inhibiting their support of progressive policy. Because of their upbringings and socialization, female politicians do not always believe in defying traditional gender roles in order to develop women's rights. As is common in Asian countries, which have several female heads of state/government, women are often elected or appointed to government positions due to their ties to a male politician, such as a father or husband (Rich and Gribbins 2014). It should be additionally noted that female politicians may not support policy that aims to expand gender equality because they fear

being seen as against men or men's interests and further, could be less likely to be perceived favorably and/or elected. Lastly, Miranda (2005) explores the notion that female politicians only support policy related to women's issues because they are given more opportunities in this area or are even forced into positions that deal with areas related to their traditional roles/stereotypes. Miranda's (2005) research here focuses more on non-Western countries, which is often left out of comparative analyses on gender and politics. These theories assert that women in politics do not necessarily have homogenous interests and will not pursue liberal policies, either due to cultural norms and gender socialization or institutional barriers that hinder female political participation. Since these findings contradict others by Thomas (1991), Carroll and Dodson (1991), and Swers (1998), a cross-cultural and more in-depth study is necessary in order to reach definitive conclusions.

More recently, research has delved into the factors that affect the number of women in the legislature, such as gender quotas, although findings on this topic have been mixed. Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2010, 181) have studied gender quotas in several different countries with varied government systems and development progress. They have found that quotas "have proven effective at increasing the number of women in political assemblies." Tinker (2004) finds that gender quotas have significantly contributed to the increase in women as legislators around the world; however, the author also cautions that these quotas vary significantly based upon the type of electoral system and have little to no impact on policy outcomes. Zetterberg (2009) furthers this claim, asserting that women who are elected by quota systems tend to be constrained by other factors within the legislative system, and Schwindt-Bayer and Mischler (2005) also argue

that the mechanics and design of the quota system determine its effectiveness. Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2010, 179) further this idea by stating, “the use of quotas alone is not sufficient to ensure high levels of representation for women, [but] properly implemented, can bring about substantial improvements in women’s political representation.” The authors also maintain that since proportional representation electoral systems, as opposed to majoritarian systems, have been shown to favor having higher levels of female political participation, they will also make gender quotas more effective. In addition, Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2010, 181) assert that “quota systems do not remove all barriers to women in politics, such as women’s double burden, the gender imbalance of campaign financing, and the many obstacles women meet when performing their job as elected politicians...”

Franceschet and Piscopo (2014, 85) discovered that in Argentina, quotas have increased female “access to elected office without altering either gendered hierarchies or gendered power networks that govern political advancement.” Consequently, women may also face institutional barriers once elected that prevent creating substantive policy change. This is significant for further study of female representation and quota systems because Davidson-Schmich (2006) explains that effective gender quota systems are much more representative of women’s interests than ineffectively constructed quota systems. The latter suggests that higher numbers of women in the legislature alone may not be enough to create female-centered policy change; rather, having women elected under free and fair elections without gender mandates or institutional barriers will be the key to seeing women who vote for women’s issues. Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2010, 179) write, “passing quota regulations may be just a symbolic gesture if implementation is not

regulated and there are no sanctions for non-compliance.” They suggest that “the specification of the quota provisions...and the sanctions for noncompliance and the eventual (non-) implementation of such sanctions” are critical to the success of gender quotas, and therefore, the increase in female political participation (179). Overall, quota systems do force the public and governmental officials to challenge their political institutions and recognize that women should play a larger role in policy-making and governing.

Schwindt-Bayer (2006) suggests that apart from gender quotas, female legislators tend to vote for female-oriented legislation such as women and children’s issues because of changing attitudes about the roles of females in society, specifically within Latin America. Policy outcomes may also be affected by the institutional settings of which women are elected. Schwindt-Bayer (2006) explains that sitting on a committee responsible for the particular policy area increases a woman’s likelihood to vote for it, even though as a control, it still shows that women vote overwhelmingly more for women’s issues. Still, this shows that more complex factors are at play impacting the policy preferences of female legislators.

CHAPTER 3

HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In February 2014, *The Guardian* released a comprehensive list of women's rights by country based on data obtained previously by the UN Women's 2011 *Progress of the World's Women* report. This list included women's rights to legal abortion, legal protections from domestic violence and sexual harassment, explicit constitutional equality, equal rights for women to property, and women's rights in the workplace. I compiled a similar list of countries that *The Guardian* used in their data set and listed their percentage of women in the legislature, both elected and appointed, (as of April 1, 2014) as well as their Freedom House score (Freedom House 2014). If there was no information from *The Guardian's* data set for my six measures of pro-female laws, however, then the country was omitted entirely¹. The final list of countries I compiled data for included 139 countries from all regions of the world, including 57 Free countries, 51 Partly Free countries, and 30 Not Free countries (See Table 1 for the list of countries examined).

