



Women's political leadership participation around the world: An institutional analysis

Amanda Bullough^{a,*}, K. Galen Kroeck^{b,1}, William Newbury^{c,2},
Sumit K. Kundu^{d,3}, Kevin B. Lowe^{e,4}

^a Thunderbird School of Global Management, 1 Global Place, Voris Bldg B 115, Glendale, AZ 85306, USA

^b Management & International Business Department, Florida International University, 11200 S.W. 8th Street, RB 310, Miami, FL 33199, USA

^c Management & International Business Department, Florida International University, 11200 S.W. 8th Street, RB 341B, Miami, FL 33199, USA

^d Management & International Business Department, Florida International University, 11200 S.W. 8th Street, RB 345B, Miami, FL 33199, USA

^e University of North Carolina-Greensboro, 352 Bryan Building, Greensboro, NC 27402, USA^{1,2,3,4}

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 3 September 2010

Received in revised form 5 September 2011

Accepted 16 September 2011

Available online 15 October 2011

Keywords:

Institutions

Leadership

Women

Cross-cultural

ABSTRACT

Understanding institutional systems is critical for the advancement of women's participation in leadership in varying contexts. A unique and global analysis of the contextual factors that affect women in political leadership, this paper extends prior research in the field. This is a cross-country study where we ask, "How are societal-level institutional forces related to women's participation in political leadership?" We collected data from 8 secondary sources on 181 countries and conducted linear regression analyses with six institutional influences: the business environment, societal development, the economic environment, physical and technological infrastructure, political freedom, and culture. Results indicate that to increase the political leadership participation of women, we need to evaluate the following: customs and trade regulations, graft, the gender gap in political empowerment, public spending on education, the economic viability of the country, access to power and the internet, political freedom, and cultural variables like performance orientation, collectivism, and power distance.

© 2011 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The various factors that affect women's participation in politics differ around the world and constantly change with shifts in national context (Erez & Gati, 2004; Stelter, 2002). This paper answers a call for the expansion of research on leader emergence to cultures and contexts outside the primarily Western settings of previous research (Javidan & Carl, 2005; Yukl & Howell, 1999). We do so with an empirically-based, theory-driven study of institutions across societies. We respect prior research on persistent barriers to entry that impede the pursuit of women to leadership positions, e.g. research on stereotypes and glass ceilings (Hoyt, 2005; Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002) as the foundation of women in leadership research and extend this knowledge by studying women's roles in leadership in other contexts, specifically political leadership across countries and institutional settings. Leadership is made up of relationships that are deeply rooted in social settings (Bryman, 1996) as well as increasingly more external global layers (Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, & Gibson, 2005). Understanding institutional systems is critical for the advancement of research on leadership in varying contexts (Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006). If academics, policy makers, and

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 602 978 7502; fax: +1 602 439 1435.

E-mail addresses: amanda.bullough@thunderbird.edu (A. Bullough), Karl.Kroeck@fiu.edu (K.G. Kroeck), William.Newbury@fiu.edu (W. Newbury), Sumit.Kundu@fiu.edu (S.K. Kundu), kevin_lowe@uncg.edu (K.B. Lowe).

¹ Tel.: +1 305 348 4221; fax: +1 305 348 6146.

² Tel.: +1 305 348 1103; fax: +1 305 348 6146.

³ Tel.: +1 305 348 3251; fax: +1 305 348 6146.

⁴ Tel.: +1 336 334 3055; fax: +1 336 334 4141.

practitioners do not adequately understand which societal-level forces impede or facilitate women's participation in political leadership, we cannot craft programs and policies to address these issues. We need representation from both women and men in the political process because of the varying skill sets that each bring to the job (Denmark, 1993; Eagly & Carli, 2004; Jago & Vroom, 1982; Weikart, Chen, Williams, & Hromic, 2006).

We ask the following research questions: "How are societal-level institutional forces related to women's participation in political leadership?" We do this by applying an institution-based view (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; North, 1990; Scott, 1987) to develop a framework to test the effects of six institutional forces: (a) the business environment; (b) societal development; (c) the economic environment; (d) physical infrastructure and technology; (e) political freedom; and (f) culture. Little attention has been awarded to the relationship between leadership and context at such a broad scale (Farid, 2007).

