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# Women Presidents and Prime Ministers in Post-Transition Democracies

Edited by  
Verónica Montecinos



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Verónica Montecinos  
Editor

# Women Presidents and Prime Ministers in Post-Transition Democracies

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*Editor*

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*To my mother Nora & to Nora, her mother  
for lessons learned*

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# Introduction

*Verónica Montecinos*

Women have long been virtually excluded from the highest levels of political power, and most countries have never elected a woman leader. The political underrepresentation of women in executive positions is problematic for women and also for democracy. Yet, attitudes and institutions are changing. During the past few decades, especially since the 1990s, a historically unprecedented number of women have served as presidents and prime ministers in a diverse range of countries around the world, mostly in post-transition democracies. Generalizations, however, are still tentative because in the small and highly diverse universe of women leaders, the emergence of new cases alters existing patterns.<sup>1</sup> The gendered nature of executive power has gained visibility and growing significance as an academic subject (Genovese and Steckenrider 2013; Jalalzai 2013; Skard 2014; Martin and Borrelli 2016). The literature on leadership, which remains a contested subject of study (Helms 2012; Elgie 2015), with some important exceptions (Stevens 2012), has largely left gender unexamined.<sup>2</sup>

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In this book, the interaction between institutional and cultural factors is viewed as central to gendered executive politics. The chapters that follow investigate the rising trend in women executives in the context of the worldwide turn toward democratization that began in the mid-1970s. By focusing on new democracies, we hope that significant but understudied aspects of women's ascent to the executive will come to light, including the potentially transformative impact of women's leadership, not only for engendering democratization but also for 'democratizing democracy' (Cornwall and Goetz 2005). Thus, this book seeks to enrich existing comparative scholarship on women executives and democratization, two areas that so far have not been approached together in an inter-regional framework.

The contemporary cycle of democratization contributed to change the gendered character of political and policy environments both nationally and transnationally. Women's activism intensified in the countries undergoing political liberalization; organized women claimed higher levels of political representation and often challenged the gendered consequences of marketization and the streamlining of state social programs. Post-transition democracies were particularly susceptible to external pressures articulated in a global agenda for gender equality, which promoted the elimination of legal, economic and political practices that disadvantage women. Democratization was generally welcome, but it did not satisfy expectations in many countries, particularly among feminists. The pursuit of gender policies faced institutional and cultural constraints imposed by the fluid nature of transition politics, the masculinist ethos and other legacies of authoritarian regimes, and by relatively low levels of economic development. Opportunities for women, however, did open through constitutional changes, electoral quotas and measures to improve conditions in education, employment, violence and discrimination, sometimes coordinated by government agencies specialized in women's issues. The number of women candidates multiplied substantially, changing the composition of legislatures and cabinets, despite resistance in political parties to sponsoring and funding women's political campaigns. Although patriarchal norms and actions remained strong, official discourses and policies gradually reflected more egalitarian standards and the need to comply with international and regional protocols on women's rights.

Inevitably, women leaders' support for gender policies and overall success in government varied, partly because democratization processes differ in their trajectory and degree of political and policy institutionalization (Potter et al. 1997). Post-transition regimes impose unpredictable challenges and not always move toward democracy (Levitsky and Way 2010). While some women in executive office experienced unexpected reversals in popularity, others had to contend with assassination attempts, coup plots and conspiracies, even within their own cabinets. The impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in Brazil led many commentators to highlight the gendered nature of the crisis, and some labeled her ouster as a 'patriarchal coup.' In post-communist countries, gender reforms, initially averted, were later facilitated by the prospects of European Union membership. In Africa, the end of civil conflicts provided unique opportunities for the expansion of women's leadership, and donor priorities strengthened attention to gender equality. In Latin America, women leaders were elected in the context of a regional turn to the left and expanding economies, and presidential systems afforded strong executive prerogatives. In Asia, dynastic politics consistently marked women's access to and use of executive power. Taiwan's Tsai Ing-wen was the first woman leader in the region elected without links to a political family.

