Women in the Legislatures and Executives of the World: Knocking at the Highest Glass Ceiling

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WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATURES AND EXECUTIVES OF THE WORLD

Knocking at the Highest Glass Ceiling

By ANDREW REYNOLDS*

MODERN liberal democracy came into being in 1893, when New Zealand offered the franchise to women. The commonwealth state was the first to institutionally open up the public sphere to both men and women—a sphere that for hundreds, if not thousands, of years had been the monopoly of the patriarchal heads of family and business in almost every part of the globe. After a century of slow, incremental gains for women in politics, the results are mixed. Women are involving themselves in grassroots party structures in higher numbers than ever before. There are more women parliamentarians,[1] and increasingly cabinet portfolios are in the hands of women politicians. However, the numbers involved remain vastly disproportional to the importance women bring to societies, and in many parts of the world the representation of women remains little more than a blip on the male political landscape.

This article reports the results of a survey of the governments of the world as they were constituted in 1998. The aim was threefold: (1) to map the number of women in legislative lower houses in 180 nation-states and related territories with autonomous governments; (2) to identify and categorize women in the executives of these 180 cases by type of ministerial portfolio; and (3) to test the leading hypotheses, which speculate about the factors hindering or facilitating women's access to political representation. The models reported in this paper juxtapose a cocktail of institutional, political, cultural, and socioeconomic variables with the following dependent variables: (1) the percentage of

* I am indebted for the research assistance of Katharine Belmont, for the helpful comments of two anonymous reviewers, and to countless individuals who assisted me in my data detective work.

[1] In 1998 the Women's Environmental and Development Organization argued that "the entry of women in greater numbers to electoral politics is a sign that it is the beginning of the end of tokenism." See WEDO, *Mapping Progress: Assessing Implementation of the Beijing Platform 1998* (New York: WEDO, 1998).

World Politics 51 (July 1999), 547–72

members of parliament (MPs) who are women and (2) the percentage of cabinet ministers who are women.

A number, although not all, of the cited hypotheses were confirmed statistically, and the results advance our understanding of the comparative impact of various barriers to the representation of women. To date, research in this field has been confined to statistical analyses of a few established democracies in the West. This article broadens that data set to include both democratic and nondemocratic states, established and fledgling democracies.

The Normative Case for Having Women in Positions of Power

While "descriptive representation"[2] is merely one component of an adequate system of representation, there are substantive reasons why the paucity of women in the legislatures of the world injures good governance and global progress. John Stuart Mill noted nearly a century and a half ago that a talented and efficient government included the representatives of both the majority and minority, and he extended that definition to women who were very much a disenfranchised "minority" at the time. In *On Liberty*,[3] Mill addressed ideas of how to represent and articulate competing interests and the utility of tolerating different views from diverse quarters of the population. He cited censorship, or the exclusion of opinion, as an evil that hindered the striving for truth. If the excluded opinion were correct, then the opportunity would be lost to realize this; and if it were wrong, then again the ability to substantiate already held theories would be lost. The most common case would be that both conflicting views held grains of truth and the real challenge would be to synthesize the two. In *Considerations on Representative Government*, Mill transferred this logic to the arena of competitive electoral politics and argued for intellectual and social diversity in government, including giving the franchise to women. For Mill, denying suffrage to half the population and thus losing their talents in society was an exercise in nonutilitarian idiocy—ideas he reinforced in *The Subjection of Women*.[4] Mill saw participatory politics as having a desirable intellectual and moral educative effect on citizens, although he

[2] That is the view that parliament should be a mirror of the nation as a whole. See Hanna Pitkin, *Representation* (New York: Atherton Press, 1969), 10.

[3] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859) and *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), ed. Geraint Williams (London: Everyman, 1993).

[4] John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (1869), ed. Susan Orkin (Cambridge: Hackett, 1988).

still saw the need for an elite, perhaps technocratic, leadership to remain the ultimate possessors of decision-making power.

If the mechanics of a particular electoral system exclude to a large degree members of a particular ascriptive group (women or otherwise), then more often than not that is damning evidence that the system is excluding the *interests* of that particular group from the structures of decision-making power. Rule and Zimmerman[5] note that a parliament with few women may fail to recognize or comprehend issues of great importance to women in society; this in turn brings up broader questions of accountability, responsiveness, and alienation. Absence is not merely a sign of disadvantage and disenfranchisement, but the exclusion of women from positions of power also compounds gender stereotypes and retards the pace of equalization. Grofman and Davidson's observation about the election of African-Americans from minority voting districts in the United States is highly relevant. They argue that "quite simply, the presence of minority officeholders makes it harder for racism to persist inside a legislature."[6] Indeed, the degree to which a system successfully includes women can indicate a propensity for the system to include other disenfranchised minorities.

Perhaps most important and most controversial is the argument that having a substantial number of women in elected positions of power will lead to the enactment of more women-friendly policies. Lijphart found that democracies with higher proportions of women in the legislature passed more laws to benefit children.[7] Thomas finds that U.S. state legislatures with higher numbers of women pass more bills dealing with women, children, and families,[8] while Saint-Germain finds the same pattern in her longitudinal study of the Arizona state legislature.[9] Saltzstein presents evidence that female mayors in the United States have an impact on changes in women's representation in different areas of employment.[10] The correlation between women MPs and women-friendly legislation, however, remains an understudied

[5] Wilma Rule and Joseph Zimmerman, "Women and Minorities in Parliaments and Legislatures," in *The Encyclopedia of Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1997).

[6] Bernard Grofman and Chandler Davidson, eds., *Controversies in Minority Voting* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1992), 314.

[7] Arend Lijphart, "Debate-Proportional Representation: III. Double Checking the Evidence," *Journal of Democracy* 2 (Summer 1991), 42–48.

[8] Sue Thomas, "The Impact of Women on State Legislative Policies," *Journal of Politics* 53, no. 4 (1991).

[9] Michelle Saint-Germain, "Does Their Difference Make a Difference? The Impact of Women on Public Policy in the Arizona Legislature," *Social Science Quarterly* 70, no. 4 (1989).

[10] Grace Hall Saltzstein, "Female Mayors and Women in Municipal Jobs," *American Journal of Political Science* 30 (February 1986).

area. Moreover, what counts as a piece of women-friendly legislation in itself is a highly debatable issue. Nevertheless, the arguments in favor of female representation in elected positions of power are compelling. While political life undoubtedly reflects and parallels social life, electoral politics can take the lead in the reorientation of a society toward gender equality.

