WOMEN AND THEIR RISE TO TOP POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN LIBERIA, CHILE, AND FINLAND: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Political Science
To the Graduate College of
East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania

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This thesis by Aisha Abdus-Sabur submitted to the Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science on May 8, 2015 has been examined by the following faculty and it meets or exceeds the standards required for graduation as testified by our signatures below.

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ABSTRACT

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Political Science to the Graduate College of East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania

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Title: Women and their Rise to Top Political Leadership in Liberia, Chile, and Finland

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Abstract

Female political leaders globally remain underrepresented and disproportionate to their male counterparts, yet some have been able to break what is known as "the final glass ceiling", and elect a female head of state. This study will investigate three countries in three significant regions of the world (Africa, South America, and Europe) that have all elected women leaders who have, or are currently carrying out their full terms. Using a comparative analysis this research explains the level of democracy, impact of non-governmental Organizations, the share of women in parliament, and the influence of education, to determine how impactful these socio-political factors have been in aiding the election of a female head of state in these countries. The findings of this research show that higher levels of democracy, a strong presence of NGO's advocating for women's rights, higher levels of education, and the share of women in parliament have all likely contributed to success rates in Chile, Liberia, and Finland in electing the first women to lead their countries.

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Chapter I Introduction and Background

While women are still underrepresented and disproportionate to their male counterparts in government, progress in decreasing the gender gap in female political leaders globally has been made. A 2014 press release from the Inter-parliamentary Union reported that thirty-six countries had 30 percent or more women ministers, which jumped from twenty six percent in 2012. Fourteen women led their countries in the Executive office in 2014. Nevertheless even a country such as the United States, that is known for a strong democratic and equal society; few women have held leadership roles in government, and a female head of state has yet to come to fruition. In fact, countries where there has been a history of abusive government regimes and low levels of gender equity, such as Liberia and Chile, have elected a woman to the highest branch of government before the United States. However, these countries are rarely studied for their progressive steps towards gender equality in government. The unanswered question is: What has prompted such progress in electing a female head of state in these countries despite being known as less progressive, while other countries have not had this success? Liberia, Finland, and Chile have been able to break through major barriers and elect women

as leaders of their respective countries. An examination of the factors that have likely contributed to this is phenomenon is important in order to promote such progress across the globe.

The objective of this study is to examine and compare similar factors in three different regions, and the relationship between these factors and the election of women leaders in each individual country within the last 20 years. The goal of this thesis is to attempt to explain the success of Liberia, Chile, and Finland in electing female heads of state while examining which of these socio-political factors may have had the greatest impact. While female political participation on a smaller scale is still not where it needs to be, this research is important to invoke discussion about whether or not these three countries are using a model that should be studied and replicated in countries that have yet to make the same progress.

Rationale for Choosing Liberia. Chile, and, Finland

This research will look into two developing countries (Liberia and Chile) and one developed country (Finland). These countries were chosen because each of them play a specific and important role in the global community. Liberia has a longstanding connection to the United States and its citizens from the African diaspora. Liberia became the first country in Africa to gain its independence after over fifty years of colonial rule. The country was established by Americans for Americans, specifically for African Americans (US department of State).

In 1816 the United States Congress made a controversial decision to establish an act to help provide funding to send freeborn Blacks and emancipated slaves there to establish

a colony (US Department of State) Their past progress in combination with their election of a female head of state (the first Sub-Saharan African country to do so) makes Liberia an important point of study.

Since its return to democracy in 1990, Chile has been an active participant in the international political arena. Chile became a two-year non-permanent position on the UN Security Council in January 2003 and was re-elected to the council in October 2013. Further, Chile has played an active role in promoting multilateral institutions and supporting democratic and human rights principles. (Human Rights Watch 2011). After decades of an abusive dictatorship Chile is regarded as one of the top peacekeeping countries in South America, and today is being led by a female president, Michele Bachelet who was elected by popular vote in 2006 (Cavides 2014).

Lastly, Finland the most developed country of the three has a political- economic design that many have studied. Finland is an example of a late but successful state-led industrialized country. The economic policy strategy that achieved this included a mix of governmental intervention and private incentives (Economic History Association). Today its position in the global economy make it a highly respected country, with a development model that upcoming industrializers can draw from. In addition to this, Finland has a longstanding history of gender equity in society. In 2000 they elected their first female President Tarja Halonen, who was later re-elected in 2006.

Together these countries come from three very important regions of the world (Africa, Europe, and South America) all of which are completely interconnected. These countries have rarely been studied in relation to one another regarding female political

leadership, and the factors that may have made this possible. Each of these three countries have their own unique set of circumstances that make the study of their female political leadership representation significant and an important point of study.

History of Finland

Finland, officially known as the Republic of Finland, is a Nordic country in Northern Europe bordered by Sweden to the west, Norway to the north and Russia to the east. Based on data from the U.S population census Finland's population is 5,268,799 (CIA world Fact book 2015). In comparison to Liberia and Chile who have histories of unequal and abusive regimes, Finland is known for its "cultural tradition of gender equality." (Holli 476) Finland was the first country in the world to grant full rights to women to vote freely, and run for government. In 2000 Finland elected their first female president Tarja Halone and in 2006 she was re-elected for a second term. During an interview at a conference entitled "A world Without Walls: A conference on Peace building, Reconciliation and Globalization in an Interdependent World," Finland's foreign Prime Minister Erkki Tuomioja states that Finland has opened up doors for female leaders globally: "We're not perfect, we have a lot to do still, but we are an example for the rest of the world."

Unlike Liberia and Chile, Finland is known as a developed and very progressive country, yet some of the same socio-political factors of these two developing countries (Chile, Liberia) have likely contributed to Finland's success. The purpose of examining Finland in combination with Liberia and Chile is to show some similar key factors

these countries have in common that have likely contributed to the success rates of female leaders in their countries.

History of Chile

In contrast to Finland, Chile is known as a less developed country both politically and economically. Chile is officially known as the Republic of Chile. This South American country occupies a long, narrow strip of land between the Andes Mountains to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Chile borders Peru to the north, Bolivia to the northeast, and Argentina to the east. According to the UN's human development index, today Chile leads Latin American nations in rankings of human development, competitiveness, income per capita, globalization, state of peace, and economic freedom. The first female president Michelle Bachelet was elected in January of 2006 after a long term oppressive military regime.

General Augusto Pinochet seized power in Chile directly following a violent and bloody military coup. Pinochet and his military remained in power until 1990. This dictatorship was established after the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende was overthrown by a CIA-backed coup d'état on September 11 1973 (Human Rights Watch). This regime was known for gross violations of human rights and terrorism. Since Pinochet's death in 1990, Chile is making a slow transition back to democracy, yet it managed to elect a female president in 2006 even before some of the most developed and democratic countries. Examining the factors that may have contributed to this may provide a guide to other regions that are being rebuilt after abusive military rule, and suppressions of basic rights and freedoms.

History of Liberia

Liberia, formally known as the Republic of Liberia is a country in West Africa bordered by Sierra Leone to its west, Guinea to its north and Ivory Coast to its east. English is the official language and over thirty indigenous languages are also spoken within the country (CIA World Fact book 2015). Liberia is the only country in Africa founded by United States colonization while occupied by native Africans. With strained race relations due to a large number of free blacks in the United States for the first time, an all-white American Congress opened Liberia up to all black Americans to "rectify the problem" (U.S Department of State 2014). The United States government money funded this movement.

Beginning in 1820, the region was colonized by African Americans, most of whom were freed slaves. Today the country is formally called the Republic of Liberia and has a government modeled, after the United States Liberia underwent a coup detat in 1980 when Samuel Doe (former president) overthrew colonial powers and became the country's first indigenous ruler. After a while many opposed Doe's self-election abuse and favoritism towards his own tribe, and as opposition forces formed, civil war broke out in 1989 (Encyclopedia Britannica). In 1990 Samuel Doe was overthrown, and with much pressure from the international community new elections were held in 1997 after seven years of ongoing conflict. Many scholars believe that international pressure may have caused this election to be held too soon, furthering the atrocities and bloodshed in Liberia due to civil war (Bauer 2009).

In 1997 Charles Taylor became the leader of Liberia, taking control of all government and military forces. Taylor proved to be an even more oppressive leader than

Doe, and has been charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity. The people of Liberia were intimidated, and threatened by Taylor and his military regime for years. Unable to make any changes, opposition forces formed, and caused a bloody civil war. Taylor was eventually exiled to Nigeria in 2003 but over 300,000 Liberians were killed and 55,000 displaced in various parts of Africa (Encyclopedia Brittanica 2011). The same year the United States Institute of peace drafted an agreement on ceasefire and cessation of Hostilities, between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and key opposition forces. An interim government was put in place in 2003 that did little to help Liberians progress or gain trust in government (United States Institute of Peace 2003).

