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Women's Political Representation: The Importance of Ideology*

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Abstract

Women's low rate of participation at the highest levels of politics is an enduring problem in gender stratification. Previous cross-national research on women in national legislatures has stressed three explanations for differences in women's political representation: social structure, politics, and ideology. Despite strong theory suggesting the importance of ideology, it has not found support in previous cross-national statistical studies. But ideology has not been as well measured as structural and political factors. In this article, we demonstrate that gender ideology strongly affects the number of women in national legislatures. We do so by introducing a newly available measure of national gender ideology into a cross-national model of women in legislatures. We demonstrate that ideology, when measured more precisely, strongly predicts differences in women's political representation.

Despite advances in women's levels of education and participation in the paid economy over the last 20 years (Clark, Ramsbey & Adler 1991; Jacobs 1996), women have made little significant progress with respect to their representation in national politics. In the U.S., women compose 46% of the paid labor force and 55% of tertiary students (United Nations 2000). However, their representation in the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate remains 13% and 14%, respectively. The situation is similar in other nations. Currently 182 countries allow women to run for office. Yet women constitute less than 20% of elected representatives in the great majority of these countries. Women's

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low rate of participation at the highest levels of politics is an enduring problem in gender stratification.

Previous cross-national research on women in national legislatures has stressed three explanations for differences in women's political representation: social-structural, political, and ideological (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Paxton 1997; Reynolds 1999). Social-structural explanations focus on the pool of available women, political explanations focus on the openness of the political system to women, and ideological explanations focus on general impressions of women in politics and how viable women are as candidates and leaders.

Despite strong theory suggesting the importance of all three factors, only political and structural explanations have consistently found support in cross-national statistical studies. Yet case studies and qualitative evidence suggest that ideology is very important in explaining low levels of women's political representation (Nelson & Chowdhury 1994; Rule & Zimmerman 1994). Also, in a recent worldwide survey of female politicians, 76% of those interviewed claimed that prevailing values about gender roles limit the participation of women in politics (IPU 2000). This strong theoretical and qualitative evidence notwithstanding, it has been difficult for previous quantitative research to demonstrate an effect of ideology on women in national legislatures.

A lack of precise measurement may be one reason for the paucity of support for ideology. In the absence of direct measures of gender attitudes in various countries, regional and religious variables are used to approximate ideology (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Moore & Shackman 1996; Paxton 1997; Reynolds 1999 cf. Norris & Inglehart 2001). These measures are only weak proxies for ideology and are confounded with many alternative explanations. When researchers have attempted to replace these dummy variables with more specific measures of ideology, their attempts have not yielded significant results.

In this article, we present evidence that gender ideology strongly affects the number of women in national legislatures. We do so by introducing a newly available, explicit measure of national gender ideology into a cross-national model of women in national legislatures. We find that the effect of ideology is substantially stronger than the effects of political variables found to be important in previous research, such as the presence of a proportional-representation system. In addition, the effect of ideology is robust in the face of a variety of regression diagnostics and a variety of alternative specifications of the model.

We complement our quantitative analyses with qualitative information from a recently released international survey of women in politics. Conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2000a), the final report chronicles interviews with more than 200 female politicians. Including illustrative qualitative information from the survey helps us corroborate our claims with another method and adds depth to our statistical findings. Overall, our findings

have important implications for policies directed at increasing the number of women in politics.

Explaining Women's Legislative Representation

Understanding women's participation in politics begins by acknowledging that in no country do women compose 50% of the national legislature. Regardless, there is a great deal of variation across countries, from no women in countries such as the United Arab Emirates to 43% in Sweden. On average, women composed 14% of national legislatures worldwide as of January 1, 2002.¹

STRUCTURAL AND POLITICAL EXPLANATIONS

Low levels of female participation in the legislature are thought to result from two factors: the "supply" of female candidates and "demand" for female candidates (Norris 1997; Randall 1987). Supply is determined by structural factors. Political elites are pulled disproportionately from the highly educated and from certain professions, such as law (Putnam 1976). Thus, if women do not have access to educational and professional opportunities, they will not have the human and financial capital necessary to run for office. At the aggregate level, structural explanations predict that women's educational achievements and women's participation in the labor force will positively affect women's levels of representation. Qualitative evidence supports the importance of structural factors. As a respondent from Southeast Asia in the IPU survey explains, "educated women (tertiary level) and professionals in their midthirties onward . . . form a pool from which candidates would be selected" (IPU 2000a:96–97).

Empirical evidence for the impact of structural variables is mixed (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Norris 1985; Paxton 1997). Several researchers have included a measure of women's educational attainment to predict women's representation (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Moore & Shackman 1996; Paxton 1997; Rule 1981, 1987). However, with the exception of Rule (1981), no cross-national study has found a statistically significant effect. This result is most likely due to data limitations that have prevented researchers from measuring women's achievements in particular fields of education such as law, which should more accurately predict the supply of women. Like educational achievements, general measures of the share of women in the paid labor force do not predict women's representation (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Paxton 1997). In this case, more specific measures of relevant occupations, such as the percentage of women in professional or managerial professions, are available. These measures produce significant effects in some studies (Kenworthy & Malami 1999) but insignificant ones in others (Paxton 1997).

On the other side of the coin, institutional differences in political systems may manifest a different “demand” for women, irrespective of the available supply. Political parties and electoral systems, which enhance or limit the ability of men or other groups in government to promote their own interests, can be crucial factors in allowing women access in equal numbers (Caul 1999, 2001; Gallagher 1988; Giele & Smock 1977; Kohn 1980; Lovenduski & Hills 1981). As an IPU respondent from Central America states, “the ‘key’ is undoubtedly the political parties” (IPU 2000a:96).

Political factors find more support in the empirical research than do structural factors. It is generally accepted that the presence of a proportional-representation system, rather than a simple plurality system (e.g., as in the U.S.), aids women in gaining access to the political system (Lovenduski & Hills 1981; Norris 1985; Rule 1987).² Further, proportional-representation systems that use party lists are viewed as more favorable still (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Matland 1998a). Parties operating under proportional-representation-list systems publish lists of candidates and may therefore feel pressure to balance their party’s ticket. As a respondent in the IPU study states, “there has been recognition over the last 10 years (1988–1998) that it is essential for the credibility of any political party to be seen to be preselecting and electing women to parliament” (IPU 2000a:57). Under proportional-representation-list systems, parties are also able to package female candidates with males, who are often perceived as stronger candidates. Sixty-four percent of respondents in the IPU survey believed that proportional-representation systems are the most conducive systems to the election of women (IPU 2000a:91).