Hypothesized Barriers to the Representation of Women

Powerful socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional barriers have blocked all but the most tenacious women from the public sphere; and while the last four decades have witnessed the erosion of such barriers, the process has been painfully slow. Rule succinctly sums up the obstacles as "narrow gender roles, restrictive religious doctrines, unequal laws and education, discriminatory socioeconomic conditions, male-biased party leaders or other political elites and some voters, and 'women-unfriendly' election systems. [Such barriers are] typically interrelated and mutually reinforcing."[11] For the purposes of this article the salient variables have been divided into four families from which I draw twelve testable hypotheses: (1) social culture and socioeconomic development, (2) political culture, (3) the nature of the state, and (4) political institutions.

Social Culture/Socioeconomic Development

Chauvinism and patriarchy come in many forms and each of the cases incorporated within this study is imbued with some degree of cultural negativity toward the presence of women in high political office. Such narrow gender roles may be least rigid in Scandinavia, but even there substantial barriers still remain, blocking the achievement of a gender-neutral political sphere. Most politicians, male and female, come from a pool of citizens who are highly educated, have professional jobs, and have access to the resources of public life. When the dominant social culture precludes young women from enjoying a full education and socializes them from birth into roles that are removed from the world of public decision making, then the pool of likely women politicians is substantially reduced. Furthermore, women find it much more difficult to break into electoral office en masse when they are socioeconomically disadvantaged due to the burdens of poor health care, poor child care, and un/underemployment.

[11] Wilma Rule, "Parliaments of, by, and for the People: Except for Women?" in Rule and Zimmerman, eds., *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women and Minorities* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 15.

In a study of nineteen democracies between 1970 and 1972, Rule found that 70 percent of the variance in the number of women in legislatures was explained by the number of women college graduates, women in the workforce, the length of women's suffrage, and the level of unemployment.[12] Many scholars have argued that women-unfriendly cultural norms retard the prospects for women taking up the reins of power.[13] Indeed, narrow gender roles are virtually omnipresent —from religiously based exclusion in the Middle East to patriarchal communalism in the South Pacific. The root may vary but the resulting discrimination against women rarely alters.

Oftentimes the cultural barriers to the representation of women are drawn from the religious inclination of the state. Rule notes that most "nondemocratic countries' cultures have dominant religions (such as Islam), philosophies (such as Confucianism), or tribal beliefs [animist] that generally confine women to a subordinate role."[14] However, it is important to note that very few mainstream religions can reasonably be interpreted as friendly to the election of women to political office. Rather, it is a matter of the degree of discrimination and the pace of religious liberalization in gender matters. Interestingly, for democracies in the early 1970s, Rule found that Roman Catholicism was negatively correlated with the recruitment of women candidates. In the 1980s the negative correlation was diminished in importance but still significant. Nevertheless, Rule's findings about the impact of Catholicism are contradicted by the results of this survey, which includes democratic and nondemocratic nations in the late 1990s.

The sociocultural barriers to the representation of women can be overcome, but the evidence seems to suggest that the process evolves over time and entails voters, both male and female, slowly coming to accept the legitimacy of women in positions of power. The Scandinavian example demonstrates that women can be present in substantial numbers once voters no longer see their election as something avant-

[12] Although subsequent research in the 1980s found unemployment to be a diminishing factor. See Rule (fn. 11), 20.

[13] This has been documented for the Middle East. See As'ad Abu Khalil, "Women and Electoral Politics in Arab States," and Avraham Brichta and Yael Brichta, "The Extent of the Impact of the Electoral System upon the Representation of Women in the Knesset," both in Rule and Zimmerman (fn. 11). For Africa, see Gisela Geisler, "Troubled Sisterhood: Women and Politics in Southern Africa," *African Affairs* 94 (October 1995). For Latin America, see Michelle Saint-Germain, "The Representation of Women and Minorities in the National Legislatures of Costa Rica and Nicaragua," in Rule and Zimmerman (fn. 11); and Lisa Baldez, "In the Name of the Public and the Private: Conservative and Progressive Women's Movements in Chile, 1970–1996" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 1997).

[14] Rule (fn. 11), 26.

garde or unusual.[15] Three hypotheses are drawn from the above observations.

H_1. The position of women within society will affect the number of women elected. The level of female socioeconomic development will help determine the number of women in the legislature and cabinet.

H_2. A nation's dominant culture will affect the number of women who achieve political office. Where the dominant religion is particularly hostile to the advancement of women in the public sphere, the number of women elected to office will be lower.

H_3. Those countries with a long history of women participating in the political and electoral sphere will evidence more women politicians than those countries with limited experiences.

Political Culture

Ideology has been cited as a strong influence on the access that women can achieve as candidates and the electoral success that they can expect. Norris argues that in candidate recruitment "social democrat and green parties are far more likely to believe intervention in the recruitment process is necessary and appropriate."[16] Rule finds that in Western Europe "women were particularly successful in socialist and several center parties,"[17] and Duverger,[18] Beckwith,[19] Jenson,[20] and Caul[21] all hypothesize that the egalitarian ideologies of left-wing parties are likely to give rise to more women candidates and MPs. While these arguments make intuitive sense, Caul rightly notes that the simple "left/right ideological continuum may be too simple to capture how ideology affects women's representation."[22] With the growth of postmaterialist and environmentalist parties (particularly in Western Europe) a distinction needs to be made between the "old left" industrial working-class parties and the "new left" parties defined by their social concerns and preoccupation with diversity and participation. Ideology should affect the presence of women in both the legislature and the executive.

[15] See Jill Bystydzienski, "Norway: Achieving World-Record Women's Representation in Government," in Rule and Zimmerman (fn. 11).

[16] Pippa Norris, "Conclusions: Comparing Legislative Recruitment," in Joni Lovenduski and Pippa Norris, eds., *Gender and Party Politics* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1993), 320.

[17] Rule (fn. 11), 20.

[18] Maurice Duverger, *The Political Role of Women* (Paris: UNESCO, 1995).

[19] Karen Beckwith, "Comparative Research and Electoral Systems: Lessons from France and Italy," *Woman and Politics* 12, no. 1 (1992).

[20] Jane Jenson, "The Modern Women's Movement in Italy, France, and Great Britain: Differences in Life Cycles," *Comparative Social Research* 5 (1982).

[21] Miki Caul, *Women's Representation in Parliament: The Role of Political Parties*, Center for the Study of Democracy Research Monograph Series (Irvine, Calif.: Center for the Study of Democracy, 1997).

[22] Ibid., 5.

