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Women and Democracy

CULTURAL OBSTACLES TO EQUAL REPRESENTATION

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A fundamental problem facing the worldwide process of democratization is the continued lack of gender equality in political leadership. The basic facts are not in dispute: Today women represent only one in seven parliamentarians, one in ten cabinet ministers, and, at the apex of power, one in 20 heads of state or government. Multiple factors have contributed to this situation, including structural and institutional barriers. But what is the influence of political culture? Are attitudes toward women as political leaders a significant barrier to their empowerment? In particular, how important is culture as compared with structural and institutional factors? These are the questions that our study seeks to address.

Despite moves toward gender equality in many spheres, barriers to the entry of women into elected office persist. In June 2000, the UN General Assembly held a special session entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace," the latest in a long series of international conferences calling for the empowerment of women. The session focused on the need for full recognition of women's rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as demands for progress toward gender equality in education, health care, work, the family, and the public sphere. Women have mobilized at the grassroots, national, and global levels to

press government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to incorporate these agendas into national programs for action. *The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics,* a UN report, concluded that substantive advances for women have occurred in access to education, health care, and reproductive services, and that there is greater recognition of such human rights issues as domestic violence and sexual trafficking.

At the same time, however, the inclusion of women's voices in politics and government has proved a more difficult challenge. Out of 191 countries worldwide, only nine currently have a woman elected head of state or government. Despite the success of some redoubtable and well-known figures, such as Margaret Thatcher, Gro Harlem Bruntland, and Golda Meir, only 39 states have *ever* elected a woman president or prime minister. According to the UN report, women today comprise less than one-tenth of the world's cabinet ministers and one-fifth of all subministerial positions. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) estimates that worldwide there were about 5,400 women in parliaments in Spring 2001, representing 13.8 percent of all members, up from 9 percent in 1987.[1] If growth at this level is maintained (0.36 percent per year), a simple linear projection predicts that women parliamentarians will not achieve parity with men until the beginning of the twenty-second century.

Although worldwide progress has been slow, the proportion of women elected to the legislative branch is much greater in some regions than in others (see Table 1 on the following page). Women have not achieved equal representation with men in any country. The most gender-balanced parliaments are in the Nordic nations, where on average 38.8 percent of lower-house members are women. Sweden leads the world: Women comprise half of the ministers in Prime Minister Goran Persson's cabinet and 43 percent of the Riksdag, up from 10 percent in 1950. The proportion of women members of parliament is much lower in other regions, including the Americas (15.7 percent), Asia (14.3 percent), non-Nordic Europe (14.0 percent), sub-Saharan Africa (12.5 percent), and the Pacific (11.8 percent). The worst record for women's representation is the Arab countries, where women constitute less than 5 percent of elected representatives and continue to be barred by law from standing for parliament in Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates. Despite official declarations by many countries of the intent to establish conditions of gender equality in the public sphere, in practice major barriers continue to restrict women's advancement in public life.

Several explanations have been offered to account for the continuing dearth of women in political leadership: *structural factors,* including levels of socioeconomic development and the proportion of women in professional and managerial occupations; the impact of *political institutions,* such as electoral systems based on proportional-

TABLE 1—PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS, LOWER OR SINGLE HOUSE, MARCH 2001

