10. Afterword: Women and Parties Navigate in a New Era,
1998-2004

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Afterword: Women and Parties Navigate in a New Era, 1998–2004

In Western Europe, the period from the 1970s to the 1990s represents a unique era of unprecedented growth in women's parliamentary presence and in political parties' adoption of new policies to promote women candidates. Since this wave, characterized by party-centered change, there have been some noteworthy developments. First, many nations have witnessed a stubborn plateau in levels of women's representation. For example, in the 2002 British general elections, women lost ground in parliament for the first time in twenty years, slipping from 120 women in 1997 to 118 (Childs, 2003). In the 2002 German elections, women won 32% of the seats, a number virtually unchanged from the 1998 elections. This stagnation stands in contrast to women's steady gains in the Bundestag in the 1980s and 1990s—particularly, a sixteen percentage point gain over the decade leading up to the 1998 election.

In a broader shift, women have increasingly focused their claims for greater presence in parliament toward the institutions of the state and have won constitutional changes (Beckwith, 2003; Klausen and Maier, 2001). For example, following women's losses in the 2002 election, Britain passed the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act in 2002, which allows political parties to adopt a form of gender quotas for candidates, if they so choose. In France, a new constitutional amendment requires parties to offer an equal number of women candidates.

Have constitutional changes and state institutions replaced party-level mechanisms to improve women's parliamentary presence? In a word, no. The evidence in this chapter suggests that where claims on institutions of the state are coupled with continued efforts within political parties, they are most likely to be effective. When it comes to women's entrance into parliaments, parties are still the "gatekeepers" to elected office and still the most effective target for women's efforts (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993). Nevertheless, whether at the party or state level, a strategic recognition of the opportunity structure makes or breaks women's efforts to gain ground. In fact, it is such a recognition of the opportunities that has prompted women to double their efforts by targeting new points of access as power shifts up to supranational institutions, and down, through devolution (Beckwith, 2003).

In this chapter, I examine select developments in women's efforts to gain political equality since 1998. The organization of the chapter is as follows: the first section returns to our starting point—cross-national trends in women's parliamentary presence as of 2004; the second section focuses on post-1998 strategies in Britain, Germany, and Finland; and the fourth situates the unprecedented reforms in the case of France within the theory of party opportunity structures developed in this book.

Women's Parliamentary Presence, 2004

The "rising tide" in women's socioeconomic achievements and in citizens' support for women's role in politics (see Inglehart and Norris, 2003) suggests that women will continue making gains in the parliaments of established democracies. Table 10.1 displays trends in women's parliamentary presence up to 2005 in twenty-four postindustrial democracies. The first column displays the percentage of female MPs in the lower chamber of the national legislature in the general election most proximate to 2005. The second column gives the percentage point difference between the elections closest to 1975 and 2005. Each nation has witnessed gains—most in the double digits. Some of the greatest strides were made by Belgium and Spain, both nearly thirty percentage point jumps. The United States posted only moderate gains, climbing from not quite 4% women in the House in the election closest to 1975 to 15% by 2005.

In a comprehensive long-term study, Ian McAllister and Donley T. Studlar (2002) examine women's parliamentary presence across twenty established democracies from 1950 to 2000, and they point out that the same nations that led in the 1950s remained leaders in 2000. While the proportional electoral formula and parties' candidate gender quotas exert influence over the number of women in office, McAllister and Studlar argue that an egalitarian political

Table 10.1 Percentage of Women in Parliament, 2005

Nation	% Women MPs, 2005	% Point Increase since 1975	1975 Ranking	2005 Ranking
Australia	24.7	+24.7	24	13
Austria	33.9	+26.2	7	8
Belgium	34.7	+28.1	10	7
Canada	21.1	+17.7	19	15
Denmark	36.9	+21.3	3	3
Finland	37.5	+14.5	1	2
France	12.2	+ 9.5	20	21
Germany	32.2	+26.4	12	9
Greece	14.0	+12.0	22	19
Iceland	30.2	+25.2	14	10
Ireland	13.3	+10.5	21	20
Israel	15.0	+ 8.3	9	18
Italy	11.5	+ 7.7	17	22
Japan	7.1	+ 5.7	23	23
Luxembourg	23.3	+16.2	13	14
Netherlands	36.7	+27.4	5	4
New Zealand	28.3	+23.7	15	11
Norway	35.8	+20.3	4	6
Portugal	19.1	+11.1	6	16
Spain	36.0	+30.0	11	5
Sweden	45.3	+23.9	2	1
Switzerland	25.0	+18.0	8	12
United Kingdom	17.9	+13.6	16	17
United States	15.0	+11.3	18	18

Source: International Parliamentary Union, 3/1/2005

culture, measured by a nation's early propensity to enfranchise women, can explain why the leaders retain high proportions of women over time. The data presented here in table 10.1 support McAllister and Studlar's contention that among established industrial democracies over this period, the "rich get richer," and those with low numbers of women in parliament in 1975 tend to remain toward the back of the pack by 2005. Certainly egalitarian values exert some influence.

Yet comparison of the rankings of countries in 1975 and 2005 (displayed in the final two columns in table 10.1) reveals that several countries have made great leaps. Australia bounced up from last place in 1975 to thirteenth

place by 2005, for a gain of twenty-five percentage points. Canada rose from nearly last to fifteenth place, gaining nearly eighteen percentage points. A few "middle-class" nations rose to leadership positions. For example, Spain rose from eleventh to fifth. Still, countries such as Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands remain the leaders, and Japan, France, and Greece remain the laggards. Despite the great gains in the 1997 election by Labourites, Britain remained in the middle of the pack. Germany moved up a few notches from twelfth to ninth place, gaining over twenty-six percentage points. The United States and Israel share the same rank at eighteenth, each with 15% women in parliament.