Although proportional-representation systems have received the most consistent support, theoretically a variety of other political variables could affect the percentage of women in a country’s national legislature. For example, the presence of left-oriented political parties has been found to increase women’s representation (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Matland 1998b; Reynolds 1999). National or party-level quotas are obvious ways to increase the number of women (Caul 2001; Dahlerup 1998; Reynolds 1999). Finally, the degree to which a country is democratic may be positively related to women’s political representation (Paxton 1997).

IDEOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS

Ideological beliefs form a third important explanation for female participation in the legislature. Ideas about women’s role and position in society can enhance or constrain women’s ability to seek political power (Arceneaux 2001; Giele & Smock 1977; Kohn 1980; McCammon et al. 2001). Public opinion has been shown to matter for a variety of political outcomes (Burstein 1998). Thus, despite the presence of favorable political systems or an adequate supply of

qualified female candidates, cultural norms can limit women's opportunities to participate in politics (Rule & Zimmerman 1994).

Ideology is not diffuse or abstract. Ideologies and arguments against women's right to participate in politics have created substantial barriers to women's political participation for many years. For centuries, political theorists such as Aristotle, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, Avicenna, and John Locke justified the exclusion of women from politics because of their assumed nonrational nature. Even after women gained suffrage, their ability to make rational decisions continued to be questioned theoretically and empirically (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960; Duverger 1955:129; see Paxton 1997:445–46 or Giele & Smock 1977¹¹ for further discussion of the historical impact of negative ideologies about women.)

In the IPU study of female politicians, a negative ideology is cited more often than any other reason to explain low female participation in politics. As a respondent from Central America states, "the patriarchal ideology prevailing in our society is the biggest stumbling block we have to face." Another respondent, from Central Europe, contrasts an ideological explanation with structural and political factors:

In spite of a long tradition of active participation in the workforce by a vast majority of women, both women and men see motherhood and marriage as the most important goals in a woman's life. A common standpoint is that "politics is a man's business," and that women are too emotional to deal with affairs of the state. The reasons for this are not to be found in education, with women in [my country] being as educated as their male counterparts. It is simply because of the stereotyped and traditional structure of society. (IPU 2000a:20)

Despite theoretical interest in ideological explanations, case-study evidence supporting their importance, and the overwhelming presence of ideological factors in the IPU qualitative study of female politicians, cross-national statistical tests of ideology have been inconclusive.

The main limitation to this previous cross-national research is that, in the absence of concrete information on gender ideologies cross-nationally, it has had to use *proxies* for ideology. The majority of previous studies use regional or religion dummy variables as a proxy to measure ideological beliefs (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Paxton 1997; Reynolds 1999 cf. Norris & Inglehart 2001). The proxy-based analyses have yielded some information about ideology. For example, Asia and the Middle East are generally found to have lower levels of female representation while Scandinavian countries have higher levels. The argument that Muslim and Catholic countries hold more conservative gender ideologies finds support in the fact that countries that are predominantly Muslim or Catholic have been shown to have lower levels of women's representation in the legislature than countries that are predominantly

Protestant. Interpretation of the effects of region or religion stress that they reflect the attitudes and beliefs of a nation (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Paxton 1997; Reynolds 1999).

Unfortunately, in the absence of direct measures of attitudes, it is difficult to definitively demonstrate that a significant effect of a regional dummy means a significant effect of ideology. The potential ideological effect of a regional or religious dummy variable is confounded with multiple other explanations, including development and democracy. Indeed, Paxton (1997:451) acknowledges that region can provide only a residual (rather than precise) interpretation of ideology, after other, more relevant variables are included. Another concern with sweeping regional and religious proxies is that they may mask important differences within regions and religions. For example, while Poland and Cape Verde are both considered Catholic countries and would be coded as such with a dummy variable measurement strategy, Poland is 95% Catholic, while Cape Verde is 50% Catholic. In general, researchers have remained unsatisfied with the need to rely on regional and religious dummy proxies (Kenworthy & Malami 1999:257; Paxton 1997:451).

To bypass the need for proxies, researchers have attempted to include more specific measures of ideology. Some such measures have been ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the presence of a woman's movement, and the presence of abortion rights. These variables have been mainly insignificant in predicting women's legislative participation. Only one variable, in one analysis, attained significance. Kenworthy and Malami (1999) find a positive effect of CEDAW on women's legislative participation, but the results are sensitive to outliers. Paxton (1997) finds no evidence for an effect of ratification of CEDAW. While more specific measures than regional or religious dummies, these alternative measures of ideology are still not direct measures of attitudes. Ratification of CEDAW and legalizing abortion are highly political decisions and may have little to do with general attitudes about women.

In sum, despite strong arguments for its importance, previous research has been hampered by poor cross-national measures of ideology and has been unable to demonstrate empirically that it has an effect. One piece of evidence for the importance of ideology cross-nationally is provided by Norris (1987), who measures ideology with an index of political egalitarianism in nine Western European countries. Despite this very small sample, Norris found that countries with more politically egalitarian attitudes are more likely to elect female representatives.³ In follow-up work with Ronald Inglehart (Norris & Inglehart 2001), she finds similar results with a larger sample.⁴ However, to this point no larger study including all important controls has been able to confirm that

societal beliefs about a woman's place influence how many women rise to positions of power in national legislatures.

Data and Measures

One major contribution of this article is the introduction of a more precise measure of gender ideology into a cross-national model of women in the legislature. We use data from a worldwide survey, the *World Values Survey*, which collected individual-level information on gender attitudes in forty-six countries in 1995 (Inglehart et al. 2000). The survey encompassed countries in Europe and North America, Eastern Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa, with sample sizes ranging from 400 to 6,000 respondents per country (most samples were between 1,000 and 2,000). By aggregating individual responses to questions about women's place in politics, education, and the labor force, we can create a measure of national gender ideology to help predict women's political representation. Our aggregated measure of ideology is intended to represent a national "climate" that may be more or less hospitable to women in politics for the reasons we have given.

