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RIVERSIDE

“What Difference Does it Make?
The Impact of Women in Politics in Costa Rica and New Zealand”

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Christina Leigh Caldwell

December 2010

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

I thank my father for raising his daughters to care about the world, our country, and our communities. You taught us to value education and hard work and to be passionate about our beliefs, even when those beliefs may have differed from your own. You inspire me to want to make a difference in the lives of others, as you have in your many years of public service. I thank my mother for showing me, through her own example, the difference that can be made in the lives of others through teaching. Because you were the first Dr. Caldwell, I never hesitated to believe that I could follow in your footsteps to graduate school, a PhD, and a career in higher education. You were the first person who told me you thought I could be a great teacher; I will consider it a great achievement if I am even partially as successful in our chosen field as you have been.

I would also like to thank my sister, Carrie, for being my biggest cheerleader throughout this process. You have never passed up an opportunity to express to me (or anyone else for that matter!) how proud you are of your little sister, which has meant the world to me. I could never have achieved this goal without the support of both you and Bryan. You gave me a quiet place to stay while I took my Comprehensive Exams, you gave me a place to live (twice!), and most importantly, you have both been a source of constant encouragement.

And finally, I thank Casey. Your faith in my ability to complete this journey has never wavered. You have listened to every frustration, worry, and concern that I've had

over the past few years with patience and understanding. You have offered your support in every possible way: you have been a shoulder to cry on, a sounding board for the difficulties I have encountered, and the first person ready to celebrate every small victory with me. You even rescued me by formatting this dissertation when I could not figure it out myself! You are my partner in everything I do...you make the obstacles I face easier to surmount and my triumphs even more rewarding because they belong to us both.

Thank you!

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“What Difference Does it Make?
The Impact of Women in Politics in Costa Rica and New Zealand”

by

Christina Leigh Caldwell

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Political Science
University of California, Riverside, December 2010
Dr. David Pion-Berlin, Committee Chairperson

This project examines the impact of having fewer or more women in national legislatures. Many scholars believe that as women become a greater presence in legislatures, they will pay more attention to women's interests, proposing legislation that reflects the needs of women. Htun states that "the growth in women's presence in legislatures has coincided with important legal advances in women's rights" (Htun 2001). Laws regarding issues important to women -- such as domestic violence, rape, and remedying years of discrimination -- have proliferated in recent years. While the amount of women's issues legislation has increased, there is a question as to whether the relationship between more women in the legislature and the proliferation of female-friendly bills is an automatic

one. Some scholars argue that the number of women in legislatures may increase but "the mere presence of women in positions of power will not automatically produce political outcomes favorable to women's interests"(Htun 2001). Particularly if women continue to constitute only a minority in a legislative body, we should not expect that they would have an overwhelming influence on the political agenda. However, is there a point at which women make up such a large percentage of the legislature that we can assume female-friendly policies will follow? The primary research question of this project is what is the legislative policy impact when women represent a critical minority of 30% or more? Related to the question of what legislative priorities drive women's political decision-making is the question, under which conditions are female legislators most likely to represent women's interests? Existing literature suggests that certain electoral conditions, such as closed-list proportional representation, are most favorable for electing women, but do those same conditions create optimal representation of women? Do women's movements within a country have an impact on legislative policy outputs? These questions will be addressed through an examination of the similarities and differences with regards to women in politics in Costa Rica and New Zealand.

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CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Women constitute roughly 50% of the world's population and yet in no country in the world does the proportion of women in the legislative branch, the people's representative branch of government, match that of the population. One of the most important contributors to legitimacy in a democratic state is fair and accurate representation of the citizenry, made possible by providing all citizens with the right to vote as well as participate in the decision-making process. The rights of participation and representation have been denied to some members of society in all democratic systems at some point in their histories; for example, the era of apartheid in South Africa or the nearly 200 years of denying African-Americans the rights to vote in the United States. Minority and historically oppressed groups labor to make their voices heard in political systems in which they are woefully underrepresented. Women are not a minority population, yet they have historically been excluded from positions of power in much the same way that minority groups have. Even as most women in the world have now obtained at least basic political rights, in relatively few countries have women used those rights to take on meaningful numbers of politically powerful positions in their respective governments. The struggle of women around the world follows a similar path: a history of exclusion from the political process, the eventual obtaining suffrage, followed by decades of under-representation at all levels of government. In some countries, women have begun to move past this last phase and are entering politics at rates higher than those seen elsewhere around the world. Two countries that are far more equitable than most

are Costa Rica and New Zealand. This research project raises and answers the question of what impact these female politicians have on public policy within the legislative branch. The theoretical implications cover a range of disciplines and topics from feminism to representation to electoral systems.

1.2 Research Questions

Scholars believe that as women establish a greater presence in national legislatures increased attention will be paid to “women’s interests.” The expectation is that female politicians will promote legislation that reflects the needs of their fellow female citizens. This is not to say that *only* female politicians can effectively manage issues of importance to the female half of the population, nor is it a contention that female politicians will only concern themselves with women’s issues. In an ideal world elected officials will represent the needs and demands of their constituents without regard for the race, gender, or religion of either politician or constituents. Until we reach that evolved political state we must be realistic and acknowledge that there are certain policy issues that find more salience with women than they do with men. Those who believe that female politicians can and/or should advocate for women’s issues hope that as their numbers increase they will use their collective power to further shared goals and political interests. There is some evidence to support the belief that female legislators do have a positive impact on legislation in support of women. Htun states that “the growth in women’s presence in legislatures has coincided with important legal advances in women’s rights” (Htun 2001). However, many laws regarding issues important to women -- such as domestic violence, rape, and gender discrimination -- have proliferated

in countries around the world in recent years, not always solely because of the actions of female legislators, but often largely due to international pressure from organizations like the United Nations and events like the United Nations Women's Conferences. Some scholars argue that the number of women in legislatures may increase but "the mere presence of women in positions of power will not automatically produce political outcomes favorable to women's interests"(Htun 2001). Therefore, while attention to women's issues has increased, there remains a question as to whether the relationship between more women in the legislature and the proliferation of female-friendly bills is as strong as some scholars and feminists would hope. If women continue to occupy only a minority of seats in national legislatures, we should not expect that they would have an overwhelming influence on the political agenda. However, is there a point at which women make up such a large percentage of the legislature that we *can* assume female-friendly policies will follow? Some scholars of gender politics believe that as women approach the threshold 30% of legislatures they become a critical minority¹ with the potential for genuine influence over policy agendas. Clearly at 30%, a critical minority cannot dominate the legislative process, but that bloc becomes powerful in its ability to push issues onto the political agenda, especially when their support may be crucial to other legislators seeking votes for their own legislative agendas.

¹ Scholars debate whether 30 percent should be used as the standard for a "critical mass." (see *Politics and Gender* 2, no. 4: 492-531; special section on the "Critical Mass Debate." Thirty percent is an internationally used standard that developed within the academic community. Academicians who now challenge this figure provide only one case (Norway) as evidence that a critical mass has not been reached at 30 percent. Based on the widespread acceptance of the figure, and while the scholarly debate rages on, I will use 30 percent as the benchmark in this study. Additionally, this work will add empirical evidence to this debate.

There is particular attention to the difference female legislators make when they achieve a level of participation in the legislature that surpasses 30% because this is the highest proportion of women in any of the world's legislatures. For most of the world, including the West, this kind of gender parity is nowhere in sight. Phillips notes that "women's under-representation in politics is in one sense just empirical fact: they are not present in elected assemblies in the same proportions as they are present in the electorate" (Phillips 1998). The global average for female members of parliament is 16.9 percent. Costa Rica and many other countries have implemented mandatory gender quotas as a way to guarantee that women hold more seats in the legislature. At a level of 38.6 percent female deputies, the Costa Rican National Assembly is significantly higher than the global average; Costa Rica ranks third on the International Parliamentary Unions list of women participating in parliamentary bodies. In other countries, such as New Zealand, a more equitable distribution of seats has occurred organically, without a formal mechanism mandating a more equitable distribution of seats. Women constitute 32.2% of the New Zealand Parliament; New Zealand ties with Austria for 14th on the IPU list. There are still many other countries, like Guatemala, which continue to significantly under-represent women. Guatemala ranks 109th in the world on the IPU list, with only 8.2% women in its Congress of the Republic. As a final point of reference, the United States ranks 67th (slightly lower than Panama and Zimbabwe, yet slightly higher than Turkmenistan and the Czech Republic) with 16.3 percent women in the two houses of Congress combined.

To address the question of difference in policy outcome when women exceed the global average, this research consists of a comparative study of two countries that have each surpassed this 30% threshold. Before proceeding with this comparison, however, it is important to understand how other scholars have addressed the issues surrounding women's participation in and influence over government and politics.

1.3 “The Justice Argument” / Liberal Feminism

Why does it matter if men represent women in the legislative branch rather than women representing themselves? Consider that one of the fundamental appeals of a democratic government stems from the fact that it is run “by and for” the people. The legitimacy of a state is “weakened if half of the population is under-represented,” which of course is the case when women are significantly left out of political decision-making (Chant and Craske 2003). As argued by Carroll and Fox (2006) with regards to American politics, “as a matter of simple justice, something seems fundamentally wrong with a democratic system that has a majority of women among its voters, but leaves women so dramatically underrepresented” (5).

Liberalism supports the rights of individuals to develop their human capacity for reason and rationality, to become fully functioning and participating members of society. Liberal feminists agree that individuals are rational actors and should be allowed to develop as such, however they criticize the fact that liberalism left women out of this discussion. Therefore, liberal feminism is an attempt to ensure that the tenets of liberalism are applied to women. A common theme in liberal theory is the separation of

human activity into a public and a private realm, arguing that there is a “close identification of men with one side of the dyad and women with the other” (Arneil 5). The public sphere is associated with reason, rationality, and freedom, the characteristics of fully developed human beings. Public life is of course also the realm of politics and government. According to liberal thinkers, the proper role of government is a limited one: government serves to protect and defend society while facilitating the development of individuals. Liberals argue that the responsibilities of government are few and that it “should regulate people’s lives very little” (Shively 26). Government must steer clear of excessive participation in the economy and in individuals’ private lives.

Liberal feminism has its root in the traditional liberal strain of political thought. As argued by these liberal thinkers, democracy is a system of government that is based on legitimacy and authority derived from the people. For example, social contract theorists argue that “legitimate authority of government must derive from the consent of the governed”(Cudd). Traditional social contract theorists fail to include women as parties to the original contract. However, as women have been granted the right to vote in all democracies, it is now accepted that women are in fact legitimate participants in the political process. Thus, the “governed” includes men and women; therefore both genders should be included in all aspects of decision-making; not just with the ability to vote for a representative to make decisions on their behalf, but to actually participate in the process as a decision maker. Under-representing one-half of the population in decision-making, whether via deliberate attempts to do so or not, reasonably calls into question the legitimacy of the government. Efforts to ensure the adequate representation of all

societal groups, particularly one that encompasses half of the population, add to the legitimacy of a democratic state. This is not a new argument; civil rights leaders questioned the legitimacy of a state that would formally or informally exclude even smaller populations of racial minorities, for example. Excluding any political group from exercising political freedoms is unacceptable in democratic society.

Contemporary liberal feminists, as well as those of the first wave of feminism, believe “that women have been unfairly excluded from positions of social value and status normally occupied by men” (Grosz 1994). The policy difference that may result from a gender balance in the legislative branch is not a motivating factor for the liberal strand of feminist thought. Instead of focusing on difference, they argue that the justification for including women in the political process is simply that women are human beings, and when they are members of a democratic society they have a corresponding right to participate in politics. The reason for women’s participation is not for a suspected change in policy as they become more politically active, but that they should be given the opportunity to actively participate because it is their right to do so.

The private sphere is the realm of the home and family, those activities that are not generally associated with economics or politics. The private sphere is equated with the characteristics of individuals unprepared for public life: simplicity, innocence, and dependence. The stereotypical and limiting roles of wife, mother, and caretaker, relegate women to the private sphere have historically hindered the development of a connection between women and the characteristics that earn the right for public participation to develop. In this way, females remain almost childlike in their inability to enter public

life, while males develop into rational individuals fully expected to become participants in the public sphere. For liberal feminists, there is a goal of freeing “women from oppressive gender roles – that is, from those roles used as excuses or justifications for giving women a lesser place, or not place at all” in public life (Putnam Tong, 32). There is no reason for women to be relegated to the private sphere of home and family, as they traditionally have been. Since men and women have equal capabilities, each should have the opportunity to participate in both the public and private spheres of society as they choose.

Liberal feminists argue that the concern with involving more women in positions of decision-making power is an issue of justice rather than a matter of policy (see Carroll and Fox, 2006). The justice argument parallels the liberal feminist perspective. Liberal feminists argue that there is an injustice in allowing men to make political decisions on behalf of women, as if women are not equally able to fill positions of political power and make policy decisions. Phillips states that “it is patently and grotesquely unfair for men to monopolize representation” (Phillips 1998). Because “women account for approximately half the population [they] therefore have the right to be represented” in the legislature in numbers that at least approximate their numbers in the population (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2005). Adherents to liberal feminist theory seek the elimination of discriminatory laws, the formal barriers to women’s participation.

Liberal feminists highlight the fact that historically and cross-culturally women’s roles have been limited to the private sphere of society. Culture, in addition to historical

norms, may also be an obstacle to women's participation in the political realm. The absence of women from positions of power is "explained as a result of cultural perceptions that women make poor leaders" as opposed to any real inadequacy in the female sex (Bruhn 2001). Much of the resistance to the political participation of women may be traceable to the public-private divide mentioned above. In many cultures, there is an association of women with the private sphere of society, which most certainly does not include political action; this is an association that is often shared by both men and women.

This public-private division of labor is especially prominent in Latin America, where traditional customs continue to exert a tremendous degree of influence over gender roles. In these patriarchal societies, "there is tension between women who claim an equal source of moral authority to compete for positions in the national legislature as men based on the same qualifications and ambitions, and women who claim a different (and superior) source of authority from men based on the machismo/marianismo gender identity system" (1993, 123). Machismo is "a cultural expression of masculinity and sexist behavior among men," which defines men as traditionally having few or no obligations within the home or private sphere of society. Marianismo is a term developed "to designate the cult regarding women as morally superior and stronger than men. Marianismo lauds women's spiritual force, women's patience with sinful males, and promotes respect for the sacred image of the mother...Latin American women are socialized to believe that men are not responsible for their faults, because they are unable

to control their sexual impulses and are morally like children.²” Based on the combined cultural pervasiveness of both machismo and marianismo, many Latin American “females believe they have all the power within the domestic sphere and great influence in decision making because the mother has authority over her children and exerts political influence through moral inspiration.”³ While sexism and gender stereotypes historically and even currently exist around the world they are generally antiquated customs rather than clearly articulated philosophies as machismo and marianismo in Latin America.

Where these cultural stereotypes persist, there is a diminished likelihood that women will see themselves as political leaders, making the choice to become actively involved with politics rare. Similarly, if women overcome the first hurdle of seeing themselves as relevant political participants, they are likely to face resistance from the men of their society. The difficult question, of course, is how to change deeply engrained cultural misconceptions about gender roles. Perhaps changes to electoral rules will facilitate the inclusion of women, not just as voters, but also as elected officials. Alternatively, a strong women’s movement helps society adapt to the idea of female political leaders. A movement may indicate to women, first of all, that there is a place for them outside of the private realm. Movement organizations provide platforms for women to be engaged in the political process. At the same time, a growing movement may serve

². Laura Guzman Stein. “The Politics of Implementing Women’s Rights in Catholic Countries of Latin America,” in *Globalization, Gender and Religion: The Politics of Women’s Rights in Catholic and Muslim Countries*. Jane H. Bayes and Nayereh Tohidi, eds. (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

³. _____.

as a signal to the rest of society that women are capable of maintaining both a public and private life, just as their male counterparts are also able to manage both.

While “liberal feminists recognize the indisputable physical differences between women and men,” the liberal feminist school of thought follows the traditional liberal line of thinking that emphasizes rationality by arguing, “an individual’s sex is irrelevant to her rights” and that women are capable of full rationality (Jaggar 37). The capacity for reason and sound judgment qualifies individuals for participation in public life. Liberal feminists believe that a person’s sex has no bearing on rationality, and therefore the exclusion of neither sex from rational activity is justifiable. The argument is that any difference between men and women is the product of socialization and stereotyping rather than any real difference in intelligence or capabilities (Grosz 1994). Liberal feminists argue “that women are as able as men to do what men do” and should therefore be encouraged to enter the political arena (Grosz 1994). How women behave as participants in politics is not the primary concern for liberal feminists; the behavioral expectations of female politicians are better explained by difference feminists.