Party fragmentation in both the legislature and the executive may well also affect the numbers of women. Norris argues that the growth of new parties and the enhanced electoral competition found in Scandinavian countries suggests that a fragmented multi-party system provides increased access points for women to participate in electoral politics.[23] But she points out that, while "it does appear that multi-party systems . . . tend to have a higher number of women in office than systems with few parties," the evidence, even from the limited data set of established democracies, is mixed.[24] Despite the implications from the fragmented party systems of Western Europe, there may actually be a stronger argument that suggests the opposite hypothesis. That is, a system where a few strong parties dominate the legislature is more likely to see women *elected* than a system where many parties win a small number of seats each. This theory rests on two premises. (1) New parties are less likely to win a substantial number of parliamentary seats than are established parties. (2) Even in the more enlightened established parties women are more likely to be elected if the party has a pool of "safe seats" in which they can place women candidates. In single-member-district systems women are more often elected from safe seats, while in list-proportional representation systems women rarely dominate the top positions of the party list. In sum, high party fragmentation may well increase the number of women nominated as candidates, but to actually win seats the fragmentation needs to be lower.

The same theory can be applied to cabinet formation. A single-party government will have more portfolios to play with and so up-and-coming women can be accommodated along with the party leadership. But in a coalition government each partner will have fewer ministerial positions to allocate and these will be taken up by the very top echelon of the party, who will usually be male. Four related hypotheses are drawn from these observations about the possible effect of political culture.

H_4. The orientation of the party system will affect the number of women in elected office. As the vote for women-friendly or gender-neutral parties increases, so should the number of women elected to the legislature.

H_5. The number of parliamentary parties will affect the number of women in the legislature. As party fragmentation increases, the number of women MPs will decline.

[23] See Norris (fn. 16), 317–19. See also Diane Sainsbury, "The Politics of Increased Women's Representation: The Swedish Case," in Lovenduski and Norris (fn. 16).

[24] Norris (fn. 16), 319.

H_6. The ideological outlook of the government will affect the number of women in the cabinet. As the influence of women-friendly parties increases so will the number of women in the cabinet.

H_7. The number of parties in government will affect the number of women cabinet ministers depending on the ideological orientation of those parties. The number of women ministers will decrease as the number of coalition partners increases.

Nature of the State-Regime

As noted earlier, historical experience often leads to gender advancement, and political liberalization enables women to mobilize within the public sphere. Therefore, we might expect higher numbers of women in office in established democracies than in transitional or fledgling democracies, and the more illiberal a state is, the fewer women will be in positions of power. Waylen argues that authoritarian regimes "rest on gendered foundations, relying particularly on the construction of masculinity and femininity which assigns particular 'traditional' roles to women."[25] Within the class of nondemocratic regimes it is fair to hypothesize that the type of regime will affect the opportunities for women. Regimes that profess a leftist ideology will be more likely to place women in high office—even if such gestures are essentially tokenistic. Therefore:

H_8. The previous history of the state should affect the propensity of women to reach high political office. Consolidated democracies will have more women in office than will fledgling democracies.

H_9. The impact of authoritarianism is tempered by the nature of the state. Nondemocratic regimes with a pronounced left-wing ideology will display more women in office than personalistic or militaristic authoritarian regimes.

Political Institutions

Chief among institutional variables, electoral systems[26] have most often been cited as the key determining factor in the number of women elected to legislative office.[27] Rule goes so far as to say that "favorable

[25] Georgina Waylen, *Gender in Third World Politics* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 114.

[26] For definitions and descriptions of the electoral system typology used in this article, see Andrew Reynolds et al., *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1997).

[27] See Duverger (fn. 18); Enid Lakeman, *Twelve Democracies: Electoral Systems in the European Community* (London: Arthur McDougall Fund, 1991); Wilma Rule, "Electoral Systems, Contextual Factors and Women's Opportunity for Election to Parliament in Twenty-three Democracies," *Western Political Quarterly* 40 (September 1987); idem, "Women's Underrepresentation and Electoral Systems," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 27, no. 4 (1994); Lovenduski and Norris (fn. 16); Rule and Zimmerman (fn. 11); Reynolds et al. (fn. 26); and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Democracy Still in the Making: Men and Women in Politics* (Geneva: IPU, 1997).

societal conditions will not substitute for unfavorable electoral systems for women to reach their optimal representation in parliament and local legislatures. But unfavorable contextual conditions—including cultural biases and discriminatory practices—can be overcome to a great extent by alternate electoral systems."[28]

Plurality-majority single-member-district systems, whether of the Anglo-American first-past-the-post (FPTP) variety, the Australian preference ballot alternative vote (AV), or the French two-round system (TRS), are deemed to be particularly unfavorable to women's chances of being elected to office. Each of these systems creates an incentive for party bosses to stand lowest-common-denominator candidates in geographical districts; these rarely turn out to be women or minorities. The literature on established democracies has long suggested that the most women-friendly electoral systems are list-proportional representation (list PR) systems with high district magnitude and low effective thresholds.[29] In these systems of high proportionality between seats won and votes cast, small parties are able to gain representation and parties have an incentive to broaden their overall electoral appeal by making their candidate lists as diverse as possible.

There are, however, important variations within the category of list PR electoral systems. Chief among these is the level of choice a voter is given, not just between parties, but between candidates as well. In free or open-list systems voters can influence the party list through their vote, but in closed-list systems the voter is constrained from indicating such a preference and is unable to alter the ordered party list. After analyzing mostly Western European democracies, Shugart,[30] Rule,[31] Rule and Zimmerman[32] find that open lists favor the election of women candidates because women-friendly voters can influence the less friendly party bosses who originally placed women candidates low down on their candidate lists. While such arguments may hold water in the progressive cultures of Scandinavia, translating the same argument to the use of list PR in less socially progressive countries in the developing world may be more troublesome. When list PR is used in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, there is some evidence to suggest that the relationship switches 180 degrees between closed- and open-list PR. In South Africa and Mozambique the ANC and Frelimo were able to use the

[28] Rule (fn. 27, 1994), 689.

[29] For a summary, see Rule (fn. 11).

[30] Matthew Shugart, "Minorities Represented and Unrepresented," in Rule and Zimmerman (fn. 11).

[31] Rule (fn. 11).

[32] Rule and Zimmerman (fn. 11).

closed-list system to place a high number of women candidates in winnable slots. If voters in these still patriarchal societies had been able to reorder the lists, women candidates may not have fared quite as well.