This book asked why some countries have made gains, while others lost ground, with an eye toward identifying some mechanisms for change. I have argued that political parties are key to the gains observed at the national level. Citizens' attitudes towards women's political roles certainly change over time, albeit slowly (see Inglehart and Norris, 2003). However, gains in women's representation are often the result of direct actions. This book has shown that by recognizing favorable party institutions and climate, women's organizations and women in top-level party positions can prompt political parties to adopt mechanisms and rules to increase the proportion of women in their delegations to parliament.

Political Party Efforts and National-Level Institutional Change

Broad trends across nations are quite instructive, yet it is also important to look underneath, to the progress of individual parties. To assess some of these changes since 1998, we briefly return to the three countries that were examined in-depth in chapters 5 through 7: Britain, Germany, and Finland.

British Women in Party Politics, 1998–2005

Britain has witnessed changes in its constitution regarding women's representation; also, British women have had remarkable success in two devolved assemblies. Both changes create a new context for women in party politics and have far-reaching implications for women in Westminster in the twenty-first century.

Great Gains in the Devolved Assemblies of Wales and Scotland

Although national elections have been the focus of this book, in order to fully understand post-1998 efforts to promote women in the House of Commons,

we must first consider the remarkable achievements and favorable electoral rules in the newly devolved Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales. Scottish and Welsh women's success in getting the topic of women's representation on the political agenda highlights the importance of strategy in a changing opportunity structure. Under a completely new set of electoral rules,[1] all parties began competing under electoral uncertainty. Further, in each new assembly, women encountered a clean slate—few entrenched male power holders. Taken together, women faced a window of opportunity to make gains, and organized women's groups recognized this critical juncture.

Women and the Scottish Parliament

Scottish women recognized the importance of gaining positions in parliament from the start, while the resources of incumbency were still up for grabs. Women with diverse backgrounds and interests found common ground in the goal to gain presence (Brown et al., 2002; Beckwith, 2003). At the 1989 Scottish Convention, a coalition of women from parties, trade unions, churches, business, and movements joined forces under the label of the "Scottish Women's Co-ordination Group" to lobby for women's political equality in parties and the new parliament (MacKay et al., 2003). Over a ten-year period, they carefully framed the claims in their "50:50" campaign within the broader Scottish campaign for voice in the democratic process. These women claimed a "double democratic deficit": they were excluded from power both as Scots and as women (Brown et al., 2002; MacKay et al., 2003).

Importantly, women in the Scottish campaign concentrated their efforts on political parties. Brown et al. (2002) point out that this focus stands in stark contrast to the context of the devolved assembly elections of Northern Ireland, where women focused their efforts outside of the electoral arena and made fewer gains.

Scots' criticisms of Westminster centered on its lack of inclusiveness. The rallying cry for a "new politics" of power sharing, access, and equal opportunities characterized the movement for devolution (MacKay et al., 2003). If parties competing in this "new politics" arena were to exclude women in the new Scottish Parliament, they would appear hypocritical (MacKay et al., 2003). By situating women's representation within the justifications for the broader campaign for devolution and by taking parties to task on their inclusiveness, women made their parliamentary presence a highly salient electoral issue.

Alice Brown (1999) describes a competition among Scottish parties for women's votes based on rhetoric concerning women's parliamentary presence. Pressured by women's organizations and competing for women's votes, Scottish Labour and the Scottish Liberal Democrats gained media attention by

signing an electoral agreement to balance their candidates in terms of gender. The Scottish Liberal Democrats proposed that for every two men who stood, two women would be nominated to match. However, the party did not end up implementing this policy. Formally, the Liberal Democrats said they could not muster enough women candidates. Brown (1999) contends that in reality, the party was afraid they might be subject to the same legal appeal under the Sex Discrimination Act as experienced by the British Labour Party, with its all-women short lists.

Scottish Labour faced the same legal uncertainties, but the party went beyond rhetoric to forge ahead with positive action measures for women. Meg Russell (2003) suggests several reasons. First, women MPs were a symbolic part of "New Labour's" more modern face. Conservatives had argued that the entrenched interests of Scotland and Wales would prevail in a devolved system, and Labour was not about to let this prediction come true. Second, Labour visibly committed itself to equality with the electoral agreement and did not want to renege on its promises. Finally, Labour women activists, many now in high-level positions (as detailed in chapter 3), kept the pressure on the party leadership.

To get around the possible legal challenges, Labour devised a process called "twinning." First, Labour matched up twin constituencies based upon geography and their chances for a Labour seat. Then, in the selection process, nominees from the twin constituencies were pooled; the woman applicant with the greatest proportion of the votes gained one candidacy, and the male applicant with the greatest proportion of votes gained the other candidacy.[2] The Scottish National Party stopped short of a formal quota rule, but because of the strong lobbying efforts of women within the party hierarchy, women's representation remained a priority on the party's agenda, and informal targets were largely adhered to in the party's nomination process (Russell, 2003).

In the first election to the Scottish Parliament in 1999, women won a strong presence with 37% of the seats. The Scottish Liberal Democrats, who relied on rhetoric only, ended up with 12% women MPs. In contrast, the Scottish Labour Party, with its direct rules, sent 50% women among its delegation (Brown et al., 2002). Despite a lack of quotas, women in the Scottish National Party fared well, gaining 43% of their party's seats. The Scottish Conservative Party ended up with only 17% women in its delegation (Russell, 2003; MacKay et al., 2003).

