

## **I. Executive Summary**

Around the world there exists varying levels of gender inequality, all of which have been studied greatly. The exact cause of the growing gaps between men and women isn't completely understood. One factor is the idea that the government regime type currently in power in particular country could have affects on the level of gender inequality. Using data from The Economist and the United Nations, it was determined that regime type does in fact have an affect. The more democratic the state, the lower the level of gender inequality will likely be. This confirms the hypothesis that was proposed using previously existing data and literature.

## **II. Literature Review**

One of the primary goals of American equality would seem to be the equality that men and women share. It is a clear desire for democracies as a whole to ensure their people are equal. For generations, women have often been neglected when it comes to governance and political participation. Movements over the last several decades across the globe have seen women make tremendous strides towards political equality. Some, those that live within democracies, may have an easier time of overcoming inequality than those that live under more authoritarian conditions. The literature that follows shows a progression from general explanation and contributing factors to specific instances of gendered politics effecting the governance of the state. The data is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research.

### **Explanation**

The first step into understanding the relationship between governance and gender is to define what gender inequality is considered. A 1998 study of women in parliaments attempted to ascertain what factors helped to create the proper situation for the development of gender equality. The study found that a combination of political, socioeconomic, and cultural variables

created the necessary environment for greater female empowerment (Kenworthy 1999). More specifically, the study found that a proportional electoral system, a more liberal-leaning government, a longer history of women's suffrage, an equal representation in the professional world, and a culture's historic positive attitude towards women are all necessary to believe the state is gender equal (Kenworthy 1999). These factors also ensured that women had an equal opportunity to be elected to office or be more involved in the government (Kenworthy 1999).

A 2009 article in the *European Journal of Political Research* expands on these factors and shows a growth in female representation since 1975 based on three factors (Paxton 2009). The article uses the type of electoral system, the use of national-level gender quotas, and the growth of the democracy (based on political rights and civil liberties) to ascertain if representation is growing for women (Paxton 2009). The data shows that national quotas do work, but at a significant lower level of impact, as compared to the impact of proportional representation which has steadily increased female participation over time (Paxton 2009). The study also concluded that at the beginning of a democracy, there is no immediate impact on women but their representation is slowly increased over time (Paxton 2009). The authors also conclude that the granting of civil liberties was much more impactful in the growth of female representation than the granting of political rights was (Paxton 2009). This article demonstrates the slow growth that female representation in government is undergoing, and begins to explore how democracy effects this data.

### **Democracy and Gender**

Another 2009 article attempts to draw a connection between democracy and gender equality. Noting that there is not much research already existing on the topic, and that tradition has allowed political scientists to deem some state's "democracies" even though half the

population is barred from voting, the author attempts to argue that democracy creates benefits specifically for gender equality (Beer 2009). The author argues that because of the nature of democracy and the addition of women's suffrage there is an inherent importance in women's political participation (Beer 2009). The author concludes, maintaining that the conclusion transcends a nation's developmental stage, that the longer the democracy is around, the greater gender equality will be within the state (Beer 2009).

### **Representation**

One of the major factors that plays a role in gender equality is the actual level of representation in the government held by women. In 2011, the Institute for Democracy and Conflict Resolution published an article that examined the levels of female representation in national legislatures and attempted to explain mechanisms for increasing gender equality (Randall 2011). Combining data, the author calculated that women make up approximately 19% of national parliaments (Randall 2011). The author notes, however, that this average is skewed as Rwanda's parliament is 55% compared to the United States' 16% (Randall 2011). The author explores peaceful attitudes of women, whether they are more or less corrupt than men, and if their presence is associated with greater prominence of women issues in the legislature (Randall 2011). The article concludes, however, that gender quotas are often the general response to gender inequality but can often lead to an "intrusive" connotation causing negative impacts (Randall 2011).

Quotas are most often used to fill in administrative positions rather than elected positions. A 2015 article examines how democracy affects gender equality at cabinet level positions of appointment. The author suggests that certain political-developmental factors must be in place in order for there to be a positive effect on gender equality (Hogstrom 2015). The author suggests a

negative situation to prove his point: that development within a military dictatorships is more likely to lead to greater inhibitions to gender equality (Hogstrom 2015). However, the author notes that when dictatorships begin a transition into democracy, there is likely going to be a positive effect on gender equality (Hogstrom 2015). The author notes that these changes were analyzed over a period of time across the planet, and positive changes to equality were denoted by the number of female officials appointed to the national cabinet (Hogstrom 2015).

