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# Where Do Women Stand?: Attitudes Towards Female Political Participation in India and the US

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**Where Do Women Stand?:**  
**Attitudes Towards Female Political Participation in India and the US**

Grace Carlson

Sociology 420/ Pols 450

Winter Term 2016/17

## Where Do Women Stand?:

### Attitudes Towards Female Political Participation in India and the US

#### **Section 1: Purpose and Overview**

- a. This project aims to study attitudes towards gender inequalities in politics, both in the United States and India. Going beyond just gendered participation in government, I hope to study people's attitudes towards women in politics, and their perceptions of the participation of women in the United States versus India. The project will focus in on the differences and similarities between Indian respondents and Augustana student respondent's views on women in politics, and whether or not these attitudes are more closely aligned than most Augustana students would expect.
- b. The topic of this project has been one which greatly interested me from the very beginning. I initially chose to look at women's positions in both the United States and India last spring when I was accepted into the India study abroad program. I was incredibly excited to get the opportunity to learn about grassroots activism and humanitarian work in a culture different than my own, and to get the chance to visit such a beautiful country. I gushed to all my family and friends about my excitement and all the unique experiences I was going to be able to have on this trip, however I was surprised and disheartened by a lot of the initial reactions I got from those around me. Extended family, my parents, coworkers, some peers from Augustana all expressed some confusion as to why I'd ever want to go to a "place like that", and warned me of all the dangers they were certain I'd

encounter on my trip. The most frequent comments I heard were about how dangerous the country was for women, and questions about whether or not I was nervous to go, given my gender. As I began to do more research about where I was going and what I was doing (because to be honest, I was pretty uninformed on India, its culture, or its history), it became clear why the predominant stereotype surrounding India among Americans is this idea of it being a “developing” country with rampant gender inequality. Much of the news I found on popular US-based news sources focused on instances of violence against women whether it be rape cases, acid attacks, or women being murdered, these were the stories that most often seemed to eyes of Americans. However, this narrative didn’t fit with the literature and media my class was reading in preparation for our trip, which focused on successes of Women’s organizations and NGOs working on the ground. I chose to compare India and the US using survey data, expecting to find that our societies would have more commonalities than Americans would expect. I narrowed my topic down to women’s participation in government in the hopes of tying together my two main topics of study during my time at Augustana. I conducted my research during the 2016 presidential election and the context of having a woman running as a mainstream candidate provided an interesting framework to look at attitudes on women in leadership positions among Augustana respondents. It seems like such a juxtaposition to hear about the gender discrimination people expected me to face during my time in India while also watching ugly gender discrimination

constantly fly in a race for the highest office in the United States. This helped to support my original idea that gender inequality exists in both countries, but just manifests itself differently.

- c. This issue is important because women make up a significant portion of the population of both the US and India, and as such should have a voice in our government. Women hold only 19.4% of seat in the United States Congress (CAWP), and 12% of seat in Indian Parliament (Factly). This project will also examine the concept of American exceptionalism and US students' attitudes towards the society of a so-called "developing" country.

## **Section 2: Review of Literature**

### Women in Politics

Much of the scholarly work about women in politics focuses roadblocks women face while trying to enter the political world. In "Measuring Stereotypes of Female Politicians", Schneider and Bos examine the double-bind women face when it comes to stereotypes that keep them out of office. The researcher found that traits which are often ascribed to women such as *warm, compassionate, understanding, sensitive* are not also attributed to female politicians. As women lose out on the benefits of being associated with those positive feminine traits, they also are not associated with positive male politician traits like *strong, tough, assertive, effective*. Their findings "demonstrated that respondents did not view female politicians as possessing female stereotypical in the same way that these traits are ascribed to women... female politicians are defined