With a solid presence in the parliament, women organized a cross-party group of women to discuss relevant issues, which contributed toward planning "women-friendly" legislation and institutionalizing women's gains in the next election. In the second election, in May 2003, women inched up to claim nearly 40% of the seats.

Women and the National Assembly for Wales

Although women played a slightly less visible role in the process of establishing the National Assembly for Wales, they still played a central role, calling for presence in the newly elected body (Russell, 2003). In contrast to the Scottish case, women's networks were not as well established in Wales, and the established politicians made little public commitment to equality early on (Russell, 2003). While few in numbers, key members of the Welsh women's movement and women active inside the political parties strategized to push parties to take positive action to promote women's political equality (Chaney, 2003).

Women began their push early in the process of constitutional reform. In 1994, at the Parliament for Wales Campaign's Democracy Conference, women placed the equality issue on the agenda. Despite a lack of resources and organization, in the 1997 cross-party "Yes for Wales" prodevolution movement, women launched a complementary "Women Say Yes" campaign, pressing for party and electoral rules favorable to women's election (Chaney, 2003).

The "Women Say Yes" campaign persuaded the Welsh Labour Party to formally commit to promoting women's representation. After considerable debate and the threat of legal action from within, the Welsh Labour Party agreed to use twinning. In contrast, the Welsh Liberal Democrats only required gender-balanced short lists and offered women special training programs. Not only did the Welsh Conservative Party stay away from any form of quotas, they also avoided any debate over it altogether. The Plaid Cymru agreed on a measure called "zipping" to promote women on its regional lists. On each list, a woman occupied the number one and three positions. Yet importantly, the Plaid Cymru had no gender rules for constituency seats (Russell, 2003; Chaney, 2003).

The first election to the National Assembly for Wales proved a solid success for Welsh women—they won 40% of the seats. With "twinning," women from Welsh Labour won 50% of their party's seats. The Welsh Liberal Democrats sent 50% as well (three of their six seats). The Plaid Cymru had 35% women in their delegation, though few women won constituency seats. Finally, with little attention paid to gender balancing, the Welsh Conservatives had no women in their eight-person delegation (Russell, 2003). Like the Scottish case, women in the Welsh Assembly were able to consolidate their gains over time. The subsequent 2003 election marked a new high—women won 50% of the seats. As a result, the Welsh Assembly is a world leader in women's representation.

In sum, in the first elections to both the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, women achieved strong parliamentary presence through party channels. Key groups of women found success within parties because they

made their claims for presence resonate within a broader process of democratization. As a result, the inclusion of women became an integral part of parties' attempts to achieve a more modern face and an electorally salient issue. And women in some parties were quite adept at gaining formal party rules to ensure women's presence. Certainly the lack of incumbents in the fresh assemblies provided the ideal conditions for these forces to work within.

The House of Commons

The devolved assembly elections primed the agenda for the British general elections. Meg Russell (2003) notes that the lively debate over women's presence in the new assemblies kept the issue of women's political equality on the parties' radar screen. Without this debate, she argues that women's representation would not have been mentioned after the 1997 general elections until 2001.

After its landslide victory in 1997, the British Labour Party entered government with a broad agenda to democratize British politics, from reforming the House of Lords to devolution, and sending more women to the House of Commons fit well within this package (Russell, 2003). In the 2001 general election, Labour was the only party to employ formal measures to promote women. Although they did not go back to the all-women short lists (AWS) of the 1997 election, Labour mandated gender-balanced short lists in all vacant seats. This policy was not nearly as effective as AWS, and the number of Labour women MPs dropped from the historic 101 down to 95.

Setbacks at Westminster stood in contrast to the great gains in Wales and Scotland, and it became apparent that some form of positive discrimination was necessary to break the status quo. Given the fact that an industrial tribunal found AWS to be in violation of the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, any new party-level rule changes would require a change in national law. The drive for national-level legal change came from the Labour Party. In early 2000, Joan Ruddock (Labour's former minister for women) spearheaded an initiative for such legal reform, and she persuaded 100 MPs from all parties to sign on. Bolstering Ruddock's efforts, legal research showed that a law permitting positive discrimination would not break European Union or international human rights law (Russell, 2003). Meg Russell (2001), a former Labour Party official-turned-scholar at the Constitution Unit, argued that the European Court of Justice was not likely to take up the issue based upon the precedent established by the new French law (discussed below), which actually mandated equality for women. Further, she showed that the United Nations' Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women allows for positive action measures (Childs, 2003).

With heightened pressure from women across the spectrum and seemingly free from legal challenge, in October 2000 Labour's annual conference voted to support a new law to allow parties to implement policies to improve women's representation. By early 2001, Labour's election manifesto documented their support, and the Queen's speech publicly voiced Labour's commitment to introducing this new legislation (Russell, 2003).

In October 2001, the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Bill was introduced to the House of Commons. The bill amends the original Sex Discrimination Act, clarifying that the act does not apply to measures adopted by political parties designed to reduce inequality among men and women. The new act allows parties to use positive discrimination measures—but only if they wish to do so (Women and Equality Unit, 2002). It applies to national and regional elections (except for mayor). A sunset clause ensures that the measure is temporary, and it expires in 2015.

To build greater support for the bill, several organizations disseminated research pointing toward the effectiveness of quota-type policies in facilitating women's election. The Equal Opportunities Commission published a report in 2001 that concluded the AWS policy and quotas in the EU were the "decisive factor" in increasing women's numerical representation. Similarly, the Fawcett Society distributed a report arguing that the only way to increase women's representation was through the use of some form of quotas (Women and Equality Unit, 2002).