The forerunner cohort of women leaders in post-transition democracies also exhibits distinctive similarities. Most were the first woman to occupy executive office; several were reelected and achieved exceptional levels of public approval. Many had to deal with fractionalized party systems, unstable political coalitions, growing discontent with corruption and the resurgence of religious conservatism. Most of these women emerged as political trailblazers under circumstances that appeared to set them apart from the conventional executive contender: as sudden compromise figures, chosen and promoted by the incumbent leader, or boosted by their families' extraordinary standing. With few exceptions, they were highly competent professionals, with a cosmopolitan outlook acquired in exile, as students in foreign universities or international policy experts. They were seen, mostly inaccurately, as political neophytes who would not threaten the status quo. Their unequaled qualities were valued as tools to enchant alienated electorates, particularly women voters, improve the position of faltering or divided elites and bolster the country's image abroad. Their outsider status, with limited or weak connections to masculine political networks, was common. So was the exaggerated and unfair scrutiny of the

media. In the face of crises and ideological polarization, negative gender stereotypes resurfaced in earnest. As women trying to secure legitimacy in a shifting political environment, these post-transition leaders had to balance discrepant expectations, typically enacting both feminine and masculine gender roles, presenting themselves as unifying national icons and resolute carriers of democratizing change. They typically supported gender equality as part of broader policies on poverty, education and family affairs rather than in explicit feminist language. In several cases (Chile, Brazil and the Philippines), women's reproductive rights became especially contentious, precisely because the government was in the hands of a woman. Although the national and international symbolic impact of these leaders is generally recognized, their gender equality legacy is seen as subject to potential setbacks. Pro-women policies were not always adequately funded or implementation was partial, and some legislative initiatives were not approved by the legislature. In general, these leaders did not have close ties to feminist groups and, although they appointed more women to ministerial and other high-level positions than their predecessors, they avoided recruiting individuals with feminist credentials. After leaving office, however, several became more vocal sponsors of women's rights in international arenas, including Michelle Bachelet and Vaira Vike-Freiberga.

The increased representation of women at the highest level of politics, partly due to the symbolic importance of executive office, potentially answers the critique that 'democracy without women is not democracy.' Yet women executives have not always advocated for improvements in women's status and political representation nor have they consistently strengthened democratic rule.

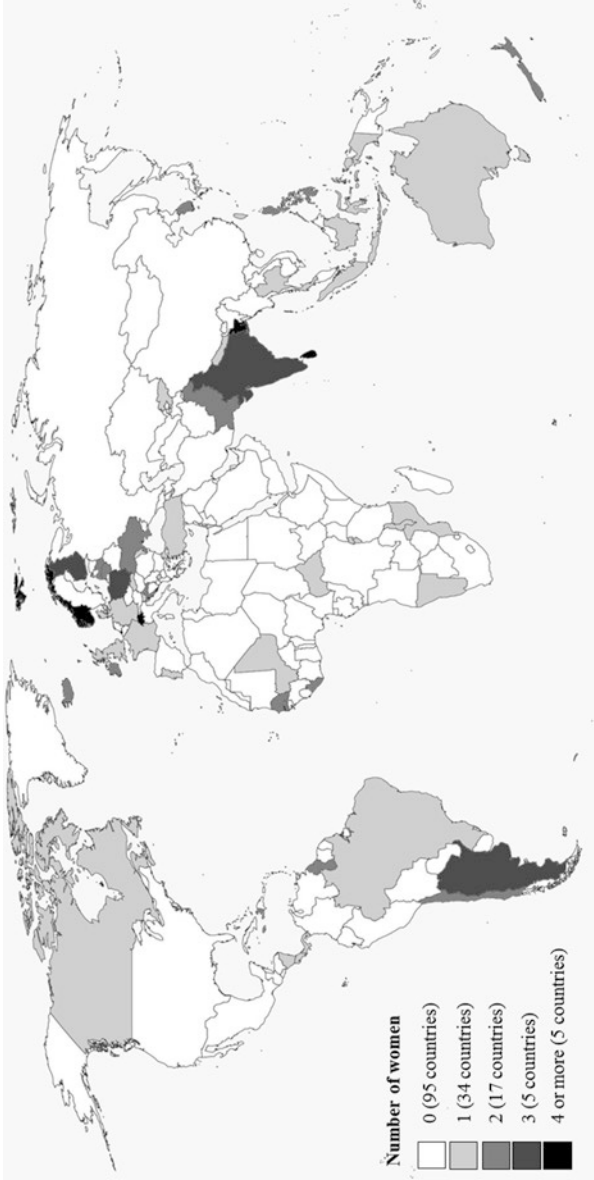
This volume's next two chapters trace the historical, geographical and political contours of executive feminization on the basis of two different sets of cases (depending on term length). The following two chapters explain the rise and performance of women leaders drawing on theoretical approaches from political science and sociology, respectively. The eight country studies delve on the specific circumstances associated with women's executive leadership in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe. To facilitate the exploration of new themes and analytical angles, the authors were not asked to follow a rigid analytical framework. The common goal of the book is to clarify how cultural and institutional dimensions have influenced women's access to executive office in post-transition contexts, the challenges faced in governing *as* women and the possibilities of advocating *for* women.