1.4 “The Women’s Interest Argument” / Difference Feminism

Discussions embracing difference are part of the third wave of feminism. Many third wave feminists focus on the “difference between men and women as opposed to the

sameness embraced by second wave feminism⁴” (Arneil 193). Whereas liberal feminists are not interested in bringing more women in to politics for the sake of changes in policy, difference feminists contend that it is precisely the different priorities of women that necessitate their political participation. Difference feminists see the relevance in investigating the policy impact of having more female legislators because they believe that there are differences between men and women and that those differences will show in the political priorities of both groups.

Rather than solely demanding that women be treated as equivalent to men in the exercise of their political rights, difference feminists⁵ add a new dimension to the feminist perspective: that while men and women should have the same political rights, we should not expect that they will share equivalent perspectives on political, economic, or personal issues. Men and women have different life experiences and therefore view society and societal issues differently. Women should not have to give up their unique perspective on society to appear the same as men; their different perspective, argue difference feminists, should be included in decision-making institutions (see Arneil). Whereas liberal feminists argue for increasing the number of women in politics as a matter of justice, difference feminists contend that female representatives bring a

⁴ The author recognizes that some difference feminists focus on the differences between women as well; however, for purposes of this study the emphasis will be on differences between men and women. The research questions whether women have different priorities than men when they serve in the legislative branch. Diversity amongst women is quite clear in a place like the United States, where women identify with a multitude of ethnic, religious, class, cultural, geographical, and other groupings, which may in fact be more important to them than gender. However, the countries under consideration in this project are far more homogeneous than the United States, thereby minimizing, although perhaps not eliminating entirely, the significance of the differences between women.

⁵ The theory that asserts that women are inherently different from men is alternatively referred to as “difference feminism,” “relational feminism,” and “essentialism.”

perspective to policy making that is simply lacking when predominantly men occupy positions of power. These feminists argue that women have unique interests that deserve to be represented.

Difference feminism expands the discussion of women in politics to include the position that women are uniquely qualified to represent women. This argument contends “that the interests of men and women are different and even conflicting and therefore women are needed in representative institutions to articulate the interests of women” (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2005). According to this argument, “women’s experiences are different from men’s and need to be represented in discussions that result in policymaking and implementation. These different experiences mean that women ‘do politics’ differently from men” (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2005). Phillips states that “there are particular needs, interests, and concerns that arise from women’s experience and these will be inadequately addressed in a politics dominated by men” (Phillips 1998).

Difference feminists disagree with liberal feminists in key ways. Difference feminists contend that women should be *sought out* as participants in the political process because of the outlook they bring to policymaking. Many in this school believe that women are by nature more compassionate and nurturing than men and therefore bring a much-needed component to political decision-making. Essentialism, or claims about what it is that makes women different, is defined by Grosz at “the attribution of a fixed essence to women” (Grosz 1994). Lauretis sees the “essence” of woman as a “triangle of properties (e.g., a feminine sexed body), qualities (a disposition to nurturance...), or

necessary attributes (e.g., the experience of femaleness, of living in the world as female) that women have developed or have been bound to historically...which make them women, and not men” (Lauretis 1994). This school holds that women consider issues from a more peaceful, calm, and nurturing perspective because of these unique qualities and attributes. Difference feminists attribute these qualities to “women’s distinct position as women (largely related to child-bearing and nurturing capacities)”(Beasley 1999). Regardless of the other roles that women play in society, it is their capability to mother that produces shared life circumstances and characteristics widely accepted as “feminine.” These scholars argue that women and men should both be included in the policymaking process because they each hold a unique perspective. Ortiz states, “instead of claiming for women the traditional norms of the public world, which it associates with men, relational feminism seeks to change those norms to incorporate women's different way of seeing” (Ortiz 1995). Since women see the world differently than men, they will interpret policy options and make decisions differently as well.

For difference feminists, “the personal is political” and thus the personal and historically private issues that women care about should not be excluded from political life. Difference feminists do not quarrel with the liberal theorists who see the world as two realms: public and private. In fact they argue that women have been relegated to the private sphere for so long that they have a unique perspective on so-called ‘private’ issues. There can be little argument that private issues of healthcare, childcare, and reproductive rights are necessarily political issues in contemporary society. These and other issues are often considered women’s issues because the historical connection of

women to these previously private matters lingers. Difference feminists agree with liberal feminists that women should be involved in politics for reasons of equality and balance, however they also believe that “it is important to press for women in leadership positions, not only for its own sake and for the virtuous reasons of fairness and elemental equality” but also because female political leaders “are most likely to give priority to women’s concerns” (Ortiz 1995; Norton 2003). While they may be different from each other in many ways, “women’s sex-specific positioning” gives them a shared perspective on the world. Because female leaders share the common experience of femaleness, they will represent that experience in their positions of power. These feminists believe “it is reasonable to assume that when women lead, they will bring to the effort the experience of being a woman and often a special sensitivity to the needs of other women”(Norton 2003).

Difference feminism drives this research project. If the expectation is that individual women will serve as advocates for the collective interests of women, then certainly it is reasonable to expect that at over 30% of the legislature women will have the means to positively affect policy in favor of women. The average percentage of women in legislative bodies is only 17% (IPU 2006). The highest percentage of women in a national legislature belongs to Rwanda at 48.8 percent; second to Rwanda, is Sweden at 45.3%. While only two countries have reached a percentage above 40%, many more states fall somewhere in the 30-40% range. Sixteen countries have at least 30% women in the lower or single house; fifteen countries have at least 30% in the upper house or senate (IPU 2006). International organizations use 30% women in national legislatures

as a benchmark for progress in the area of advancing the political participation of women. A United Nations report on equality in decision-making states that “women are able to achieve solidarity of purpose to represent women’s interests when they achieve certain levels of representation” (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2005). The report states that those in favor of a critical mass argument often use 30% as their benchmark. Scholars also rely on the 30% standard in their work on women’s representation (Krook 2005, Sacchet 2003). The wide acceptance of 30% as the standard by which to judge whether a “critical mass” has been reached justifies its use for the same purpose in this project.

1.5 Evidence of Women’s Impact on Politics

Much of the research on the impact of women in politics comes from studies done in the United States. There is some evidence that the claims of difference feminists may in fact be correct. Any group that feels that they have faced decades or centuries of lack of representation by traditional political leaders may strive to elect members of their own social groups in order to achieve the substantive representation that they have been denied historically. Substantive representation assumes that elected officials will represent members of the demographic group with which they primarily identify by acting on behalf of that group in the legislature (see Childs and Krook, 2006). In the United States, African-Americans and women are usually seen as the two main demographic groups seeking substantive representation and for this reason they are often mentioned in the same research studies. Bratton and Haynie, for example, test the

assumptions that women and blacks will represent the interests important to their own communities when they hold seats in state legislatures; African-Americans constitute 7% of all state legislatures and women hold 20% of state legislative seats. The authors find, as many would expect, that each group does have “a distinctive policymaking focus” (670). Female representatives attempt to advance the collective interests of women through promotion of women’s interests bills, in much the same way that “black legislators introduce more black interest bills than do other legislators” (667).

Vega and Firestone examine the intersection of ideology and substantive representation. The authors use the CQ conservative coalition support scores to place female Congressional representatives on the ideological spectrum. They find that women are slightly more liberal than their male counterparts, even within the same party. Republican women, for example, are more liberal than Republican men, although less liberal than Democratic women. Even within the Democratic party, women tend to be more liberal than men. Those issues traditionally thought to be the domain of women, including childcare and healthcare, tend to be associated with the political left. The more liberal a representative is, regardless of party affiliation, the more we may reasonably expect that they will be supportive of women’s interests. Vega and Firestone find that as women become more prominent in the legislature, not only does the number of bills they introduce naturally increase, but so does the percentage of women’s legislation that they introduce. The percentage of bills relating to women’s interests does not remain constant as the numbers of women increase; instead, as there are more women involved, greater attention is paid to women’s issues. Thus, the evidence appears to argue that substantive

representation of women increases as more women are included in policy making. If substantive representation of American women has increased while female legislators remain a relatively small percentage of the total number of legislators, we should expect to see that substantive representation of women becomes even stronger in relation to their numbers in the legislature.

Much scholarship finds that the influence of women in politics often relates to their domestic responsibilities. Sapiro explains that “the term ‘women’s issues’ usually refers to public concerns that impinge primarily on the private (especially domestic) sphere of social life” (Sapiro 1998) (165). As Rhode points out in The Difference “Difference” Makes, “research on state and federal legislatures and high-ranking political appointees consistently finds that female representatives are more likely than their male colleagues to support and sponsor initiatives dealing with the interests of women and families”(Rhode 2003).

Thomas and Welch find similar results in state legislatures. They argue that as a minority group like women becomes larger, it will also become more active (447). They find that female members of state legislatures introduce “more legislation pertaining to children and the family,” as well as welfare than the men do (450). Not only do the women devote more attention to these issues, but they also say that these bills are a source of pride for them, greater than any of the other work they do (453).

Dodson finds that “the increased presence of women in public office transforms the political agenda, with women office holders giving greater attention than their male colleagues of the same party to women’s rights as defined by the contemporary women’s

movement, as well as to concerns reflecting women's traditional roles as caregivers in the family and society" (Dodson 2001). Dodson's claim provides an interesting look at the multi-dimensionality that women's interests may take. Women represent the traditional women's issues relating to children and the family that society tends to associate them with; however, they also represent the demands of modern women, expanding the realm of women's issues outside of the domestic sphere. The issues that matter to women find substantial variance from country to country, but women's groups in each country give researchers a glimpse of the contemporary issues that those women face. For example, in Costa Rica women head over 50% of households, so the list of critical issues for women includes the unique concerns of female breadwinners. In New Zealand, women make up a significant portion of the workforce, so pay equity is vitally important to them. In Guatemala, both rural and urban women struggle to gain access to quality healthcare and education, so naturally those two issues top their list. Increasing the amount of female legislators makes it more likely that the legislature will focus on both the traditionally female policy areas and the currently relevant concerns of the women in their country.

Remember, much of the research on the impact of women in politics consists of studies focused on the American political environment. This is troublesome for multiple reasons, not the least of which is the fact that American women have not achieved the levels of representation that exist elsewhere in the world. Women in the US have achieved success in education and many areas of the workforce, but politics remains for us an area where great inequalities still exist. Women make up only 16.3% of the United States Congress, while the countries studied in this research project each have over two

times that amount. Therefore, we should not expect female legislators in the US to have as significant an impact on the legislative policy agenda as they do in countries like Costa Rica and New Zealand where they hold over twice as many legislative seats as American women. In the matter of the impact of female legislators, the US should not be used as the principal example by which to judge other systems, for clearly there is still much progress to be made here.

1.6 Electoral Systems

The primary concern of this research is to understand the impact female legislators have on policy. There is an assumption on the part of some feminist scholars and many average citizens that as members of minority or historically marginalized become a greater presence in the legislative branch they will provide substantive representation for the members of their community. Therefore, one goal of this research is to determine if it is in fact the case that we can expect female legislators to provide substantive representation of the female populations of their countries.

While determining the impact that women have on public policy is the primary goal of this project, this goal cannot be reached without first identifying the political and/or social conditions that might enhance the representation of women, making their impact more significant. Existing literature suggests that specific electoral conditions, including closed-list proportional representation, are most favorable for *electing* women. Do those same conditions create optimal *representation* of women? The notion of equality often discussed in democratic societies is the equal chance of all individuals to

participate in the system, to “make their voice heard.” Voicing one’s opinion via the ballot box, however, does not mean that any elected officials will acknowledge, represent, or act upon said opinion. This is particularly true in a majoritarian system like the United States. Everyone has the opportunity to participate, but only majority perspectives gain traction with leaders. Electoral systems that adhere to proportional representation tend to promote proportional equality, a system in which “all ideas should have a chance to be represented, not only those that get the majority of votes” (Urbinati 40).

The type of electoral system present in a country effects the number of women elected to the legislative branch (Lijphart 1994; Rule 1994; Matland and Taylor 1997; Norris 1997; Htun 1999; Women's Environment and Development Organization ; Matland 2002). Electoral systems can be used to overcome “unfavorable contextual conditions keeping women from being elected (Rule 1994). The most common electoral systems are the majoritarian system (used in the United States) and variants of the proportional representation system used in countries around the world.

Pippa Norris explains that the “principle of proportional representation is that seats in a constituency are divided according to the number of votes cast for party lists” (Norris 1997). Proportional representation systems are of two broad types: open-list PR or closed-list PR. In an open-list system voters view the entire list of candidates recommended by a party and then express their preferences for candidates on the list. (Also see (Matland and Taylor 1997; Jones and Navia 1999). When a list is closed, voters do not see a list of candidates associated with the party; instead they are simply

asked to express their party preference without knowing who the candidates for that party are or how each candidate is ranked on the list. Findings are mixed as to whether the open- or closed-list system is better for electing women. For example, Matland suggests that closed-list systems are good for women because biased voters cannot exclude female candidates, as they are selecting a party rather than individual candidates. On the other hand, Rule argues that parties in an open-list system “have an incentive to place women on their respective lists to broaden their appeal” (Rule 1994). The opposing argument is that in an open-list system there may be some voters who would choose women, but that likelihood “can easily be outweighed by the opportunity for other voters to demote women” (Matland 2002).

According to the Women’s Development and Environment Organization, the “most important predictor of the extent of women’s participation in parliaments was the type of electoral system in place” (1). The virtue of a PR system is that it is more likely to “produce a parliament which reflects the composition of the electorate,” thereby implying that the parliament elected via PR is likely to include actors otherwise not included in large numbers (Norris 1997). Proportional representation systems allow for the election of more women and members of minority groups than other systems (Also see (Rule 1987; Inglehart and Norris 2003). Additionally, WEDO contends that “more women are also elected in countries with systems that mix elements of the proportional representation and majoritarian systems” (1). In a mixed-member proportionality system voters cast two votes: the first for a single member to represent the voter’s district, the second for a party list.

A plurality system is less likely to be inclusive and therefore less likely to represent minority groups effectively. For all varieties of feminists, it is vital to increase the numbers of women that are active in political decision-making; the focus of this study, however, is not on how to increase female participation, but rather on understanding the policy priorities of those women who are elected and how those priorities relate to the representation of women.

1.7 Conclusion

The findings of this research project will therefore be a significant contribution to the literature in this subject. The existing literature makes a good case that women do make a difference in shaping the legislative agenda and political outcomes. However, there are a few key limitations to that research. As previously stated, the majority of the work on the impact of women in politics comes from studies done within the United States. This is problematic for two reasons: (1) the US is an advanced industrialized state with significant differences from the rest of the world, and (2) the proportion of women in the US Congress is a mere 14.6% as of July 2006 (IPU); 15.2% in the House and 14% in the Senate. The US ranks 67th on the list of women in parliaments and has not reached the critical minority of 30%. This research project will add to the literature on women in politics because it specifically looks at the impact of having 30% or more of the seats in the legislature held by women and because of its non-US subjects.

The first of two research questions this work seeks to answer is: What is the legislative policy impact when women constitute a critical minority of 30% or more of

the legislative branch? Based on existing literature we expect that more women in the legislative branch will translate into greater attention to women's issues. Assuming the theory of a critical minority is correct we should see greater attention to women's issues in both Costa Rica and New Zealand, since both countries have surpassed the 30% threshold. The second of the research questions adds another dimension to the question of a critical minority. The question is whether or not the impact of more female legislators is magnified in a country that elects such great numbers of female legislators without a mechanism requiring that they do so as compared with a country that elects women via a quota.

The countries chosen for this study employ the two systems assumed to be most favorable for electing women: Costa Rica has a PR system, and New Zealand as a MMP system. Costa Rica has a Closed-list Proportional Representation system, said to be the most favorable electoral system for electing women, yet they were unable to elect significant numbers of female legislators without the implementation of a gender quota. New Zealand has a Mixed Member Proportional system, which includes elements of both proportional and plurality systems. The voters and political parties of New Zealand, with the mixed system, chose to elect significant numbers of women to their parliament without a quota or any other legislation compelling them to do so. Clearly a quota will help to elect women into office. An important question to examine in Costa Rica, however, is what impact can female politicians make if they are operating in a country that would not have elected them without the quota?