The benefit to using the *World Values Survey* is clear — a precise measure of ideology. However, the cost to using the survey is that it restricts the analysis to forty-six countries, which is smaller than the sample sizes used in some previous research (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Paxton 1997). Despite our smaller sample size, we retain good regional and developmental variation. Only 22% of our sample consists of western industrialized countries, which is similar to the percentage of western countries in previous analyses (e.g., 20% in Paxton 1997). In addition, our sample achieves much better representation of former communist states than previous research. Understanding women's political representation in Eastern Europe is especially important because of the documented rise and fall of women's political participation in communist/postcommunist states (Saxonberg 2000). Appendix A provides a list of the countries in our analysis and the percentage of women in their national legislatures.

In this section we discuss the measurement of all the variables in our basic model, as well as our estimation strategy. Auxiliary variables and analyses are discussed in appendix B.⁵

THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable in our analysis is the percentage of female members in the national legislature of a country (lower house). Representation in the lower house rather than the upper house is used in cross-national studies of this type because in bicameral legislatures lower houses generally have more

TABLE 1: *World Values Survey Questions on Women's Place — Means and Standardized Scores*

	Means (Higher Values = More Negative Ideology)					
	Men Better in Politics	Men Better in University	Men Better in Jobs	Woman Needs Child	If One Child, Prefer a Boy	Woman Earns More = Problem
West Industrialized						
Australia	2.10	1.87	1.59	.20	.22	2.45
Britain	—	—	1.57	.18	—	—
Spain	2.11	1.96	1.70	.45	.18	2.42
Switzerland	—	—	1.75	.42	.15	—
U.S.A.	2.24	1.93	1.54	.18	.59	2.38
West Germany	1.77	1.68	1.59	.27	.20	2.47
Finland	1.80	1.55	1.36	.18	.22	2.10
Norway	1.59	1.40	1.35	.19	.16	1.92
Sweden	1.67	1.34	1.15	.17	.14	1.96
Eastern Europe						
Bosnia	2.69	1.93	2.02	.80	.29	2.30
Bulgaria	2.80	1.97	1.95	.71	.31	2.42
Croatia	2.56	1.84	1.91	.53	.26	2.12
East Germany	1.97	1.79	1.58	.57	.24	2.39
Macedonia	2.50	1.81	2.15	.67	.32	2.10
Poland	2.79	2.28	2.03	.70	.18	2.36
Serb/Mont	2.74	2.14	1.83	.76	.32	2.32
Slovenia	2.43	2.01	1.71	.51	.27	2.26
Armenia	3.17	2.45	2.29	.83	.50	2.78
Azerbaijan	2.99	2.33	2.36	.61	.36	2.88
Belarus	2.98	2.41	2.06	.85	.37	2.53
Estonia	2.92	2.17	1.79	.80	.31	2.56
Georgia	3.22	2.30	2.36	.83	.48	2.68
Latvia	2.86	2.21	1.69	.73	.33	2.53
Lithuania	2.69	2.11	1.84	.76	.28	2.67
Moldova	2.89	2.27	2.22	.85	.42	2.35
Russia	2.77	2.37	2.10	.83	.34	2.54
Ukraine	2.82	2.34	1.92	.80	.30	2.51
Latin America and Caribbean						
Argentina	2.30	1.98	1.58	.55	.29	2.47
Brazil	2.42	1.74	2.34	.53	.39	2.78
Chile	2.40	1.94	1.85	.61	.37	2.68
Columbia	2.28	1.89	1.60	.56	.33	2.61
Dom Republic	2.25	1.68	1.48	.65	.26	2.61
Mexico	2.45	2.20	2.21	.44	.33	2.68
Peru	2.27	2.27	1.64	.51	.32	2.54
Uruguay	2.37	1.93	2.24	.58	.24	2.39
Venezuela	2.32	1.92	1.79	.60	.49	2.70
Asia and the Middle East						
Bangladesh	2.70	2.46	2.33	.97	.38	2.71
China	2.60	2.10	2.06	.82	.40	2.30
India	2.53	2.16	2.10	.84	.45	2.61
Japan	2.65	2.36	2.14	.71	.32	2.53
Pakistan	2.96	2.33	2.55	—	—	2.70
Philippines	2.64	2.30	2.28	.87	.29	2.37
South Korea	2.73	2.32	2.19	.67	—	2.58
Turkey	2.73	2.07	2.23	.73	.28	2.77
Africa						
Nigeria	3.13	2.27	2.16	.82	.46	2.99
South Africa	2.61	1.81	1.86	.55	—	2.71

TABLE 1: *World Values Survey Questions on Women's Place — Means and Standardized Scores (Cont'd)*

	Standardized Scores					
	Men Better in Politics	Men Better in University	Men Better in Jobs	Woman Needs Child	If One Child, Prefer a Boy	Woman Earns More = Problem
West industrialized						
Australia	-1.10	-.65	-1.00	-1.84	-.97	-.19
Britain	—	—	-1.07	-1.93	—	—
Spain	-1.07	-.32	-.66	-.72	-1.36	-.32
Switzerland	—	—	-.51	-.85	-1.66	—
U.S.A.	-.74	-.43	-1.16	-1.93	2.70	-.49
West Germany	1.94	-1.33	-1.00	-1.53	-1.17	-.10
Finland	-1.86	-1.80	-1.72	-1.93	-.97	-1.69
Norway	-2.40	-2.34	-1.75	-1.89	-1.56	-2.46
Sweden	-2.20	-2.56	-2.37	-1.98	-1.76	-2.29
Eastern Europe						
Bosnia	.40	-.43	.33	.86	-.27	-.83
Bulgaria	.68	-.29	.11	.46	-.08	-.32
Croatia	.07	-.76	-.01	-.35	-.57	-1.60
East Germany	-1.43	-.94	-1.04	-.17	-.77	-.45
Macedonia	-.08	-.86	.73	.28	.02	-1.69
Poland	.66	.83	.36	.41	-1.36	-.57
Serb/Mont	.53	.33	-.26	.68	.02	-.75
Slovenia	-.26	-.14	-.63	-.45	-.47	-1.00
Armenia	1.62	1.44	1.17	1.00	1.81	1.23
Azerbaijan	1.17	1.01	1.38	.01	.42	1.66
Belarus	1.14	1.30	.45	1.09	.52	.16
Estonia	.99	.43	-.38	.86	-.08	.28
Georgia	1.75	.90	1.38	1.00	1.61	.80
Latvia	.84	.58	-.69	.55	.12	.16
Lithuania	.40	.22	-.23	.68	-.37	.76
Moldova	.91	.79	.95	1.09	1.01	-.62
Russia	.61	1.15	.58	1.00	.22	.20
Ukraine	.73	1.05	.02	.86	-.17	.07
Latin America and the Caribbean						
Argentina	-.59	-.25	-1.04	-.26	-.27	-.10
Brazil	-.29	-1.12	1.32	-.35	.72	1.23
Chile	-.34	-.40	-.20	.01	.52	.80
Columbia	-.64	-.58	-.97	-.22	.12	.50
Dom Republic	-.72	-1.33	-1.35	.19	-.57	.50
Mexico	.21	.54	.92	-.76	.12	.80
Peru	-.67	.79	-.85	-.45	.02	.20
Uruguay	-.41	-.43	1.01	-.13	-.77	-.45
Venezuela	-.54	-.47	-.38	-.04	1.71	.88
Asia and the Middle East						
Bangladesh	.43	1.48	1.29	1.63	.62	.93
China	.17	.18	.45	.95	.82	-.83
India	-.01	.40	.58	1.04	1.31	.50
Japan	.30	1.12	.70	.46	.02	.16
Pakistan	1.09	1.01	1.97	—	—	.88
Philippines	.27	.90	1.14	1.18	-.27	-.53
South Korea	.50	.97	.86	.28	—	.37
Turkey	.50	.07	.98	.55	-.37	1.18
Africa						
Nigeria	1.52	.79	.76	.95	1.41	2.13
South Africa	.20	-.86	-.17	-.26	—	.93