## OVERVIEW

Since 1960, more than 70 women have occupied executive office, beginning with the pioneer Sirimavo Bandaranaike, widow of a popular leader who was assassinated. She became Sri Lanka's prime minister (the country had established universal suffrage in 1931) (Kearney 1981). Indira Gandhi, Golda Meier and Margaret Thatcher, among the earliest and best-known women leaders, rose to power before the mid-1980s, when the trend first gained momentum. The Women in Politics 2015 Map, elaborated by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, shows the variant global geography of the feminization of politics in executives, legislatures and cabinets (UN Women 2015), while the Women Executives maps below (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2) illustrate the uneven outlines of the phenomenon, with the expected higher rates in Scandinavia and the election of women leaders in several transition democracies.

Today, however, women still occupy a disappointing 7 percent of executive posts worldwide, with only 16 women serving as heads of state or government in early 2016.<sup>3</sup> The overall number has never gone beyond 19, with shifting regional gains and reversals. In general, relatively few women compete for public office, even in model democracies. Women occupy 22 percent of parliamentary seats, thanks to the adoption of electoral gender quotas in many countries around the world,<sup>4</sup> but improvements in women's representation at this level have not everywhere contributed to the election of women to the executive.<sup>5</sup>

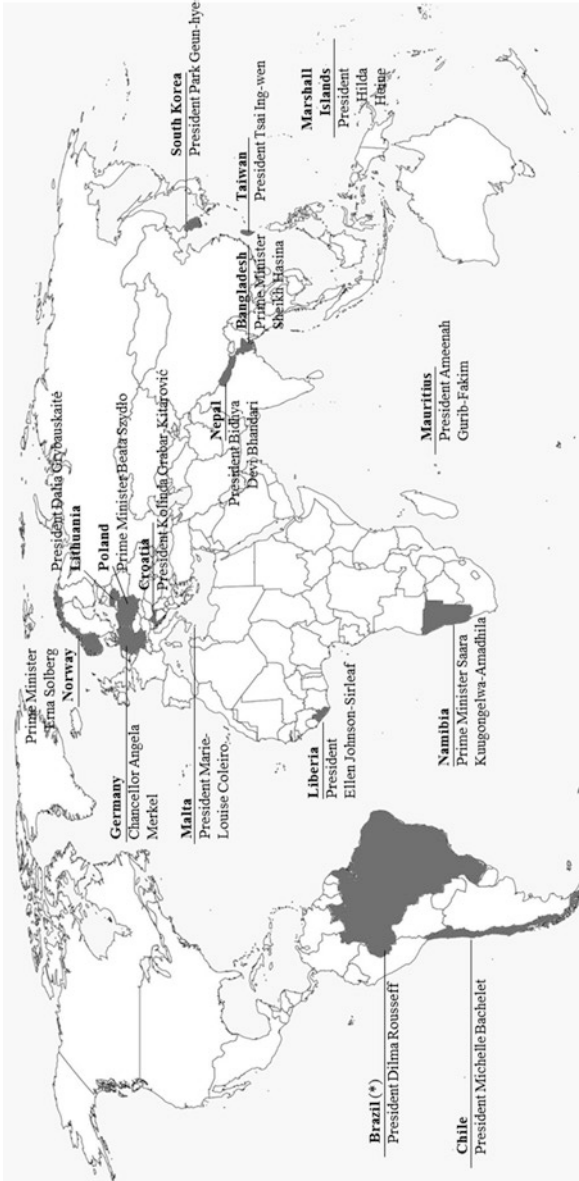
Since 1990, women executives have served in most countries in the Balkans and in several post-communist countries.<sup>6</sup> The number of women leaders in South Asia far exceeds the East Asian record. Several Caribbean countries also have had women serving in executive posts. Also in South Saharan Africa the pace of change has been momentous: women ran in about one-third of presidential contests between 2000 and 2009, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president in 2005. Currently, only the Arab and Pacific regions have had no women at the highest level of politics. Attitudes toward women in politics can change suddenly and dramatically, as demonstrated during the massive uprisings of 2011–2012 in the Middle East—the Arab Spring—in which the political visibility of women's organizing reached unexpected heights, even in Yemen where political representation was particularly low (Paxton and Hughes 2014, p. 316). The pro-democracy activism of journalist Tawakkol Karman (known as 'mother of the revolution') was recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011.