more by their deficits than their strengths” (Schneider and Bos 260). While Schneider and Bos argue it is these stereotypes that most affect women trying to enter politics, scholars Kathleen Dolan and Timothy Lynch would disagree with that claim. In “It Takes a Survey: Understanding Gender Stereotypes, Abstracts Attitudes, and Voting for Women Candidates”, they argue that “gender stereotypes are not major forces but instead are, like many things, context-bound and episodic, appearing as significant in some races but not in others” (Doland and Lynch 672). They claim that stereotypes are important in a more abstract sense, but not important enough to overpower other factors like party affiliation. They claim that media treatment of female candidates is becoming less stereotyped, and that women can make strategic moves in their campaign to neutralize the impact of these negative stereotypes. No matter the reasoning, it is undeniable that women face more setbacks while trying to enter the political arena than their male peers.

### Women in India

In “The Politics Of Access: Narratives Of Women Mps In The Indian Parliament” Shirin Lai uses interviews with female members of parliament to trace the different paths women use to reach their seat, and the obstacles they had to overcome to get there. Rai finds that class, caste, and religion all play a crucial role in a woman’s rising to political power, as does their participation in social movements prior to seeking their seat. Rai also touches on the way familial duties keep women out of politics, citing a story from a woman who was asked to run for office, but felt it was more important to

stay home with her daughters so her husband could focus on his career “I was asked to stand for election by the party of my father. I was reluctant to stand because I had two young daughters who needed me. My husband is a judge and I didn’t want his promotion to the Supreme Court to be adversely affected by my joining politics. It was only in 2004 that I finally agreed to stand for elections – after my daughters had grown up and my husband had been promoted” (Rai 201). In “Issues Of Under-Representation: Mapping Women In Indian Politics”, Lal, Ojha, and Sabharwal examine why, despite a growing number of female voters and candidates, women continue to be underrepresented in Indian political bodies. They argue that a history of patriarchal attitudes have limited female voter turnout, as well as dissuaded women from seeking candidacy. Much like Rai, they see female involvement in social movements as a key factor in increasing women’s representation. Ultimately, they say that increasing female participation will “ improve policy making, construct democratic decision making, improve the level of competition for better governance, and contribute to the diversity of experiences (Lal et. Al 78).

### Women in the United States

In “Why So Few (Republican) Women? Explaining The Partisan Imbalance Of Women In The U.S. Congress” Danielle Thomson argues that it is harder for conservative women to be elected as members of their party because they are seen as being too moderate. She argues that many women’s issues such as reproductive rights and family leave are seen as inherently liberal issues. As such, Republican women have a

hard time overcoming this stereotype and detaching themselves from these issues. Moderate conservative women have to swing farther right to gain traction within the world of conservative politics. She argues that “There have been dramatic ideological changes in the type of candidate that is elected in the contemporary political context, and potential candidates, male and female alike, are inclined to take note of this shift... moderate Republican women will be largely absent from the policymaking process” (Thomson 314). Scholar Kathleen Dolan also focuses on voter behaviors, and what affects their decision to vote (or not vote) for female candidates. In “The Impact of Gender Stereotyped Evaluations on Support for Women Candidates”, she is more concerned with the voter behaviors which limit the likelihood of women being elected. She finds that the stereotypes which voters may have in mind about each gender are more impactful than any other variables in getting them elected. However, neither of these scholars focus too extensively on factors that help or hinder American women reach the stage of candidacy in the first place.

### American Exceptionalism

My hypothesis that Augie students will be unaware of these similarities has led to research into the concept of “American exceptionalism”, or the belief that the United States is inherently unique and superior in comparison to other nations. In *American Exceptionalism: Some Current Case Studies*, Noam Chomsky discusses how the “national identity” of the United States, unlike other powers, is defined by universal political and economic values, namely liberty, democracy, equality, private property,



and markets “Hence the United States has a solemn duty to maintain its ‘international primacy’ for the benefit of the world” (Chomsky 1). *American Exceptionalism and National Identity* uses Pew Research Center data to support this concept of American Exceptionalism, and points out that nearly 90% of American think the US is either the greatest, or one of the greatest (among a few other) nations in the world (Onuf 77). Both of these scholars’ work help to support my hypothesis that Augustana student respondents will have a sense of American exceptionalism that will lead them to believe the United States is a unique nation immune to the gender inequality they perceive in India.

