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Cultural Barriers to Women's Leadership:
A Worldwide Comparison

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Synopsis: A fundamental problem facing the process of democratization is the continued lack of gender equality in political leadership. The basic facts are not in dispute: worldwide today women represent only one in seven parliamentarians, one in ten cabinet ministers, and, at the apex of power, one in twenty Heads of State or Government (IPU2000a, UN 2000). Projections based on the current pace of global change indicate that women will achieve parity in parliaments a century from now. Multiple factors have contributed towards this situation, including social structural and institutional barriers, but what is the role of political culture in this process? Do attitudes towards women as political leaders play a significant role in hindering their empowerment?

Our thesis is that (a) there are substantial differences in attitudes towards women's leadership in post-industrial, post-Communist and developing societies; (b) traditional attitudes are a major barrier to the election of women to parliament; (c) culture continues to prove a significant influence on the proportion of women parliamentarians even controlling for social structural and political institutions; but that (d) there is evidence that these cultural barriers have been fading among the younger generation in postindustrial societies as a result of modernization.

The analysis testing these propositions draws on evidence from the World Values Surveys in 55 societies with data drawn from the most recent wave conducted in 1995-99, offering new and rich insights into cultural attitudes towards gender equality. The conclusion considers the implications of the analysis for strategies to advance gender parity.

The Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly this June, on "*Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace*", was the last in a long line of international conferences that have called for the empowerment of women. Demands in the Beijing Declaration adopted by the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women focused on full recognition of women's rights and fundamental freedoms, and demands for progress towards gender equality in education and health care, in work and the family, and in the public sphere. Women have mobilized at the grassroots, national and international level to press government agencies and non-profit organizations to incorporate these agendas into national programs for action. The June 2000 meeting of the United Nations in New York reviewed how far these goals and objectives had been met. The official UN report published in conjunction with this meeting, *The World's Women 2000,* summarizes the global balance sheet, suggesting that substantive advances have occurred in many important spheres like access to education, health care and reproductive services as well as in human rights, including greater recognition of the issues of domestic violence and sexual trafficking.

Yet at the same time progress worldwide has perhaps proved most difficult to achieve in the top levels of government. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the most comprehensive treaty on women's human rights, which came into force in 1981, has been ratified or acceded to by 165 states worldwide. It calls for equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and it emphasizes the importance of equal participation of women with men in public life. States that are parties to the Convention are obligated to ensure women equal opportunities in the right to vote and be eligible for election. Yet there remains a wide gulf between these official declarations and the representation of women in public life. At the time of writing (July 2000) there are just over 5100 women in parliament worldwide, representing 13.8% of all members, up from 9% in 1987 (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2000a). If growth at this level is maintained (0.36% per annum), a simple linear projection predicts that women parliamentarians will achieve parity with men at the turn of the 22nd Century.

[Figure 1 about here]

The global map in Figure 1 illustrates marked variations by region; women do best in the Nordic nations where they are on average 38.8% of MPs in the lower house, topped by Sweden, compared with only 3.8% in Arab states. Formal limitations to women's election still exist in a few parliaments, such as Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The proportion of women members elsewhere fell between these extremes, including in the Americas (15.7%), Asia (14.3%), Europe

excluding the Nordic states (14.0%), Sub-Saharan Africa (12.5%), and the Pacific (11.8%). The worldwide rank order of the proportion of women in the lower house of parliament in the most recent election by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2000a) reveals that the level of socioeconomic and democratic development are not necessary conditions for women's advancement (see Appendix A); for example, female representation is far higher today in Mozambique (ranking 9th worldwide) South Africa (10th), and Venezuela (11th), than in the United States (50th), France (59th) and Japan (94th).

[Figure 1 about here]

The situation remains far worse at the apex of power: out of 179 nations worldwide, only nine currently have a woman elected head of State or Government. Despite some redoubtable and well-known figures, like Margaret Thatcher, Gro Harlem Bruntland and Golda Meir, historical records show that only 39 states have ever elected a woman President or Prime Minister. Women are less than one tenth of the world's cabinet ministers and hold one fifth of all sub-ministerial positions (UN 2000). These familiar statistics suggest that despite many official declarations of intent over the years by governments, NGOs and international agencies, major barriers continue to restrict women's advancement in public life. The extensive comparative literature seeking to explain these cross-national disparities has suggested multiple reasons behind this phenomenon, including the importance of cultural attitudes, social structure, and political institutions (for recent overviews of the literature see, Karam 1998; Reynolds 1999; Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Inter-Parliamentary Union 1999).

Cultural Barriers influencing Candidates and Gatekeepers

There is nothing novel about the idea of cultural barriers to women's advancement, indeed ever since Duverger's seminal study (1955) it has often been assumed as the conventional wisdom, and it receives support in surveys monitoring the attitudes of candidates and gatekeepers in particular countries (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Norris 1997). Nevertheless systematic cross-national evidence has been scarce. Many accounts based on theories of socialization have long emphasized the importance of the division of sex roles within a country -- especially egalitarian or traditional attitudes towards women as political leaders. The political culture may plausibly influence both whether women are prepared come forward as candidates for office (the supply-side of the equation) as well as the criteria used by gate-keepers like party members and leaders, the news media, financial supporters or the electorate when evaluating suitable candidates (the demand-side). In traditional cultures, women may be reluctant to run and, if they seek the office, they may fail to attract sufficient support to win. A

recent study by the Inter-parliamentary Union interviewing 187 women politicians in 65 countries to find out about their experiences found that cultural attitudes and attitudes hostile to women's participation in politics was nominated as the second most important barrier to running for parliament, just behind the problems of balancing time demands (IPU 2000b). Cultural explanations provide a plausible reason why women seem to have made such striking advances within the Nordic region compared with other comparable European societies like Switzerland, Italy or Belgium, since all these are affluent post-industrial welfare states and established parliamentary democracies with PR systems. A long tradition of government intervention to promote social equality may have made the Scandinavian public more receptive to the idea of positive action designed to achieve equality for women in public life (Karvonen and Selle 1995). Culture also seems like an important reason why many nations with a strict Islamic background have often ranked at the bottom of the list in terms of women in parliament, even the more affluent Arab societies like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, as well as Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon (Abu-Zayd 1998), despite notable exceptions in Islamic societies in top elites including the election as Prime Minister of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Tansu Ciller in Turkey and Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wajed in Bangladesh.

Political culture has therefore commonly been suspected to be an important determinant of women's entry into elected office, yet so far little systematic cross-national evidence has been available to prove this proposition. In most cases comparative studies have been forced to adopt proxy indicators of culture, such as the historical prevalence of Catholicism within post-industrial societies, understood as representing more traditional attitudes towards women and the family than Protestant religions (Rule 1987; Kenworthy and Malami 1999). An early study by Margaret Inglehart (1979), for example, argued that women's political activism was lower in the Catholic than Protestant countries of Western Europe because the Catholic Church was associated with a culture that was more hierarchical and authoritarian in nature. A more recent worldwide comparison of 180 nation states by Reynolds (1999) found that the greatest contrasts were between dominant Christian countries (whether Protestant or Catholic) and all other religions including Islamic, Buddhist, Judaic, Confucian and Hindu, all of which had lower proportions of women in legislative and Cabinet office. An alternative approach in cross-national research has compared attitudes in Western Europe towards the women's movement, feminism, and sex role equality in the home and workplace (Mayer and Smith 1985; Wilcox 1991). This provide insights into public opinion in Europe but it is difficult to know how far we can generalize from these attitudes towards egalitarian support for women in positions of political

leadership, still less whether comparable results would be evident in a broader range of societies like post-Communist states and developing countries.

