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The Intersectionality of Gender, Rights, and Privilege: A Comparative Analysis of 127 Countries (Preprint)

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Abstract

This study provides a macro-level comparison of the rights and privileges that women have around the world through the development of a multi-dimensional index of pro-woman states. This is important because states that score highly on the index provide models for decreasing gender inequalities and increasing human rights for women worldwide. Cross-national differences in female education, employment, reproductive freedom, and participation in state policy formation are explored. Pro-woman states have policies that are associated with higher levels of education, income, and satisfaction. An understanding of the rights and privileges provided in pro-woman states can be used to restructure the welfare state to encourage the empowerment of women and the development of more equal societies.

Keywords

pro-woman state, cross-national comparison, gendered state, comparative political sociology, gender equality, country-level characteristics

Introduction

An overlooked element of comparative stratification is the state structuring of female empowerment. There is wide variation across states in the provision of rights and opportunities for women. Some states, those that are considered to be pro-woman by Orloff (1993), focus on problems and issues concerning families, women, and children. In states that have highly expansive pro-woman policies, women have access to education, employment, and services such as daycare and family leave. Additionally, they have legal control over their reproductive systems and enjoy full rights of citizenship. These rights and benefits then make it possible for women to participate fully in society, to be true equals to men, to pursue careers which enable them to be financially self-sufficient, and to raise families with some level of state protection. However, Orloff (1993) and others note that there is heterogeneity across states in pro-woman policies. Women in relatively few countries around the world enjoy a full range of rights and privileges. It is therefore important to examine how different political systems shape social institutions and impact individual lives.

A conceptual focus on pro-woman states is necessary because these states may help diminish traditional gender roles and gender stratification by providing structural opportunities for women (Wang 2004; Wernet, Elman, and Pendleton 2005). Comparative, country level data on multiple domains, such as female life expectancy, low fertility rates, education levels, the legal status of abortion, the percent of women in public life, income equity, and family leave policies, are gathered from the Population Reference Bureau (2005; 2011; 2013), the Global Gender Gap Report (2012), and the International Labor Organization (2010). This paper explores the differential access that people in 127 countries have to the aforementioned rights and

privileges in order to identify which countries have policies that are the most beneficial for women by ranking pro-woman states in a comparative index.

A previous index of 39 states found that countries which provide women with more rights and privileges enable women to reach their full potential as human beings and to be more autonomous in society (Wernet 2008). This research expands upon the original index by adding over 80 countries and utilizing more recent data. In addition, a human rights approach is explored and a discussion of the welfare state and pro-woman states is used to frame the research.

Theoretical Background

Human Rights Approach

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) not only identifies human rights, but it provides a perspective that encourages us to imagine how the world can be a better place (Blau 2013). The UDHR recognizes the inherent dignity of all human beings and the equal rights of women and men. The declaration explicitly recognizes several rights which are of importance to gender equality. For example, everyone has the right to work and the right to equal pay for equal work, as well as the right to just and favorable remuneration (Article 23). Everyone has the right to a standard of living that promotes an adequate state of health and well-being (Article 25). All individuals have a right to an education (Article 26). The family is entitled to protection by the state (Article 16). Specifically, mothers are entitled to special care and assistance (Article 25). All citizens have the right of equal access to public service and government participation (Article 21). Finally, everyone has responsibilities to a community where the full development of his or her personality is possible (Article 29). Other human rights instruments such as the

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) outlined by the United Nations also explicitly promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) 179 countries adopted a 20 year program of action that focused on reproductive health and rights as well as women's empowerment and gender equality. In 2000, the United Nations (UN) established the MDGs which include: the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and the empower women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and creating a global partnership for development by 2015. In 2014 the ICPD reviewed their original program of action. After concluding that there is still much work to be done, the ICPD urged governments to recommit themselves to an agenda which focuses on women's empowerment.

While human rights instruments outline what constitutes human rights and call for gender equality, they are dependent on the state to provide and protect human rights (Armaline and Glasberg 2009). The UDHR holds the state legally accountable to uphold and ensure basic human rights (Melton 2014), yet the provision of basic human rights varies considerably around the world. An important way of participating in the human rights enterprise is to evaluate the role of states by measuring their ability to protect and provide fundamental human rights to their citizens (Armaline and Glasberg 2009).

By understanding the conditions that are necessary for people to flourish and how societies enable people to enjoy rights and freedoms, human rights can be both affirmed and advanced. Additionally, "by looking at the beneficiaries of human rights, scholars of human

rights uncover new questions about structure and agency” (Brunsma, Smith, and Gran 2013:3).