**Fig. 1.1** Number of women heads of state and government, 1960–2015

*Note:* Interim and acting heads of state and government are excluded. Also excluded are Peru’s three women ‘*Presidentes del Consejo de Ministros*.’ Many sources count these cases as prime ministers, but, according to Chapter II of the 1856 Constitution and its subsequent amendments, the Peruvian political system is presidential and there is no prime minister. Those in office more than once are counted as many times as they have been in office. All sovereign states whose sovereignty is undisputed (196) and disputed (16) are included.

*Source:* Prepared by the author based on data from the *Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership* (2016)



**Fig. 1.2** Women heads of state and government in 2016. (\*) President Dilma Rousseff from Brazil, reelected in 2011, was impeached on 31 August, 2016  
*Note:* Interim, acting heads of state and government, and monarchies are excluded. All sovereign states whose sovereignty is undisputed are included.

*Source:* Prepared by the author based on data from the Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership (2016)

Oddly, despite cultural changes and relatively strong democratic institutions, the countries of the developed ‘North’ outside of Scandinavia have lagged behind. Many countries have not had a woman executive, and only in 2016 was the US at the point of electing a woman<sup>7</sup>; polls and the campaign showed a persistent gender bias against her. The June 2016 general elections in Spain stirred complaints that there were no women on the ballot for president despite a parity law passed a decade earlier (Peinado 2016).<sup>8</sup> The UN itself, after 70 years of calling attention to the consequences of gender discrimination, faced scrutiny for never having a woman as a Secretary General.<sup>9</sup>

The increasing number of women in high office, the enlarged pool of qualified contenders and expectations that more countries will also elect women may lessen anxiety over the end of male executive dominance and the perception that women candidates need to downplay maternal qualities and other gender-related attributes to be judged as serious politicians. Eventually, gender may become less of a novelty, reducing the pressure to protect electability by differentiating political credentials from the candidates’ womanhood.<sup>10</sup> Melinda Adams (2016) suggests that reactions to women’s executive candidacies may differ when incumbents run for reelection, as the media and the public focus more on their record and less on their gender. Our chapters on Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Latvia and Liberia seem to confirm this. Some see a declining impact of gender in US political campaigns (Hayes and Lawless 2016). Hillary Clinton’s breakthrough to become the first woman to represent a major party, in July 2016, was accepted without much fanfare. A CNN survey of registered voters in early 2016 found that 80 percent believed the country was ‘ready for a female president’ (CNN 2016).<sup>11</sup>

The upward trend in women’s empowerment—while encouraged and celebrated—continues to expose unrecognized institutional faults in democratic representation, not only in terms of the dearth of women politicians but also in the awareness, knowledge and capacity of decision-making bodies to address concerns that are particularly close to women’s experience. The complexity of women’s representation (diversity of interests, actors, venues and policies adopted and implemented) is increasingly recognized in the academic literature (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2014), and societies and politicians themselves display new levels of awareness. Misogynist attitudes and behavior in the media, political parties and elected assemblies are being publicly censured, and offenders are losing their long-held latitude and privileges. The resignation of Denis



Baupin, the deputy speaker of parliament in France, on sexual harassment charges, and other recent cases exemplify women politicians' new willingness to speak out against mistreatment based on their gender (Krook and Restrepo Sanín 2016; Penketh 2016; Miller 2016).

### CHANGING INTERNATIONAL NORMS

The international environment began to change considerably with the UN Decade for Women (1985–1995) and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by 188 out of 194 countries.<sup>12</sup> When the Decade began, most countries were still under autocratic and even dictatorial rule. By 1995, democratization had advanced around the world. The Beijing Platform for Action called for removing barriers to equal participation, emphasizing the conclusions of the 1992 UN Conference on Human Rights, that women's rights were human rights. The Decade and Beijing spurred women's organizing, facilitating contacts, exchanges of information and strategies to claim a larger political role in parties and governments. Regional multilateral treaties also sought to advance women's rights.<sup>13</sup> The goal of women's political participation was again espoused at the 2000 Millennium Summit, and the European Union made gender equality measures a condition of membership agreements as post-communist countries applied to join. In 2011, a UN General Assembly resolution noted the opportunities that political transition provided to eliminate obstacles to women's political participation urging member states 'to encourage political parties to ensure that women have a fair and equal opportunity to compete for all elective public positions.'<sup>14</sup> Most recently, in September 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Summit reaffirmed the commitment to gender balance in political decision-making, which is considered essential to the achievement of sustainable development, peace and democracy. Gradually, thus, equal gender representation in politics has become an international norm and a measure of the quality of democracy.