Perhaps the most important element of the treaty was to outline a timeline for the 2005 election, in which Ellen Sirleaf Johnson was elected president. After over a decade of war, human rights violations, and political instability the people entrusted a woman to run the nation. It is important to study Sirleaf's rise to power and what factors likely contributed to such progress and success.

In each of these countries the level of democracy, share of women in parliament over time, the impact of NGO's advocating for women and education will be examined. Overall the study of these regions together are important because while they are unique in their own right their similarities are notable. Liberia, Chile, and Finland have each faced social, and or political challenges that have stunted or delayed development. Each of these countries have also been affected in some way shape or form by colonization, and have had to rebuild their societies, economies, and political structures in the aftermath. While a number of factors could have hindered their growth they managed to break the "final glass ceiling" in an arena where electing a female president had been seemingly

impossible. Studying the success rates of female elected heads of state and its causes will encourage and inspire female politicians in various regions to reach for leadership roles. This research will analyze the extent to which the mentioned factors have impacted the success rates in electing female heads of government in Liberia, Chile, and Finland.

Chapter II Theoretical framework

In choosing the outlined socio-political factors that may have influenced women being elected as leaders in these specific countries there was a solid basis that made these factors important to examine. The impact of Non-governmental Organizations, level of democracy, the share of females in parliament and the influence of education have all been studied in relation to gender equity, specifically politically, across the globe. Examining the levels of each of these factors also reinforce a number of academic political theories including: Feminist political theory, the pipeline theory, and the feminist standpoint theory.

Non-Governmental Organizations and Gender Equity

Non-governmental organization (NGO's) are also known as "civil society organizations" or (CSO's). They are nonprofit, and independent from government, and work from the grassroots level of a society. They are organized on local, national or international levels to address issues in support of the public good, and are usually heavily task oriented. For this research, the focus will be on NGO's whose task is to empower and enhance the lives of women. Non-Governmental organizations and civil society organizations have been systematically noted to influence

the social and moral responsibility of governments across the globe. NGO's have been partners of the United Nations since 1947. In accordance with Article 71 of the UN Charter, NGOs can have consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Non-Governmental Organizations are often at the center of peace building and negotiation throughout and across nations. There are also a number of NGO's who focus solely on gender issues, and advocate in favor of woman's movements and female inclusion in government. Because of this when it comes to women's issues these organizations have been key players in achieving equity for all members of society and more importantly promoting women's political participation across the globe.

The work of Non-governmental organizations advocating in favor of women and women's political inclusion reinforce feminist political theory, a major academic theory used to promote gender equity specifically in the political realm. Historically feminist thought was excluded from politics and public affairs. The feminist political theory examines gender gaps and relations in political institutions, economics, and education. This theory focuses on examining and promoting equity of women in society and politics, and all of its resources (Bryson 1989). This theory, turned movement, has promoted and prompted more women to break through barriers and participate in government. Feminist political theory has helped to urge societies to understand the importance of women carrying out leadership roles in society, and enacting positive and timely change.

Democracy and Gender Equality

A Democracy by definition has become known as government by the people; especially: rule of the majority (Meriam Webster Dictionary 2012). While there are various forms of democracy its essence has been associated with an inclusiveness for all involved in the process. Scholars have studied democracy in relation to gender equity in the past and have found that there is a clear connection between democratic societies and higher levels of women in politics than counties run by alternative forms of government (Adams 2012). The authors of the article "Gender Equality and Democracy" theorize that modernization simultaneously leads to democratization and the rise of women as key players in in public life (Inglehart, Norris,Welzel 2004). In a 2013 discussion paper on "Democracy and Gender Equality" published by the United Nations the contributor's state:

> "Experience has taught us that democratic ideals of inclusiveness, accountability, and, transparency cannot be achieved without laws policies, measures, and practices that address inequalities. Moreover, we must go beyond thinking about these issues mostly at the time of elections. Rather we must weave these ideals into the social, political, and economic fabric of a society, so that girls and women can reach their potential on an equal basis with men, whatever they choose to do."

The international Parliamentary Union adopted a Universal Declaration on democracy urging all governments to follow its ideals in order to promote equity across the globe, and a commitment to peace and development (1998). In this declaration some of the key principles include:

- The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between the men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work on equally and complimentary, drawing mutual enhancement from their differences.

- Democracy is founded on the right of everyone to take part in the management of public affairs; it therefore requires the existence of representative institutions at all levels and, in particular a parliament in which all components of society are represented, and which has the requisite powers and means to express the will of the people by legislating and overseeing government action.

- A state of democracy ensures that the process by which power is acceded to a wielded and alternates, allows for free political competition and are the product of open free and non-discriminatory participation by the people, exercised in accordance with the rule of law in both letter and spirit (IPU 1998).

The promotion of democracy has likely been a key component to not only allowing more women the opportunity to become members of parliament, but also rise to the level of top political leaders in their respective countries.

Share of Women in Parliament and the "Pipeline Theory"

The growing number of women in Parliament can help to explain the success rates of electing female heads of government in countries such as Chile, Liberia, and Finland. According to comparative data from the Inter parliamentary Union that ranked 189 countries in descending order of the percentage of women in Parliament in 2014, (world and regional averages) Finland ranks number 7 with 42.5% of seats in parliament occupied by women. Chile is ranked number 95 with 15.8% of women occupying seats while Liberia ranks 119 with 11.0% of women in Parliament (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2015). Scholars have argued that countries that have a significant number of women as members of parliament are more likely to elect female heads of state. This can be attributed to the

academic pipeline theory. The United Nations has also expressed the importance of ensuring women participate directly in governing. The 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation noted:

> "Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women."

One of the top priorities of this resolution is to increase the number of women in parliament globally. Examining the progress of countries that have increased the number of women becoming MP's is important to understanding how women end up in top political leadership roles through the pipeline.

The basic idea of the pipeline theory is rooted in underrepresented women in corporate roles and in higher education, specifically in America. Judith S. White reviews the pipeline theory in regard to "Women on campus." The idea behind this is that the more women that enroll in college on the undergraduate level will prompt more women to apply to college, thus encouraging them to obtain the highest level of education available. In political science this theory suggests that women serving in lower levels of political office will leverage political resources and experience gained at those levels to advance to higher office, and urge their other female counterparts to join and move through "the pipeline." this theory is important to this research because it provides a possible explanation for how female political leaders have risen to power and can continue to do so, by first participating in low levels of politics.

Education and the Feminist Standpoint Theory

Equitable access to education may also be a key factor in understanding women's rise to executive office in Chile, Liberia, and Finland. Women still suffer a disadvantage with exclusion in the education system, specifically tertiary or college level education, yet education has been linked to development and gender equity worldwide (Unicef 2011). According to a representative from Educational International:

> "Education has the power to transform people's lives. Promoting equality and encouraginging diversity is core business for education, through questioning gender stereotypes, providing windows of opportunity, opening doors of access, and building positive, inclusive learning environments."

When women are provided equal access to education, especially at the college/ university level they are able to tap into their highest potential and become citizens that have the ability and skills to positively impact their societies and the world. Since women are still underrepresented in higher education, their perspectives and ideas are also underrepresented. This idea aligns with an important academic theory known as the feminist standpoint theory.

Scholars of the Feminist standpoint theory state that it makes three basic claims: 1.) Knowledge is socially situated. 2.) Marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions, than it is for the non-marginalized. 3.) Research particularly that focuses on power relations, should begin with the lives of the marginalized. This theory suggests that the female experience allows women to view issues from a more empathetic standpoint, making it easier for women to understand another person's needs as her own (Trauth 12). This theory plays a

crucial part in understanding why women have organized, formed activists groups, and enacted change in Liberia, Chile and Finland while rising to head of state pivotal moments.

Chapter III Literature Review

In the article "Liberia's Election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Women's executive Leadership roles in Africa" Melinda Adams (2008) discusses the idea that while it seems paradoxical that Liberia, a country that is known for years of conflict was able to make such progress in electing a female head of state, they have made great strides. Adams attributes the success rates of women in the executive office in West Africa specifically Liberia, to some specific post-conflict factors that directly relate to the contributing factors in the proposed research. The article begins with an examination of women in the legislature in Africa, discussing the progression of these numbers over the last decade. The article also draws a connection to the increase in women running for leadership roles in government both regionally and globally.

