

HIC SUNT LEONES: ARE UNEXPLORED INNATE GENDER DIFFERENCES THE  
ANSWER TO THE PERSISTING GENDER GAP IN THE NUMBER OF POLITICIANS?

by

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(Under the direction of Markus Crepaz)

ABSTRACT

Over the last decades, women have made tremendous progress in their socioeconomic status and general standing in society in a great deal of countries. As a result, traditional theories, which rely solely on economic, cultural or other sort of environmental inequality between men and women in trying to explain the male domination of politics, are growing weaker, for the presence of women in politics continues to be low across very different political, economic or cultural environments. I hold that the near universal pattern of male control of politics is rooted in innate, and therefore universal, gender differences in levels of dominance orientation and aggressiveness, resulted from eons of different evolutionary pressures on males and females. However, the World Values Survey data used to explore the connection at a national level between the gender gap in dominance and aggressiveness levels, on the one hand, and the percentage of women in the parliament, on the other, invalidates one of the proposed factors and seriously weakens the other.

INDEX WORDS: Women, Gender, Politics, Political participation, Evolutionary psychology, Aggressiveness, Dominance

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. An Impasse and a Proposal to Break It.....	1
1.2. Structure.....	3
2. THE PUZZLE AND WHY IT MATTERS .....	4
2.1. What Seems to Be the Problem? .....	4
2.2. The Case for Descriptive Representation .....	5
2.3. What's in It for Men? .....	10
2.4. The Road to Hell.....	11
2.5. Something Old, Something New .....	14
3. TRADITIONAL THEORIES .....	16
3.1. Income, Workforce and Time Burden Gap .....	16
3.2. Education .....	18
3.3. Socialization and Gender Roles .....	19
3.4. Religion.....	22
3.5. Male Establishment and Incumbency .....	22
3.6. History of Unequal Rights .....	24

3.7. Electoral rules and Party Ideology and Centralization .....	25
3.8. Other Factors .....	28
3.10. Need for a Fresh Approach .....	29
4. ENTER EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY .....	31
4.1. Basic Principles .....	31
4.2. Sexual Selection.....	32
4.3. Dangerous Research .....	33
4.4. Reductionism and Determinism .....	37
4.5. Other Critiques.....	38
5. FEMINISM AND EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY .....	41
5.1. Feminism's Evolutionist Schism .....	41
5.2. Feminist Contributions to Evolutionism.....	42
6. THE THEORY.....	43
7. DOMINANCE ORIENTATION .....	46
7.1. The Motive.....	46
7.2. The Evidence .....	48
7.3. The Crime .....	52
8. AGGRESSIVENES .....	54
8.1. Another Motive.....	54
8.2. More Evidence.....	54
8.3. The Same Crime .....	57
9. THE TEST .....	58
9.1. Operationalization.....	58

9.2. Hypothesis .....	60
9.3. Alternative Hypotheses.....	60
9.4. Cases .....	63
9.5. Model.....	63
9.6. Essential Critiques .....	64
10. RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS .....	70
10.1. So Far, So Good.....	70
10.2. Traditional Model .....	71
10.3. Traditional Model Revisited .....	73
10.4. Where Do We Go from Here? .....	77
REFERENCES .....	79
APPENDIX I .....	84
Gender Development Index .....	84
Gender Equality Scale.....	85
Freedom House Ratings .....	85
Cases .....	86
APPENDIX II .....	87

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1 Legislative recruitment system .....	2
Figure 6.1 Legislative recruitment system revisited .....	44
Figure 10.1 Scatterplot: Individual dominance orientation gap and percentage of women in parliament..	75
Figure 10.2 Scatterplot: Tolerance gap and percentage of women in parliament.....	76



## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 2.1 Fifty years of percentages of women in legislative bodies worldwide.....	5
Table 10.1 Traditional model – coefficients and significance .....	71
Table 10.2 Added IVs – coefficients and significance .....	73

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### An Impasse and a Proposal to Break It

It does not take training in the political sciences, but only watching the nightly news, to realize that politics is still largely a male business. Hard figures, such as from the International Parliamentary Union or United Nations Development Programme's gender-equality data, back up the impression one gets of the gender distribution of politics from the sex of the politicians that appear in the media, any given day in almost any country around the world – it's mostly men that run the country. What is not so common knowledge is that this imbalance is not just unfair, but exacts heavy costs on the society as whole, as we shall see later on in this paper. For that reason, this is not just a theoretical concern or something that only feminists should care about, but a shortcoming that takes its toll on the entire system.

The large size and variety of the body of literature dealing with the low percentage of women in politics stand proof of the importance of the issue. However, despite the impressive number of methodological, ideological or geographical approaches, the literature on the topic is limited by a glass ceiling of its own making<sup>1</sup>. The bulk of the literature focuses on the demand side of politics, namely why women that want a career in politics have a hard time achieving that purpose, while the works that do take into account the supply side of the equation (what affects a woman's decision to enter politics) deal mostly with socio-economic factors, and rarely with psychological ones. Finally, the fraction of the literature that does center on intangible factors

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<sup>1</sup> "Glass ceiling" is a term originally coined by the feminist literature to refer to the invisible factors that prevented women in the workplace from climbing up the hierarchical ladder past a certain level, despite being on the same level as men in terms of qualifications.

that affect a woman's desire to enter politics deals only with socialization and gender roles and not at all with gender differences that are not the result solely of nurture, but also of nature<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 1.1). Despite the inroads some feminists have been making in the field of evolutionary psychology and the acceptance of even more feminists that there are such things as innate gender differences, there still is no literature on the impact of such variations on the male domination of politics.

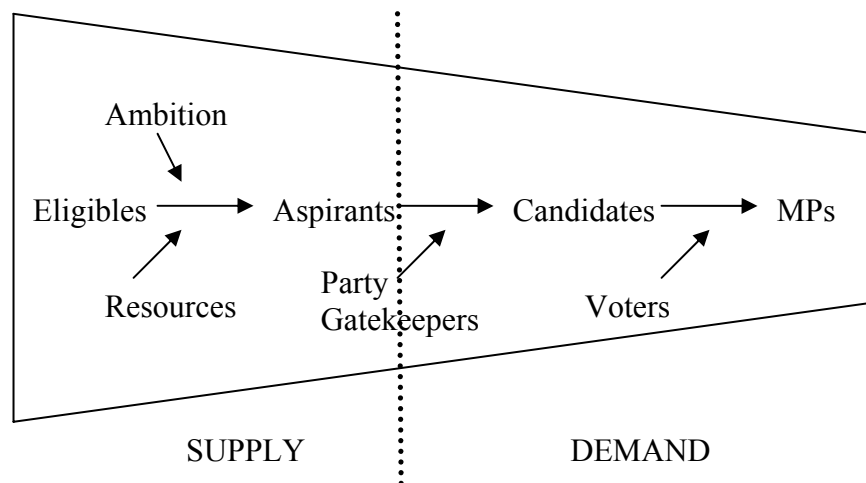


Figure 1.1 Legislative recruitment system. (Matland and Montgomery 2003)

It's not just the theory that is facing a glass ceiling. Even in highly-developed democracies, despite great progresses in women's socioeconomic status and in the fight for equality and anti-discrimination, women are still significantly below their portion of the

<sup>2</sup> "Nature" and "nurture" are catchy terms that stand in for the complex factors that determine one's behavior: on the one hand, there is nature, namely innate predispositions resulted from eons of evolutionary pressures, while nurture sums up everything that influences one after birth.

population, save for a few exceptions that are mostly the results of genuine and extensive affirmative policies. In other words, despite major progress in what the literature on the issue sees as the roots of the problem, there is little, if any, matching progress in the number of women in politics. For that reason, a fresh approach, located at the intersection of political science, feminism and evolutionary psychology is in order, and that is what I propose to do in the following pages.

### Structure

The first section will deal with evidence of the low number of women in politics, the reason this is a serious problem, and the potential consequences of efforts to redress this problem (be they beneficial or chancy), as well as offer a glimpse at the how evolutionary psychology sheds some light on the matter. Next, the major trends in the literature so far will be reviewed, not just to build the background to the problem but also to show a pattern to their shortcomings. The third section will introduce evolutionary psychology, explain its core principles and how they are relevant to innate gender differences, but also review the many critiques to this field. Fourth, we will be familiarized with feminism's takes on evolutionary psychology.

Sections five and six will focus on dominance-orientation and aggressiveness, respectively, the two innate gender differences that my theory relies on in order to account for the persisting gender disparity in the number of politicians. These two chapters will look at the evolutionary reasons for this traits, the evidence in favor of their existence, and why they are related to men's domination in politics. Using World Values Survey and American National Election Studies data, sections seven and eight will test whether dominance-orientation and aggressiveness, respectively, actually bear on the number of women in politics. The findings will be reviewed in chapter nine, and chapter ten will wrap up with the conclusions and implications.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE PUZZLE AND WHY IT MATTERS

#### What Seems to Be the Problem?

There have been great improvements in women's position in society in most countries around the world, due to economic development, democratization and an increasing penetration of anti-discrimination policies. However, women continue to have low levels of presence in politics across countries very different in terms of human development levels, democratization stage and electoral system, or culture and history. From high-development, single-member district, as-Western-as-it-gets United States and its 14% of women in politics, to medium-development, proportional representation, East European and former communist Romania and its 9.9% female representation in parliament, percentages of women in top political positions worldwide seem to bear little relation to the progress women have made in terms of overall standing in the society. Even the most egalitarian, developed and democratic countries in the world display, at best, a 60%-40% male-to-female ratio in the legislative (Howard Davis 1997; Reynolds 1999; Klausen and Maier 2001; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Lovenduski 2005). The current situation is not an anomaly, but in line with the dismal, and not always in the 'right' direction, evolution of the percentages of women in politics over several decades, and data collected and aggregated by the International Parliamentary Union over 50 years of parliamentary history worldwide stand proof of this (see Table 1.1). Moreover, as of 2003, only 12 women are heads of state and only 5 vicepresidents, out of more than 180 countries in the world ([www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org](http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org) 2003).

Table 2.1 Fifty years of percentages of women in legislative bodies worldwide

Year	1945	1955	1965	1975	1985	1995
Number of parliaments	26	61	94	115	136	176
% of women MPs	3	7.5	8.1	10.9	12	11.6
% of women senators	2.2	7.7	9.3	10.5	12.7	9.4

Source: (www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org 2003)

Before rushing to explain the causes of this particular instance of the gender gap, one should first make the case that this is a problem indeed. Using Skjeie's terminology, we shall first approach the issue under the "doctrine of fairness", namely that a political minority (in this case women) draws certain benefits from being represented in the political system in proportion to their percentage of the population at large, and that it is entitled to these benefits. Secondly, we shall assume the viewpoint of the 'doctrine of utility' and assess the benefits to the system as whole of integrating more women in politics. Lastly, we shall review the dangers associated with the move towards a 'fair' representation of women in politics.

#### The Case for Descriptive Representation

Most often, the first question that comes to mind about the issue is whether it necessarily takes women to represent women. On the one hand, there are 'women's perspectives', namely views on issues that affect first and foremost women. Can men really understand and represent women on issues such as pregnancy, abortion, rape? (Lovenduski 1997) On the other, there are 'women's issues', namely women's views on all issues, "rooted in the particularity of their

experiences in the face of the false universality of men's experiences" (Nelson and Chowdhury 1994 11). Women's perspectives are rooted in their sex, their biology, while women's issues are more about gender, about the social (Lovenduski 1997) construction of sex. Chowdhury gives the example of women that are the only water gatherers in a village and have to walk many miles each day to fetch water. Building a well close to the village does not seem to be of special concern to women if one takes into account only their sex, but it certainly is a women's issue due to their role in that society. Surely, there is no clear line between the two perspectives. For instance, is the American gender gap in opinions on security and the use of force a matter of women's sex, which makes them the target for rape and battery, or their gender, which makes them the primary nurturers?

This sort of differentiation between what two groups (men and women or ethnic and racial groups) can have in common and what they cannot surfaces in other binomials. Swain lists "politics of presence", namely descriptive representation (women representing women or blacks representing blacks), and "politics of ideas", namely substantive representation of interests, or "politics of difference", when a legislator who is descriptively representative of a group focuses on the specific needs of that group, and "politics of commonality", which is about representing interests that do not require shared descriptive attributes because those interests are not so unique that someone outside the group – e.g. a man representing the interests of women – cannot identify with them and thus offer satisfactory representation (Swain 2001, 205). In the feminist literature, Lovenduski points to equality feminism (sometimes named 'equity' or 'liberal' feminism), which implies that "women representatives will become political men", and difference feminism (also known as 'maternal' or 'social' feminism), which believes "women

representatives will change the practice and nature of politics”, as instances of the same divide (Lovenduski , Feminizing, 2).

Theory and term-coining aside, there is evidence that women representatives are farthest away from their male counterparts when it comes to women’s interests. Studies on several European legislative bodies found that women are more divided by party than by gender on most issues, but also that they more supportive of equal opportunities than men and that their presence increases the enactment of women-friendly policies (Lijphart 1991; Mateo Diaz 2002). That is because not only are women more successful than men at the passage of bills concerning the lives of women, but also because when women have a sizeable presence male legislators are more likely to sponsor such bills (Thomas 1994). Even in egalitarian Sweden, the presence of women legislators triggered significant changes in sensitivity to women’s and equality issues by all politicians (Wangnerud 2000).

Women could also better represent women’s interest because they would communicate better with women due to their sharing “some version of a set of common experiences and the outward signs of having lived through those experiences” (Mansbridge 2001, 21). Quite often, men and women are prevented from sharing more of the same experiences not just because of sex and gender roles, but also by how, for instance, the education system is set up. In Britain, until fairly recently, the most influential classes were educated in single-sex schools and got most of their public experience in single-sex organizations, meaning the male - and female - public leaders had experience of the other sex only in private life. (Lovenduski 2005, 63)

When the common experience of two or more communication partners includes subordination, they also find it easier to trust one another, which can go quite far in easing communication between two women. However, identity is fluid and gender is not always the



defining trait. Would a black woman be better represented by a black man or a white woman? Which one would better share her background, understand her problems and gain her trust? Mansbridge reviews the literature on the issue and finds that African-Americans are more likely to contact their representative if the representative was African-American than if he or she was Caucasian, whereas women in districts represented by a woman were not more likely to contact her than female constituents in other districts were contacting their male representative. Therefore, even though women may find easier to trust other women than men, “the size of the male-female female gaps in communication is probably smaller than the size of gaps in communication created by race, nationality or class” (Mansbridge 2001, 22).

Now that we have established men can represent women, but that often women do it better, the issue becomes how many women there should be in political decision-making positions so that women in the general population get the best representation possible. Since most countries face the problem of getting women even beyond a measly 15-20%, talking about ‘fair’ representation seems more like a thought experiment. However, this is also about setting a target to be reached, something concrete that activists for women’s representation rights would shoot for. It is telling the countries with 30-35% of women in parliament are considered ‘success stories’, that the most of the other countries are so much lower that even a 2:1 ratio of male to female MPs (such is an house with a third of women parliamentarians) is considered ‘advanced’. When does the number of women in such a system stop being just a statistic and start being a major influence, a tilting point for the overall manner of doing things? Can women’s issues get fair representation in a system where, despite the presence of women, both the agenda and the style of doing things are still dominated by men?

Important changes can take place even when there are just a few women in the parliament, for instance, because the very presence of 'the other' exposes the inherent male bias in more or less formal conventions of the political system that were taken for granted and considered 'universal' so far. Until 1998, both men and women in the United Kingdom's House of Commons were required to wear a top hat and a tie when making a point of order. How many women does it take to generate major system-wide changes? Do women have to reach 50% or just go beyond token status and reach critical mass for major system-wide changes to take place?