### **Participation**

The previous article made reference to political transitions. A 1994 *World Politics* article examines how gender impacted democratization (Waylen 1994). The author considers several key questions about the role women play in the transition to democracy (Waylen 1994). The author developed a gendered analysis of the different processes that states in Latin America and Eastern Europe underwent in their transition to democracy (Waylen 1994). The concluding argument attempts to highlight the significance between civil society and the existence of “political space” (Waylen 1994). The article suggests that if women are allowed to have organizational space, and are able to freely articulate their beliefs among likeminded thinkers, they are more likely to help push for political transition (Waylen 1994).

### **A Different Approach: Women in China**

While much of the previous research focused on women within current democracies or transitioning governments, a 2013 article from the *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* examines the role of women in infamously authoritarian China. The article examined traditional views of women within the Chinese culture, the severe education gap between women and men, and role of women’s groups (Berna 2013). The Chinese State uses its authoritarian power sparingly, but often does so without question. This trend is commonplace, and has become more

so in terms of gender inequality. The article explores how women's groups have fought for new women's rights laws, the creation of newer gender sensitive policies, the removal of gender segregation in the workplace, and the equality of access to employment (Berna 2013). Even when facing a much more difficult battle for representation, women in China have demonstrated that they can begin a drive for equality through their voice.

### **III. Study Design**

Throughout the world, as in China, there are many different forms of governance. They range from military or civilian dictatorships to direct or representative democracy. It may be controversial, but the fact remains that these many forms of government offer a unique set of benefits and drawbacks. The way a state is actually governed can have a multitude of effects on the society within the borders that may be completely different from a neighboring nation with just a slightly different form of government. One of the more prevalent and drastic of differences arises when examining the levels of gender inequality in different countries. Experts have offered thousands of opinions on the exact reasoning behind the creation of gender inequality and even more opinions on what effects its growth or decay. Examining forms of government and their effect on the level of gender inequality within the state may offer an entirely new perspective.

Most would expect that democracies would promote a more gender-equal society, but, using the percentage of women elected to state legislators as an indicator of gender politics, the data shows women make up only 19% of all national parliaments (Randall 2011). In order to disturb the generally accepted fact of American equality, further data shows that the U.S. Congress is comprised of 16% women, while Rwanda's similarly bicameral parliament is 55% female (Randall 2011). Even within the designation of

democracy, there exists some contradiction on if it creates a more equitable society. The study will attempt to examine if the form of government effects the level of gender inequality. While reconciling the discrepancy within democracies, and understanding that many of the values of democracy do still promote equity, the hypothesis stands that if the state has a higher level of democracy and democratic tendencies than the level of gender inequality will be lower. The null hypothesis states that democracy will have no effect on the level of gender inequality. It is clear that democratic values of equality and the ability for the whole population to vote that there will be a likely chance that women would have more opportunity for empowerment. This basic logic and understanding of democracy is what drives the consideration of the hypothesis.

In order to prove this hypothesis, several concepts will be employed for statistical use. The independent variable will be the level of gender inequality and is empirical data that will be ran through the statistical software SPSS. Similar, the dependent variable is the form of government, which is also empirical data to be run through SPSS. The level of gender inequality is measured using the 2008 Gender Inequality Index provided by the UN. This data was categorized into three groups (Low, Medium, and High) using a visual binning technique. The form of government will be defined by the Economist's 2014 determination of regime type. This data is provided in four categories: Full democracy, part democracy, hybrid, and authoritarian. Given the considerable research done in preparation for this study, it is considerable that no other research has attempted to compare these two types of variables. The idea of it is though provoking to a point where this comes as a surprise, but it should be noted that studies on gender inequality are limited, and more so when adding the additional variable of regime types.

As previously stated, the UN gender inequality index fractured into three categories (SPSS title: Gender\_Inequality, "Gender Inequality Index Grouped") and the regime type of different countries (SPSS title: dem\_level4, "Regime Type, Economist 2014") will be cross-examined. This data is found within the world.sav data file which contains 167 entries of countries that were measured and 101 variables, excluding the created variable mentioned above. Gender inequality is an ordinal dataset that has undergone categorization. The form of government is a nominal data set. A cross tabulation of the two variable will be the primary statistical test. In addition, a chi square score will be sought to determine the level of significance. Lambda and Cramer's V will be used to measure the association of the two variables.