¹ Countries that lacked data and were omitted included Afghanistan, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belize, Bhutan, Brunei, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Comoros, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hong Kong, Iraq, Kiribati, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Monaco, Myanmar, Nauru, Palestine, Palau, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Suriname, Swaziland, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Table 1: List of Countries in Analysis

Note: * indicates countries that did not have data on percentages of female legislators

Albania	Cote d'Ivoire	Ireland	Nepal	South Africa
Algeria	Croatia	Israel	Netherlands	Spain
Angola	Czech Republic	Italy	New Zealand	Sri Lanka
Argentina	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Jamaica	Nicaragua	Sudan
Armenia	Denmark	Japan	Niger	Sweden
Australia	Dominican Republic	Jordan	Nigeria	Switzerland
Austria	Ecuador	Kazakhstan	Norway	Syria
Azerbaijan	Egypt*	Kenya	Oman	Tajikistan
Bangladesh	El Salvador	Kuwait	Pakistan	Thailand
Belarus	Estonia	Kyrgyzstan	Panama	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Belgium	Ethiopia	Laos	Papua New Guinea	Timor-Leste
Benin	Fiji*	Latvia	Paraguay	Togo
Bolivia	Finland	Lebanon	Peru	Tunisia
Bosnia & Herzegovina	France	Lesotho	Philippines	Turkey
Botswana	Gabon	Liberia	Poland	Uganda
Brazil	Georgia	Lithuania	Portugal	Ukraine
Bulgaria	Germany	Madagascar	Republic of Korea	United Arab Emirates
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Malawi	Republic of Moldova	United Kingdom
Burundi	Greece	Malaysia	Romania	United Republic of Tanzania
Cambodia	Guatemala	Mali	Russian Federation	United States
Cameroon	Guinea	Mauritania	Rwanda	Uruguay
Canada	Haiti	Mauritius	Saudi Arabia	Uzbekistan
Chad	Honduras	Mexico	Senegal	Venezuela
Chile	Hungary	Mongolia	Serbia	Vietnam
China	Iceland	Montenegro	Sierra Leone	Yemen
Colombia	India	Morocco	Singapore	Zambia
Congo	Indonesia	Mozambique	Slovakia	Zimbabwe
Costa Rica	Iran	Namibia	Slovenia	

My research focused specifically on the data that included legislative protections of women's rights and my dependent variable is an index based on the measures from *The Guardian* (2014). I chose the following six categories because they focus uniquely on legislation and they are less culturally ambiguous than some of the other measures.

The six categories that I chose to use are as follows:

1. Is there legislation that specifically addresses domestic violence?
2. Is there legislation that specifically addresses sexual harassment?
3. Are there criminal sanctions for sexual harassment?
4. Does the law mandate paid or unpaid maternity leave?
5. Does the law mandate equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value?
6. Are there laws mandating non-discrimination based on gender in hiring?

With these measures, I created an index of pro-female laws and calculated a total for each country based upon their scores under each measure. If the country had passed the legislation, it received a score of 1 under that category and if it did not, it received a score of 0. Each country's total was based upon the summation of these scores. Presently, my research is only directly measuring current legislatures with the percentage of women and their passage of these laws at some point in time. My research does not include the dates in which each country passed each piece of legislation, nor the change of the percentage of women in each country's lower legislature over time. The passage of these laws could have aided the election of more female politicians and it is also possible that the percentage of women in the legislature as well as the passage of these laws are both correlated to other factors such as the countries' cultural values, political and economic stability, and/or their Gross Domestic Products (GDPs).