### **Section 3: Hypotheses**

1. Augustana respondents and Indian respondents will have similar views on women’s participation in government.
2. Men in both the US and India will have more patriarchal views on women’s effectiveness as political leaders than women.
3. Augustana students will be less likely to consider themselves world citizens than Indian respondents.
4. Augustana students believe that more developed nations are more egalitarian.
5. Augustana students believe the United States is more developed than India.
6. Augustana students see the United States as more developed than other countries, and therefore the top nation in the world.

### **Section 4: Definition of the Study Variables/ Questionnaire**

1. What is your Gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other

19. What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

1. African American
2. White
3. Latino/a
4. Asian
5. Other
6. Rather not respond

20. What is your major?

1. Open response

21. Are you an international student?

1. Yes
2. No

22. Have you ever voted in a state, local, or national election?

1. Yes
2. No

23. What is your political affiliation?

1. Conservative
2. Moderate
3. Liberal
4. Independent
5. Other

24. Have you ever taken a course that covered information about modern day India?

1. Yes
2. No

25. How interested are you in politics?

1. Very interested
2. Somewhat interested
3. Not at all interested

26. How frequently do you read/ watch the news?

1. Very frequently
2. Sometimes
3. Not at all

27. What sources do you get most of your news from? (Ex: Fox News, BBC, CNN)

1. Open response

28. I follow international news as closely as domestic news:

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

29. Women should be responsible for the majority of housework and childcare in their homes.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

30. Do you think familial duties prevent women from entering politics?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

31. Men make better political leaders than women.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

32. How important is politics to you on a scale from 1- 10? (10 being the highest)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

33. I see myself as a world citizen.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree

d. Strongly Disagree

34. Women can be equally as effective leaders as men.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

35. America is the most powerful nation in the world.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

36. The more developed a country is, the more equal the society is for all of its citizens.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

37. India is less developed than the United States.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree

## **Section 5: Research Procedures Utilized**

- a. I surveyed a random sample of Augustana students.
- b. A survey from SurveyMonkey was sent out by email to the random sample of students.
- c. Anonymous responses were used to protect the respondent's identities, and a statement of informed consent was included prior to the survey.

- d. I coded my data and used SPSS to run data analysis.
- e. I used World Values Survey Wave 6 data to compare to my Augustana data.
- f. For my logic of proof, I looked at the P values of the correlations between my variables. If the value is between .0-.05, I will be able to reject my null hypothesis and find a statistically significant connection between my variables.

## **Section 6: Data and Analysis**

To begin to compare Augustana students to Indian respondents, I first looked at World Values Survey data. World Values Survey is a broad survey data database “which started in 1981 and seeks to use the most rigorous, high-quality research designs in each country. The WVS consists of nationally representative surveys conducted in almost 100 countries which contain almost 90 percent of the world’s population, using a common questionnaire...The WVS seeks to help scientists and policy makers understand changes in the beliefs, values and motivations of people throughout the world” (World Values Survey, 2017). I looked at World Values Survey Wave 6: 2010-2014 data, specifically from the age bracket “up to 29”. Two of the survey questions were taken directly from WVS, so it was possible to directly compare and contrast the Augustana survey data.