Some of the post-conflict factors that Adams attributes to the election of a female president include: new roles in society, transitional governments, and women's movements. During times of conflict women systematically play a major role as negotiators and peacekeepers, advocating for change through women's movements and Non-governmental Organizations , also boosting their roles in society overall. After conflict many states such as Liberia shifted toward more democratically functioning governments

and even reformed their constitutions, creating electoral reform and paving the way for women to run for leadership roles.

Adams employs a qualitative case study approach to show the relationship between the factors addressed and the contexts in which African women presidential candidates are likely to succeed, and the impact of post-conflict societal factors. Adams finds that Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's victory was heavily influenced by women's movements with a focus on electing women into political leadership. This article is important to the proposed research because it observes similar factors such as the role of NGO's and the increasing number of women in African Parliament. This article draws a connection to the pipeline theory starting with women in parliament showing that since the election of Sirleaf-Johnson, many countries globally have followed the same pattern.

"Women and the 2005 Election in Liberia" an article authored by Jacqui Baker (2009) examines the role of women in electing the first female President of Liberia. Baker contends that while women in Liberia have experienced small gains of power in society that have rarely translated into politics, the 2005 election broke that trend. Baker employs a quantitative study by analyzing Liberian newspapers published in the months leading up to the 2005 election. Baker associates women's movements with informing and mobilizing both male and female voters. The analysis of the newspapers showed that women's groups in relation to others played a very active yet not exclusive role in the election process. Based on the number of activities mentioned for all groups in a given category: democracy and reform groups, religious groups, groups based on age, women's groups, trade groups and the geographically based groups showed the most activity. Baker finds that consistency of female participation in the electoral process became the

most important civil society group in the 2005 election in Liberia, unlike other groups whose activity levels dropped between 37-70 percent. Baker draws the conclusion that there are a number of factors that have changed the political climate for women in Liberia making it possible to have a female president. This includes Liberia's large population of educated professional women, women's movements that have made women more comfortable and likely to run for public office, and the failure of male dominated peace efforts.

This article is relevant to the current research because while it focuses on the impact of women as key civil society actors in the 2005 election in Liberia, it also examines a number of other active groups, and factors that have likely assisted in electing Liberia's first female head of state.

Marcela Rios Tobar (2008) the author of "Seizing a Window of Opportunity the Election of President Bachelet in Chile" discusses the milestone for women and gender equity in Chile with the 2006 election of Michelle Bachelet, and Latin America in general in In the article "Seizing a Window of Opportunity The Election of President Bachelet in Chile". Tobar highlights the fact that while women have made great gains in Parliament in Chile, the presidency is a leadership role that has seemed virtually unattainable to women in the country. The author of this article argues that Bachelet's major hurdle existed in the nomination phase rather than the actual election. Tobar uses a qualitative approach examining three factors that likely contributed to Bachelet's nomination and victory.

These factors include: 1.) disruptions of the political scene that impacted the governing coalition, in particular, opening a window of opportunity for nontraditional political elites such as women 2.) The slow but persistent pressure for gender equity in politics that had allowed women to occupy key and highly visible political positions at the executive branch, and 3.) Gender-based voting that impacted both public opinion surveys and election results in which women supported and voted for female candidates, similar factors are associated with the election of Sirleaf-Johnson in Liberia. Tobar finds that Michele Bachelet's election was the product of the three factors stated above, and women taking advantage of the small "opportunity window" within an elite and traditionally exclusive government structure that was disrupted by political instability. The author states that "some of the factors that contributed to Bachclet's election as President of Chile will no doubt be relevant for understanding the growing success of women in reaching their highest positions of power throughout the world."

This article is important because in a region where women have been systematically underrepresented in politics, a woman was elected to the most powerful position in government. The contributing factors examined in this article are relevant to understanding the success if women reaching powerful positions globally.

The article "Electoral Reform Opens Roads to Presidency for Finnish Women" begins with a brief description of Tarja Halonen and her political stances. Halonen a social democrat, single mother who openly advocates for gay and lesbian rights became the President of one of the most developed countries in 2000. Holli (2008) discusses the fact that four out of five candidates in Finland's 2000 Presidential election were women, and argues that this was no accident. While Finland is known for longstanding gender equali-

ty, Holli argues that this alone did not pave the way for a woman President, but rather some important institutional changes from the 1990s onward. This article suggests three important factors to analyze along with Finland's long history of women's political mobilization and representation. These include: diminished powers of the presidency due to constitutional reform, the reform of the electoral system from indirect elections to direct majoritarian system, and gender based voting patterns (voting for same gender candidates). This article is important because while Finland has made great strides toward gender equality in government, Tarja Halonen was the country's first female President making it clear that this was no easy accomplishment. There are a number of contributing factors that must be examined in order to thoroughly analyze such progress, and this article analyzes three that are often overlooked.

In the article "Beyond Hillary and Benazir: Women's Political Leadership Worldwide" by Farida Jalazi and Mona Lena Krook (2010) the authors seek to examine Female political representation beyond Hillary Clinton the 2008 United States Presidential Candidate and Benazir Bhutto the former Prime Minister of Pakistan. Jalalzai and Krook examine female leaders around the globe that have been elected to positions of high power such as Michele Bachelet in Chile, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia. This article asks the questions: What is the status of Women in politics today? And what explains the increased election of women in some countries but not in others? These are key questions that relate directly to the proposed research.

Jalazi and Krook address these questions by analyzing and comparing women in political leadership roles in both the legislative and executive branch. The authors analyze data provided by the Inter-parliamentary Union from the 1960s to 2009. Their re-

search shows that seventy-one women from fifty- two countries have become national leaders, and the overall number of women in national Parliament continues to increase, despite variations by country. In 2009 the global percentage of women in National Parliament (lower and upper combined) was 18%. In 2014 the number has increased to 21.8%, an all-time high (Inter-Parliamentary Union). Numerous scholars have made clear that the path for women to the executive office focuses on three factors: social, economic, and cultural, several of which will be examined in this research.

Jalazi and Krook conclude from their survey of global trends that women from culturally, politically, and socially diverse countries were able to break through "the glass ceiling" in terms of political leadership roles. While progress has been made the question of why some countries are unable to achieve this remains unanswered. This article is important because it examines how far countries such as Liberia, Chile and Finland have come, what factors have likely contributed and how far other nations still have to go.

Chapter IV Data and Methods

This research will employ a comparative analysis to examine each of the possible explanatory factors previously explained. A Comparative analysis is an important method frequently employed to help explain a phenomena between countries. This method puts an emphasis on key patterns and differences and allows connections and inferences to be drawn. The current study will use four socio-political factors to examine the connections between each country's successes in electing a female head of state.

Hypotheses:

H1: Higher levels of women in parliament increases the likelihood of electing a female head of state.

H2: Higher levels of democratic freedoms within a country positively impacts female representation in top political leadership.

H3: A strong presence of NGO'S advocating for women's rights positively impacts female representation in politics.

H4: Higher levels of female students enrolled in tertiary education increases the likelihood of female representation in top political leadership.

Table 1. Categorization and Description of Factors

	Factor	Description
Political	**Share of Women in Parliament**	% of seats occupied by women over time
	Level of Democracy	Democracy Index score based on political rights and civil liberties
Social	**Non-Governmental Organizations Advocating for Women and Women's Movements**	Presence/activity, how long, purpose
	Education	% Females enrolled tertiary education

Share of Women in Parliament

Data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union and World Bank databases will be analyzed from the 1980-2014. In order to assess the increasing number of women in national parliament in Chile, Liberia, and Finland over time this data will be placed into a line chart distinguishing each country with a different color. The chart will show any major increases or decreases of the share of women in parliament for each country from 1973-

2014. Any jumps in levels between years will be analyzed and discussed, and increases during election years will receive careful examination.

While the implementation of gender quotas is not a separate factor, the adoption and impact of gender quotas in Liberia, Chile, and Finland will help to explain any major changes. This information was accessed through the Global Database of Quotas for women, which provides detailed descriptions of gender quotas filtered by specific country. (http://www.quotaproject.org/aboutProject.cfm).

Level of Democracy

The level of Democracy is examined 1973 to 2014. This data will come from Freedom House, a non-governmental organization that includes reports that provide ratings from 1972 onward on the basis of political rights and civil rights in all countries globally. Each country is assigned two numerical ratings—from 1 to 7—for political rights and civil liberties, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free (https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world#.VQd4UWZSOCQ). Political rights and civil liberties are core values associated with high levels of democracy. This source is used by policymakers, the media, international corporations, civic activists, and human rights defenders to monitor trends in democracy to keep track of progress and setbacks over time. This data will also be placed in line charts with the countries and democracy indicators (political rights and civil liberates) distinguished by color to display and major changes over time.