In 1977, Kanter published "Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women", a seminal work on the performance of minority groups in an institutional setting characterized by a majority culture. Under the taxonomy Kanter came up with, an institutional setting without a minority group is 'uniform', when the minority is higher than zero but below 15%, the environment is 'skewed', when the ratio gets to 35:65 the setting is 'tilted', and a minimum 'balance' is reached only when the minority stands at least 40%. According to this roadmap, most parliaments around the world are doing just a little better than skewed, and very few are around the balance point. However, Thomas rejects the idea of investing any specific percentage with being the threshold for balance.

In conclusion, there is no specific figure where the representation of women in the legislative body would be considered fair, and there cannot be one, for any number would carry a heavy degree of arbitrariness. Should it be 50%-50%? Or, to be even closer to the actual gender distribution most populations, should it be something like 49% men - 51% women? But making matters relative will still not make the worldwide average of women in parliament, which hovers around 15% (according to IPU), seem closer to genuine balance. Furthermore, Mateo Diaz finds that when women are under 15-20% in parliament, they are less like women voters than male

MPs are of male voters. Only after surpassing that figure do they get more representative of women and therefore more likely to defend the interests of women in the general population.

### What's in It for Men?

Having more women in politics is not just a matter of fairness and of the benefits to the female constituents, but also of the advantages to men and to the political system in general. If the effect of increasing number of women in decision-making positions in business is any guide, more women in politics could benefit the system. According to a study released in early 2004 by New York-based research group Catalyst, which included 353 companies for four out of five years between 1996 and 2000, “the companies with the highest representation of women in their senior management teams had a 35 percent higher Return on Equity (ROE) and 34 percent higher Total Return to Shareholders (TRS) than companies with the lowest representation” (Stephenson 2004, 2). Cryptic terms aside, this finding supports not only that women in management usually have a beneficial effect on a company's performance, but also that the effect is sizable. According to the same study, the main causes of this effect are the fact that women tend to employ more diverse measures of efficiency than men (“When women are on board, the Conference Board found a major increase in the use of non-financial performance measures – such as innovation and social and community responsibility”), improved ethics (“94 percent of boards with three or more women ensure conflict of interest guidelines, compared with 68 percent of all-male boards”), “improved risk management and audit control”, and higher creativity. A board consisting of white men with similar backgrounds is more prone than a diverse one to fall into the trap of group-thinking, and the same kind of danger applies to a male-dominated party leadership. Furthermore, a uniform political system increases the chances of political alienation on the part of minorities, which brings about decreased respect on their part

for laws enacted without their direct input by legislative bodies they may begin to view as illegitimate (Zimmerman 1994, 3).

Therefore, it is inaccurate to assume that “more players merely cut the political pieces into smaller pieces [...] As often as not, increasing the number and variety of political players changes the nature of politics and generates additional political resources” (Nelson and Chowdhury 1994, 14). In fact, as early as 1869, J.S. Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* read that “The [...] benefit to be expected from giving women the free use of their faculties, by leaving them the free choice of their employments, and opening to them the same field of occupation and the same prizes and encouragements as to other human beings, would be that of doubling the mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity”(1869). In the same vein, Coote claimed that the status quo, which is at the root of the gender ratio of politicians, but is also reinforced by the male domination of politics in a vicious cycle, is not only unfair to women but also puts more pressure than necessary on men and therefore takes its toll on men’s health and life chances(2001), while a 1991 report by a high-level group of OECD experts stated that "effective structural adjustment, including the social transformation needed to achieve economic growth and social cohesion in the 1990s and beyond, depends upon empowering women to play a greater role in shaping structural change. That role implies increased participation in both employment and decision-making structures." (OECD 1991, 17)

### The Road to Hell...

To every action there is a reaction, and the target of a gender-balanced political system or the means employed to reach it can have undesirable side-effects. First and foremost is the danger of making an essentialist argument: if only a woman can represent women, the corollary is that only a man can represent men (Mansbridge 2001, 29). Some argue that politics is like

market, in that politicians will represent any interest, regardless of their own gender or that of the constituents, as long as there are votes in it. This implies there is no need for women to represent women and blacks to represent blacks, for women's votes and blacks' votes would make their interests important enough to white male representatives anyway, or to any other sort of representative, for that matter. However, it is mostly large, coherent and self-conscious interests that get represented, and women are not such a group because they are divided by class, religion, race, region and so on, and that is more often than not the crucial factor, instead of one's gender, in deciding who to vote for (Lovenduski 2005, 37). That is why the fact that the candidate's sex matters little (to both men and women voters) is a double edged sword – constituents do not discriminate against women candidates, but women do not vote more for women candidates either.

Another corollary of “it takes a woman to represent women” could be “it takes blondes to represent blondes”. Joke aside, the fact remains that there is wealth of categories that might claim descriptive representation, namely in accordance to their numbers in the population (Gaspard 2001, 64; Klausen and Maier 2001, 4). To give just an example, young people can make a strong case that the typical politician, over 40 years of age, is hardly representative of them. However, “a history of communicative distrust and [...] uncrystallized interests” provide some answer to the criteria based on which groups can claim the right to be represented descriptively (Mansbridge 2001, 19).

Another anti-essentialist argument is that substantive representation needs representation of interests, not of people. For instance, not all women politicians are feminist and not all male politicians are anti-feminist or neutral, which means a man may sometimes be better for women's interests than a woman. However, as we have seen so far, women in general are more

likely to support women's interests than men. Even the avowedly anti-feminist Margaret "Iron Lady" Thatcher paid close attention to improving women's access to public appointments and consistently increased the budget of the Equal Opportunities Commission during her years in office (Bashevkin 1998).

One important issue facing a political system in the process of including more women is the risk of backlash (Cuijetti 2000; Klausen and Maier 2001, 10). Men and women alike might feel threatened by the process of rapid change that the status quo is undergoing in countries that are striving to have more women politicians, all the more so as that is often done by public-awareness campaigns that try to change long-standing gender roles, by affirmative policies that increase women's chances of acquiring the resources necessary to make into politics, often at the expense of men, or even by strict requirements on the gender distribution of the parties' candidate lists. Even in egalitarian Norway, for instance, severe backlash followed the spectacular success of women candidates in the 1971 local elections, as many newspapers and male politicians charged the women activists with undemocratic tactics and with ruining the electoral process (Bystydzienski 1994, 61). Backlash can come not only from opponents, because there is no pleasing everyone. Women politicians either adopt the rules of the game to be efficient or fight the system. Either way, they can fail to meet the expectations of their supporters for forthcoming and sweeping changes and are thus sometimes charged with betrayal and abandoned by their followers (Lovenduski 2005, 4).

Looking at the international level, Fukuyama claims there is a serious potential danger to feminizing politics, namely having significant numbers of women in key positions. Since women in most advanced democracies are less supportive than men of use of force abroad and defense spending, having more women in politics would make that decreased support show in a

country's foreign policy and, "in anything but a totally feminized world, feminized policies could be a liability" (Fukuyama 1998, 37). In other words, countries with feminized politics would certainly draw advantages from interactions with similar countries and under conditions of peace, but would be weak in dealing with "the occasional Mobutu, Milošević or Saddam" (Fukuyama 1998, 37). Fukuyama is not breaking entirely new ground with this sort of thinking. International relations (IR) scholars have often accused feminists of implying that women are more peaceful than men and that a world run by women would be less violent and morally superior. IR feminist scholars, on the other hand, claim that women's association with peace and moral superiority has a long history of keeping women away from politics because it is 'dirty' (Tickner 1999, 4). Tickner argues that Fukuyama's "leap from aggressive men to aggressive states" is problematic and that "the link between the democratic peace and the political participation of women is tenuous at best" since there are not that many countries where women have reached critical mass (Tickner 1999, 10). In other words, associating men with war and women with peace is problematic given the many instances of peace being maintained by men and the lack of actual experience with women running the world.

#### Something Old, Something New...

Now that we have ascertained that the gender disparity in the number of politicians is of theoretical and practical importance, we can return to trying to account for its existence in the first place. There is a great deal of literature on the issue, where explanations of the low number of women in politics range from social to psychological to economic to electoral factors. However, one thing that is present in most of them is the failure to explain why major variations in their explanatory variables across time or national borders are not matched by variations of even close magnitude in women's situation in politics. Women's current situation in many

countries around the world is unimaginably better compared to just a century ago, and yet most of the same countries have not made it past 20% of women in parliament. All this seems to indicate that there is something deeper at work, something that has not been explored so far and is not entirely explained by social, economic or political factors, but could in fact be rooted in human nature itself. However, before we get to that, we shall review the traditional theories of the gender imbalance in politics and why they have limited explanatory power.



## CHAPTER 3

### TRADITIONAL THEORIES

#### The Income, Workforce and Time Burden Gaps

Across the world, it is usually the women that are unemployed, underemployed, in positions that pay less and get less respect than those traditionally dominated by men, financially dependent on their spouses or single parents. This works against women playing a larger part in politics in two ways: a) fewer financial resources leads to fewer political resources since even in an ideal, corruption-free political system, it takes money to get elected or support your favorite candidate to get elected, and b) the workplace provides a great deal of political resources, because just being out there, as opposed to cooped up in the house, supposedly increases one's chances of one's getting involved in the agora and of being successful in doing so (Gaspard 2001, 57; Matland and Montgomery 2003). However, even when women are employed, they are less likely than men to be so in occupations supportive of political activism. (Lovenduski 2005, 160)

Women in many countries had a taste of the empowerment provided by the workplace during World War II, which is why Rosie the Riveter, the WWII poster showing a working woman and proclaiming "We can do it!", has become a feminist icon. Many working women had to go back to being housewives once their husbands returned from the frontlines, and in some countries a conflict erupted between the traditional views of the men returning from war and the empowered attitudes of women that got to see they could hold most of the jobs normally associated with men. The US society, for instance, experienced a backlash to women's signs of

independence, which is why the 1950s is not a proud period for the US in terms of women's status. However, 20 years later, wage inflation and tight labor markets undid that massive female exit from the workforce (Klausen 2001b, 223).

Problems with this explanation arise when looking at the former communist countries in Eastern Europe, where the two-income family was the norm in communism and still is, but this does not show in the gender ratio of parliamentarians or other top-tier politicians. The solution to the apparent paradox of post-communist Eastern Europe, where the gender gap is not large in terms of employment but is so in politics, is the fact that, although more women take jobs outside the home and dedicate more time to bringing in income, not enough men dedicate more time to sharing the household chores. Balance in contributions to the household income is not met by balance in contribution to household tasks, and this is actually a problem not limited just to former communist countries. The women that gain in terms of income and political skills by taking up jobs lose time resources because they continue to do most of the household work anyway (Inglehart and Norris 2003, 29), and since women have to dedicate more time to caregiving tasks and household chores, they have less time for the public forum (Nechemias 1994, 96). Women usually advance slower in a career, political or not, because of their sex, which means they have to carry and give birth to children, and because of their gender and the prevalent gender roles, which mean they will also be the primary caretakers.

However, the female participation in the workforce does not seem correlated with women in politics. Howard Davis looks at 15 countries across Europe from 1950 to 1985 and finds a measly .02 Pearson correlation coefficient between women in government and change in workforce participation. In southern Europe, the percentages of working women almost doubled during the period in question, but the percentages of women in politics did not budge (Howard

Davis 1997, 33). Inglehart and Norris' *Rising Tide* goes beyond Europe by using World Values Survey data and still finds only low correlations, both across time and national borders, between women in the workforce and women in politics.

However, women and men have different time burdens not just because of household chores, but also because of the widespread belief that it's a woman's duty, more so than a man's, to care for children, and because it's the women that have to be pregnant, give birth to a child and feed it in the first months. As a result, women politicians tend to be older and have no or fewer children as compared to male counterparts (Thomas). However, this cannot explain why there is so little variation in terms of women in politics between countries where the female caretaker stereotype is still very strong and there aren't many ways a woman can reduce the time she needs to spend caring for her children, and countries where openly stating such stereotypes is not quite acceptable and there are institutions are trying to correct for it, such as having also paternity, not just maternity leaves. Moreover, the increase in longevity and reduction in the number of pregnancies have been quite significant over the past decades - as early as 1970, only 1/7 of a woman's time was spent on maternity (Hubert 2001, 149).

### Education

Education is one of the strongest predictors of an individual's levels of political participation (Putnam 2001, 43), and this holds when measured either in absolute or in relative terms. No matter the general level of education in a country, schooling will endow one with a better understanding of politics and, consequently, stronger feelings that one's opinion counts, which is why it's usually the less educated that feel most alienated from politics. In terms of relative levels of education, those with more of it will always have some sort of advantage over the others, despite the overall level in the country in question (Niemi and Weisberg 2001, 25).

Women have a long history of being denied the same level of education as men, or even of being kept out of school entirely. Rule looks at 23 countries between 1987 and 1991 and finds strong correlation between a country's percent of women college graduates and women's proportion in parliament (Rule 1994, 21). However, the evidence is mixed, since Howard Davis finds a Pearson correlation coefficient for women in government and change in the number of women in higher education of just .17 for 15 European nations between 1950 and 1985, and theorizes this might have something to do with "the type of educational programs into which women are channeled. European women are still concentrating upon a narrow range of subjects, reflecting their traditional interests" (Howard Davis 1997, 33) Any way one looks at it, women have caught up and are even starting to surpass men in number of higher education degrees in several highly-industrialized countries (Inglehart and Norris 2003), so falling back on women's lower levels of education to account for low levels of women in parliament is highly questionable.

#### Socialization, Gender Roles and Stereotypes

The gender roles that most women and men are socialized into are posited to work against women's participation in politics on two fronts. On the demand side, party gatekeepers (those that have a say in who gets to run for office on behalf of the party and who does not make the cut) keep women away and prefer a man, either because they believe the former has lower chances of winning the electoral contest or because they plain don't like having a woman candidate and feel a woman's place is not in politics. "If they can't see you in their social environment, they don't want to select you" and "What they want is a nice, young white boy who they can see marrying their granddaughter" are two quotes from interviews with British female Conservative MPs that sum up these sort of attitudes very nicely (Lovenduski 2005, 79).

On the supply side, since women are generally raised to be appeasing and men to act assertive (Tannen 1990, 46), more men than women are interested in politics, which is more of a game of imposing oneself than of being nice.

A wealth of stereotypes supposedly present in the minds of the electorate and the politicians - be they male or female - have been invoked to account for the lack of progress in women's political participation: politics is dirty and women are pure and should not sully themselves with it; or, politics is tough, women could not handle it. These are just two examples of the more 'delicate' stereotypes, for there are also those that plainly say a woman's place is in the kitchen, the way traditional German culture delimited the roles of women as *kinder*, *kuche*, and *kirche* (children, kitchen, and church) (Zimmerman 1994, 4) More than a few would like to see the return of the gynaeceum<sup>3</sup>.