### Attitudes

*Hypothesis: Augustana respondents and Indian respondents will have similar views on women’s participation in government.*

### *World Values Survey*

TOTAL	Sex [Age=Up to 29]
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	Male	Female	Missing Unknown	
<i>On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do</i>				
<i>Agree strongly</i>	22.5%	25.4%	18.4%	50.0%
<i>Agree</i>	26.4%	30.2%	21.4%	-
<i>Disagree</i>	27.8%	24.9%	31.7%	50.0%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	11.2%	9.5%	13.5%	-
<i>Don't know</i>	12.1%	10.0%	15.0%	-
<i>(N) Up to 29</i>	968	559	407	2

Selected samples: India 2012

### Augustana

<b>Crosstab</b>						
			What is your gender?			Total
			Other (please specify)	Male	Female	
<i>Men make better political leaders than women.</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	1	0	2
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	33.3%	2.4%	0.0%	1.2%
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	12	1	13
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	0.0%	29.3%	0.9%	8.1%
	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	15	51	67
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	33.3%	36.6%	43.6%	41.6%
<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	13	65	79	

	<i>disagree</i>	<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	33.3%	31.7%	55.6%	49.1%
<i>Total</i>		<i>Count</i>	3	41	117	161
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</i>
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	61.481 <sup>a</sup>	6	.000
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	38.781	6	.000
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	23.822	1	.000
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	161		

Unlike I had hypothesized, there is in fact a large difference between the data from Indian respondents and Augustana respondents. When Strongly Agree and Agree are combined, nearly half (48.9%) of the male Indian respondents indicated they believe men make political leaders than women do, while 31.7% of the Augustana male respondents believe that. However, there was a dramatic difference in the responses of Augustana men and women. Although 31.7% of male respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that men make better political leaders than women, only .9% of female respondents feel the same. With a P-Value of .000, it is 99.9% certain that this gendered difference is representative of a real difference in the Augustana community.

*Hypothesis: Men will have more patriarchal views on women's effectiveness as political leaders than women.*

Augustana

			What is your gender?			Total
			Other (please specify)	Male	Female	
<i>Women can be equally as effective leaders as men.</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	24	101	127
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	66.7%	58.5%	87.1%	79.4%
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	16	14	30
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	0.0%	39.0%	12.1%	18.8%
	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	1	0	1
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.6%
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	0	1	2
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	33.3%	0.0%	0.9%	1.3%
<i>Total</i>		<i>Count</i>	3	41	116	160
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	100.0%	100.0 %	100.0%	100.0%

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</i>
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	43.740 <sup>a</sup>	6	.000
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	23.040	6	.001
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	15.557	1	.000
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	160		

This gender difference at Augustana continues to be apparent in this crosstab,



with 99% of women indicating they believe women can be equally as effective leaders as men, and 97.5% of men indicating the same. These percentages are much closer than those on the previous question, which seems to conflict with the earlier results. 97.5% of men at Augustana believe women can be equally as effective leaders as men, yet 31% of the same male respondents also believe men make better political leaders than women. These results continue to show a divide between male and female respondents, with women being more likely to support the idea of an equality of the sexes when it comes to political and leadership ability. With a P-Value of .000, it is possible to say this question also represents a real difference between men and women's attitudes at Augustana.

Hypothesis: *Augustana students will be less likely to consider themselves world citizens than Indian respondents.*

### *World Values Survey*

TOTAL	Sex [Age=Up to 29]			
	Male	Female	Missing Unknown	
<i>I see myself as a world citizen</i>				
Strongly agree	53.2%	55.1%	50.6%	50.0%
Agree	30.5%	28.8%	32.9%	-
Disagree	7.2%	7.0%	7.6%	-
Strongly disagree	2.7%	3.0%	2.0%	50.0%
Don't know	6.4%	6.1%	6.9%	-
(N) Up to 29	968	559	407	2