In the existing literature it also remains unclear how far attitudes towards women in office may have been transformed over time, particularly among the younger generation living in affluent nations. Previous work by the authors has demonstrated that gender differences in electoral behavior have been realigning, with women moving toward the left of men in postindustrial societies, especially among the younger generation, although this process is not yet evident in post-Communist or developing societies (Inglehart and Norris 2000). Just as the process of modernization has affected mass electoral attitudes and party preferences among the younger generation, so it may also have eroded traditional views of the appropriate division of sex roles towards values that increasingly emphasize gender equality, in the home and family, as well as the paid labor force and the public sphere (Inglehart 1997).

Hypotheses and Data

On this basis this study seeks to compare attitudes towards women's political leadership worldwide to see how far political culture is systematically related to the advancement of women in elected office in a wide range of postindustrial, post-Communist and developing countries. The study seeks to examine four related propositions, namely that:

(a)   There are substantial differences in attitudes towards women's leadership in post-industrial, post-Communist and developing societies;

(b)   Traditional attitudes are a major barrier to the election of women to parliament;

(c)   Culture continues to be a significant influence on the proportion of women parliamentarians even with the introduction of prior structural and institutional controls; but that,

(d)   There is evidence that these cultural barriers have been fading among the younger generation in postindustrial societies as a result of the process of modernization and value change.

The analysis testing these propositions combines aggregate data at national-level with survey evidence about culture drawn from the World Values Surveys, the largest investigation ever conducted of attitudes, values and beliefs around the world. These surveys provide time-series data from the earliest wave in 1981 to the most recent wave completed in 1999. This comparison is restricted to evidence

derived from the third wave, conducted from 1995-99, covering 55 societies worldwide including 11 postindustrial, 23 post-Communist, and 21 developing societies. These have per capita annual gross national products ranging from $300 to more than $30,000 and their political systems range from long-established stable democracies to authoritarian states. The proportion of women in the lower house of parliament ranges from 40% in Sweden down to 1% in Jordan. All are independent nation-states except for three major regions that are disaggregated since they have distinct political histories and cultural traditions, namely West Germany, East Germany, and Northern Ireland. Full information about the nations, fieldwork, methodology and questionnaire for the WVS are available online from http://wvs.irs.umich.edu.

Attitudes towards Women's Political Leadership

First, how does the public regard women as political leaders today and do attitudes vary systematically in different types of postindustrial, post-Communist and developing societies? The third wave of the World Values survey contains many items measuring attitudes towards sex role equality in the home and family, labor force and public sphere, as well as confidence in the women's movement. The basic indicator selected as the core dependent variable for this study is the Likert-like 4-point scale asking respondents how far they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

> *"People talk about the changing roles of men and women today. For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how much you agree with each? Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or disagree strongly? ... On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do."*

The response scale was reversed for ease of graphical interpretation, so that higher scores represent more egalitarian attitudes and lower scores express stronger agreement with traditional gender roles in public life. The distribution of mean responses to this item are illustrated graphically in Figure 2 with post-industrial, post-Communist and developing societies ranked by level of socioeconomic development, measured by logged per capita GNP.

[Figure 2 about here]

The results display the striking relationship between levels of socioeconomic development and support for egalitarian or traditional gender roles in politics. The simple correlation between these factors, without any controls, is strong and significant (R=0.456 sig. P.01). Postindustrial societies in the top right hand corner are led by those like Norway, West Germany and Finland, all well above the regression line, with higher than expected support for women's political leadership given their level of affluence, while Spain, Australia and (to a lesser extent) the United States are close behind. Among

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richer nations, the Asian societies of Japan, Taiwan and South Korea cluster together below the regression line, showing lower support for women in politics than would be predicted by their level of socioeconomic development alone. Many Latin American countries with moderate levels of development are found clustered together in the middle of the graph, along with South Africa and the Philippines. Post-Communist societies like Armenia and Belarus are clustered together displaying more traditional attitudes towards male leadership (with the important exception of East Germany which is close to West Germany). Lastly Nigeria, Pakistan, Jordan and Egypt, scatter at the bottom of the chart, all poorer countries with sizeable Muslim populations. This first cut at the evidence suggests that socioeconomic development does seem to be significantly related to the global distribution of traditional and egalitarian attitudes towards women's leadership yet the major outliers to the regression line, such as the dramatic contrasts in developing nations between India and China well above the line and Nigeria and Egypt well below, indicate that much more is at work than simply contrasts between rich and poor societies.

To explore whether these cultural attitudes reflected broader ideological beliefs, the national-level responses to political leadership were compared with confidence in the women's movement, selected as an indicator of feminist sympathies. The results in Figure 3 shows a striking pattern: in postindustrial societies attitudes towards gender quality in politics are related to support for the women's movement: the correlation is not strong but it is significant (R=0.27 Sig. .01). In contrast there was no relationship between these indicators in other types of society: this suggests that the rise of the second-wave women's movement in affluent countries like the US and Western Europe has created a link in the public's mind between the demands for socioeconomic and political equality for women. Yet this association is not established elsewhere; given the diversity of the demands which organized groups of women have made in different societies it is possible that even the phrase 'the women's movement' brings different connotations to countries spread across the spectrum, such as in Russia and Azerbaijan, in Argentina and Brazil, or in Iran and Armenia.

[Figure 3 about here]

To go further and see how far egalitarian attitudes towards women and men as political leaders tapped into and reflected deeper cultural values, these attitudes were also compared with a 24-item scale reflecting a much broader range of traditional versus rational values, based on factor analysis developed elsewhere (Inglehart and Baker 2000), including items reflecting beliefs in the importance of religion and adherence to traditional moral standards on issues like divorce, euthanasia and the family.

The picture presented in Figure 4 shows that there is a strong relationship, with different types of societies also clustered together across the ideological map. Again the Scandinavian and West European societies are consistently in the top right-hand corner, as the most secular or rational societies in their moral and ethnical values and also the most favorable of gender equality in politics. Again Nigeria, Jordan and Egypt emerge as the most traditional on both dimensions, along with Iran and Azerbaijan. But we also see that in the middle of the map the post-Communist societies cluster together towards the more rational or secular side while the Latin American countries are close together on the traditional side, along with the South-East Asian nations like India and Bangladesh.

[Figure 4 about here]

The Relationship between Cultural Attitudes and Women in Parliament

So far we have established systematic patterns of cultural beliefs and values suggesting that there are systematic differences towards men and women's political leadership in postindustrial, post-Communist and developing societies, and that these differences are related to broader cultural indicators. But the acid test at the heart of this study is whether these attitudes matter in practice, in particular whether more egalitarian attitudes towards women leaders affect the proportion of women in office. Figure 5 starts to explore this critical issue by showing the simple bivariate correlation between egalitarian attitudes towards women leaders and the proportion of women elected to the lower house of the national parliament, following the election closest to the date of the WVS survey in each country, in the mid to late 1990s, with data taken from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2000a).

[Figure 5 about here]

The results in Figure 5 demonstrate the existence of a strong and significant relationship between attitudes towards women's political leadership and the proportion of women in parliament (R=0.51 Sig. .01). Countries with an egalitarian culture empower more women. The scattergram displays a fairly tight regression, with the Scandinavian countries at the forefront on both indicators in the top right-hand corner. At the bottom corner can be found Jordan, Egpyt, Pakistan and many of the Central Asian post-Communist states like Georgia, Belarus and the Ukraine. Yet there are some striking outliers, such as Australia, Spain and the United States above the regression line, which display more egalitarian attitudes than are reflected in the proportion of women elected to parliament. In these countries, public opinion seems to have run ahead of the actual opportunities that woman face when pursuing public office. On the other hand, Bosnia Herzegovina, South Africa and China all have more

women parliamentarians than we would expect from the cultural attitudes in these societies, suggesting that perhaps positive action strategies to boost women's leadership, like the use of gender quotas in South Africa and China, may be ahead of public opinion in these countries. Of course with any simple correlation we cannot establish the pattern of causation here, and it could well be that the experience of women politicians could shift public opinion in a more egalitarian direction, dispelling traditional stereotypes about men making better political leaders than women. Nevertheless it seems more plausible to assume that the causal direction flows primarily from political culture towards the success of women in elected office, since more egalitarian attitudes can persuade more women that they should seek these opportunities and it can also influence the selector's evaluations about suitable candidates.