Lovenduski finds evidence of stereotypes working against women on the demand side of the recruitment equation in British politics. Even as late as 2001, hardly any male candidates were inquired about how they will reconcile family duties and a political career, but that sort of question showed up quite a few times when female potential candidature were being interviewed. "One candidate realized she had lost when asked what she would do with her children while campaigning. She replied that, if selected, she would of course have them adopted, an ironic comment that was lost on the selection committee." (Lovenduski 2005, 74)

Another damaging stereotype with a long history is that women are more emotive and "closer to nature", while men are more rational and capable of abstract thinking. As a result, women have been confined to the private sphere, the family, while men were supposedly the only ones able to become true, 'disembodied' citizens (Lovenduski 2005, 25). This is not limited

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<sup>3</sup> Part of the house reserved for women in ancient Greece, which came to stand in feminist literature for the confinement of women to the private sphere).

to Aristotle's views of agora, but is found in seminal political science works in our time. For instance, Weber's model of bureaucracy, explains Lovenduski's review of the feminist literature on the issue, has as main characteristics "*hierarchy*, routine, accountability, regulation, professionalism and *impartiality*" (my emphases), features associated more with the male breadwinner than the housewife.

However, there is little evidence of voters actually being biased against women even close to the extent required to generate the such gender gaps in the number of politicians (Darcy, Welch et al. 1994; Hoecker 1994; Lakeman 1994). Matland and Montgomery find no difference in the chances of male and female candidates to be elected once they are out there and communicate with the electorate, and concludes that stereotypes are just that – stereotypes – and fade away in the face of real, living and breathing candidates(2003). Lovenduski analyzes the voting patterns of the British and concludes they vote not according to the candidate's sex, but their party, as well as that, once women incumbents were in place, they were just as difficult to be defeated as their male peers (Lovenduski 2005). In fact, Wilcox looked at three Eurobarometer waves (1975, 1983 and 1987) and found that, if anything, people seem to be in favor of equality of opportunities for women in the public sphere. Before jumping to conclusion about how open-minded about women people were even 20-30 years ago, one should keep in mind that there might be some halo effect at work here. In the US, Wilcox et al. also find that the last 30 years saw large increase in the percentage of Americans willing to vote a woman into office. (Wilcox, Stark et al. 2003, 44)

All in all, negative gender stereotypes held by the people already in power or electorate hostility towards female candidates do not quite stand as explanations of the low rates of female participation in politics, and are even more dubious when we confront the progress of culture of

gender equality and anti-discrimination with the progress (or, rather, lack thereof) in the numbers of women in politics. Relying on socialization and gender roles to account for the persistently low number of women in politics is a tricky feat because the literature on the issue focuses exclusively on nurture and culture, and not at all on nature. The problem with nurture in this particular case is that there are great variations in cultures in general, and child socialization practices in particular, across time and space, but there is not nearly enough variation in the number of women in politics to match them. This brings us back to the point made at the end of the previous chapter, that there seems to be something deeper at work, something quite resilient to social, economic or cultural variation.

### Religion

Most religions are rich sources of stereotypes damaging to women's emancipation, and it shows. Religiosity (which Inglehart and Norris operationalize as church attendance, denominational allegiance and faith in religious authorities) is a factor inhibiting women from entering politics, particularly in Catholic and Islamic societies, yet the increasing secularization of most societies (a trend stronger among women), is not as effective as expected in promoting women in politics (Mayer and Smith 1985; Inglehart and Norris 2003). In other words, strong religiosity is bad for women in politics, but low religiosity does not live up to the expectations.

### Male Establishment and Incumbency

One can make the argument that the time lag required for the progress in women's position in society to show to an equal extent in politics has been underestimated. One reason for that could be that incumbents, who are still overwhelmingly male in a most political systems, are difficult to displace, in particular in countries with systems that favors constituent services and, consequently, personal ties between constituents and their representative, such as the US

(Shugart 1994, 39). Low turnover rates also mean that newcomers, be they men or women, are more quickly and easily ‘conditioned’ into the already existing practices of doing politics (Lovenduski 2005, 79), which stifles change. The incumbents are part of a more or less formal “old boys’ club”, with established practices and ties between its members, and opposed by its very nature to unconventional newcomers, such as women or other sorts of political minorities. Under this system, the women that actually get into the system have a very hard time networking and accruing informal power.

However, claims that more time needs to pass before we can ask for significant progress in women’s numbers in politics are weakened by several counter-arguments. First of all, conditions can arise for women to break the cycle and make significant progress in a leap. Chowdhury et al, for instance, find evidence from 43 countries that women have better chances of getting to power when the political parties were dormant or in disarray during some major regime event. Even without such major events, smaller factors can come together to deal a serious blow to incumbents, as it happened in the 1992 US elections, also known as the “Year of the Woman”, when an unusually high number of open seats and a general anti-incumbency feeling generated a spike in the number of women elected to Congress (Wilcox 1994). Second, what is even more important is that once women gain some ground, evidence shows they are able to hold on to it. A study on Scotland found that, once women were elected into office they were just as difficult as male incumbents to dislodge (Studlar and Welch), which means there should have been more incremental progress over time. Third, parties can start to see women inclusion as an electoral advantage and thus change from an impediment to women in politics to an ally. For the British Labour, the symbolic effect of women's success in the 1997 general election was thought to be an asset for the party, leading to an important connection between the



presence of women and political modernization and providing a campaign issue against the Conservatives (Russel 2003).

Therefore, even allowing for a longer time lag for women's position in politics to catch up with their improved position in society, more change should have happened in more countries by now. Also, one cannot disregard the former communist bloc, where the number of women in politics does not seem to have benefited much from starting a political system anew.

### History of Unequal Rights

Even advanced democracies, the champions of democratization, development, gender equality, human rights and so on, have a few skeletons in the closet, one of which is women's situation only decades ago. When thinking of complete and utter subjugation of women by men, most people think back to medieval times. However, even as late as the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women in most of Europe and North America were denied by law such basic rights as divorcing their husbands, filing lawsuit for obtaining allowance or getting their assets back after divorce, getting custody of their children or using earnings from their own work as they saw fit (any money they made was automatically considered the property of their husbands) (Popescu 2004, 24-7). As for political rights, the United States ratified the right to vote of blacks in 1870, less than 5 years after it stopped considering slaves, but it took another 49 years for women to be enfranchised. Even more recently, Switzerland did not fully enfranchise women until 1972.

Surely, one cannot expect equality between men and women to blossom from such bedrock. However, the lack of progress even after many of these problems were eliminated casts serious doubt as to their explanatory power today. Gross political inequality persisted for five to ten decades of full voting rights for women in most countries (Klausen and Maier 2001), such as was the case of French women, which recorded no improvement in their political representation

since they were enfranchised in 1945 until the parity principle was put into place in the late 1990s (Lovenduski 2005,133). Also, this historical approach has no explanatory power regarding the generally low levels of women political participation, or variation thereof, in the former communist countries, where both genders were quite equally deprived of genuine political rights (Matland and Montgomery 2003).

There is also the fact that, despite the historical gap in terms of political and civil rights, women's voting frequency nowadays is very close to that of men, and it usually took women no more than a few decades to catch up in this respect once they were enfranchised. Women also did not have much problem catching up with men in other forms of political participations besides voting. Inglehart and Norris look at political participation – traditional political activism (elections and parties), civic activism (community associations and voluntary organizations) and protest politics (demonstrations, strikes, petitions) - and find a consistent and ubiquitous gender gap in it, but one that is “usually modest” (Inglehart and Norris 2003, 102). If the history of unequal political, civil and social rights did not stop women from making so much progress in terms of political participation, one can hardly claim it is the reason behind women's poor progress in terms of being elected into office.

#### Electoral Rules and Party Ideology and Centralization

Why is it that United States, one of the most developed countries in the world and at the avant-garde of feminism and anti-discrimination, is marred by a mere 14.9% of women in its legislative body<sup>4</sup>? This question has led many scholars to delve into the rules of the electoral system in search of the answer, and what they found is that women do worst in terms of electoral success in single-member-districts (SMD) (Norris 1987; Rule 1987; Matland and Dwight Brown

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<sup>4</sup> According to the International Parliamentary Union data on women in national parliaments, there are 80 women out of a total of 535 legislative representatives - 66 out of 435 in the House of Representatives and 14 out of 100 in the Senate – as of November 2004. (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>)

1992; Rule and Norris 1992; Rule and Zimmerman 1994), and that this is because a woman's chance of getting elected into office is directly related with district magnitude – the smaller the number of people that get to represent an electoral unit, the smaller the chances one of them will be a woman (Shugart 1994). This is not written in stone, since size and even direction of the correlation depend on the level of the election (national or subnational) (Studlar and Welch 1991) and the interaction with the number of parties running in the election (Matland 1993; Darcy, Welch et al. 1994), but the general rule stands – the smaller the electoral pie to be shared, the less likely women will get a piece.

Another factor that can influence the percentage of women that get on the candidate slate is whether the electoral system is proportional representation (PR) or winner-take-all. Even when elections are in multi-member districts, if the rule is that the party with the most votes gets all the seats, the parties will be less inclined to risk everything by including on their electoral slate a woman, which is thought to lack the universal appeal of the standard, namely male, politician (Norris 1987). Proportional representations benefits women representation in politics also because of what has been termed the “contagion effect”: one party takes a risk and includes women among its candidates and is not hurt by that in the elections, or even benefits from it, which convinces the other parties to follow suit (Matland and Studlar 1996). This is more likely to happen in a PR system than in a majoritarian one for two reasons: a) in a winner-take-all system, nobody wants to be the first to risk it because slipping even a little in the electoral preferences in an electoral district can mean losing the whole district, and b) a winner-take-all system is usually associated with a two-party system, while PR does not stifle excessively the existence of third parties that do matter (although things can depend to a large extent to the

electoral threshold for making into the parliament), which means that the more political actors there are, the higher the chances one of them will try something new.

One electoral rule that has been found to be associated with higher percentages of women in politics is having some sort of preference voting, such as when voters have the option of voting either for the entire party list, with the party leadership determining the rank-ordering of its candidates, or directly for one or more candidates. For instance, Shugart finds that, in 1982, legislative assemblies with 20% or more female representation have “varying degrees of preference voting” and that “there is a substantial cluster of closed-list systems among PR systems with the lowest rate of female representation” (Shugart 1994, 37). Shugart also looked at other factors that have an influence on the presence of women in politics, and found that presidential systems are not very hospitable to women politicians.

The parties’ openness to women candidates is not just a matter of structural constraints, but also of their ideological leaning and internal organization. Norris (1987) observes that, as early as 1955, Duverger wrote in *The Political Role of Women* that leftist parties were more supportive of women and that women in most countries were to the left of men on the ideological spectrum. Therefore, this might be an issue of demand, in that there are more women in leftist parties because women prefer to enter politics via a leftist rather than a rightist party (Inglehart and Norris 2003). As for internal party organization styles, several studies have found that party centralization benefits women because, if the party leaders decide to have more women candidates, they can actually implement the decision (Matland 1993; Norris 1993; Darcy, Welch et al. 1994; Norris 2001).

In light of all these theories and data, it becomes clear why women still fare poorly in US politics - single-member-districts, two-party system and low party centralization levels.

However, the literature on the effects of the electoral system and party features is limited to explaining cross-national or temporal variation. By its very comparative nature, it cannot come up with the cause for women's simultaneous low presence in politics in countries with very different electoral systems. Furthermore, this approach is unsuitable when including in the analysis low-development countries, since electoral system effects are strongest in post-industrial societies and weakest in developing countries, where their effects are 'drowned out' by other problems facing women in politics (Norris 2004)

#### Other factors

One explanation of the low number of women in the politics of so many countries is the women's failure to vote as a bloc. More than a few feminists have decried the failure of women's parties to mushroom in more than just a handful of countries or to make a difference when they did appear on the political scene (Popescu 2004), but the fact of the matter is that many other factors besides one's gender are better predictor's of one's vote. Therefore, women do not vote as a bloc (and, on that note, neither do men as part of some sort of male conspiracy to keep women subjugated) and cannot put real pressure on the system the way ethnic or racial minorities can (Nechemias 1994)

Some scholars took the path-dependent approach and looked for the particular factors and events that make a country be an outlier in the graphs based on the theories reviewed so far. For instance, changes in the constitution and in party rules in Germany (Lemke 2001), distance from Third-World labor force in the sixties that the encouraged the participation of women in the workforce in Sweden (Hubert 2001), a broad-based, well-organized women's movement dedicated to having more women elected in local and national offices in Norway (Bystydzienski 1994) are cited as key factors in changing the levels of representation of women in the respective

countries. Also, sometimes you do not need complex interaction diagrams, but one extraordinary woman to rise through the ranks to a top political position and have a significant effect on women in politics.

When all else fails, some scholars turn to the all-encompassing ‘political culture’ as the key independent variable. If operationalized thoroughly, political culture breaks down to a sum of many, inter-related factors, most of which are subsumed in the theories reviewed up until now. Such operationalization is necessary, because political culture is all too often the ‘residual’ in explaining variation (Howard Davis 1997, 8), but the very cultural variety that this approach assumes makes it unsuitable for explaining low levels of women in politics in so many different countries.

#### Need for a Fresh Approach

Although the existing theories as to the male domination of politics make a lot of sense and are often backed by data, the fact remains that they are often weakened by the low correlations between the significant cross-national or temporal variation in their explanatory variables, on the one hand, and the much smaller changes in the dependent variable, namely the number of women in politics (Gaspard 2001, 60). Based on extensive data from the World Values Survey, Inglehart and Norris conclude that, “despite the major changes in lifestyles, in the workforce, and in the home and family discussed earlier, women continue to be less engaged than men in many common modes of political life” (Inglehart and Norris 2003, 118). That is why only when affirmative policies (meant to compensate for the impediments on the supply side of women’s path to politics) and quotas (designed to remove the impediments in the demand part of the equation) are implemented do women’s numbers in politics break the 15%-20% glass ceiling that plagues so many political systems (Norris 2001). Offe posits that the plateau that women’s

numbers in politics seem to have hit in so many countries could be due to the fact that the last stretch of the road is the hardest. However, this might also mean that the traditional tools used so far to promote more women in politics, which we have reviewed, can only go so far, and that progress beyond this limit requires a fresh approach, one that can illuminate the factors not affected by traditional policies.

If fewer women than men are interested enough in politics to want to enter it, and this is a universal phenomenon, then the political interest gender gap takes the spotlight as a potential cause for the low presence of women in politics in political systems that are so different on other dimensions. The reason this factor has been explored so little, and never with an evolutionary psychology approach, is that speaking of innate gender differences (and differences that may be responsible for the male domination of politics and society in general, no less) is a highly charged issue. Claiming that there is such a thing as human nature is still frowned upon in most of social science research, and claiming that women's 'natural' predispositions might play a part in their subjugation by men is downright heretical among all but a handful of feminist scholars. As a former student in a gender-studies master's program, I know that first-hand.

Using the insights of evolutionary psychology, I shall explore if innate gender differences in levels of dominance-orientation and aggressiveness play a part in the political-interest gender gap and, consequently, in the gender imbalance in the number of politicians in so many countries around the world. However, before we get to that, the following two sections will lay the groundwork by explaining the principles of evolutionary psychology, why our evolutionary past would build up innate gender differences, and how feminists and other scholars feel about that.