legislative power than upper houses. The data cover elections from the period September 1992 through December 2000 and were obtained from the IPU Web page (2000b). In our sample, the percentage of women in legislatures ranges between 2.3% and 42.7%, with a mean of 15.1%.

IDEOLOGICAL VARIABLES

The *World Values Survey* has six relevant questions on gender attitudes:

1. On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.
2. A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl.
3. When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.
4. Do you think that a woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled?
5. If you were to have only one child, would you rather have it be a boy or a girl?
6. If a woman earns more money than her husband, it's almost certain to cause problems.

All variables were coded so that higher numbers indicate more negative attitudes about women. Thus, they reflect *negative* gender attitudes. As these variables have never been used in cross-national research on women in politics, we provide means and standardized scores for each country in Table 1. Prior cross-national research on feminist attitudes has demonstrated that attitudes about women vary meaningfully across countries (Banaszak & Plutzer 1993a, 1993b; Treas & Widmer 2000; Wilcox 1991a, 1991b). Our findings demonstrate similar variation. Perusing the table suggests that the questions have good face validity as measures of a national-level gender ideology. For example, as would be expected, the Scandinavian countries, with their long tradition of egalitarianism, score lower than other countries on negative gender attitudes (Bystydzienski 1995; Rule 1987).

From the *World Values Survey* items, we create three measures of country-level gender ideology. To begin, we aggregate the first item by itself. This item speaks directly about women in politics and is therefore directly relevant to women's political representation. Second, to capture attitudes about women's place in three major external spheres — work, education, and politics — we create a scale of the first three items. Finally, we consider a more generalized scale, which uses all items to encompass questions on women's place in and outside the home.⁶

It is important to compare these new measures of ideology to a variety of more traditionally available measures, including region and religion. We include five regional dummies in the analysis: Eastern Europe, South America, Asia, other nonwestern countries, and Scandinavian countries. Western industrialized countries are the omitted category. To measure religion, we

include the percentages of Catholics, Muslims, and Orthodox religious adherents (*World Almanac* 1996). This measure is an improvement on religious dummy variables since it acknowledges variation within countries considered predominantly Muslim, Catholic, or Orthodox.

POLITICAL VARIABLES

Our base model includes the two political variables that have found fairly consistent support in previous research. We include a measure of whether a country has a proportional-representation or a party-list system (Derbyshire & Derbyshire 1996). We also include a measure of democracy — a country's 1995 score on Bollen's (1998) political democracy index.⁷

SOCIAL-STRUCTURAL VARIABLES

Our base model includes three social-structural variables. As in previous research, we include the percentage of the economically active population who are women and the percentage of tertiary students who are women (United Nations 2000). As we mentioned, both measure the size of the pool of women eligible for political office. We also include the log of energy use per capita in 1995 (World Bank 1999) as measure of industrialization. Industrialization is related to structural arguments in that a certain level of development frees up time for women to pursue political careers. Although not included in every model of women in politics, industrialization has been found to be significant in some previous research (Paxton 1997).⁸

ESTIMATION STRATEGY

With only forty-six cases, we needed to address a few concerns in estimation. First, we accounted for missing data through a maximum-likelihood estimation procedure (Allison 2002; Arbuckle 1995). This procedure uses the maximum amount of information available for each case and allowed us to retain the full forty-six cases.⁹ Second, to preserve our parameters-to-cases ratio, we limited the number of variables we modeled at any one time. Our base analysis includes the most common variables from previous research and those that were most consistently significant. We view this model as the simplest possible model that can be estimated without misspecification.¹⁰ We also estimate a series of auxiliary models, which add variables with less prior justification. These variables and analyses are described in appendix B. Third, as with any cross-national sample, demonstrating robustness is crucial. We therefore considered outliers, multicollinearity, heteroskedasticity, and a variety of alternative specifications to ensure that our results were robust. These results are presented and discussed in Appendix B.

TABLE 2: Model of Women in Parliament

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Men better in politics		-18.62*** (3.90)		-18.65*** (2.75)		
Negative gender attitudes (three questions)					-8.39*** (-1.16)	
Negative gender attitudes (six questions)						-6.60*** (.76)
Scandinavia	15.60** (4.90)	8.36* (4.07)				
Eastern Europe	-11.36*** (3.27)	1.50 (3.69)				
South America	-8.64* (3.66)	-3.71 (3.00)				
Asia	-13.41*** (3.86)	-2.02 (3.81)				
Other	-10.47* (4.90)	3.45 (4.77)				
Percent Catholic			-.07 t (.04)	-.04 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Percent Orthodox			-.16*** (.05)	-.06 (.04)	-.05 (.04)	-.04 (.03)
Percent Muslim			-.12* (.06)	-.06 (.04)	-.07† (.04)	-.06† (.04)
Proportional representation			4.53† (2.33)	3.35* (1.65)	2.66† (1.61)	1.37 (1.48)
Democracy			.01 (.07)	-.03 (.05)	-.01 (.04)	-.03 (.04)
Percent women econ. active			.05 (.22)	.34* (.16)	.30* (.15)	.41** (.14)
Percent women in tertiary educ.			.16 (.19)	-.03 (.14)	-.14 (.14)	-.18 (.12)
Industrialization			1.04 (2.04)	-.20 (1.46)	-.68 (1.42)	-1.27 (1.29)
R ²	.56	.71	.48	.75	.76	.82
N	46	46	46	46	46	46
Method	OLS	MLE	MLE	MLE	MLE	MLE

