James Madison Undergraduate Research Journal

Volume 7 | Issue 1

2019-2020

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Recommended APA 7 Citation

Heck, J. (2020). Variation in women's political representation across countries. *James Madison Undergraduate Research Journal, 7*(1), 15-26. http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/jmurj/vol7/iss1/2

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Variation in Women's Political Representation Across Countries

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Julianna Heck

This cross-national study examines the ongoing gender imbalance in positions of power in local and national governments. While some countries have gone to great lengths to combat disproportion and inequality, others have taken steps backwards and have made it almost impossible to achieve equal opportunities for women. Despite the fact that women make up almost half of the world's population, men still far outnumber women in government in the majority of countries worldwide. This quantitative study analyzes variation in women's political representation in four categories: domestic roles, wage parity, political systems, and gender quotas. The results suggest that although the number of women pursuing and achieving positions of political office is increasing, challenges and historical tendencies still persist.

Few elements of the global body politic engage as much consideration as women's representation, or lack of representation, does during elections. Women, who comprise nearly half of the world's population, continue to suffer imbalance and stagnant progress. The scarcity of women in local, state, and national government positions is a pertinent issue for countries around the world. This enduring gender imbalance in politics must be a concern as the world works to address a host of old and emerging challenges.

Limited female representation continues to have effects on a global scale, such as elevated corruption, increased cynicism and disengagement, and curtailment of policies concentrated on health, education, civil rights, and inclusion of minority groups (Ashenafi, 2004; Raza, 2007). In order to more accurately understand this breakdown, political scientists must first grasp the mechanisms, motivations, implications, and justifications that cause imbalance in political gender representation. Detecting the causes of female political underrepresentation will help actors develop effective, enforceable policies to eliminate all forms of exclusion. Proportionate participation and representation of women in politics would not only contribute to justice and democracy, but establish a necessary "pre-condition" for valuing women's priorities (Beauregard, 2016, p. 99; Kassa, 2015, p. 1).

A number of case studies have analyzed the scope of women's political underrepresentation and its causes in individual countries, but few have investigated inclusive measures that apply to a cross-national study (Rule, 1994). Literature has also "draw[n] a distinction between quantitative statistical analyses and qualitative case studies," but few researchers have utilized a combination of both measurement tactics (Krook, 2010, p. 233). Many sources have examined strategies to deliver parity in the aftermath of decades of monopolized male elections, but "limits to prediction and prescription when it comes to implementation" have made it difficult to calculate causal variables across distinct countries (Crocker, 2010, p. 686).

Literature Review

Beyond individual country studies, non-governmental organizations such as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Emily's List, the National Women's Political Caucus, the Sisters of Purity, and She Should Run have allowed research on women's political representation on a cross-national level using data from sources like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), scholarly journals, and historical events. The data on women's political representation have been evaluated on multiple scales using various measures of analysis such as the "Women in Politics: 2017" infographic presented at the IPU-UN Press Conference for the CSW. The map and its accompanying tables critically examine all causes and effects of incongruity and reiterate the fact that, in UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka's words, "persistent missing voices of women" and an "overall stagnation and specific reversals are warning bells of erosion of equality that we must heed and act on rapidly" (IPU, 2017a).

Domestic Roles

During the Rosie the Riveter era of World War II, a Stokely's tomato advertisement urged women to "perform a service without which this war cannot be won," while a Chef Boy-ar-dee commercial emphasized "not just in overalls or a uniform—but even more in an apron—the American woman is serving her country today as never before" (Inness, 2001, p. 124). Although the early 20th-century marketing technique placed the value of working women on a similar pedestal to those serving in war, they still played to the concept of a "good-looking ... good-cooking girl" (Inness, 2001, p. 37). Suzanne O'Malley reiterated a similar theme in a 1992 *Cosmopolitan* article: "as far as I'm concerned, Men and Cooking is an oxymoron. Lots of guys cook *something*. But if your life depended on someone to cook for you, who you gonna call? A man? I doubt it" (as cited in Inness, 2001, p. 17). While domestic tasks such as cooking and caring for children are associated with being feminine, they do not reflect the individuality and image of *real* women, but only affirm norms fabricated by society. Even in more modern days when a woman is allowed to replace her sewing kit or saucepan with a stethoscope, gavel, or briefcase, some still find the idea of a man cooking anything besides burgers and steaks incredible.