There are competing plausible hypotheses about the impact presidentialism or parliamentarism could have on the representation of women in the cabinet, but on both sides the arguments are foundationally weak. It might be argued that in a presidential system the executive need not be drawn from the legislature and the powerful head of state has the freedom to place women in the cabinet proactively without suffering the constraints of male-dominated legislative campaigning (for example, President Clinton's cabinet in the United States). Conversely, in a parliamentary system women have more points of access to executive power through majority and minority political parties that may be in a coalition government (for example, Norway). It seems likely that the presidential versus parliamentary division is not salient standing alone but will become important when conditioned by other factors, such as party ideology and the effective powers of the presidential office—in particular, who appoints and dismisses cabinet ministers.

Last, there is an increasing practice in legislatures for the state, or the parties themselves, to utilize formal or informal quota mechanisms to promote women as candidates and MPs. In 1997 the Inter-Parliamentary Union identified five countries that had national legislation establishing a compulsory quota of women MPs (Argentina,[33] Belgium [candidature], Brazil, North Korea, and Nepal), a further four had national legislation that reserved seats for women (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Tanzania [with India considering a 30 percent rule]).[34] And in thirty-six nations some, or all, of the political parties had quotas for women's candidatures for legislative elections.[35] Thus, on the question of the impact of political institutions three hypotheses can be stated.

H_{10}. The electoral system used for legislative elections will affect the number of women elected to the legislature, but it will not necessarily affect the number of women who are awarded cabinet office. Majoritarian single-member district electoral systems with personal voting (that is, FPTP, AV, TRS) will allow fewer opportunities for women to be elected than proportional systems without personal voting (that is, closed-list PR). Mixed systems (that is, parallel and mixed-

[33] See Mark Jones, "Increasing Women's Representation via Gender Quotas: The Argentine Ley de Cupos," *Women and Politics* 16, no. 4 (1996).

[34] See Jane Everett, "Reservation of Seats for Women in India: Toward the Engendering of Politics?" (Paper prepared for delivery at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, August 29–September 1, 1996).

[35] Inter-Parliamentary Union (fn. 27), 64, 67.

member proportional, or MMP), proportional systems with personal voting (that is, STV and open-list PR), semiproportional systems (that is, SNTV and LV), and majoritarian multimember district systems (that is, the block vote) will fall somewhere in between the two extremes.

H_{11}. Whether the system is presidential or parliamentary will not directly affect either the number of women in parliament or the number of women in the cabinet.[36]

H_{12}. The existence of quotas for women in office (whether formal or informal) will increase the number of women in the legislature.

Other Variables Not Considered in This Study

There are, of course, a number of other variables that, because of the global (each unit case equals one country) nature of this project, were immeasurable in a quantitative sense. Norris[37] stresses the role of party organization and recruitment in affecting the number of women who are first selected as candidates and then take the next step of being elected to office. Caul[38] notes that the existence of women as party activists lays the ground for the advancement of female candidates, while Bystydzienski[39] demonstrates that the representation of women in politics is sometimes preceded by windows of opportunity that enable women to integrate themselves into civil society. Finally, there are the barriers erected by the niceties of campaign and election law. Zimmerman[40] notes that both incumbency and campaign finance issues are blocks to women's access to representation.

Overview of Survey Results

The survey found 4,209 (12.5 percent) women sitting in the lower houses of the 180 national parliaments, out of a total of 33,715 MPs. Data were collected primarily from Keesings Record of World Events, the Women's Environment and Development Organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), relevant embassies, and country desk officers at the U.S. State Department. This figure is marginally higher than the IPU's figure of 3,956 women (12.0 percent) in 167 states at the be-

[36] The presidential or parliamentary nature of the system will interact with the broader constitutional framework of the executive and the ideological orientation of the elected executive. The related evidence in this article suggests that such interactions may well influence the number of women chosen to fill ministerial positions.

[37] Norris (fn. 16).

[38] Caul (fn. 21).

[39] Bystydzienski (fn. 15).

[40] Joseph Zimmerman, "Equity in Representation for Women and Minorities," in Rule and Zimmerman (fn. 11).

ginning of 1997.[41] Since 1945 the IPU has tracked the slow growth in the number of women MPs—based on an increasing number of parliamentary affiliates. In 1945 women constituted only 3.0 percent of all MPs (based on data from twenty-six mostly Western democratic parliaments). That figure rose to 7.5 percent in 1955 (61 cases), 8.1 percent in 1965 (94 cases), 10.9 percent in 1975 (115 cases), 12.0 percent in 1985 (136 cases), and 11.6 percent in 1995 (176 cases). The highest proportion occurred in 1988, when the IPU found that 14.8 percent of the MPs within their survey were women.[42] It is striking that despite the advances women have made in representation, for the last fifteen years the numbers have plateaued at approximately 12 percent.

At the executive level, as of 1998, there are 302 (8.7 percent) women cabinet ministers across the globe out of 3,486 ministers in total. As data on women in cabinet positions have not been systematically collated on such a broad scale before, it is difficult to ascertain the trajectory of women's participation at the executive level. However, Davis gathered data on fifteen West European countries (176 new cabinets and 278 midterm reshuffles) and found that cabinet representation increased from 3 percent in 1968 to 13 percent in 1992.[43] The number of women who lead their nations as presidents or prime ministers has remained consistently minuscule in each decade since the Second World War. As of July 1998 there were only five current women leaders (or 2 percent of the total).

Women in National Parliaments

The 4,209 women sitting in the lower houses of national parliaments at the end of the 1990s are disproportionately found in the parliaments of Western Europe, North America, and Asia. Western European legislatures include the most women MPs—18.4 percent—while the Middle East brings up the rear with 4.4 percent. The parliaments of North America and the Caribbean (18.2 percent) and the Asian states (13.8 percent) also have an above-average percentage of women in legislative office (see Table 1). When averages are taken the electoral system used for legislative elections does appear to affect the number of women elected. But the variance is not quite as high as one might have been

[41] Cases included in this survey that were not in the IPU survey are Belarus, Bermuda, Burundi, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Gibraltar, Iraq, the Isle of Man, Niger, Pakistan, Vanuatu, and Yugoslavia. Cases excluded from both studies are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nigeria, Libya, Marshall Islands, Burma, Qatar, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia.

[42] IPU (fn. 27), 83.

[43] Rebecca Howard Davis, *Women and Power in Parliamentary Democracies: Cabinet Appointments in Western Europe, 1968–1992* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 13, 16.