My main independent variable for this project is the percentage of women in the lower legislative house of each country examined (% of Women in Leg). To find this

data, I drew from the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) data from April 2014. I also included ten relevant control variables, which I explain in detail here. First, I include a measure of whether or not each country had a gender quota in place. A gender quota is defined by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2012) as an electoral system mechanism that sets "a target or minimum threshold for women, and may apply to the number of women candidates proposed by a party for election," or takes the form "of reserved seats in the legislature." Data for gender quotas was taken from Global Database of Quotas for Women in 2014 and is represented as "Gender Quota" with either a score of 1 if the country has one present or 0 if not. For the purpose of this research, a gender quota was only recorded as present if it was legally required by electoral law or the constitution, and not just as a recommendation to the political parties in office. I included gender quotas largely because political scientists continue to debate whether or not gender quotas actually benefit female politicians and increase their participation. Thus, I seek to examine the effects of gender quotas on the index score as well as the percentage of women in government in each country.

Second, I include two control variables measuring if the countries currently have or previously have had a female leader. To measure these, I used a list from J. McCullough's "Female World Leaders Currently in Power", updated April 18, 2014, to find data on countries that currently do and have previously had female leaders. The variable "Female Leader Present" represents whether or not countries currently have a female leader and "Female Leader Past" represents whether or not countries have had a female leader since WWII.

Next, I include two control variables representing whether or not the country was

a former British or French colony. Drawing from Lieberman (2015) and Sheers (2014), I recorded data for countries that were previously French or British colonies, as represented by “French Colony” and “British Colony.” Past colonization and even current ties with colonial powers can have an effect on a country’s political system, gender equality, and development. These control variables were selected out of interest in the progress that previously French colonies, like Rwanda and Cameroon, have had recently in female political participation, despite their tumultuous history and unstable government system (Hunt 2014; UN Women 2013; Wilber 2011).

Fourth, I controlled for religion, particularly if the country has a predominately Muslim or Catholic population. Using data from Golder, Golder, and Clark’s *Principles of Comparative Politics* (2012), the variables “Maj Muslim” and “Maj Catholic” measure whether or not the countries have majority Muslim or Catholic populations (51% or higher). I coded the countries with 0s and 1s under categories for “Former French Colony,” “Former British Colony,” “Majority Muslim Population,” and “Majority Catholic Population”². These variables were used to determine whether or not religion and colonization play a role in the countries’ total index scores and gender equality. Existing works suggest that religion plays a strong role in determining cultural norms, and therefore, acceptable political behavior for women. If these two major world religions have an impact on female political participation, it is possible they will also affect policy.

Fifth, I incorporate control variables for each country’s Freedom House score,

² Initially, models with a Majority Protestant Population variable were included, but they failed to reach statistical significance in any model.

gathered from the Freedom House's 2014 report of *Freedom in the World*. Freedom House is a nongovernmental organization that measures levels of democracy across the world by examining countries' political rights and civil liberties. Factors such as election competitiveness, media freedom, and human rights are taken into consideration when given an overall score and ranked either "Free" (connoting a high score on an index associated with liberal democracies), "Partially Free" (a country with considerable restrictions on political and civil rights), or "Not Free" (mostly considered dictatorships). Countries' Freedom House scores are commonly used as proxies for the level of democratization and should be included in this research as factors in gender equality and development.

Lastly, I control for each country's GDP Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). Each country's GDP PPP for 2013 was gathered from the World Bank's database (2014) and then, by using natural logs, was entered into the dataset under "GDP PPP". GDP PPP is a measure of economic development and as used in this research, can contribute to the idea that more developed countries tend to provide greater opportunities for women both economically and politically. If this is the case, then countries with a higher GDP PPP will most likely have higher index scores. These ten sources of data were combined and then analyzed using STATA to determine whether or not there was a significant positive change in the countries' index of pro-female laws when they had a higher percentage of women in government.