As the world community reiterated pledges to women's equality and more inclusive decision-making with greater transparency and accountability, the fundamental inconsistency between the universality of democratic principles and the political sidelining of women has become more visible. 'Male democracy,' as Valentine Moghadam (2008) has said, is incomplete and 'very biased.'<sup>15</sup> By 2014, equality between men and women was guaranteed in the constitutions of 143 countries (52 had not taken this step)

(UN Women 2016). Progress, however, is uneven. In the past decade, the gender gap in health, education, jobs and politics closed by only 4 percent, according to the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum 2016).<sup>16</sup> In an innovative attempt to increase the slow pace of change, in 2014 the UN launched *HeForShe*, an international campaign to encourage men and boys to contribute to gender equality and to the promotion of women's rights. The initiative has its critics but gained massive attention.<sup>17</sup> 'We shouldn't be afraid of the word feminist,' said Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at a session on Progress Toward Parity during the 2016 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos. He made headlines when he appointed a parity cabinet upon his election, a measure he justified by simply stating: 'because it's 2015' (cited in Parker 2016).

Men will continue to have the advantage of incumbency, but as more women set precedents in every area of the world, masculine hegemony in executive office seems increasingly out of step. Heretofore, the office—like its male occupant—was believed genderless.<sup>18</sup> But clearly, 'presidential politics is far from gender neutral,' and gender dynamics in political language, media coverage and voters' perceptions are now watched more closely (Dittmar 2016).<sup>19</sup>

### DOES HISTORY PROVIDE MODELS?

There are numerous historical examples of women political leaders (Watson et al. 2005).<sup>20</sup> Against the odds, women shaped the core of early globalization, with Elizabeth I challenging Spain's imperial hegemony established under Isabella of Castile. Other queens of early modernity were notable reformers: Descartes was called to advice the unconventional Kristina of Sweden; Voltaire and Diderot provided guidance to Catherine the Great. These women were often attacked for usurping male authority, transgressing gender boundaries, spurning marriage or motherhood. Irrespective of their accomplishments, their sexuality was frequently questioned or defamed and their endings far from peaceful. In China, Lu Zhi and Wu Zetian were vilified. To this day, powerful queens of antiquity, like Zenobia of Palmyra, Egypt's Hatshepsut and others in Africa, Persia and elsewhere, stay badly misjudged or forgotten.

History elucidates the strategic advantages and travails of contemporary women executives. The legacy of women rulers of the past has been mentioned in studies of the puzzling number of women executives in

Asia (Derichs and Thompson 2013, pp. 12, 18). They seem relevant as inspirational figures; South Korean president Park Geun-hye cited Queen Elizabeth I as her role model (Choe 2012), but they also offer warning examples of harsh treatment and gendered attacks.<sup>21</sup>

## WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN POST-TRANSITION DEMOCRACIES

Since the mid-1970s, the contemporary transitions from authoritarianism set in motion a historical tide that invigorated women to claim equality at a scale and with a force never seen (e.g. Alvarez 1990; Jaquette and Wolchik 1998; Craske and Molyneux 2016). Women were politicized by their roles in the opposition, by experiences of exile in countries with active feminist movements, and as a result of international and regional women's conferences. Foreign donors gave substantial support to women's groups as part of their mission to support democratic change, and reforms inspired by the global human rights paradigm put gender issues on the agenda, but this did not happen everywhere.<sup>22</sup> From Brazil to South Africa, and from Indonesia to Ukraine, new groups formed and new leaders appeared. They demanded the replacement of discriminatory laws, changes in jobs, public services, school curricula and patriarchal interpretations of religious texts. From Cairo to Buenos Aires and Port-au-Prince, women marched on the streets chanting the names of those victimized by state terror and challenged the impunity of torturers.