Notes: Coefficients and standard errors

† $p < .05$ (one-tailed) * $p < .05$ (two-tailed) ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed) *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Results

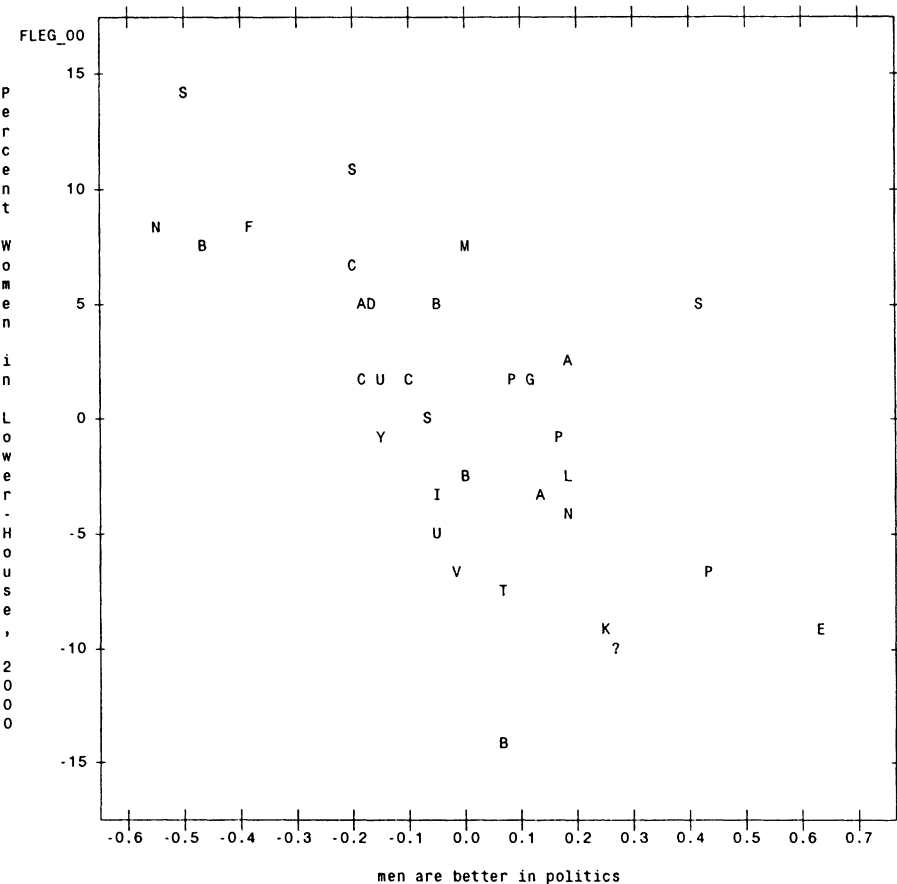
In Table 2, models A through F, we present the results from our models of women in national legislatures. Model A provides a picture of regional differences in women's legislative representation. As has been demonstrated in previous research, the Scandinavian countries have higher percentages of women in their legislatures than other western industrialized nations. All other regions had lower percentages of women than western industrialized countries. As discussed above, the argument for these effects in past research is that the regional differences reflect ideological differences.

Model B tests that hypothesis by including a more precise measure of ideology along with the regional variables. We use the aggregated variable "men are better in politics" for this test. This variable is highly significant, with a strong negative impact on women's representation in national legislatures. A one-unit increase in the measure (which ranges from 1.59 to 3.22) is expected to lead to 19% fewer women in a country's legislature. In addition, coefficients for the regional variables are dramatically reduced, with only the dummy for Scandinavian countries retaining significance. Model B indicates that the previously observed regional differences are in fact due to ideological differences. Once a more precise measure of ideology is included, they no longer have direct effects on the percentage of women in national legislatures. It is important to note that the R^2 changes substantially as well, rising from .56 to .71.¹¹

Model C introduces our substantive model, without "men are better in politics."¹² The most important conclusion from this model is that it replicates previous findings. Proportional-representation party-list systems have a positive effect on the percentage of women in the legislature, as has been found in previous research. We also find effects of religion — countries with larger Muslim populations have fewer women in their national legislatures. The percentage of women in a country's national legislature also decreases as the percentage of Catholics and Orthodox increases. As in previous research, we find no effect of the two structural variables — the percentage of the economically active population who are women and the percentage of tertiary students who are women — on women in the legislature. This correspondence of our results to previous results helps demonstrate that our sample is not substantially different from the larger samples used in previous research.

Model D adds the ideological variable "men are better in politics." As in model B, this variable has a highly significant negative coefficient. As in the previous analysis, a one-unit increase in negative ideology (which ranges from 1.59 to 3.22) results in a 19% decrease in women in politics. Here, proportional-representation party-list systems continue to have a positive effect on women in national legislatures. However, the religion variables have substantially reduced coefficients and no longer attain significance. Again,

FIGURE 1: Partial Regression Residual Plot of Men in Politics



gender ideology is displaying a classic mediating effect — once included, no direct effects from the religious variables to women in the legislature remain. In similar results, after controlling for political egalitarianism, Norris found no effect of the percentage of Catholics on women’s participation. Our analysis suggests that the proxies for ideology do indeed work through attitudes, as has been assumed in previous research. Finally, the R^2 again increases between models C and D, indicating heightened explanatory power with the inclusion of a precise measure of ideology.

To demonstrate the effect of “men are better in politics,” we present the partial regression residual plot (Bollen & Jackman 1990) in Figure 1. The plot demonstrates a clear, strong, negative relationship between “men are better in politics” and the percentage of women in the legislature, controlling for the

other variables in model D.¹³ As negative attitudes increase, the percentage of women in legislatures decreases. It is important to note that this plot looks essentially the same, regardless which model is considered. Comparison of the standardized coefficients indicates that the effect of gender ideology is also the strongest effect in the model. For example, the presence of a proportional-representation system, found to be highly significant in previous research, has a standardized effect of .165. The standardized coefficient for "men are better in politics" is $-.732$.