The theory of intersectionality states that the social concepts of gender and the state construct one another to create systems of power which are often unjust (Collins 2012). As a result, these structures can and do constrain individual agency. It is necessary to transcend the traditional single axis analysis, which focuses on either gender or the state, by looking at the intersectionality of power relations at the state level (Cho, Crenshaw, McCall 2013). Katuna and Silfen-Glasberg (2014) discuss the gendered state and point out that states frequently reinforce patriarchy in a society, thereby marginalizing women. Gender is an organizing principle in social institutions such as the economy, politics, education, medicine, and the family (Lorber 2006). An example of this in the governmental realm is how maternity and family leave policies are implemented. In societies with generous leave policies women have more opportunities to engage in the paid workforce and in civic society, making it more likely that women will participate in politics and have an impact on national policies.

An examination of the intersectionality of gender and the state illuminates the conditions in which women live worldwide, this then makes it possible to rectify these conditions when necessary. A human rights perspective requires ongoing attention to the global economic and political processes that shape everyday life in different parts of the world (Gurr and Naples 2013).

The Welfare State

As indicated in the original pro-woman state index (Wernet 2008), an examination of the welfare state highlights the intersection of gender and the state. Welfare states refer to governments where the state provides for the social and economic wellbeing of its citizens. Some

of the benefits offered by welfare states include pensions, health care, education, child care, and poverty reduction programs. The distribution of these services can affect various aspects of an individual's life, including personal autonomy, overall wellbeing, and life choices such as parenthood (Daly and Rake 2007; Esping-Andersen 2003).

Welfare states have typically developed in societies that are both democratic and capitalist (Flora 1985). Citizens in these states tend to enjoy a broad range of social, civil, and political rights. The welfare state is considered to be a distinctive state form. The states that are typically referred to as welfare states tend to offer their citizens moderate to considerable benefits.

It is important to understand how the welfare state shapes the lives of women and men differently. The welfare state is a key actor in designing social policies which impact the interconnection of work and family life (Inglehart and Norris 2003). By examining the policies of welfare states, gender inequalities in a society can be understood and possibly reduced. States that enable women to reach their full potential as human beings and to be more autonomous in society can be used as a model by other states in order to encourage the development of more equal societies that recognize the inherent dignity of all human beings.

Esping-Andersen (1990) classified the most developed welfare state systems, which include countries across Western Europe, North America and Japan, into three categories; liberal, corporatist, and social democratic. (See Table 1). Many scholars recognize Esping-Andersen's typology and confirm the existence of the three worlds of welfare capitalism (Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser 2011). The distinctions between states are based on the quality of social rights, social stratification, and the relationship between the state, market, and family.

TABLE 1 about here

Liberal welfare states, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, are dominated by a free market economy and strong norms of individualism (Rice, Goodin, and Parpo 2006). These states only provide moderate to minimal assistance to the working-class, state dependents, and low-income individuals. There are strict rules regarding the receipt of aid and there is a stigma attached to receiving welfare benefits (Esping-Andersen 1990). Because of limited assistance it is difficult for women, especially mothers, to be independent of male breadwinners. As a result, traditional gender norms tend to be reinforced in these countries compared to social democratic states.

Corporatist welfare states include countries such as Germany, France, and Italy. Granting social protection (such as maternity leave) and government aid to the underprivileged is not questioned in these states. This is partially due to the fact that there is not as strong an emphasis on market efficiency in corporatist welfare states as there is in liberal welfare states. However, these states do not do much to redistribute wealth and as a result they maintain status differences between individuals. Because of the influence of the church in corporatist welfare states the traditional, patriarchal family tends to be preserved through the benefits structure (Esping-Andersen 1990). Norms dictate that men are the breadwinners and that women are the homemakers. Marriage is strongly encouraged while lone motherhood is strongly discouraged (Rice et al. 2006).

Social democratic welfare states such as Finland, Denmark, and Norway provide generous benefits and promote equality. Social norms dictate that the state should provide health

care, child care, and eldercare, as well as assistance to the poor and helpless. It is widely recognized in social democratic states that everyone in society benefits from the protective policies of the state. Some of these policies directly impact women's autonomy, such as substantial family leave policies, high quality child care, and comprehensive health care, which make it possible for women to have children and pursue a career. Interestingly, these are also the states that are most likely to extend family leave to men as well as to women. As a result, these states promote individual independence instead of dependence on the patriarchal family (Esping-Andersen 1990; Korpi 1983; Rice et al. 2006).

According to Daly and Rake (2007), significant factors of study in cross-national variations in the welfare state include:

- the degree of state intervention and the form of the welfare state;
- the bridging of the work/family interface;
- the extent to which the welfare state directly targets gender inequality and women's welfare;
- the coherence of social policy as it addresses gender roles and inequalities.

These factors can be studied by examining cross-national differences in abortion policy, family leave programs, female education, the percentage of women in public life, life expectancy, fertility, income equality.