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CHAPTER 2: METHODS

2.1 Methodology: Mixed Methods Approach

This research utilizes a multi-country, mixed methods approach to discern the policy impact when women represent a critical minority of at least 30% of a national legislature. Costa Rica and New Zealand were the two countries chosen for comparison because they share a common value on the independent variable, the percentage of women in their respective legislatures. The Costa Rican National Assembly currently consists of 38% female deputies, or diputadas; the New Zealand Parliament includes 32% female Members of Parliament (Interparliamentary Union 2006). The percentage of female participants in each country's legislative branch is substantially higher than the global average of 16%. On other variables, such as type of electoral system and the catalyst responsible for the election of larger percentages of women, the countries are quite different; thus, the comparisons of these two countries will follow a most-different systems format. A discussion of the multiple methods used follows.

2.2 Controlled Comparison

The most different systems approach seeks to maximize the differences between countries. In this approach, countries that look extremely different at the macro-social level may experience similar institutional outcomes (i.e., electoral outcomes, as in these cases), thus allowing the researcher to rule out any systemic factors as the cause of the similar outcome (Przeworski and Teune 1970)35).

The most important difference between Costa Rica and New Zealand, for purposes of this study, is the means by which each achieved their high level of women in the legislature. Costa Rica reached this level via a gender quota approved in 1996. The numbers of women in the National Assembly have risen significantly each electoral period since 1996. New Zealand saw an increase in the number of female MPs after it changed its electoral system from a straight plurality system to a Mixed-Member Proportional system. A discussion of these two changes follows.

2.3 Quotas

Whether one favors the liberal argument that women should be included in the legislature out of fairness or the difference argument that women should be included because of the unique perspective they bring to policymaking, gender quotas have been the primary exogenous mechanism for ensuring women's inclusion. This affirmative approach can take the form of any number of different kinds of quotas. Constitutional quotas are those mandated by inclusion in the original constitution or amendments passed in later years. Political party quotas "are rules or targets set by political parties to include a certain percentage of women as election candidates" (Dahlerup 2003). Constitutional or electoral law does not mandate these quotas, but rather their implementation is a choice made by the parties themselves. However, the most popular type exists where national legislation mandates election law quotas. These quotas, found throughout Latin America and Western Europe, generally range between 30% and 40%. Costa Rica, for example, has a 40% quota; as of 2006, the percentage of women in the legislature has

steadily risen to the current level, 38.6%. Costa Rica currently ranks third on the International Parliamentary Union's list of Women in Parliament.

The rationale for choosing to implement a gender quota is based on the fairness argument for achieving gender balance: "given the slow speed by which the number of women in politics is growing, there are increased calls for more efficient methods to reach a gender balance in political institutions. Quotas present one such mechanism" (Dahlerup 2003). Gender quotas are a tool that can guarantee the election of women; they do not guarantee, however, that elected women will represent the interests of their counterparts in the citizenry. Quotas are an affirmative approach to remedying the fact that in most countries women historically have not had equal access to political office. While women have the right to vote and hold public office in most countries today, in many locations resistance to the idea of women as political leaders remains pervasive with much of the general population; a difficult obstacle for women with political aspirations to overcome. Dahlerup argues that "real equal opportunity does not exist just because formal barriers are removed. Direct discrimination and a complex pattern of hidden barriers prevent women from getting their share of political influence" (Dahlerup 2003). Thus, quotas are a way of requiring the population to elect representatives from both sexes. Quotas are a formal mechanism that can be useful in the short term until the informal barriers disappear, or may remain in place as a safeguard against future injustices. The language of most quotas is gender-neutral in order to ensure that both men and women have an equal opportunity to participate in the legislature.

2.4 Electoral System

Costa Rica has achieved a more equitable distribution of legislative seats via gender quota. New Zealand, on the other hand, passed a law transforming its electoral system from a first-past-the-post system to a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) representation system in the mid-1990s. The first elections held under the new system were in 1996. The levels of women in the New Zealand Parliament increased dramatically beginning in 1996. Although the levels of women in the legislative bodies are similar, the crucial fact for this study is that Costa Rica achieved a more equitable distribution of seats via gender quota while New Zealand achieved the same result by means of electoral reform.

Costa Rica has a PR system; New Zealand has an MMP system. The type of electoral system present in a country effects the number of women elected to the legislative branch (Lijphart 1994; Rule 1994; Matland and Taylor 1997; Norris 1997; Htun 1999; Women's Environment and Development Organization ; Matland 2002). WEDO contends that “proportional representation has proven to be the most important predictor of high numbers of women in parliament” (Women's Environment and Development Organization). The reason for this relationship is that PR systems are generally better at electing members of poorly represented groups, including women. Electoral systems’ scholars consistently find “that singlemember district (SMD) systems, whether majority, plurality, or preferential voting, have fewer women than do proportional representation (PR) systems” (McAllister and Studlar 2002). A plurality system is less likely to be inclusive and therefore less likely to represent minority groups

effectively. Rule states that “in single-member districts where only one person is elected, political elites have a disincentive to risk backing a woman candidate” (Rule 1994).

When a party’s entire chance of success in a given district rests on one candidate, they are less likely to risk a loss by putting forth a female candidate, or any candidate with little chance of electoral success. Lijphart sums up the appeal of proportional representation well: “PR and consensus democracy provide more accurate representation and better minority representation” than plurality systems (Lijphart 1994). Thus, a PR system, with or without the added benefit of a quota mechanism, is likely to be more conducive to the election of women than a plurality system. Within the variety of PR systems, a closed-list PR system appears to be more favorable to women than an open-list. Matland states that while an open-list system with its opportunity for preferential voting “provides the opportunity for some voters to promote women, this can easily be outweighed by the opportunity for other voters to demote women” (Matland 2002). Matland argues that an open list may be detrimental to women because some voters who do not want to elect women will not select a list that includes women. Therefore, closed lists that rely on public support for a party rather than individual candidates are better for women seeking office.

Much of the literature on the effectiveness of gender quotas and electoral systems concludes that the most effective scenario for electing women is a quota implemented in a closed-list PR system backed by a mandate that women must be placed in electable positions on the party lists. Matland states that in some countries “voters with traditional views of women’s roles would go out of their way to strike or lower the women’s names

on the party list” (Matland 2002). A party could fulfill a quota that requires having a list with at least 30% women by placing women in the last 30% of the list positions, meaning female candidates would have little chance of winning a seat. In such a scenario, the technical requirement of the quota would be reached, but the substantive goal of electing more women would not. Therefore, a directive to place women in higher positions where they actually have a chance at success is crucial to getting women elected. Costa Rica has the system described as potentially most effective for electing women: a closed-list PR system accompanied by an electoral quota. The open-list system does not provide an opportunity for this kind of mandate to place women in electable positions. In an open-list system voters know the names and reputations of all candidates and select between them, therefore, a candidate’s rank on the party list does not make them “electable,” as it does in a closed-list system; electability in an open-list system is determined by voters rather than list ranking (Carey). While the theorists who support this “effective” system may be correct that this scenario is optimal for electing women, it says nothing about how the women elected under these conditions will respond to their female constituencies.

New Zealand has a Mixed-Member Proportional electoral system, which means that voters elect some representatives in single-member districts, but they also elect others via proportional representation. The literature suggests that the chances of seeing women elected in this system, at least to the PR seats, is much greater than they would be in a straight plurality, first-past-the-post system. Operating within this MMP system, New Zealanders were able to elect a percentage of women that is among the highest in the world, however they did it without a gender quota.

2.5 Control Case – Guatemala

As will be explained in more detail in the Hypotheses section that follows, Guatemala is used as part of the testing for the first hypothesis only. H_1 addresses the question of whether there is in fact an impact on policy from having over 30% women in the legislature. If we assume that having significant levels of female legislators will make a difference on policy, then analyzing the policy proposals in a country without many women in the legislature should find minimal attention for women's issues. Guatemala is used as a control case for this purpose.

Guatemala has only 8% women in the national legislature. As argued by Booth, “the six countries of the Central American isthmus share many similarities in size, historical experiences, economics, general social culture, and geopolitical environment. They thus provide an ideal setting for a most-similar-systems analysis” (Booth and Richard 1996). Costa Rica and Guatemala share a religious background that has historically limited the roles of women. Societal beliefs about women as influenced by machismo and marianismo are also common to these two countries. These similarities could hamper the advancement of women in both countries, yet that only seems to be the case in Guatemala. The progress concerning women in politics and other gender-related development indicators in each country is strikingly different.

Costa Rica and Guatemala share a colonial legacy that includes a strong religious conviction for the majority of both populations. Women's authority in Latin American countries has largely been limited to the private realm, a fact the Catholic Church has helped maintain. Catholicism historically encouraged a traditional view of women's

roles in society, which revolved around the home and the family. This outlook is rooted in the idea that “moral superiority and spiritual strength combined with a submissiveness towards men” defines women (Craske 1999). Women had to struggle against the Church to gain political rights as “the Church was interested in maintaining women’s subordinate position” to men as wives, mothers, and caretakers limited to functioning in the private sphere of society (Leitinger 1997).

The Church often played a progressive role in challenging the injustice of military regimes, but their progressiveness in this area does not translate into an entirely progressive platform that includes support for expanding women’s roles (see Barry 1992). The church has changed its perspective slightly to conform with more contemporary attitudes towards women, but its “central focus on motherhood remains” (Craske 1999). While the Church after Vatican II became more progressive in its positions on poverty, class, justice, and even encouraging women to become more participatory in society, they maintained a traditional view of women’s roles.

The values promoted by the Church in Latin America parallel the traditions of machismo and marianismo, which Costa Rica and Guatemala share. Machismo is “a cultural expression of masculinity and sexist behavior among men,” which defines men as traditionally having few or no obligations within the home or private sphere of society. Marianismo is a term developed “to designate the cult regarding women as morally superior and stronger than men. Marianismo lauds women’s spiritual force, women’s patience with sinful males, and promotes respect for the sacred image of the mother...Latin American women are socialized to believe that men are not responsible

for their faults, because they are unable to control their sexual impulses and are morally like children” (Stein 2001). Based on the combined cultural pervasiveness of both machismo and marianismo, many Latin American “females believe they have all the power within the domestic sphere and great influence in decision making because the mother has authority over her children and exerts political influence through moral inspiration” (Stein 2001). The implied truth of this belief is that a woman exerting her political power by being a “moral inspiration” to her family is not herself actively participating in the political process.

The discussion of these stereotypical Latin American values should not be misconstrued to mean that all men and women in this region believe that women do not have a role in politics. However, it is difficult for any society to update traditional values to correspond with contemporary thinking, whether the forum is political, social, or otherwise. In a culture like that of Costa Rica and Guatemala, where traditional perspectives of gender roles are still held by many citizens, it would seem reasonable that women would struggle to find their place in the public realm, and specifically in politics. Yet shared cultural and religious beliefs have not led to similar results when it comes to the involvement of women in politics nor the production of policies geared towards women. Costa Rica has managed to achieve one of the highest levels of female legislators while Guatemala has one of the lowest levels.

2.6 Hypothesis Testing

The literatures on democratic theory, women in politics, and difference feminism in particular, establish a strong case for what we might expect when women achieve significant numbers in national legislatures. Normatively, it is clear that women should be included in politics because excluding half of the population weakens the legitimacy of a democratic state. Difference feminists make a strong case that the presence of female legislators will result in decidedly different policy outcomes; the empirical evidence supporting the claims of difference feminists and scholars of women in politics is, however, still being developed. A substantial amount of the literature regarding the impact of women in politics comes from studies conducted within the United States. More work outside of the US would augment the existing research conclusions. Therefore, I propose to test the following hypotheses, using observations from Costa Rica, New Zealand, and Guatemala (discussion of each hypothesis follows):

H₁: If women constitute at least 30% of the legislative branch, then more bills related to women's interests will be proposed.

H₂: If a country freely chose to elect high levels of women to their legislature, then the effect of having over 30% women in the legislature will be greater than in a country that did so via a federally mandated quota system.

H₃: Men in the non-quota country will be more supportive of women's issues legislation than men in the quota country.

Discussion of Hypotheses

H₁: If women constitute at least 30% of the legislative branch, then more bills related to women's interests will be proposed.

International organizations and scholars alike use 30 percent as the threshold for when women will begin to make a substantive difference in the policies produced by a legislature⁶. The notion that women constitute a critical mass at roughly 30%, along with the limited evidence from the US that female political leaders do tend to support women's interests, drives the hypothesis that we will see more women-friendly legislation when this critical mass is achieved.

Multiple comparisons are used to test this hypothesis. First, I employ a longitudinal analysis of the bills presented before and after reaching the critical mass in Costa Rica and New Zealand. This includes a comparison of the number of proposals related to women's interests in the Costa Rican National Assembly from 1986 to 1996 with the same type of legislation proposed from 1996 to 2006. Similarly, I will look at the pre-1996 legislation in New Zealand in comparison with the post-1996 legislation. The time periods used reflect the ten year period (1986-1996) before women began to occupy significantly more seats in each legislature and the ten years (1996-2006) subsequent to the introduction of the catalyst for electing more women. Each country experienced a tremendous policy change in 1996 that explains the election of more female politicians; a gender quota mandate in Costa Rica and the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system in New Zealand.

⁶ Thirty percent is an internationally used standard that developed within the academic community. Based on the widespread acceptance of the figure, 30 percent will be used as a benchmark in this study as well.

At this point it is useful to introduce a third country to serve as a control case. Guatemala has not been nearly as supportive of women in politics and has nowhere near the percentage of women in its legislature as is found in the two primary cases. Therefore, the legislative data for the post-1996 era in Costa Rica and New Zealand is compared with Guatemalan legislation of the same period. Since Guatemala has never had significant levels of women in their legislative branch, we should see that (1) there should not be a change in the amount of women-friendly legislation pre- and post-1996, and (2) they have significantly less women-friendly policies than either Costa Rica or New Zealand.

H₂: If a country freely chose to elect high levels of women to their legislature, then the effect of having over 30% women in the legislature will be greater than in a country that did so via a federally mandated quota system.

In the post-1996 era, Costa Rica and New Zealand experienced an increased number of women participating in their legislative branches, although the catalyst for this increase was vastly different. Costa Rica's 1996 gender quota law led to an increased percentage of female legislators; the electoral system change in New Zealand in 1996 had a similar effect. Both were changes to the system, but the quota forced the election of women while the change to MMP allowed that to happen naturally. In New Zealand, voters making their electorate seat choices could freely select women to represent them. Party leaders were also free to select women or men to fill spots on the party list. Costa Rican leaders, on the other hand, were required to place women in electable positions on their party lists. Costa Rican voters, in other words, were forced by executive decree to

elect women; there is no reason to believe that there was widespread societal support for the election of women because the electorate had certainly not been electing women in any meaningful numbers prior to the introduction of the gender quota law. Although the levels of women in the legislative bodies are similar, the crucial fact for this study is that Costa Rica achieved a more equitable distribution of seats via gender quota while New Zealand achieved the same result by means of electoral reform. We can characterize Costa Rica as a country operating under a mandate to elect female legislators and New Zealand as a country that elected women of their own accord.

Hypothesis 2 tests the idea that since New Zealand voters freely elected such high percentages of female MPs there will be measurably more significant effect on policy in New Zealand as compared with Costa Rica. Assuming that H_1 is correct and we do see a significant increase in women-friendly policy proposals in both countries in the post-1996 era, to test H_2 we simply need to determine which country experienced a greater increase. A chi-squared test will reveal if there is a significant increase in the number of women's bills proposed in Costa Rica and New Zealand from the pre-1996 to post-1996 period. Calculating the magnitude of the difference between the expected and observed values in both cases will demonstrate in which country there was a greater effect on policy proposals of having an increased number of female legislators. Hypothesis 2 purports that the most striking increase in women's bill proposals will occur in New Zealand, which does not use a quota to elect women; the willingness of New Zealand voters to elect women may suggest a societal acceptance of women as relevant participants with "issues" worth national political attention by Parliament.

H₃: Men in the non-quota country will be more supportive of women's issues legislation than men in the quota country.