Next the bill came up for debate in the House of Commons. Ironically, this formal proceeding is more accurately characterized by a lack of debate over party use of gender quotas. Few male MPs attended the debate, and women spoke disproportionately, most in favor (Childs, 2003). The majority of those in favor argued for positive action measures on the grounds of leveling the playing field for potential female candidates (Childs, 2002).

Passing both houses with cross-party support, the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Bill became law in February 2002 (Russell, 2003; Childs, 2003). The lack of controversy over the bill stems from its voluntary nature—no party is obligated to adopt quotas. Indeed, most MPs agree that there should be more women's faces in their midst, but there is partisan disagreement over the means to achieve gender balance (Childs, 2002).

After the passage of this new bill, parties could now freely adopt positive action measures. Labour women renewed their efforts to gain formal measures to get more women elected. By relying solely on balanced short lists in 2001, Labour saw its percentage of women MPs slip for the first time in twenty years. MP Joan Ruddock voiced her rationale, stating, "I am certain that my party will have to re-adopt all-women shortlists because no other measure— we have tried the others that I know—will work for Westminster selections and elections" (quoted in Childs, 2003: 89). The Labour Party agreed to use

Table 10.2 British Women MPs, by Party, as of 2005

Party	% Women MPs	Change 1975–2005 (% Points)
Labour	23	+18
Conservative	8	+5
Liberal Democrat	10	+10

Source: Data for 2002 election from Childs (2003)

AWS in 50% of vacant seats in the next election, and if an insufficient number of constituencies volunteer, the central party leadership is committed to enforcing it (Childs, 2002).

Although Labour slipped in the percentage of women in its parliamentary delegation from 1997 to 2002, Labour still led the British parties in women's representation. Table 10.2 displays the percentages of women among each party's MPs after the 2002 election, and the final column denotes the percentage point increase in women MPs from 1975 to 2005. After the 2002 general election, Labour led with 23% women, the Liberal Democrats were a distant second with 10%, and the Conservatives were last with 8%. Certainly Labour made great strides, increasing by eighteen percentage points over the past thirty years.

The Conservative Party has largely stalled in improving women's position in parliament. In the 2002 election, 14% of Conservative candidates were women, but only 8% of their MPs ended up being women (Studlar, 2004). Unlike Labour, the Conservatives' manifesto made no mention of women's representation (Studlar, 2004). Yet it appears that there may be some intraparty debate over the importance of sending more Conservative women to Westminster. In the House of Commons debate over the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Bill, Conservative MP Teresa May hinted at some potential changes (possibly even gender-balanced short lists) in her party over the issue of formal measures to improve women's presence, stating that "parties move on their attitudes" (quoted in Childs, 2003: 84).

Although Liberal Democratic women won few seats in the general election, women's political equality is a salient issue within the party. The Liberal Democrats' 2002 manifesto makes reference to "family-friendly and efficient working practices for Parliament" (as quoted in Studlar, 2004: 10). In addition, women within the party are growing impatient, and they have upped their lobbying efforts for a formal mechanism to improve their numbers in the House.

The Liberal Democrats voiced their support for the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Bill. During the bill's debate in the House of Commons, Liberal Democratic MP and Spokesperson for Women Evan Harris said his

party "recognized that we have a problem" regarding women's representation and called for some direct action to improve women's situation (quoted in Childs, 2003: 85). Despite support for the bill, the party's 2002 conference rejected the proposition of using all-women short lists (Childs, 2003).

More Women in Westminster—Does It Matter?

The great strides made by women in Westminster in 1997 prompted a wave of research to assess whether women's presence impacts politics as usual. Sarah Childs (2004) conducted interviews with the newly elected women MPs and found that these women do feel like they speak with a different voice—a less confrontational, more problem-solving tone. Yet these new female MPs note that their approach is not valued, but rather that it is perceived by male colleagues as an area in which they must improve if they are to become effective within Parliament. Cowley and Childs's (2003) analysis reveals that Labour's newly elected women MPs, when compared with Parliament as a whole, voted overwhelmingly with the government. Rather than a signal of some tendency for women to be compliant, these women's propensity to toe the party line may reflect the process by which Labour nominated and elected them in 1997. Many of the newly elected women gained nomination through the central party organization's AWS policy. As a result, the AWS women may have a stronger sense of loyalty toward the central party leadership. In addition, the constituencies in which these women were nominated complied with the AWS policy before other constituencies, and this compliance may signal the local party's already more favorable attitude toward the party leadership.

Women in the Bundestag, 1998–2005

Women made only slight gains in seats in the Bundestag into the 2002 election. The stagnation stems, in part, from women's inability to win more constituency seats. Overall, women continue to fare better on the party lists (through which women have won 61% of their seats) than in constituency seats (through which women have only won the remaining 39% of their seats).

Table 10.3 displays the percentage of women MPs for each party, and the final column presents the increase from the 1970s up to early 2005. The Social Democrats (SPD) had 38% women in its parliamentary party after the 2002 election (up from 35% in 1998). This jump represents an increase of thirty-three percentage points over thirty years. The Free Democrats (FDP) sent 21% women, largely unchanged from the 20% women in its 1998 delegation. Finally, Alliance 90/The Greens actually witnessed an underrepresentation of men, with 58% women in their parliamentary party.