Cultural, Institutional and Social Barriers to Elected Office

So far we have demonstrated that culture matters, but not *how much* it matters compared with other social and institutional factors associated with gender equality in politics. The relationship could, after all, prove spurious if something else is simultaneously driving both egalitarian attitudes and the success of women leaders. Multivariate analysis is required to test the main relationship remains significant even with controls. Early sociological accounts commonly regarded the social system as playing a critical role in determining the eligibility pool for elected office, including the occupational, educational and socioeconomic status of women. Accounts have emphasized the importance of the pool of women in the sort of related professional, administrative and managerial occupations like the law and journalism that commonly lead to political careers, providing the flexibility, financial resources, experiences and social networks that facilitate running for office (Rule 1987, 1988; Norris 1985, 1987; Darcy, Welch and Clark 1994: 118; Kenworthy and Malami's 1999: 257). Women may find it more difficult to break into electoral office in societies where they are generally disadvantaged due to poor childcare, low literacy, inadequate health care and poverty. Reynolds (1999) found that the UN gender-related development index was significantly related to the proportion of women parliamentarians worldwide. We therefore propose to examine the relationship between political culture and the election of women parliamentarians controlling for the *UN index of gender-related development*, combining indicators of women's literacy, longevity, education and real GDP per capita.

Yet there are many reasons why we might expect the relationship between social status and political parity to prove relatively weak today, in contrast to, say, the 1960s and 1970s. In recent decades women have moved ahead in management and the professions in the private sector in many

postindustrial societies, as well as predominating in higher education, yet electoral success continues to elude them in some of these countries. This pattern is exemplified in the United States where almost a third of all lawyers (29%) are now female, a figure likely to increase further since the proportion of women graduating from law school has shot up eightfold, from 5.4% in 1970 to 44% in 1996 (US Census Bureau 2000). Law remains the most common training ground for legislative office in America, yet despite female gains in this profession, only nine out of 100 US Senators wear skirts. While improvements in women's educational and professional status may be facilitating conditions for women's empowerment, and are important gains in their own right, this is clearly not sufficient to win elected office, and something more that the eligibility pool is at work here. Moreover social structural explanations fail to explain major disparities in the proportion of women in national parliaments among relatively similar societies, such as the contrasts between Canada (19.9%) and the neighboring U.S. (12.9%), or within Europe between Italy (11.1%) and the Netherlands (36%), or between South Africa (29.8%) and Niger (1.2%).

The alternative explanation may lie in institutional accounts emphasizing the importance of the political system and the structural rules of the game, which have become increasingly popular, indeed probably accepted as the mainstream perspective today. This approach suggests that the rules of the game are not only the prime driver that help to explain systematic differences between similar societies, but also the most important factors which can alter women's political activism by the ratchet of public policy reforms (see, for example, the discussion in Karam 1998). Among institutional factors, the *level of democratization* provides the most general context affecting women's political and civil liberties, including at the most basic their citizenship rights to vote and to stand for elected office. To control for this we can include the standard measure of democratization using the Freedom House 7-point scale of political rights and civil liberties. Yet Reynolds (1999: 572) cautions that democracy in itself may not necessarily be a precursor to the presence of substantial numbers of women in public life, since he found no significant relationship between levels of democratization and women's parliamentary representation worldwide. The continued use of affirmative action strategies for women's representation in Communist systems like Cuba and China, and the decline in the proportion of women in parliaments in Central and Eastern Europe once these quotas were abandoned in the transition to democratic elections, suggests that there may be no consistent association between democratization and gender equality per se.

Ever since seminal work by Duverger (1955), the type of *electoral system* has long been regarded as an important facilitating condition; many studies have demonstrated that far more women are commonly elected under proportional party lists than via majoritarian single-member constituencies (Norris 1985, 2000b; Rule 1987; Rule and Zimmerman 1994; Reynolds and Reilly 1997; Kenworthy and Malami 1999). The level of *party competition* in terms of the number and ideological polarization of parties is another factor that may influence opportunities for candidacy, including whether the country has a predominant one party system as in Japan, a two-party system exemplified by the U.S., a moderate multiparty system such as in Germany, or a polarized multiparty system as in the Ukraine, Ecuador and Israel (Lovenduski and Norris 1993; Norris 1997; Caul 2000). Greater party competition may increase the access points for female candidacies, although this in itself does not necessarily lead to more women being elected.   We can therefore seek to examine whether the proportion of women in parliaments worldwide was significantly related to the *level of democratization*, the type of *electoral system* (classified simply into majoritarian, mixed, and proportional) and the *level of party competition* (measured by the number of parliamentary parties).

Overall institutional accounts are persuasive and provide many important insights into why women leaders have moved ahead in some countries more than others. Yet, as always, puzzles remain about why apparently similar rule changes or institutional reforms may turn out to have very different consequences, even among relatively similar political and social systems. Why should national list PR have very different impacts in, say, Israel and the Netherlands? Why should the use of gender quotas for candidacies seem to work better in, say, Argentina rather than Ecuador? Rather like the literature on the failure of Westminster democracy in many African states in the 1960s, uprooted institutions do not necessarily flourish in different environments to their origins. Accordingly we need to test the relative impact of the cultural factors on women's representation in parliaments worldwide controlling for social and institutional factors.

 Stepwise OLS regression models were used for this purpose. The first model shows the simple bivariate correlations between the independent variables and the proportion of women in the lower house of parliament, without any controls, using data closest to the date of the survey. Subsequent models enter the effects of socioeconomic development alone, then the additional effect of political institutions, then finally the complete model including all variables. Details about the measurement, operationalization and sources are listed under Table 1. The result of Model 1 without any controls shows that all the factors, with the exception of the number of parliamentary parties,

proved to be significantly correlated with the proportion of women in parliament. But we cannot determine if these effects are real or spurious without multivariate analysis. Model 2 showed that the independent effect of the UN gender-related development index was significant, but Model 3 revealed that this effect was in fact due to the relationship between development and the process of democratization. Once the model controlled for the Freedom House indicator of level of democratization, then socioeconomic development dropped out as a significant factor. In Model 3, somewhat surprisingly, once controls were introduced, neither the type of electoral system nor the number of parties proved to be important explanations for the proportion of women in parliament in this comparison, in contrast to many other studies. This could be in part because the simple measure of majoritarian or proportional electoral systems was unable to capture other important variations, such as the degree of district magnitude or the level of disproportionality, and the measure could be refined in further research. Lastly, when the measure of egalitarian attitudes towards women leaders was added to Model 4, the results demonstrated quite dramatically the importance of culture, which proved not only strong but also the only significant factor in the equation, even with the battery of prior controls. If the measure of attitudes was not derived from a source that is wholly independent of the actual proportion of women in legislatures then one would be tempted to doubt this relationship, but the final model is clear and dramatic. The relationship between political culture and women's empowerment already observed in Figure 5 survives unscathed our best attempts to explain it away.