H₃ provides another way to test the notion that individuals whom freely elect significant levels of women to the legislature without the mandate of a quota are generally more supportive of women's interests than are individuals that elect more women via the quota mechanism. To test this hypothesis, I will compare the proposals made by men in the Costa Rican legislation after 1996 (quota, more women) with those of the men in post-1996 (MMP, more women) New Zealand. This hypothesis develops my theory that in a country where men and women freely elect women to the legislature without a mechanism that forces them to do so, society as a whole is likely to be more supportive of women's issues. This support would be reflected not just by the actions of women in the legislature, but also by men.

2.7 Defining Women's Interests

It is essential at this point to define "women's interests," the key concept of the dependent variable: women's interests bills. This project defines women's interests by drawing on the traditional perspective of women as mothers and wives, but also incorporates the changing roles and needs of women in contemporary society. The working definition for this research draws on the general ideas of difference feminism, the specific concerns of domestic women's organizations, and the global gender issues presented by international organizations.

Returning to the discussion of difference feminism, we know that difference feminists argue that women possess a set of characteristics, different from those held by men, which inform their actions in the public and private realms. Beasley claims that the distinctiveness of women originates from their “child-bearing and nurturing capacities” (Beasley 1999). Kelly, et al, maintain that women “emphasize responsibility and care,” and “approach decision making by considering others” (Kelly 2000). The key theme that runs through these works is that women are the custodians of the private sphere of society. Women are historically associated with the domestic concerns of children, families, and nurturing. In many countries this traditional view of women stems from the Catholic Church. As Craske states, “the inference that women are expected to be responsible for others is part of the construction of womanhood based on caring endorsed by patriarchal institutions such as the Catholic Church” (Craske 1999).

Many scholars argue that this traditional way of defining women’s issues is outdated and that it reinforces gender stereotypes. However, it is not practical to exclude the issues with which women are historically associated, since many women around the world still consider the issues of family, home, and children important to them. What is more constructive is to expand the definition of what is important to women beyond these traditional concerns without denying the fact that traditional issues are very important for many women. We can do this by looking to the active women’s organizations within each country for guidance (see (Swers 2002), (Thomas 1989), (Carroll 2001), (Dodson 2001)). Examining the reasons why women mobilize gives us a sense of the issues that are important to them.

One of the largest women's organizations in Costa Rica is Centro Feminista de Información y Acción (CEFEMINA). CEFEMINA's projects include working to build housing for low-income and head-of-household women; developing women's educational groups in the areas of healthcare, domestic violence, and income generation; providing small-business loans to women; running clinics for women and children; and the creation of battered women's shelters (Carazo 1997). We still see the focus on women and children in CEFEMINA's work, but it goes beyond the traditional to focus on contemporary Costa Rican society as well. For example, the needs of women as heads of households and small business owners become apparent from looking at the goals of CEFEMINA.

The National Union of Guatemalan Women (UNAMG) is one of the leading women's rights organizations in Guatemala. Formed in 1980, UNAMG is also the oldest functioning women's organization in Guatemala. Their goals include expanding civic and political participation, protecting the rights of the indigenous, eliminating violence against women, and pressuring "the government to act on its promises to improve health care, increase economic benefits and guarantee education in native Mayan languages" (Global Fund for Women 2007).

Each year, the membership of the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) chooses different issue areas on which to focus. The issues for 2007 were (1) income equality, including pay equality and access to services, and (2) freedom from violence, including drugs and school bullying. The group also has 11 standing committees focusing on issues including the feminization of poverty, parental leave,

maternal healthcare, and abortion rights. Again, the issues addressed by the NCW go beyond the traditional scope of women's issues.

Relying only on traditional definitions of women's issues as the way to classify women's issues bills is objectionable to some scholars. An expanded definition should be better received in the academic community; it will also give us a better sense of whether representatives in a particular country address the issues of importance to the women of their country. As we can see from the aforementioned examples, the concerns that mobilize women differ by country. These domestic issues should be included on any list of women's issues for a particular country, even if they may not be of a more global concern. We can also develop a more broad understanding of women's issues by referring to internationally recognized issues of importance to women. The United Nation Development Fund for Women lists the following four areas to be dealt with in order to achieve "gender equality and women's empowerment": feminized poverty, violence against women, HIV/AIDS in women and girls, gender equality in governance (United Nations Development Fund for Women 2007).

Using traditional concerns related to the home and family supplemented by the issues of importance to both domestic and international women's groups gives us a much fuller understanding of what women's issues truly are at the start of 2007. Bill proposals in the following traditional and international issues will be looked at in each country:

Traditional issues⁷

⁷ The same list of issues is used in other discussions of women's issues. See Robinson-Taylor, M. M. and R. Heath (2003). "Do Women

- women's rights
-

Legislators Have Different Policy Priorities than Their Male Colleagues? A Critical Case Test." Women & Politics 24(4): pp. 77-101..

- children and families
- healthcare
- education
- welfare/social security

International issues

- feminization of poverty
- violence against women
- HIV/AIDS in women and girls
- gender equality in governance

The following is a list of women’s issues specifically identified in each country:

Costa Rica

- housing for low-income and head-of-household women
- women’s education
- healthcare
- domestic violence
- small-business loans to women
- running clinics for women and children
- creation of battered women’s shelters

New Zealand

- income equality
- violence
- drugs
- school bullying
- parental leave
- maternal healthcare
- abortion rights

Guatemala

- civic and political participation
- rights of the indigenous
- violence against women
- healthcare
- increase economic benefits
- education in native Mayan languages

2.8 Conclusion

Two very different events, the passage of a gender quota in Costa Rica and the altering of the electoral system in New Zealand, explain the election of considerable percentages of women to the legislatures of each country. Does the fact that the countries reached the same outcome (critical minorities of women in the legislature) via different paths have an impact on the issues on which the female legislators chose to focus their attention? Would the Costa Rican women feel stifled by the fact that they obtained their political positions using a quota system imposed on their country's political parties and fellow citizens by the political leadership? Would they remain more moderate in a society that would not have elected so many women without the quota? Similarly, would the New Zealand women, elected by a citizenry of its own free will, be more apt to pursue legislation related to women's interests in a society that was clearly more supportive of women politically? The best way to uncover the legislative priorities of these women and thus discern the impact of their participation is to examine the bills that they propose, which tells us to what issues they devote their time. It is in this empirical endeavor that the small-n statistical testing is useful.

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CHAPTER 3: COUNTRIES

3.1 Introduction

“Women encounter no legal impediments to their participation in politics; however, the percentage of women in government and politics does not correspond to their percentage in the population” (2009). This is a statement made in reference to Costa Rica, but, sadly, its message is one that applies to countries around the world. Constitutional protections exist in democratic countries to allow women and all other citizens to participate in politics, but for a variety of reasons many women choose to, or perhaps feel obliged to, abstain.

In 2010, women have overcome many of the obstacles that historically blocked their path to full gender equity. Many, but by no means all, women around the world have the liberty to exercise the same rights as men: the right to own property, to make choices in marriage and divorce, to make their own decisions about education and employment, and to participate in the political system. Yet in this last category of participation women often fail to take full advantage of their political rights. Scholars of gender politics use the 30% as the benchmark for classifying countries with a critical minority of female participants in the national legislative decision-making process. Only 23 countries have obtained or surpassed this benchmark and none of the most advanced industrialized democracies make the list. Four of the largest and most economically and politically powerful of the world’s democracies -- the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany -- currently fall short of this critical minority of female

representation. Germany tops this list with roughly 25% women in their legislative branch. France and the UK follow with just under 20% women in their respective legislatures, and the United States falls behind with only 17% women in the House and Senate combined. The US, in fact, falls below the global average of 18% women in the legislature⁸.

Scholars are concerned with the percentages of female legislators for many reasons, not the least of which is that it is the legislative branch that is supposed to represent the citizens of a country. The question that proponents of greater political participation by women ask is, “if women are not included in the decision making that happens in the legislative branch, are their interests adequately represented?” These scholars answer that women cannot be adequately represented by male individuals who do not share the same life experiences, nor the concerns and demands of government that are often uniquely female. While it may not be realistic to hope for a 50-50 distribution of legislative seats between men and women it is reasonable to expect that some distribution approaching gender parity could be reached.

If women alone have the capacity to provide adequate representation for other women, we should see greater attention to women’s issues reflected in the policies proposed in the legislatures in which we find a critical minority of women. This study provides empirical testing of the normative claims that female legislators provide substantive representation of women. The research presented here centers on Costa Rica

⁸ All statistics in this paragraph courtesy of the IPU Interparliamentary Union. (2009, February 2009). "Women in National Parliaments." Retrieved April 4, 2009, 2009, from <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

and New Zealand, two countries with a critical minority of female legislators. What follows is a discussion of the histories of women in the politics of each of these countries, including participation in various aspects of their respective political systems.

3.2 New Zealand

New Zealand's status as one of the world's strongest democracies is indubitable. In Freedom House's Annual Freedom in the World report, New Zealand consistently rates a perfect score of 1 (on a scale of 1 to 7) in both the Political Rights and Civil Liberties categories. These scores mean that the country has regular free and fair elections, an active and competitive political party system, as well as the opportunity for minority groups to participate in government (Freedom House).

Political History

Until 1907, New Zealand was a territory of Great Britain. Like many former colonies, the country inherited numerous institutions from the British, including the parliamentary executive system of government and even the lack of a written constitution (Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1996). The parliamentary system is characterized by the consolidation of the executive and legislative functions in one institution. The parliamentary system of government allows "electors to choose a government by voting for various parliamentary candidates offered by competing parties" (Mulgan 1989). The

leader of parliament is the Prime Minister,⁹ a member of the majority party chosen first by the electorate to serve as a member of parliament and subsequently by his or her colleagues to fulfill the executive leadership position. The PM serves at the behest of the majority party and can be dismissed by them as well. The PM shares power with his or her cabinet, other politically powerful members of parliament chosen to serve in various ministerial positions. There are currently 19 members serving with the PM inside the cabinet, leading ministries that include Justice, Education, and Agriculture, to name only a few.

In a parliamentary system, MPs are directly elected by the citizenry, according to one of a variety of electoral systems. The UK, for example, elects MPs to represent single member districts, similar to Congressional districts in the United States. For roughly a century, New Zealand used the British model of single member districts. From 1907 until 1996, the country operated under a simple plurality (SP), first-past-the-post electoral system. While the SP is used in two of the largest and oldest democracies in the world, the UK and the US, it is criticized by some citizens and scholars because the system often fails to create a government that mirrors the diverse interests and demographics of the country. In a simple or strict plurality system, the state is divided into a set of districts, each having roughly equal populations. One representative is elected from each district to be a member of the legislature. To win election to the legislature candidates need to win a plurality of votes; in other words, the winning

⁹ The country has a separate head of government and head of state; the head of the government of New Zealand is the Prime Minister and ceremonial head of state duties are performed by the Queen of England and her official representative, the Governor General.

candidate receives the largest number of votes cast for any candidate, which may or may not be the majority of votes. Because there is only one representative elected from each district, these electoral arrangements are also referred to as “winner take all” systems.

This type of electoral system favors large parties and hurts small parties. A small party may only receive a small amount of votes in each district, rarely enough to achieve a plurality in a given district and thereby posing an insurmountable obstacle for the candidate. In the SP system, “third or fourth parties tend to win disproportionately fewer seats than votes” (Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1996). Wherever it exists, the SP single member district system marginalizes smaller, single issue political parties¹⁰. The New Zealand electoral system offered the electorate a limited choice between only two parties, or “alternative governments”: the Labour Party and National Party (Mulgan 1989). Minor parties did exist under the SP system, although the probability of any of these parties winning a sizable share of seats was miniscule and the chance of becoming the majority party in government was nonexistent. As is the case with other two party systems, including the US, minor parties are “assumed to be parasitic on two-party competition,” existing only as a means for citizens to express dissatisfaction with the major parties, thereby taking votes away from them, while never actually taking meaningful part in governance (Mulgan 1989). Electoral rules clearly marginalize minor parties, turning them into outlets for protest votes rather than meaningful participants in decision-making. This may be troublesome in terms of representativeness, but may actually provide for a more simple form of government. Supporters of SP systems argue

¹⁰ This phenomenon is not unique to New Zealand, as explained by Duverger’s Law.

that having only two political parties provides a clear and structured electoral choice for voters and simplifies parliamentary governance by allowing one party, which received the greatest amount of support from the electorate, to control decision-making.

The SP system in New Zealand created a political environment in which Labour and National alternated power and smaller parties languished. Electoral success in a given district required only a plurality of votes, which Labour or National generally won because they were the two largest parties in every district. On a national level, this meant that the share of seats won by these two parties was grossly out of proportion to the share of their vote in the electorate. For example, in 1972 Labour won 48% of the vote, followed by National with 41%, and minor parties collecting the final 10% of the vote share. These percentages translated into a whopping 63% of parliamentary seats for Labour, 36% of seats for National, and 0% of seats for minor parties. The 1972 results demonstrate that Labour was overrepresented while all other parties did not receive adequate representation (Elections New Zealand 2005). The same scenario repeated itself each electoral cycle.

Complaints from voters about the disproportionate share of political power held by the two main parties, to the exclusion of smaller but still popular parties, led the 1986 Labour government to direct the Royal Commission on the Electoral System to investigate the existing electoral system and propose alternatives to correct its inadequacies if appropriate. The RCES found that under the SP system New Zealand performed poorly “on almost every assessment of proportionality representativeness of political parties,” including the representation of women (Catt and McLeay 1993). The

motivation for commencing the RCES had little or nothing to do with the underrepresentation of women; the primary concern of the Commission was creating a system of “fairer representation for ‘minority’ groups,” specifically the native Maori population (Catt 2003). However, the conclusion of the RCES was that the SP electoral system not only unfairly diminished the political power of minorities, but that it also had the same effect on women (Catt 2003). The recommendation of the RCES was that the citizens vote on a referendum to change to a Mixed Member Proportionality¹¹ (MMP) form of electoral system. The electorate approved the recommendation of the Royal Commission in 1996.

MMP is a hybrid of the PR and SP electoral systems that retains single member districts but also uses party lists. The new system thus requires that voters make two votes for Parliamentary representation: one for their district representative and the other for their party of preference. For all parties that surpass the minimum vote share threshold of 5% there is a guarantee of representation in Parliament. This guarantee of representation for even the smallest parties addresses the concerns of minor parties that were virtually without voice under the SP system. As in all PR systems, the proportional aspect of MMP provides that “the proportion of MPs from each party is the same as the proportion of votes that they won” in the electorate (Catt 2003). Supporters of MMP contend that the new electoral rules allow for the most favorable aspects of both the simple plurality and proportional representation systems: the single member district keeps the connection between the voter and their elected representative while the PR aspect of

¹¹ Mixed Member Proportionality is sometimes referred to as Additional Member System.

the mixed system also guarantees greater representation for smaller parties and minority groups.

Women in Politics

The New Zealand people took an early lead in the global struggle for women's rights. Kate Sheppard, who first introduced the petition for women's suffrage, was a pioneer for greater political rights of women. Because of Ms. Sheppard's efforts, New Zealand became the first country in the world to grant suffrage to women, doing so in 1893¹². The right to vote is an important development in the area of gender equality, but it is only with the opportunity to serve as elected officials that women can enter the political decision-making arena and consequently have a genuine opportunity to exercise their political power. New Zealand women did not gain the right to run for office until 1919 (Catt 2003).

The 1930s was an important era for women in New Zealand. In 1933, the first woman, Elizabeth McCombs, was elected to Parliament as a member of the Labour Party. Under the leadership of the Labour Party, a welfare state was created, which came to define the country for the next 50 years. The extensive welfare state included a variety of social programs, from pensions for older persons, to unemployment protections, to universal healthcare and education for all New Zealanders. Social progress in the form of the welfare state was matched in the political arena as women began to win election to

¹² New Zealand expanded suffrage to women 27 years before the United States, and 25 years before the United Kingdom.

the parliament. By the 1940s a few women had been appointed as cabinet ministers. Mabel Howard, elected by the Labour Party in 1943, was the first female cabinet minister. In these early years, women's participation in politics reflected their traditional roles as mothers and familial caretakers; this trend is evidenced by the fact Ms. Howard and many of her later female counterparts served as Minister of Health and Child Welfare. The 1950s ushered in a three decades long period of National Party rule.