## CHAPTER 4

### ENTER EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

#### Basic Principles

It is the purpose of any living thing to survive and leave its genetic heritage in as many offspring as possible, because the individuals with genes that did not promote survival and reproduction to a sufficient extent did not pass on the said genes. Therefore, when for various reasons a mutation changes an individual's genes in a way that improves reproductive fitness (the number of offspring), that individual will have more offspring than those without the mutation and, eventually, the mutation spreads in the populations at the expense of genes less 'useful' for survival and reproduction (Wilson 1975; Trivers 1985; Buss 1994; Ridley 1997; Pinker 2002). Throughout the evolutionary history of the lineage that has led to *Homo sapiens sapiens*, a great deal of mutations have shaped what we are today, and not just in terms of the body. Mutations can influence one's reproductive fitness not just by making the body better suited for reproduction or survival, but also by generating "mental modules" (Pinker 2002), namely creating predispositions on how to best deal with a particular situation, predispositions that have genetic basis and are therefore inheritable. "We all come from a long unbroken line of ancestors that managed to get and to hold on to reproductively valuable mates long enough, to fend off rivals, and to solve problems that would have impeded their reproduction. We carry in us the sexual heritage of those successes". (Buss 1994, 5)

This runs counter to the widely spread belief in the *tabula rasa*, known in English as the "blank slate", namely the belief that people's minds are like white sheets of paper at birth, with



nothing already written on them, and that we are the exclusive products of culture. While evolutionary psychology does not hold the opposite, namely that we are all nature and that nurture is irrelevant, it does hold that the end product is result of our innate, universal predispositions acting in the context of each individual's particular environment. That is why cross-cultural studies have found universal human emotions, proof of the underlying "human nature" that crosses any cultural barrier (Kenrick, Trost et al. 1996; Pinker 2002). A smile may have subtle nuances in one culture that are lost in another, but in no culture will someone charge you with a weapon while smiling.

### Sexual Selection

Evolutionary pressures are usually not the same on the males and females, and humans are no exception. Countless trials and errors have created taste buds that appreciate fats and sweets and dislike what is sour and bitter in both men and women, because the evolutionary benefits and costs of eating the right things have been the same for men and women. However, the evolutionary pressures are not gender blind when it comes to finding and retaining a mate. Therefore, while the general principles of evolution are responsible for human nature, the principles of sexual selection are responsible for male and female natures.

Sexual selection two-fold: intra-sexual and inter-sexual. In the first instance, males compete with males and females compete with females for getting and keeping the best mate possible, while in the latter, males and females compete with another for getting the best 'deal' out of their relation (be it casual sex or long-term partnership).

Two stags locking horns in combat is the prototypical image of this intrasexual competition. The characteristics that lead to success in contests of this kind, such as greater strength, intelligence, or attractiveness to allies, evolve because the victors are able to mate more often and hence pass on more genes. In the other type of sexual

selection, members of one sex choose a mate based on their preferences for particular qualities in that mate. These characteristics evolve in the other sex because animals possessing them are chosen more often as mates, and their genes thrive. (Buss 1994, 3)

In the case of many species, including humans, both intra- and inter-sexual selection come down to the fact that, when it comes to the number of offspring one can have, women's primary limitation is how many children they can carry themselves, while for men it is how many women they can impregnate. As the joke goes, both the chicken and the pig contribute to a breakfast of ham and eggs but, while the first is involved, the second is committed. This crucial difference between men and women is the main culprit when it comes to men's innately higher average level of dominance orientation and aggressiveness, as compared to women. However, before we go to the evidence of these traits actually being present in the population and why they might play a big part in women's low presence in politics, we will review how evolutionary psychology holds up in the face of the many critiques and counter-arguments.

### Dangerous Research

Human history is a long list of put-downs. First Galileo displaced people from being the center of the universe and special in God's plan. At least, people thought, we are different from animals, but then came Darwin and *Homo sapiens sapiens* became another species<sup>5</sup>. Finally, the development of the evolutionary sciences showed that people are not the end purpose of evolution because evolution is not teleological, and that they are not the pinnacle of it either, since humans' intelligence and sociability are not superior in themselves, but just evolutionary strategies and should be judged solely in terms of the reproductive success. We may have

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<sup>5</sup> While *Homo sapiens* is the popular term for the human species, the exact name of the modern man, the earliest evidence of which is from around 130,000 years ago, is *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

conquered almost any environment found on earth and there are over 6 billions of us, but ants, for instance, greatly outnumber us and are our equals in terms of total biomass (Wilson 1975).

Evolutionary arguments are feared not just because they chip away at our ego as a species, but also because there is quite a history of misuse of evolutionary arguments by devastating ideologies. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, social Darwinists like Herbert Spencers twisted Charles Darwin's ideas of natural selection "to explain and justify everything from class stratification to the domination of much of the world by white Europeans" (Fukuyama 1998, 28). In fact, Spencer tried to convince the world that helping the poor and the less fit only interferes with evolution, for only the biologically less 'fit' are unable to secure a decent living.

There were not just attempts to justify the status quo with the principles of evolution, but also to 'improve' on it. Darwin's cousin Francis Galton suggested that human evolution should be sped up by impeding the breeding of the less fit, something that came to be known as eugenics. This idea was not merely the rambling of a misguided scientist. Over the following couple of decades, "laws were passed that called for the involuntary sterilization of delinquents and the <<feeble-minded>> in Canada, the Scandinavian countries, thirty American states, and, ominously, Germany". (Pinker 2002, 16) Later on, misguided beliefs in some sort of genetic purity and in the genetic superiority of one race over another provided the perverted foundations of the Nazism's attempt to have an all-Arian nation of supermensch. Nazi Germany, however, is not holding the monopoly on founding racial prejudice on distorting the neutral scientific principles of evolutionism. Instead, it is the tip of the iceberg. Evolution as the process of adaptation was misinterpreted as an explanation for intellectual, moral and technological progress and, since the white race was the leader of the world in terms of intellectual and

technological achievements, and Christianity is considered the morally superior religion, it has been tempting for many – and still is - to consider the non-white “rungs on an evolutionary ladder between the apes and Europeans” (Pinker 2002, 15).

It is not the fault of Darwin and his followers that such things happen, because the evolutionary science, same as evolution itself, is neutral and does not provide any moral guiding principles. Nuclear test detonations are dangerous research, not trying to find out what makes people tick, regardless of their culture and upbringing. On the other hand, denying the existence of an immutable human nature and believing instead in the blank slate and total malleability has more than proven its capacity for destruction in the communist regimes.

Trying to remake human nature on a grand scale is inherently totalitarian. Assuming that people are entirely malleable, that the desire to acquire property is just a capitalist fad and the preference for privacy is a bourgeois whim, made the communist regime impose the most drastic – and sometimes ridiculous – social engineering policies on whole nations. Communist grade-school manuals praised the ants and the bees for the efficiency they drew from their highly collective organization – which is somewhat ironic, to emphasize the ‘nature’ of bees and ants in order to deny the existence of a nature in humans. However, bees and ants have strongly collective social organization for good reasons – evolutionary reasons, while people do not have it because of their different evolutionary path. That is why Marxism and the belief that people can be convinced to work primarily for the collective good, and not their own or that of their immediate kin, is now “almost universally recognized as an experiment that failed, at least in its worldly implementations” (Pinker 2002, 296) E.O. Wilson, the father of sociobiology and world’s expert on ants, said it all about Marxism: “Wonderful theory. Wrong species” (Getlin 1994)

Just because evolutionary psychology is amoral does not make it immoral. The evolutionary sciences have been charged with the ‘moral decay’ of modern world because putting into people’s heads they are made by God in his image, but run by their genes, sets them free from moral restraints. According to such critiques, people will increasingly claim it’s not their fault, but their genes’. However, the excuses for shirking responsibility and attacks on free will have had more to do in our time with environment than with genes. “It’s the society’s fault” or “abusive parents” are the preferred defense in courts, not genes. In the same vein, religious figures accuse the evolutionary sciences with an alleged corrosion of the moral sense because it takes away from people a sense of a higher meaning in life - saying we are just biological products does not seem like a very inspiring frame of mind (Pinker 2002, 139).

Evolutionary psychology is also accused of ruining the ‘moral fabric’ of society because it shows how morally reprehensible actions can be ‘natural’, an accusation that is twice misguided. First of all, such finger-pointing is a textbook case of the ‘naturalistic fallacy’ – just because something is it does not mean that it ought to be. Just because rape, murder, aggression, deceiving and many other impulses nobody should can be proud of are ‘natural’ - they can be valid survival and reproductive strategies under particular conditions - does not mean they are acceptable. Secondly, evolutionary psychology also shows how actions considered moral – love of kin and of mate, or altruism, for instance – are just as ‘natural’. In fact, Ridley theorizes in *Origins of Virtue* that it is part of human nature to consider altruistic acts ‘moral’ and to praise them because this increases the chances of trust and cooperation among people, something useful in highly sociable animals such as humans.

A lot of these accusations against the evolutionary sciences are generated by the jargon, which suggests conscious intention where there may be none (Gowaty 1997, 358). That is why

when stories about evolutionary psychology break into the mainstream media and the general public reads about ‘evolution’, ‘the selfish gene’, ‘mating strategies’, ‘genetic heritage’, ‘mutation’ and so on, misguided reactions, some of them hostile, can be expected.

### Reductionism and Determinism

In fact, ‘the selfish gene’ is one of the terms that really went beyond specialty publications to become a misleading buzzword and has generated more than a few accusations of determinism and reductionism, of the “we are not run by this or that gene” kind. To make matters worse, it somehow got mixed in a lot of people’s minds with the pop theory of Freud’s unconscious motives paradigms (Pinker 2002, 191) and got people thinking we are some kind of zombies that run around and do things for reasons they are not aware of or are even against their will – their ‘free will’.

Evolutionary psychology has largely failed to make clear outside its field that traits are not “written in genetic stone” (Waage 1997, 547), that behavior is not entirely predictable, but always probabilistic, depending on the environment, for what makes the human species stand out is its impressive adaptability. That is why the feminists are right to say that “Biology is not destiny” and the evolutionist are also right to rebut: “No, but it’s a high statistical probability”. However, the bulk of feminists are not right in opposing evolutionary psychology and in denying the existence of innate gender differences. Only a full exploration of the causes for the male domination in society, an exploration that does not limit itself to nurture but also goes into nature, can be the basis of the most effective policies for gender equality. That is not a call for policies aimed at changing human nature, for such a thing is impossible and we have seen the evil that can come of it, but for policies that try to compensate in the environment for any innate gender differences that have a negative effect on gender equality, in the society in general and in

politics in particular. “Evolution is surely the most deterministic for those unaware of it” (Alexander 1987, 40)

If we look at the link between genes and behavior in terms of probabilities, we are no more driven by our genes than we are by our environment. They say students do not choose what topic to study, but rather the topic chooses them. The bulk of political science foreign students in the US, for instance, *decide* to focus their research on country or region of origin. I myself place the origin of my interest in gender studies in the fact that I spent my entire four years of high school in a class with thirty girls and five boys. One can hardly complain about that sort of determinism, all the more so when one is aware of the chain of events. A lot of people seem strangely convinced of the determinism of genes, yet everybody knows of children who are nothing like their parents. Nobel-prize winners, to give just an example, are the children of ordinary or even low-education people. Pinker tells the following story:

“When the biochemist (and radical scientist) George Wald was solicited for a semen sample by William Shockley’s sperm bank for Nobel Prize-winning scientists, he replied, <<If you want sperm that produces Nobel Prize winner, you should contact people like my father, a poor immigrant tailor. What have my sperm given the world? Two guitarists!>>” (Pinker 2002, 153)

### Other Critiques

Some opponents of evolutionary psychology do not claim that there is no human nature, just that since hunter-gatherer bands stopped roaming the earth and agriculture started the appearance of civilizations, culture has become a much stronger factor in influencing people’s predispositions, to the point where it drowns out human nature (Pratto 1996, 181). In other words, ‘savages’ may be the prisoners of human nature, but modern people are the products of culture - a human artifact - not of genes. What this view misses is that, despite the amazing

variety of cultures found by anthropologists around the world, there is a core set of human behaviors that is the same in all of them. Second, culture itself is an evolutionary strategy that can confer an advantage on a group, the same way a physical feature or psychological predisposition is an evolutionary strategy that can confer an advantage on an individual. People's behavior is indeed dependent on their culture, and that is because humans are highly adaptable animals - "learning culturally particular attitudes, ideologies and behavioral repertoires seems necessary for performing behaviors that are adaptive within one's culture" (Pratto 1996, 200). In other words, "when in Rome..."

Another popular idea is that human nature is essentially good, but that culture and civilization took that away from us, that all the evils of society, including the subjugation of women, are the result of forgetting our 'true' nature (Ridley 1997). From Rousseau's "gentle savage" to the syrupy depictions of Native Americans living in harmony with nature and their peers, such views are denying the basic fact that human nature is about surviving and reproducing, not about being in tune with Mother Nature. Fukuyama reviews extensive anthropological and historical studies showing that, if anything, primitive societies were more violent (in terms of inter-group wars and intra-group murders) than the world today: "surveys of ethnographic data show that only 10-13 percent of primitive societies never or rarely engaged in war or raiding: the others engaged in conflict continuously or at least less than yearly intervals" (Fukuyama 1998, 26).

Other problems that evolutionary psychology has been charged with are that non-evolutionary models yield similar ideas, which means that evolutionary ideas are besides the point, and that evolutionary claims are not in fact testable, given the trouble so far in coming up with the actual link between genes and behavior and with the genes in humans responsible for



this or that trait (Gowaty 1997b, 10). We have mapped the human genome and there seems to be significant progress in isolating the sets of genes responsible for obesity or the likelihood of having a heart attack by the age of 50, but nothing yet on genes linked to aggressiveness or dominance-orientation, for instance. However, shows Gowaty, these critiques are unfounded. Natural selection hypotheses about behavioral variation have been tested in non-human subjects and, while there are experiments that should not or just cannot be performed on humans, it does not deny the fact that “clever observers are able to collect systematic observations controlled against their perceived or possible biases to test the prediction about naturally selected functions of human behavior” (Gowaty 1997b, 12). As for claiming that ideas derived from evolutionary psychology are superfluous, it is the accusations that are redundant, since political correctness already provides better ammunition to opponents of the idea of human nature and innate gender differences.

## CHAPTER 5

### FEMINISM AND EVOLUTIONISM

#### Feminism's Evolutionist Schism

As we have seen, there is no shortage of opponents of evolutionary biology, and quite a few of those are feminists. The dispute between evolutionists and feminism is as old as evolutionism itself, given Susan Blackwell's criticizing Darwin's *Descent of Man* in *Sexes Throughout Nature*, published in 1875, just 4 years after Darwin's book first appeared. The basic difference between the evolutionary sciences and feminism is that the former study what is while the latter is also concerned with what ought to be, meaning some of the conclusions of evolutionary psychology are difficult to swallow for some feminists. As a result, a schism of sorts took place among feminists: some believe that accepting men and women are inherently different is a dangerous path, while others consider there are innate gender differences between men and women and that it is a good thing.

Unfortunately, some of the anti-evolutionist feminists turn out to be the ones going down a dangerous path when the desire to improve society and belief in the blank slate paradigm are used as arguments in giving the state the power to mold its citizens in the name of gender equality. Communism denied people's individualism and desire for wealth and some feminists are attempting to deny men's and women's differences. Pinker quotes a dialogue from 1975 between icon feminists Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir, where the latter says the following: "No woman should be authorized to stay at home to raise her children. Society should be totally different. Women should not have that choice, precisely because if there is such a

choice, too many women will make that one”. Those are strong words from someone who has made a career of accusing men with patronizing women.