[Table 1 about here]

Changes in Cultural Attitudes

Lastly, if culture is important, is there evidence that traditional views about women's suitability for political office are changing? The measure of attitudes towards men and women's leadership was only included in the third wave of the WVS so we are unable to compare trends over time directly, but we can use cohort analysis, analyzing the distribution of attitudes among generations within each type of society. Much evidence based on theories of socialization suggests that people's attitudes are shaped by their formative experiences in their early years but the basic values of individuals are largely fixed by the time their reach adulthood (Baker, Dalton and Hildebrandt 1981; Inglehart 1977, 1997). During the twentieth century, in postindustrial societies the formative experiences of the younger generation of women and men have differed from those of older ones. Women and men's sex roles have been affected by a long series of critical developments, ranging from the impact of the extension of the

electoral suffrage and full citizenship rights after the first world war to the entry of more women into higher education and the paid labor force, the rise of the second wave women's movement in the mid-sixties along with radical shifts in sexual mores and lifestyles, and major changes within families, marriage and the sexual division of labor and child-rearing within the home, as well as the experience of seeing more women as leaders and statesmen in public life. All these factors can be expected to have altered the norms about the appropriate role of women in the public sphere and the suitability of women for elected office. The historical traditions in post-Communist and developing societies has followed a more complex and distinctive pathway, for example the experience of women in the workforce, the widespread use of quotas in parliaments under the dominance of the Communist party and their subsequent abandonment, and the role of the organized women's movement in Central and Eastern Europe, and we would expect that although some generational shifts in attitudes will be evident, the pace of change will be slower in these countries.

[Figures 4 and 5 about here]

Figure 4 and 5 confirms exactly these expectations. The traditional belief that men make better leaders than women shows a substantial decline among cohorts in postindustrial societies, with younger postwar generations far more egalitarian than their parents and grandparents. Yet in post-Communist and developing societies attitudes among younger and older generations are almost identical, with at most a modest shift towards less traditional views among the young. Moreover when we disaggregate the cohort analysis for women and men in postindustrial societies, the most striking pattern is how far the gender gap on this issue has widened substantially among the younger generation. In the pre-war generation in these nations there was no difference by sex: women were as traditional in their attitudes as men. The gap widens steadily by successive cohorts until by the youngest generation the gap has become substantial. What this suggests is that through the gradual process of demographic turnover, attitudes towards women in public leadership are likely to become more egalitarian over time in the more affluent nations of the world. The process of modernization will proceed in the broader political culture, even if no other strategies or institutional reforms were adopted to hasten the election of more women to office. Nevertheless there is little evidence that a similar process is yet at work transforming public opinion among post-Communist and developing countries, where traditional values are prevalent among younger and older citizens.

Conclusions: The Implications for Change

The idea that the values endemic in the broader political culture affect the success of women in elected office has always been commonly assumed, but rarely, if ever, demonstrated in a convincing fashion using systematic comparative evidence. We have long suspected that somehow the 'X' factor distinguished the striking advancement of women in parliaments in the Scandinavian north from their European neighbors in the Mediterranean south, as well as from Latin America, Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab states. Yet capturing the 'X' factor has proved illusive from existing aggregate data.

What this study demonstrates is that egalitarian attitudes towards women in office are more widespread in post-industrial societies, reflecting broad patterns of socioeconomic development and cultural modernization. Moreover these attitudes are not simply interesting for their own sake, since egalitarian values are significantly associated with where women have got elected to power. Culture matters. Lastly, the more egalitarian attitudes evident among the younger generation in postindustrial societies, especially younger women, suggests that over time we can expect to see continued progress in female representation in these societies. Yet the empowerment of women remains a complex process and as the cases of Australia, the United States and Spain demonstrate, favorable attitudes towards women's leadership, by themselves, are not sufficient to produce effective breakthroughs in the structural and institutional barriers, especially in the short term. Nor can we expect overnight change in deep-rooted traditional beliefs about the appropriate division of sex roles prevalent in many developing and post-Communist societies.

Nevertheless cultural change in postindustrial societies produces an environmental climate of opinion that is potentially more receptive to effective policy reforms designed to get more women into office, such as the use of positive discrimination or affirmative action strategies like gender quotas. Many studies suggest that reforms to the regulations governing the formal criteria of eligibility to stand for elected office, set by law and by internal party rules, play a critical role in promoting gender parity. Positive measures include quotas requiring a certain proportion of female candidates, such as those implemented by law at local level in India and adopted in the 1990s for the national parliaments in ten Latin American nations (Jones 1996, 1998, 1999; Htun and Jones 1999). The adoption of quotas for female candidates in internal party rules has proved one of the most important and successful means for getting more women into office, especially in bureaucratic mass-branch parties where the rules count (Dahlrup 1998). Many parties in Northern Europe introduced quotas in the 1970s, followed by

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social democratic parties in Germany, Spain, Portugal and the UK. The situation is more varied in Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa, although again parties of the left have been more sympathetic to their introduction, such as the MPLA in Angola, the Popular Front in Côte d'Ivoire and the SWAPO party in Namibia (IPU 1999). Their impact can be demonstrated in 'natural experiments' by comparing changes in the proportion of women MPs in particular parties over successive elections, like the introduction of all-women short-lists in target seats by the British Labour party, leading towards the proportion of women at Westminster doubling from 1992-97 (Norris 2000a). Trying to alter deep-seated attitudes towards sex roles in public life may prove a frustrating exercise, akin to nailing jello to the wall, perhaps impossible to alter in the short-term even with extensive educational and public awareness campaigns. But in the longer-term, the secular trends in value change associated with the process of modernization, especially among younger generations of women and men, are likely to facilitate the process of implementing affirmative action strategies. The combination of cultural change in conjunction with institutional reforms holds considerable promise that maybe projections can be accelerated towards a more optimistic scenario for democracy, so that women achieve political parity well before the dawn of the 22nd Century.

Figure 1:

% of Women in Parliament, 2000

World
Means(perwom)

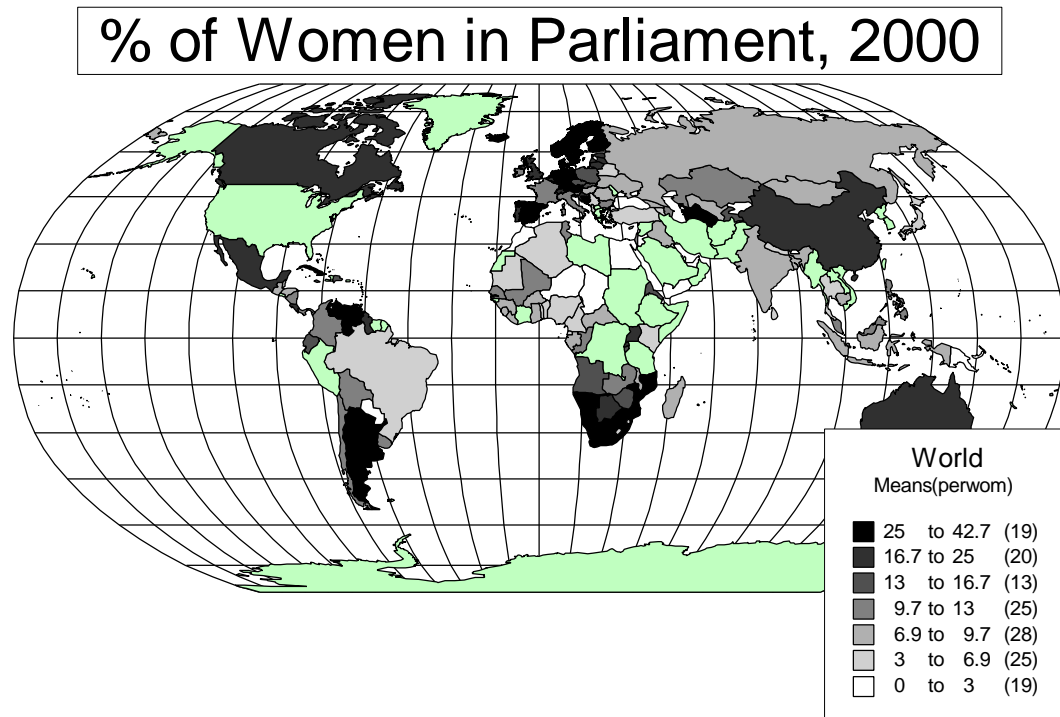|		
■	25 to 42.7	(19)
■	16.7 to 25	(20)
■	13 to 16.7	(13)
■	9.7 to 13	(25)
■	6.9 to 9.7	(28)
■	3 to 6.9	(25)
□	0 to 3	(19)