In *British Social Attitudes 30*, Park et al. (2013) concluded that "in the mid-1980s close to half of the public agreed that 'a man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family'" (p. 115). The same statement was only applicable to thirteen percent of the population in 2012 (Park et al., 2013, p. 115). The decline of the generational "male breadwinner" family system has not only altered the traditional patriarchal views that the woman's place is strictly in the household, but has allowed more women to join the conventional workforce.

Vigil (2019) noted that "Many of the contemporary difficulties women face as political actors are grounded in deeply entrenched perspectives that interpret women in

exceptionally narrow terms" (p. 189). The macho culture of politics classifies women as unequipped to play on a level playing field with men. Carlin and Winfrey (2009) explained that "In general, describing women in sexist terms reduces their credibility or may cause them to be seen as less human" (p. 328). The media's portrayal of the appearance of female candidates using metaphors that illustrate women with animal characteristics, children's vocabulary, and food terminology such as "foxy," "saucy," "old bat," or "shrew" minimizes their status and hinders their political success (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009, p. 328).

Similarly, being depicted as more caring, compassionate, understandable, and likely to be honest can bolster female candidates, but can also minimize their ability to perform in leadership roles, as women are "identified with emotional matters" and questioned because of "maternal responsibilities" (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009, p. 328). Bohn (2017) noted that the concept of motherhood also works in two dimensions, as it hinders their option of running for elected positions due to perceived responsibilities to their children, but also allows them to "[hone] their expertise regarding particular political domains" such as reproductive rights, child care services, and human trafficking (p. 14). The modern atmosphere of later marriages, delayed childbearing, and declining fertility rates has shifted the former label of motherhood and femininity as a weakness, positing "that motherhood imbues women with values that voters deem highly desirable in current politics" (Bohn, 2017, p. 14).

In other countries, progress has remained less evident. The election of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which is dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, was highly criticized due to the existence of a "male guardianship system" which enables men to "remain in control over female relatives' lives" (Coogle, 2017). This patriarchal system has been at the heart of unequal treatment of women in a country which "forbids women from obtaining a passport, marrying, or travelling abroad without the approval of a male guardian" (Coogle, 2017). Victims of the hegemonic system have been arrested or detained for questioning the one-sided government regime or challenging statutes on the claims of abuse by male counterparts (Coogle, 2017).

H1: Countries that are more accepting of traditional gender and domestic roles as norms are less likely to have women's political representation.

Wage Parity

Variation in wage parity can aid in predicting the distribution of women's representation in government. Countries such as Spain, Austria, and Denmark require that companies evaluate the effectiveness of their gender equality programs and Australian law mandates equal pay for comparable work. Despite this progress, the World Economic Forum (2018) projected that it will take 202 years to close the "economic opportunity gender gap" (p. 15).

Despite the conclusive research surrounding women's lack of participation in politics, there is little research on the role that money plays in keeping women from entering into the arena of politics. Burns et al. (2001) demonstrated that women are less disposed to run for political office if it means that they have to go through added expenses. These costs may include primary elections or challenging an incumbent. This correlates with the perception that men are more risk-seeking in the realm of politics, whereas women are seen as more risk-averse. The source also takes into account the contrasting views of feasibility and the lower levels of encouragement that women receive from political actors. Scholarly consensus suggests that limited access to campaign financing and a perceived lack of ambition are viewed as lack of qualifications for positions ranging from local governments to high levels of parliament (Bangs, 2017).

A study conducted by the Pew Research Center noted that "seven-in-ten women—vs. about half of men—say a major reason why women are underrepresented in top positions in politics and business is that they have to do more to prove themselves" (Horowitz et al., 2018). The study also emphasized that women are more likely than men to see structural barriers and uneven expectations holding them back from earning positions of high leadership. As U.S. Bureau of the Budget official Rufus Miles observed in the late 1940s, "Where you stand depends on where you sit": women typically begin their careers at lower entry positions and earn less than men with comparable qualifications (Wolford, 2005, p. 85).

The issue is not exclusive to North America and Europe. Women in South Korea earn one third less than their male counterparts, the highest gender wage gap among the countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Additionally, a case study on Chile points out that financing elections is one of the key indicators keeping women out of political office. Chilean politician Maria Antonieta Saa observed that "[m]en will take risks, they will sell their family house ... but a woman is not going

to put her family at risk" (as cited in Franceschet, 2005, 89). Similarly, China does not allow women to enter the securities industry because it is more important for them to marry well than find a good job. As a result of societal and familial pressures, promotions and leadership opportunities are extremely limited ("What Are the Obstacles," 2017).