The number of female candidates for office continuously rose throughout the 1960s and subsequent decades¹³. Over the past six decades women have served in a variety of elected and appointed positions, in both the executive and the legislature. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there were demands for increased female representation within Parliament and for political parties to give “priority for women's issues on the party agenda” (Catt and McLeay 1993). The Labour Party in particular has been responsive to these demands. In fact it was under the 1980s Labour government that the Ministry of Women's Affairs, a cabinet level position dedicated to women's issues, was created. Mary O'Reagan, the first Minister of the MWA, pursued “efforts to develop and maintain a working relationship with community-based women and women's organizations” (Chappell and Hill 2006). O'Reagan created an expectation that the MWA would be an institution of government that was directly accountable to the women of New Zealand, implementing Women's Forums and other avenues for individual women and women's organizations to communicate their needs directly to government.

¹³ For a full discussion of the history of women's political participation and success in New Zealand, see Catt, H. (2003). *FRAIL SUCCESS?: THE NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCE OF ELECTING WOMEN*. *ECPR*. University of Edinburgh..

Policymaking under MMP is said to be responsive to societal pressures, in which case the influence of these women's groups should be influential to the MWA as well as other policymakers (Boston, Levine et al. 1996). Participation in interest groups is an alternative to conventional political participation, so the creation of the MWA to communicate with these groups has been an important development for New Zealand women.

If the goal for women in politics, however, is to increase opportunities for substantive representation, that goal can only be reached through the election of more female MPs. According to this model of substantive representation, women must be elected in numbers that approximate their proportion in the population so that "women's interests can become more visibly represented"(Curtin 2008). When considered from this perspective of representation, it is clear that the greatest political development for New Zealand women came in 1996. The first elections held under the new MMP system were in 1996. Although the Royal Commission had a multitude of reasons for recommending the country move to a MMP system, one of the statements in the Report was that there was a hope among members of the Commission "that MMP would open up greater opportunities for women and for Maori to enter Parliament" (Boston, Levine et al. 1996). The RCES view mirrored that of other proponents of MMP that "an important consequence of the operation of party list systems is the effect on female representation" (Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1996). In the first elections under MMP it became apparent that the Commission's beliefs that the new system would positively effect female representation were correct. According to McAllister, et al, "the introduction of mixed

systems in New Zealand...has led to more opportunities for women,” most of which have come from the proportional representation side of MMP (McAllister and Studlar 2002).

While there have only been three MMP elections in New Zealand, the proportion of women in the Parliament appear to be increasing:

Table 3a

Election Year	Women (AS % OF TOTAL)
1990	16
1993	21
1996 (MMP)	29
1999	29
2002	28
2005	32

The electoral success experienced by women from across the ideological spectrum was highlighted by the selection of the first female Prime Minister, Jenny Shipley of the National Party. Prime Minister Shipley was first elected to the Parliament in 1987, then served first as Minister of Social Welfare and Women’s Affairs in 1990 and later as Minister of Health in 1994, ultimately being named PM in 1997. In 1999, the National Party lost control of the government to the Labour Party. The female leader of Labour, Helen Clark, took over the position of PM from Ms. Shipley in 1999 (Curtin 2008). Women have also served in a variety of cabinet-level ministerial positions. By a ratio of 2 to 1, female MPs most commonly serve in the cabinet as the Minister of

Women and Children¹⁴ (Christensen 2005). The current Prime Minister John Key, who was selected in November 2008, appointed five women to his 20 person cabinet¹⁵.

By the late 1990s, New Zealand voters broke from 30 years of National Party dominance by electing a Labour government once again. Labour itself chose to put another female, Helen Clark, in the executive office of the government. Prime Minister Clark was the first female Labour candidate elected to Parliament in 1981. She quickly rose through her party's ranks, becoming Minister of Conservation and Minister of Housing in 1987, followed by a brief stint as Deputy Prime Minister in 1989. She served as Labour Party Leader for a decade before becoming PM in 1999; she was reelected to that position in 2002, and 2005. Clark and the Labour Party established a coalition government that included the Greens, United Future, the National Party, and Alliance¹⁶.

Women in New Zealand have very clearly been afforded greater opportunities to participate in politics than have women in most other countries in the world. Women have been serving in Parliament since the 1930s and as Cabinet Ministers since the 1940s. Two women have been chosen for the top government position of Prime Minister.

¹⁴ The title of this office has varied by government, but always serves the same constituency (Women and Children).

¹⁵ Judith Collins (Minister of Police, Minister of Corrections, Minister of Veteran's Affairs), Anne Tolley (Minister of Education, Minister of Tertiary Education), Georgina te Heuheu (Minister of Courts, Minister of Pacific Island Affairs, Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control, Minister of Maori Affairs), Paula Bennett (Minister of Social Development and Employment, Minister of Disability Issues, Minister of Youth Affairs), Pansy Wong (Minister of Ethnic Affairs, Minister of Women's Affairs) (2009). "Ministerial List." Cabinet Office Retrieved May 15, 2009, from <http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/cabinet/ministers/ministerial-list.html>.

¹⁶ Alliance is a Social Democratic party first created in 1991. In their first election cycle they garnered 18.3% of the vote, but as the country at that time had a simple plurality system that vote share only won the party two seats in the Parliament. This underrepresentation is seen by many as one of the forces that led the country to approve the change to the MMP electoral system, which would allow for greater representation of third parties (see "Dictionary of Contemporary World History" and Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1996).

These facts make New Zealand an excellent case study for researching the political power of women when they play a greater role in the legislative policymaking arena.

3.3 Costa Rica

The Central American country of Costa Rica boasts a tradition of democratic rule extending further than most any other country in Latin America. Costa Rica regularly scores a perfect score of 1 (on a scale of 1 to 7) on Freedom House's rating of Political Rights. This score reflects the country's regular elections, competitive party system, and generally inclusive political environment (Freedom House). While Costa Rica's score in the area of Civil Rights is slightly lower, a 2, this score means only that there are "deficiencies in a few aspects of civil liberties" but that the country and its citizens are still relatively free (Freedom House).

Political History

Costa Rica, along with the rest of Central America, gained its independence from Spain in 1871, at which time it entered into an era of democratic rule that has continued virtually uninterrupted. Two brief periods of destabilization did occur, first with the military dictatorship of Granados in 1917, which was quickly overturned, and later, when the country's democratic institutions and elections were threatened in 1948. Under the leadership of Jose Figueres a popular uprising was able to quell the non-democratic forces in the country and subsequently implement a democratic constitution.

The aftermath of the civil war created the conditions necessary for modern political reform. Figueres used his position of power after to the war to usher in a new constitution in 1949. The 1949 constitution created a limited presidential democracy with checks, balances, and a separation of political power designed to ensure that no further interruptions of democratic rule occur. This political system is characterized by a government in which members of three branches – a singular executive, unicameral legislature and independent judiciary – share power. The primary rationale for choosing this type of system is that each branch of government is able to check the power of the other branches, ensuring that no one branch becomes too powerful. As a presidential system of democracy, the legislature and the executive exist independently of one another; Costa Rican voters directly elect their president, a post currently occupied by the first female president, Laura Chinchilla. Costa Rican Presidents serve four-year terms, and until 2004, were limited to a single term in their lifetime¹⁷. The Legislative Assembly serves as the branch of government ultimately responsible for representing the citizenry of Costa Rica. Voters from 57 geographical districts participate in direct elections to choose representatives for the Legislative Assembly. Deputies are elected to serve four-year terms simultaneous with the President.

Costa Rica operates under a Closed List Proportional Representation (PR) system. As explained by the International IDEA, in this system each party offers a list of candidates for voters to consider electing to a multi-member district. As in all PR

¹⁷ This law was changed in 2004 to allow for two non-consecutive terms, which then allowed for Arias' reelection. Costa Rica. World Encyclopedia of Political Systems and Parties. N. Schlager and J. Weisblatt. New York, Facts on File (Infobase Publishing). 1.

systems, parties receive a number of seats in the legislature that is proportional to their share of the vote. In a closed list system voters do not know the names or other informative details regarding the candidates on each party's list'; the emphasis during Costa Rican campaigns is not on individual candidates, but rather the platforms and promises made by each party.

Costa Rican politics operates largely within the framework of a two-party dominant system, with some input from minor parties. The presence of a proportional representation system of legislative elections means that minor parties do have an opportunity to win a few seats, however government has consistently been dominated by two parties. Subsequent to the turmoil of the 1948 revolution, two primary factions arose: the Partido Liberacion Nacional (PLN) and the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR)¹⁸. The PLN, party of national leader and civil war hero Jose Figueres, is a social democratic party and member of Socialist International. The PLN is responsible for the abolishing the military, drafting the 1948 constitution, and for the nationalization that characterizes significant components of the Costa Rican economy. For decades, the PLN traded electoral successes with the PNR, later renamed the Partido Unidad Social Cristiana (PUSC). While the PNR/PUSC is a more conservative political party, in their times of power they supported and continued to implement the progressive policies of the PLN.

Currently the most influential political parties are the Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN) and the Partido Acción Ciudadana (PAC). Today, the PLN, party of current

¹⁸ The PNR evolved into the PUSC in 1983.

President Oscar Arias, continues to promote a platform of social democratic ideals: solidarismo (workers cooperatives), economic equality, and social insurance (2009). The past two decades brought much success to the PLN, as they maintained a strong presence in the Legislative Assembly, and captured the presidency in 1994 and again in 2006. The PLN counts the passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) as one of its greatest and most recent successes; this was no small feat given the tremendous opposition to CAFTA amongst many Costa Ricans. The PLN is recognized for its efforts to balance much needed support from the United States government and investors while not allowing the perception of undue foreign influence. This sentiment characterizes the current administration of Oscar Arias, as well as his efforts to address and resolve regional troubles during the turbulent 1980s. Working in particular with Nicaraguan officials, Arias was able to broker a regional peace plan that included free and democratic elections; Arias was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987 for his successful efforts.

The liberal PAC is relatively new to the Costa Rican political arena and only began fielding candidates for office in 2002, when it garnered an impressive 20% of the vote for the Legislative Assembly. The success of PAC in recent years may be due in part to the fact that its message of domestic economic equality and international economic independence resonates with many Costa Ricans who, like the PAC, oppose CAFTA and other economic agreements they feel damage the country's ability to exercise economic sovereignty and execute policies beneficial to Costa Ricans. The PAC has taken over ground that previously belonged to the Partido Unidad Social Cristiana (PUSC). The PUSC has historically maintained a strong presence in the government,

including the presidency in 1990, 1998, and 2002¹⁹. The PUSC still controls the Legislative Assembly, although the strength of their numbers has dwindled over the past few elections.

Women in Politics

Women in Latin American countries have had to fight against a more pervasive resistance to female participation outside the home, based on the twin cultural stereotypes of machismo and marianismo. Machismo is “a cultural expression of masculinity and sexist behavior among men,” which defines men as having few or no obligations within the home or private sphere of society. Traditionally, men have no responsibility within the home, but are responsible for *everything* that happens in the public sphere, including participation in labor and politics. The related concept of marianismo argues that women’s responsibility for the home and family is tied directly to their “moral superiority” over men. Marianismo “lauds women’s spiritual force, women’s patience with sinful males, and promotes respect for the sacred image of the mother” (Stein 2001). Based on the combined cultural pervasiveness of both machismo and marianismo, many Latin American females have accepted the belief that their power originates and resides only in the private sphere; that a woman’s political influence is indirect, stemming from the “moral inspiration” she provides her children, specifically her male children who will one day become participants in the public realm (Stein 2001). In other words, in the

¹⁹ 1998 – Calderón Fournier, 1998 – Rodrigues Echeverria, 2002 – Abel Pacheco

privacy of their homes, mothers can raise their sons to be good, upstanding citizens, who will hopefully employ moral lessons, learned from their mothers, in the public realm.

Culturally accepted stereotypes which dictate that the proper role for women is as the wife and mother figure, while men take on all obligations external to the home, obviously “tend to let the men dominate the political world” (Booth). In addition to these cultural stereotypes, Costa Rican women face the uphill battle of entering politics from a position of less education and therefore less income. As in most countries, those citizens with higher socio-economic backgrounds are far more likely to participate in politics than their lower socio-economic counterparts. The historical reality in Costa Rica is that even with universal education since the late 1940s, women have only recently begun to take on a more active role in the public realm.

Costa Rica’s deputies, as members of the legislature are called, are chosen according to a proportional representation electoral system. PR systems tend to be more representative of society than the SP systems found in many other democracies. Because of the low threshold necessary to win seats in the legislature, PR system allow for the election of members of smaller parties and minority groups. In addition to its favorability for minority groups and smaller political parties, evidence supports the notion that a PR system is generally more favorable to the election of women. The Women’s Environment and Development Organization suggests that more than any other indicator of women’s participation in legislative activity is the choice of electoral system (Women's Environment and Development Organization 2000). Twenty-four countries have at least 30% women in their legislative branch; of those 24, 15 utilize a PR electoral

system, and another five have a mixed system, meaning their electoral systems incorporate elements of both PR and plurality elections (IPU 2006).

Costa Rican women found their earliest political successes in the legislative branch. Estela Hernandez Quezada was the first woman elected to the Legislative Assembly, in 1953. A member of the PLN, she also became the first female cabinet minister, appointed to the position of Minister of Education in 1958, by President Mario Echandi²⁰. Ms. Hernandez Quezada was one of only three women elected in 1953, collectively occupying only 6.7% of seats. The percentage of female legislators remained low for the next four decades; the average percentage of female deputies between 1953 and 1990 was a mere 6.7% (Saint-Germain and Metoyer 2008).

While Costa Rica currently has their first female president, it is very early in her term to determine the consequences this historic post may hold. Prior to this recent success in the executive, women have obtained many other executive branch positions, including five female vice-presidents and many appointed cabinet ministers²¹. Six of the 20 positions in Oscar Arias' current cabinet are held by women²². One of the frontrunners in the 2010 Presidential race is also a woman. Female justices are not uncommon in the judicial system of Costa Rica, although a 2005 study by UNESCO

²⁰ Since Ms. Hernandez Quezada's ministerial appointment, over 20 more women have been appointed to the cabinets of subsequent presidents.

²¹ The most common cabinet positions for women to hold are 1) Minister for the Condition of Women, 2) Minister of Culture, and 3) Minister of Education Christensen, M. K. I. (2005). "Female Ministers of the Republica de Costa Rica." Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership Retrieved May 15, 2009, from http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/women_heads_of_governments.htm.

²² Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports (Maria Elena Carballo), Minister of Health (Maria Luisa Avila), Minister of Justice (Viviana Martin Salazar), Minister of Public Security (Janina del Vecchio), Minister of Science and Technology (Eugenia Flores) (2009). "Costa Rica." Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments Retrieved May 15, 2009, from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/world-leaders-g/guatemala.html>.

asserts that “a majority of women may be found at the lowest levels of the judicial organization pyramid” (Formisano and Moghadam 2005). In other words, female justices are more likely to be found in the lower courts than in the highest court, the Supreme Court of Justice.

In the past 20 years Costa Ricans have seen far more women enter politics than ever before. The amount of female legislators jumped to an average of 21% between 1992 and 2006, with the highest numbers elected in 2002 (31.5%) and 2006 (38%) (IPU 2006). The key explanation for this significant increase is the mandatory gender quota law, proposed in the early 1990s by PLN deputies in the Legislative Assembly and implemented in 1996. The “Law of Real Equality” mandates that all parties must create electoral lists that include at least 40% women²³. The passage of this law was not due to a grassroots effort by women’s organizations, but instead proceeded successfully with the support and attention of former (and now current) president Oscar Arias and the PLN²⁴. In 1999, the Supreme Elections Tribunal (TSE) went a step further to mandate that “women must be placed in electable positions on party lists.”²⁵ Resolution 2837 (December 1999) “defines as an electable place ‘that which is assigned to a person with real responsibilities of being elected, and this should be considered individually in

²³ This is different from the political party quota, mentioned in the previous section. Political party quotas are decided internally, not mandated by the state. Electoral law quotas are imposed on political parties. Quotas in Costa Rica are imposed by the state.

²⁴ For a discussion, see “Quota Legislation and the Election of Women” Jones, M. P. (November 2004). “Quota Legislation and the Election of Women: Learning from the Costa Rican Experience.” *THE JOURNAL OF POLITICS* 66(4): Pp. 1203–1223..

²⁵ Global Database of Quotas for Women. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and Stockholm University. <http://www.quotaproject.org/displayCountry.cfm?CountryCode=CR>. Accessed 8 November 2004.

drawing up lists of candidates for each province'.²⁶ The quota law mandates at least 40% of each list be female but it also allows political parties to create their own, higher standard should they choose.