CHAPTER 4

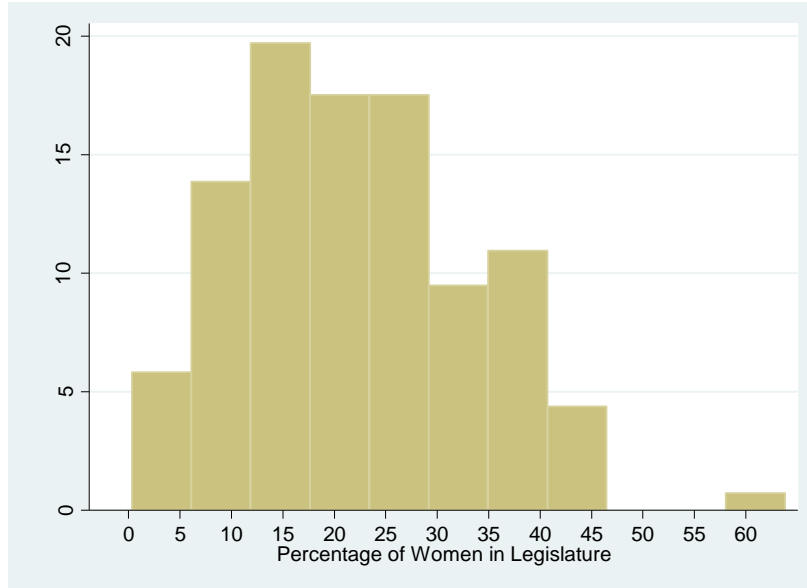
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Of the 139 countries analyzed, 137 of them had data on the percentage of women in their legislature's lower house as found by IPU³. Of these countries, the ranges of female representation extended from 0.3% (in Yemen) to 63.8% (in Rwanda) with the average being 21.96% women in the legislature's lower house. Figure 1 shows the percentage of women in the legislature among the examined countries. Within Free countries, the percentages of women in the lower house ranged from 8.1-45% while in Partly Free countries, it ranged from 2.7-41.6% and in Not Free countries, from 0.3-63.8%. As one would expect, Free countries had a generally higher range of the percentage of women in government than Partly Free and Not Free countries. If Rwanda – a clear outlier – is removed from the analysis, the next Not Free country with the highest percentage of women in the lower house has 36.8% (Angola).

³ The two countries that did not have these data were Egypt and Fiji.

Figure 1:
Countries' Percentages of Women in the Lower Legislatures

Y-axis = Percentage of Countries



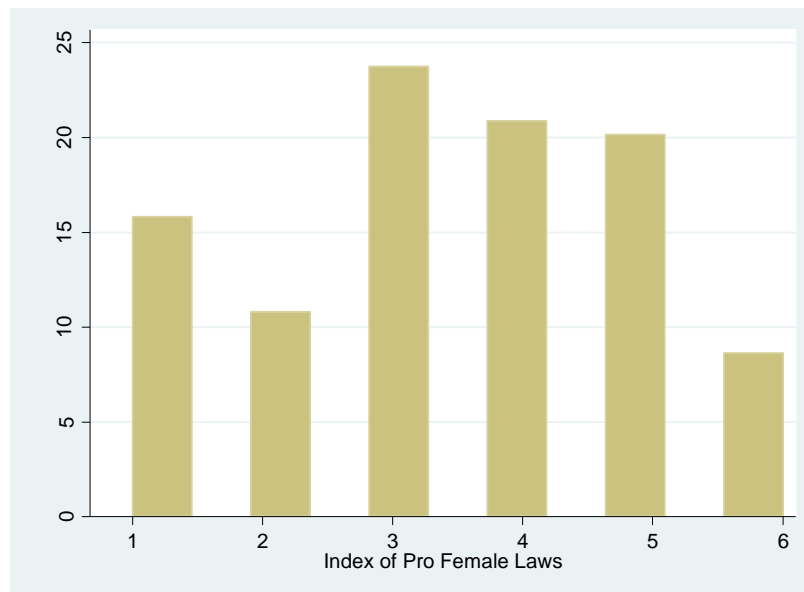
Moving on to the breakdown of countries and their scores on the index of pro-female laws, the range of these total scores went from 1-6 with a 3.4 being the average score among the 139 countries. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of countries with specified total index scores and Table 2 shows the number of countries that had instituted each piece of legislation used in the pro-female law index. While Free countries had an average index score of 3.61, Partly Free countries had an average score of 3.64 and Not Free countries, an average of 2.83. Once again, Not Free countries generally are less protective of women's rights and do not have as many laws instituted that protect women and gender equality. To say that Free countries are always more female-friendly, however, would not necessarily be true, as the Partly Free countries have a higher average score on my index than Free countries. One could argue that the average index

score for Partially Free countries is higher than in Free countries because Free countries may seem already more egalitarian to the general public and legislators, therefore making these issues and laws seem not necessary to address/enact. All three categories of countries, Free, Partly Free, and Not Free, had the same range of index scores from 1-6.