COUNTRY	%	COUNTRY	%	COUNTRY	%
Albania	5.2	Greece	8.7	Nigeria	3.4
Algeria	3.4	**Grenada**	**26.7**	**Norway**	**36.4**
Angola	15.5	Guatemala	8.8	Palau	0.0
Antigua & Barbuda	5.3	Guinea	8.8	Panama	9.9
Argentina	**26.5**	Guinea-Bissau	7.8	Papua New Guinea	1.8
Armenia	3.1	Guyana	18.5	Paraguay	2.5
Australia	23.0	Honduras	9.4	Peru	20.0
Austria	**26.8**	Hungary	8.3	Philippines	11.3
Azerbaijan	10.5	**Iceland**	**34.9**	Poland	13.0
Bahamas	15.0	India	8.8	Portugal	18.7
Bangladesh	9.1	Indonesia	8.0	Romania	10.7
Barbados	10.7	Iran	3.4	Russian Federation	7.6
Belarus	10.3	Iraq	7.6	**Rwanda**	**25.7**
Belgium	23.3	Ireland	12.0	Saint Kitts & Nevis	13.3
Belize	6.9	Israel	12.5	Saint Lucia	11.1
Benin	6.0	Italy	11.1	Saint Vincent & Grenadines	4.8
Bhutan	9.3	Jamaica	13.3	San Marino	13.3
Bolivia	11.5	Japan	7.3	São Tomé & Príncipe	9.1
Botswana	17.0	Jordan	0.0	Senegal	12.1
Brazil	5.7	Kazakhstan	10.4	Seychelles	23.5
Bulgaria	10.8	Kenya	3.6	Sierra Leone	8.8
Burkina Faso	8.1	Kiribati	4.8	Singapore	6.5
Burundi	14.4	Korea, North	20.1	Slovakia	14.0
Cambodia	7.4	Korea, South	5.9	Slovenia	12.2
Cameroon	5.6	Kuwait	0.0	Solomon Islands	2.0
Canada	20.6	Kyrgyzstan	10.0	**South Africa**	**29.8**
Cape Verde	11.1	Laos	21.2	**Spain**	**28.3**
Central African Republic	7.3	Latvia	17.0	Sri Lanka	4.0
Chad	2.4	Lebanon	2.3	Sudan	9.7
Chile	10.8	Lesotho	3.8	Suriname	17.6
China	21.8	Liberia	7.8	Swaziland	3.1
Colombia	11.8	Lithuania	10.6	**Sweden**	**42.7**
Congo (Brazzaville)	12.0	Luxembourg	16.7	Switzerland	23.0
Costa Rica	19.3	Macedonia	6.7	Syria	10.4
Côte d'Ivoire	8.5	Madagascar	8.0	Tajikistan	12.7
Croatia	20.5	Malawi	9.3	Tanzania	22.2
Cuba	**27.6**	Malaysia	10.4	Togo	4.9
Cyprus	7.1	Maldives	6.0	Tonga	0.0
Czech Republic	15.0	Mali	12.2	Trinidad & Tobago	11.1
Denmark	**37.4**	Malta	9.2	Tunisia	11.5
Djibouti	0.0	Marshall Islands	3.0	Turkey	4.2
Dominica	18.8	Mauritania	3.8	**Turkmenistan**	**26.0**
Dominican Republic	16.1	Mauritius	5.7	Tuvalu	0.0
Ecuador	14.6	Mexico	16.0	Uganda	17.8
Egypt	2.4	Micronesia	0.0	Ukraine	7.8
El Salvador	9.5	Moldova	8.9	United Arab Emirates	0.0
Equatorial Guinea	5.0	Monaco	22.2	United Kingdom	18.4
Eritrea	14.7	Mongolia	10.5	United States of America	14.0
Estonia	17.8	Morocco	0.6	Uruguay	12.1
Ethiopia	7.7	**Mozambique**	**30.0**	Uzbekistan	7.2
Finland	**36.5**	**Namibia**	**25.0**	Vanuatu	0.0
France	10.9	Nauru	0.0	Venezuela	9.7
Gabon	9.2	Nepal	5.9	**Vietnam**	**26.0**
Gambia	2.0	**Netherlands**	**36.0**	Yemen	0.7
Georgia	7.2	**New Zealand**	**30.8**	Yugoslavia	7.2
Germany	**30.9**	Nicaragua	9.7	Zambia	10.1
Ghana	9.0	Niger	1.2	Zimbabwe	9.3

Note: Countries with more than 25 percent female representation in parliament are in bold.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments," *www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm.*

representation; and *cultural factors,* like the predominance of traditional attitudes toward gender roles.

Social Structures and Political Institutions

Early sociological accounts commonly assigned a critical role in determining the eligibility pool for elected office to a country's social system, including the occupational, educational, and socioeconomic status of women. In developing societies, women may find it difficult to break into electoral office because they are generally disadvantaged by poor childcare, low literacy, inadequate health care, and poverty. A country's level of socioeconomic development is significantly related to its proportion of women parliamentarians.[2] Comparative studies of established democracies have long emphasized the importance of the pool of women in the professional, administrative, and managerial occupations that typically lead to political careers. Jobs in such fields as law and journalism commonly provide the flexibility, financial resources, experience, and social networks that facilitate running for elected office. In recent decades, women in many postindustrial societies have forged ahead in the private and public sectors and greatly increased their enrollment in higher education.