Table 10.3 German Women MPs, by Party, as of 2005

Party	% Women MPs	Change 1975–2005 (% Points)
Social Democrat (SPD)	38	+33
Christian Democrat (CDU)	23	+16
Christian Social (CSU)	21	+19
Free Democrats (FDP)	21	+16
Alliance 90/The Greens	58	+22
Party of Democratic Socialists (PDS)	100*	N/A

Sources: Data for 2002 election from McKay (2004).
*The PDS sent two MPs to the Bundestag after the 2002 election. Both are women.

Table 10.3 also shows that the Christian Democrats (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) sent 23% and 21% women to the Bundestag, respectively. The CDU's "quorum" resolution (a loose form of quotas), passed in 1996, appears to have helped CDU women gain seats. The quorum became binding in December 2001, and one would expect to observe the greatest rise in women's parliamentary presence in the subsequent election. Indeed, the 23% achievement in 2002 represents a rise of five percentage points from the 1998 election. The quorum's impact focused on the list candidates, where women gained 34% of the slots. Since the resolution is not applied to constituency seats, women only made up 10% of the constituency candidates (McKay, 2004).

While the quorum resolution has been somewhat effective, it appears to be gaining only marginal legitimacy among women in the party. McKay (2004) cites a poll at the party's 1999 federal conference in which the majority of the women polled supported the resolution as a temporary measure to even the playing field, and in a 2001 survey, about half of CDU women felt the quorum had a positive impact for women in the party. The emphasis on the rule's temporary nature and the "quorum" terminology certainly help to fit the idea of positive discrimination within the conservative ideology.

In contrast to its sister party, as of 2004 the CSU still eschewed quotas in any form. Yet in the 2002 election, the CSU elected nearly the same proportion of women to its parliamentary delegation as did its partner, the CDU. One might suspect that the debate over quotas brought women's equality onto the party agenda and pointed out women's deficit within the CDU/CSU, and its saliency has brought women modest gains in nominations. In addition, the CSU may have used informal measures in an attempt to stave off calls for controversial quotas.

Although women's progress in the German Bundestag appears minimal after the 2002 election, trends in the party system and within individual par-

ties may offer unique openings for women to make gains in the next election. First, the broad political climate lends itself to competition for women's votes. The catchword in the 2002 election was "Wechselwähler," which means the changing voter. As the traditional group bonds based upon class and religion continue to erode and party attachments further decline, electoral choice is increasingly volatile (Dalton and Bürklin, 2003). Women's votes are still up for grabs, as they have been since the CDU lost its lock on women voters in the 1980s. Where key women in party politics can connect winning women's votes to a party's greater commitment to women's political equality, women may gain stronger party measures to ensure their election.

Within this climate of electoral volatility, the German party organizations themselves have witnessed developments that offer potential changes in the status quo. Importantly, women's advancement in CDU party politics must be set against the enormous party crisis that occurred after the 1998 election. Former Chancellor Kohl was found to have an unreported personal slush fund, and he was forced to step down from control of a party that had largely coalesced around his personal leadership (Clemens, 2000). The scandal toppled the tight party leadership circle, and the top party post was up for grabs. The party elected Angela Merkel as its leader in January 2002, the first woman to hold this post in a unified Germany. Merkel's ascendance to top leadership marks a victory for women in the CDU. In fact, the CDU's general secretary has called the party "the model for other social groups who devote themselves to the promotion of women" (as quoted in McKay, 2004: 69).

However, one cannot take Merkel's election as an about-face in the traditionally patriarchal party culture. Reports surfaced of "backroom efforts to block Merkel's elevation—a secret meeting among some top male colleagues at a 'smoke-filled Ratskeller' in Lübeck . . ." (Clemens, 2000:80). Despite her popularity among the party faithful, Merkel did not win the chancellor nomination. Some suggest party insiders knew that the odds were stacked against Merkel in seeking the chancellor-candidate position (McKay, 2004). The CSU's position vis-à-vis its partner CDU was strengthened by the scandal, and a senior CSU figure, Edmund Stoiber, claimed the nomination for chancellor. Further, McKay (2004) notes that the buzz among party officials concerning Merkel continually focused on whether or not she was "up to the job," and her leadership abilities were often questioned (70). This cloud of doubt stands in stark contrast to the confidence and allegiance inspired by Kohl. Despite difficulties, Merkel was re-elected to the chair position in 2002 and is a contender for the party's next chancellor-candidate. Despite Angela Merkel's election as the head of the CDU, as of 2003, the CDU still had fewer women in top-level positions than the SPD (Rueschemeyer, 2003).

The CDU's shake-up brings potential advantages for women in the party. The scandal brought calls from outside and within the party for a process of

democratization, especially in terms of increasing transparency and widening the circle of party leadership. Clemens (2000) calls this the "healthy shock effect." Women might use this larger process of democratization to frame their claims for greater inclusion and diversity in decision-making positions. Further, the absence of Kohl's uber-centralized leadership style opened up spaces for newcomers within the party. In effect, there was turnover among the party leadership, which had long been dominated by men—namely, older men loyal to Kohl. In 2000, party delegates elected ten women (37%), out of the twenty-seven total, to the executive committee. This number is more than that required by the semiquota, and six of the top ten vote-getters were women (Clemens, 2000). With a greater presence among the highest party echelons, these key CDU women may be able to tighten up the quorum policy and to help women gain more constituency seats.

Angela Merkel's rise to CDU party chair not only impacted her party, but it also sent shock waves across the German party system. Women in the Social Democratic Party (SPD) were disappointed not to have been the first major party to reach this goal, and this failure renewed debate within the SPD over gender politics (McKay, 2004). The SPD's 40% quota has been in place for fifteen years now, and it has been an effective method in creating openings for women. In the 2002 elections, the SPD's candidates composed 40% on the lists, and nearly 40% in constituency seats, as well (McKay, 2004). Yet in no election have women been able to rise above the quota "ceiling."