Figure 2:

Attitudes towards Women Political Leaders, WVS mid-1990s
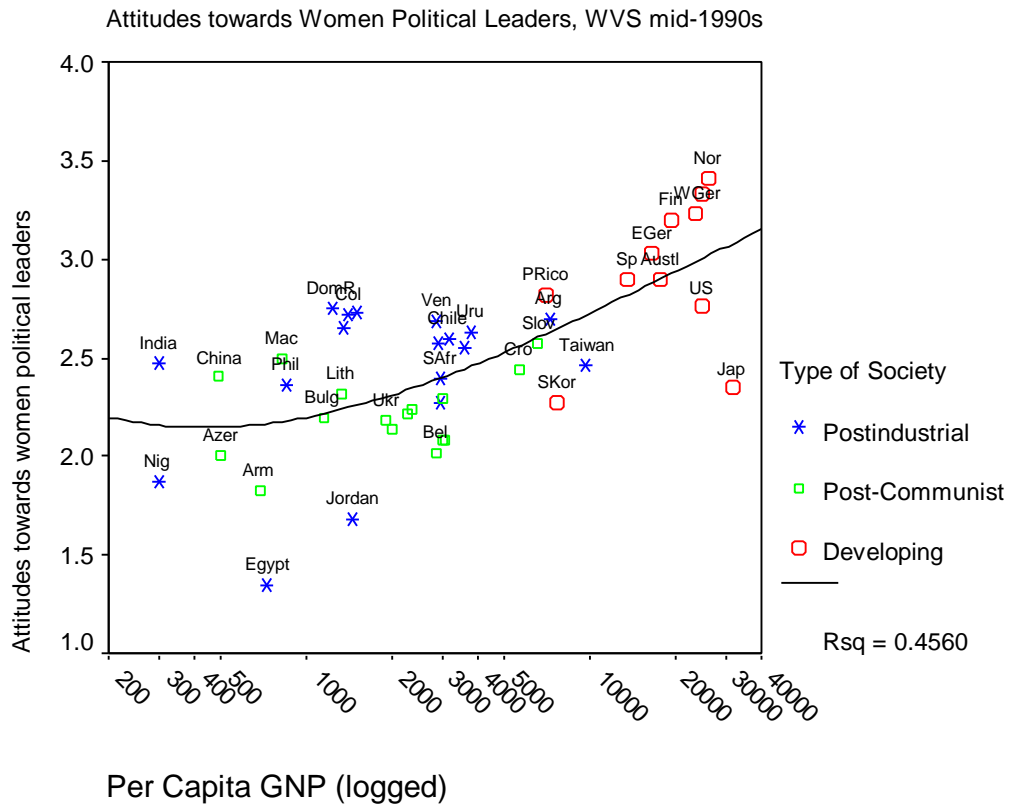
Figure 3:

Figure 4:

Figure 5:

Women in Elected Office
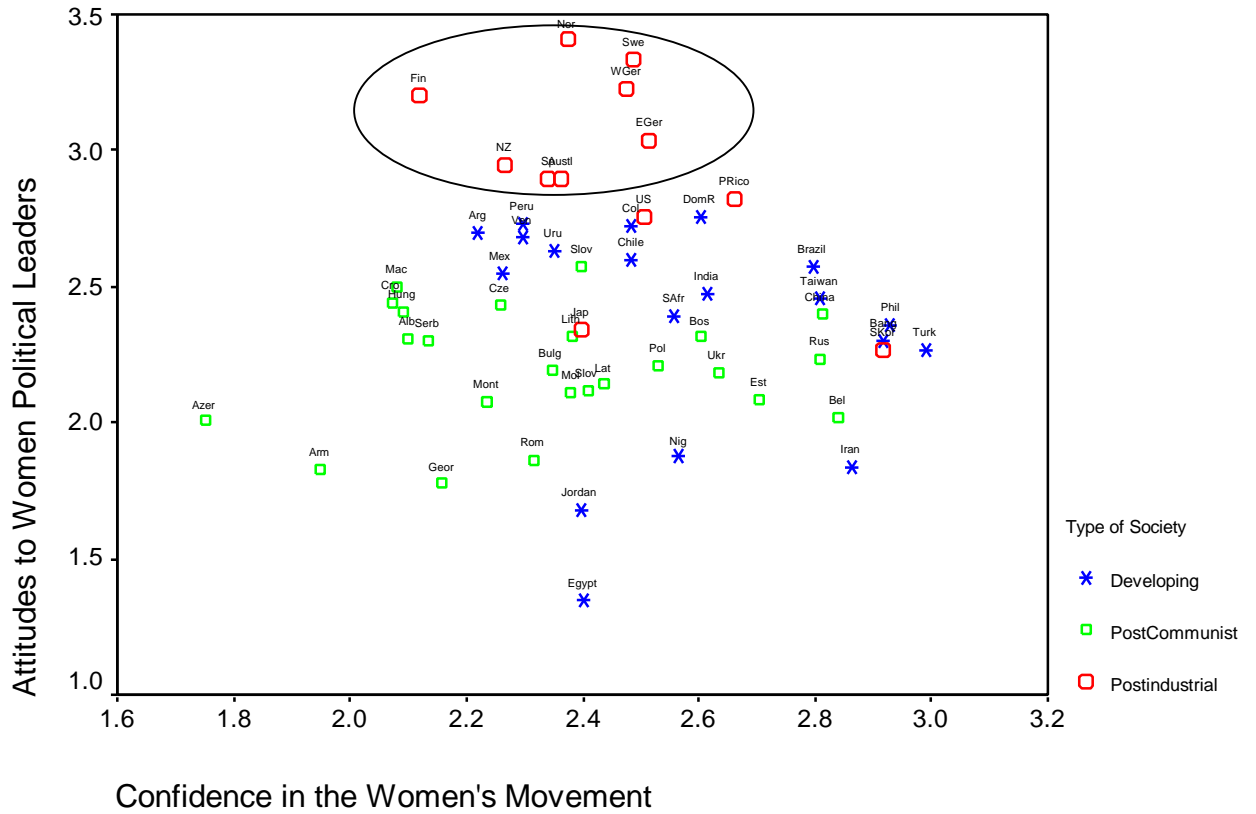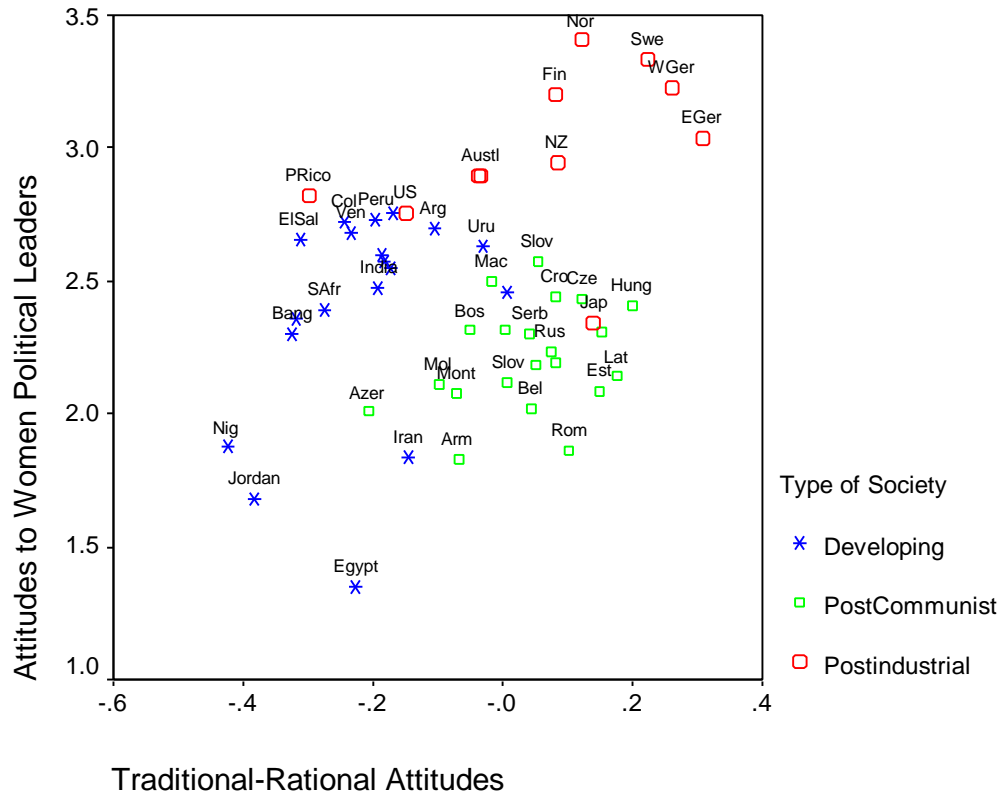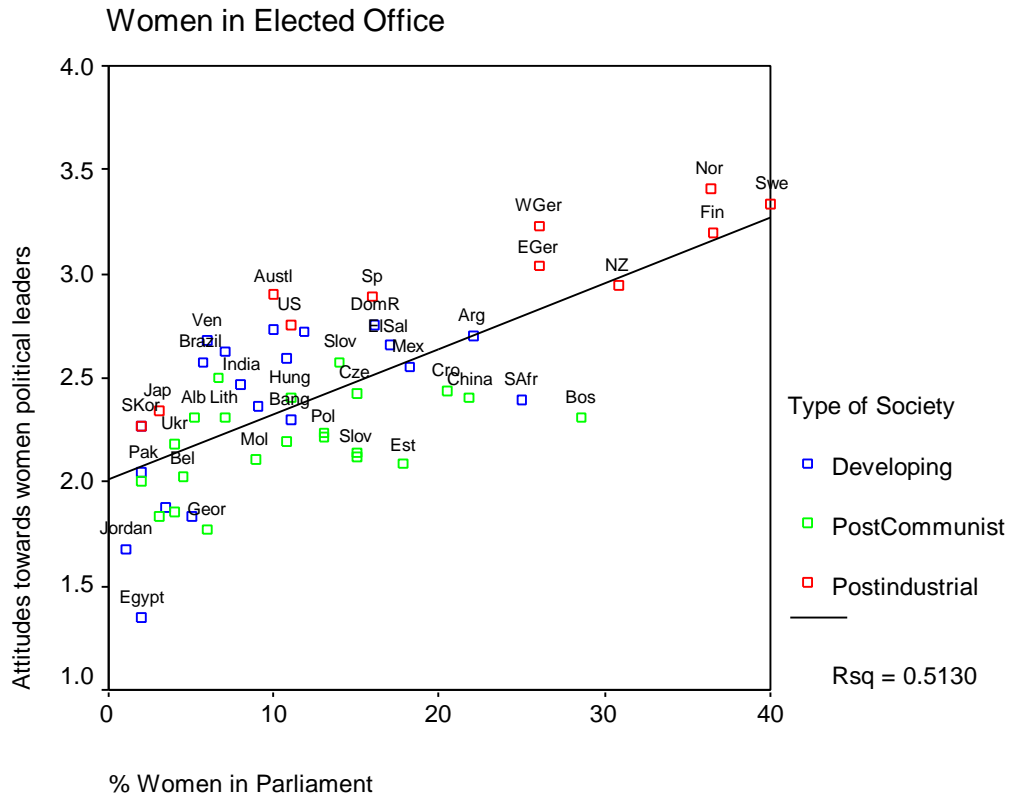
Figure 6. Attitudes Towards Women and Men as Political Leaders, 1990s
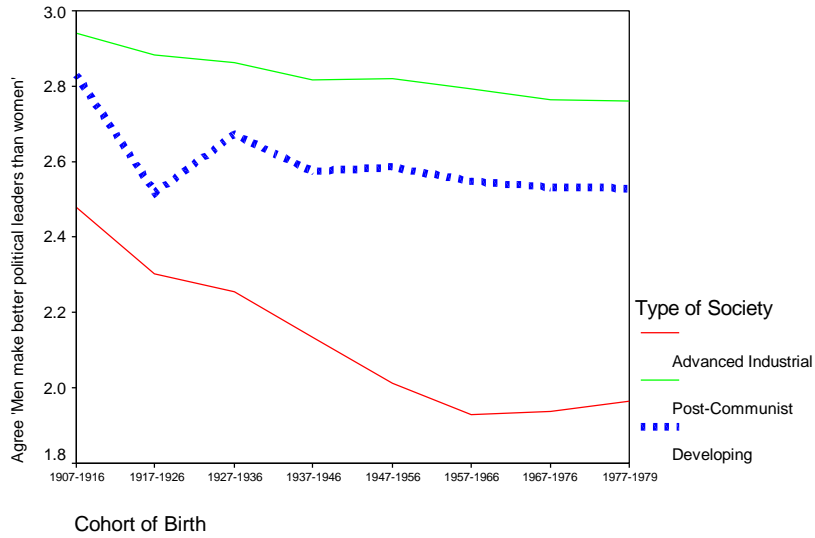
Figure 7: The Gender Gap in Attitudes towards Leadership in Postindustrialized Societies
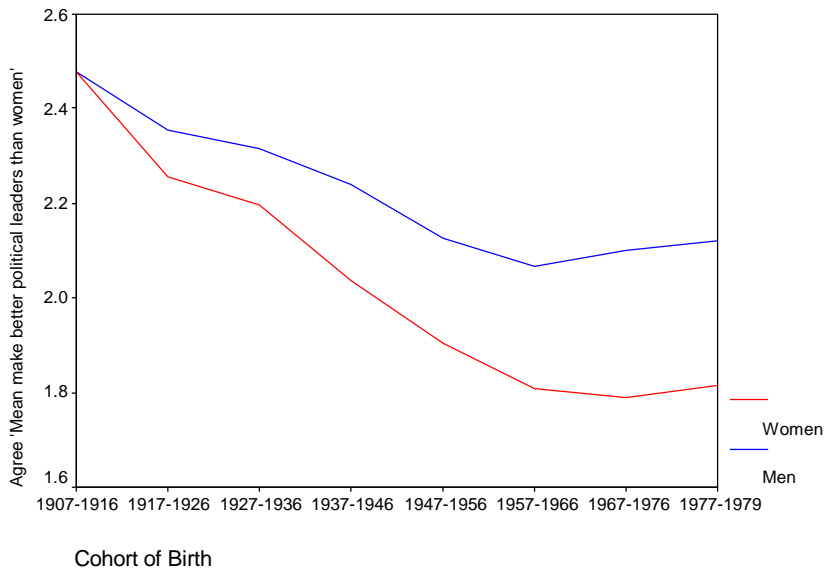
Table 1. The impact of social, institutional and cultural factors on the proportion of women in parliament, 1995-99.