**Table 2:
Total Countries and Legislation Passed**

Legislation Passed	Number of Countries
Domestic Violence	75
Sexual Harassment	84
Criminal Sanctions for Sexual Harassment	63
Maternity Leave	134
Equal Pay for Equal Work	57
Gender Non-Discrimination in the Workplace	66

**Figure 2:
Countries' Total Index Scores**
Y-axis= Percentage of Countries



For each country, I examined whether or not they currently have or previously have had a female leader. Only 15 of the countries I analyzed currently have female heads of state and 30 have previously had female heads of state (since WWII)⁴. If the country currently has a female leader, it received a 1 under the “Female Leader Present” category and if it does not, it received a 0. This same method was used under the “Female Leader Past” category. I used the Global Database of Quotas for Women (2014) to find out which of the countries had instituted electoral gender quotas. Below, Table 3 illustrates how many of the countries analyzed currently have gender quotas broken down by Freedom House scores. This table demonstrates that more Partially Free countries than Free have gender quotas in place and that there are more Not Free countries with gender quotas in place than without. Only in the Free category is there a higher percentage of countries without quotas than with, hinting to the idea that these countries might feel they have enough female political participation and do not need electoral mandates to increase this participation.

Table 3: Percentage of Countries with and without Gender Quotas

	Not Free	Partially Free	Free
No Quota	6.81	34.09	59.09
Quota	19.67	44.26	36.07

⁴ Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand (head of government), Ukraine, and United Kingdom.

Model 1 included the independent variable of percentage of women in the lower legislature in order to determine what effect this has on the amount of pro-female policy that is passed in the legislature. This regression showed that there is a small but statistically significant increase in a country's total index score when the percentage of women in the lower legislature is higher. In Model 2, I included the presence of gender quotas for each country and the variables "Female Leader Present" and "Female Leader Past." Including the gender quota, which was not a statistically significant variable, resulted in the percentage of women in the legislature variable to have less of an impact on the countries' total index scores; however, it remained statistically significant and has a positive effect on the index scores. Adding these variables did not produce any significant results despite the assumption by their supporters that gender quotas increase women's representation in government and therefore, the passing of legislation that protects women. Furthermore, when a regression was estimated to examine if there was a positive correlation between the percentage of women in the lower legislatures and the presence of a gender quota, no statistically significant results were found⁵.

Partially Free and Not Free countries were taken into consideration in Model 3. The category "Free" is omitted in this model to prevent perfect multicollinearity and thus, is used as a benchmark to evaluate the categories "Partially Free" and "Not Free." In this model, I also controlled for the variables "Former French Colony," "Former British Colony," "Majority Muslim Population," "Majority Catholic Population," and GDP PPP. Percentages of women in the lower legislature remained significant, but the significance of the gender quota variable decreased. This may be due to the fact that the mere

⁵ This suggests that the overall presence of women in lower legislatures isn't directly increased by the institution of gender quotas, although this could be due to the limitations of my research design.

presence of a gender quota does not necessarily mean there will be more women in government. The actual enforcement of a gender quota could possibly produce an increase in the countries' total index scores, much like the actual percentage of women in the legislature.

In sum, through a series of regressions, I found that for every 1% increase in women in the lower house of the legislature, there is a 0.03 unit increase in the country's total score on the index of pro-female laws. If there is an even larger increase in the percentage of women in the legislature in a given country, there is a more dramatic change in the total score of the country's index of pro-female laws. For example, a 33% increase in the amount of women in the legislature would result in a whole 1-unit increase in the total index score. The percentage of women in the lower legislature remained statistically significant and had a positive effect on the countries' total index scores in all three of my models.

Table 4: OLS Regression on Gender Legislation Index

Note: ***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05; Regressions are unstandardized coefficients

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
% Women in Leg	0.03**	0.01	0.03*	0.01	0.03*	0.01
Gender Quota			0.46	0.30	0.57	0.35
Female Leader Present			-0.31	0.56	-0.20	0.56
Female Leader Past			0.23	0.45	-0.10	0.47
FrenchColony					-0.43	0.47
BritishColony					0.63	0.47
MajMuslim					-0.33	0.46
MajCatholic					0.26	0.38
GDP PPP					0.01	0.18
Partially Free					0.25	0.44
Not Free					-0.58	0.57
Constant	2.77***	0.28	2.68***	0.39	2.44	1.90
N	137		104		104	
Adjusted R ²	0.04		0.03		0.06	

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDIES

Of the 139 countries analyzed in this research, there were two countries that stuck out because of their unusual percentages of women in the lower legislature--one surpassing gender parity and one extremely low. To briefly discuss the outliers in my research, I will address the country that has exceeded gender parity in the lower house with 63.8% women as well as the country that has only 0.3% women in the lower house, the lowest percentage out of the 137 countries. Rwanda is a Not Free country with an extremely high percentage of women in the legislature, especially when compared to countries similar in GDP and region of the world. The next highest percentage of women in the lower house, according to my data, is in South Africa, a Free country, with 44.8%⁶. Women hold one-third of the cabinet positions in Rwanda and the country became the first one in the world to have a female majority in its parliament in 2008 (McCrummen 2008). Because of its high level of women, the Rwandan legislature has passed many bills benefiting the welfare of women and children since the early 2000s, such as policy aimed at combatting domestic violence and child abuse (McCrummen 2008). Since the country has had a majority-female parliament, it has seen great progress in gender equality and economic development.