The Presence of Non-Governmental Organizations Advocating in Favor of Women's Rights

The presence and activity of the most prominent non-governmental organizations that are known for their promotion of women's rights and movements in Chile, Liberia, and Finland will be analyzed using The World Association of non-Governmental organizations directory. The directory allows filtration of NGO'S based on region, country, and areas of activity. The search will be refined based on NGO'S that work in the area of women's status and issues. Once these organizations are identified their mission, purpose, activity and how long these organizations have been active in each country will be discussed. This research will pay close attention to Activism of NGO's during election periods that involve female candidates.

Education- Tertiary Level Enrollment Percentage of Women

In order to accurately assess and understand the level of education, an overview of the education system of each country must be discussed. The source will come from Class base, an online international database that allows filtration by country. This database provides information on each country's education system from primary to tertiary education. This will provide basic facts and relevant information for the education system of each country.

The percentage of women enrolled in tertiary level education over time will be examined. The World Bank EdStats database will be examined on the percentage of women enrolled in tertiary level education from 1973 until 2014 in three year intervals. This database has approximately 2,500 internationally comparable indicators that describe education access, progression, completion, literacy, teachers, population, and expenditures. The indicators cover the education cycle from pre-primary to vocational and

tertiary education. (http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/ed-stats). Equitable access to tertiary level education will be the main focus of this study. The database also reports projected data up to 2050. In this research the focal point will be percentage of females compared to males enrolled in tertiary level education.

Chapter V: Findings

Share of Women in Parliament

The hypothesis for share of women in parliament (H1) discussed in the methods section states that higher levels of women in parliament will increase the likelihood of a female head of state. In Liberia, Chile, and Finland female heads of state were elected when a high percentage of women made up each country's national parliaments. As of March 2014 the percentage of women in Parliament worldwide stood at a record high of 21.8 percent, and this number has consistently increased each year. In 2014 forty-six countries had more than 30 percent of female Members of Parliament (MP's) in at least one chamber. This is an increase from forty-two countries in January of 2013 (IPU data). There are a number of possible explanations for this increase of women in parliament over time, including pressure from international communities, loss of life during conflict, and most notably gender quotas. Chile, Liberia and Finland have progressed individually during different periods of time, each country during some pivotal moments in their history.

Figure 1. Share of Women in Parliament over Time (1973-2015)

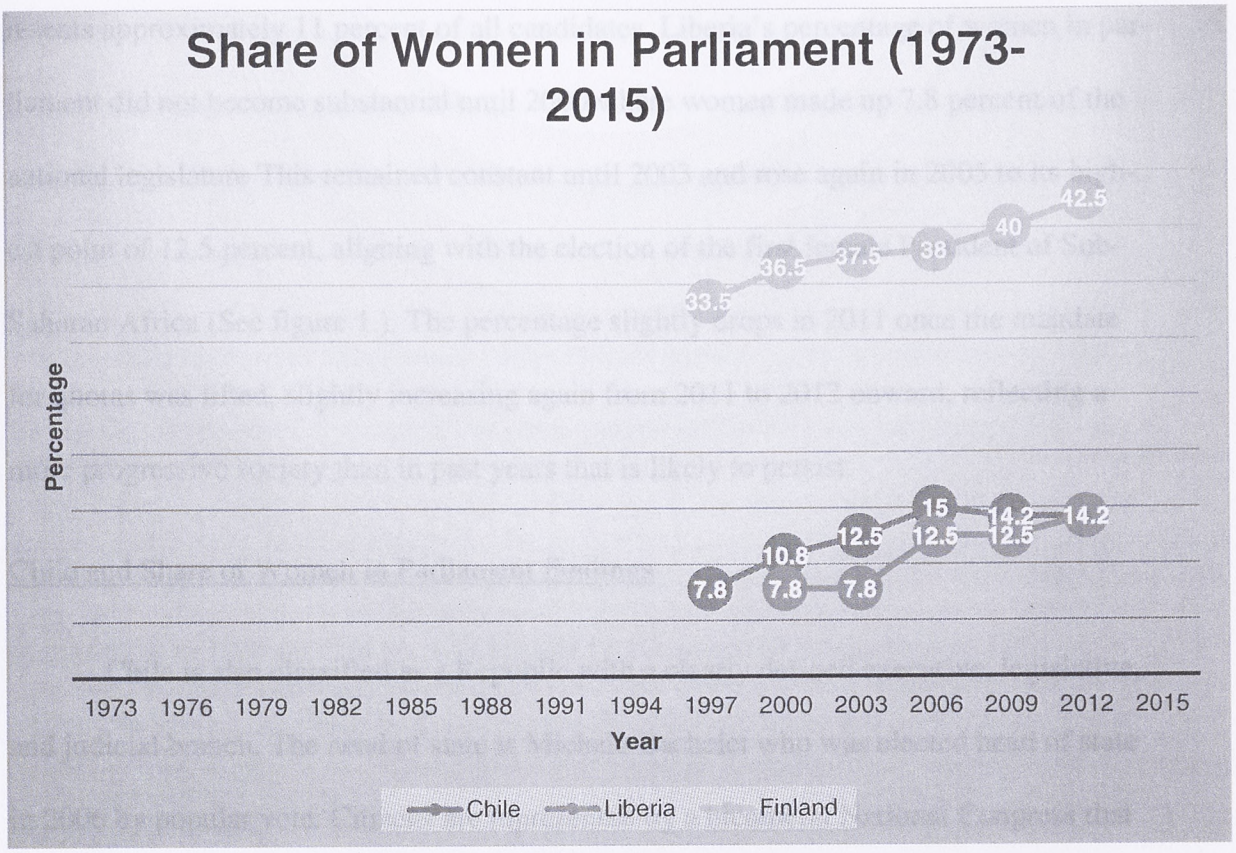


Figure 1

Source: World Bank Development Indicators Databank

Liberia and Share of Women in Parliament Findings

Gender quotas were implemented in January 2005 in Liberia under the Guidelines relating to the registration of political parties and independent candidates that mandated the political parties to have at least 30% of women candidates in their electoral lists (Quota Project Database). In March 2011 this law was amended and no gender quota provision is included. "In the national election on 11 October 2011, of 925 candidates, 105 were women, including 87 candidates for the House of Representatives, 12 candi-

dates for the Senate, and 6 candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency" This represents approximately 11 percent of all candidates. Liberia's percentage of women in parliament did not become substantial until 2000 where women made up 7.8 percent of the national legislature This remained constant until 2003 and rose again in 2005 to its highest point of 12.5 percent, aligning with the election of the first female President of Sub-Saharan Africa (See figure 1.). The percentage slightly drops in 2011 once the mandate for quotas was lifted, slightly increasing again from 2011 to 2012 onward, reflecting a more progressive society than in past years that is likely to persist.

Chile and Share of Women in Parliament Findings

Chile is also classified as a Republic with a clearly defined executive, legislative, and judicial branch. The head of state is Michele Bachelet who was elected head of state in 2006 by popular vote. Citizens are represented by a bicameral National Congress that consists of the Senate or (38 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve eight-year terms; one-half elected every four years); and the Chamber of Deputies (120 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms). Chile's highest court is the Supreme Court that consists of a court president and 20 members. There is also a functioning Constitutional Court that consists of 7 members, and an Electoral Court that consists of 5 members, making up the judicial branch (CIA World Fact book).

Chile implemented voluntary party quotas for each prominent party. The Party for Democracy (PPD) or Partido por la Democracia allows for neither men nor women to be represented on electoral lists by more than 60 percent (Party statutes, article 7). While this is a provision that has been reported to be weakly enforced (Quota Project).

The Socialist Party of Chile (Partido Socialista de Chile Since) implemented a quota in 2003 that mandates that neither of the sexes shall be represented on electoral lists by more than 60 percent; neither sex shall occupy more than 70 percent of the seats in parliament (Party statutes, Article 40). Once again this has become known as a weakly enforced provision.

Chile made their first reported steps toward gender parity in parliament in 1997 for the first time with 7.5 percent of women making up the national parliament. This increases slightly between 2000 and 2003, likely due to the enforcement of the gender quota during Chile's transition to democracy under a new democratically elected leader. The year 2006 with 15 percent of women making up Chile's national parliament. This increase aligns with the election of the first female president Chile has ever elected, and it can be inferred that the pipeline theory, may have been partly responsible for her election to the executive office.