	Model 1 Bivariate correlations		Model 2 Social		Model 3 Social + Institutional		Model 4 Social + Institutional + Cultural	
	Corr	Sig	Beta	Sig	Beta	Sig	Beta	Sig
SOCIAL:								
Socioeconomic Development	.488	**	.492	**	.135		-.060	
INSTITUTIONS:								
Level of Democratization	. 427	**			.412	*	.125	
Electoral System	.339	**			.143		.060	
Number of Parliamentary Parties	.244				.067		.130	
CULTURE:								
Egalitarian Attitudes towards Women Leaders	.716	**					.662	**
Constant			-18.4		-15.7		-28.4	
Adjusted R2			*.223*		*.314*		*.559*	

Notes and sources: 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 WVS survey in each country. The variables were entered in the listed order.
Level of gender-related development: UNDP. 1999. *United National Development Report, 1999.* NY: UNDP/Oxford. http://www.undp.org
Level of Democratization: Freedom House. 2000. *Annual Survey of Freedom Country Ratings 1972-73 to 1999-00.* http://www.freedomhouse.org
Electoral System: IDEA. 1997. *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design.* http://www.idea.int
Number of Parliamentary Parties: Calculated by counting all parties with more than 3% of the seats in the lower house of parliament with data derived from *Elections Around the World.* www.agora.stm.it/elections/alllinks.htm.
Egalitarian Attitudes: Responses to: "*On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.*" 4-point reversed scale. *The World Values Survey 1995-1999. http://wvs.irs.umich.edu*
Proportion of women in Parliament: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2000. *Women in National Parliaments.* www.ipu.org

Appendix A: Women in National Parliaments, June 2000.

1	Sweden	09 1998	349	149	42.7	---	---	---	---
2	Denmark	03 1998	179	67	37.4	---	---	---	---
3	Finland	03 1999	200	73	36.5	---	---	---	---
4	Norway	09 1997	165	60	36.4	---	---	---	---
5	Netherlands	05 1998	150	54	36.0	05 1999	75	20	26.7
6	Iceland	05 1999	63	22	34.9	---	---	---	---
7	Germany	09 1998	669	207	30.9	01 2000	69	41	59.84
8	New Zealand	11 1999	120	37	30.8	---	---	---	---
9	Mozambique	12 1999	250	75	30.0	---	---	---	---
10	South Africa	06 1999	399	119	29.8	06 1999	89	17	32.1*
11	Bosnia and Herzegovina	09 1998	42	12	28.6	09 1998	15	0	0.0
"	Venezuela	02 2000	21	6	28.6	---	---	---	---
12	Spain	03 2000	350	99	28.3	03 2000	259	59	22.8
13	Cuba	01 1998	601	166	27.6	---	---	---	---
14	Austria	10 1999	183	49	26.8	N.A.	64	13	20.3
15	Grenada	01 1999	15	4	26.7	01 1999	13	1	7.7
16	Argentina	10 1999	257	68	26.5	12 1998	72	2	2.8
17	Turkmenistan	12 1999	50	13	26.0	---	---	---	---
"	Viet Nam	07 1997	450	117	26.0	---	---	---	---
18	Namibia	11 1999	72	18	25.0	11 1998	26	2	7.7
19	Seychelles	03 1998	34	8	23.5	---	---	---	---
20	Belgium	06 1999	150	35	23.3	06 1999	71	20	28.2
21	Switzerland	10 1999	200	46	23.0	10 1999	46	9	19.6
22	Australia	10 1998	147	33	22.4	10 1998	76	23	30.3
23	Monaco	02 1998	18	4	22.2	---	---	---	---
24	China	1997-98	2984	650	21.8	---	---	---	---
25	Lao People's Democratic Rep.	12 1997	99	21	21.2	---	---	---	---
26	Croatia	01 2000	151	31	20.5	04 1997	67	4	6.0
27	Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	07 1998	687	138	20.1	---	---	---	---
28	Canada	06 1997	301	60	19.9	N.A.	105	32	30.5
29	Costa Rica	02 1998	57	11	19.3	---	---	---	---
30	Guyana	12 1997	65	12	18.5	---	---	---	---
31	United Kingdom	05 1997	659	121	18.4	N.A.	666	105	15.8

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32	Mexico	07 1997	500	91	18.2	07 1997	128	22	17.2
33	Uganda	06 1996	279	50	17.9	---	---	---	---
34	Estonia	03 1999	101	18	17.8	---	---	---	---
35	Lithuania	10 1996	137	24	17.5	---	---	---	---
36	Portugal	10 1999	230	40	17.4	---	---	---	---
37	Rwanda	11 1994	70	12	17.1	---	---	---	---
38	Botswana	10 1999	47	8	17.0	---	---	---	---
"	Latvia	10 1998	100	17	17.0	---	---	---	---
39	Luxembourg	06 1999	60	10	16.7	---	---	---	---
40	United Rep. of Tanzania	10 1995	275	45	16.4	---	---	---	---
41	Dominican Republic	05 1998	149	24	16.1	05 1998	30	2	6.7
42	Angola	09 1992	220	34	15.5	---	---	---	---
43	Bahamas	03 1997	40	6	15.0	03 1997	16	5	31.3
"	Czech Republic	06 1998	200	30	15.0	11 1998	81	9	11.1
"	Tajikistan	02 2000	60	9	15.0	03 2000	33	4	12.1
44	Eritrea	02 1994	150	22	14.7	---	---	---	---
45	Ecuador	05 1998	123	18	14.6	---	---	---	---
46	Burundi	06 1993	118	17	14.4	---	---	---	---
47	Slovakia	09 1998	150	21	14.0	---	---	---	---
"	Zimbabwe	04 1995	150	21	14.0	---	---	---	---
48	Jamaica	12 1997	60	8	13.3	12 1997	21	5	23.8
"	Saint Kitts and Nevis	07 1995	15	2	13.3	---	---	---	---
"	San Marino	05 1998	60	8	13.3	---	---	---	---
49	Poland	09 1997	460	60	13.0	09 1997	100	11	11.0
50	United States of America	11 1998	435	56	12.9	11 1998	100	9	9.0
51	Israel	05 1999	120	15	12.5	---	---	---	---
52	Mali	07 1997	147	18	12.2	---	---	---	---
53	Senegal	05 1998	140	17	12.1	01 1999	60	11	18.3
"	Uruguay	10 1999	99	12	12.1	10 1999	31	3	9.7
54	Azerbaijan	11 1995	125	15	12.0	---	---	---	---
"	Congo	01 1998	75	9	12.0	---	---	---	---
"	Ireland	06 1997	166	20	12.0	08 1997	60	11	18.3
55	Colombia	03 1998	161	19	11.8	03 1998	102	13	12.7
56	Bolivia	06 1997	130	15	11.5	06 1997	27	1	3.7
"	Tunisia	10 1999	182	21	11.5	---	---	---	---
57	Fiji	05 1999	71	8	11.3	02 1994	32	3	9.4