TABLE 1
WOMEN IN LEGISLATURES[a]

	Africa	*Asia*	*CIS, C & E Europe*	*Middle East*	*N America & Caribbean*	*Oceania*	*S & C America*	*Western Europe*	*Totals*
# of ♀ MPs	654	1,140	457	69	338	68	354	1,129	4,209
Total # of MPs	7,297	8,230	4,997	1,555	1,857	725	2,926	6,128	33,715
% ♀	9.0	13.8	9.1	4.4	18.2	9.4	12.1	18.4	12.5
# of cases	48	20	26	10	16	13	20	27	180

[a] Figures based on national assemblies in unicameral systems and the lower house in bicameral systems.

led to expect by the literature, which has historically concentrated upon established democracies in the developed world.

PR systems do on average have nearly twice as many women MPs as plurality-majority systems (13.7 percent versus 7.8 percent), but the six MMP systems perform slightly better than the seventy list PR systems, while STV systems do not significantly increase the number of women elected when compared with the average.

The presence of women in both legislative and executive positions of power relates, to some degree, to the religious orientation of the nation-state (see Table 2). Dominant or majority Christian countries have, on average, 12.8 percent of legislative positions filled by women MPs. This figure is largely due to the above average number of women MPs in Catholic and Protestant countries, while Eastern Orthodox nations have a much lower number of women in office. Potentially the finding that Christian countries have more women in power than non-Christian states might be washed out by a correlation between Christianity, industrial development, and established democracy, but this is not clearly so. Of the sixty-seven states that are either dominantly Catholic or Protestant, only twenty-three are established industrial democracies. Among other religions, Hindu and Buddhist nations have the next highest number of women in parliament, with Muslim, traditional (animist), and Jewish states having fewer, but the variance is not great. However, the Muslim and Jewish states of the Middle East do particularly poorly when it comes to the inclusion of women, seemingly irrespective of socioeconomic factors.

Finally, it comes as little surprise that the number of women is higher when some form of quota is used to advantage women as candidates. In those states that have either (1) national legislation establish-

TABLE 2

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT UNDERLYING THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN POLITICS[a]

			Legislature		*Cabinet*			
Religion		*(# Cases)*	*%*	*All*	*Mean # of ♀*	*%*	*All*	*# of states*
Christianity	Catholic	dominant (40)	15.8		2.4	16.5		
		majority (12)	10.4	13.9	1.5	7.6	13.0	64
		minority (12)	10.8		1.6	6.8		
	Protestant	dominant (27)	15.5		2.5	14.0		
		majority (14)	10.2	13.5	1.3	6.3	10.6	53
		minority (12)	13.0		1.4	7.5		
	Orthodox	dominant (12)	6.7		1.0	4.6		
		majority (2)	7.4	6.6	1.5	7.7	5.1	15
		minority (1)	3.3		1.0	5.3		
	Overall			12.8			11.1	132
Islam		dominant (34)	6.0		1.2	5.3		
		majority (5)	6.4	6.4	1.8	7.8	6.4	46
		minority (7)	8.6		2.0	10.5		
Traditional		dominant (3)	7.0		1.3	6.3		
		majority (7)	9.2	7.0	2.3	10.1	6.9	22
		minority (12)	5.8		1.2	5.2		
Buddhism		dominant (6)	5.4		0.8	4.8		
		majority (4)	13.1	9.1	1.0	2.9	4.1	12
		minority (2)	12.5		1.0	4.4		
Hinduism		dominant (2)	5.5		0.5	2.4		
		majority (2)	11.6	9.7	1.0	5.3	6.0	6
		minority (2)	12.1		2.0	10.3		
Taoism		dominant (0)	0		0	0		
		majority (1)	21.8	21.8	1.0	4.0	4.0	1
		minority (0)	0		0	0		
Shintoism		dominant (0)	0		0	0		
		majority (0)	0	4.6	0	0	0	1
		minority (1)	4.6		0	0		
Confucianism		dominant (0)	0		0	0		
		majority (0)	0	20.1	0	0	5.5	1
		minority (1)	20.1		2	5.5		
Judaism		dominant (1)	7.5		0	0		
		majority (0)	0	7.5	0	0	0	1
		minority (0)	0		0	0		

[a] Dominant = over 70 percent; majority = the largest numerical group; minority = a minority but over 30 percent.

ing a compulsory quota of women MPs, or (2) national legislation providing for a proportion of seats to be reserved for women, or (3) some or all of the electoral parties setting, by rule or custom, a quota for women candidature, the average for women in the legislature is 15.0 percent (N = 39). The fact that this figure is only marginally higher than the worldwide average illustrates the variety of weight that such quotas carry. In many states quotas are set but never filled.[44] Parties may set formal thresholds but then perform badly and win few seats; other times national legislation is perceived more as an idealistic goal rather than a legal compulsion.

Women in Cabinets

There were 3,486 cabinet ministers in the 180 nation-states categorized in this study, of which 302 (8.7 percent) were women while 3,184 were men (see Table 3). The most women cabinet ministers were from the continent of Africa (eighty-four), closely followed by the eighty cabinet ministers in Western Europe. There does seem to be significant regional variation in the numbers of women making it into high ministerial executive office. While 20 percent of the cabinet ministers of Western Europe are women, in Oceania and the Middle East the totals are less than 4 percent. Both figures are best explained by a variety of sociocultural factors that foster male political dominance. Nevertheless, the nature of patriarchy is somewhat different between the two regions.

The island states of the Caribbean, along with the United States and Canada, display the next highest number of women cabinet ministers (14.7 percent), which can be understood as a product of the combination of advanced industrialized democracies (the United States and Canada), social democratic Caribbean island governments (St. Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Dominica), and the communist orientation of Cuba. Thirty-three of the 313 (10.5 percent) cabinet ministers in Central and South America are women, while, from a much larger pool, Africa manages to score 7.8 percent.

As Table 2 illustrates, societies that are either dominant (over 70 percent) or majority (the largest numerical group) Christian or have a significant Christian minority have on average the highest number of women in the cabinet (11.1 percent). While all other religions appear to give rise to a roughly equal number of women in the cabinet (traditional = 6.9 percent, Islamic = 6.4 percent, Hindu = 6.0 percent, Con-

[44] For example, in Senegal the Socialist Party did not, in practice, respect the quota it had set, and in Costa Rica the mandatory 40 percent requirement for women on all party lists is often disregarded; see WEDO (fn. 1), 8.