As stated, the political parties must comply with a 40% quota mandated by federal election law, although this does not mean that 40% of the candidates ultimately elected by each party will be women. In the 2002-2006 legislative term, the first resulting from the 1999 directive to place women in electable position on party lists, the PUSC won 19 seats, six of which were occupied by women (31%)²⁷. Women held six of the PLN's 17 seats, for a total of 35%. In the current session (2006-2010), the PLN has the majority of seats (25) in the Legislative Assembly; female deputies occupy 44% of those seats. The PAC holds the next highest number of seats (17) and women hold 47% PAC seats. Currently, six other minor parties also hold seats in the Legislative Assembly; two of these have at least one female deputy (PUSC and Liberty Movement), while the rest (Accessibility Without Exclusion, Costa Rican Renovation Party, National Unity Party, and Broad Front) have no representation by women (IPU 2006).

Women in Costa Rica, like many of their sisters throughout Latin America, have faced considerable obstacles to becoming active participants in government. Cultural stereotypes of machismo and marianismo have supported the idea of a male dominated public sphere while women are relegated to domesticity. These gender roles have also

²⁶ Quesada, Ana Isabel Garcia. "Putting the Mandate into Practice: Legal Reform in Costa Rica." Paper presented at International IDEA Workshop, Lima, Peru, 23-24 February 2003.

²⁷ Election results available at the Supreme Elections Tribunal of Costa Rica website: http://www.tse.go.cr/datos_estadisticos.htm. (2002). "República de Costa Rica Elecciones Nacionales 2002 - Resultados Definitivos." *Estadísticas Electorales* Retrieved February 19, 2009, from http://www.tse.go.cr/datos_estadisticos.htm.

fostered a society in which women tend to be less educated, thereby creating another reason why they may not enter the political arena. Acceptance of women in politics was virtually forced upon the citizens of Costa Rica when the “Law of Real Equality” passed in 1996. Since 1996 there has been a steady increase in the numbers of women elected to the legislative branch.

3.4 Summary Notes on Costa Rica and New Zealand

Costa Rica and New Zealand are similar in the fact that each surpasses the 30% threshold for adequate participation of women in a national legislature; the path that each country took to achieve that degree of gender equity, however, was quite different. Costa Rica’s 1949 democratic constitution included adult suffrage for men and women, a political right granted to women in New Zealand a full 100 years earlier. Perhaps that early acceptance of women in the political process explains the greater level of success of New Zealand women in politics. Women have experienced great electoral success in the New Zealand parliament for decades, with a female member of parliament being selected as Prime Minister on two occasions. In Costa Rica, while a few women were elected to each term of the National Assembly since the 1850s, the numbers of female legislators has only begun to increase drastically in the past 15-20 years; and in 2010, Costa Rica elected their first female president. Each country’s political system underwent a change in 1996, leading to the election of far greater numbers of women. Costa Rica’s gender quota and New Zealand’s shift to a Mixed-Member Proportional electoral system are

what place them on similar ground today, paving the way for each country to elect more substantial numbers of women.

3.5 Control Case: Guatemala

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the expectation of supporters of the 30% critical minority is that women's interests will not be adequately represented by men and that the only way to achieve adequate representation for women is to elect more women to the legislative branch. While Costa Rica and New Zealand provide fertile grounds for researching the effect that having more female legislators has on bills proposed in the legislature, they do not allow for the consideration of how women are represented in a country that has far less than 30% female legislators. Guatemala, a country with only 12% women in the legislative branch provides an opportunity for examining that circumstance. Again, we would expect that the policies proposed by the Guatemalan legislature would be far less favorable to women than those found in Costa Rica, New Zealand, or any other country that has achieved a critical minority.

Guatemala is a country characterized by "political instability, social unrest, and repression". As recently as the 1970s, economic elites and political oligarchs have been at odds with the majority of the Guatemala population, constituted of poor indigenous and mestizos. Upon gaining independence in 1839, the country fell prey to a quick succession of dictators, lasting through the 1940s, at which time Guatemalans had a brief interlude with democratic rule. However, this period of democracy was short-lived due to strong anti-democratic forces, both domestic and foreign. Foreign interests were often

driven to protect their economic interests, most often fruit-related businesses such as United Fruit Company. By 1965, the country was again ruled by a military junta, the status quo for political rule until 1985. Indigenous peoples along with the rest of the poor in Guatemala suffered under this system dominated by elites and foreign interests, which on occasion led them to attempt to “seek redress for social inequalities and economic injustices” (Saint-Germain and Metoyer 2008). Governing forces often resorted to use of the military in order to keep these uprisings at bay.

Political liberalization did not begin until the 1980s and even that was limited by the demands of the military. In 1982 and 1983, two separate and unsuccessful coup attempts revealed the country’s patience with dictatorial rule had finally worn thin. The coups represent attempts to end military rule and return the country to “normalized electoral politics” the population had so briefly encountered four decades prior . The military junta allowed for the countries first semi-democratic elections in decades to occur in 1985; this electoral cycle was only semi-democratic due to the limitations imposed by the military, which included excluding all but conservative, rightist political parties, and ultimately led to a lack of popular participation in the election (Vanden and Prevost 2006; Saint-Germain and Metoyer 2008). However, the 1985 election produced a new government as well as popular approval of a new constitution.

Under the 1985, Guatemala became a constitutional democratic republic with power distributed between three branches of government. The executive branch consists of a president, vice-president and Council of Ministers (cabinet). The president, who is elected to no more than one four-year term, has full power to appoint the Ministers of his

cabinet. No Guatemalan woman has ever served as president or vice-president, although they have occasionally occupied ministerial positions, most frequently serving as Minister of Culture or Minister of Education. Currently, two women hold cabinet-level positions²⁸.

The National Congress consists of 158 members who also serve four-year terms. Congressional representatives are elected via a Mixed Member Proportional system with some members representing geographical districts and others representing party lists. The party system in Guatemala is best described as “highly volatile”. Whereas many democratic countries operate with a relatively small number of major political parties²⁹, Guatemalan voters are consistently faced with a choice between 10³⁰ or more political parties. In fact, oftentimes an electoral cycle will foster the development of new parties centered less on ideology and a coherent political platform than on individual candidates. The newest political parties include the National Unity of Hope (2000) on the left and the Grand National Alliance (2003) on the right. Given the relative newness of the democratic system in the country, it is surprising that four of the currently active parties trace their creation to a time before 1985. The oldest party in Guatemala is the Unionist Party, created in the early 1900s, soon after independence; the Christian Democratic

²⁸ Ana Francisca del Rosario Ordonez Meda de Molina is the current Minister of Education; Maria Antonieta del Cid de Bonilla is currently the President of the Bank of Guatemala (2009). "Guatemala." Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments Retrieved May 15, 2009, from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/world-leaders-g/guatemala.html>.

²⁹ United States – 2 major parties, France – 2 to 3 major parties, Germany – 2 to 3 major parties, Costa Rica – 2 major parties, New Zealand – 2 to 3 major parties and/or alliances

³⁰ Currently active parties in Guatemala are: Christian Democratic Party (1950s), Democratic Union (1994), Grand National Alliance (2003), Guatemala Republican Front (1990), National Advancement Party (1989), National Liberation Movement (1960), Unionist Party (1900s), National Unity of Hope (2000), Guatemalan National Revolutionary Party (1979).

Party, a center-left organization, formed in the 1950s; on the other side of the political spectrum, the right-wing National Liberation Movement was created in 1960; the last party to form before the 1985 election and constitution was the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Party, another leftist party.

Guatemalan women were granted the right to vote at the same time as men, in 1945 during the country's initial experience with democratic rule. However, throughout the dictatorships and military juntas that followed women were marginalized in the political system, as were most other Guatemalan citizens. There have been fewer women elected and/or appointed to government positions in Guatemala than in any other Central American country (Saint-Germain and Metoyer 2008). One path to power for male and female elected officials is participation first in civil society via social, political, or religious organization. However, women's participation in this sphere of socio-political life has been stunted as well. Only in the 1990s, for example, did women begin to found organizations "explicitly to achieve their rights as women" (Vanden and Prevost 2006). One of the primary hurdles to effective political participation for Guatemalan women is that the Guatemalan government has historically spent far more public resources on the military than it has on education. An illiterate population, male or female, lacks the basic skills necessary to partake in the process.

3.6 Conclusion

The three cases presented here provide an opportunity to empirically test the notion that female legislators are best suited to represent the other women of their

respective states. Costa Rica and New Zealand are part of an elite group of countries that have made tremendous advances with regards to the participation of women in the political system; Costa Rica via its 1996 gender quota legislation for political parties and the National Assembly and New Zealand, although the country has a history of committing to women's rights, with the decision to transform its electoral system into a Mixed Member Proportional System. If there is any location in which we might see the effects of women representing women, it is these two countries. Each has over 30% women in their legislature as well as women participating effectively in many other areas of government, including the executive branch.

The country of Guatemala, although similar to Costa Rica in many ways, falls far below Costa Rica and New Zealand in its treatment of and inclusion of women across all aspects of political and social life. Women are the most illiterate group in a severely illiterate general population, with appalling primary and secondary education completion rates. Given the lack of basic skills it is understandable, but by no means justifiable, that women do not fulfill a greater role in politics.

Assuming that female legislators in Costa Rica and New Zealand will represent the interests of women, the logical corollary to that argument is that women in Guatemala will have a much harder time finding allies in the legislative branch since so few of the legislators are women. The subsequent chapters set out to test this argument.

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CHAPTER 4: HYPOTHESIS TESTING

4.1 Introduction

Costa Rica and New Zealand are among two of only a handful of countries that have elected higher than average percentages of women to their legislative branches of government. The fact that each country took a unique path to the inclusion of women in representation only serves to enhance the opportunity for comparison of the two countries. The differences allow us to investigate the question of whether the dissimilar means of obtaining the critical minority has an impact on the policy outcomes in each country. Is there a difference in policy when a citizenry (Costa Rica) is forced to elect women as compared with one (New Zealand) in which voters freely choose female leaders? This research takes advantage of both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the impact of female politicians on legislation. This mixed methodology utilizes the statistical methods that allow for analysis of attention paid to issues of concern to women, as evidenced by the real numbers of women's interests bills; it also employs a qualitative analysis, not just comparing the numbers of bills variety of policy areas related to women's interests, but also the content of key pieces of legislation.

For purposes of this study, women's interests are defined by drawing on the traditional perspective of women as mothers and wives, and also incorporating the changing roles and needs of women in contemporary society. While most of the world's women are no longer limited solely to the gender specific roles of wife and mother, it is not reflective of women's contemporary reality to exclude these issue areas with which

they are historically associated, since many women around the world still consider the issues of family, home, and children of significant importance to them. Instead, a fully developed definition of women's interests should include these traditional concerns while simultaneously recognizing that the newer issues are uniquely important to women as well. This research takes cues for defining the issues of importance to women from national women's organizations within each country; specifically CEFEMINA in Costa Rica, NCWNZ in New Zealand, and UNAMG in Guatemala³¹.

4.2 Testing of Hypothesis 1

H₁: If women constitute at least 30% of the legislative branch, then more bills related to women's interests will be proposed.

The goal of this research is to determine if the participation of a critical minority of women in politics makes an impact on public policy. To this end, H₁ articulates the primary research question of this project in the form of a testable hypothesis. The hypothesis asserts that when women hold a significant share of seats in a national legislature there will be a demonstrable change in policy; specifically that policies will become increasingly reflective of women's interests in that country. "Significant," for purposes of this research, is defined as a scenario when 30% of legislative positions are occupied by women. This critical minority is the commonly accepted standard of

³¹ See Chapter 2 – Methods for a full discussion of how women's interests have been defined for purposes of this research project.

international organizations and scholars in this field³². Thirty percent is also used because it is nearly the highest percentage of women in any national legislature in the world today. The global average for female legislators is 17% of seats in national legislatures, which is also approximately the percentage of women in the United States Congress.

The suggestion that female political leaders will affect policymaking in favor of the women of their respective countries is rooted in the theory of substantive representation, that elected officials will effectively represent the interests of the populations that share their own demographic characteristics. In other words, substantive representation alleges that female representatives will ensure that the issues important to their female counterparts in the populace are brought to the policymaking agenda (see Childs and Krook, 2006). Substantive representation assumes that female politicians will represent the women of their country by proposing and supporting legislation that reflects their interests. This notion is supported by existing scholarship, specifically the research on women in politics that provides evidence that female political leaders *do* tend to support the needs of women in their role as policymakers.

This hypothesis also draws on the theory of difference feminism. This school of thought promotes the idea that women are distinctively qualified to serve in political leadership capacities because of the unique perspective they bring to policymaking. Difference feminism argues that female representatives “are most likely to give priority

³² Thirty percent is an internationally used standard that developed within the academic community. Based on the widespread acceptance of the figure, 30 percent will be used as a benchmark in this study as well.

to women’s concerns,” whereas men lack the experiences of women that provide the basis for their unique set of interests, including the challenges and responsibilities of motherhood, the position of women in the family, and the historical resistance to the inclusion of women in politics and the workplace (Ortiz 1995; Norton 2003). Hypothesis 1 offers an empirical test, done in two very different countries, for a theory that has undergone relatively little analysis outside of the United States. The paucity of testing outside of the United States is troubling, since the US lags behind many other countries, in both the developed and developing worlds, when it comes to increasing the real numbers of women serving in positions of political power. The analyses of how female politicians behave in the United States, where they make up such a small percentage of the legislature, are not necessarily relatable to women who are operating in systems where they are supported by much larger percentages of fellow female legislators.

Achieving a Critical Minority

Women gradually began to occupy more seats in the Costa Rican and New Zealand legislatures in the mid 1980s, but their numbers began to increase more steadily in the mid-1990s. Tables 4a and 4b outline the numbers of female legislators in each country between 1986 and 2006.

Table 4a – Diputadas in Costa Rica National Assembly (by legislative term)

COSTA RICA		
<i>Legislative Term</i>	<i># of Women</i>	<i>% Women</i>
1986-1990	6	10.5%
1990-1994	7	12%
1994-1998	8	14%
1998-2002	11	19%
2002-2006	18	31.5%

Prior to the introduction of the gender quota in 1996, the Costa Rica National Assembly experienced modest increases in the number of female members; a 1.5% increase in 1990 followed by a 2% increase in 1994. The first election held with the quota mandate was in 1998, when the number of women elected increased from 8 to 11, a more significant increase of 5 percent. However, the first incarnation of quota legislation did not require that political parties place women in electable positions; prior to an amendment to the law in 2002, political parties were able to comply with the quota mandate by placing women in low positions on the lists leaving them very little chance of actually winning a seat. By the 2002 election parties were required to place women in higher positions on their party lists, in order to ensure that some women from each party would in fact gain seats in the legislature. This explains the drastic increase in the number of female legislators in the 2002-2006 term; a total increase of 7 seats, which raised the percentage of women in the legislature by 11.5 percentage points. Between 1986 and 2006, the country saw the percentage of female deputies grow a full 20.5 percentage points.

Table 4b – Female Members of the New Zealand Parliament (by parliamentary term)

New zealand		
<i>Legislative Term</i>	<i># of Women</i>	<i>% Women</i>
1984-1987	12	12%
1987-1990	14	14%
1990-1993	16	16%
1993-1996	21	21%
1996-1999	35	29%
1999-2002	35	29%
2002-2005	34	28%
2005-2008	39	32%

Table 4b demonstrates the respectable levels of female MPs in New Zealand throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, but as in Costa Rica and the implementation of the gender quota, the most dramatic increases were experienced after 1996, when voters approved the transition to the MMP electoral system. After steady increases of 2-5% per year, the percentage of female MPs increased 8% immediately following the introduction of MMP. Voters have consistently elected women to roughly 30% of parliamentary seats since MMP, as compared to 20% or fewer seats prior to MMP. As in Costa Rica, the percentage of female legislators in New Zealand increased a full 20 points between 1986 and 2006.

If correct, the results of the test of H_1 provide a valuable contribution to the literatures of both substantive representation and difference feminism; if scholars of difference feminists are correct in their assertion that individual female representatives will serve as advocates for the collective interests of women, then certainly it is reasonable to expect that at over 30% of the legislature women will have the means to positively affect policy in favor of women.

H₀: There is no association between percentage of women legislators and the number of women's interests bills passed.