H2: Countries with higher levels of wage parity between men and women will have greater political representation of women.

Political Systems

The UN-IPU "Women in Politics: 2017" infographic indicates there are only eleven women heads of state in 157 countries which elect their leaders. Analyses from the 1980s and early 1990s emphasized the "importance of political factors, such as the structure of the electoral system and the partisan composition of parliament, as determinants of the proportion of legislative seats held by women" (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999, p. 236). According to USAid (2016), "Countries with increased women's participation and leadership in civil society and political parties tend to be more inclusive, responsive, egalitarian, and democratic." This has shown true in Bolivia with the establishment of Law 243 against harassment and political violence, which enabled women to use their roles as legislators on an unprecedented level ("Bolivia Approves," 2012).

In contrast, in Saudi Arabia and other countries, there are "legislative, social, educational, and occupational constraints that prevent women from fully participating in the development process of their country" (Rajkhan, 2014, pp. iv-2). Although women make up the majority of voters in Brazil, the massive country "ranks 32nd among the 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries according to the proportion of women in the National Congress" (Cristaldo, 2018). Brazilians live in a society that is "highly oppressive towards minorities" and women, and requires a "deconstruct[ion] of ideologies that dehumanize women" in order to expand societal cultivation and cooperation (Conway, 2017). Brazilian feminist scholars have concluded that the introduction of a female approach to foreign policy and domestic initiatives could play a considerable role in policy decision-making impacting their country (Conway, 2017). For instance, although Australia's first female Minister for Foreign Affairs rejected the label of "feminist," "she paved the way for another woman to follow, in what has otherwise been a male-dominated portfolio" (Conway, 2018).

In the United States, the single member district system makes it hard for women to break the structural and systemic barriers that hinder their political participation. The manipulation of the electoral system to disproportionately benefit men limits women's ability to discuss and restructure the systems and barriers that block their progress. Studies have indicated that "political scientists have known for a long time that more women are elected in proportional representation systems than in plurality ones," but "have usually focused on limitations of women themselves (their lack of aggressiveness and interest in politics), or on prejudice by voters or party leaders" (Welch & Studlar, 1990, pp. 391-392). Only in recent years have investigations suggested that prejudice is embedded in the structure of many political and electoral systems.

Political system type is a crucial characteristic that can determine the outcome of a country's efforts to value women's representation and participation in politics. Evidence from studies of the wealthiest democratic nations "strongly suggests that the structure of the electoral system matters. ... [I]t is one of the most important factors, if not the most important, in accounting for variation in the female share of legislators" (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999, p. 237). For example, Wilber (2011) noted that the Rwandan government "prioritized women, introducing structures and processes designed to advance them at all levels of leadership." In contrast, in Kuwait, "women have failed in politics so far partly due to the 'stalling' nature of political life" (as cited in Shalaby & Obeid, 2017). The limitations to the constitution and structure of the monarchy prevent female newcomers from mobilizing voters, establishing electoral bases, and winning supporters. Although no single policy will advance Kuwaiti women's access to political power, previous research has confirmed that affirmative action policies are some of the most effective mechanisms to facilitate women's representation ("Kuwait: Tackling Persistent Barriers," 2016).

H3: Countries that are more democratic will have higher levels of women's political representation.

Gender Quotas

Crocker (2010) observes that "Research on gender quotas has become one of the fastest growing areas of scholarship within the subfield of women and politics," and has received attention and application from both developing and developed countries (p. 686). Gender quotas have been found to have a positive association with the number of women holding political positions, and these structural changes to redress the underrepresentation of women

are easier than reconstructing political culture or shifting economic development (Caul, 2001; Gray, 2003, p. 55). For example, the consistent increasing rates of women with political representation in Scandinavian countries are congruent with findings supporting gender quota policies (Gray, 2003, p. 54). In countries such as Rwanda, where women outnumber men in government, "post-conflict peace operations" in the aftermath of the genocide helped foster gender quotas and a consolidated society (Bush, 2011, p. 103; Wilber, 2011). Paired with institutional reform, the "institutional configurational change" that quotas offer can promote progress (Crocker, 2010, p. 687).