The state has a major impact on individuals and the relations of power within families and society. Women's lives are more dependent upon and determined by state policies than are those of men (Adams and Padamsee 2001; Fraser 1989; Hernes 1987; Lorber 2006). Yet, there is too little information on the welfare state as a redistributor of financial and other resources between women and men (Daly and Rake 2007).

The state affects the division of roles, the distribution of resources, and power relations between women and men in a society (Daly and Rake 2007). Thus, the state can

differentially impact the life chances of women and men. This paper is an analysis of the distribution of resources, rights, and privileges along gender lines. How welfare is realized in practice has consequences for women's lives (Esping-Andersen 2003).

The welfare state is a particular state form where public authorities garner resources and assume responsibilities for organizing their redistribution. The welfare state is dependent on organizational forms such as the family, democracy, and the market. At its most basic level the welfare state provides income and resources to individuals. It may also reduce poverty and provide opportunities, thus organizing private and public life. It creates a bureaucracy of rules and practices with regard to benefits. These rules and practices are reflective of the gender norms in society (Daly and Rake 2007). This paper explores how policies at the state level reinforce gender norms and shapes the lives of women and men around the world.

Pro-woman States

Previous research (Wernet et al. 2005) has established that pro-woman states can decrease gender stratification by providing policies and services which allow women to fully participate in the paid workforce and in civic society. The domains explored in this study include both policies and outcomes. Policies such as maternity/family leave, reproductive rights, and the percent of women in public life, impact outcomes such as female life expectancy, fertility rates, female education levels, and income equity. This combination of structural level policies and individual level outcomes is what is unique about the pro-woman state index. The index explores individual level indicators like the number of children a woman has and education attainment, as well as structural level indicators, such as, the likelihood of gainful employment outside the home and engagement in public life. The measures included in the index were carefully selected

from the data available in the countries studied because they represent a number of different spheres of social life that impact women.

Family and medical leave policy is one of the indicators of pro-woman states, and it varies greatly across countries. For example, in European countries, parents typically receive between 50 to 100% of their earnings over the course of 3 to 12 months. Countries such as Croatia have extensive family leave packages where mothers can take as many as 58 weeks off from work for the birth of a child with significant monetary benefits. In Cote d'Ivoire mothers receive 14 weeks of paid leave. However, in the United States mothers can only take up to 12 weeks of unpaid job protected leave (International Labor Organization 2010). Generous family leave policies enable women to balance career and family responsibilities (Chesnais 1996), which can reduce gender stratification and increase female autonomy.

The provision of reproductive rights can also reduce gender stratification in pro-woman states. Reproductive rights include access to health care, contraception, and legalized abortion. The pro-woman index uses access to legal abortion as an indicator of women's rights at the state level. While legalized abortion is often a controversial subject, it does clearly reveal who has power over women's bodies in a society (Luker 1984). When abortion is illegal the state has control over the woman's body. Access to this right, whether one chooses to use it or not, like other legal rights, provides the individual with a sense of security and entitlement (Schneider 1990). It gives women a sense of control over their destiny and a sense of security. The "assertion of rights . . . [can] affirm human values, enhance political growth, and assist in the development of collective identity" (Schneider 1990:228). Reproductive rights have been widely recognized as having a direct impact on women's health, and the UN has been urging governments to provide reproductive rights since 1994.

Beyond family leave policies and reproductive rights, other important factors in pro-woman states include the percent of women in public life, fertility rates, female life expectancy, female educational attainment, and income equity. Civic involvement by women at the national level is important because when women hold positions of power it is more likely that women's rights and privileges will be provided and protected (Chesnais 1996; Daly and Rake 2007). Fertility rates are important because they influence educational attainment, likelihood of paid employment, and time to engage in public life. Female life expectancy is used as an indicator of women's overall health. Income equity and female education increase a woman's ability to be self-sufficient (Esping-Andersen 2003; Lewis 2002). Additionally, female education also increases earning potential (Joshi 2002). This research develops a pro-woman state index that examines these domains in 127 countries in order to highlight which countries provide their citizens with the most rights and opportunities.

Other indices that look at gender inequality across countries include: the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), the Gender Equity Index (GEI), the Gender Development Index (GDI), the Gender Inequality Index (GII), and the Global Gender Gap report. With the exception of the Global Gender Gap report, most of these indices only look at a couple of indicators, such as the percentage of women in parliament, labor force participation, and education levels. The Global Gender Gap is by far the most comprehensive of the indices, with 14 indicators which measure women's health, education, economic and political involvement. However, none of these indices address domains of policies that provide reproductive rights and privileges that enable women to fully participate in society. These indices do not generally include fertility rates, maternity leave policies, abortion policies or the ratio of earned income by women. The pro-woman state index is the only index that is grounded in sociological theory of the welfare

state with a human rights approach. It is the only index that includes a measure of structural policies at the state level that empower women to fully participate in society.