ASF, the SPD's women's organization, continues to lobby to keep women's equality on the party agenda, and it aims to raise the 40% goal to 50%, calling for parity for women. In 1999, the SPD adopted the principles of gender mainstreaming, and in 2001, a party commission sought to apply this principle more rigidly to party organizational development (McKay, 2004). In addition, the SPD has initiated a mentoring program for junior women.

The proportion of women MPs from the Free Democratic Party (FDP) has remained nearly stagnant since 1990, hovering around 20%. Yet the FDP remains staunchly against any formal measures to directly increase women's presence. In 2002, the FDP's party executive committee made plans to draw in more women at the party's grass roots, with the rationale that the committee could thus solve their underrepresentation problem by increasing the pool of applicants for higher party posts and elected office. These plans resulted in the 2003 Frauenkampagn, which aimed to increase women's membership from 23% to 30%. The party's top leadership circles continue to be dominated by men: women make up only 19% of the party executive committee, and there are no women among the party's deputy chairs (McKay, 2004).

The proverbial catch-22 persists for the FDP; it is not clear whether the FDP has few women at the top because there are few to draw upon at the lower rungs, or whether the FDP fails to attract more women activists because of its

patriarchal image. So far, the bottom-up approach has yielded glacial results, and the lessons from rival parties point toward the efficacy of top-down strategies to promote women for powerful positions. Women within the FDP want gender quotas, but their requests have been turned down at party conferences (Rueschemeyer, 1998). However, FDP women have not yet "sold" the party leadership on a connection between the party's patriarchal structure and its difficulty in attracting women voters and members. The ability of women to connect women's party and parliamentary presence to electoral concerns is paramount. Perhaps the party's current crisis in being out of government will create a political opportunity structure ripe for women to make claims on the party to modernize its image and attract a wider range of support.

Alliance 90/The Greens made a strong showing in the 2002 election, and the rising tide lifted women's boats as well. The party sent a delegation to the Bundestag in which men were in the minority. In 1999 the party had initiated a mentoring program in which women in top party positions mentored younger colleagues, and this mentorship program was later extended to young men, as well (McKay, 2004). Yet even within the egalitarian Green Party, quotas for women still appear necessary. Only 31.5% of their constituency candidates were women, but the party made up for this figure by allotting most of the slots on the party lists to women (McKay, 2004). Still, it is important for women to gain constituency seats, and parties must look to new mechanisms to improve women's chances.

Of special note, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) sent a landmark delegation to the 2002 Bundestag. Of their two seats, both were held by women. Although the Bundestag election results were disappointing for the PDS, their image has certainly emerged as quite women-friendly. By 2002, the PDS had the largest proportion of female members of any German party, at 46% (McKay, 2004). The PDS still retains its quota, calling for at least 50% women at all levels in the party, and women gained both the number one and number two slots on the 2002 party list. In a survey of women MPs, Joanna McKay (2004) finds that women in the PDS "seem unanimous in the view that the quota is still necessary. However, many feel they have to defend the quota year in, year out, because some party members consider it to be undemocratic" (63). At the local level, and especially in the East, some party workers claim it is difficult to find women candidates, and they often ask to subvert the quota regulations. Because there are no sanctions for party branches that break the rules, women often fare worse at the local level (McKay, 2004). While women in the PDS have made terrific strides in parliamentary office and in party posts, these gains are offset by lower representation at the local level and a lack of power among the party's most powerful inner circle. For this reason, McKay (2004) argues that women in the PDS lack real power, and that party rules to promote women have yet to alter the party culture.

Women in the Finnish Eduskunta, 2005

Like Britain and Germany, major changes in the political system also characterize post-1998 Finland. Finland had gradually moved from a system of shared power between the parliament and the president since the 1950s, and this trend was reinforced in the new Finnish constitution of March 2000. Under the new constitution, the Finnish president has less power in domestic policymaking (Raunio, 2001; Paloheimo, 2003). With more parliamentary control, political parties have gained power in making policy. Popular thought has often reasoned that where office holding portends more power, women will be marginalized (i.e., women's high levels of representation in the largely rubber-stamp parliaments of the former Communist nations, yet their lack of presence among the real leadership circles). Yet even as parliamentarians gained power with the 2000 constitution, women's strong presence in the Eduskunta appears institutionalized.

In the March 2003 election, women won 38% of the seats in the Eduskunta overall. This percentage is virtually unchanged from the 1999 election (37%). Women, it seems, cannot break the 40% ceiling in the Finnish parliament. The 2003 election did bring a breakthrough in women's power holding. The Center party (KESK) won the most votes, and the Center-led coalition government is led by Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Finland's first female prime minister.

A great deal of variation exists across the Finnish parties in women's numerical representation. Table 10.4 displays the percentage of women MPs in the Finnish Eduskunta for each party as of early 2005, and the percentage point gains for each party since the mid-1970s. The Finnish Green Party sent an overwhelmingly female delegation to the Eduskunta after the 2003 elections—71% women. In contrast, the prime minister's Center Party (KESK) sent only 24% women, a number that has only increased by six percentage points over the last thirty years. The National Coalition Party (KOK), which fared poorly in the 2003 election, held 38% women in its parliamentary party. This is a high percentage, relative to its sister center-rightist parties across Western Europe. Finally, the Social Democrats (SDP) nearly achieved parity, with 45% women MPs. The SDP has made some of the greatest gains over the past three decades, rising twenty-one percentage points.