This study suggests that modernization creates systematic, predictable changes in gender roles, observable in two phases.[3] First, industrialization brings women into the paid workforce and dramatically reduces fertility rates. During this stage, women make substantial gains in educational opportunities and literacy. Women are enfranchised and begin to participate in representative government, but they still have far less power than men. The second, postindustrial phase brings a shift toward greater gender equality, as women move into higher-status economic roles and gain greater political influence within elected and appointed bodies. Over half the world has not yet begun this process, however, and even the most advanced industrial societies are still undergoing it.

Yet in many ways structural explanations fail to account for the barriers facing women who seek elected office. These accounts cannot explain major disparities between relatively similar societies in the proportion of women in national parliaments, such as the contrasts between Canada (where 20 percent of parliamentarians are women) and the United States (13 percent), between the Netherlands (36 percent) and Italy (11 percent), or between South Africa (30 percent) and Niger (1 percent). A worldwide comparison of the proportion of women elected to lower houses of the legislature confirms that a high level of socioeconomic development is not a necessary condition for the success of women.[4] For example, female representation is far greater today in some poorer societies—like Mozambique (ranking 9th in the world), South Africa (10th), and Venezuela (11th)—than in some of the most affluent, including the United States (50th), France (59th), and Japan (94th).

In many postindustrial societies, despite the transformations of women's and men's lifestyles, electoral success has continued to elude women. This pattern is exemplified by the United States: Although almost one-third of all U.S. lawyers are now female and law remains the most common training ground for legislative office in America, only 11 out of 100 U.S. senators are women.[5] This suggests that while improvements in women's educational and professional status serve as *facilitating* conditions for women's empowerment, structural changes by themselves may be insufficient for women to achieve greater success in winning elected office. Indeed, something more that the size of the eligibility pool is at work.

One alternative explanation is provided by *institutional* accounts, which emphasize the type of political system and some of its specific features, like proportional representation in elections and gender quotas in party recruitment processes. This increasingly popular approach is probably the mainstream perspective among scholars today. Institutional accounts suggest that the political rules of the game are the primary explanation for systematic differences in women's representation among relatively similar societies, and that changing those rules is the most effective way to promote women's political leadership.[6]

Among institutional factors, the *level of democratization* has the broadest effects. In general, the transition and consolidation of democratic societies can be expected to promote widespread political and civil liberties, including the right of women to vote and to stand for elected office. Yet the role of democracy in promoting women's role in public life remains in dispute: Andrew Reynolds finds no significant relationship between the level of democratization and that of women's parliamentary representation.[7] The weakness of this relationship may be due to the continued use of affirmative-action strategies for women's representation in communist systems like Cuba and China, as well as to the decline in the proportion of women in Central and East European parliaments once quotas were abandoned with the transition to democracy. Of course, in comparing democratic and nondemocratic parliaments, one must keep in mind that the latter often are merely window dressing, and that women therefore may have a relatively high degree of representation without having any real power.

Since the 1955 publication of Maurice Duverger's seminal *The Political Role of Women,* the type of *electoral system* has been regarded as an important factor affecting women's political presence. Many studies have demonstrated that far more women are elected under proportional party-list systems than under majoritarian single-member-district systems.[8] The level of *party competition,* in terms of the number of parties and their degree of ideological polarization, is another factor that may influence women's opportunities for candidacy. Greater party competition may increase the access points for female candidacies, although this in itself does not necessarily lead to more women being elected.

The fact that we can test these propositions—whether the proportion of women in parliaments is significantly related to the level of democratization, the type of electoral system, and the level of party competition—enables institutional accounts to provide many important insights into why women politicians have advanced further and faster in some countries than in others. Yet several puzzles remain. Why do apparently similar institutional reforms turn out to have diverse and often unanticipated consequences, even among relatively similar political and social systems? Why should national-list proportional representation have a very different impact on women's electoral fortunes in Israel than in the Netherlands? Why should the use of gender quotas for candidacies seem to work better in Argentina than in Ecuador? As the failure of Westminster-style parliaments in many African states in the 1960s demonstrated, transplanted institutions do not necessarily flourish in alien environments.