#### **IV. Analysis and Conclusion**

A statistical test was run using a cross tabulation of two variables: the level of gender inequality (the dependent) and the type of regime in power (the independent). There were 135 valid cases to analyze within the data set, comprising 80.8% of the total number of entries. The cross tabulation shows a clear relationship between the two variables. Of particular note, 91.7% of full democracies have a low level of gender inequality while 0% have a high levels of inequality. 11.1% of authoritarian regimes have low level but 52.8% of them have high levels of inequality. Hybrid regimes, which take on more characteristics of authoritarian regimes than democracy, represent a peculiar data point. 63.3% of these governments, approximately 10% more than authoritarian, have high levels of gender inequality whereas only 3.3% of hybrid regimes have low levels. Further analysis of this data shows that 40% of partial democracies, those governments that have significant democratic values but falter under corruption, have low levels of gender inequality, while 15.6% have high levels.

A chi-square test was performed to measure the level of independence between the two variables. A strong association between the two variables exist. The Pearson Chi-Square resulted in a value of 69.233, with 6 degrees of freedom and a .000 p-value ( $\chi^2(6) = 69.233, p = .000$ ). There is no possibility that the data calculated could occur by chance, and thus the null hypothesis can be successfully rejected.

Cramer's V was used as a measure of association between the two variables, as they both are categorical and nominal data. The test shows a very strong relationship between the two variables with a measure of .50, with a p value of .000. Lambda was also performed as a measure of association. There exist yet another strong association between the two variables with an output of .283 and a p value of .000.

This data suggests that a strong relationships between the two variables. Not only can the null hypothesis be rejected, the positive nature of the relationship between the variables allows for the hypothesis to be proven true. Clearly, the more democratic the state is, the lower the level of gender inequality will be. Interestingly, the data does not present itself with a direct trend. There are more hybrid regimes with a higher level of gender inequality than most of the authoritarian regimes. The relationship can be considered very significant as the p values are within 100% confidence. While Cramer's V rises to a critical point of questioning the similarity of the two variables, it rests toward the lower end of this question allowing the association to be considered extremely strong. The lambda association tests helps to confirm this observation as its output remains strong but is not overly strong to question.

As stated before, the data allows the original hypothesis to stand as correct. The data shows a very strong relationship between the two and offers insight into the



directional nature of this relationship. It is clear that as countries take on more democratic values, their level of gender inequality will fall. Previous literature and research hinted at this concept, but was focused primarily in the difference between democratic and authoritarian regimes. While the data presented above does confirm previous literature as well as the hypothesis, it does present interesting questions regarding hybrid and partial democracies. Hybrid regimes seems to experience higher levels of gender inequality than authoritarian regimes, considering they had the same number count. A major theme in the literature, however, was considering the differences within the collection of democracies. Only 2 countries had mid-level gender inequality and 0 had high levels. Previous research referred to extreme differences within democracies regarding gender inequality, but the data shows that there is little difference. More than likely, the indicators that were examined in the literature were either not represented in the UN's index or the indicator is a false one.

The data found could have a considerable effect on further research and on a multitude of topics. Gender inequality is often a subjective topic, with many experts in their field attaching a lot of different causes to it. One such cause can now be considered to be what type of government is in power within the particular country. It's interesting to explore how these governments would affect the levels directly, but simply understanding that the characteristics of these regimes very strongly effect inequality among men and women. These characteristics are something that could easily be explored to try and ascertain what exactly about these government types might affect the level of gender inequality. Examining concepts like representation, accessibility, transparency, military power, voice/opinion, control, information control, and many more cultural questions

could be applied to the question at hand. This research successfully answers how regime type could affect gender inequality, but it also raises questions in other, related topics.

One such topic was alluded to earlier and is the idea that within the collection of democracies, many researchers see a stark difference in gender equality. A question that can be posed from this is how do parliamentary and presidential democratic systems differ in their levels of gender inequality? Does direct democracy have a more significant effect than a representative democracy? These questions can easily be answered with further research and more specific data regarding democracies. Also alluded to earlier was an idea regarding why hybrid regimes might have higher levels of gender inequality than the similarly associated authoritarian regimes. Does the level of corruption within the government effect its ability to create a more gender-equal society?

A more interesting line of thought that could be researched is the idea of government transition and the level of gender inequality. When the government transitions from one administration to another, how do new policies effect the data presented above. Further, when a government transitions from an authoritarian regime to a more democratic one, how are the levels affected. It'd be interesting to see how women may or may not find more empowerment during the transition. The vacuum that opens during such a transition may allow more space for women to be represented and in power in the new government. Continuing this line of thought, it'd be interesting to see if gender inequality is a causal mechanism of the government falling. The end goal of this research should be to answer the question of just how powerful can a woman's voice be within the government?

## V. Works Cited

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## VI. Tables and Charts