Data and Methods

Comparative, country level information is used to identify pro-woman states. (See Appendix A for an alphabetized list of the countries studied.) The data are collected from the Population Reference Bureau (2005; 2011; 2013), the Global Gender Gap Report (2012), and the International Labor Organization (2010). Eight indicators are used to measure pro-woman states. When these conditions favor women at the state level, women have a greater likelihood of leading healthy, productive, independent lives (Wernet et al. 2005).

The Population Reference Bureau (2005; 2011; 2013) supplies information on four of the indicators in this study: female life expectancy, fertility rates, female representation in parliament, and abortion policy. Abortion policy is scored in the index by three classifications: if abortion is legally permitted upon request; if it is permitted in some circumstances such as to preserve the woman's health; or if it is not permitted at all.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh indicators measure income equity and education attainment; these data are gathered from the Global Gender Gap Report (2012). Female participation in the labor force and the ratio of earned income, relative to men's participation and income, is used to compare the countries' income equality. Information on the number of females enrolled in secondary school per 100 males is provided to measure educational attainment.

The eighth and final indicator of pro-woman states, national policies on family and medical leave, is available from the International Labor Organization (2010). The laws of each country that support care giving in the family, such as the Family and Medical Leave Act in the

United States, are used to compare countries. More specifically, the number of weeks that parents are allowed to take off from their job to care for a newborn is compared.

In order to identify which states provide women with the most rights and privileges, descriptive statistics were run on each indicator, and each country was ranked individually on the indicators studied. The rankings on the eight variables were then summed and the countries were ranked in an index. This is the same procedure that was used in the original pro-woman index (Wernet 2008), and this is how many indices are compiled, including many indicators on the Human Development Index, the Kids Count Data, and The Status of Women in the States report. For example, the country with the most women in parliament was ranked number one and the country with the least number of women in parliament was ranked number one hundred and twenty-seven on the index. This was done for each indicator. When more than one country has the same percentage of women in parliament each country gets the same ranking. For example, 28.7% of the national legislators in Austria and Portugal are women. Therefore they both received a ranking of twenty-eight on the index for this indicator. The next country, Canada, where 28% of the national legislators are women, received a ranking of thirty on the index.

If countries had more than two missing data points they were eliminated from the sample. After such countries were eliminated there are very few cases of missing data; in these circumstances the missing data are replaced with the mean score for the country.

Results

The 127 countries in the index were divided into three groups based on the indicators studied. The first 42 countries provide women with the most rights and privileges, and they are considered to be pro-woman states. The middle 43 countries offer women some rights and

privileges, and the last 42 countries are not considered to be pro-woman states and offer women the fewest opportunities. Finland, Portugal, Denmark, Norway, Australia, Sweden, Croatia, Netherlands, Latvia, and Estonia scored very high on the index and are pro-woman states. The United States ranked 42 on the index, last amongst the pro-woman states. The countries that had the lowest scores on the index include Oman, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Guatemala, Pakistan, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Mali, Nigeria, and Yemen. A breakdown of each indicator is outlined below.

In pro-woman states women are nearly as likely as men to participate in the paid labor force. However, in states that are not pro-woman, women are much less likely to be employed. For example, in Saudi Arabia only 27 women are employed for every 100 men. In states that score high on the index the ratio of female income to male income is about 70%, meaning that women make 70% of what men make. In states that rank low on the index women only make about 30% of what men make. In Iran and Pakistan women only earn on average 21% of what men earn. In states that score high on the index women are just as likely as men to receive a high school degree, in some cases, women are actually slightly more likely to have a high school diploma than are men, such as in Croatia and Denmark. In states that score low on the index women tend to be less likely to get a high school degree than men. In Yemen only 63 women earn a high school degree for every 100 men that earn a high school degree.

In pro-woman states women are more likely to participate in the political decision making process. In countries such as Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands approximately 40% of the parliament is made up of women. In states that are not pro-woman it is much less likely that women are represented in government. Only 3% of the parliament in Iran is female.

Female life expectancy in the countries studied ranges from 86 in Japan to 48 in Lesotho. Women in pro-woman states tend to live longer than women in states that are not pro-woman. Fertility rates for women in pro-woman states tend to be at or below replacement value. Fertility rates for women in states that are not pro-woman tend to be much higher, for example women in Mali typically have 6 children.

Pro-woman states nearly always provide women with reproductive freedoms such as the legal right to obtain an abortion, while states that are not pro-woman nearly always restrict this access. Maternity leave policies tend to be much more liberal in states that score high on the index, with some countries, such as Norway and Croatia, offering over 39 weeks of leave with significant financial compensation. In states that score low on the index it is typical that maternity leave policies are significantly shorter, around 11 or 12 weeks, with little or no financial compensation. This is the case in countries such as the United States and Nigeria. While the United States does not score low on the overall index, its poor ranking on this indicator partially accounts for why it does not have a higher score compared to other pro-woman states.