Cultural Barriers

Structural and institutional explanations need to be supplemented by accounts emphasizing the importance of political culture. It has long been assumed that traditional anti-egalitarian attitudes toward gender slow down the political advancement of women, though little systematic crossnational evidence has been available to verify this proposition. Theories of socialization have long emphasized the importance of gender roles—especially the predominance of either egalitarian or traditional attitudes toward women in the private and public spheres. Studies of political recruitment processes in established democracies like Britain, Finland, and the Netherlands have found that these attitudes influence both whether women are prepared come forward as candidates for office (the supply side of the equation) and the criteria that are used by political gatekeepers when evaluating candidates (the demand side).[9] In cultures with traditional attitudes toward the role of women in the home and family, many women may be reluctant to run and, if they seek office, may fail to attract sufficient support to win. A recent study by the IPU found that female politicians in many countries cited hostile attitudes toward political participation by women as one of the most important barriers to running for parliament.[10]

Cultural explanations provide a plausible reason why women have made much greater advances in parliaments within the Nordic region than in socially and institutionally comparable European societies like Switzerland, Italy, or Belgium. In Scandinavia, a long tradition of government intervention to promote social equality may have made the public more receptive to the idea of positive actions (such as gender quotas) designed to achieve equality for women in public life.[11] Culture also appears to be an important reason why many nations with strict Islamic traditions have often ranked at the bottom of the list in terms of women in parliament, despite a few notable women in top leadership positions.[12]

In spite of these apparent effects of culture, little systematic cross-national evidence has been available on the subject, and most comparative studies have been forced to adopt proxy indicators of culture, such as religion. An early comparison found that there was less political activism among women in West European Catholic countries than in Protestant ones and suggested that this was because the Catholic Church was associated with a more hierarchical and authoritarian culture.[13] A more recent worldwide comparison of women in politics in 180 countries reveals that the greatest contrasts are between predominantly Christian countries (both Protestant and Catholic) and countries of other religions, including Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, and Hinduism, all of which had lower proportions of women in legislatures and in cabinet offices.[14] An alternative approach has compared attitudes within Western Europe toward the women's movement, feminism, and equality in the home and workplace; while this provides insights into support for feminism within that region, it does not necessarily reveal attitudes toward women in political leadership positions, and there are no comparable results for societies in other regions.[15]

Our own study uses survey and aggregate evidence to compare how political culture is systematically related to the advancement of women in elected office in a wide range of countries with varying political systems and levels of economic development.[16] We focus on four related propositions: 1) There are substantial differences in attitudes toward women's leadership in postindustrial, postcommunist, and developing societies; 2) traditional attitudes are a major barrier to the election of women to parliament; 3) culture continues to be a significant influence on the proportion of women parliamentarians, even with the introduction of prior structural and institutional controls; and 4) as a result of the process of modernization and value change, these cultural barriers have been fading most rapidly among younger generations in postindustrial societies.

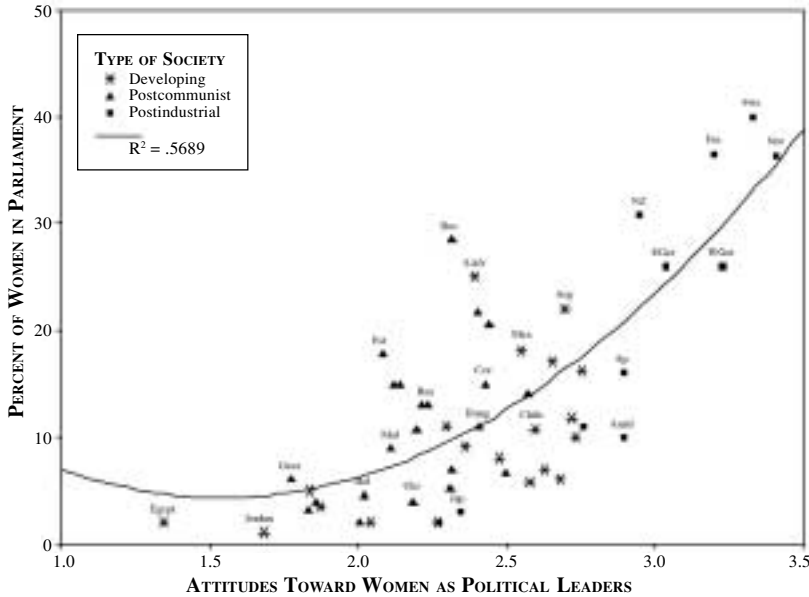## Attitudes Toward Women's Political Leadership

First, how does the public regard women as political leaders and how do these attitudes vary systematically between postindustrial, postcommunist, and developing societies? The World Values Survey measures support for gender equality in political leadership with a question asking respondents how far they agreed or disagreed (on a 4-point scale) with the following statement: "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do." A comparison of responses shows that there are substantial crossnational differences. The countries that are most positive toward women's leadership include the Nordic nations and other postindustrial societies such as New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and Spain; the countries that are most traditional include many of the poorer developing societies, including Egypt, Jordan, Iran, and Nigeria.