In model D, the percentage of economically active people who are women is significant and positive. No previous study has found a significant effect for this variable. One possible explanation of this finding is that the effect of economically active women is being suppressed in studies that do not include a precise measure of gender ideology. Suppression could occur if the direct effect of economically active women is positive but its effect mediated through ideology is negative and of approximately the same size. Essentially, the two effects would cancel each other out in that case, leading to an insignificant total effect (see Bollen 1989b:40-79 for a discussion of suppression effects). However, the significance of economically active women is not robust against changes in the specification of the model (see Appendix B). Thus, without strong evidence for an effect, we do not speculate further on this finding.

Models E and F include the two alternative specifications of the independent variable. Model E includes the three-indicator scale, which captures attitudes about women's place outside the home. Model F contains the six-indicator scale, which reflects attitudes about women's place inside and outside the home. Under both codings, the ideology scale has a strong, significant effect. The coefficients are smaller because the range of the variables increased (e.g., the range of the three-indicator scale is 4.16 to 7.91).

ROBUSTNESS OF RESULTS AND AUXILIARY REGRESSIONS

To demonstrate the robustness of our results, we considered listwise deletion, outliers, heteroskedasticity, multicollinearity, the inclusion of auxiliary variables, and several interactions. Despite a very large range of robustness checks, our core results remain unchanged. Table B1 presents these robustness checks as well as the regressions with auxiliary variables. Under no circumstance was the basic finding of a strong negative effect of ideology on women's political representation affected.

TESTING FOR ENDOGENEITY

It might be argued that high levels of legislative participation by women could influence gender ideology through increases in citizens' comfort with women in politics. This is a reasonable hypothesis, with implications for the consistency

of the OLS estimator, and it can be tested with a Hausman (1978) endogeneity test. Using percentage female, mean age, percentage married, and average life satisfaction as instruments (along with the other variables in the original equation), we tested whether gender ideology was endogenous in the equation (reciprocally affected by the percentage of women in politics). The instrumental variables were good predictors, resulting in a first-stage R^2 of .71. The residual in the second stage was not significant, indicating that the percentage of women in the legislature is *not* affecting gender ideology in this analysis.¹⁴

The evidence that the percentage of women in the legislature does not have a reciprocal effect on gender ideology makes additional sense if we consider the Eastern European countries. There, Communist party doctrine led to exceptionally high levels of women's political participation for more than forty years. Yet in 1995 Eastern Europe tended to have a more *negative* gender ideology than other countries (Table 1). This is potentially the result of the Communist party's forcible promotion of women in politics rather than their presence through a more protracted bottom-up process. Indeed, after the fall of communism, women's political representation in Eastern Europe dropped dramatically,¹⁵ as would be expected in the face of a negative gender ideology (Saxonberg 2000). The experience in Eastern Europe suggests that the simple presence of women in politics will not lead to a gender ideology benign to women.

We should stress that the above endogeneity test does not rule out a reciprocal effect over a longer time period. We would expect any effect of legislative participation to have a *long-term* effect on gender ideology, much longer than the five-year period considered here. And ideally, we would want data on gender ideology for two time periods, rather than the single time period currently available. However, the Hausman test indicates that our OLS estimator is consistent.

Conclusion

In this article, we introduced a new measure of ideology into quantitative models of women in politics. We argued that the lack of support for ideological factors in previous research was the result of the use of proxies in place of a precise measure of societal attitudes toward the place of women. We demonstrated that ideology, when measured more precisely, matters more than political factors in predicting differences in women's political representation. In fact, in our sample of forty-six countries, ideological beliefs were by far the strongest predictor of differences and were stable across a series of modifications to the model.

While structural factors represent a supply of women, and political factors a demand, ideological factors simultaneously influence both the supply of and demand for women. On the supply side, ideological beliefs may influence women's decision to run for political office, regardless of their careers or levels of education. For instance, a female politician from the Middle East stated, "In my country men think and act more politically than women in general because of their socialization process and their respective upbringing" (IPU 2000a:23). Or consider an Australian female politician's views: "social values that it is a women's role to be wives and mothers are still strong in Australia. This creates psychological and emotional barriers to women participating in formal politics" (IPU 2000a:25).

On the demand side, ideological beliefs may influence the likelihood that voters will accept women as their elected politicians and influence the likelihood that party elites will select and support female candidates. As democracy spreads, elections become the primary avenue to gain political power. Voters are influenced by their ideological beliefs about women and may be more or less willing to elect them according to their views about the women's emotionality or competence. Party elites' decisions to support female candidates may be shaped by their perception of voters' preferences (Gallagher & Marsh 1988; Huddy & Terkildsen 1993; Thompson & Steckenrider 1997; Rule & Zimmerman 1994).

Our research also replicated findings from previous cross-national studies. We found that political structures, in particular electoral systems, are important influences on women's levels of representation. Proportional-representation party-list systems are more effective than other electoral systems for getting women into politics. However, while political parties are certainly helpful, they still may hold ideological barriers that limit women. Fifty percent of the IPU respondents "felt that political parties in general were structures somewhat hostile to the incorporation of women" (IPU 2000a:55). This hostility does not necessarily come from formal structures within the parties. In fact, many parties have adopted structures to support women, such as party quotas or women's branches (Caul 2001; IPU 1997). However, as a representative from Western Europe states, "the problems are the nonwritten rules. The rules are written down . . . but the practices do not favour women" (IPU 2000a:57). Ultimately, "women actively participate in the same way as men, but they don't manage to move upward, always holding subordinated positions in political organizations and on electoral lists" (IPU 2000a:60, West African respondent). While party-list systems are generally conducive to women's representation, there is clearly still room for improvement.

Women's representation in formal politics matters normatively and practically. In a democracy, political elites should represent the interests of all citizens, including traditionally marginalized groups (Phillips 1991; Williams

1998). Previous research has established that the gender of political elites matters for policy decisions, especially with respect to the passage of legislation that promotes women's opportunities to live independent and safe lives (O'Regan 2000; Swers 1998; Thomas 1994, 1997). The level of female representation is critical for women to be effective legislators — the United Nations argues that women need to constitute 30% of national elites in order to exert meaningful influence on politics (UNDP 1995).