A comparison of Finland and Yemen, the countries that had the highest and lowest scores on the index respectively, show a stark contrast of what life is like for women at the top and the bottom of the pro-woman state index. In Finland female life expectancy is 83, and the average woman has two children. Women are nearly as likely as men to be part of the paid labor force, and women make, on average, 71% of what men earn. Women are actually slightly more likely than men to earn a high school degree, and women actively participate in making political decisions, with women making up 42.5% of parliament. Abortion is legal, and women receive 21 weeks of maternity leave after the birth of a child. In Yemen female life expectancy is 66, and

the average woman has five children. Only 28% of women participate in the paid labor force, and women make 27% of what men earn. Only 63% of women have a high school degree, and less than one percent of parliament is made up of women. Abortion is illegal, and women receive 8 weeks of maternity leave after the birth of a child. In pro-woman states like Finland women are educated, and they participate in the paid labor force as well as the political decision making process. Women enjoy a host of rights and privileges in society. In states like Yemen, that are at the bottom of the index, women are much less likely to be educated, employed, or participate in the political decision making process.

Discussion and Conclusion

The discussion of pro-woman states explores connections to the welfare state, communist policies, economic development, and postmodernization. Additionally, exceptions to the norms and limitations of the study are outlined.

Until the 1970's welfare policies were focused on the male breadwinner model (Esping-Andersen 2003), reinforcing traditional gender norms. The state protected men's employment, earnings, and social security, and it was assumed that these measures would therefore protect women and families. However, these policies reinforced women's dependence on men. Only in the last several decades has there been a shift that makes motherhood and careers compatible in social democratic welfare states, as well as in some corporatist states such as Belgium and France (Esping-Andersen 2003).

Women-friendly policies are beneficial for women, families, and even the economy because they enable women access to gainful employment (Esping-Andersen 2003). Women's employment is a key factor in reducing poverty in a society; it is even more effective than

welfare payments. Access to maternity leave and daycare, which is provided in social democratic welfare states, is extremely important for working mothers. It is advantageous for states to provide welfare policies that enable women to participate in the paid workforce (Esping-Andersen 2003).

Structural level changes that are prevalent in social democratic welfare states, such as the provision of rights and privileges which empower women, mark the emergence of the pro-woman state. The recognition of pro-woman states is important because this state structure can reduce gender stratification in society. In order to identify pro-woman states, 127 countries were ranked based on eight indicators.

The countries with the most favorable conditions for women are found in the first third of Table 2 and Table 3. These countries include Finland, Portugal, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and others. Interestingly, all 5 social democratic welfare states are pro-woman states, and rank very high on the index. This is in line with Esping-Andersen's (1990; 2003) research that shows that social democratic welfare states are more likely to promote equality between women and men.

TABLE 2 about here

The countries that fell in the middle had a score between 43 and 85 on the index and included countries such as Japan, Ireland, Nicaragua, Brazil, Kyrgyzstan and others. Interestingly, some of these states are liberal welfare states. Again, this corresponds to Esping-Andersen's (1990) findings that liberal welfare states are more likely preserve the traditional patriarchal family structure than are social democratic welfare states. There are a number of

states that are liberal and corporatist welfare states that are considered to be pro-woman states, but they tend not to rank as highly as social democratic states.

Countries such as India, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt and Nigeria rank very low on the pro-woman index. Of the countries studied, these countries are least likely to provide women with the rights and privileges examined in this paper such as a high school education, employment, representation in government, reproductive freedoms, family leave, and conditions that would result in longer life expectancies (see Table 3).

TABLE 3 about here

There are several patterns that the pro-woman state index illuminates. Countries that have higher levels of economic development, like those in the Global North, are more likely to provide their citizens with more rights and privileges (see Figure 1). Additionally, a number of countries that are either communist, such as China, Cuba, and Vietnam, or have a history of communism, such as the Eastern European countries of Croatia, Estonia, and Latvia, rank highly on the index and are considered to be pro-woman states. Women in these countries are more likely to have at least a high school education, to be employed, and they tend to have lower fertility rates, legalized abortion, and better maternity leave policies.

FIGURE 1 about here

There are also regional and cultural connections that help explain why countries provide certain rights and privileges to their citizens. The results of this study seem to have a strong

association with indicators of postmodernization. Inglehart (1997) has found that citizens in some countries tend to have more postmodern values. One gauge of postmodernity is the shift from traditional authority to secular-rational authority. Traditional authority is rooted in customs frequently based in religious practice, while secular-rational authority is based in the belief that authority comes from one's position in an organizational hierarchy and from formal rules and regulations. Additionally, postmodern countries tend to be more financially secure (Inglehart 1997). It is the combination of economic development and the type of authority that is valued that seems to be highly predictive of where countries rank on the pro-woman state index (Wernet 2008). Pro-woman states tend to be more economically developed and emphasize secular-rational authority, while states that are not pro-woman are more likely to be less economically developed and value traditional authority.