### Feminist Contributions to Evolutionism

Not all feminists are against evolutionary psychology. In fact, some of them are evolutionary scholars themselves, and their feminist inclination led them to have a fresh approach to the field. As such, some of them have made significant contributions to evolutionary psychology, mainly by questioning the idea of the passive or, at most, coy female in the mating process, which was the dominant paradigm in evolutionary psychology not so long ago. Instead, they showed that sexual selection is just as significant for females as it is for males because women are not just passive resources that men compete for, but in fact respond to being treated by males as resources, they are active partners, and they have a say in the mating game (Smuts 1996; Gowaty 1997; Waage 1997). This shift of focus has shed new light on why men and women have different mating strategies. For instance,

Females, in general, know who their offspring are (males often do not). Females can and do have influences on their offspring that transcend, complement, or contradict the genetic influence provided by males through DNA and paternal care. To the extent that daughters reproduce their mother's (grandmother's) patterns of influence, they take part in a powerful lineage of evolutionary transmission, one that males rarely, if ever, participate in. (Waage 1997, 543)

The fresh approach of women evolutionists has also uncovered other problems in this field of study, such as the over-generalization and bias in the selection of primate species for study. Especially in the early years of the primatology – the 1950s and 1960s – some researchers chose particular primate species, such as the baboon and chimpanzee because their social organization resembled that of humans (Snowdon 1997, 281; Gowaty 1997b, 24).

## CHAPTER 6

### THE THEORY

A gender gap in interest in politics and, consequently, the desire to enter politics, can create a gender imbalance in the candidate pools and, subsequently, in the number of elected or appointed officials. Women's absence from the pool of eligibles is one of the primary factors limiting their recruitment to office (Darcy, Welch et al. 1994) and, while others believe increasing the supply of women results in small gains in representation, they agree that doing so “has highlighted the resistance to women candidates and brought into sharp relief the need for policies to increase demand” (Lovenduski 2005, 92)

As we have seen from the literature review, when it comes to women's access to political positions, such as members of parliament, the focus is on what prevents women that already want to enter politics to do so. Only a fraction of the writings takes into account psychological factors that influence whether a woman desires to enter politics in the first place, and all the writings on such factors take a culture-exclusive approach to it. Feminists lay the blame for men's higher ambition and assertiveness levels, which play a part in their higher interest in politics, on socialization and gender roles alone, and not at all on gender-specific innate predispositions towards this or that type of behavior.

I hold that there are innate gender differences, that some of these are cause for men's higher average level of aggressiveness and dominance-orientation (which is expressed through higher ambition and assertiveness, among others), that these are partly responsible for a gender

gap in interest in politics and, consequently, the gender gap in the number of politicians. Under this approach, the ‘funnel’ view of legislative recruitment needs some additions (see Fig. 6.1).

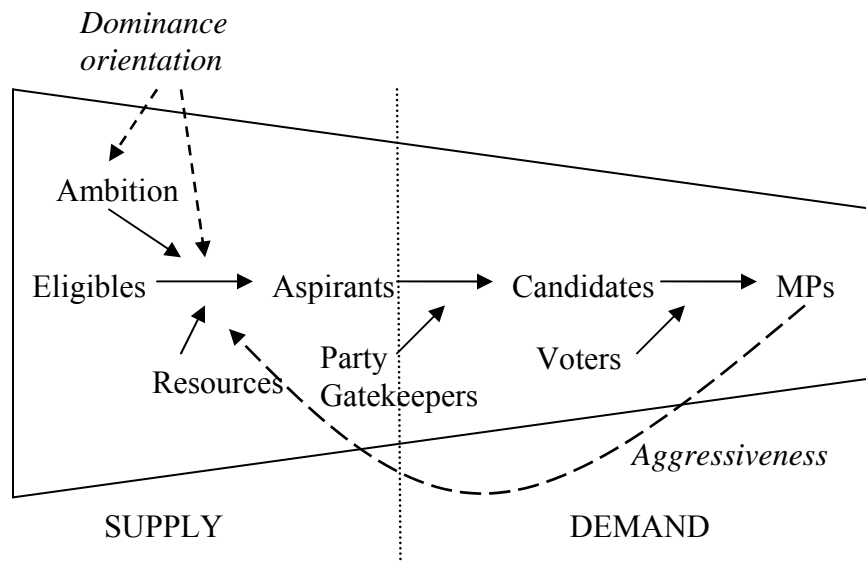


Fig. 6.1 Legislative recruitment system revisited

The original model used here, as described by Matland and Montgomery, lists “ambition” as the sole psychological factor that has something to do with what makes an eligible for legislative office become an aspirant. Higher ambition is but one facet of higher dominance orientation levels on the part of men, which is why the diagram shows dominance orientation to influence an eligible’s path to aspirant via ambition, as well via directly, which I shall detail later on. As for aggressiveness, I hold that male’s domination of politics, combined with men’s higher levels of aggressiveness, makes politics more aggressive than most women would like, which deters some of those that would have wanted to join politics from actually doing so. In order to

justify these changes to the long-standing model of recruitment, we need to establish there is good reason to believe that innate gender differences in dominance orientation and aggressiveness do indeed exist and explain in more detail why they would generate a gender gap in interest in politics.

## CHAPTER 7

### DOMINANCE ORIENTATION

#### The Motive

A mother and a father contribute the same to a child in terms of DNA (an offspring will have half of his DNA from one parent and the rest from the other parent), but that does not mean that the costs of ‘delivering’ that DNA are the same. A seminal work by Trivers in 1985, *Social Evolution*, shows how anisogamy - different gamete size between males (spermatozoid) and females (eggs) is at the root of the gender differences in mating strategies. An egg poses large energy costs, whereas males can produce hundreds of millions of spermatozooids in the course of just a few hours. Since this means that men can invest their DNA in relatively many offspring with little energy costs, while women cannot, Trivers claims that men’s best bet is to impregnate as many women as possible, whereas for women the best strategy is to pick a mating partner as carefully as possible.

Some have criticized the „different parental investment” theory, as it has come to be known, by showing that it costs very much energy to produce sperm as well (Snowdon 1997, 277) or by contesting the claims that equate spermatozoid motility with the male’s taking the more active role and the immobile egg with female passivity (Fausto-Sterling 1997, 56). A few feminists have also countered with examples of so-called sex-role reversal species, where it is the males that are more discriminating about the mating, but the unintended result was that they actually strengthened the original principle. Sex roles are reversed in a few species because the

gamete size is also reversed – the male produces a large spermatophore loaded with nutrients (Buss 1994, 20).

Even if things such as gamete size may be too technical for the social scientists, and the causal link from that to women's being more picky and choosy than men in the process of mate selection, there are other sex differences that back up the end principle. For one thing, women have a limited number of eggs, compared to men's virtually unlimited supply of spermatozooids. Also, men generally continue to be fertile well past women's average menopause age. More importantly, gestation, birth and lactation costs are born exclusively by females, and that applies to absolutely all mammal species. Snowdon has also countered these arguments by claiming that it is not the number of offspring (or even just surviving offspring) that matter, but the number of offspring that get to reproduce, meaning that male and female investments may be much more equal in the long run (Snowdon 1997, 28) and that "reproductive opportunity" and "reproductive success" are two different things (Waage 1997, 529).

All in all, however, it seems that men's best strategy for improving their reproductive fitness is to try to impregnate as many women, even though they cannot care for all the resulting offspring the way they would if they concentrated on just one mate and her children (Buss 1994; Fausto-Sterling 1997, 56). The trouble is that women have a different agenda. Since they can have only so many children, their best bet is to secure as many resources as they can for their offspring. As a result, along humankind's evolutionary past, the men more inclined than the average towards acquiring and maintaining resources have generally been the ones that got the best and the most mates, reproduced more than the average and, consequently, spread this trait in the population. Resources will not secure one just access to more females, but also improve the probabilities that the resulting offspring will stand higher chances of surviving long enough to



reproduce and higher chances to reproduce themselves. The father that works hard to send his children to the best private schools and the Stone Age tribe chief that bestows his riches on his children may be worlds and ages apart, but they are united by the same desire.

From back when the hunter-gatherers roamed the earth to this very day, the most efficient way to gather and control resources is to be on top of others. One's dominating the others means not only that one's offspring will have on average better chances than the offspring of the underlings, but also that one will have more offspring. Thus, a 'mental module' in charge of the desire for dominating the others has proved very efficient in terms of reproduction in men, and, consequently, has spread. The obvious question is why this mental module is not present in women nearly as much as it is in men, similar to the question of why evolution led to greater bodies and muscular mass in men but not in women. Even if status (acquired as a result for a higher than average inclination towards domination) or a stronger body would have spelled more resources for a woman, she still would be dependent on a man's protection and resources during the late stages of her pregnancy and the first years after the birth, for the sake of both her and her offspring. That is why the female psychological and physical traits favored by human evolution are those that lead to resources and protection not primarily by high status and more muscles but by attracting a partner with just those qualities. Thus, the circle is complete - men want power because women want the men that have power.

### The Evidence

According to a study conducted between 1984 and 1989, which included some 10,000 persons from 37 cultures, "women from all continents, all political systems, all races, all religions and all marital systems (from intense polygamy to alleged monogamy) place a greater emphasis on the mate's financial perspectives than men. On average, women consider a potential

mate's financial resources twice as important as men do". (Buss 1994, 25) As for dominance orientation per se, cross-national reviews of the empirical literature on social and political attitudes showed that women favor the establishment of equal status and wealth relationships between groups of people – “linking” - and more men favored the establishment of group-based hierarchies – “ranking” (Sidanius, Cling et al. 1991). In the same vein, some scholars argue that men view relations as agentic, women as communal (Tannen 1990, 26; Pratto 1996, 183-4).

There is also cross-cultural, economic, racial, situational and demographic evidence that men have higher average levels of social-dominance orientation (SDO – degree of preference for one's own group to dominate other groups ) and that the SDO gap explains much of the gender gap in terms of the sorts of policies supported (Sidanius, Pratto et al. 1994). Sidanius et al. also find that higher SDO levels are associated with more jealousy – which makes sense, since the more one care about status, the more one cares about not being made a fool of - and that the correlation is stronger for men than for women - because, as we shall see in the next chapter, men have more reason than women to fear cuckoldry. What is even more interesting is that SDO levels vary in relation to the perceived gap between one's group and other groups when the group differentiation criteria was not gender, but men continue to have higher SDO levels than women even when the status gap between men and women was perceived to be very low (Levin 2004). In support of that, another study concluded that sex is encoded much more strongly than race, even in contexts in which sex is not the relevant group distinction (Kurzban, Tooby et al. 1998).

Extensive or just anecdotal anthropological evidence are consistent with the claim of men's higher dominance orientation. Despite rumors, there is no documented culture in which women dominate men, purchased them as husband or placed them into harems (Buss 1996, 277-

9). There are recorded instances of high sexual equality, such as the !Kung tribe, where the roots and fruits women collect account for the majority of the calorie intake of the family. However, as soon as conditions allowed it, men's dominance orientation showed its ugly head. Bush-living !Kung accumulate virtually nothing, but !Kung living in villages have begun to acquire wealth, which is not equally distributed among families, and have begun to become sexist against women (Pratto 1996, 219), yet another instance of how status is linked to sex and reproduction.

An indirect sign of men's higher desire for status and resources is that they take more risks and that they kill themselves or others much more often than women. Men are more risk-taking because sometimes that is the only way to gain status, or the only way to gain it quick, and men want it quick, when they're young and marrying. Men are also more prone to depression and suicide than women, partly because of the pressures of acquiring status or fulfilling the breadwinner model. Men will also kill others more often than men, particularly at an young age, which is why there is not one country, according to United Nation's 2003 Human Development data, where men have higher life expectancy at birth than women, from Norway, at the top of the ranked list, to Sierra Leone, at the bottom. Moreover, murder rates are higher in regions with greater wealth disparities, even after controlling for absolute levels of wealth, partly because chronic low status pushes more men to murder more often (Pinker 2002, 304), and most of the murders are by men between the age of 15 and 30, because this is the age of their top reproductive capability, in the biological sense, and a period critical to their chances of establishing a high status later on (Kenrick, Trost et al. 1996, 35; Pinker 2002, 315).

Another sign that status and resources are essential to a man's attractiveness on the "mating market" (Buss 1994), while looks are more important for a woman's appeal to potential mates, is that you'll see much more often financial moguls married to supermodels than rich

women married to young studs. Men keep acquiring status and resources as they age, meaning the status column in their rep sheet on the mating market will usually be higher at, say, 40 than it was when they were 20 years of age. For women, on the other hand, good looks (which is very attractive to men because it is indicative of good genes), decreases with age. That is why “trophy” means different things to men and to women. A trophy wife is young and gorgeous, a trophy husband is rich and powerful (Kenrick, Trost et al. 1996, 37).

Men’s desire to dominate the others, be they men or women, is also evident in the gender differences in discussion styles. Despite the common impression that women are more talkative regardless of the circumstances, when dominating the discussion (in terms not just of style, but also quantity, of contribution) is about dominating the others, such as by displaying knowledge and skill, it’s men that will do most of the talking (Tannen 1990, 75-7). Tannen concludes that is why men are more comfortable with public speaking, while women are more at home with private speaking. Women are also considered more talkative because the common belief is that gossip is a woman’s thing, but men gossip less than women because for them status is not a matter of who they are close to but rather of their individual achievements. Men gossip less because they brag more. Tannen believes that most of the inter-sex communication problems are caused by the fact that “status and connection are bought with the same currency” (Tannen 1990, 94), namely words, and that men and women are rarely aware that the other sex is using language differently.

Men and women’s different priorities also show in politicians. Women are more likely to specialize in less esteemed areas (health, cultural affairs, education) while men dominate more prestigious areas of economic management and foreign affairs (Howard Davis 1997, 17-8; Lovenduski 2005, 8). One might argue that the very domination by women of certain fields that

makes them less revered, but it is relevant that, despite these domains' standing, women still prefer to enter them, and that men are more inclined towards the highly regarded areas. Also, female legislators are more likely than men to have entered politics through the less prestigious volunteer work and local-level politics, while male legislators were more likely to have shot directly at national-level politics (Carroll 1984). Furthermore, female delegates have been found to value the aspects of their jobs that stress civic duty, while men have been more inclined to highlight legislative effectiveness or status within the legislative chamber, and these views may reflect different understandings of the appropriate use of power (Cantor, Bernay et al. 1992). This pattern is not limited to the job of politician, as men are over-represented in hierarchy-enhancing jobs, while women seem to prefer hierarchy-attenuating positions (Pratto 1996, 192).

### The Crime

To recapitulate, men's interest in acquiring and maintaining resources has translated into a higher desire in men than in women for status, for dominating the others. Politics is a major source of status because it provides wealth, publicity and a direct say in communal affairs (thus making a politician's status recognized in the population at large), whereas business may provide only wealth and an indirect say in public affairs, and some occupations provide status only in a certain group (academic or other sort of occupational status is sometimes limited to that occupation group) and not much wealth. Thus, politics has become a male-dominated field and, implicitly, the male style of interaction (more about ranking than linking) is the predominant style of politics. Therefore, the very game of politics and the status it confers on its players is attractive to outsiders, the same way men watch football not because they are in it, but because they like what they see (Buss 1994). However, women's higher inclination towards cooperation and linking behavior is not in tune with the predominance of the "dog eat dog" style of politics.

In fact, the macho style of politics need not necessarily be attractive to men, just less repelling to them than to women. “It is not rare that electoral campaigns and electoral confrontations share some traits with a war-like and uncivilized primitivism. [...] This is not a fight for supporters of political projects, but for conquering power” (Miroiu 2003, 30)

## CHAPTER 8

### AGGRESSIVENESS

#### Another Motive

Men stand to lose significantly more than women, in terms of reproductive fitness, from cuckoldry. Men risk spending their resources on another male's offspring (*pater semper incertus est*<sup>6</sup>), while women risk only having some or all of the male's resources directed to another woman and another woman's offspring instead of her own. Hence, across our evolutionary past, males have had more reason than females to be suspicious and aggressive towards one another and, under certain circumstances, towards the females (Buss 1994). In short, the males that were more jealous than others (to a point, of course) stood better chances of not being cheated on and of having more offspring, meaning this trait spread in the population at the expense of the males that were not aggressive and suspicious enough, which made them more likely to be cuckolded. Surely, this does not mean that most men are jealous stalkers or willing to have a fistfight, and that women are not incapable of throwing fits of rage if they suspect their husband is straying. In fact, every gender displays the whole spectrum of behaviors on the aggressiveness scale but, on average, men are more aggressive than women.