Despite the increasing use of gender quotas, some scholars argue that quotas distort the meaning of representation and give the erroneous idea that only women can represent women. Scholars who do not support gender quotas also argue that reserved seats foster a competitive environment where women compete against each other rather than work together to collectively achieve more influence in politics (Dhanda, 2000, p. 2969). Critics have also argued that gender quotas "[address] only one dimension of inequality at a time" (Hughes, 2011, p. 604). Nonetheless, gender quotas have the potential to transform other dimensions in the domain of politics, such as reducing voter bias and inaugurating a norm that heterogeneous representation of women in politics.

H4: Countries that have implemented gender quotas will have higher levels of women's political representation.

Methods and Data

Dependent Variable

To measure the dependent variable, I assessed women's political representation using the "percentage of women in the lower or single House" of national parliaments compiled in the IPU's (2017b) March 2017 "Women in National Parliaments" resource. This ratio data allowed variations between countries to be easily calculated. Higher percentage values corresponded with a higher number of women holding political office, allowing me to compare female political representation across countries using the following independent variables: domestic roles, wage parity, political apparatus, electoral system, and the existence of a gender quota. These variables were tested using a linear regression model to account for the persistent dependent variable.

The method used to calculate the proportion of seats occupied by women in parliament does not present any significant threats to the validity or reliability of my data. The percentage of seats occupied by women in each single or lower chamber of parliament was calculated by dividing the total number of seats occupied by women by the total number of seats in parliament. The data compiled by the IPU (2017b) uses official statistics provided by national parliaments and is updated on a monthly basis. The only threat to validity is that the measure does not address the sometimes dramatically different percentages of women in countries' upper houses. However, calculating the mean percentage of women in two houses for some countries would distort the data and lead to inaccurate comparisons. Using only the IPU's "%W" column in the "Lower or single House" category guaranteed consistency since there was no weighting or normalizing of statistics.

Independent Variables

DOMESTIC ROLES. Domestic roles is one of the most prominent variables discussed in the literature. Similar to the culture variable, defining acceptance of traditional gender and domestic roles as societal norms is a troublesome task. I used the Gender Inequality Index (GII) from the United Nations Development Programme's (2018) *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update* to test this variable. The GII represents inequalities using a zero to one scale, with higher values indicating increased inequalities. As a whole, the GII "shows the loss in potential human development due to disparity between female and male achievements in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market" (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). The GII "relies on data from major publicly available international databases," which in turn draw on reputable organizations like the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the IPU, UNESCO, and UNICEF (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). While the index does not capture important concerns like gender-based violence and asset ownership due to limited data availability, it offers a clear understanding of the achievement gaps between men and women.

WAGE PARITY. While wage disparity is closely related to educational attainment and social class, this variable provided distinctions that outside factors did not take into consideration. Wage disparity gives insight into psychological questions of motivation that limit women from gaining political office. It is important to note that these factors are often outside of their control. I used the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), from the World Economic Forum's (2017) *Global Gender Gap Report*, which examines the gap between men and women in four subindexes, but I only applied the data from the "Economic Participation and

Opportunity" category. This subindex reflects differences between women and men in workforce participation, earned income, and advancement in technical and professional positions (p. 5). By removing the three other subindexes, I eliminated the possibility of tautology in the areas of health and empowerment, which are fundamental components of the GII. Additionally, while education has helped women to begin catching up to men in holding seats in national parliaments, the literature indicates that advances in women's education pale in comparison to the existence of unequal pay for equal work. Achieving the same advanced degrees as men can aid in women's political representation, but if women cannot afford the added expenses, then it is a lost cause.

The GGGI's zero to one scale from imparity to parity is calculated for each country. These benchmarks—0 for complete inequality and 1 for complete equality—are kept fixed over time, which increases the consistency of the measure (World Economic Forum, 2017, p. 7). This also allows scholars to follow the progression of individual countries in relation to a perceived standard of ideal equality levels. There are no anticipated threats to reliability because a "country must have data available for a minimum of 12 indicators out of the 14 that make up the index" to be included in the report (World Economic Forum, 2017, p. 7). Additionally, 106 of the 144 countries in the 2017 GGGI have been consistently included in the report every year since the first edition was published in 2006, and any "missing data is clearly marked" (World Economic Forum, 2017, p. 7).