Of these two factors, norms emphasizing traditional authority are more important than financial security in predicting pro-woman states. For example, oil rich countries, such as Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Iran are ranked in the bottom third of the pro-woman index. While the gross national product (GNP) per capita in these countries ranges, some of these countries such as Kuwait, UAE and Qatar, have GNP's per capita that are comparable to those found in most industrialized nations. These countries, while financially secure, are not pro-woman states. This is most likely due to the fact that these countries are highly religious and they tend to emphasize traditional authority (Inglehart 1997; Inglehart and Norris 2003).

Other countries that are outliers include Vietnam and Costa Rica. Both of these countries qualify as pro-woman states, yet their GNP per capita is quite low. These countries are considered to be least industrialized nations, yet they empower women. Vietnam and Costa Rica

both have governments which provide education, health care, maternity leave and other rights and privileges to their citizens. For example, both of these countries offer women 100% of their salary for four months after the birth of a child. Historically, these rights have been provided by communist governments like the one found in Vietnam. Costa Rica, while not communist, is a democracy which has long prioritized the common good through promoting education and health care which empowers both women and men, unlike many governments in least industrialized nations.

The classification of pro-woman states is based on the criteria of this data set; a limitation of this study is that these findings are relative to the indicators and the countries studied. For example, a life expectancy of 80 years is not necessarily unfavorable, and having a women make between 17% and 79% of what men make is not necessarily favorable. The ranking on the index shows the best or the worst-case scenario within the context of the 8 domains and the 127 countries studied. If more domains or countries were included in the index an individual countries' ranking, relative to the other countries studied, may change. For example, since the United States ranks last among the pro-woman states, the inclusion of more domains or counties could downgrade the United States' classification. When data is available, future research should explore how more domains and countries impact the pro-woman index and how provision of these rights has evolved over the decades.

Ideally, more domains would have been included into the analysis, but comparable data for large numbers of countries is, unfortunately, unavailable at this time. The inclusion of more domains would have resulted in a drastic reduction of the number of countries studied which would have limited the ability of comparative researchers to explore the impact of pro-woman states. One of the major contributions of this research is that it is very comprehensive with regard

to the number of countries studied. As a result, the pro-woman state index is an essential tool which can be used by researchers to illuminate the state's role in shaping individual lives in 127 countries. For example, the index can be used as a structural level variable with cross-national data sets to analyze the impact of state policies on a variety of social outcomes.

The ranking of pro-woman states provides powerful confirmation of the literature on gender and the welfare state through the use of comparative analysis. Further, this paper indicates that scholars interested in the rights of women would do well to focus more on the social democratic welfare state as a structural mechanism for improving the rights of women throughout the world. Pro-woman states provide structural opportunities for women. Ranking states based on policies which empower women, children, and families also provides a means of monitoring the continuation or diminishment of gender stratification in countries around the world. Countries that provide their citizens with the aforementioned rights and privileges offer a model of how states can enable women to reach their full potential as human beings and to be more autonomous in society, thus encouraging the development of more equal societies that recognize the inherent dignity of all human beings.

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Table1

Welfare States

Liberal

United States
Canada
Australia
Ireland
Japan
Switzerland
The United Kingdom

Corporatist

Austria
France
Germany
Italy
Belgium

Social Democratic

Norway
Sweden
Denmark
Finland
Netherlands

Table 2
Index of Pro-Woman States

Rank	Nation
1	Finland
2	Portugal
3	Denmark
4	Norway
5	Australia
6	Sweden
7	Croatia
8	Netherlands
9	Latvia
10	Estonia
11	United Kingdom
12	Serbia
13	Lithuania
14	Iceland
15	France
16	Canada
17	Slovenia
18	Germany
19	Moldova
20	Switzerland
21	Luxembourg
22	Bulgaria
23	Cuba
24	Czech Republic
25	Spain
25	Vietnam
27	Romania
27	Slovakia
29	Barbados
30	Russia
31	New Zealand
32	Austria
32	Belgium
34	Poland
35	Italy
36	Singapore
37	Hungary

38	China
38	Cyprus
40	Mongolia
41	Costa Rica
42	United States
43	Greece
44	Albania
45	Ukraine
46	Israel
46	Japan
46	South Africa
49	Thailand
50	Kazakhstan
51	Azerbaijan
52	Ireland
53	Macedonia
54	Armenia
55	Brazil
56	Uruguay
57	Trinidad and Tobago
58	Namibia
59	Korea, South
60	Jamaica
61	Kyrgyzstan
62	Madagascar
63	Chile
64	Lesotho
64	Peru
66	Guyana
67	Cambodia
67	Venezuela
69	Ecuador
69	Tajikistan
71	Nicaragua
72	Colombia
73	Bolivia
74	Bangladesh
74	Burundi
76	Georgia
77	Algeria