TABLE 3
WOMEN IN CABINETS

	Africa	*Asia*	*CIS, C & E Europe*	*Middle East*	*N America & Caribbean*	*Oceania*	*S & C America*	*Western Europe*	*Total*		*Established Democracies*
# of women in cabinets	84	26	31	5	36	7	33	80	302		108
# of cabinet ministers	1,082	437	587	241	245	180	313	400	3,486		633
♀ % of cabinet	7.8	5.9	5.3	2.1	14.7	3.9	10.5	20.0	8.7		17.1
Share of world total (%)	27.8	8.6	10.3	1.6	11.9	2.3	10.9	26.5			
Portfolio									#	%	
Foreign Affairs	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	5	12	3	7
Finance-Treasury	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	1	0
Home Affairs	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1
Defense	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1
Health-Social Welfare	13	6	4	2	5	0	3	14	48	14	15
Education	11	1	4	1	3	1	4	6	32	9	7
Labor-Employment	2	1	4	0	2	0	3	11	23	6	12
Environment-Energy	5	1	0	1	5	1	2	6	21	6	12
Planning and Development	7	0	1	1	0	0	2	6	17	5	6
Law-Justice-Security	0	0	2	0	3	2	2	5	14	4	11
Communication-Information	5	0	1	0	1	1	1	4	13	4	4

Trade-Industry-Science	5	2	0	0	1	0	1	4	13	4	5
Agriculture-Fishing-Sea	5	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	11	3	4
Regional-Local-Minority	2	1	0	0	3	0	1	2	9	3	4
Transport	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	8	2	6
Oil	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	2
Civil Service	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0
Housing	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0
Women's Affairs	23	5	1	0	6	3	3	7	47	13	12
Culture-Arts-Heritage	4	1	7	0	4	1	3	12	32	9	14
Family and Children	14	2	1	0	3	0	1	8	30	8	10
Sport	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	4	10	3	2
Tourism	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	1
Displaced persons	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
# of women categorized	84	19	26	4	32	7	26	80	278 (92% of total)		108
# of portfolios categorized	113	24	27	5	40	9	32	108	358		142
# of countries	48	20	26	10	16	13	20	27	180		36

fucian = 5.5 percent, Buddhist = 4.1 percent, Taoist = 4.0 percent, there are no women ministers in the dominantly Jewish state of Israel or in Shinto-influenced Japan.

Focusing in on dominant Christian countries the figure is 16.5 percent for Catholic states, 14.0 percent for Protestant countries, and a lower 5.1 percent for Eastern Orthodox nations. These more detailed figures may raise some eyebrows due to the fact that Catholic countries appear to be more progressive than Protestant countries in the representation of women.[45] This appears to be a possible anomaly considering the widespread belief that Catholicism is less sensitive to gender equality than are many strands of Protestantism. It is also significant that the number of women in cabinets declines as Christian dominance declines, whereas the number of women in Islamic countries increases as the proportion of Muslims declines. The pattern for Muslim states is mirrored in states with a Hindu population. Nevertheless, the mere existence of a religious community should not predestine a cabinet to be light on the representation of women. In the seven states that have a significant minority population of Muslims the level of women's executive representation is almost as high as that in dominant Christian countries. The same is true for those countries where traditional religions exist alongside other, imported religions.

PORTFOLIO ALLOCATIONS

Looking at ministerial positions broken down by portfolio allocation, one sees a worldwide tendency to place women in the softer sociocultural ministerial positions rather than in the harder and politically more prestigious positions of economic planning, national security, and foreign affairs, which are often seen as stepping-stones to national leadership (see Table 3). While women are making it into cabinets in more countries than ever before (indeed only 38 nations out of 180 states did not have a woman cabinet minister), even within the more gender-advanced states women are skewed toward the positions that are, no doubt wrongly, viewed as lesser offices by their male colleagues. What is remarkable about the 358 portfolios categorized in Table 3[46] is the consistency across region. Whether in Europe, Africa, or Asia, there remain only a handful of women across the continent in the four key ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Home Affairs, and Defense.

[45] Indeed, the same pattern was repeated in the number of women in legislatures.

[46] I was able to categorize 278 (or 92 percent) of the 302 women cabinet ministers by portfolio. In all these 278 women held 358 portfolios.

But each region (aside from the Middle East) is well stocked with women in the social ministries of Women's Affairs, Culture, Family Affairs, Sport, and Tourism (in Oceania 44 percent of all women ministers handle such portfolios; in Africa, 43 percent; in Asia, 37 percent; in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Central, and Eastern Europe, 33 percent; in North America and the Caribbean, 35 percent; in Western Europe 29 percent; and in South and Central America, 25 percent). The most popular portfolio to be handled by a woman worldwide is Health (48, or 14 percent of the total), which is closely followed by Women's Affairs (47, or 13 percent), Education (32, or 9 percent), Culture/Arts (32, or 9 percent), and Family/Child Affairs (30, or 8 percent).

As Heads of State (Presidents or Prime Ministers)

The number of women leading their nations (as presidents or prime ministers) at any one time has never reached double figures. As of July 1998 there were only five women at the political helms of their nations: Janet Jagan in Guyana (since 1997), Chandrika Kumaratunga in Sri Lanka (since 1994), Jenny Shipley in New Zealand (since 1997), Pamela Gordon in Bermuda (since 1997), and Shaikh Hasina Wajed in Bangladesh (since 1996). Mary McAleese, the president of Ireland, although not without influence, holds a largely ceremonial position, while Aung San Suu Kyi was never allowed to take up her democratically won position as prime minister of Burma. Sirimavo Bandaranaike became prime minister of Sri Lanka in 1959, but it took another decade until she was joined by Golda Meir (Israel) and Indira Gandhi (India). The highest number of women prime ministers or presidents came in 1990 and 1993–96, when there were seven worldwide; the nadir was in 1978, when there were none.

In the 1980s and 1990s women reached the pinnacle of political life in more and more countries. Following in the footsteps of Golda Meir in Israel (1969–74), Indira Gandhi in India (1966–77, 1980–84), and Sirimavo Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka (1959–65, 1970–77), were Corazon Aquino in the Philippines (1986–92), Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan (1988–90, 1993–96), Begum Khaleda Zia in Bangladesh (1991–96), Eugenia Charles in Dominica (1980–85), Kim Campbell in Canada (1992–93), Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain (1979–90), Vigdis Finnbogadottir in Iceland (1980–96), Kazimiera Prunskiene in Lithuania (1990–91), Gro Harlem Brundtland in Norway (1990–96), Tansu Ciller in Turkey (1993–95), Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in Nicaragua (1990–96), and Ruth Sando Perry in Liberia (1996–97). Nearly half (9 out of 22) of the women mentioned above were either the wives or

daughters of former national leaders and, of these, only Cheddi Jagan (husband of Janet) and Jawaharlal Nehru (Indira's father) were not assassinated.[47]

The Multivariate Regression Models

By crafting multivariate regression models, we are able to see more clearly the relationship between our twelve hypothesized independent variables and the levels of women in legislatures and cabinets.