Selected samples: India 2012

Augustana

<b>Crosstab</b>						
			What is your gender?			Total
			Other (please specify)	Male	Female	
<i>I see myself as a world citizen.</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	10	23	33
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	0.0%	24.4%	19.7%	20.5%
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	22	77	101
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	66.7%	53.7%	65.8%	62.7%
	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	9	17	26
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	0.0%	22.0%	14.5%	16.1%
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	0	0	1
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
<i>Total</i>		<i>Count</i>	3	41	117	161
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</i>
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	55.876 <sup>a</sup>	6	.000
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	12.202	6	.058
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	1.289	1	.256
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	161		

a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

The results from this question are quite striking. The percent of Indian men who strongly agree they consider themselves world citizens (52.2%) is more than *double* the number of Augustana men who strongly agree they're world citizens (24.4%). Even when Strongly Agree and Agree are stacked, Indian men are more likely to see themselves as world citizens than Augustana men are, with 83.7% of Indian men responding positively, and only 78% of Augustana men responding either Strongly Agree or Agree. The difference between Indian and Augustana women was much the same in the Strongly Agree category, with 55.1% of Indian women responding as such, but only 19.7% of Augustana women. However, when Agree and Strongly Agree are stacked in this category, Augustana women slightly outpace Indian women with 85.5% versus 83.9% responding either Strongly Agree or Agree.

Although my hypotheses that the attitudes between Indian and Augustana respondents would be similar were largely rejected, I was surprised by the difference between the attitudes of men and women at Augustana. I had hypothesized there would be a gendered difference in attitudes towards women in politics, but I was shocked by how dramatically different they were in the response to *Men make better political leaders than women*. I was also surprised by the proportion of Augustana students who don't consider themselves world citizens in comparison to Indian respondents. These results were also gendered, with more men than women responding that they do not see themselves as world citizens. This helped to provide a basis to look at questions which measure for a student's view on the US and the concept of American exceptionalism.

Rather than looking at basic frequencies, I continued to look at the responses by gender to see if there is a similar divide between Augustana men and women when it comes to their attitudes on America's position in the world.

American Exceptionalism

Hypothesis: *Augustana students believe that more developed nations are more egalitarian.*

*Augustana*

<b>Crosstab</b>						
			What is your gender?			Total
			Other (please specify)	Male	Female	
<i>The more developed a country is, the more equal the society is for all of its citizens.</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	4	5	9
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	0.0%	9.8%	4.3%	5.6%
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	10	32	44
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	66.7%	24.4%	27.4%	27.3%
	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	20	59	79
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	0.0%	48.8%	50.4%	49.1%
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	7	21	29
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	33.3%	17.1%	17.9%	18.0%
<i>Total</i>		<i>Count</i>	3	41	117	161
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</i>

<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	5.560 <sup>a</sup>	6	.474
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	6.432	6	.377
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	.452	1	.502
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	161		
<i>a. 5 cells (41.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .17.</i>			

This crosstab compares gender and respondents view on whether or not more “developed” countries are more egalitarian. Although there were no distinct or statistically significant differences between the genders, the data does illustrate that more than a third of Augustana men (34.2%) and nearly a third of Augustana women (31.7%) believe that a country that is more developed will be more equitable for its citizens. The results of this response seem to be in direct conflict with the earlier findings on the disparities in attitudes towards women in leadership positions, which were distinctly unequal. This finding also supports my hypothesis that Augustana students will see the see more developed nations as more egalitarian.

Hypothesis: *Augustana students believe the United States is more developed than India.*

*Augustana*

<b>Crosstab</b>				
	<i>What is your gender?</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Other (please specify)</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	

<i>India is less developed than the United States.</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	1	6	6	13
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	33.3%	14.6%	5.1%	8.1%
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	27	68	95
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	0.0%	65.9%	58.1%	59.0%
	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Count</i>	2	8	41	51
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	66.7%	19.5%	35.0%	31.7%
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	0	2	2
		<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	1.2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>Count</i>	3	41	117	161	
	<i>% within What is your gender?</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</i>
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	12.170 <sup>a</sup>	6	.058
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	13.174	6	.040
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	4.554	1	.033
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	161		

This crosstab shows that a majority of both Augustana male and female respondents see the US as being more developed than India, supporting my hypothesis. Although with a p-value .058 there is no statistically significant difference between the gender's responses, it does show that over 65% of respondents believe the United States is more developed than India. This continues to support my idea of American exceptionalism in that Augustana students see our nation as being more highly

developed than India.