As the counter-position to Hypothesis 1, the null hypothesis states that an increase in the proportion of female legislators in a given legislature will not significantly impact the number of women's bills passed by that legislature. The test of the null hypothesis predicts a specific number of women's interest's legislation in each country based on the

total number of women's bills in each country and in each time period. If the results of the test were equal to the predictions, the null hypothesis would be proven and we would know with a high degree of certainty that the amount of women in each legislative chamber would not have had an impact on the amount of female friendly legislation that chamber produced.

The total volume of legislation in each legislature increases in the 1996-2006 timeframe, therefore the predicted number of women's interest legislation is also higher in that period. The expectation is that as there is more legislation in general it is likely that a few more proposal related to women's interests would be included. A result in which the number of women's interest's bills was higher than predicted would prove that the increase in women friendly legislation was attributable to the higher levels of female deputies rather than to an increase in the overall quantity of legislation. If the results were the same or lower than predicted, the claim that greater numbers of female legislators would positively impact women friendly legislation would be disproven.

Quantitative results of Hypothesis 1

Multiple comparisons were employed to test Hypothesis 1 and its null hypothesis. First, I employed a longitudinal analysis of the bills presented before and after reaching the critical mass in Costa Rica and New Zealand. This entailed a comparison of the proposals in the Costa Rican legislation from 1986 to 1996 (no quota, fewer women in the legislature) with legislation proposed from 1996 to present (quota, more women). Similarly, I examined the pre-1996 legislation (before the electoral system changed to

MMP and the number of women elected increased) in New Zealand in comparison with the post-1996 legislation.

The numbers alone tell us that there was an increase in women friendly legislation in both countries in the period of time following attainment of a critical mass. In Costa Rica, the number of bills related to the needs of women soared from a total of 10 during the years 1986-1996 to 32 in the 1996-2006 period. Although an increase also occurred in New Zealand in the two time frames, it appeared to be less dramatic; there were only 2 Member's Bills that could be categorized as relating to matters of specific concern to women in the first time period and 7 in the second. The true meaning of this expanded attention to women's interests cannot be fully understood, however, until a comparison is made between the observed and expected values (below).

Finally, these two sets of post-1996 data will be compared with Guatemalan legislation of the same period. Since Guatemala has never had considerable levels of women in their legislative branch, I expected to find that there would not be a change in the amount of women-friendly legislation pre- and post-1996. The numbers alone, without a comparison with expectations, begin to confirm this suspicion; there were a total of 13 pieces of legislation related to the needs and concerns of women in Guatemala between 1986 and 1996, and the number actually dropped to 12 in the 1996-2006 period of time. Since the numbers of women in the Guatemalan legislature did not change in any meaningful way, the lack of variation in regards to attention paid to women's interests is not surprising.

As previously stated, further statistical analysis of these numbers is necessary in order to fully comprehend their significance; this is done by employing a two-way table to test Hypothesis 1 and the null hypothesis. This table allows us to compare the expected numbers of women's bills passed in each country in each time period. The expected counts relate to the null hypothesis; they are the numbers of female related bills we would expect to see with an increase in female legislators. If the observed counts are greater than those predicted, the null hypothesis is incorrect and the evidence will instead support Hypothesis 1.

The formula for the expected counts is:

$$\text{expected count} = [(\text{row 1 total} \times \text{column 1 total}) / \text{table total}]$$

Table 4c – Bill Proposals

	1986-1996	1996-2006	N (# OF WOMEN'S BILLS)
<i>Costa Rica</i>	A	B	42
<i>New Zealand</i>	C	D	9
<i>Guatemala</i>	E	F	25
N	25	51	76

The following calculations demonstrate the expected counts for each country:

$$\text{Cell A} = (42 \times 25) / 76 = 13.8$$

$$\text{Cell B} = (9 \times 25) / 76 = 2.9$$

$$\text{Cell C} = (25 \times 25) / 76 = 8.2$$

$$\text{Cell D} = (42 \times 52) / 76 = 28.7$$

$$\text{Cell E} = (9 \times 52) / 76 = 6.1$$

Cell F = (25 x 52) / 76 = 17.1

Table 4d – Expected Counts

	EXPECTED	
	<i>1986-1996</i>	<i>1996-2006</i>
<i>Costa Rica</i>	13.8	28.7
<i>New Zealand</i>	2.9	6.1
<i>Guatemala</i>	8.2	17.1

Table 4d presents the expected number of bills passed in each legislature in the 1986-1996 and 1996-2006 time periods. The predicted values represent the expectations of the null hypothesis (H_0), that there is no relationship between the independent variable (increased # of women in legislature) and dependent variable (number of women’s interest bills). If the increase in the number of women has no significant effect on the number of women’s bills, then the actual values of the cells should be roughly equal to the values shown in Table 4d. According to the null hypothesis, we should find approximately 13.8 women’s bills proposals in Costa Rica in 1986-1996 and 28.7 bills of the same type in the post-1996 timeframe. The null hypothesis predicts that in New Zealand, we should find 2.9 proposals related to women’s interests prior to 1996 and 6.1 after 1996. If H_1 is correct, however, then the amount of women in the legislature will influence the amount of women’s interest bills and the observed values will be higher than the expected values.

For the null hypothesis to be correct there should be no increase in policies related to the interests of women in the second time period, when MORE women are present in the legislature; similarly, FEWER female legislators in the first time period should not

correspond to less activity in the same policy area. Simply put, for the null hypothesis to be correct the numbers of women’s interest bills should not vary from the predicted values in Table 4d. Table 4e presents the actual data for each time period alongside the expected values. The observed values differ noticeably from the expected values.

Table 4e: OBSERVED AND EXPECTED VALUES

	OBSERVED		EXPECTED	
	1986-1996	1996-2006	1986-1996	1996-2006
Costa Rica	10	32	13.8	28.7
New Zealand	2	7	2.9	6.1
Guatemala	13	12	8.2	17.1

In the two primary case studies, Costa Rica and New Zealand, the observed values for the 1986-1996 time periods are *lower* than the expected values. In other words, fewer women in the legislatures resulted in fewer than expected women’s bills passed. This is counter to the prediction of the null hypothesis, and thus supports the claim of Hypothesis 1. In fact, fewer female legislators clearly corresponded to less legislation in the areas of concern to women. More importantly, the observed numbers of women’s bills in the second time period are *higher* than the predicted by the null hypothesis. The observed values provide evidence for Hypothesis 1; the presence of more women in the legislatures of Costa Rica and New Zealand led to the passage of more women’s bills in each country, again disproving the null hypothesis. In the control case, Guatemala, we see roughly the same number of women’s bills passed in each time period, as predicted by H₁ since the number of women in the legislature was unchanged between 1986-1996 and 1996-2006.

A chi-squared test confirms that there is statistical significance to the increase in women's interest bills passed. The chi-square test "is a measure of how far the observed counts in a two-way table are from the expected counts" (Moore 2001). The formula for the chi-squared test is:

$$X^2 = \sum [(\text{observed count} - \text{expected count})^2 / \text{expected count}]$$

The actual data for the chi-squared test follows:

$$X^2 = [(10 - 13.8)^2 / 13.8] + [(32 - 28.7)^2 / 28.7] + [(2 - 2.9)^2 / 2.9] + [(7 - 6.1)^2 / 6.1] + [(13 - 8.2)^2 / 8.2] + [(12 - 17.1)^2 / 17.1] = 6.15$$

The chi-squared statistic (X^2) is 6.15, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. A value of 6.15 for the chi-squared statistic means that the probability of the increase in women's bills occurring by chance, rather than due to the increase in the percentage of female legislators, is only 5%. We can therefore safely conclude that H_1 (*If women constitute at least 30% of the legislative branch, then more bills related to women's interests will be passed*) is correct. A critical minority of at least 30% in the legislatures of both Costa Rica and New Zealand in the 1996-2006 time period did in fact lead to an increase of women's bills.

Qualitative support for Hypothesis 1

This project defines the interests of women according to both the traditional issues of concern to women as well as some of the more contemporary issues that women face.

Traditionally, women's role in societies around the world centers on the home and family (Beasley 1999; Craske 1999; Kelly 2000). To augment this traditional perspective with the reality that the role of women in many countries has expanded in recent decades, I also look to women's organizations in each country for an understanding of how they define the issues of women in their respective countries. This more extensive definition provides a better sense of whether representatives in a particular country address the issues of importance to the women of their country. Some of the traditional issues focused on in this research are women's rights, matters relating to children and families, healthcare, and education. In Costa Rica, we can add issues related to the increased number of female heads-of-households and domestic violence. Finally, in New Zealand, women's organizations are focused on newer concerns of income equality, parental leave, and reproductive rights, among others³³.

Costa Rica

An examination of the actual bills passed in Costa Rica demonstrates that the National Assembly has not only paid more attention to women's interests as the number of female legislators has grown, but the bills considered do in fact reflect the actual issues that women in Costa Rica care about. The following is a discussion of bill proposals in three key areas: motherhood, crimes against children, and the protection of the rights of children.

³³ See Chapter 2 (Methods) for a full discussion of women's interests as defined for this research project.

MOTHERHOOD – Law 8312³⁴

Law 8312 (2002) recognizes and attempts to address the growing problem in Costa Rica of teenage motherhood; therefore, this law technically addresses a traditional issue (motherhood) with a contemporary problem (teenage pregnancy). The policy aims to prevent teenage motherhood but also creates a network of services for teenage girls who do become pregnant. The Consejo Interinstitucional de Atención a la Madre Adolescente³⁵ sponsors “preventive, educational, dissemination and training programs on the implications of teenage pregnancy” as well as encourages responsible parenting by teenage mothers and fathers” (Pacheco and Santamaría 2002; 2004). This is a coordinated effort across multiple governmental and non-governmental organizations, including the Ministry of Health, the National Children’s Office, the Costa Rican Social Security Fund, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security; the National Institute of Women (INAMU), and others (2004).

CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN – Laws 8143 and 8002

Together, laws 8143 and 8002 address the growing issue of crimes against children that are of a sexual nature. Unfortunately, Costa Rica has become a focal point in the sexual tourism and sex trafficking “industries,” both of which affect adults and

³⁴ Formal Title: Modificación de los Artículos 1º, 4º, 5º y 12 de la Ley General de Protección a la Madre Adolescente N° 7735, y derogación del inciso C) de sus artículos 8º (2004). "Costa Rica: Report of Costa Rica on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the United Nations General Assembly." Retrieved June 4, 2010, from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/COSTA-RICA-English.pdf>.

³⁵ Translation: Teenage Mother Inter-institutional Support Council

children alike (Phinney 2007; Seelke 2009). Costa Rican political leaders demonstrated their support for international attempts to bring an end to the tragedy of sex crimes against children when they passed these two laws. The first, Law 8143, increases fines for the dissemination of child pornography. This bolsters other constitutional prohibitions against child pornography in Costa Rica (2003). Law 8002 creates tougher sentencing guidelines for sex crimes against minors (2005).

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN – *Law 8261*

Law 8261, commonly known as the Young Person’s General Law reflects the commitment on behalf of Costa Rican political leaders to create a space for the participation of Costa Rican youth in the political process (2002). This political space is epitomized by the National Advisory Network of Young People, whose purpose is to serve as the key institution facilitating cooperation between members of “District Youth Committees, non-governmental youth organizations, student organizations, youth representation bodies of ethnic groups and political parties” (Krauskopf). Through this network of committees and organizations, young people are able to “intervene in the national decisions that concern them as a social group,” including public policies relating to education, healthcare, and employment .

New Zealand

Three bills in particular verify that New Zealand parliamentarians are also paying attention to issues that concern women in their country. These bills correspond to the

traditional women's policy areas of healthcare, families and children, as well as the current concern with paid parental leave.

HEALTHCARE – *Child Mortality Review Board*

The goal behind the proposal to create a Child Mortality Review Board was to investigate the reasons for childhood mortality. Known causes like Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) as well as less well known reasons for the death of children would be investigated by the board. According to Parliamentary records, the Child Mortality Review Board could make “a significant contribution to reducing the number of deaths of children and young people, and to improving service provision for children, young people and their families” (King 2000). The proposal for a “formal mechanism for the review of child mortality” did not pass, but reason for including this bill proposal in the discussion is to demonstrate that even when MPs were unsuccessful in finding enough support to turn their proposals into law, the attention of members of parliament was nonetheless focused on this key area of concern to women (King 2000).

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES – *Child Support Bill*

Legislative proposals related to children seemed to find more success in New Zealand than the aforementioned children's healthcare proposal. The Child Support Bill, which proposed an agreement between New Zealand and Australia, passed in 2000. This agreement allows the two countries to work in cooperation to “enforce payments of child support from parents living in Australia who are financially liable for children in New

Zealand” (Beehive 2000). The breakdown of the family due to divorce is a global concern. The proposal was based on the idea that parents who have children living in New Zealand should be held responsible for those children, even after divorce and even if they establish residence outside of the country. The bill specifically targeted those parents who move to the neighboring country of Australia and cease to fulfill financial obligations to their children. Supporters argued that the rationale for the child support legislation was that "parents are financially responsible for their children, regardless of whether their children live with them or not" (Beehive 2000).

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE – *Paid Parental Leave Act*

The Paid Parental Leave Act, which became law in 2001, proposed that parents should be offered paid leave from their work obligations “as they adjust to the birth of a child” (Beehive 2001). The benefits afforded by the policy would be available to mothers and fathers, although supporters argue that women are most likely to take advantage of the bill since women are contributing to their family’s income as well as maintaining the traditional responsibility for childcare. The Paid Parental Leave Act passed due to a belief that paid leave would “reduce the financial pressures on these women and their families as they adjust to the birth of a child” (Beehive 2001).

Summary of Results (Hypothesis 1)

Not only is there statistical evidence that there is a significant increase in women’s interest legislation in the post-1996 era, but the bills discussed in detail above

demonstrate that politicians in each country are working to enact policy that relate directly to the specific concerns that women in each country have today. In both countries, the bill proposals reflect issues that can traditionally be categorized as women's interests: motherhood, children and families, and healthcare. Moreover, many of the bills show that the legislatures of Costa Rica and New Zealand are paying attention to more contemporary women's issues, as defined by the women's organizations active in their countries.

4.3 Testing of Hypothesis 2

H₂: If a country freely chose to elect high levels of women to their legislature, then the effect of having over 30% women in the legislature will be greater than in a country that did so via a federally mandated quota system.

Hypothesis 1 provides evidence for the claim that the presence of a critical minority of female legislators has a statistically significant and positive correlation to the number of women's bills passed by the legislative branch; the next step is to determine what impact the means of reaching that critical minority has on the policy outputs in each country.

The means by which Costa Rica and New Zealand achieved their high level of women in the legislature differs (see Chapter 3). Each country saw increases in the election of women to the legislature beginning in 1996, with the introduction of the respective changes to the system. Costa Rica quickly reached the 30% threshold when the country implemented a gender quota for political party lists in 1996. New Zealand

reached the critical minority stage via a different route; when the country changed from a Single-Member District Plurality System to a Mixed-Member Proportional System in 1996, the numbers of female legislators began to climb. Both were changes to the system, but the quota forced the election of women while the change to MMP allowed that to happen naturally. In New Zealand, citizens casting their votes for the electorate (district) seats freely chose to elect women to represent them. Party leaders were also free to select women to fill spots on the party list, though they were not legally bound to do so. Costa Rican leaders, on the other hand, were required to place women in electable positions on their party lists.

Although the levels of women in the legislative bodies are similar, the crucial fact for this hypothesis is that Costa Rica achieved a more equitable distribution of seats via gender quota while New Zealand achieved the same result by means of electoral reform. It is also important to note that the quota in Costa Rica did not develop out of a grassroots movement. A grassroots movement which resulted in a gender quota might represent a societal shift in the attitudes that would be reflected in a change in policy. Instead, the quota proposal came from the top, in the form of a proposal by former (and current) President Oscar Arias and First Lady Margarita Peñón Arias. The passage of the bill coincided with the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Platform.

A population that elected over 30 percent female legislators without a quota was likely supportive enough of women that they elected them to the legislative branch without an artificial mechanism. Hypothesis 2 suggests that this support of female

candidates will correspond to an acceptance of women's issues in general, translating into more female-friendly policies.

H₀: There is no association between the means for electing women to 30% of legislative seats and the impact they will have.