"	Philippines	05 1998	222	25	11.3	05 1998	23	4	17.4
58	Cape Verde	12 1995	72	8	11.1	---	---	---	---
"	Italy	04 1996	630	70	11.1	04 1996	326	26	8.0
"	Saint Lucia	05 1997	18	2	11.1	05 1997	11	2	18.2
59	France	05 1997	577	63	10.9	09 1998	321	19	5.9
60	Bulgaria	04 1997	240	26	10.8	---	---	---	---
"	Chile	12 1997	120	13	10.8	12 1997	48	2	4.2
"	Trinidad and Tobago	11 1995	37	4	10.8	11 1995	31	9	29.0
61	Barbados	01 1999	28	3	10.7	01 1999	21	7	33.3
62	Kazakhstan	10 1999	77	8	10.4	09 1999	39	5	12.8
"	Malaysia	11 1999	193	20	10.4	03 1998	69	18	26.1
"	Syrian Arab Republic	11 1998	250	26	10.4	---	---	---	---
63	Zambia	11 1996	158	16	10.1	---	---	---	---
64	Slovenia	11 1996	90	9	10.0	---	---	---	---
65	Panama	05 1999	71	7	9.9	---	---	---	---
66	Nicaragua	10 1996	93	9	9.7	---	---	---	---
67	Honduras	11 1997	128	12	9.4	---	---	---	---
68	Gabon	12 1996	120	11	9.2	01 1997	91	12	13.2
"	Malta	09 1998	65	6	9.2	---	---	---	---
69	Bangladesh	06 1996	330	30	9.1	---	---	---	---
"	Sao Tome and Principe	11 1998	55	5	9.1	---	---	---	---
70	Ghana	12 1996	200	18	9.0	---	---	---	---
71	Republic of Moldova	03 1998	101	9	8.9	---	---	---	---
72	Guatemala	11 1999	113	10	8.8	---	---	---	---
"	Guinea	06 1995	114	10	8.8	---	---	---	---
"	India	09 1999	543	48	8.8	03 2000	220	?	?
"	Sierra Leone	02 1996	80	7	8.8	---	---	---	---
73	Hungary	05 1998	386	32	8.3	---	---	---	---
"	Malawi	06 1999	193	16	8.3	---	---	---	---
74	Mauritius	12 1995	61	5	8.2	---	---	---	---
"	Samoa	04 1996	49	4	8.2	---	---	---	---
75	Burkina Faso	05 1997	111	9	8.1	12 1995	176	21	11.9
76	Indonesia	06 1999	500	40	8.0	---	---	---	---
"	Madagascar	05 1998	150	12	8.0	---	---	---	---
77	Mongolia	06 1996	76	6	7.9	---	---	---	---
78	Guinea-Bissau	11 1999	102	8	7.8	---	---	---	---

"	Liberia	07 1997	64	5	7.8	07 1997	26	5	19.2
"	Ukraine	03 1998	450	35	7.8	---	---	---	---
79	Russian Federation	12 1999	441	34	7.7	N.A.	178	1	0.6
80	Iraq	03 2000	250	19	7.6	---	---	---	---
81	Cambodia	07 1998	122	9	7.4	03 1999	61	8	13.1
82	Central African Republic	11 1998	109	8	7.3	---	---	---	---
"	Romania	11 1996	343	25	7.3	11 1996	143	2	1.4
83	Georgia	10 1999	235	17	7.2	---	---	---	---
"	Uzbekistan	12 1999	250	18	7.2	---	---	---	---
84	Andorra	02 1997	28	2	7.1	---	---	---	---
"	Cyprus	05 1996	56	4	7.1	---	---	---	---
85	Belize	08 1998	29	2	6.9	06 1993	8	3	37.5
86	The F.Y.R. of Macedonia	10 1998	120	8	6.7	---	---	---	---
87	Benin	03 1999	83	5	6.0	---	---	---	---
"	Maldives	11 1999	50	3	6.0	---	---	---	---
88	Nepal	05 1999	205	12	5.9	06 1999	60	9	15.0
89	Brazil	10 1998	513	29	5.7	10 1998	81	6	7.4
90	Cameroon	05 1997	180	10	5.6	---	---	---	---
91	Antigua and Barbuda	03 1999	19	1	5.3	03 1999	17	2	11.8
92	Albania	06 1997	155	8	5.2	---	---	---	---
93	Yugoslavia	11 1996	138	7	5.1	03 1998	40	4	10.0
94	Equatorial Guinea	03 1999	80	4	5.0	---	---	---	---
"	Japan	10 1996	500	25	5.0	07 1998	252	43	17.1
95	Kiribati	09 1998	42	2	4.8	---	---	---	---
"	Sri Lanka	08 1994	225	11	4.9	---	---	---	---
"	Togo	03 1999	81	4	4.9	---	---	---	---
96	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	06 1998	21	1	4.8	---	---	---	---
"	Thailand	11 1996	374	18	4.8	03 2000	200	?	?
97	Belarus	11 1996	110	5	4.5	02 1997	62	18	29.0
98	Singapore	01 1997	93	4	4.3	---	---	---	---
99	Turkey	04 1999	550	23	4.2	---	---	---	---
100	Liechtenstein	02 1997	25	1	4.0	---	---	---	---
101	Lesotho	05 1998	79	3	3.8	05 1998	33	9	27.3
"	Mauritania	10 1996	79	3	3.8	04 2000	56	?	?
102	Republic of Korea	04 2000	273	10	3.7	---	---	---	---
103	Kenya	12 1997	224	8	3.6	---	---	---	---

104	Algeria	06 1997	380	13	3.4	12 1997	144	8	5.6
"	Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	02 2000	290	10	3.4	---	---	---	---
"	Nigeria	02 1999	351	12	3.4	02 1999	108	3	2.8
105	Armenia	05 1999	131	4	3.1	---	---	---	---
"	Swaziland	10 1998	65	2	3.1	10 1998	30	4	13.3
106	Marshall Islands	11 1999	33	1	3.0	---	---	---	---
107	Paraguay	05 1998	80	2	2.5	05 1998	45	8	17.8
108	Chad	01 1997	125	3	2.4	---	---	---	---
109	Kyrgyzstan	02 2000	43	1	2.3	02 2000	57	5	8.8
"	Lebanon	08 1996	128	3	2.3	---	---	---	---
110	Bhutan	N.A.	150	3	2.0	---	---	---	---
"	Egypt	11 1995	454	9	2.0	---	---	---	---
"	Gambia	01 1997	49	1	2.0	---	---	---	---
"	Solomon Islands	08 1997	49	1	2.0	---	---	---	---
111	Papua New Guinea	06 1997	109	2	1.8	---	---	---	---
112	Niger	11 1999	83	1	1.2	---	---	---	---
113	Yemen	04 1997	301	2	0.7	---	---	---	---
114	Morocco	11 1997	325	2	0.6	12 1997	270	2	0.7
115	Djibouti	12 1997	65	0	0.0	---	---	---	---
"	Jordan	11 1997	80	0	0.0	11 1997	40	3	7.5
"	Kuwait	07 1999	65	0	0.0	---	---	---	---
"	Micronesia (Fed. States of)	03 1999	14	0	0.0	---	---	---	---
"	Palau	11 1996	16	0	0.0	11 1996	14	1	7.1
"	Tonga	03 1999	30	0	0.0	---	---	---	---
"	Tuvalu	03 1998	12	0	0.0	---	---	---	---
"	United Arab Emirates	12 1997	40	0	0	---	---	---	---
"	Vanuatu	03 1998	52	0	0.0	---	---	---	---

Note: Nine countries with elections this year are excluded from the ranking as information about the number of women in parliament is not yet available (including Dominica, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Greece, Haiti, Nauru, Peru and Suriname).

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union. *Women in National Parliaments.* 15 June 2000.

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