⁶ This came from my preliminary research, as some countries were not included because they lacked additional data.

Studies of Rwanda and its peculiarly high percentage of women in the lower house of the legislature have been conducted and offer various explanations for this unusual characteristic. While there is no one factor that has created such a high percentage of women in the lower house, Rwanda's governmental gender quota more than likely contributes to this. According to the Global Database of Quotas for Women (2014), both the lower and upper houses of Rwanda's legislature have gender quotas in a percentage as well as an additional legislator count. Out of the 80 seats in the country's legislature, the Chamber of Deputies, 53 members are elected by "direct universal suffrage through a secret ballot using closed list proportional representation" and at least 30% of these seats must be reserved for women (Global Database of Quotas for Women 2014). In addition, 24 women are also guaranteed seats through a provision in the constitution stating, "2 [women] elected from each province and from the city of Kigali by an electoral college with a women-only ballot," (Global Database of Quotas for Women 2014). Electoral law in Rwanda declares that these 24 women "shall be elected by specific organs in accordance with national administrative entities" (Global Database of Quotas for Women 2014). Gender quotas in Rwanda are just one institutional factor that could potentially explain the country's 63.8% of women in the lower house. There may also be cultural factors to explain this (or the historical effects of the 1994 genocide that eliminated roughly 20% of the country's entire population), though these would have to be more thoroughly researched and discussed in another paper.

Interestingly, the countries with both the highest and lowest percentage of women in the lower house are Not Free countries. Yemen reports having just 0.3% women in the legislature—this meaning there is one woman in the country's 301-member parliament

(Inter-Parliamentary Union 2014). Nevertheless, Yemen has made some advancement in women's rights in the past 30 years. The country granted suffrage to women in 1967, the same year the southern part of the country received independence from Britain, despite its later slow movement toward democracy in the early 1990s (Freedom House 2005). From 1990 to 1994, women in Yemen were guaranteed equality through the constitution and other legal measures, but when civil war broke out across the country in 1994, women lost almost all rights and were legally and socially reverted back to a second-class status (Freedom House 2005). While the country may have scored a 3 on the index, Freedom House has published that "Gender inequality in the law remains a major problem today, and legal implementation and protections for women are very poor" (Freedom House 2005). This quote demonstrates the issue of enforcement of pro-female laws that was mentioned earlier.

There are several different factors that play into Yemen's having such a low percentage of women in the lower legislature. From an institutional standpoint, the country does not have the means to enforce the compulsory education law, meaning the majority of Yemeni girls do not attend school, and the government does not have set gender quotas, even though 89% of Yemeni women who are aware of gender quotas strongly or somewhat support them, according to a survey done by The International Foundation for Electoral Systems and The Institute for Women's Policy Research (2010). Recently, however, it has been reported that the Yemeni government will consider instituting an electoral gender quota recommending that at least 30% of governmental officials be women (*Al Jazeera* 2014) upon the ratification of the country's new constitution. Culturally, many Yemeni people do not believe in educating girls due to

religious teachings of gender inequality and girls are often married off early in life, further preventing them from attaining a basic education and economic independence, especially the chance to become an elected official.

The United States will be used as a case study to compare our own political system with those of Rwanda and Yemen. While these countries are all three extremely different, culturally, politically, and economically, it is important to use the U.S. example to give us a snapshot of how we compare in relation to these countries with both a high amount of women in government and a very low amount. Data from the Inter Parliamentary Union shows that the United States has 18.3% women in the lower legislature of the national government. The total index score that was calculated for the U.S. is 4, above the average for all 137 countries. It does not have a gender quota system in place and has never had a female head of state (McCullough 2015; Global Database of Quotas for Women 2014). Considering all these factors, it may seem that this index score is relatively high, and although that may be true, this belief inhibits women's political participation even further. If a society believes that things are "good enough" for women, based simply on institution of policy or other factors, it becomes complacent and does not strive for additional measures to alleviate gender inequality. With my findings, it could be possible that if the percentage of women in the U.S. legislature increased to parity, the country could see more "pro-female" policy passed and more progress for the country's women, in general.