Regression Results: Legislative Model

To operationalize the institutional, political, social, and cultural factors, twelve independent variables were included within a preliminary legislative model that uses the percentage of women in the legislature as the dependent variable.

INSTITUTIONS

The *electoral system* dummy variable categorized each country under one of ten systems based upon Reynolds and Reilly.[48] To measure the degree of *party system fragmentation* the Laakso-Taagepera Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties (ENPP) was calculated.[49] The *size of parliament* includes directly elected members, while the *presidential versus parliamentary* dichotomy is a dummy variable.[50]

POLITICAL/HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Years of suffrage measures the number of years from when women were first allowed to stand for office up to the legislative election year for which data are included. *Number of elections* counts multiparty competitive elections since 1945. The *level of democracy* is the Freedom House score for the country for 1996–97.[51] *Left vote %* is the sum of the vote

[47] Gro Harlem Brundtland's father was finance minister in the Labor government in Norway in the 1950s and 1960s.

[48] Reynolds et al. (fn. 26). Electoral systems relate to the system used for the election upon which the legislative data were based; the categorizations were updated from the 1997 IDEA study. Two cases within the study do not have directly elected national parliaments. China was categorized as SNTV because that is the system used at the provincial level, while the United Arab Emirates was categorized as FPTP because it has been used for some elections within the state.

[49] Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera, "'Effective' Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe," *Comparative Political Studies* 12, no. 1 (1979). Because no political parties exist in 18 of the 180 cases, the ENPP could not be calculated. These cases were dropped from the legislative model.

[50] In eight cases the president is not directly chosen by the people through multiparty elections, but the system resembles a presidential system nevertheless.

[51] http://www.freedomhouse.org/political/frtable1.html and http://www.freedomhouse.org/political/frtable2.html

shares of socialist, social democratic, communist, green, and women's parties.[52]

SOCIOECONOMIC VARIABLES

The level of women's socioeconomic development is measured by the United Nations Development Program's *Gender Related Development Index* (GRDI).[53] The *degree of urbanization* is the percentage of the population living in urban areas, and *population size* is taken from 1998 estimates.[54] The dummy variable of *religion* sorted cases on the basis of their majority religion as of 1998.[55] (The figures in Table 2 give a more nuanced breakdown of countries by dominant, majority, and minority religion.)

An initial multivariate regression, where the dependent variable is women as a percentage of the legislative body, sought to test the relationship between our three sets of independent variables (institutions, political context, and socioeconomic) and the presence of women MPs. In that model the level of democracy, the size of parliament, the population size, the percentage urban, and the dummy created for presidential (as opposed to parliamentary systems) were not statistically correlated with the dependent variable. Therefore, a refined model was developed to hone in on the significant variables to assess their relative importance. This model (shown in Table 4) illustrates that the number of women in legislatures in the late 1990s is determined by a patchwork of institutional and cultural variables. The model as a whole explains 45.5 percent of the total variance and the most significant predictors of the number of women MPs are the level of female socioeconomic development (as measured by the GRDI) and the electoral strength of left-wing parties in the system.

A society familiar with women competing for political power has an increased likelihood of electing women to office. That is, the number of years that women have had the right to stand for office, along with the number of multiparty elections, is also significant. The higher the ENPP the fewer women are elected, which confirms the hypothesis that a reservoir of safe seats is required for women to become, not merely

[52] In the few cases where the left vote percentage was unavailable, the left vote seat share was used as a proxy.

[53] The GRDI incorporates measures of the differences between women and men when it comes to life expectancy, literacy, education, and earned income. The disparities are then applied against the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) to produce the GRDI. In the cases where the UNDP does not measure GRDI, the HDI score was used as a proxy, as the two measures are autocorrelated. In the few cases where neither the GRDI or the HDI exists, a regional average was applied.

[54] *The New York Times 1998 Almanac* (New York: Penguin, 1997).

[55] Ibid.

TABLE 4
THE EFFECT OF SALIENT VARIABLES ON THE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATURE
(OLS REGRESSION ESTIMATES)

Independent Variables (Constant)	*% ♀ in Legislature (2.291)*
GRDI	.292 (2.324) ***
Religion dummies	
Buddhist	−.142 (2.322)**
Eastern Orthodox	−.229 (2.063)***
Muslim	−.171 (1.460)**
Other	−.083 (2.649)
Protestant	.117 (1.409)
Traditional	−.061 (2.110)
Religious baseline, Catholic	
Years candidacy	.186 (.022)***
# of elections	.124 (2.570)*
Left vote %	.293 (.018)***
ENPP	−.162 (.229)**
Electoral system dummies	
alternative vote	−.097 (6.139)
block vote	−.124 (2.570)*
first past the post	−.258 (1.304)***
limited vote	−.083 (5.950)
mixed member proportional	−.026 (2.556)
parallel	−.049 (1.606)
single nontransferable vote	−.097 (4.398)
single transferable vote	−.097 (4.308)
two-round system	−.105 (1.680)
electoral system baseline, List PR	
Adjusted R squared	.455
Number of cases	162

Standardized coefficients (standard error)
***p <.01, **p <.05, *p <.1

candidates, but candidates with real prospects for electoral success. As noted earlier, a less fragmented party system is a system with a small number of large parliamentary parties, which implies less competition for the bulk of the seats. The religious orientation of a nation appears statistically significant in suppressing the number of women elected when compared with the Catholic baseline (which had on average the highest number of women in legislatures and executives). Buddhist,

Eastern Orthodox Christian, and Muslim countries have significantly lower numbers of women in parliament than do Catholic countries.

Last, as expected, the electoral system used to choose members of parliament also has some purchase on the number of women elected. All nine electoral system dummies suppress the number of women MPs (as compared with the list PR baseline) but only two systems (FPTP and the block vote) are statistically significant. In the theory underlying the regression model, both of these systems were predicted to be disadvantageous to the election of women.

In sum, the multivariate regression suggests that what primarily determines the number of women in a nation's legislature is neither the level of democracy nor the size or degree of urbanization of the state. Rather, women are elected in significant numbers when the parties that are ideologically sympathetic to gender neutrality do well, the national culture and religion are not overly hostile to women in positions of power, there is a history of women playing a role in consecutive multiparty elections, there are a small number of political parties who dominate elections, and the electoral system does not place undue barriers in the way of women candidates being elected.

Regression Results: Executive Model

The independent variables included within the executive model were slightly different from the twelve used in the legislative model.