Finland and Share of Women in Parliament Findings

Unlike Chile, and Liberia Finland has not implemented gender quotas yet still became the first of the three countries to have a substantial share of women in Parliament in 1990 with 31.5 percent of women as members of Parliament. After 1990 the numbers decreased significantly until 1997 when the percentage increased to 33.5, and increased again in 1999, the year before the election of President Tarja Halonen. Since the election of the first female president in 2000 the numbers have increased each year with the exception of 2008 and 2009, and in 2014 women made up 42.5 percent of Parliament. This is the highest proportion of seats held by women between the three countries.

Increasing the number of women that serve in parliament has undoubtedly aided in the election of female heads of government in Liberia, Chile, and Finland. Each of these countries elected females to the executive office for the first time during the peak of female political representation. Increased numbers from 2003- 2005 in Liberia can be attributed to the implementation of gender quotas. In Chile the year 2005 also marks the largest increase in the number of women in parliament which stagnates until it begins to increase again from 2013 onward. While this could be influenced by Chile's voluntary party quotas, this is unclear. Finland was the first country of the three to have a substantial number of women in Parliament with the highest number of women in parliament over time, and the first of the three to elect a female president. This seems to point to a clear connection between heightened levels of women in parliament leading to a female head of government. Together these three countries have had different circumstances that have led to increasing numbers of women in the legislative branch, eventually electing a woman as head of state.

Level of Democracy

The hypothesis for level of democracy (H2) states that high levels of democratic freedoms within a country impacts female representation in Parliament. In Liberia, Chile, and Finland female heads of state were elected during times of heightened democratic freedoms. Democracy has become one of the most critical components of sustainable development of societies globally. With promotion of government transparency, accountability, human rights, and equity across the board at the forefront, democracy has become the most desirable form of government for developed and newly developing countries. According to an essay published in the *Economist* entitled "What's Gone Wrong with

Democracy": "Democracies are on average richer than non-democracies, are less likely to go to war and have a better record of fighting corruption. More fundamentally, democracy lets people speak their minds and shape their own and their children's futures" (2015). In 2003 Freedom House classified 63 percent of countries worldwide as democratic. While Finland has a long standing relationship with democracy and democratic values, Chile and Liberia have taken small steps over time to become more democratic and free societies. This research will argue that higher levels of democracy in Chile, Liberia, and Finland over the last twenty years may have had a positive impact on electing female leaders.

Liberia and Level of Democracy Findings

Today Liberia's government is classified as a republic. A republic is almost identical to a democracy in that it is a system of government which elects representatives to govern, but still keeps minority rights in mind. The structure of Liberia's government closely mirrors that of the United States with a clear and defined executive, legislative, and judicial branch. The executive branch consists of a head of state (who is also head of state), and a cabinet appointed by the president. The President is elected by popular vote for six year terms. The current President is Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who was elected in January of 2005 with 90.7% of the popular vote. The country's bicameral National Assembly consists of the Senate that consists of 30 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve nine-year terms and the House of Representatives that consists of 73 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve six-year terms. The judicial branch consists of a Supreme Court which has jurisdiction for all constitutional cases. Chief Justices are ap-

pointed by the President also under the advice and consent of the Senate (CIA World Fact Book).

While Liberia has a government structured after the United States due to the countries longstanding connections, they have had a history of violence and democracy has become a new development in Liberian society. Over time the level of political and civil liberties citizens have enjoyed over time has both progressed and regressed. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected in 2005 for the first time after fourteen years of civil war plaguing Liberia. Under the leadership of Former President Charles Taylor (1997) Liberia's economic, social, and political structure was in shambles up until 2003. President Taylor and his armed forces tormented, intimidated, and scared victims into compliance for over a decade (International Justice Monitor). During this time opposition forces also formed in an attempt to oust the abusive leader, but only resulted in exacerbating the violence. There were two main opposition groups that ousted Taylor from power. The main opposition group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), had been fighting President Taylor since 1999 and had grown from a northern-based insurgent movement to a force that now controls the majority of the country the second opposition group, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) which branched off into surrounding regions causing large scale displacement. (Global Security 2015). The opposition groups combined with Taylor's armed forces recruited thousands of child soldiers and devastated the nation as a whole. Liberia's development was set back drastically by this long standing conflict. Eventually the situation became too great for the international community to ignore. By 2003 Liberia's government structure was so unstable under President Taylor that On June 4, 2003, a UN-backed court indicted Liberian President

Charles Taylor for war crimes and issued an international warrant for his arrest. But, this did not stop the fighting instead opposition forces began to take control which could have resulted in even more conflict until the United States decided to step in with much pressure from the international community. In June of 2003 President George W. Bush called for Taylor to step down and in July Taylor accepted asylum in Nigeria with much resistance.

Since 2003 Liberia has made great strides towards transitioning to a more democrat society. This progress likely lead to the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2005 and specifically her reelection in 2011. The first full free and fair elections in over fifty years took place in 2011 where Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected for a second term with over ninety percent of the votes. Liberia has taken great steps toward inclusion of all citizens to fully participate in government, and the elections process. In February 2013, with funding from the Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia, the National Democratic Institute began implementing a multi-year program to strengthen citizen-centered political engagement (National Democratic Institute). Today Liberia is taking great steps towards a full democracy under the leadership of a woman.

Figure 2. Liberia Political Rights and Civil Liberties

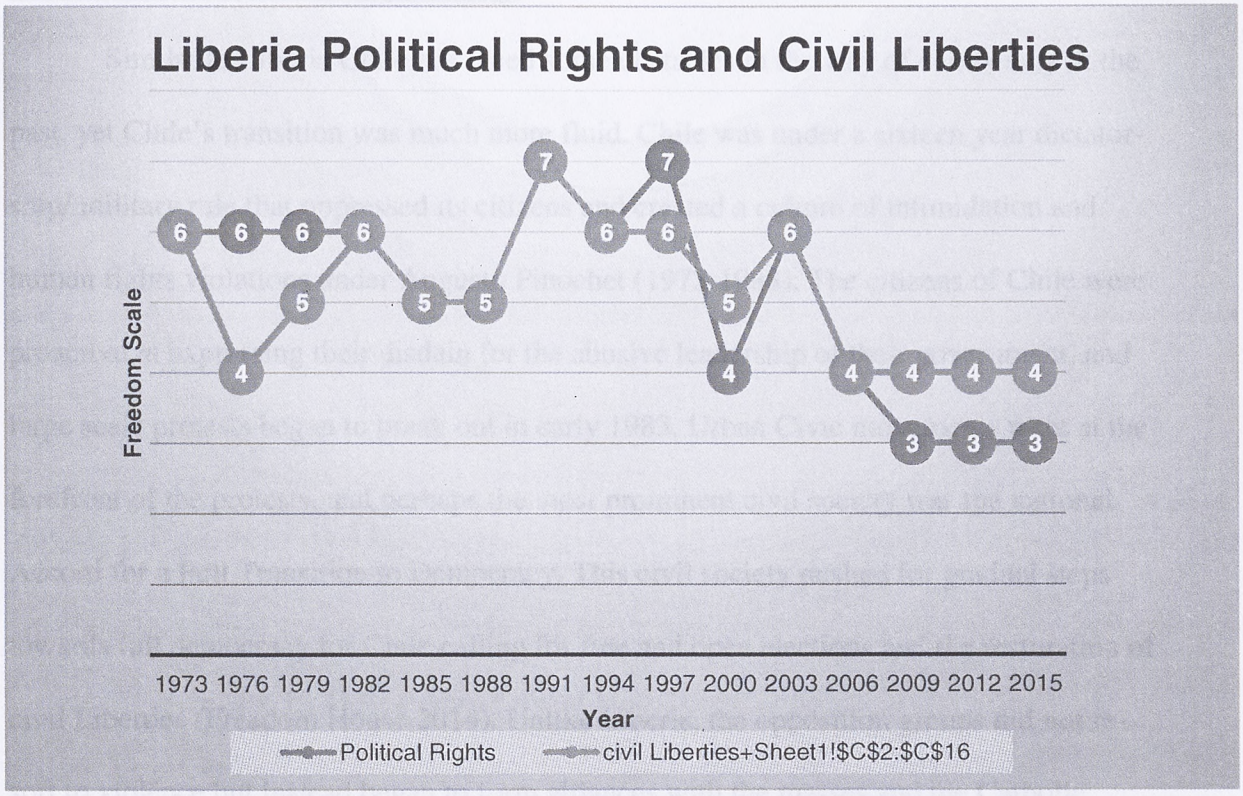


Figure 2

Original Data Source: Freedom House Individual Country Ratings

Figure 2 helps to explain the increases and decreases of Freedom using political rights and civil liberties as indicators in Liberia over time. This figure shows significant jumps from 1973- 2003. During Liberia's period of conflict between 1973 and 2003 both political rights and civil liberties of citizens were extremely low (7 being the worst, 1 the best). The year 2000 shows a significant increase in freedom until 2003 where the levels dropped again likely due to the instability of the state after ousting of former President Charles Taylor and his abusive regime. Liberia had its highest levels of freedoms begin-

ning in the year 2005- 2015. The first year of this increase marks the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first female President elected in any Sub Saharan African country.