While the U.S. is considered a Free country by Freedom House, it ranks extremely low in female political representation compared to other Free countries. According to my data, the 57 Free countries have a range of 8.1-45% women in the lower

legislature (Japan and Sweden, respectively) with the average being 25%. Out of these 57 countries, the U.S. ranks 41st in percentage of women in the lower legislature. Even though none of these countries have reached gender parity in government, the U.S. case is a lot farther away from achieving 50% women in the lower legislature than are other countries, such as Sweden (see Table 5). In addition, out of these Free countries, six have a total index score of 6, 11 have a total score of 5, 12 have a score of 4, 16 have a score of 3, seven have a score of 2, and five have a score of 1 (see Table 6). It may seem unusual that several supposedly Free countries have total index scores much less than that of the overall sample, however, this could be due to the fact that many developed and/or Free countries already consider their societies fairly gender equal and therefore, do not feel the need to establish further legislation protecting women's rights.

Table 5: Free Countries and Percentages of Women in Lower Legislature

Sweden	45	Lithuania	24.1
South Africa	44.8	Croatia	23.8
Senegal	43.3	United Kingdom	22.6
Finland	42.5	Israel	22.5
Belgium	41.3	Peru	22.3
Iceland	39.7	Greece	21
Spain	39.7	Dominican Republic	20.8
Norway	39.6	Czech Republic	19.5
Denmark	39.1	Estonia	19
Netherlands	38.7	Mauritius	18.8
Costa Rica	38.6	Slovakia	18.7
Argentina	36.6	United States	18.3
Germany	36.5	Chile	15.8
New Zealand	33.9	Ireland	15.7
Serbia	33.6	Republic of Korea	15.7
Austria	33.3	Mongolia	14.9
Slovenia	33.3	Montenegro	14.8
Italy	31.4	Romania	13.5
Portugal	31.3	Uruguay	13.1
Switzerland	31	Jamaica	12.7
Lesotho	26.7	India	11.4
El Salvador	26.2	Ghana	10.9
France	26.2	Botswana	9.5
Australia	26	Hungary	9.4
Namibia	25.6	Brazil	8.6
Canada	25.1	Panama	8.5
Latvia	25	Benin	8.4
Bulgaria	24.6	Japan	8.1
Poland	24.3		

Table 6: Free Countries by Index Score

Index Score	Countries
1	Austria, Botswana, Dominican Republic, Iceland, Israel
2	Bulgaria, Estonia, Jamaica, New Zealand, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia,
3	Belgium, Chile, Czech Republic, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Panama, Peru, Republic of Korea, South Africa
4	Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Lesotho, Lithuania, Senegal, Sweden, United States
5	Argentina, El Salvador, France, India, Namibia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland, Uruguay
6	Benin, Brazil, Croatia, Mauritius, Spain, United Kingdom

There are many aspects of the U.S. political and cultural system that inhibit women’s political participation. In *Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics*, Lawless and Fox (2012) record seven cultural factors that hinder gender parity in governmental office, including: “Women are substantially more likely than men to perceive the electoral environment as highly competitive and biased against female candidates”; “Women are much less likely than men to think they are qualified to run for office”; “Women are less likely than men to receive the suggestion to run for office”; and “Women are still responsible for the majority of childcare and household tasks.” Lawless and Fox (2012) also note that only 23.6% of state legislators in the U.S. are women, demonstrating the idea that a lack of women in elected positions is not limited to national office. These factors are not unique to the U.S., though, as they represent a broader problem in global societies that see women as less capable and legitimate politicians/authority figures.

The U.S. electoral system, on the other hand, is unique and consists of components that do create disadvantages for female candidates and politicians.

According to Wayne (2014, 73), “For most of the nation’s existence, men dominated politics, and that domination...still exists.” The incumbency advantage in U.S. politics disadvantages women who are running for office by lessening competition within districts and requiring more money to win. The media is also less friendly to female candidates, hinging on deeply ingrained gender stereotypes and traditional roles for women. This persistence of gender stereotypes delegitimizes women running for public office by making them seem “weaker, more emotional, and less rational than men,” (Wayne 2014, 73). Wayne (2014, 73) also cites the majoritarian electoral system in the U.S. as a deterrent for female political participation; he writes, “A proportional voting system would probably help women gain greater representation in government.” Because proportional representation systems give minorities greater representation in elections, they can better alleviate the gender gap.