INSTITUTIONS

The ENPP and legislative electoral system variables were dropped from the model, as there is no strong hypothesis about why such parliamentary issues should directly affect the composition of the cabinet. Thus, the only institutional variable kept in the executive model was the *presidential/parliamentary* dummy.

POLITICAL/HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The *years of suffrage*, *number of elections*, *level of democracy*, and *left vote %* (for the legislature) variables were retained. The percentage of *women in the legislature* was added as an independent variable, and two new variables were created: the *number of parties represented in the cabinet* and the *ideological orientation of the government*. For the latter, cases were classified as (1) single-party cabinets with a left-wing majority, (2) coalition cabinets with a left-wing majority, (3) coalition cabinets with a left-wing minority, (4) single-party cabinets with no left-wing presence, or (5) coalition cabinets with no left-wing presence.

SOCIOECONOMIC VARIABLES

All of the socioeconomic variables used in the legislative model were retained: the *Gender Related Development Index*, the *degree of urbanization*, the *population size*, and the majority *religion* dummy.

A preliminary model taking the percentage of women in the cabinet as the dependent variable found that, similar to the legislative model, the index of democracy was not statistically significant. Neither was the population size, the urban percentage, the number of parties in the cabinet, the electoral system, or whether the system was parliamentary or presidential. The Gender Related Development Index, which had been significant in explaining the number of women in the legislature, ceased to be significant in the executive model.

The results in Table 5 focus in on the significant variables that help determine the percentage of women in ministerial office. The model explains 37 percent of the variance; far and away the best predictor of women cabinet ministers is the proportion of women MPs in the legislature. Although the legislative percentage is a stronger predictor, a history of women's participation also matters, as the years of candidacy and number of elections are statistically significant. If institutions do not seem to help determine the number of women making it into the cabinet, culture and ideology clearly do. The Buddhist and Eastern Orthodox Christian[56] dummies statistically correlate with lower numbers of women in cabinets when compared with the Catholic baseline (as they did in the legislative model), but this time the religious dummy *Other*[57] (which includes Hindu, Taoist, and Jewish states) is statistically significant while Islam is not. The importance of the cabinet's ideological basis partially confirms the theory that left-wing governments will have more women than will conservative, authoritarian, or populist administrations. When compared with the baseline of a single-party left-wing government, a coalition cabinet with no left-wing parties present suppresses the percentage of woman and is highly significant. This was

[56] An examination of influence diagnostics provides some inconclusive evidence that the effect of the Eastern Orthodox dummy may not be entirely robust. There were some cases (Sweden, France, Romania, Georgia, Ukraine, and Ecuador) with large dfbetas. When each outlier was removed individually, the measure retained its significance (except when either Romania or Georgia was removed). Nevertheless, there is no theoretic justification for excluding these cases from the sample.

[57] Countries classified as dominantly "other" religions are not significantly different from Catholic countries in this model when one removes the outliers: Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Seychelles, Mozambique, China, Suriname, St. Kitts, Albania, the Isle of Man, Bangladesh, India, Tuvalu, Israel, Andorra, Malta, Cameroon, Ecuador, and Nepal. When each outlier is removed individually, this measure retains its significance except when either China, Suriname, Israel, or Andorra is removed (that is, when any of these four cases is not included in the sample, "other" countries are not significantly different from Catholic countries in this model).

TABLE 5
THE EFFECT OF SALIENT VARIABLES ON THE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN THE EXECUTIVE
(OLS REGRESSION ESTIMATES)

Independent Variables (Constant)	*% ♀ in Executive (2.837)*
% ♀ legislature	.368 (.085) ***
Religion dummies	
Buddhist	−.175 (2.536)***
Eastern Orthodox	−.122 (2.479)*
Muslim	−.109 (1.650)
Other	−.114 (3.236)*
Protestant	−.078 (1.556)
Traditional	.025 (2.507)
Religious baseline, Catholic	
Years candidacy	.126 (.026)*
# of elections	.176 (.124)**
Left vote %	−.035 (.030)
Government ideology dummies	
coalition: majority left	−.003 (2.117)
coalition: minority left	−.076 (2.229)
single party: no left	−.092 (2.187)
coalition: no left	−.259 (2.343)**
Government ideology baseline, single party left	
Adjusted R squared	.371
Number of cases	180

Standardized coefficients (standard error)
***p <.01, **p <.05, *p <.1

the composition hypothesized to be the most unfavorable to the representation of women at cabinet level.

The executive regression model tells a related, but slightly different story from that of the earlier, legislative model. History and culture remain important, while the level of democracy, population size, and level of urbanization remain insignificant. The presence of a left-wing political movement is important in both models, but at the cabinet level it is related to the composition of government rather than the vote percentage of the left. But perhaps most importantly the level of women's socioeconomic development (GRDI), while highly significant in determining how many women there will be in the legislature, is statistically insignificant when it comes to determining women in the cabinet.

Conclusions

It has long been assumed that the global diffusion of multiparty competitive politics would provide increased opportunities for women to enter the public sphere and assume elected positions of power. Since the late 1980s there has been an avalanche of countries attempting to make the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, and "free and fair" elections have increasingly become the focus of international trade and aid calculations. This article suggests that such expectations have been partially confirmed but need to be accompanied by some important caveats. Democracy in itself is not necessarily a precursor to the presence of substantial numbers of women in political life. Rather, the determining factors are a nation's familiarity with women in positions of power and the sociopolitical cultural acceptance of women as leaders, governors, and national administrators. Religious practices and ideological movements help determine the baseline for women, but these foundations can then be built upon (or perhaps bypassed) by women-friendly political institutions. Such friendly institutions may include list PR electoral systems and electoral quotas at both the legislative and the candidate level.

It is also important to note that institutions affect the cultural propensity to elect women candidates in different ways in different parts of the world. In Western Europe electoral systems appear to have more impact on the representation of women than, for example, in Asia or Central and Eastern Europe. While sociocultural variables are highly salient when it comes to parliamentarians, the presence of women as cabinet ministers is correlated more closely with the political orientation of the government and the success rate of women in the legislature. In many ways the evidence suggests that the glass ceiling for women in politics has been slowly raised over the last fifty years. Women have made advances in parliaments since the end of the Second World War, but it has been only in the last decade or so that they have assumed a significant number of ministerial cabinet positions. The next glass ceiling to be broken through will be women filling the top jobs—as ministers of defense, finance, home, and foreign affairs. Then will come the highest glass ceiling—women competing on a gender-neutral playing field for the very top job as president or prime minister.