#### More Evidence

That men are more aggressive is not just evolutionary deducting or popular opinion, but is also confirmed by extensive psychological research:

In a heroic effort, Maccoby and Jacklin reviewed over 2,000 studies on gender differences in psychological characteristics, ranging from abilities

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<sup>6</sup> Latin expression declaring that paternity is always uncertain.

to personality, social behaviors, and memory. [...] they concluded that four gender differences were “well established”: female superiority in verbal ability, male superiority in mathematical and spatial ability, and the greater aggressiveness of males (Hyde 1996, 109)

Hyde goes on to detail this difference: women differed most from men in levels of aggression when harm to someone else or danger to oneself were involved, and women experience more guilt and anxiety about being aggressive (Hyde 1996, 113-4). That is why, even though women are poorer and more likely to need money to feed themselves and their children, they are less likely than men to steal things by force (Pinker 2002, 312). American National Election Studies adds to the body of evidence with data that shows a persistent gender gap in opinions on the use of force by state (Niemi and Weisberg 2001, 375).

Aggression is not a strategy ‘working’ independently of the drive for status, but is inextricably linked with dominance orientation. Status is a zero-sum game, it cannot be acquired without competition, without chipping away at other people’s standing in the hierarchy. Since most people do not take kindly to being outdone, one often has to step on other people in order to climb to the top. Dominance orientation and aggression (which, as we have seen, is a by-product of jealousy) are strongly linked also because being cheated on takes its toll on one’s status, if it goes public, and therefore decreases one’s value on the mating market. To that end, a study has found that men and women differ most in levels of aggressiveness when insulted about their intelligence - a reliable indicator of status potential - or made to feel “losers” (Fischer and Rodriguez Mosquera 2001, 11)

This is not to say that males are in a state of “homo homini lupus”, because they can and do form coalitions, and Snowdon documents that male chimpanzees have well-developed reconciliation mechanisms to restore social cohesion after an aggressive display (because



ranking behavior is an important part of their social life), while females were observed to be aggressive much less often, but the results of female aggression were more serious, and females appeared to be more refractory to reconciliation than males (because they have less experience with ranking behavior). Chimpanzees also form coalitions, but the male coalitions are primarily for achieving goods that cannot be shared (status, females) and therefore fraught with instability, whereas female coalitions are often for protection (mainly from male aggression) (Smuts 1996; Waal 2000).

An illuminating story is in order. In the appropriately called *Chimpanzee Politics*, de Waal depicts how aggression, fight for status and coalitions came together in a story of rise and fall and betrayal in a captive chimp colony over the course of a couple of years, a story that Fukuyama described as “worthy of Machiavelli” (Fukuyama 1998, 1). Every group of chimpanzees has an alpha male that does most of the copulations, and this was the position occupied in the beginning by the chimpanzee the observers had called Yeroen. However, the ‘king’ was aging while young males were getting stronger, and one of them, Luit, started challenging Yeroen. Since Luit did not yet have the strength and the experience of Yeroen, he allied with another young male, Nikkie, to help him with the dethroning. However, there is only one position at the top and, even though the ally Nikkie, as second in command, got to do some of the copulations, he was apparently unhappy with the arrangement, because he did an 180° turn and allied with Yeroen. This way, Nikkie became the new dominant male, and allowed Yeroen to do some of the copulations in exchange for the continuing support, while Luit was relegated back to the status of challenger.

## The Same Crime

How is the gender gap in levels of aggressiveness linked to the gender gap in politics? Since politics has been dominated by man for so long, it is in his image, namely more about ranking than linking. Also, confrontation is in the very nature of politics, because politics is about allotting scarce resources to a multiplicity of requests. Therefore, more women than men are repelled by the predominantly aggressive style of politics and, even after they enter politics, they are less likely to want to go up the ranks because the higher up one goes, the dirtier the fight. This explains not just why there are so few women in politics, but also why we are dealing with the law of increasing disproportions – the number of women in politics is inversely related to the ‘height’ of the position. Men are more willing than women to deal with the aggressiveness that comes with acquiring a position, and the fight only gets fiercer the higher up the ladder one wants to go.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE TEST

#### Operationalization

To review, innate gender differences in levels of dominance orientation and aggressiveness result in gender differences in the motivation to enter politics, on the one hand, and on the extent to which one is attracted or repelled by the style of politics, thus generating a gender imbalance in the candidate pool and, ultimately, in the number of politicians. In an ideal world, there would be extensive and reliable data on the candidate pools and on women in all aspects of politics, and that data that could be coupled with lengthy psychological test batteries on dominance and aggression impulses. Under the circumstances, we will have to rely on one of the political scientists' workhorses, the World Values Survey (WVS), to tap indirectly into people's dominance orientation and aggressiveness, and we will use the percentages of women in parliament as a measure of women's success rate in a given political system.

Survey Design 101 tells one that, more often than not, a reliable measure is an indirect measure, for asking a respondent directly if he or she likes to "dominate" or "be aggressive" would not be very smart. Therefore, it stands to reason that, if one is very ambitious, concerned with status and with dominating others, one will not care much for egalitarian values, but rather praise the principles that allow one to rise as high as possible and not have second thoughts about those left below. The questionnaire of the WVS 1999-2002 wave provides several items that tap more or less into this dimension, one of which is as follows:

How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree

completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between:  
Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas – Competition is harmful. It brings out the worst in people

One end of the spectrum offered here fits best those people that want to climb the hierarchical ladder and are believers in the “survival of the fittest” and “it’s a dog eat dog world”, while the other blames competition for making people do anything in order to succeed. Other items that were considered included “Incomes should be made more equal – We need large income differences as incentives for individual effort” and “The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for – People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves”. However, the first requires believing into *large* income differences as incentives, which makes one term in the pair stronger than the other and thus may bias the respondent’s choices, while the second item is ‘contaminated’ because it seems to be strongly correlated with people’s ideological identification on the left-right continuum.

In the same vein, I argue that people with higher levels of aggressiveness, be they men or women, are not highly tolerant of other people, as in the possible option to the following WVS item:

Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five.

- Independence
- Determination, perseverance
- Tolerance and respect for other people
- Unselfishness
- Obedience

While some of the other options in there are somewhat associated with aggressiveness (or with dominance orientation, for that matter), “Tolerance and respect for other people” seems like the exact opposite of aggressive tendencies.

## Hypothesis

Under this operationalization, “higher dominance orientation and aggressiveness are correlated with more interest in entering politics” becomes “strongly agreeing that competition is good and giving diminished importance to teaching your children tolerance and respect for other people is associated with more interest in entering politics”. Since, at individual level, entering politics is a dichotomous variable, it is not suitable for our purposes. Instead, we shall look at national percentages of women in parliament and, consequently, the independent variables will be at the national level as well. As such, my reasoning is that the larger a country’s gender gap on the “competition is good” scale and on the percentages of people that mentioned “tolerance and respect for other people” as an important value to teach children, the larger that country’s gender gap in interest in politics and, ultimately, the smaller the number of women in its legislative body.

The dependent variable, namely the percentage of women in the parliament will be supplied by UNDP’S 2003 Gender Empowerment Measure, which includes the “Seats in parliament held by women”. When dealing with bicameral systems, the data refers to the weighted average of women’s shares of seats in both houses.

## Alternative Hypotheses

As I’ve said before, my claim is not that innate gender differences are the sole, or even the main factor depressing the number of women in parliaments in so many different countries, but just that it is a significant factor and that their being disregarded by the traditional theories is the reason behind those theories’ increasingly limited explanatory power. Therefore, given that the alternative theories reviewed previously have some merit, I will include the major ones in my model, next to dominance orientation and aggressiveness.

We have talked about how income and education are posited to play significant roles in explaining why so few women break into top-level politics. These are nicely and extensively captured in the Gender Development Index (GDI) that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) computes on the base of several items from the much larger Human Development Index (HDI): Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above), Combined primary secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ration (%), life expectancy at birth, and estimated earned income (see Appendix I). Thus, the GDI captures not just basic education, which increases the chances of political participation in general, but also secondary and tertiary education, of importance to actually entering politics. Also, it takes into account not just income per se, but also some of women's general socioeconomic situation, reflected in life expectancy at birth. It is interesting to note that women outlive men in just about any of the 170+ countries included in the study, from top-ranking Norway (with 81.7 years for women and 75.8 for men) and to bottom-of-the-pile Sierra Leone, where the life expectancy is about 45 years lower for both sexes than in Norway.

However, traditional theories are not limited to tangible factors, but have also looked at attitudes prevalent in the population at large that might impede women's access to politics. Fortunately, Inglehart and Norris have put together in *Rising Tide* a good measure of such attitudes, the Gender Equality Scale, based on several WVS items testing opinions on men's and women's position in society (see Appendix I). As you may remember from the literature review, religion is also deemed important by Inglehart and Norris, but the correlations that they find between strength of religiosity and women in politics are not very strong, and conclude that it's rather the type of religion that has something to do with it, namely that Catholicism and Islam are associated with lower numbers of women in politics. However, I hold that including religion (in terms of type, strength or both) in the model would not add anything significant, since the way

religion influences women's position in society and politics is via attitudes in the population, which are already captured comprehensively by the GES. On that note, I would like to make clear that, as with just about any social research, the independent variables used here overlap and influence one another to some extent, but it is below the threshold where one of them would be deemed redundant.

The model will include not just societal, but also political factors, namely the type of electoral system and the presence or absence of quotas of some kind. Since a great deal of research has found evidence that the percentage of women in politics is often a matter of whether the electoral system is majoritarian or proportional, I shall include a dummy variable that will take the "majoritarian", "proportional" or "mixed" value (with the proper adjustments in the testing for a dummy that has more than 2 possible values). While I realize that there is no such thing as pure winner-take-all or pure proportional representation (PR) systems, and that all of them are mixed to some extent, "mixed" here will stand for bicameral systems where one of the chambers is mixed or where one is PR and the other majoritarian or for systems with unicameral legislatures that qualify as mixed under the criteria of the International Parliamentary Union (such as by having single-member-districts for some of the seats and a nationwide proportional district for the rest).

Finally, the model will also sport a second dummy variable that accounts for the effect of quotas on the presence of women in a particular political system. While there are many types of quotas and, accordingly, many types of effects they can have on the system, they fall mainly into three categories: constitutional, electoral law, or party quotas. The first kind, also the most rare, are embedded in the constitution, the second type are enacted as part of laws concerning the electoral process, while the party quotas are voluntary rules self-enforced by the parties

(Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005). For the sake of parsimony, the present model will combine the legally compulsory categories of constitutional and electoral law quotas into one category, use the party rules as the second category and no quotas as the third. The classification of country's into one category or the other is taken from the Global Database of Quotas for Women (<http://www.quotaproject.org/system.cfm>), a joint project of the Stockholm University and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

### Cases

There were over 60 countries where the WVS asked all the items of interest to computing the dominance orientation and tolerance gender gaps, but some pruning was required after cross-referencing that list with cases included in the GES and after eliminating the countries that do not qualify as democratic, based on Freedom House's ratings, which brought the final sample to 31 countries (see Appendix I)<sup>7</sup>. However, the countries left still represent a good cross-section of cultures, geography, levels of development, electoral systems, historical heritages, religions etc. (see Appendix II).

### Model

To put it all together, the final model is as follows:  $WP = a + b_1 \cdot GDI + b_2 \cdot GES + b_3 \cdot ES + b_4 \cdot Q + b_5 \cdot IDO + b_6 \cdot TG$ , where WP is "women in parliament", I, GDI is the Gender Development Index, GES is the Gender Equality Scale, ES stands for electoral system and Q for quotas, while IDOG is "individual dominance orientation gap"<sup>8</sup> and TG is "tolerance gap".

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<sup>7</sup> If a country is not democratic, the percentage of women in politics is irrelevant, for it does not genuinely reflect the position of women in that society. Rwanda is currently the top-ranking country in the world in terms of women in parliament, with 48.8%, but its Freedom House rating of 6-7 over the past few years places it at the bottom of the pile when it comes to real rights and liberties.

<sup>8</sup> In trying to convey the similarities but also the differences from Sidanius's social dominance orientation (SDO) measure, I shall term my operationalization of status-seeking and ambition individual dominance orientation (IDO).



## Essential Critiques

Before we get to do introduce the results, we need to answer several questions critical to the very core of the theory, as well as of the model. If these differences are innate, and therefore immutable, constants, how can they be used in a model ultimately meant to explain variation? Also, if the gender gap in politics is the result of unchangeable human nature, what policy implications can there be, since social sciences are ultimately about revealing causes for social phenomena in hope those causes can be tweaked and the society improved? Second, the central issue here is about change in women's situation in politics *over time* - or lack of any significant progress, and yet the present model is using cross-section data instead of time-series, which would seem better suited at tracking changes and would also help with keeping certain important factors constant. Third, and perhaps the most important, we start from a theory based individual traits, and yet we end up with a model based on aggregate, national level data. This certainly is a leap, and can open the whole enterprise to crippling critiques. We shall now address all of these questions.

How can *constant* human nature be of use in explaining *variation* in the gender ratio of politicians (or variation in anything, for that matter)? That is because the end result, the variation we are trying to explain, is not the direct result of human nature, but of human nature in the context of a certain environment. Any human action is the result of innate predispositions *plus* the particular environment that those predispositions have to work with. Some say that, under the 'proper' circumstances, anybody can be either an angel or torturer. Therefore, although nature does not vary, nurture does, which is why actions in real life are variations of the innate predispositions, depending on nurture. There is no such thing a pure human nature that we can analyze, for an individual cannot act outside a particular environment, cannot escape the

influences of nurture, which start from the very moment one is born – or even before that, if you believe in the such things as the positive influences of playing classical music to the child while still in the womb.

However, this answer begets other questions. If we cannot see human nature in its ‘pure’ form, how can we know what it is or even that it really is there, that it plays a part in people’s actions, that life is all nurture? Also, if the key to variation lies in nurture, why are we dealing with nature in the first place, why not just focus our energies on environmental factors, since those are responsible for why individual X is not acting the same as individual Y, or why country X is not like country Y?

Our bodies are the results of eons of evolution, and anybody who accepts the idea of evolutionism will agree to that. Our worldly incarnations are certainly not perfect, but they are amazingly complex survival machines, immense sets of interconnected solutions to survival problems. If that is the case, why should we stop at the neck? Why would we accept that our bodies have been refined by evolution over stretches of time impossible to grasp, but not our brains? The neuro-sciences have not advanced so far as to be able to pinpoint on the brain the exact way the ‘mental module’ of aggressiveness or dominance-orientation might work, but we have the next best thing. Anthropological research on what life in the time of the hunter-gatherers might have been like, plus research on our closest cousins, several species of primates, can infer quite accurately what sorts of evolutionary pressures our evolutionary ancestors most likely faced. Also, as we have seen, trans-cultural studies find extensive evidence of the presence of universal traits of the kind that would have provided an adaptive answer to the survival problems most likely faced by those same ancestors. Therefore, although we cannot say that this

cerebral lobe is the site of innate aggressiveness and that one of dominance-orientation, we have the reason to believe it does exist and the evidence in the real life that such traits are universal.