The null hypothesis maintains that the path to greater inclusiveness of female legislators will not magnify nor diminish the effect of the critical minority. In other words, the mechanism for electing women is immaterial as far as the consequences for policy are concerned; the important component is that women occupy 30% of the seats, not the path taken to occupy that critical minority. Electing more female political leaders may or may not lead to different policy priorities; however, that shift in focus will not be affected by the mechanism used to elect those women, according to the null hypothesis.

RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS 2

The test of Hypothesis 1 has already demonstrated that the presence of more women in the legislature leads to an increase in women's legislation; just how sizeable an increase each country has experienced will be determined by testing Hypothesis 2. Employing the data from the test of Hypothesis 1 we can determine the magnitude of the increase in women's interests' legislation in each time period and in each country. Table 4.6 outlines the observed and expected values for Costa Rica and New Zealand³⁶.

³⁶ Guatemala is excluded from the table because it is not part of Hypothesis 3.

Table 4f – OBSERVED AND EXPECTED VALUES 1996-2006

	OBSERVED		EXPECTED	
	1986-1996	1996-2006	1986-1996	1996-2006
<i>Costa Rica</i>	10	32	13.8	28.7
<i>New Zealand</i>	2	7	2.9	6.1

In Costa Rica, we expected to see roughly 28 proposals reflecting women’s interests, when in fact there were 32 women’s bills signed into law. The divergence between observed and expected values *appears* smaller in New Zealand, where the expected number of bills was 6 and the actual number was just 7. The number of bills is clearly higher than expected in each country, but the question to be answered in this hypothesis test is which country experienced a statistically greater increase. As stated in Hypothesis 2, the prediction is that magnitude of difference between expected and observed values will be less significant in Costa Rica, the country that used a gender quota. The idea is that Costa Rican voters elected more women to their National Assembly due to an electoral system quota foisted upon voters by the government. This imposition does not necessarily reflect an outpouring of support for increased participation of women in politics or support for women’s issues. On the other hand, New Zealand voters chose to elect female representatives, and political parties chose to include women in electable positions on party lists, without a government mandate to do so. The assumption is, therefore, that New Zealanders are generally more supportive of women and the political issues that are important to them, and that support would be reflected in a greater increase in women’s legislation as more women are elected to Parliament.

Calculating the magnitude of the difference between the expected and observed values in both cases demonstrates in which country the presence of an increased number of female legislators had a greater effect on policy proposals. The formula for calculating the difference in each country is listed below:

$$\text{difference between observed value (O) and expected value (E) = (O-E = D)}$$
$$\text{difference (D) divided by the observed value (O) = D/O = \% Increase}$$

Costa Rica:

- Difference = $32 - 28.7 = 3.3$
- % Increase = $3.3/32 = .103 = 10.3\%$

New Zealand:

- Difference = $7 - 6.1 = 0.9$
- % Increase = $0.9/7 = .12 = 12\%$

As predicted, the test of Hypothesis 2 demonstrates that the effect of having an increased number of female legislators was greater in New Zealand, the country that did not rely on a gender quota to elect more women. These results are supported by the responses to a survey of female MPs in New Zealand. The women frequently mentioned their belief that men and women are “equally qualified³⁷” to represent the interests of women. MP Ruth Dyson indicated an inclination to believe that women understand their own needs “better” but that “men get it too!³⁸” Another anonymous respondent said it’s

³⁷ Survey of MP Heather Roy; March 22, 2010.

³⁸ Survey of MP Ruth Dyson; October 9, 2009.

“difficult to say – some men represent the interests of women better than women and vice versa³⁹,” again signifying an inherent understanding that both men and women in New Zealand are receptive to, willing, and able to represent the interests of women in their legislature.

The numbers prove that the effect on policy related to the critical minority of women in the legislature was greatest in New Zealand. The anecdotal data from female MPs expressing a belief in the equal abilities of men and women to represent the interests of women supports my argument for why this is so: a society that freely elects such an unusually high percentage of female legislators must be more progressive in their acceptance and support for women’s issues.

³⁹ Anonymous survey; August 13, 2009.

4.4 Testing of Hypothesis 3

H₃: Men in the non-quota country will be more supportive of women's issues legislation than men in the quota country.

The final hypothesis seeks to understand whether or not the change in policy that we see when women occupy 30% of the legislative seats is solely attributable to those female politicians, or if, perhaps, there is also a change in the policies promoted by men. Are women affecting policy simply because there are more of them and each one is introducing legislation that speaks to the needs of the women of their country? Or as women become more involved in the political arena is there a shift that is occurring in the male perspective towards women, manifested in proposals made by male representatives that are more empathetic towards women?

There is no reason to believe that in Costa Rica, where women are elected via a gender quota, male representatives will suddenly become more appreciative of the needs of women. Had the implementation of the quota been the result of a grassroots social movement, pushed for or voted on by the citizenry, perhaps there would be some reason to believe that society as a whole was ready to accept women taking on more active roles in government. Instead, the mandatory gender quota was the result of a more elite movement, led by the Costa Rican president and his wife. Thus, what we can say with some degree of certainty is that Costa Ricans were not ready to elect female leaders on their own and that therefore society was likely not overwhelmingly in tune with or concerned with the political and societal concerns of women.

In New Zealand, however, quite a different story exists. New Zealanders made a choice to switch to the Mixed Member Proportional System, which led to the election of more women, precisely because they wanted a system that was more inclusive of their native Maori population as well as other underrepresented groups, including women. The citizens of New Zealand approved this institutional change and then proceeded to create a more diverse representative body with the votes they cast. In fact, the first Prime Minister after the shift to MMP was a woman, which only highlights the fact that in New Zealand the society was far more willing to accept women, and their political concerns, as part of the political landscape than the Costa Ricans were. Another basis for the idea that men in New Zealand would be more willing to sponsor women's interest legislation than the male representatives in Costa Rica is that major pieces of legislation related to issues of concern to New Zealand women were, in fact, proposed by men⁴⁰.

Given the differences between these two countries, H₃ predicts that male representatives in New Zealand will be more supportive of women's issues than the men in the Costa Rican National Assembly, and that this variance will be confirmed by a comparatively higher percentage of these kinds of bills proposed by the New Zealand male MPs. To test H₃, the number of proposals made by men in the Costa Rican legislature was compared with the number of similar proposals in New Zealand, both in the 1996-2006 time period.

⁴⁰ The Child Mortality Review Board Bill mentioned on page 11 is an example.

H₀: There is no association between the level of male support for women’s interests legislation in a given country and the means by which women were elected to 30% of the legislative seats in that country.

The null hypothesis for H₃ indicates that there is no association between the way women became greater participants in policymaking and how their male colleagues in the legislative branch behave with regards to women’s issues legislation. The null hypothesis implies that there is no reason to suspect a shift in the attitude of men as women become more politically active. If the null hypothesis is correct, we should see no difference between the observed and expected values for women’s interests bill proposals made by men; similar numbers would mean that male representatives are relatively unaffected by the presence of more female legislators.

RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS 3

The results in Table 5 show that men in both countries performed exactly as would be expected.

Table 4g – Women’s Bills Proposed by Men

	OBSERVED	EXPECTED
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Men</i>
<i>Costa Rica</i>	13	12.69 (same)
<i>New Zealand</i>	34	34.31 (same)

The expected number of women’s interest bills proposed by men in Costa Rica was 12.69 and the actual number was 13. In New Zealand, the expectation was that men would propose 34.31 bills in this category; the expected number is almost identical to the actual 31 bills proposed by men. The results therefore disprove hypothesis 3 and provide

evidence for the null hypothesis; there is no greater level of support for women's interest bills, demonstrated by more men sponsoring such legislation, in New Zealand, whose citizenry voluntarily elected women to a substantial number of seats in their parliament, and Costa Rica, whose voters were required to do so by the use of a mandatory gender quota.

In this final hypothesis test, the evidence supports the null hypothesis. According to the data, there is no proof of an association between the level of support amongst male legislators for legislation related to the interests of women in a given country and the means by which women were elected to the legislature. In both Costa Rica and New Zealand, men performed as expected with regards to their proposal of women's interest legislation. In other words, the presence of significantly more women in the later time period did not lead to men introducing significantly more women's bills; had they introduced many more women's bills than expected there would be evidence to support an increased level of support for women's interests.

4.5 Summary of Hypothesis Tests

This chapter outlines three hypotheses and the related tests of each.

H₁: If women constitute at least 30% of the legislative branch, then more bills related to women's interests will be proposed.

Hypothesis 1 represents the primary question of this research project: do women make a difference in legislative policy when they constitute a critical minority? The results of the test for hypothesis 1 provide ample support for the claim that a critical

minority of women do in fact affect the legislative agenda. As predicted, women's interest bills were proposed in both Costa Rica and New Zealand as women became a more formidable force in the legislature branch of each country.

H₂: If a country freely chose to elect high levels of women to their legislature, then the effect of having over 30% women in the legislature will be greater than in a country that did so via a federally mandated quota system.

Hypothesis 2 presents a secondary research question: assuming that a critical minority of female legislators does affect the legislative agenda, is the effect greater in a country that freely elects women as compared to a country that is forced to do so? This second hypothesis supposes that the electorate that independently elects female leaders is more accepting of women as participants in the political process, and similarly supportive of legislation promoting women's interests. The test of hypothesis 2 indicates that in a comparison of the two primary cases, Costa Rica and New Zealand, the female MPs elected freely in the non-quota system of New Zealand did have a greater impact on policy than the diputadas of the Costa Rica National Assembly. The numbers in new Zealand point to a society that is more open to dealing on a national level with women's issues.

H₃: Men in the non-quota country will be more supportive of women's issues legislation than men in the quota country.

The assumptions of the first two hypotheses – that a critical minority of female legislators will positively impact policy and that the effect of that impact would be

greater in New Zealand – are supported by the results of the related tests. Hypothesis 3 is closely related to hypothesis 2 in that both hypotheses develop the notion of New Zealand as a society that is generally more accepting of female legislators and the political relevance of women's issues. While the test of hypothesis 2 demonstrates that the impact of women in New Zealand was greater than that of Costa Rica, the evidence does not support Hypothesis 3, that male MPs in New Zealand would be more supportive of women's issues legislation than the male deputies in Costa Rica. The male legislators in each country performed as expected with regards to women's interests legislation. The male MPs in New Zealand did not pay any more attention to the interests of women when compared with their counterparts in Costa Rica. While the evidence does not support H₃, it does support the claims of difference feminists that underlie this entire research project. Difference feminists believe that women and men have different priorities and that the discrepancy between them will manifest itself in the legislation that male and female legislators choose to support. According to this school of thought, women will be greater supporters of legislation that relates to women's interests than their male counterparts. The results of H₃ lend credibility to this key claim of difference feminists.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This research project undertook to answer a seemingly simple question regarding the participation of women in politics: What difference does it make? More specifically, does a critical minority of female legislators in the national legislatures of Costa Rica and New Zealand, two countries that have far surpassed the global average for the participation of women in the legislative branch, make a difference in the legislative agenda? The results of the various hypotheses tested in this research project provide us with a clear answer: Yes, when women occupy a significant number of seats in a national legislature they affect decision-making by bringing issues of importance to women to the legislative agenda. The more nuanced findings of the research add to existing scholarship in a variety of fields.

5.1 Contributions to Existing Scholarship

The primary theoretical influence on this research comes from feminist scholarship. Liberal feminists argue that women should be included in politics because to exclude them weakens the legitimacy of democracy. Democracies must fulfill the promise of full political equality for all citizens, and therefore women, minorities, and any other under-represented group must have the opportunity to participate in politics. Difference feminists build on the argument for the participation of women by asserting that women should not only participate in politics, generally interpreted as participation by voting, but that they should become active participants in the decision-making process

as members of the legislative branch. Difference feminists argue that women have had different life experiences, that relate to their roles as wives and mothers for example, which lead them to have different political views and legislative priorities.

In the context of difference feminism in particular the findings of this research are specifically important. Difference feminists claim that women will behave differently than men in the legislative arena and the tests of all three hypotheses support that assertion. First, results of H_1 show that the presence of a critical minority of women brings more proposals relating to issues of importance to women to the legislative agenda; more women's interest bills were proposed in both Costa Rica and New Zealand as women became a more formidable force in the legislature branch of each country. Additional support for the claims of difference feminists comes from the third hypothesis test, which demonstrates that while women proposed much more women friendly legislation than expected, men performed exactly as expected. In other words, the bulk of women's interest legislation was proposed by female legislators, confirming the behavioral expectations of difference feminists.

It is sometimes difficult to make a connection between theories like those of difference feminists and the "real" world; I do not believe that is a problem here. Liberal feminists argue that women should be included in the political process out of respect for fairness and a fulfillment of the principles of equality upon which democracies are founded. Difference feminists agree that women deserve to be equal participants in the process, and furthermore that they have something different to offer as participants in the political arena than their male counterparts. For anyone who believes in either or both of

these two schools of feminism, the real world question regards what is the most effective way to ensure that women are a greater force in politics? Is it best to force a society, through a top-down mechanism like a gender quota, to include women in policymaking? Or, is it ultimately more effective to allow for support for women in politics to develop more slowly from the bottom-up? The two countries compared in this research provide a test of each method for electing women – by force in Costa Rica and by choice in New Zealand. The results of hypothesis 2 indicate that the female MPs elected freely in the non-quota system of New Zealand had a greater impact on policy than the diputadas of the Costa Rica National Assembly. These results provide a real dilemma, but also a real choice, for countries that seek to bring more women into the political process: if the goal is simply to elect more women to the legislature, from the perspective of fairness developed by liberal feminists, then gender quota legislation may be the right choice; if however, the goal is more substantive change in the types of policies enacted by a legislature that includes more women, then a gender quota may not be as effective as long-term attempts to develop societal support for women's interests, perhaps by attempting to dismantle long-standing cultural stereotypes like Machismo and Marianismo that remain so influential in Latin American countries like Costa Rica.

Research on the impact of women in politics also influenced this project. Though much of this research has been done in the United States and is therefore limited in its applicability elsewhere, the results support substantive representation – the idea that elected officials tend to represent members of the demographic group with which they self-identify. African-American politicians represent the needs of the Black community;

female politicians represent the needs of women, and so on. Additionally, there is ample support in the existing literature, primarily relating to state legislatures in the United States, for the fact that female politicians tend to promote women's interests legislation, and that as women constitute a larger percentage of a legislature the number of these types of bills also increases. The findings of this project enhance the research that has been done in the United States, adding international support to the existing literature.

The final body of literature that has been influential to this research project is that on electoral systems. The electoral systems literature makes grand claims about which electoral arrangements are most effective for electing women. Scholars point to closed-list proportional representation as the most favorable arrangement for electing any under-represented group, including women and minorities. This research project draws attention to a potentially significant flaw in the electoral systems literature, which is that if it were correct to assert that women were more likely to be elected in closed-list proportional systems than any other electoral system, it should not have required a gender quota to elect meaningful numbers of women in Costa Rica. A related deficiency in the electoral systems literature is that there is no consideration of a goal beyond simply electing women to, for example, a real discussion of what the goal of electing women actually means. Again, a more nuanced approach, such as the one used here, seeks to point out that there are two possible goals: 1) elect more women because it is the fair and democratic thing to do, or 2) elect more women out of a desire to see substantive change in policies.

5.2 Suggestions for Future Research

The possibilities for further research in this area are extensive. From the perspective of comparative methodologies, both large-N and small-N studies would be useful. There are 25 countries that have a critical minority of female members of the legislative branch. If the results of a test of H1 were replicated in these countries even greater support for the claims of difference feminists would exist. At the same time, a much more detailed, qualitative examination of the two countries used for comparison in this study would also be beneficial. Field research would allow for in-depth interviews with legislators, which would help to provide greater anecdotal support for the quantitative findings provided here. In both large-N and small-N studies it would also be informative to probe more deeply into the behaviors of male legislators. There is some indication from the test of H3 that neither Costa Rican nor New Zealand male legislators are becoming any more supportive of women's interests as women become a greater force in each legislature. This is a finding that I believe deserves further examination.

5.3 Conclusion

This research set out to answer the question of what impact women have on policymaking. It is safe to conclude that women do in fact influence the policymaking process. Difference feminists appear to be correct in their assertion that women bring different experiences, different priorities, and different issues to the legislative arena. To answer the question posed in the title, "What difference does it make?" I draw the following conclusion: the difference made by a critical minority of female legislators is

that they will focus attention on the needs of the women of their country in a way that male legislators have not been willing or able to do on their own.