Similar to the recent processes in Britain and France, Finnish women focused their efforts on both political parties *and* state-level institutions to facilitate their political representation, and chapter 7 detailed this process. The important point that sets the Finnish case apart is that women in Finland initiated this dual strategy to press both the state and political parties much earlier than in most Western European nations. For example, in 1972 Finland

Table 10.4 Finnish Women MPs, by Party, as of 2005

Party	% Women MPs	Change 1975–2005 (% Points)
Social Democrat (SDP)	45	+21
Center (KESK)	24	+6
National Coalition (KOK)	38	+13
Green	71	N/A
Left Alliance	26	+4

Source: Data for 2003 election compiled and tallied from Eduskunta website, July 30, 2004, at www.eduskunta.fi

established the Council for Equality. In 1987, parliament passed the Act on Equality Between Men and Women. In 1995 parliament passed a national law to promote equality, amending the constitution to allow for positive discrimination measures to improve women's equality in state institutions. Although that act does not apply to parliament, it did give women in party politics one more source of leverage in pressing for equality in the party hierarchy and in elected office.

In short, women still enjoy a strong position within Finnish parties and in parliament. Although rising above 40% has proven to be an elusive goal, in each election Finnish women have been able to consolidate their presence. The party-state strategy brought Finnish women early gains in elected office and provided a solid foundation. Certainly the lack of a strong movement outside of political parties has not resulted in a backlash.

French Parity and Opportunity Structures

Although France is not included in the empirical analysis in the main text (because of its exclusion from the published party data handbooks used in this study), recent developments in France provide an extremely interesting case in women's claims for parliamentary presence. With the passage of a new law, France has "one of the most radical quota policies in Europe" (Russell and O'Cinneide, 2003: 587). One of the strongest claims of this book has been that the mechanisms to improve women's parliamentary presence are best achieved through political parties. France's national-level policy sheds some light on how women can simultaneously press for change through more than one institutional channel. Further, the French case provides new evidence for the efficacy of recognizing political and institutional opportunity structures.

The Movement for Parity

At the beginning of the 1990s, the French feminist movement appeared stagnant (Gaspard, 2001). Soon, women advanced a new set of claims, and through newly formed organizations, they called for equal representation for women in politics. These efforts culminated in unprecedented rule changes in the French constitution.

According to Dauphin and Praud (2002), the parity movement was not a large social movement; rather, it began in 1992 as a set of organizations composed of women active within political parties. The women demanded parity in elected office, to be enshrined in law. The movement's approach was innovative, both in the use of new terminology and in the call for equal numbers of women. Most women across Europe pressed for 30%, or even 40%, quotas, falling short of the 50% that reflects women's proportion of the population.

The parity movement gained momentum in 1995 after the European Commission investigated women's political power in the European Union nations. Women for parity first aimed at the European level, but they later found better reception at the level of the French state and among French political parties (Jenson and Valiente, 2003). The word "parity" finds its legitimacy in long-standing French democratic ideals of liberty and equality, and thus it fit well with French political values (Jenson and Valiente, 2003).

French Parties and Rule Changes

As shown in table 10.1, France ranks toward the bottom of established industrial nations in women's numerical representation, both in 1975 and still in 2004. Without substantial pressure from women's organizations, up to the 1990s French political parties paid little more than lip service to issues of women's parliamentary presence. In 1982, the Socialist Party pushed national legislation requiring that electoral lists be composed of no more than 75% of either men or women. Although the law passed both Houses, it was struck down by the Conseil Constitutionnel, which cited the unconstitutionality of making distinctions based on sex (Russell and O'Cinneide, 2003).

French political parties have adopted some party-level rules designed to improve women's parliamentary presence. Since 1974, the French Socialist Party (PS) has had a 10% women's quota rule in its party statutes, and the bar was gradually raised to 30% over twenty years. However, the Socialists only loosely implemented the quota rule, resulting in little progress (Gaspard, 2001). In 1988, the French Green Party included a rule in its statutes requiring equal numbers of men and women (Dauphin and Praud, 2002). However, the Greens are a small party in France, and their quota policy did not ignite a process of contagion across the party system.

Rather than a push from the Greens, it was an intraparty crisis that renewed the French Socialists' debate over women's representation. After losing handily in 1993, the Socialist Party sought ways to gain new groups of voters. In the 1995 presidential elections, Lionel Jospin, leader of the PS, specifically targeted women voters. He reasoned that by increasing women's faces among the party's delegation to parliament, the PS might gain greater electoral support among women (Gaspard, 2001; Dauphin and Praud, 2002). Jospin's public support for women's equality did create competition among the French presidential candidates to state their support for more women in French politics (with the exception of Jean-Marie Le Pen). Unfortunately for women in French parties, this competition remained largely a war of words and did not yield increases for women in subsequent elections.

The Socialists' Jospin later went beyond rhetoric, pushing for 30% women candidates in the 1997 legislative elections, convincing his party to agree on a form of Britain's all-women short lists. Some electoral districts were designated "women only." The Left did return to power, but women had been nominated in largely unwinnable seats, and as a result only 16.7% of the elected Socialist MPs were women (Russell and O'Cinneide, 2003).

After the election, Prime Minister Jospin called for a revision of the French constitution to allow for laws designed to achieve parity for women in elected office (Gaspard, 2001). In early 1999, a bill was introduced calling for regional council election lists to be composed of no more than 75% of either sex. Just as in 1982, France's Constitutional Council declared this law unconstitutional.