Regression analysis, without any prior controls, demonstrates a striking link between socioeconomic development and support for egalitarian gender roles in politics. The simple correlation between these factors is strong and significant (r = .456; sig. = .01);[17] more affluent nations are by far the most egalitarian. Nonetheless, despite the role of socioeconomic development, diverse historical legacies in different world regions continue to affect cultural attitudes. A few postindustrial societies like Norway, West Germany, and Finland express higher than expected support for women's political leadership, while Spain, Australia, and (to a lesser extent) the United States are close behind. Among richer nations, the Asian societies of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea show lower support for women in politics than would be predicted by their levels of socioeconomic development alone. Middle-income countries in Latin America tend to have the moderately egalitarian attitudes that might be expected. Many postcommunist societies display more traditional attitudes favoring male leadership (with the important exception of East Germany, which is close to West Germany). Finally, Nigeria, Iran, Jordan, and Egypt, all poorer countries with sizeable Muslim populations, evince very traditional attitudes. Therefore, socioeconomic development does appear to be significantly related to the global distribution of egalitarian attitudes toward women's political leadership. Yet the dramatic contrasts between developing nations with similar levels of GNP (India and China are surprisingly egalitarian, while Nigeria and Egypt are quite traditional) indicate that much more is at work than simply differences between rich and poor societies.

To explore the extent to which attitudes toward women as political leaders tap into and reflect deeper cultural values, these responses have been compared with a 24-item scale reflecting a much broader range of traditional versus "rational" values.[18] This scale includes items reflecting belief in the importance of religion and in adherence to traditional moral standards on issues like divorce, euthanasia, and the family. Correlation analysis shows that Scandinavian and West European societies are consistently the most rational in their moral and ethical values, as well as the most favorable toward gender equality in politics. In contrast, Nigeria, Jordan, and Egypt emerge as the most traditional on both dimensions, along with Iran and Azerbaijan. Attitudes toward women and men as political leaders therefore do appear to be related to broader ideological values on a wide range of ethical and moral issues.

Women in Parliaments

Now that we have established the existence of cultural patterns in attitudes toward women's political leadership, we must ask: Do they matter in practice? In particular, do more egalitarian attitudes toward women leaders influence the proportion of women actually elected to

FIGURE 1—ATTITUDES AND REPRESENTATION

Sources: For women's representation, see Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments," *www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm;* for attitudes, responses to: "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do," on a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree) in the World Values Survey conducted in 1995–99; see *http://wvs.isr.umich.edu.*

office? There is striking evidence that they do (see Figure 1 above). Egalitarian attitudes toward women leaders are strongly related to the proportion of women elected to the lower houses of national parliaments (r = .57; sig. = .01). Simply put, countries with a more egalitarian culture have more women in power. The Scandinavian countries are at the forefront of both indicators, while Jordan, Egypt, Pakistan, and many of the Central Asian postcommunist states are low on both scales.

Yet there are some striking outliers to this general pattern that deserve attention. Some established democracies—including Australia, Spain, and the United States—display more egalitarian attitudes than might be expected given the proportion of women elected to their parliaments. In these countries, public opinion may have run ahead of the opportunities that women actually have for pursuing public office. On the other hand, Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Africa, and China all have more women parliamentarians than would be expected from their cultural attitudes alone, suggesting that proactive strategies adopted to boost women's leadership, like the use of gender quotas in South Africa and China, may be ahead of public opinion.

Of course, a pattern of causation cannot be determined from any simple correlation, and we cannot rule out an interaction effect. It could

well be that the experience of having many women involved in political life shifts public opinion in a more egalitarian direction, dispelling traditional views that men make better political leaders than women. Nevertheless, it seems equally plausible to assume that the causal direction flows primarily from political culture to the success of women in elected office, since increasingly egalitarian attitudes could persuade more women to seek elected office and could simultaneously influence the political gatekeepers' evaluations of suitable candidates.

One way that this can be tested further is by examining the relationship between the proportion of women in parliament and the broader scale of traditional versus rational values. The results show that there is a strong and significant correlation between these factors (r = .408; sig. = .004). Since these broader moral values should not be greatly affected by an increase of women in leadership, this strongly suggests that culture drives the success of women in elected office, rather than vice versa.