Hypothesis: *Augustana students see the United States as more developed than other countries, and therefore as the top nation in the world.*

<b>Crosstab</b>						
			What is your gender?			Total
			Other (please specify)	Male	Femal e	
<i>America is the most powerful nation in the world.</i>	Strongly Agree	Count	1	6	6	13
		% within What is your gender?	33.3%	14.6%	5.1%	8.1%
	Agree	Count	0	14	48	62
		% within What is your gender?	0.0%	34.1%	41.0%	38.5%
	Disagree	Count	2	18	60	80
		% within What is your gender?	66.7%	43.9%	51.3%	49.7%
	Strongly disagree	Count	0	3	3	6
		% within What is your gender?	0.0%	7.3%	2.6%	3.7%
<b>Total</b>		Count	3	41	117	161
		% within What is your gender?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.828 <sup>a</sup>	6	.132
Likelihood Ratio	9.542	6	.145
Linear-by-Linear Association	.488	1	.485
N of Valid Cases	161		

a. 7 cells (58.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

Although this crosstab does not support my hypothesis that students would see the US as the top nation in the world, it does show that nearly over 45% of respondents do believe that the US is the most powerful nation in the world. This fits with the responses to the previous two questions and, although not a majority, continues to support the idea that a large portion of the Augustana population subscribes to the idea of American exceptionalism.

### **Section 7: Discussion**

I started this project thinking I had a clear concept of what I would find. Looking only at the statistics on women involved in US Congress and Indian Parliament, there seemed to be more similarities than differences in the under representation women in both countries face. As my friends and loved ones warned me about all the discrimination I would face visiting India as a woman, I continued to see gender discrimination in my own country. The 2016 presidential election waged on and I watched a lot of underlying sexist and patriarchal ideas simmer to the surface, I suspected there would actually be more parallels than differences between trying to enter politics as a women in India and the United States. As I reviewed the literature, I found that there is a lot of scholarly work on what keeps women out of politics, and much of it focuses on the attitudes voters have towards women. With this in mind, I decided to compare the attitudes of Indian respondents and Augustana students on women in politics, with the expectation that that would be closer than many Americans would have expected. That hypothesis was thoroughly disproven, given the fact that



significantly more Augustana students disagreed that men make better political leaders than women than Indian respondents did (nearly 90% of Augustana respondents versus about 50% of Indian respondents). Although this portion was completely disproven, I still found the data on the gender split at Augustana very interesting. My questions measuring patriarchal views on women's leadership or participation both found a statistically significant difference in the way men and women responded. With this in mind, I continued on to look at gendered responses to questions on elements of American exceptionalism. What stood out to me the most through my analysis was the fact that although a majority of respondents thought that the more developed a country was the more egalitarian it would be, and that the US was highly developed (and in some cases the most powerful nation in the world), student's attitudes towards women in politics was distinctly unequal. Even among a population of educated students at a liberal arts college, there is a significant difference between the way men and women view women's ability to be involved in politics and be a leader. So though the numbers were different, the same issue persists both in India and among Americans; this idea that women cannot lead as well as men can. While I don't think these findings are exactly groundbreaking, I do think they're important. Most people would not be shocked to find that sexism exists in the world of politics, or that Americans think America is one of the best countries in the world, it is very important to be aware of these concepts. As our world becomes increasingly globalized and interconnected, I think being able to identify the commonalities we have with other nations around the world will help us to bridge gaps between cultures and countries. I also think it is important to take a step back and

reflect on how Americans view our country, especially in comparison to a nation we consider ourselves more developed than. As long as we cannot see the issues in our own country when it comes to gender inequality, they will go unsolved.

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