POLITICAL SYSTEMS. To measure operationalization of political structure and stability, I utilized the Polity IV Project, a constantly updated dataset supported by the Political Instability Task Force (Marshall et al., 2017; *Polity Project*, 2017). In order to assess democracy and autocracy, the Polity IV Project utilizes factors such as competitiveness of political participation, openness of executive recruitment, and constraints on the chief executive (Marshall et al., 2017). I focused on whether a particular structure of government favors female prominence in its legislature in comparison to others. The -10 to +10 scale of individual country regime change does not limit countries by a selective number of categories and allows for discernible differences in scores.

Some validity concerns may exist as scarce or missing data could alter the score positively or negatively in one direction. However, few reliability concerns threaten the measurement techniques of the Polity IV Project since "multiple historical sources were used for each country" and ambiguity was reviewed with special attention to questions of consistency (Marshall et al., 2017, p. 5). Intercoder reliability was maintained because the coding guidelines were applied in an undeviating manner by four individuals, even though the components were scored and weighed by hand. The data series "regularly examine[s] and often challenge[s] codings" by analysts and experts in academia, policy, and intelligence (*Polity Project*, 2017). These approaches increase confidence that the judgments do not reflect the views of one individual and if they do, the idiosyncrasies are explicit in the coding guidelines.

GENDER QUOTAS. Legislated gender quotas are one of the fastest growing subfields of political science scholarship, as they are viewed as a solution to battling the primitive and oldest forms of inequality. To test this variable, I utilized the Gender Quotas Database maintained by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2019). The variable places countries on a scale ranging from "1-No Quotas, 2-Legislated Candidate Quotas, 3-Reserved Seats, and 4-Political Party Quotas" (International, 2019). I recoded this variable to combine the three classifications of gender quotas. Grouping one was recoded to represent a value of zero and groupings two, three, and four all received a score of one. This recoding was designed to clearly distinguish the countries with an established gender quota from those who have an absence of quotas. I hypothesized that countries with mandated gender quotas are likely to have more female representation in politics, so the alteration of my independent variable helps to make my prediction more striking.

There were no obvious threats to validity or reliability since I eliminated the possibility of flawed or inaccurate methodology by recoding the variable. Even though there are three distinct types of gender quotas, they all have an identical objective of ensuring that women hold a critical minority of 30-40% in political representation. Grouping each classification of gender quotas into one system eliminates any threat to changes in the quota type from constitutional or legislative to voluntary overtime by centralizing on the existence of a quota in contrast to the specific nature of each quota type.

As a whole, my research study has strong external validity. I selected data sources that have at least 120 cases out of 195 and that reflect all geographic regions, government types, and systematic electoral decisions. I also used data from 2014-2019, which allowed access to the most accurate percentages, legislation, and constitutional changes. I was not able to calculate every variable that factors into female representation in government, but I chose the variables with

the largest pools of literature and combined some aspects of other variables, such as health and education, into existing independent variables.

I believe that my study has moderately strong internal validity, but lacks a substantial measure for wage parity and domestic roles. It may be difficult to prove that my independent variables came before my dependent variables, and some relationships may prove to be spurious. For example, it may be challenging to determine if fewer women are represented in politics due to disparities in wages and lack of ambition, or if wage disparities exist because there are no women in politics to change legislation and mandate that both genders be paid the same for equal work.

Control Variable

Due to the nature of my empirical research, a control variable would have no major effect on the relationships between my dependent variable and the four independent variables, and would not be the cause of a spurious relationship. It would also be impossible for a country to possess a value of zero for each variable. While a country could have a value of zero for the variable of gender quotas (signifying the absence of a quota), no country exists that has a value of zero for the variable of wage parity. For example, Burundi has the highest level of parity, with a value of .911, and Syria holds the highest level of imparity, with a value of .274 (World Economic Forum, 2017, pp. 10-11). Palazzolo (n.d.) suggests that "if there are fewer than 1,000 cases, it will be very difficult to test a control variable," and my study only has 120 cases.

Results and Discussion

Domestic Roles

My regression analysis showed that domestic roles, as defined using the GII, have an extremely significant relationship (.000 significance level) to the percentage of occupied seats held by women in parliaments (see Table 1). Due to the extensive literature on domestic roles in relation to gender stereotypes, sexism, and relation of emotion to lack of ability, it makes sense that this relationship proved significant, although I did not predict that it would be as significant as it was. The unstandardized regression coefficient for the GII (-20.522) supports my hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between the variables. In a general sense, unstandardized B is used to determine the direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. As the value of the independent variable increases, the dependent variable either increases or decreases. In my analysis, as the numerical value of the GII increases, the percentage of women represented in national Parliaments decreases.