So far we have demonstrated that culture matters, but not *how much* it matters relative to other factors associated with gender equality in politics. The relationship could, after all, prove spurious if some social or institutional dynamic is simultaneously promoting both egalitarian attitudes and the political success of women. Multivariate analysis is required to test whether the relationship remains significant even with controls. Accordingly, regression models were run to estimate the relative impacts of cultural, structural, and institutional factors on women's representation in parliaments worldwide. (For a detailed discussion of this analysis and its results, see the Appendix on pp. 138–39.) Ultimately, the relationship between political culture and women's empowerment survives unscathed our best attempts to explain it away with prior controls.

Generational Shifts

Finally, given the importance of culture, is there evidence that views about women's suitability for political office are changing? The measure of attitudes toward women's political leadership was only included in the third wave of the World Values Survey, so we are unable to compare directly trends over time. But by using cohort analysis, which groups the population by date of birth, we can analyze the distribution of attitudes among generations within each type of society. Many theories of socialization suggest that people's attitudes are shaped by formative experiences in their early years and that their basic values are largely fixed by adulthood. In postindustrial societies, the formative experiences of younger generations of women and men have differed significantly from those of older generations. In the twentieth century, gender roles were affected by a long series of developments, including the extension of suffrage and full citizenship rights to women; the entry of more women into higher education and the paid labor force; the rise of the Second

Wave women's movement and radical shifts in sexual mores and lifestyles in the mid-1960s; dramatic changes in the family, marriage, and the division of labor within the home; and the experience of seeing more women as leaders in public life. All these factors can be expected to have altered norms regarding the appropriate role of women in the public sphere and the suitability of women for elected office.

Outside the postindustrial societies, social change has followed different paths. In the postcommunist countries, the experience of women in the workforce, the widespread use of quotas in parliaments under communism and their subsequent abandonment, and the role of the organized women's movement in Central and Eastern Europe have all affected the development of gender-related norms. As a result, we would expect that, while some generational shifts in attitudes will be evident, the pace of change will be slower in these countries.

The evidence confirms these expectations. The traditional belief that men make better leaders than women shows a substantial generational decline in postindustrial societies, with younger postwar generations far more egalitarian than their parents or grandparents. Yet in postcommunist and developing societies, attitudes among younger and older generations are almost identical, with at most a modest shift toward less traditional views among the young. Moreover, when we disaggregate the cohort analysis for women and men in all types of society, the most striking pattern is the substantial widening of a "gender gap" on this issue among younger generations. In prewar generations, there is no difference by sex: Women are as traditional in their attitudes as men, or even slightly more so. Yet with each successive cohort, the gap widens between women's increasingly egalitarian attitudes and men's more traditional ones, until by the youngest generation the disparity has become considerable (see Figure 2 on the facing page).

This analysis suggests that, through the gradual process of demographic turnover, attitudes toward women in public leadership roles are likely to become more egalitarian, especially among women themselves. The effects of modernization will proceed in the broader political culture, even if no proactive strategies or institutional reforms are adopted to hasten the election of more women to public office. Nevertheless, there is little evidence that a similar process has yet begun to transform public opinion in postcommunist and developing countries, where traditional values are prevalent among younger as well as older citizens.

The Implications for Change

The idea that the values prevailing in the broader political culture affect the success of women in gaining elected office has always been assumed but rarely, if ever, proved in a convincing fashion using systematic comparative evidence. We have long suspected that culture is

FIGURE 2—THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP IN ATTITUDES TOWARD
WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP
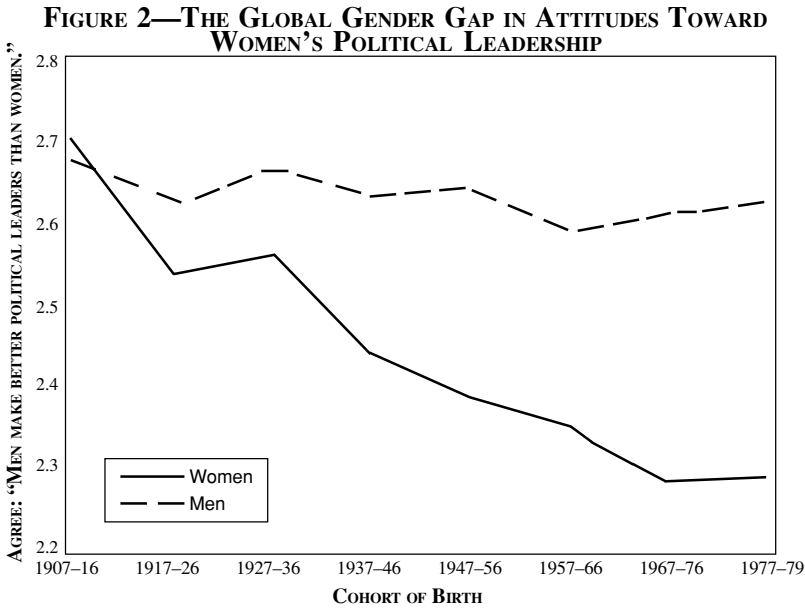
Source: Responses to: "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do," on a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree), in the World Values Survey conducted in 1995–99; see *http://wvs.isr.umich.edu.*