Our approach to institutions is similar to a PEST analysis, examining Political, Economic, Social and Technological institutions (Aguilar, 2006; Morrison, 2008), the extended PESTEL analysis, which adds Environmental and Legislative institutions (Havergal & Edmonstone, 1999; Rogers, 1999), and the CAGE analysis of distances, examining Cultural, Administrative, Geographic, and Economic distances among societies (Ghemawat, 2001). These widely-accepted frameworks support the validity of our institutional study.

2. Institutional theory applied to women's political leadership participation

Opportunities for societal growth and development are provided by the shared skills and knowledge within established institutional structures (North, 1990). The main theme of institutional theory is that rules, requirements, and norms govern environments, and in turn provide support and legitimacy (Scott, 1987). This leads to institutional forces that cause organizations and people to act and become more similar, conforming to norms, in an attempt at increased legitimacy and survival, a concept referred to as isomorphism. Organizations are granted greater access to resources and can strengthen their capacity to survive when they conform to rules and requirements established in the institutions in which they operate (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999; Oliver, 1991). Actors function within institutions according to normative expectations, social values (March & Olsen, 1984, 1996), rules, and incentives, and consider their own priorities while simultaneously operating within the parameters of the institution (Peters, 2000).

Institutions gain legitimacy when social practices become accepted and collectively expected as obvious behavior (Lucas, 2003; Montgomery & Oliver, 1996). As it becomes more commonplace to observe women in political leadership and in influential positions, such behaviors will become an accepted schema within society. Legitimacy is achieved when the success of women leaders is recognized by one group, which in turn influences another group, and so on (Lucas, 2003). For example, an increase in working women during and following war has led generations of women to follow the example of their mothers, aunts, and neighbors into the workforce. The increasing flow of women in leadership happens over generations, with each generation becoming more comfortable with, or institutionalized to, the idea of women working outside the home and even holding leadership positions. Globalization and institutional isomorphism can also lead to a similar form of institutionalization across societies, as societies become more alike and model one another, and in this case more tolerant and accepting of women in influential positions. Therefore, we propose that as the institutional development of a country increases, women's political leadership participation also increases.

Women's advancement to independence and leadership in each country may be affected by different factors in various ways because of the dynamic nature of the environments in which they live (Erez & Gati, 2004; Stelter, 2002). We present a developmental view of institutional forces to explore how society-wide institutions—the business environment, societal development, economics, technology and infrastructure, political freedom, and culture—might encourage or hamper women's participation in political leadership. Certain institutions are more or less supportive of women in leadership roles. Table 1 presents a summary of these relationships and shows how the support of women's political leadership participation might transform with a change in certain institutional factors. Table 1 helps us understand better how the progress in each of the six institutions tested in this study is related to the level of women's political leadership participation. Table 1 shows us that countries move from a somewhat tradition-bound, inward-looking, less-democratic orientation to a more egalitarian, performance-oriented and outward-looking orientation.

2.1. Business environment

Business institutions have an important role in developing a country's macro-environment and are interwoven with modernizing and globalizing influences. The institution of modern, global business practices affects the business environment, which conforms in order to establish legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). The transnational networks, in which multinational enterprises operate, manipulate institutional development (Dahan, Doh, & Guay, 2006). This often happens through a process of moving from informal and relationship-based transactions to more rule-based organizational arrangements in emerging economies (Peng, 2003). This leads to a decrease in transaction costs and new opportunities with an expanded network, which requires more formality to survive in this more complex system.

The business environment institution and the factors that affect doing business affect business culture and productivity. These same factors therefore affect a modernizing culture that allows and even welcomes women into positions of leadership (Weiss, 1988; World Bank, 2007b). Changes in business systems not only affect the private sector, but are adopted at the government level as well. Some business institutional forces, such as the skill level of workers, access to tools to finance a business, global business competitiveness, and a strong entrepreneurial environment, might facilitate women's participation in leadership roles. For example, the innovation and creativity spawned from the generation of business (Schumpeter, 1934) brings with it modernity, efficiency, and new norms with more acceptance of women in leadership positions (Newbury, Belkin, & Ansari, 2008). On the other hand,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/887852>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/887852>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)