Chile and Level of Democracy Findings

Similar to Liberia Chile has faced some obstacles in the way of democracy in the past, yet Chile's transition was much more fluid. Chile was under a sixteen year dictatorship/ military rule that oppressed its citizens and created a culture of intimidation and human rights violations under Augusto Pinochet (1972-1988). The citizens of Chile were proactive in expressing their disdain for the abusive leadership of their government, and large scale protests began to break out in early 1983. Urban Civic movements were at the forefront of the protests, and perhaps the most prominent civil society was the national Accord for a Full Transition to Democracy. This civil society pushed for gradual steps towards full democracy for Chile calling for free and open elections and the restoration of civil Liberties (Freedom House 2014). Unlike Liberia, the opposition groups did not resort to violence but instead began to form alliances with the masses and the Catholic Church. In 1988 the movement had gained so much momentum that the majority of citizens groups and organization supported the "no on Pinochet" and voted him out of office without much resistance from armed forces. Christian Demo Crat Patricio Aylwin won open elections in 1989 (Freedom House 2014). Since then Chile has become a fully democratic society, and has become a role model for its Latin American neighbors.

Figure 3. Chile Political Rights and Civil Liberties



Figure 3

Original Data Source: Freedom House Individual Country Ratings

Figure 3 displays the major jumps in freedom in Chile from 1973- 2015 also in three year intervals. Unlike Liberia, Chile begins as a very free and democratic society in the early 1970's and then experiences a significant decrease from 1976-1988 during the regime of Augusto Pinochet. After the fall of his regime political rights and civil liberties increased drastically and hit a peak from 2003, and remained constant until present day, including the year 2006 when Michele Bachelet was elected head of state.

Figure 4. Finland Civil Liberties and Political Rights

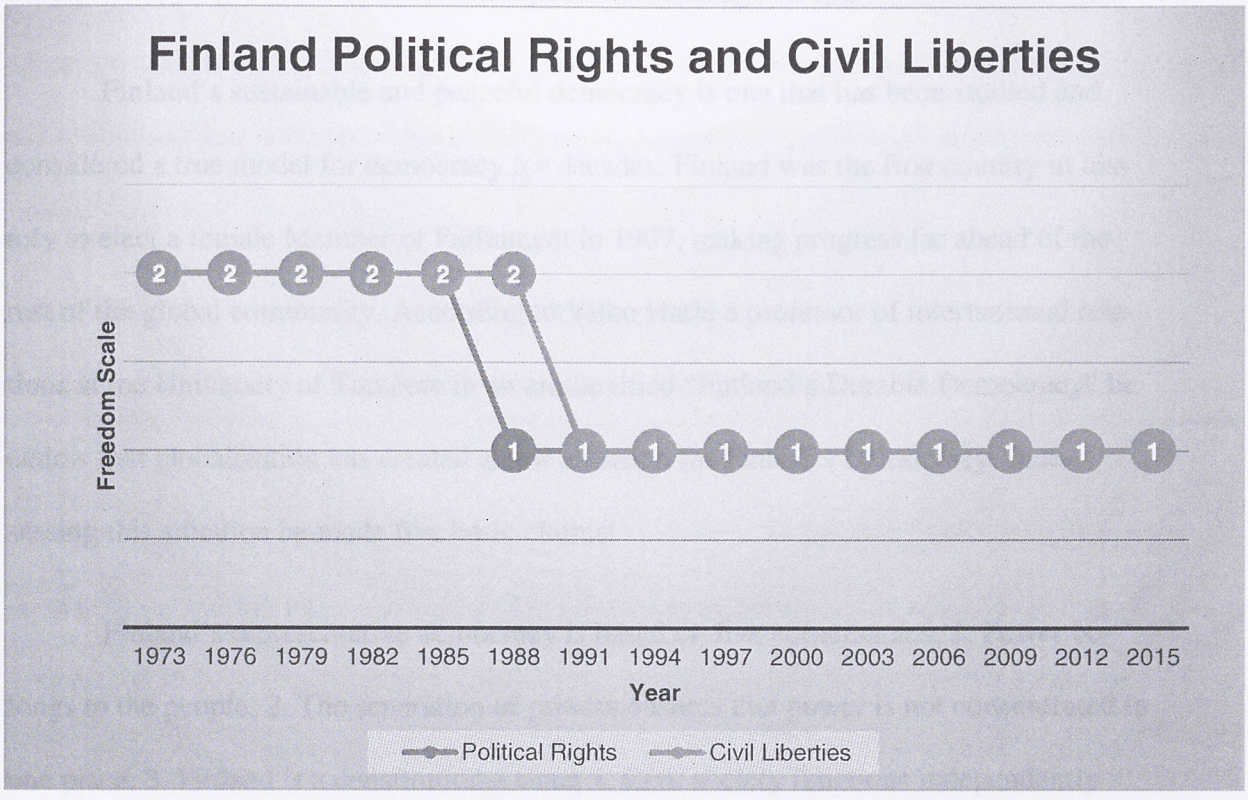


Figure 4

Original Data Source: Freedom House Individual Country Ratings

Finland and level of Democracy Findings

Compared to Liberia and Chile Finland is an outlier. The Republic of Finland has prided itself on strong democratic values for decades. Finland is governed by a parliamentary democracy. Presidents are elected by popular vote for six year terms, but there is also Prime Minister who is elected by the President. Finland has a unicameral Parliament known as Eduskunta which holds 200 seats. These members are elected by popular vote on a proportional basis to serve four-year terms. The judicial branch has a Supreme Court

Supreme Court and Supreme Administrative Court judges appointed by the president of the republic; judges serve until mandatory retirement at age 65 (CIA World Fact Book).

Finland's sustainable and peaceful democracy is one that has been studied and considered a true model for democracy for decades. Finland was the first country in history to elect a female Member of Parliament in 1907, making progress far ahead of the rest of the global community. According to Vilho Harle a professor of international relations at the University of Tampere in an article titled "Finland's Durable Democracy" he claims that globalization has created a new situation for Finand's Democracy. In assessing this situation he made five basic claims:

Finland's representative democracy is based on five cornerstones: 1. Power belongs to the people; 2. The separation of powers ensures that power is not concentrated in one place; 3. Finland is a constitutional state; 4. Civil society functions independently from the power of the state; and 5. Decision-making is based on reconciliation and consensus".

Finland's emphasis on inclusion, the separation of power and parliaments has led to peaceful resolutions to an array of issues both domestic and foreign. Perhaps the most important component of Finland's democracy is the importance of consensus in decision making. Harle discusses the idea that in Finland different social opinions are encouraged, and made a priority rather than dismissed, and an atmosphere of compromise is present (Harle 2011). Allowing all citizens to have a voice is one of the basic principles on which democracy is founded. Finland's heightened levels of democracy has likely contributed to the election of Tarja Halonen in the first female President in 2003-2011.

Unlike Liberia and Chile, Finland has remained a mostly free and Democratic society since 1973. Finland's democratic freedoms increased further in the year 1988 and remained constant until 2015. Similar to Liberia and Chile during the 2000 election of Tarja Halonen and her re-election in 2006 Chile was considered to be at its peak of democratic freedom.

Overall, democracy seems to have played an important role in the election of female leaders in Liberia, Chile and Finland. Each country was able to elect a woman as head of government during their most free and democratic time periods. For Liberia this occurred in 2005, two years after the ousting of an oppressive dictator that caused over a decade of civil conflict that ended in 2003. While peace, freedom and democracy did not happen right away, likely due to the instability and destruction of the war, steps towards a more democratic society allowed for the rebuilding of a broken society and an important change in leadership by electing the first female president in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is similar to Chile a country that experienced a dramatic increase in democratic values after Augusto Pinochet lost power in 1988.