the unknown factor that accounts for the striking political achievements of women in Scandinavia as compared to their counterparts in Mediterranean Europe, let alone Latin America, Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Arab states. Yet that factor has proved difficult to capture on the basis of existing aggregate data.

This study demonstrates that egalitarian attitudes toward women in office are more widespread in postindustrial societies, reflecting broad patterns of socioeconomic development and cultural modernization. Such attitudes are not simply interesting for their own sake but are significantly associated with the political success of women. In short, culture matters. Moreover, the more egalitarian attitudes evident among younger generations in postindustrial societies, especially among younger women, suggest that we can expect to see continued progress in female representation in these societies. Yet the empowerment of women remains a complex process. As the cases of Australia, the United States, and Spain demonstrate, favorable attitudes toward women's leadership are not sufficient by themselves to produce breakthroughs, since some social structures and institutions continue to act as barriers. Nor can we expect the overnight transformation of the deep-rooted traditional beliefs about gender roles prevalent in many developing and postcommunist societies.

Nevertheless, cultural change in postindustrial societies produces a climate of opinion that is potentially more receptive to policy reforms

designed to boost the number of women in elected office, such as the use of positive-discrimination or affirmative-action strategies like gender quotas. These reforms can include adjustments to the eligibility criteria for elected offices and the legal requirement that a certain proportion of candidates be women (a measure that has been adopted at various levels in India, France, and ten Latin American countries).

Elsewhere, the use of gender quotas in parties' internal candidate-selection rules has proved to be one of the most important and successful means for getting more women into office.[19] Many parties in Northern Europe introduced quotas in the 1970s, followed by social-democratic parties in Germany, Spain, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. The situation is more varied in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa, though once again such quotas have been introduced predominantly by parties of the left, such as the MPLA in Angola, the Popular Front in Côte d'Ivoire, and SWAPO in Namibia.[20] The impact of quotas can be demonstrated in "natural experiments" by comparing changes in the proportion of women parliamentarians in particular parties over successive elections. For instance, the introduction of women-only short-lists for specific seats by the British Labour party helped to double the proportion of women at Westminster between 1992 and 1997. If the public is broadly sympathetic toward getting more women into public life, parties may feel more willing to introduce institutional reforms and affirmative-action strategies to achieve these aims.

Trying to alter deep-seated attitudes toward gender roles in public life may prove to be a frustrating exercise in the short term, even with extensive educational and public-awareness campaigns. In the longer term, however, the secular trends in value change associated with modernization, especially among younger generations, are likely to facilitate the process of getting more women into power. Indeed, the combination of cultural shifts in attitudes and institutional reforms of recruitment processes offers considerable promise that women may achieve political parity well before the dawn of the twenty-second century.

Appendix

The first model in Table 2 on the facing page shows the simple bivariate correlations between the independent variables (social factors, institutions, and culture) and the proportion of women in the lower house of parliament, without any controls. Subsequent models consider the effects of socioeconomic development alone, then the additional effects of political institutions, and finally the complete model including all the variables. Details about measurement, operationalization, and sources are listed under Table 2.

The results of Model 1 (no controls) show that all the factors, with the exception of the number of parliamentary parties, are significantly correlated with the proportion of women in parliament. But we cannot determine if these effects are real or spurious without further analysis. Model 2 shows that the independent effect of socioeconomic development is significant, but Model 3 reveals that

TABLE 2—THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND CULTURAL
FACTORS ON THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT, 1995–99

	MODEL 1 BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS		MODEL 2 SOCIAL		MODEL 3 SOCIAL + INSTITUTIONAL		MODEL 4 SOCIAL + INSTITUTIONAL + CULTURAL	
	r	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.
SOCIAL								
SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	.488	.01	.492	.01	.135		-.060	
INSTITUTIONAL								
LEVEL OF DEMOCRATIZATION	.427	.01			.412	.05	.125	
ELECTORAL SYSTEM	.339	.01			.143		.060	
NO. OF PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES	.244				.067		.130	
CULTURAL								
EGALITARIAN ATTITUDES								
TOWARD WOMEN LEADERS	.716	.01					.662	.01
CONSTANT			-18.4		-15.7		-28.4	
Adjusted R^2			*.223*		*.314*		*.559*	

Notes: The models represent standardized beta coefficients derived from OLS regression analysis models with the proportion of women in the lower house of parliament in 55 nations worldwide as the dependent variable. The year of the aggregate data was selected to match the year of the World Values Survey in each country. The variables were entered in the listed order.