Therefore, since we have established that human nature has strong claims to existence, but it can only be present in conjunction with nurture, we move on to the issue of why we should not focus just on nurture. The main point of this thesis, what started it all, is the realization that, despite this great variation in women's standing in society, their standing in politics does not even come close to matching the extent (and, sometimes, not even the direction) of that variation. Therefore, the logical conclusion is that there is something else at work, something most likely not present in the environment, something that depresses the numbers of women in politics across the board, regardless of what happens in the environment, as well as that affects how this or that policy in the environment work out. If we do accept that there are innate gender differences that make men and women not start from the same position in the race towards top political positions, as well as affect the manner and success of how particular policies meant to redress this gender gap actually work out, then we are on the way to designing better policies.

The issue here is twofold. If women have some sort of innate handicap in the race towards politics, then policies aimed just at equality in the environment (income equality, for instance) will fail to address the initial inequality at all and will not be able to generate genuine equality. Secondly, the extent to which the design of policies takes into account relevant innate gender differences will affect the extent to which they are able to compensate for them in the environment. Therefore, the issue is not just how does environment X affect the number of women in politics compared to environment Y, but also how do innate gender differences play out in environment x compared to environment y in respect to the number of women in politics. Only when we see people's actions as the result of nature in the context of nurture can we fully

understand the role of both nature and nurture in influencing behavior. That is how human nature, which is essentially a constant, plays a part in explaining the amazing variety that life presents us with, and the way it can have policy implications.

Moving on to the issue of choosing a cross-sectional versus a time-series approach, there are, of course, arguments for both of them. On the one hand, analyzing the same countries over time would eliminate altogether the critique of comparing apples and oranges, an important critique as the final sample in this study includes countries with very different levels of economic development, cultural backgrounds, recent histories and so on and so forth. Furthermore, the main charge brought against the traditional theories is that they are increasingly limited *as time goes by*, namely that, despite the fact that over the past decades women have come a long way in a great deal of fields used by traditional theories as IVs, their position in politics, namely the DV, is still very poor for the most part. Therefore, it would seem appropriate to keep in line with this approach and trying to bring to shed some light on how innate gender differences are ‘showing their ugly head’ as the environment changes over several decades.

However, two important arguments tilted the balance in favor of a cross-sectional approach. First, showing the effect of gender differences in aggressiveness and dominance-orientation across such different settings as those included in the final sample would make much stronger the case that we are dealing with universal, innate gender differences. Second, if such gender gaps in politics show even now, at the turn of the millennium (the WVS data used is from the 1999-2002 wave), then it is less likely they are due to the gender differences in the environment (since women currently have the best standing in society they ever had) and are more likely to be caused human nature, which is immutable. Even just a few decades ago, one would have a much harder time trying to separate the impediments to women in politics posed by

the environment from those posed by innate predispositions, since the environment was much more hostile to women in politics. Just a few decades ago, differences in average ambition levels between men and women or gender differences in perceptions of aggressiveness in politics mattered little to women's chances of making it into politics in most countries, since environmental impediments, such as gatekeepers' stereotypes and interests, or the gender gap in income and political skills, were much worse than now and would have most likely 'drowned out' any human-nature influences. In light of this argument, one could say that the research design could have benefited from a focus on high-development countries, such as limiting the sample to OECD countries, since it would be in those countries that women faced the least environmental impediments to their presence in politics, and if they still failed to be fairly represented in politics, it must be because of innate gender differences. However, this brings us back to the issue of universality. An OECD-exclusive research design would be open to charges of speciousness. What if there is something specific to those countries, and not universal gender traits, that is responsible for the patterns in the data? That is most unlikely in the approach taken in the current work, where the sample ranges from Albania to Australia and from United States to Uruguay.

Lastly, there is the issue of using aggregate, national-level data to test a causal process that essentially takes place at the individual level. Because a man is more likely to have higher dominance-orientation and aggressiveness levels than a woman, he is on average more likely to have higher interest in politics and be less repelled by it, and therefore more likely than her to want to enter politics. However, the test in this work is of gender differences in national level averages of dominance-orientation and aggressiveness, and their link to the gender ratio of parliamentarians.

There were three main reasons for doing this: data availability, relevancy of result, and consistency with existing research. A proper testing of these innate gender differences at the individual level would have most likely required comprehensive data on psychological traits of people in party candidate pools or of politicians, to establish if these people that did enter politics have higher ambition and aggressiveness levels than the population at large, and to see what sorts of gender gaps are there in such groups. However, the data that do touch upon this issue are not extensive enough or offer items for a satisfactory operationalization. Second, one needs to ‘keep the eyes on the prize’. The end result of all these factors is women in top-level politics, that is the most important thing. Therefore, establishing a connection between innate gender differences and women in politics would carry the most weight, as opposed to a connection between gender differences and interest in politics. Interest in politics is not necessarily the same as actually being in politics – and even less so in being in top-tier politics. Last, most of the previous research on the issue looked at the same thing. Since my primary interest is seeing whether adding these innate gender differences would *add* anything to the traditional model, the best path seemed to be preserving the model used by most of the existing literature, namely using women in parliament as the dependent variable.

## CHAPTER 10

### RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### So Far, So Good...

In the first stage, the data is consistent with the theory, as the results show the presence of a gender gap, in the direction predicted, on the “Competition is good...” and “Tolerance and respect...” items. Save for a few exceptions, women have higher mean scores on the first item (higher scores indicates being closer to the “Competition is *harmful*...” end of the scale) and higher percentages of women than men mentioned “Tolerance and respect...” as an important value to teach children. On a country per country basis, the differences are not always statistically significant, and some may also be considered rather irrelevant substantively, but the trend is clear and consistent. In only one country (South Africa) out of the 31 in the sample did women believe the same or more than men that competition is good, and in only another country (Uruguay), did an equal or smaller percentage of women than men mention tolerance and respect for other people as important value to teach children (see Appendix II).

The consistency of the gap is all the more relevant as there are significant differences on men’s or women’s scores across the cultures, continents, economies or histories of the countries in the sample. The competition scores for men and women, respectively, range from Romania’s 2.45 and 3.05 (lowest combined average), to Uruguay’s 4.62 and 4.81 (highest combined average), and the range of the ‘competition’ gender gap is also significant (from South Africa’s -.17 to Mexico’s .82). The same applies to the ‘tolerance’ scores, where Lithuania, with 51.9% of men and 62.5% of women mentioning tolerance, seems worlds apart from fellow East European

Croatia, which leads the pack with a whopping 90.7% of men and 95.6% of women that believe children should learn to tolerate and respect other people. As for the gender gap, there are again differences that cannot be disregarded, such as between Uruguay, on the one hand, where actually slightly more men than women believe tolerance is an important value to teach children, and the Czech Republic, at the other end of the continuum in the sample, where 11% more women than men mentioned tolerance on the WVS questionnaire.

### Traditional Model

In order to assess the actual relevance of the addition to the traditional factors of the individual dominance orientation and aggressiveness gaps, we shall first put through the paces a ‘traditional’ model, consisting of the major factors researched so far ( $WP = a + b_1 \cdot GDI + b_2 \cdot GES + b_3 \cdot ES + b_4 \cdot Q$ ). The results are as follow (taking ‘majoritarian’ and ‘no quotas’ as the “baseline” for the “electoral system” and “quotas” dummy variables, respectively):

Table 10.1 Traditional model – coefficients and significance

	Coefficients	t	Sig.
Constant	-36.83	-2.609	.016
GDI	.27	.417	.681
GES	.69	2.697	.013
ES – mixed	1.97	.531	.601
ES - proportional	.4.42	.952	.351
Quotas – party	-1.01	-.292	.773
Quotas - law	5.09	.928	.363

r-square = .26



Thus, the model yields:  $WP (\%) = -38.63 + .27*GDI + .69*GES + 1.97*ES \text{ (mix)} + 4.42*ES \text{ (proportional)} - 1.01*Q \text{ (party quotas)} + 5.09*Q \text{ (constitutional / electoral quotas)}$ . The adjusted  $r^2$  stands at .26, which means that, even when putting all these traditional factors, we can only account for about a quarter of the variation in the percentage of women in politics in the 31 countries included here. The negative constant is the result of the fact that the GDI and GES do not actually start from zero in any country, either in the sample at hand or in general.

Oddly, none of the IVs are statistically significant at an acceptable level, which means that, for all we know, none of them might actually be correlated with the DV in the actual population. However, let us have a quick look at what the tale that these regression coefficients tell, statistically significant or not. All else equal, a 1 point increase in the GDI will yield an average of 0.27% more women in parliament. Therefore, it does not look like improving women's economic position in society is the fastest or easiest way to improve their position in politics. Even if Tanzania, the bottom of the pile in our sample in terms of GDI (39.6), were to have the GDI of Norway (94.1), its percentage of women in politics would go up only by about 9.3%. The GES is a little more promising, with a coefficient of .69, which seems to point to the fact cultural factors play a bigger role than economic ones. *Ceteris paribus*, a country's 1 point increase on the GES would generate an average increase of .69 increase in that country's percentage of women in politics. From this viewpoint, if Bangladesh, were to increase its GES score of 47 to Finland's level (85), its 2% of women in politics would theoretically go up to 28%.

The electoral system does not seem to play a big part by itself. Changing from a majoritarian system, charged by a great deal of literature with depressing the numbers of women in politics, to a mixed system would increase the percentage of women in the legislative body, on average, by just 1.97 points, while going all the way to a proportional system would increase it

by 4.42 points. This does not seem like much but one should bear in mind that, in a world where the average percentage of women in politics is 15%, 4.4 points counts for something.

As for quotas, at first they look liked a mixed bag. Going from no quotas to quotas in the electoral law or constitution does, on average, increase the percentage of women in parliament by about 5%, but making the change from no quotas to having parties that enact quotas of their own actually has a negative effect. In analyzing this apparent paradox, one needs to bear in mind that quotas (be they in the form of laws or of party rules) are most often put into place when the position of women in politics is dire. The problem with party quotas is that, because they are self imposed, they are rarely enforced in reality, because, for starters, they do not come with penalties. Therefore, they are often used solely for façade and steal the wind in the sails of initiatives for increasing the number of women in politics via other avenues. In short, some parties pretend to care about promoting women in their ranks in order to relieve some of the pressure on them to actually do so.

#### Traditional Model Revisited

What happens when we add to the model our new variables? The new model yielded the following coefficients:  $WP (\%) = \dots .67*IDOG - .36*TG$ , and the adjusted  $r^2$  went down to .21.

Table 10.2 Added IVs – coefficients and significance

	Coefficients	t	Sig.
IDO gap	.67	.102	.920
Tolerance gap	-.36	-.653	.520

r-square = .26

To say that the results are not encouraging would be an understatement. Both the adjusted r-square and the coefficients tell the same story: the new variables do not add to the model, but rather the contrary, and are not statistically significant. The hypothesis was that the larger the gender gap in individual dominance orientation (IDOG) and tolerance (TG), the larger the gender gap in interest in politics and, ultimately, the smaller the percentage of women in politics. However, whereas TG is in the expected direction (the more women and men are alike in their levels of aggressiveness, the smaller the tolerance gap and the larger the number of women in politics), IDOG is in the ‘wrong’ direction in this model (namely, when keeping everything else constant), showing that the higher the differences in men’s and women’s views of competition, (and, consequently, in each gender’s average individual dominance orientation level), the more women there are in politics, which goes against the assumption that women’s lessened interest in dominance would be associated with lessened interest in politics, and, as a result, with lower numbers of women in parliament. Furthermore, although TG comes out in the direction expected, it does not seem to have much of influence, given its coefficient of .36 and the fact that the difference between the highest and lowest TG scores in the sample is about 11, which means that, holding everything else constant, changing TG from one extreme to the other would yield an increase of only about 4% in the number of women in politics, not a very promising avenue for potential policies.

The individual dominance gap and tolerance gap variables do not add anything to the model because they are correlated with the percentage of women in politics, as seen in the following scatterplots:

Figure 10.1 Scatterplot: Individual dominance orientation gap and percentage of women in parliament