Finland, on the other hand, has been a democratic society for quite some time. Even their least democratic time was more free and peaceful than Chile and Liberia's most democratic years. While the spread of democratic values seems to have had an impact on helping to elect the first female leaders in each of these countries, democracy is a highly Western idea of government that has spread to other areas of the world. Finland has been developing and advancing its democracy since the early 1900's, while Democracy is a recent development for Liberia and Chile.

Non-Governmental Organizations advocating for Women's Rights

Hypothesis 3 states that a strong presence of non-governmental Organizations advocating for women's rights impacts female political representation. The influence of Non-Governmental Organizations advocating for women's rights has helped in understanding in female political participation in Liberia, Chile, and Finland.

Liberia and NGO's Advocating for Women's Rights Findings

Liberia has a number of non-governmental organizations that have advocated for and continue to promote women's rights, gender equity, and full inclusion for women as equal members of society. One import and organization is the Liberian Foundation for Empowerment (LIFE). LIFE'S mission is to form partnerships with donors and volunteers to decrease poverty, and increase development in Liberia. Gender equity falls under the umbrella of increasing development. LIFE Inc. aims to improve the lives of the most marginalized members of Liberian society, specifically women and children by offering educational, health, and agricultural projects. This organization was founded in 2012 and is still an active part of Liberian society today.

Another important NGO dealing with women's issue and status in Liberia is the Center for Women & Children Empowerment (CEWE). CEWE is a non-governmental organization with a vision to empower women and children in a post war society. This Liberian based organization was established in 2005 and has a number of programs and

services offered to advance women in Liberian society. Some of these programs include external internships, computer training, and an adult literacy program that has beginners, intermediate, and advanced classwork. CECWE appears to be less active today than thay were between 2005-2011 which was a pivotal time in Liberian history, including the election and re-election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Chile and NGO's Advocating for Women's Rights Findings

In Chile there has been one organization that may have been the most impactful with regard to women's inclusion and rights. This Non- Governmental Organization is known as Help for the Andes. Their mission is to "enhance the quality of life for individuals and communities through focusing on programs that strengthen organizations, reinforce networks of communication, and increase knowledge" (http://www.helpfortheandes.org/home.html). One of their major initiatives is to improve the life and condition of rural women, a group that has been systematically unequal in society. This is achieved through educational, social and health development programs. Help for the Andes was established in 2001 and still plays an integral role in enhancing the lives of the marginalized. In 2009, the Help for the Andes Foundation was granted Special Consultative Status with the United Nations by the Economic and Social Council. Equity in all areas of society is a main priority for this organization.

Finland and NGO's Advocating for Women's Rights Findings

Finland, the most developed of the three countries has a stronger presence of NGO's advocating in favor of women' s rights and greater inclusion, the two most nota-

ble organizations are the Finland national Committee for UN women and the Coalition of Finnish women's organization. Finland National Committee for UN Women is an independent non-governmental organization that supports the mission of United Nations Women by implementing through "dynamic membership programs, advocacy, public education about UN Women and global women's issues, and fund raising efforts to support UN Women programs worldwide." The UN Agency for Gender Equality is a leading advocate of the rights of women and girls in the world. Finland is one of only fifteen countries that have national committees for UN women. Neither Chile nor Liberia have committees supporting the initiatives of UN women.

The Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations is an organization a social organization that includes the women's associations of the political parties represented in the Parliament as well as the Feminist Association Union, the National Council of Women of Finland and the Association for Women's Studies in Finland. This organization was founded in 1988 and works for the advancement of women, de facto gender equality and social justice. The coalition of Finnish Women's association also serves as a watchdog for women´s rights: monitors legislation, decision-making and research. This organization also responds to political decisions and issues from a women's perspective. This organization operates both nationally and internationally to promote inclusion and cooperation of government with regard to gender equity.

While Non-Governmental Organizations may have had an impact on women's movements, it is unclear what role this factor has played in helping to elect women to the executive office. NGO's have played a large role in each country in helping to promote

women's rights and granting equal access to both conventional and vocational education and resources. While it is hard to measure the role that NGO's have played in helping to create a more inclusive environment for women in politics there are some clear connections.

In Liberia the two most important women's NGO's were developed after the civil war to help rebuild their society after longstanding conflict and political instability. Women and children were the most devastated and both LIFE and CEWE play an integral role in helping to empower the marginalized by offering some valuable projects and services. One connection that can be drawn is that NGO's help to empower women and provide them with adequate tools to take advantage of opportunities that would not otherwise be available. In Liberia these organizations have helped women to reach new level in society mainly through education. Helping to rebuild schools, and provide adequate and equitable education has been a priority for Liberian NGO'S which has in turn helped to enhance development.

In Chile Non-Governmental organizations seemed to play a smaller role in the lives of women. This could be because women's issues and status has often been overlooked in Chile. Only recently under the leadership of Michele Bachelet has Chile paid such close attention to women's rights and status. Help for the Andes was specifically designed to help the lives of the poor and women who seem to have been lumped into the same category. There is also a focus on rural women who have systematically been the most marginalized. This foundation was created to help the poorer population and rural women to develop skills to help them become more financially independent. This is fostered once again through educational, social and health development programs.

Perhaps the most important role the NGO's play in helping women to become more active politically is the support of the United Nations. International NGO's are more inclined to gain support from the United Nations, and this is seen in the case of Finland. Finland a highly developed country is the only one of the three that has a national committee for UN women. The UN agency for gender equality is an agency whose top priority goal is to promote inclusion of women in all aspects of society. Finland's longstanding commitment to gender equality has helped them to achieve consultative status with the UN, yet this likely has a lot to do with their advanced economic development. Non-Governmental Organizations that partner with the UN and support their initiatives are more likely to have access to funds and resources needed to help those in need. The United Nations puts a strong emphasis on the inclusion of women in politics and governance and this has likely played a role in Finland.

The Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations is an NGO based solely on keeping women informed on policies, legislation and political decisions that will affect women. This is also an international organization that provides women with the information and resources necessary to become active and important players in the political arena.

When women are left behind, half of the population is left behind. When women are educated, aware, and living up to their full potential they are more inclined to become active politically. When women become a part of the political arena beginning on a small scale, it is more likely that they move up in the ranks of governance, eventually to the highest levels. While Liberia and Chile seem to have less of a presence of NGO's that focus on the inclusion of women in politics and governance than Finland, they are taking

steps in the right direction. NGO's undoubtedly play a large role in helping and supporting women's advancement.