As stated briefly earlier, the United States does not have a gender quota in place that requires the election of a certain percentage of women to Congress (Global Database of Quotas for Women 2014). More than half of the countries that have higher percentages of women in their legislatures than the U.S. have some sort of gender quota system in place (Somani 2013) and “a majority of countries with more than 30 percent women in the national parliament have implemented quota provisions” (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2010, 175). Somani (2013) argues that if the U.S. were to implement a “fast track” approach to gender quotas, the country would see not only a quick increase in female Congress members, but also a gradual increase in gender equality over time. An increase in women in government leads to a more effective representation of women and thus, the electorate, overall (Somani 2013). Due to the fact that gender quotas in other countries

have shown progress in women being elected to political office and that the U.S. is still lagging in female political participation compared to other developed nations, it is time for the U.S. electoral system to see some changes that will encourage women to run for and be elected to office instead of discouraging and hindering them.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

While very few countries across the world have reached legislative gender parity and/or have female leaders, there are institutional factors that help or hinder women from entering the political sphere. Gender quotas instituted by either electoral law or constitutions usually benefit female politicians by increasing their chances of getting elected to office in a society where male-dominated politics is the norm; although in this research, it was discovered that there was no correlation between an increase in the percentage of women in the lower legislature and the presence of a gender quota. It is important to study how certain institutional systems affect the amount of women in government, but what is as equally important, although less studied, are the affects the amount of female politicians within a given district or country have on legislation. In this research, I have found that there is significant data showing gendered legislation does exist.

By comparing countries from every region in the world along with their percentages of women in the lower legislature, their Freedom House scores, as well as some of the laws they possess that advance women's rights in some form, I discovered that there is a measureable effect of the amount of women in the legislature on pro-female laws. In Free, Partly Free, and Not Free countries, the amount of women in the lower house of the legislature increases the likelihood that these countries will have

higher scores on the index of pro-female laws as derived from measures used by the United Nations to assess progress of the world's women. I also found that, generally, Free countries have higher average ranges of percentages of women in the legislature than Partly Free and Not Free countries, however, Partly Free countries had a slightly higher average score on the index than Free countries.

This research is important because it provides evidence that the amount of women in government does have an impact on bettering the lives of women around the globe. Contrary to some arguments, female politicians can and do help other women through politics and sometimes their politics are different than that of male politicians. Whether legislation is completely gendered or not remains to be discovered, though, my research suggests that there could be an indirect correlation between a stronger presence of women in government and the type of legislation (pro-female) instituted by the government.

It is important to list some of the limitations of my research analysis. First, I did not attempt to measure the extent to which these laws used as measures in the index are enforced in each country. There is an obvious difference between the passing, institution, and enforcement of a law and while many of the countries I studied may have passed or instituted such pro-female laws, they may not necessarily enforce the laws, thus, lowering the overall well-being of women within those countries. My research specifically examined the presence of a few pro-female laws and does not argue that having more women in government automatically creates a safer and more progressive environment for women. It is also possible that these pro-female laws encourage the election of more female representatives. I originally began to include data on each democratic country's electoral system, to see whether or not this would have an influence on the total index

score, however, much of my data was unavailable, and therefore, inconclusive. Future expansion on this research should consider electoral systems as a direct effect on the percentage of women in government and an indirect effect on the total index score.

Future research should also examine the actual enforcement of such laws by using various measures of overall safety and well-being of women within a country; amount of lawsuits filed by women with complaints of breaching of the laws I introduced into the index; as well as legislative amendments made that increase the sanctions for violators of laws that protect women. There is also potential to expand this research and use it to support theories that more women in government makes a difference in increasing domestic gender equality. Using measures such as gender gaps in education, employment, pay, life expectancy, and voter turnout (similar to those in the United Nation's Human Development and Gender Inequality Indices) in addition to the variables analyzed in this paper, could make a stronger argument about the importance of increasing female political participation for the betterment of women and gender equality worldwide. If this research is extended, it will be able to help international researchers determine what factors contribute to the advancement or regression of women's rights in legislation as well as contribute to politicians' and feminists' discussion of getting more women involved in government and making the world a better place for women overall.

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