Standardized B helps determine the strength of the relationship. Higher values indicate a stronger relationship and lower values indicate a weaker relationship. The standardized regression coefficient for Domestic Roles (-.337) is the largest coefficient in my analysis, which validates that Domestic Roles has the strongest influence on the amount of women gaining access to seats in parliaments in relation to my other independent variables. Despite having the most prominence on my dependent variable, the standardized coefficient value of -.337 establishes that the strength of the relationship is moderately strong and may not have as great of an influence in determining prediction of women's representation in politics as I predicted.

Table 1: *Regression Analysis of Relationships Between Independent Variables and the Percentage of Seats Held by Women in Single or Lower House Parliments.*

Variable	Unstandardized B	Standard error	Standardized B	Significance*
Constant	10.028	6.178		.107
Domestic roles	-20.522	5.625	-.337	.000
Wage parity	23.446	8.182	.259	.005
Political systems	.007	.171	.004	.969
Gender quotas	6.124	1.851	.273	.001

Note. Dependent variable: percentage of occupied seats held by women in parliaments. N=120; 120 of 195 possible counties were utilized in this study. R^2=.267
*Significant at .05

Wage Parity

My regression analysis also showed that Wage Parity was very significant (.005 significance level). Additionally, the unstandardized regression coefficient of 23.446 supports my hypothesis that countries with higher levels of wage parity will have a greater representation of women in the legislature. However, the standardized regression coefficient of .259 highlights that the relationship between wage parity and women's political representation is weak, which could be a result of a poor measurement. Although the GGGI captures the idea of wage equality for similar work, it also emphasizes the value of work, which could distort statistical analyses of wage inequality. The weak standardized regression coefficient

could also be the result of a non-causal relationship where fewer women are represented in parliaments not because of wage disparities and indifference, but because of the lack of a female presence in policy-making mandating higher wage parity. Moreover, the Pearson correlation value of -.375 suggests that, despite uncertainty in the literature, the methods used for Domestic Roles and Wage Parity do not result in multicollinearity. In other words, the low strength of the association for Domestic Roles and Wage Parity suggests that there are few intercorrelations or inter-associations between the two variables.

Political Systems

My results revealed that the relationship between women's political representation and political systems was extremely insignificant (.969 significance level), which does not support my hypothesis. The unstandardized coefficient of .007 shows that when there is a 20 unit increase in the polity scale (difference between -10 and +10), the percent of women occupying seats in Parliament only increases by .14%. This mathematical computation explains that a one unit increase in polity (going from the most autocratic regime to the most democratic regime) improves the percentage of women in politics, but by an extremely small and unimpactful amount. This idea correlates with the standardized regression coefficient of .004, which is exceedingly weak.

Since my literature review did not reveal a consensus that political systems that are more democratic will have a higher percentage of women represented in politics, it is not surprising that the independent variable is very weak and not significant. Reynolds (1999) highlighted that "democracy in itself is not necessarily a precursor to the presence of substantial numbers of women in political life," but is instead a familiarity with more women in positions of power and acceptance of women as leaders (p. 572). Similarly, Rule (1994) drew upon the work of Haavio-Mannila, articulating that variation in "women's parliamentary representation in long-established but 'unfinished democracies'" are caused "primarily [by] the electoral arrangements by which legislators are chosen" (p. 689). Rule explained that these electoral "arrangements are amenable to change faster than social biases and other barriers to women's election opportunity and fair representation" (p. 689). On the other hand, case studies and qualitative evidence support the idea that the "effect of ideology is substantially stronger than the effects of political variables" (Paxton, 2003, p. 88).

Gender Quotas

The regression analysis showed that the relationship between gender quotas and women's representation in politics is extremely significant (.001 significance level). These findings support my hypothesis that countries with implemented gender quotas have a higher percentage of women in politics, which implies a growth in support and opportunities for female candidates and a decline in political institutions with high levels of male dominance and power.

Although my standardized regression coefficient of .273 for Gender Quotas is not very strong, some scholars have highlighted that of the top 20 countries in terms of female representation in government, 17 of them utilize some sort of a gender quota (International, 2019; IPU, 2017a). These findings suggest that the results of implemented gender quotas go far beyond statistical analysis. Comparatively, the implementation of gender quotas increases women's representation in politics by 6.124% on a zero to one scale, where a value of zero is representative of the absence of a quota and a value of one is representative of the existence of a gender quota.