Faced with a setback, advocates for parity set their sights on a constitutional amendment. In 1999, the French parliament passed an amendment to allow for rules requiring a gender balance, modifying Articles 3 and 4 of the French constitution (Dauphin and Praud, 2002). The new electoral law went so far as to require political parties to nominate equal proportions of men and women candidates on their local election lists. The new law brought great gains for women in the local elections of 2001.

The bill laid out a different set of rules for national elections, which are based in single-member districts, making list balancing impossible. The law stipulates that parties that nominate fewer than 49% women candidates may lose their state funding. Yet most parties used the tried-and-true loophole; they nominated women in unwinnable seats. In the first round, 39% of the candidates were women. By the second run-off round, the percentage of women candidates dipped to 24% (Russell and O'Cinneide, 2003). Other parties chose to ignore the new law, accepting the financial penalty (Russell and O'Cinneide, 2003). As a result, the new rule changes did not bring great gains for women in the French parliament in the 2002 general election. In the end, as table 10.1 shows, the percentage of women in the National Assembly amounted to only 12.3%.

The French case yields several points that are consistent with the arguments of this book. The overriding point is that political parties are still key to increasing women's presence in parliament. It was the French Socialist Party (PS) that drove early calls for rule changes, and the parity movement coupled with the PS that lobbied for the constitutional amendment. Further, electoral concerns created the context for party efforts to support women. The Socialists' fall in the polls in the early 1990s created incentives for Jospin to target women voters by presenting more women for office.

On a separate note, it appears from the French case that national-level quota laws may not be as effective as party-level quota mechanisms. Most parties violated either the spirit or the letter of the new law in the general elections. As opposed to local elections where the quotas were more easily implemented, at the national level it was more difficult to find a formula to increase the number of women than in list-based elections. In addition, national elections are high-stakes elections, and power is not redistributed without a fight. Faced with challenges, French parties ducked the gender quotas. One might suspect that in order for the true gatekeepers—party leaders—to enforce quotas, they have to be convinced of the electoral payoff for their party. In cases such as Britain and Germany, women in top-level party positions sold party leaders on the benefits of gender quotas for gaining women's votes and modernizing the party's image in the long run. In France, with the exception of the Socialists, there is no indication that the remaining parties, who were also subject to the quota laws, perceived such advantage. In short, the evidence seems to support the idea that political parties must undergo an internal process in which the party's political opportunity structure is ripe for institutional changes. Otherwise, without the proper context and central party backing, rule changes are likely to be ignored. Further, gender quota rules are ineffective if they are not backed up with real sanctions and if they allow for wide loopholes. A more specific quota that mandates an equal proportion of women in winnable seats may bring French women greater gains.

Where Do Women and Parties Go from Here?

The twenty-first century certainly brings the possibility for women in Western Europe to achieve full equality in national legislatures. With strategic pressure on parties, and on state institutions, women can gain more than incremental increases in representation. One of the clearest trends is that parties from across the ideological spectrum are seeking new issues upon which they can show a more modern face to the electorate. Including more women among their power structures is one way in which parties can appear more inclusive and democratic. Further, pressing for national laws concerning gender quotas

may bring results, even if implementing quotas is voluntary. These rule changes give women another peg upon which to hang their claims. Advocates of equality for women in parliament can insist that their parties measure up to national standards.

The next general election in Britain may bring great gains for women in the House of Commons. With a legal environment favorable to rules to directly increase women's parliamentary presence, Labour's commitment to using the all-women short lists in 50% of vacant seats, and competitive pressure on the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats (who have both hinted they may use informal measures), women will at the very least face fewer barriers to election.

In Germany, candidate gender quotas helped women make rapid gains in the Social Democratic and Green Parties. However, based on interviews with German MPs, Katharina Inhetveen (1999) found that quotas were still controversial in the late 1990s. Inhetveen theorizes that the German justification for more women in elected office—equality for all—runs at odds with the use of quotas, which reify gender differences. In other words, German culture may not be hospitable to quotas. Nevertheless, they remain in use and have been quite effective. Given that quotas remained contested, it is possible that gender balancing has not become institutionalized within parties, and women may lose ground in the future without these formal rules. Indeed, Inhetveen (1999) reports that most German politicians she interviewed believe the proportion of women in parliament would slip without formal rules to ensure their presence.

In contrast, Finnish parties never adopted formal quotas. Yet a confluence of women's pressure within parties and a specific set of favorable electoral rules led to a system in which gender-balanced lists became the norm. In other words, women's political equality has become part of the party culture. Thus, even without quotas, one does not expect to see a drop in women's representation in Finland. At the same time, Finnish women are not likely to achieve full equality in parliament in the near future. Their presence seems to have hit a point of equilibrium and there is little talk of new mechanisms to bolster women's position.

The great numerical gains made by women in Western European parliaments from the 1970s to the 1990s generated a great deal of recent research on whether women MPs are different from their male counterparts. In one of the most extensive studies, Joni Lovenduski and Pippa Norris (2003) conducted a survey of 1,000 national politicians in Britain in 2001. They found significant differences between male and female politicians over affirmative action policies such as quotas, even controlling for party, social background, and age of the MP. The positive attitudes of women political elites are especially important when coupled with one of the strongest findings of this book, that women in powerful positions in parties are essential to getting more

women into powerful positions. Those groundbreaking women must be willing to "let the ladder down," and recent surveys point toward a growing recognition of the effectiveness of quota policies. New quota rules may take time to change party culture, but in the interim they continue to be an effective tool for new contenders such as women.