Sources: For socioeconomic development, see "Gender-related development index," in United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1999: Globalization with a Human Face* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 138–41, available at *www.undp.org/ hdro/contents.html;* for level of democratization, see Freedom House, *Freedom in the World* annual surveys, 1972–73 through 1999–2000, *www.freedomhouse.org;* for electoral system, see The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design,* available at *www.idea.int;* for number of parliamentary parties, calculated by counting all parties with more than 3 percent of the seats in the lower house of parliament, data derived from "Elections Around the World," *www.agora.stm.it/ elections;* for egalitarian attitudes, see Figure 1 on p. 134; for proportion of women in parliament, see Table 1 on p. 128.

this effect is in fact due to the relationship between development and the process of democratization. In contrast to many other studies, Model 3 shows that, once controls are introduced, neither the type of electoral system nor the number of parties proves to be an important determinant of the proportion of women in parliament. This may be in part because the simple binary distinction between majoritarian and proportional electoral systems is unable to capture other important variations, such as district magnitude or the level of disproportionality. Finally, when the measure of egalitarian attitudes toward women leaders is added in Model 4, the results demonstrate the importance of culture, which proves to be the only significant factor in the equation, even with the battery of prior controls. If the measure of attitudes had not been derived from a source independent of the actual proportion of women in legislatures, we would be tempted to doubt this relationship, but the final model is clear and dramatic.

NOTES

1. Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments," *www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm.*

2. Andrew Reynolds, "Women in the Legislatures and Executives of the World: Knocking at the Highest Glass Ceiling," *World Politics* 51 (July 1999): 547–72.

3. For a more detailed discussion, see Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Post-*

modernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

4. Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments."

5. United States Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1999,* available at *www.census.gov*.

6. See, for example, the discussion in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998), *www.int-idea.se/women*.

7. Andrew Reynolds, "Women in the Legislatures and Executives of the World."

8. There is no evidence that closed-list proportional systems outperform open-list ones in terms of female representation.

9. See Pippa Norris, ed., *Passages to Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

10. Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Politics: Women's Insight*, IPU Reports and Documents No. 36 (Geneva: IPU, 2000).

11. Lauri Karvonen and Per Selle, eds., *Women in Nordic Politics: Closing the Gap* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1995).

12. Gehan Abu-Zayd, "In Search of Political Power: Women in Parliament in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon," in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament*.

13. Margaret Inglehart, "Political Interest in West European Women," *West European Politics* (1979).

14. Andrew Reynolds, "Women in the Legislatures and Executives of the World."

15. Lawrence Mayer and Roland E. Smith, "Feminism and Religiosity: Female Electoral Behavior in Western Europe," in Sylia Bashevkin, ed., *Women and Politics in Western Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1985); Clyde Wilcox, "The Causes and Consequences of Feminist Consciousness among Western European Women," *Comparative Political Studies* 23 (1991): 519–45.

16. Data are drawn from the third wave of the World Values Survey, conducted in 1995–99 and covering 55 societies worldwide, including 11 postindustrial, 23 postcommunist, and 21 developing societies. Full information about the nations, fieldwork, methodology, and questionnaire for the survey is available online at *http://wvs.isr.umich.edu*.

17. Socioeconomic development is measured here by logged per-capita income in terms of purchasing power parity. R can vary from – 1 (a perfect inverse association) to 0 (no relationship at all) to 1, meaning a perfect association between the two variables. A significance level of .01 means that the statistical finding would happen by chance only one time in a hundred.

18. Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker, "Modernization, Cultural Change and the Persistence of Traditional Values," *American Sociological Review* 65 (February 2000): 19–51.

19. Drude Dahlerup, "Using Quotas to Increase Women's Political Representation," in Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament*.

20. Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Participation of Women in Political Life*, IPU Reports and Documents No. 35 (Geneva: IPU, 1999).