Conclusion

The greatest obstacle when trying to accurately determine the causes of the current state of women's political (under) representation was the time restriction and limited availability of resources. Increased time and resources would allow me to find better measures for variables, particularly domestic roles and wage parity, which could in turn produce more accurate and significant results. More specifically, a more valid measurement for distinguishing economic participation and opportunity and whether a country has mandated wage parity legislation could be created. Additional research would allow me to include additional variables or gather my own data. This could possibly produce more substantial results that would assist future researchers and scholars looking to solve the causes of this socio-structural and cultural issue.

My main empirical findings were the significant correlations between three of my independent variables and the percentage of single or lower chamber parliamentary seats occupied by women. More explicitly, I found that Domestic Roles—which measures the dimensions of reproductive health, empowerment, and economic status—had the greatest impact on a country's number of women represented in the national parliament. Gender inequality was also the most significant variable as a determinant of the prevalence of traditionalistic attitudes and domestic roles. An additional finding was the R-squared value of .267. R-squared—

the coefficient of determination—is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is predicted from the independent variable. In my study, the R-squared value of .267 signifies that 26.7% of the causes of female representation in politics were explained by the four variables in my regression. Although this number only explains roughly a quarter of the research question I am trying to solve, it shows that the carefully selected variables and forms of measurement do in fact help explain variation in women's political representation.

My careful selection of variables allowed 120 cases using countries as the unit of analysis to truly encompass the diversity and complexity of the global spectrum. It is important to acknowledge that the Political Systems variable did not prove to be significant and that I omitted variables such as educational attainment, media influence, and militarism due to a "lack of data" and consensus in the literature on a cross-national scale (Matland, 1998, p. 110). Matland (1998) in "Women's Representation in National Legislatures: Developed and Developing Countries" suggested that "considerable work remains to be done" across nations. While "evidence of systems for women's electoral success [are] consistent and striking," a "minimum development level is needed to create a foundation for other variables to have an effect" (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999, pp. 261-262; Matland, 1998, p. 120). As the level of development increases, "more women start to acquire the resources needed to become politically relevant, resources such as education, salaried labor force experience, and training in the professions that dominate politics (such as law)" (Matland, 1998, p. 120).

While the regression analysis revealed significant relationships between certain independent variables and women's representation in politics, the results are in no way absolute. The addition of new independent variables may cause a variable that was once significant to become unsubstantial and vice versa. Measurements used for Domestic Roles and Wage Parity were not ideal, and the moderately strong and weak relationships were established by the lack of validity in the measures. Moreover, the results for Political Systems using the Polity IV Project demonstrate that while the measure may not have lacked reliability or validity, perhaps there really is no relationship between political systems and the amount of women represented in respective parliaments. My R-squared value of .267 emphasizes that there is still much to learn and discover about this subject matter and that more in-depth research and analysis is necessary.

With more time and resources, I would calculate which countries mandate equal pay and which countries do not in order to create a binary response with no flexibility. I would also study the characteristics of country leaders to determine whether there is diversity in the women represented or if they all advocate for the same issues, members of similar parties, from similar backgrounds, etc. It would be interesting to see how the portrayal of women in the media influences willingness to select female candidates, especially with respect to recent literature about female politicians regarding their appearance and other physical characteristics.

This research paper could foreshadow case study analysis of countries with implemented gender quotas compared to those with an absence of quotas or could facilitate discussion on the effectiveness of a quota within a single country. Some of these debates could examine whether quotas generate cultural, attitudinal, or behavioral shifts among citizens. In *The Impact of Gender Quotas*, Franceschet et al. (2012) reflected on the idea that quotas may "reinforce a gendered division of labor in parliament whereby women work on less prestigious social issues, while men focus on policy areas traditionally deemed more important" (p. 230). My findings can illuminate the complexity of the quota question and can contribute to a second generation of quota research.

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Julianna is grateful to Dr. Jonathan Keller for his guidance and advice, Professor Veronica Haun for her words of positivity and encouragement, and Juan Mansilla for inspiring her to go above and beyond. She would like to thank the *JMURJ* Editorial Board for their dedication, optimism, and support throughout the publication process.

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