Education

Figure 5. Female Enrollment in Tertiary Education Liberia, Chile, and Finland

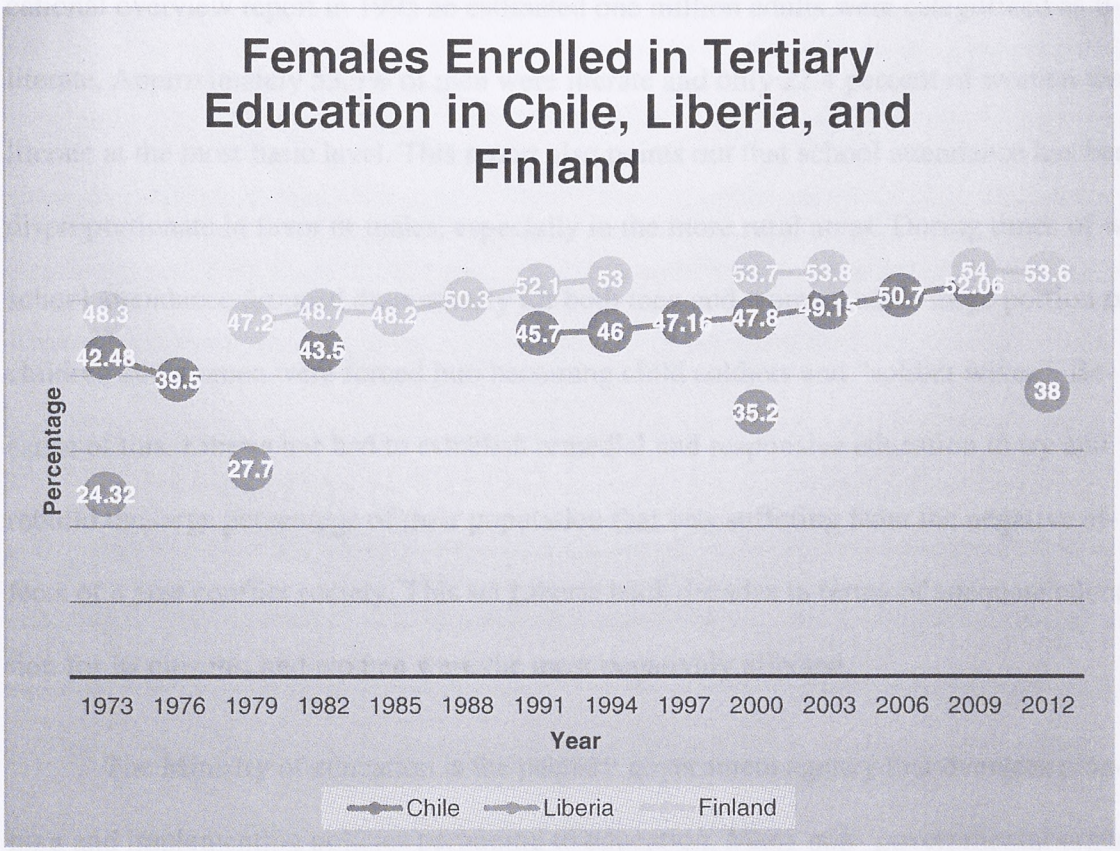


Figure 5

Original Data Source: World Bank Database

Hypothesis 4 states that higher levels of females enrolled in tertiary education increases the likelihood of electing a female head of state. In Liberia, Chile, and Finland higher education does seem to have had an impact on the election of their first female political leaders.

Liberia and Education Findings

Liberia, Chile and Finland each have separate and unique education systems that are important to understand in relation to the percentage of women enrolled in tertiary level education. Liberia's education system has faced much instability in the past, and has been on the road to recovery in recent years. According to Liberia's State University educational overview report in 1995 an estimated one million adults were categorized as illiterate. Approximately 53.9% of men were literate and only 22.4 percent of women were literate at the most basic level. This report also points out that school attendance has been disproportionate in favor or males, especially in the more rural areas. During times of war school attendance dropped dramatically for both men and women, and a large portion of children and women were forced into becoming child soldiers and "soldier wives". Because of this, Liberia has had to establish remedial and responsive education to try and rebuild the large percentage of their population that was suffering from the negative effects of a post conflict society. This set Liberia back decades in terms of adequate education for its citizens, and women were the most negatively affected.

The Ministry of education is the primary government agency that oversees planning and implementing policies pertaining to education. Many non- governmental organizations are responsible for slowly rebuilding Liberia's education system. UNESCO is a primary organization that has helped and partnered with the Ministry of Education and helped to fund a number of programs to help enhance education in Liberia. Due to these efforts many schools (primary, secondary, and university level) were reopened in the post war society, but access is very limited and the rebuilding of this education system will be a slow process.

There has been insufficient reported data on the percentage of women enrolled in Liberia from 1973-2105. This is likely due to a number of issues. As discussed in the educational overview one major issue is the lack of access to internet in Liberia, specifically in rural areas, making reporting of data difficult. Liberia also faces a clear gender disparity with regard to female access to higher education. After decades of civil war and the fall of Liberia's education system, female enrollment in tertiary education has not been a priority. The highest percentage of women enrolled in tertiary education occurs in 2012 increasing from 35.2% in 2000 to 38%. While these numbers appear low there does seem to be progress made over time. Higher enrollment rates between 2000-2102 has likely positively impacted women, their role in society, and perhaps, their participation in the political process in electing Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president in 2005.

Chile and Education Findings

In Chile there are 25 state universities and over 50 private universities. While access to this level of education is available it is not always equitable. The standards of the more recent privately funded universities are reported to be failing. These include mandatory examinations in math and language, as well as other course-specific ones (class Base 2015).

Chile also has some lapses in data of females enrolled in tertiary education which can also be attributed to lack of adequate resources such as internet in rural and lower income area, yet there are less inconsistencies than Liberia. Enrollment rates for female students in Chile begin relatively high at 42.48 percent in 1973 dropping to 39.5 percent in 1976. After 1975 there are some major lapses in data until 1991 which is most likely

due to the rise and fall of Augusto Pinochet's oppressive regime. Since 1991 the percentage of female students enrolled in tertiary education has consistently increased until the last reported dates in 2012. Chile's highest enrollment rate for female students in college level education was in 2012 was 52.6 percent, while there is no reported data after this year it can be projected that this number will continue to increase.

Finland and Education Findings

Finland is known for a strong and equitable education system where enrollment in tertiary level education is encouraged. "Education in Finland is as free and fair as anything in this advanced society" according to class base (2015).

In terms of tertiary level education there are two forms of tertiary education in Finland, namely universities, and polytechnics. The latter focus on practical skills and do not involve themselves in research. By way of an example, they train nurses, whereas doctors go to university. Polytechnic graduates can cross-over between programs at master's degree level.

Finland has a clear advantage over Chile and Liberia with better access to resources, number of institutions, and gender equity. Because of this Finland leads the three in percentage if women enrolled in tertiary education. As early as 1973 there were 48.3 percent of females enrolled in tertiary level education. This number only dropped slightly in 1979 to 47.2 percent but continues to increase from 1982 onward.

Together each of these countries have one thing in common, and that is increasing number of women enrolling in higher education over time. If these numbers continue to increase these societies will be on the right track to shrinking gender inequity in enroll-

ment in higher education. Increasing gender parity in education can almost always be connected to a higher level of female political participation, and a better likelihood that women will become directly involved in governing.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The socio-political factors examined in this thesis are important to analyze when studying the progress of female political leadership in different countries across the globe. Employing a comparative analysis allows for inferences and connections to be drawn about what factors may have influenced Chile, Liberia, and Finland's progress towards more equitable government leadership. The Share of women in parliament over time and level of democracy over time, the influence of NGO's advocating in favor of women, and level of education all have played a clear role in Chile, Liberia, and Finland electing women as leaders. The hypothesis outlined previously in this work states: An increased percentage of women in parliament over time, high levels of democracy, a strong presence of NGO's advocating in favor of women's rights, and a high percentage of women enrolled in tertiary level education has helped Liberia, Chile, and Finland elect female heads of government. While proving this hypothesis may not be possible, Chile Liberia, and Finland all have had had high or increasing levels of two or more of these factors, and they have all had women rise to top political leadership roles.

In Chile the share of women in parliament peaked in 2006, the same year that Michele Bachelet was elected. In the same year, political rights and civil liberties were at

their highest point and the number of women enrolling in college/ university level education was at its peak, and steadily increasing. In Chile NGO's do not seem to have a major impact on directly helping to elect more women into office, or a female head of state. But, an emphasis in empowering the most vulnerable can only aid in increasing the numbers of women equipped with the proper training, education, and skills to rise to their full potential.

Liberia also sees the largest share of women in parliament in the same year that the first woman is elected to office in 2005. While it can be argued that this was influenced by a mandatory gender quota, by the 2003 peace agreement outlined by the United States; higher numbers of women in parliament remained even after the mandate expired. One connection that could be drawn from this is that democracy played the most impactful role. Liberia started out with the lowest rate of political and civil freedom, yet were able to increase political rights and civil liberties drastically after decades of conflict. During the most democratic time, with the largest share of women in parliament Liberia elected its first president. The presence of NGO's advocating for women is strong and these organizations put an emphasis on helping women become equal members of society. This has likely played a key role in increasing democracy and female political participation, ultimately mobilizing women and electing a woman to top political leadership. These thesis findings draw a number of connections between the factors and the first elected female presidents in each of these countries

In this research Finland acts as the outlier. It is an advanced economy, longstanding democratic government, high levels of women in parliament over time, and NGO's that advocate for the inclusion of women in the political process make it seem odd to

study in comparison. However Finland also acts as catalyst for the two developing nations discussed. Finland displays a country where high levels of each of these socio-political factors exist became one of the first countries to elect a woman as president. This can also help to understand how to increase this progress in other countries over time.

While a comparative analysis is helpful to understanding the relationships and trends between countries and world problems there are also some limitations to this research. One clear limitation to this comparative research is that it is hard to prove any of these factors have had a definite impact without employing quantitative methods (regression analysis). Comparative analyses methodology is one that requires much reflection and comprehensive understanding.

While connections can be drawn there are no numbers to support these implications. While this research examines four important socio-political factors there are a number of other socio-political, economic, and cultural factors that may need to be examined further. One important omitted factor would be economic development, specifically GDP per capita. This research sets the groundwork for further examination of female leaders of countries over time both qualitative and quantitative. This subject is one that will always be relevant and need to be studied and expanded upon over time as more Female heads of government come to fruition.

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