In most countries, constitutions grant men and women the same rights and responsibilities in political participation. However, as we have shown, in practice women are much less likely to participate at the highest levels of politics. While our findings help explain this difference, they provide a challenging public policy prescriptive. On the one hand, changing societal values and beliefs may take extensive time and effort. On the other hand, there are numerous examples of racial and ethnic groups overcoming ideological barriers to representation in politics. Therefore, rather than discouraging activists, our results should encourage those interested in increasing women's representation to focus their efforts not only on changing formal political opportunity structures but also on efforts to change societal attitudes. Party quotas, women's branches, and equal access to education and professional experience are all important pieces of the representation puzzle. However, ultimately we should also heed the words of an IPU respondent from Central America (IPU 2000a:23): "the general public thinks that we are influenced by our emotions rather than by the facts, that we fight with our hearts rather than with our heads. I, of course, think they are wrong. The challenge is to prove it."

Notes

1. The meaning of the lower representation of women is more than a simple numbers game — the gender of political leaders matters for policy decisions. Without women the state can legislate in the male interest (Connell 1990; MacKinnon 1989). In contrast, higher numbers of women in legislatures can influence the passage of legislation more relevant to women (O'Regan 2000; Swers 1998; Thomas 1994, 1997).
2. Proportional-representation systems allocate legislative seats according to the proportion of the vote received by each party. Simple plurality, or "first-past-the-post," systems allocate seats through contestation in separate districts. A wide range of variants of these two systems exist (Grofman & Lijphart 1986).
3. With only nine countries, Norris was unable to control for a wide range of alternative variables.
4. In a study of women's representation in U.S. state legislatures, Arceneaux (2001) finds evidence that U.S. states with more accepting attitudes toward women in politics have more female representatives.
5. An issue in any cross-national research is whether to treat the sample as random or fixed. In the current analyses, all countries for which any information on gender attitudes

were available were included in the sample. Traditionally, such a sample is either assumed to be "fixed" (a true population), which requires that the processes producing the data were deterministic, or "random" in that the social world could have produced different outcomes from the ones that were observed. Under the second assumption significance tests are possible. We do present significance tests here but also discuss the substantive size of the coefficients, acknowledging that the size of effects may be a better method of assessment than statistical significance. (See the debate between Berk, Western, and Weiss and others in *Sociological Methodology* [1995] for further detail on these issues and other suggestions on how to proceed.)

6. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to estimate and test the three-indicator and six-indicator models. The three-indicator model was just identified, which means that global goodness-of-fit statistics were not available. However, the factor loadings for that model were all significant and the R^2 s for each indicator high. In addition, the factor loadings for the three indicators were very similar, which indicates that an additive scale is a good approximation. Global goodness-of-fit statistics were available for the six-indicator model and indicated a very good fit of the model to the data. The chi-square test statistic was nonsignificant, which indicates a good fit. Other measures of fit were also excellent: the Incremental Fit Index (Bollen 1989a) was 1.0, and 1-RMSEA (Steiger & Lind 1981) was 1.0. For both those fit statistics, values close to 1.0 indicate an excellent fit. The only fit statistic that indicated a less-than-excellent fit was the AGFI, with a value of .88. The fit of the six-indicator model in each country was less exceptional. In some countries, the chi-square test statistic was significant (an indication of poor fit) but other fit statistics still showed a good fit. In addition, the last three indicators tended to have lower R^2 s than the other indicators. More information on the fit of these confirmatory factor analyses is available from the authors. Cronbach's alpha for the three-indicator scale was .89, and for the six-indicator scale .88, indicating highly reliable scales.

7. To get 1995 data the authors used an updated version of Bollen's (1998) dataset.

8. Unfortunately, our sample size constrained our ability to use some variables, namely percentage of economically active women in professional occupations. Although this is a more specific measure of the supply of women, it traditionally has a great deal of missing data and we could not afford the loss of cases.

9. Recent reviews of methods to deal with missing data list maximum likelihood as one of two optimal procedures (e.g., Allison 2002). For robustness, we also present the listwise deleted results (see appendix B).

10. Because our sample is small, we also checked the normality of the error terms. Plots of the error terms were normal, with just a slight suggestion of positive kurtosis.

11. In fact, a model that includes *only* "men are better in politics" has a higher adjusted R^2 than the model with all the regional dummies.

12. We separate the analysis of the regional dummies from the analysis of the substantive variables. The regional dummies have little theory driving their inclusion, except as stand-ins for more precise ideological measures. Once we include those more precise ideological measures, we remove the regional dummies from the analysis to maintain a high parameters-to-cases ratio.

13. This plot was not available with the maximum-likelihood missing-value routine. For that reason this plot was created from the listwise deleted model, which is discussed below and appears in Table B-1, column B.

14. Running the model with an index of gender ideology that eliminated the item specifically asking if men make better political leaders than women led to virtually identical results.

15. For example, in Russia women's participation was almost 33% during the last communist legislature but dropped to 13% immediately after the transition to democracy.

16. The closest difference in model B was that the percentage of a country that is Catholic is significant with a one-tailed test, while women economically active is significant at only the .06 level.

17. If the cases are listwise deleted, then access to abortion is significant only if four outliers are removed. This variable should therefore be investigated further in larger samples.

18. Years of female suffrage could also be seen as structural factor. More years of suffrage could produce more familiarity with the political process for women and lead to more women who see politics as a viable career option.

19. Other changes were small. For example, the percentage of Muslims is significant in two models and its coefficient is negative, reflecting the findings from prior analyses.

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APPENDIX A: Percentages of Women in National Legislatures

West Industrialized		Latin America and the Caribbean	
Australia	23.0	Argentina	26.5
Britain	18.4	Brazil	5.7
Spain	28.3	Chile	10.8
Switzerland	23.0	Columbia	11.8
U.S.A.	14.0	Dom Republic	16.1
West Germany	30.9	Mexico	16.0
Finland	36.5	Peru	20.0
Norway	36.4	Uruguay	12.1
Sweden	42.7	Venezuela	9.7
Eastern Europe		Asia and the Middle East	
Bosnia	7.1	Bangladesh	9.1
Bulgaria	10.8	China	21.8
Croatia	20.5	India	9.0
East Germany	30.9	Japan	7.3
Macedonia	6.7	Pakistan	2.3
Poland	13.0	Philippines	11.3
Serb/Mont	7.3	South Korea	5.9
Slovenia	12.2	Turkey	4.2
Armenia	3.1	Africa	
Azerbaijan	10.5	Nigeria	3.4
Belarus	10.3	South Africa	29.8
Estonia	17.8		
Georgia	7.2		
Latvia	17.0		
Lithuania	10.6		
Moldova	7.9		
Russia	7.7		
Ukraine	7.8		