78	Mexico
79	Turkey
80	Belize
80	Mozambique
82	Tanzania
83	Mauritius
84	El Salvador
84	Panama
86	Dominican Republic
87	Ethiopia
88	Malta
89	Botswana
90	Uganda
91	Nepal
92	Paraguay
93	Ghana
94	Malawi
95	Timor-Leste
96	Burkina Faso
97	Philippines
98	Suriname
99	Malaysia
100	Senegal
101	Qatar
102	Sri Lanka
103	Zambia
104	Kenya
105	Honduras
106	Indonesia
107	United Arab Emirates
108	Kuwait
109	Gambia
110	Chad
111	Cameroon
112	Syria
113	Morocco
114	Lebanon
115	India
116	Mauritania
117	Jordan

118	Oman
119	Saudi Arabia
120	Iran
121	Guatemala
122	Pakistan
123	Cote d'Ivoire
124	Egypt
125	Mali
125	Nigeria
127	Yemen

Table 3
Indicators of Pro-Woman States

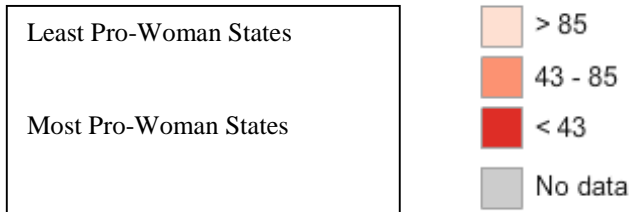
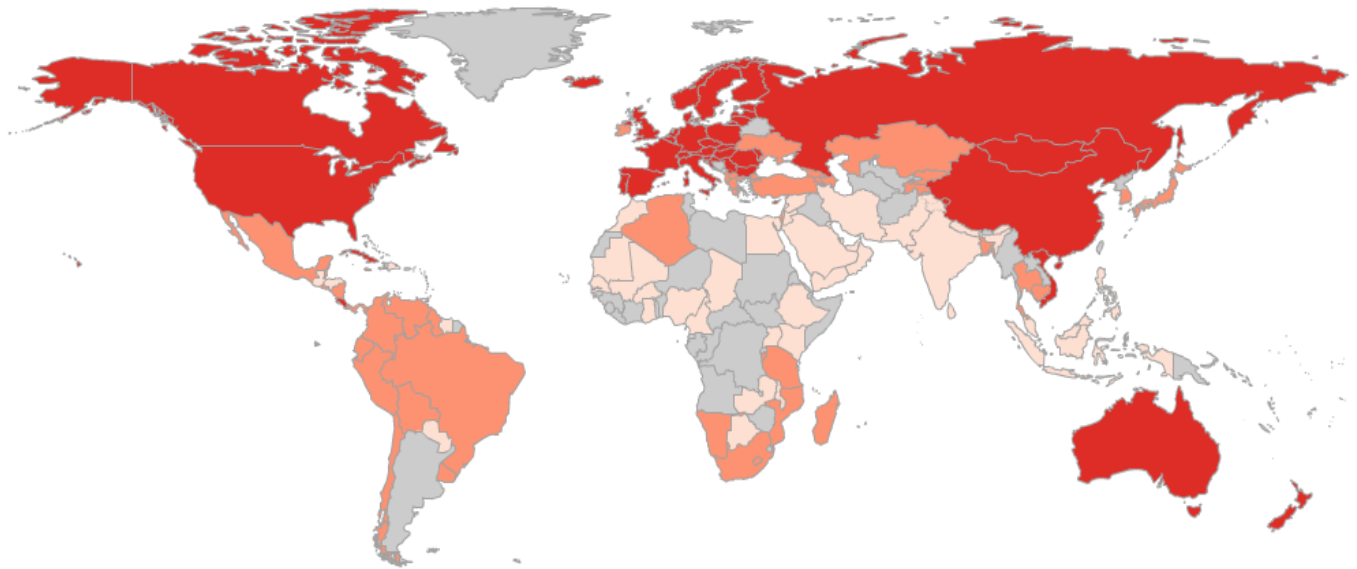
Nation	Life Expectancy	Fertility Rates	Female-Male Ratio Labor Force participation	Female-Male ratio in Secondary Ed	% Women in Parliament	Maternity Leave in Weeks	Abortion policy	Ratio of earned income	Rank
Finland	83	1.8	0.96	1.01	42.5	21	Legal	0.71	1
Portugal	82	1.3	0.87	1.10	28.7	21	Legal	0.64	2
Denmark	81	1.8	0.92	1.03	39.1	18	Legal	0.75	3
Norway	83	1.9	0.94	1.00	39.6	46	Legal	0.78	4
Australia	84	1.9	0.85	1.02	29.2	52	Legal	0.71	5
Sweden	84	1.9	0.94	1.00	44.7	14	Legal	0.79	6
Croatia	80	1.5	0.83	1.06	23.8	58	Legal	0.70	7
Netherlands	83	1.7	0.87	1.02	37.8	16	Legal	0.68	8
Latvia	78	1.1	0.88	1.02	23.0	16	Legal	0.71	9
Estonia	80	1.5	0.89	1.02	19.8	20	Legal	0.65	10