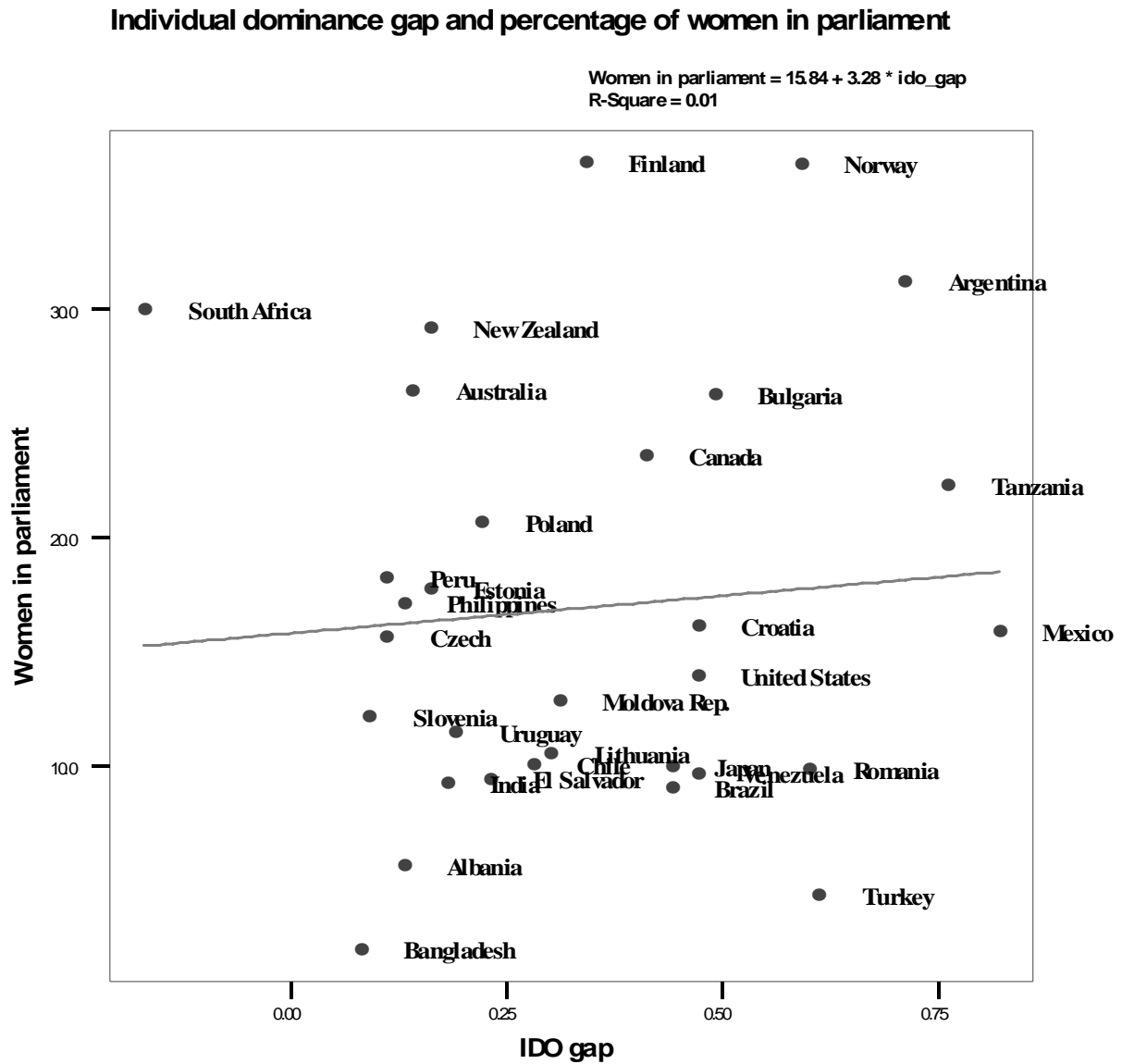
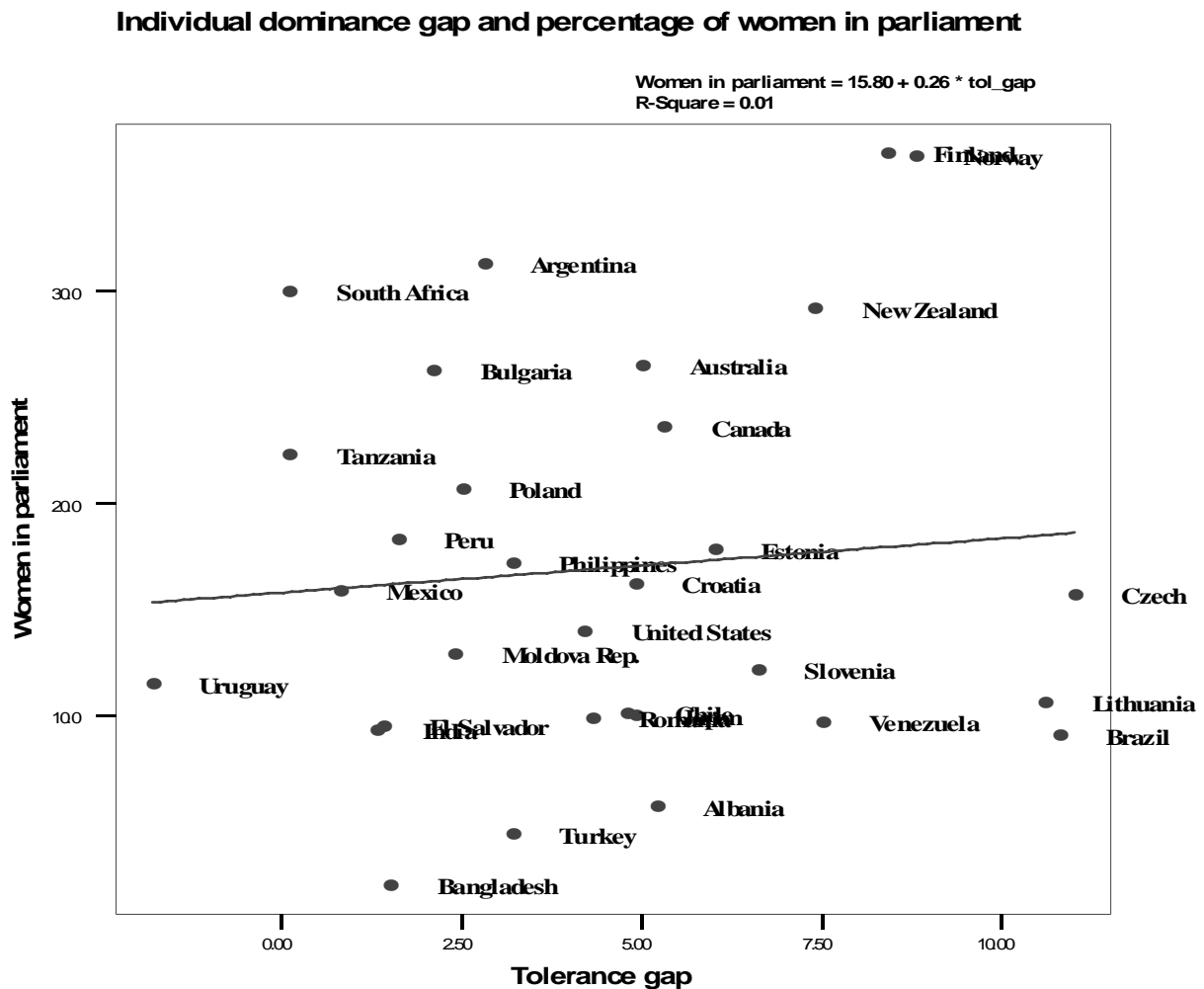


Figure 10.2 Scatterplot: Tolerance gap and percentage of women in parliament



Although there are consistent national-level gender gaps in the importance bestowed on teaching children tolerance and in the dominance orientation, as measured by views of competition, thus confirming the assumption by the hypothesis that such gender differences exist, they scatterplots show to the naked eye the lack of connection of these gender gaps to the national percentages of women in politics, and the measly 0.01 r-squares confirm that impression. Neither the aggressiveness, nor the competition differences between men and women are even close to account for a significant part of the variation in the percentages of

women in national parliaments in the 31 countries in this study. Furthermore, as compared to the extended model, where the other factors - GDI, GES, electoral system, quota system, and IDO gap – were held constant, the tolerance gap is no longer correlated negatively with the percentage of women in politics, but the other way round. This would mean that, the more different women are from men in terms of importance bestowed on tolerance, the more women there are in parliament. Thus, taken separately, both IVs are not just statistically significant, but even go in the ‘wrong’ direction.

### Where Do We Go from Here?

Despite the shortcomings of the traditional factors and the theoretical support for innate gender differences playing a part in the low percentages of women in politics worldwide, at the end of it it’s still the traditional theories that come out on top – which does not mean that much, given the failure across the spectrum of this study’s hypothesis to come through. That means that efforts to improve women’s position in politics should stick to the tried and true policies of improving their position in society and of breaking the barriers on the demand side of the recruitment process. Resources are limited and, in view of these results, they would be better spent on making sure that women that do want to enter politics get to do that, instead of trying to increase the motivation of women in general to enter politics.

Given the failure of not just the innate gender difference, but also of the ‘traditional’ factors tested here, to account satisfactorily for the variation in the percentages of women in parliaments worldwide, it stands to reason that the nexus between women in the society at large and women in politics is so complex as to require an approach that is novel not just in terms of the factors invoked, but also of the way it models the causal relations. Perhaps the shortcomings of the traditional theories, as emphasized in the literature review and repeated in the model tested

here, are due not to the lack of influence of the IVs they posit, but to the reliance on linear models. The variations in the percentages of women in politics, small as they may be, seem to defy most of the explanations theorized.

However, this should not be reason to focus solely on symptom-focused policies, such as quotas, and not at all on cause-alleviating factors. The traditional literature itself warns of the inherent problems in the “band aid” approach. Low levels of women in politics are undeniable symptoms of system-wide failings, and redressing them at the end, such as by legal quotas, instead of at the source, is not the best solution. For instance, Lovenduski finds that, despite high levels of representation of women in politics, the Nordic countries features the most segregated labor markets in Europe, and warns that quotas are more open to claims of essentialism, thus marginalizing other differences and putting unfair scrutiny on those included in the quotas (Lovenduski 2005). As for human nature, it still should be regarded a fertile ground for investigation. Better data and operationalization, and deeper exploration of how the context (nurture) mediates and influences nature are needed before we can discard innate traits as sources of persisting problems in political representation.

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## APPENDIX I

### Gender Development Index

UNDP acknowledges the difficulties in comparing men's and women's income: "Because of the lack of gender-disaggregated income data, female and male earned income are crudely estimated on the basis of data on the ratio of the female nonagricultural wage to the male non-agricultural wage, the female and male shares of the economically active population, the total female and male population and GDP per capita (PPP US\$)" (UNDP 2003, 313). PPP stands for purchasing power parity: "The PPP conversion factor shows how much of a country's currency is needed in that country to buy what \$1 would buy in the United States. By using the PPP conversion factor instead of the currency exchange rate, we can convert a country's GNP per capita calculated in national currency units into GNP per capita in U.S. dollars while taking into account the difference in domestic prices for the same goods. Thus PPP helps us compare GNPs of different countries more accurately. Because prices are usually lower in developing countries, their GNP per capita expressed in PPP dollars is higher than their GNP per capita expressed in U.S. dollars. In developed countries the opposite is true." (World Bank)

The GDI is expressed as a three-decimal value between 0 and 1. For instance, the highest as of 2003 was Norway, with 0.941, while the lowest recorded values went to Niger, with 0.279. However, for easier reading in the regression, consistency with the Gender Equality Scale was ensured by moving the point two places and turning the GDI on a 0-100 scale, with one decimal.

### Gender Equality Scale

Inglehart and Norris compute their GES based on 5 items from the pooled 1995-2001 WVS / European Values Survey:

- MENPOL: “On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.” (1990-2001 WVS/EVS).
- MENJOBS: “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.” (1990-2001 WVS/EVS).
- BOYEDUC: “A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.” (1990-2001 WVS/EVS).
- NEEDKID: “Do you think that a woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled or is this not necessary?” (1981-2001 WVS/EVS)
- SGLMUM: “If a woman wants to have a child as a single parent but she doesn’t want to have a stable relationship with a man, do you approve or disapprove?” (1981-2001 WVS/EVS)

The authors ran a factor analysis on the scale and found that all five items tap a single dimension, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.54. Finally, they summed the items and standardized them to 100 points for easy interpretation. For example, Finland and Sweden lead the pack with 85 points each, while Jordan, Bangladesh, Egypt and Morocco trail at the bottom with 43 points each.

### Freedom House Ratings

Freedom House has devised a 7-step scale for how much freedom the citizens in a country enjoy in terms of political rights and civil liberties (each field has its own 7-item score). Until 2003, countries whose combined average ratings for Political Rights and for Civil Liberties fell between 1.0 and 2.5 were designated “Free”; between 3.0 and 5.5 “Partly Free,” and between

5.5 and 7.0 “Not Free.” Beginning with the ratings for 2003, countries whose combined average ratings fall between 3.0 and 5.0 are “Partly Free, and those between 5.5 and 7.0 are “Not Free. Wherever the line between democratic and not-democratic may be drawn, it will be to some extent arbitrary. For the sake of simplicity, I have decided to have the cut-off in the middle of the scale, meaning that only countries with scores below 5.3 were included in the study.

#### Cases

Albania, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, India, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Moldova, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, Tanzania, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela.

## APPENDIX II

Country	IDO M	IDO W	IDO Gap	n IDO	TOL M	TOL W	TOL Gap	n TOL	GDI	GES	ES	Q	WP
Albania	2.91	3.04	<b>0.13</b>	961	77.4	82.6	<b>5.2</b>	1000	73.2	68	Mx	NQ	5.7
Argentina	3.8	4.51	<b>0.71</b>	1240	68.9	71.7	<b>2.8</b>	1280	83.9	76	Mx	CE	31.3
Australia	3.13	3.27	<b>0.14</b>	2030	78.2	83.2	<b>5</b>	2048	93.8	78	Mx	PQ	26.5
Bangladesh	2.84	2.92	<b>0.08</b>	1398	70.3	71.8	<b>1.5</b>	1499	49.5	47	Mj	CE	2
Brazil	3.22	3.66	<b>0.44</b>	1136	54	64.8	<b>10.8</b>	1149	77	69	Mx	CE	9.1
Bulgaria	3.25	3.74	<b>0.49</b>	888	58.2	60.3	<b>2.1</b>	517	79.4	69	PR	NQ	26.3
Canada	3.32	3.73	<b>0.41</b>	1913	77.9	83.2	<b>5.3</b>	1931	93.4	83	Mj	PQ	23.6
Chile	4.61	4.89	<b>0.28</b>	1176	73.5	78.3	<b>4.8</b>	1200	82.1	74	Mj	PQ	10.1
Croatia	2.66	3.13	<b>0.47</b>	994	90.7	95.6	<b>4.9</b>	1002	81.4	72	PR	PQ	16.2
Czech	3.19	3.3	<b>0.11</b>	1871	57.3	68.3	<b>11</b>	1899	85.7	68	Mx	PQ	15.7
El Salvador	3.63	3.86	<b>0.23</b>	1176	58	59.4	<b>1.4</b>	1254	70.7	72	PR	PQ	9.5
Estonia	4.31	4.47	<b>0.16</b>	948	68	74	<b>6</b>	999	83.1	66	PR	NQ	17.8
Finland	4.1	4.44	<b>0.34</b>	1014	78.3	86.7	<b>8.4</b>	1034	92.8	85	PR	NQ	36.5
India	3.14	3.32	<b>0.18</b>	1486	62.6	63.9	<b>1.3</b>	2002	57.4	62	Mx	CE	9.3
Japan	3.95	4.39	<b>0.44</b>	1251	68.6	73.5	<b>4.9</b>	1362	92.6	64	Mx	NQ	10
Lithuania	3.84	4.14	<b>0.3</b>	883	51.9	62.5	<b>10.6</b>	999	82.3	71	Mx	PQ	10.6
Mexico	3.5	4.32	<b>0.82</b>	1360	70.2	71	<b>0.8</b>	1535	79	72	Mx	PQ	15.9
Moldova Rep.	3.82	4.13	<b>0.31</b>	930	76.6	79	<b>2.4</b>	1008	69.7	60	PR	PQ	12.9
New Zealand	3.4	3.56	<b>0.16</b>	1137	73.8	81.2	<b>7.4</b>	1192	91.4	81	Mx	NQ	29.2
Norway	3.24	3.83	<b>0.59</b>	1120	61.4	70.2	<b>8.8</b>	1127	94.1	83	PR	PQ	36.4
Peru	3.35	3.46	<b>0.11</b>	1450	71.8	73.4	<b>1.6</b>	1501	73.4	76	PR	CE	18.3
Philippines	3.97	4.1	<b>0.13</b>	1192	58.5	61.7	<b>3.2</b>	1200	74.8	57	Mx	CE	17.2
Poland	3.87	4.09	<b>0.22</b>	1051	78.8	81.3	<b>2.5</b>	1089	83.9	63	Mx	PQ	20.7
Romania	2.45	3.05	<b>0.6</b>	981	56.1	60.4	<b>4.3</b>	1093	77.1	64	PR	PQ	9.9
Slovenia	3.19	3.28	<b>0.09</b>	982	66.5	73.1	<b>6.6</b>	1004	87.9	75	PR	PQ	12.2
South Africa	3.66	3.49	<b>-0.17</b>	2950	74	74.1	<b>0.1</b>	3001	67.8	72	PR	PQ	30
Tanzania	2.71	3.47	<b>0.76</b>	1090	83.8	83.9	<b>0.1</b>	1157	39.6	63	Mj	CE	22.3
Turkey	3.56	4.17	<b>0.61</b>	1127	60.9	64.1	<b>3.2</b>	4608	72.6	62	PR	NQ	4.4
United States	3.17	3.64	<b>0.47</b>	1199	77.3	81.5	<b>4.2</b>	1200	93.5	81	Mj	NQ	14
Uruguay	4.62	4.81	<b>0.19</b>	964	70.7	68.9	<b>-1.8</b>	999	83	73	PR	PQ	11.5
Venezuela	3.6	4.07	<b>0.47</b>	1186	75.9	83.4	<b>7.5</b>	1200	76.7	75	Mx	PQ	9.7
TOTAL				39084				44089					



IDO Men: National average for men on the “Competition is good...” item

IDO Women: National average for women on the “Competition is good...” item

IDO Gap = IDO Women – IDO Men

n IDO = number of people in each country that were asked the ‘competition’ question

TOL Men: National percentage of men that mentioned “Tolerance and respect...” as an important value to teach children

TOL Women: National percentage of women that mentioned “Tolerance and respect...” as an important value to teach children

TOL Gap = TOL Women – TOL Men

n TOL = number of people in each country that were asked the ‘tolerance’ question

ES: Electoral system (Mj – majoritarian, Mx – mixed, PR – proportional)

Q: Quota (NQ – no quotas, PQ – party quotas, CE – constitutional/electoral law quotas)

WP: Percentage of women in the legislative body