APPENDIX B: Robustness of Findings

In this appendix, we demonstrate the robustness of our results against a variety of regression diagnostics and alternative specifications. Table B1 presents the results for some of these robustness checks. In the first column, model A presents a replication of our main finding from Table 2. The results of model A in Table B1 are the same as the results from model D, Table 2. Two robustness issues are addressed in model B of Table B-1. First, this model presents the listwise deleted results to demonstrate that our use of the missing-value procedure did not affect the results. Second, when we performed the Spearman rank-order correlation and the Breusch-Pagan tests for heteroskedasticity, we found some evidence of multivariate heteroskedasticity in the data. Therefore, model B also includes White's (1980) correction for heteroskedasticity. There are no substantial differences between those results and the maximum likelihood missing value results presented in model A.¹⁶

No strong outliers appeared from the partial plot (Figure 1 in main text). We also checked a variety of other diagnostics (leverage [hat], Cook's D, DFFits, and DFBetas, for example) on all of the variables in the model (Bollen & Jackman 1990). Compiling these results identified Brazil and South Africa as potential outliers. Brazil had far fewer women in its national legislature than would be predicted, while South Africa had far more. These are not entirely surprising results. Brazil's long experience with a military regime historically limited women's participation and the high costs of participating in elections has recently negatively affected women's participation (Tabak 1994). In South Africa, the unexpectedly high number of women can be attributed to the strength of the ANC, which has always shown a strong commitment to women's representation (Klugman 1994). Regardless, removing the cases from the analyses as a test of their influence led to no difference in the results. Although they are outliers, they are not influential.

We next tried a variety of alternative variables to represent ideology, politics, and social structure. These variables were added to the baseline model A. First we included two alternative ideological variables: a Guttman scale referencing the conditions under which abortion is legal in a country (United Nations 2000) and a dummy variable indicating whether a country has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (United Nations 2000). Both these variables can be viewed as a combination of ideology and politics and may indicate the strength of feminist movements in a country. Ratification of the convention was not significant, but access to abortion was significantly associated with a greater number of women in the national legislature. The results for the model that includes access to abortion appear in model C.¹⁷ Regardless of which alternative ideological variable was included, the coefficient for "men are better in politics" remained unchanged.

APPENDIX B: Robustness of Findings (Continued)

We also tried three alternative political variables: whether one of a country's leading parties is left of center (Derbyshire & Derbyshire 1996), the number of years that women have had the vote,¹⁸ and a dummy variable for a bicameral legislature. None was significant initially, although the number of years that women have had the vote significantly increased the proportion of women in a country's national legislature if Brazil and South Africa were removed from the analysis (model D of Table B1). These were the two outliers identified earlier; in this case they had an influential effect on the impact of years of suffrage on women in the legislature. Again, the coefficient for "men are better in politics" remained unchanged with the inclusion of these variables.

Finally, we tried other alternative structural variables: the percentage of women married by age 15 in 1990, the average age for women's first marriage in 1990, and the average female life expectancy in 1990. Female life expectancy did not have a significant effect, but the two marriage variables did affect the percentage of women in national legislatures. This is not surprising, since the effect of age at marriage can be considered to reflect a combination of ideology and structural factors. The percentage of women married by age 15 is included in model E of Table B1.

Interactions between the explanatory variables are also possible. Examples include an interaction between a proportional-representation system and gender ideology or an interaction between women in tertiary education and gender ideology. Unfortunately, including interactions between ideology and the structural and political variables produced unacceptable levels of multicollinearity. Likely because the sample is small, tolerance estimates were often below .01 for the variables involved in the interaction, making the results practically uninterpretable.

One particularly interesting interaction can be tested, however. Since leaders are not popularly elected in undemocratic regimes, would we expect attitudes about gender roles to have the same impact on women's political representation? If we consider only undemocratic countries (denoted by a score less than 80 on Bollen's (1998) liberal democracy index, $N = 28$), gender ideology continues to have a strong significant effect on women in politics, with essentially the same coefficient as in the full sample of countries. This suggests that the national ideological climate influences political outcomes regardless of whether political processes are democratic.

Finally, since the Scandinavian countries have a more positive national gender ideology than other countries, we tried omitting them from the sample (this is a slightly stronger test than simply including Scandinavian as a control as in Table 2). When the Scandinavian countries are removed from the sample, the coefficient for "men are better in politics" was slightly reduced, to -12.4 , but it was still strongly significant.

As noted throughout, the inclusion of these additional variables never affected the significance of our measures of gender ideology. The effect of a proportional-representation party-list system also remained stable. However, the significance of the percentage of women in the labor force did change in some of the models. Its effect is therefore not robust against the specification of the model.¹⁹

TABLE B1: Robustness Checks and Auxiliary Analyses, Coefficients and Standard Errors

	A	B	C	D	E
Men better in politics	-18.65*** (2.75)	-17.64*** (2.98)	-18.39*** (2.67)	-20.68*** (2.87)	-19.03*** (2.69)
Scandinavia					
Eastern Europe					
South America					
Asia					
Other					
Percent Catholic	-.04 (.03)	-.06 _t (.04)	-.01 (.03)	-.01 (.03)	-.02 (.03)
Percent Orthodox	-.06 (.04)	-.05 (.05)	-.06 (.04)	-.03 (.04)	-.04 (.04)
Percent Muslim	-.06 (.04)	-.06 (.05)	-.08 _t (.04)	-.07 _t (.04)	-.05 (.04)
Proportional representation	3.35* (1.65)	4.65 _t (2.76)	3.47* (1.58)	4.48* (1.94)	3.27* (1.58)
Democracy	-.03 (.05)	-.03 (.04)	-.03 (.04)	-.08* (.04)	-.02 (.04)
Percent women econ. active	.34* (.16)	.23 (.14)	.23 (.16)	.31* (.14)	.38** (.15)
Percent women in tertiary educ.	-.03 (.14)	.06 (.12)	-.11 (.14)	-.14 (.16)	-.15 (.14)
Industrialization	-.20 (1.46)	-.71 (1.32)	-.66 (1.42)	-1.83 (1.28)	-1.77 (1.65)
Scale of abortion rights			1.02* (.51)		
Years with female suffrage				.18* (.07)	
Percentage of women married by age 15	-.23*				
R ²	.75	.76	.77	.83	.77
N	46	34	46	32	46
Method	MLE	OLS	MLE	OLS ^a	MLE

^a Brazil and South Africa removed from the analysis

† p < .05 (one-tailed) * p < .05 (two-tailed) ** p < .01 (two-tailed) *** p < .001 (two-tailed)

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