Nation	Life Expectancy	Fertility Rates	Female-Male Ratio Labor Force participation	Female-Male ratio in Secondary Ed	% Women in Parliament	Maternity Leave in Weeks	Abortion policy	Ratio of earned income	Rank
United States	80	1.9	0.85	1.02	17.0	12	Legal	0.63	42

Nation	Life Expectancy	Fertility Rates	Female-Male Ratio Labor Force participation	Female-Male ratio in Secondary Ed	% Women in Parliament	Maternity Leave in Weeks	Abortion policy	Ratio of earned income	Rank
Oman	76	2.9	0.34	1.01	9.6		Not legal	0.25	118
Saudi Arabia	75	2.8	0.27	1.06	0.1	10	Sometimes	0.17	119
Iran	71	1.9	0.44	0.87	3.1	12	Sometimes	0.21	120
Guatemala	74	3.6	0.56	0.94	13.3	12	Not legal	0.44	121
Pakistan	66	3.6	0.26	0.76	21.1	12	Sometimes	0.21	122
Cote d'Ivoire	54	4.6	0.62	0.57	11.0	14	Not legal	0.47	123
Egypt	75	2.9	0.30	0.96	2.2	12	Not legal	0.26	124
Mali	53	6.3	0.57	0.70	10.2	14	Not legal	0.41	125
Nigeria	53	5.6	0.53	0.77	6.7	12	Not legal	0.57	125
Yemen	66	5.2	0.28	0.63	0.7	8	Not legal	0.27	127

Figure 1

World Map of Pro-Woman States



Appendix A

Countries Studied (in alphabetical order)

Nation	Rank
Albania	44
Algeria	77
Armenia	54
Australia	5
Austria	32
Azerbaijan	51
Bangladesh	74
Barbados	29
Belgium	32
Belize	80
Bolivia	73
Botswana	89
Brazil	55
Bulgaria	22
Burkina Faso	96
Burundi	74
Cambodia	67
Cameroon	111
Canada	16
Chad	110
Chile	63
China	38
Colombia	72
Costa Rica	41
Cote d'Ivoire	123
Croatia	7
Cuba	23
Cyprus	38
Czech Republic	24
Denmark	3
Dominican Republic	86
Ecuador	69
Egypt	124

El Salvador	84
Estonia	10
Ethiopia	87
Finland	1
France	15
Gambia	109
Georgia	76
Germany	18
Ghana	93
Greece	43
Guatemala	121
Guyana	66
Honduras	105
Hungary	37
Iceland	14
India	115
Indonesia	106
Iran	120
Ireland	52
Israel	46
Italy	35
Jamaica	60
Japan	46
Jordan	117
Kazakhstan	50
Kenya	104
Korea, South	59
Kuwait	108
Kyrgyzstan	61
Latvia	9
Lebanon	114
Lesotho	64
Lithuania	13
Luxembourg	21
Macedonia	53
Madagascar	62
Malawi	94
Malaysia	99
Mali	125
Malta	88
Mauritania	116

Mauritius	83
Mexico	78
Moldova	19
Mongolia	40
Morocco	113
Mozambique	80
Namibia	58
Nepal	91
Netherlands	8
New Zealand	31
Nicaragua	71
Nigeria	125
Norway	4
Oman	118
Pakistan	122
Panama	84
Paraguay	92
Peru	64
Philippines	97
Poland	34
Portugal	2
Qatar	101
Romania	27
Russia	30
Saudi Arabia	119
Senegal	100
Serbia	12
Singapore	36
Slovakia	27
Slovenia	17
South Africa	46
Spain	25
Sri Lanka	102
Suriname	98
Sweden	6
Switzerland	20
Syria	112
Tajikistan	69
Tanzania	82
Thailand	49
Timor-Leste	95

Trinidad and Tobago	57
Turkey	79
Uganda	90
Ukraine	45
United Arab Emirates	107
United Kingdom	11
United States	42
Uruguay	56
Venezuela	67
Vietnam	25
Yemen	127
Zambia	103