Truth and reconciliation commissions eventually focused on women, revealing the extent of gender violence and the indignities of gendered imprisonment—rape, forced pregnancy, forced abortion and other forms of oppression (Buckley-Zistel and Stanley 2012; Buckley-Zistel 2014). In some cases, women leaders were imprisoned and tortured by the regimes they opposed (Chaps. 6 and 7). Women's political involvement was itself a justification for torture, as it violated traditional gender conventions, which were glorified by regime authorities.

Democratization was not free from gendered constraints, even if those constraints differed according to place and policy issue (Waylen 2007, 2010). Despite women's active roles in democratization, scholars and organizations that measured the quality of democracy in post-transition regimes hardly mentioned gender, failing to address a fundamental dimension of political equality.<sup>23</sup> Either inherited obstacles or newly constructed hurdles led to disenchantment, as women's demands were subordinated

to agendas set by male-dominated political elites. Democratic liberalization in several cases was accompanied by economic liberalization under the guidance of the ‘Washington Consensus,’ focusing on economic growth, opening up economies to globalization, and cutting government spending to avoid fiscal deficits and fight inflation. In Latin America and Eastern and Central Europe, these politically unpopular policies took precedence over the uncertainty of fighting moral wars over abortion, violence against women and gender discrimination. Women divided over strategy as some were included in state bureaucracies trying to ‘mainstream’ gender or joined professionalized advocacy networks, while others defended autonomy from parties and kept closer to grassroots communities (Bernal and Grewal 2014). Across the world, cultural individuation and the revival of conservative movements and religious fundamentalisms also debilitated gender equality claims.<sup>24</sup>

The optimism that existed in the 1990s dimmed as economic liberalization did not bring rapid economic growth and countries with long authoritarian and patriarchal traditions did not develop the full range of institutions needed for a pluralist democracy—an independent judiciary and press and a meritocratic civil service. Austerity programs weakened social protection and loosened regulatory state structures, while parties were increasingly delegitimized by legislative incompetence and scandals. All this proved fertile ground for corruption and uncompetitive practices, while hierarchical systems of expertise shielded political decisions about economic policies from public examination, colliding with the participatory promise of democratization.<sup>25</sup> Technocrats and feminists, who simultaneously gained political visibility in Latin America, promulgated largely incompatible answers for the consolidation of post-authoritarian regimes, as those who relied on the premises of economics saw no need to address gender issues, and feminists insisted that women’s interests be moved to the core of democratization (Montecinos 2001).<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, Chaps. 8 and 9, on Mozambique’s Luísa Diogo and Liberia’s Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, respectively, show how post-transition women leaders with advanced training in economics and experience as formers finance ministers achieved praise for attracting new investments and adjusting their troubled economies while making improvements for women.

Some transition processes provoked a backlash against feminist discourses, while others opened political opportunities for women and widened representation. Many political parties were newly formed in the course of regime change and a diversity of women’s parties emerged, for

example, in post-communist countries (Ishiyama 2003), where women were more skeptical of feminist agendas, arguing that they had already experienced ‘equality’ under communist rule, and it did not meet their needs. Older parties resurfaced in disarray after years of persecution, with some becoming more permeable to new groups. Some parties adopted voluntary gender quotas, but often, women’s access to leadership positions was difficult, given the lack of internal democratic rules and procedures, and ideological resistance to promoting gender diversity (Matlosa 2007; Carreras 2012; Tavits 2013). The segregation of women within party structures, the costs of campaigning, candidate recruitment and other formal and informal practices, still keep women’s political voices muffled, limit their political ambitions and weaken the substantive representation of women’s interests.

Predictably, perhaps, the last wave of democracy has given way, as in previous instances of transnational democratization, to an ‘authoritarian wave’ (Markoff 2015). An interviewer asked the following question to the President of the National Endowment for Democracy in 2015: ‘Today we are learning that democracy is neither inevitable nor irreversible. Were we then naive, or stupid?’ (Gazeta Wyborcza 2015).<sup>27</sup> Severe economic crises and a reassertion of authoritarianism have prompted new debates on the global deterioration of democracy (Kurlantzick 2013; Diamond and Plattner 2015; Diamond et al. 2016).

The manifestly elusive process of democratization turns more so in unstable and divisive policy environments. Fragmented, ineffective and opportunistic political parties contributed to citizens’ demobilization and political apathy, despite regularly held elections. The transition paradigm itself is said to have ‘outlived its usefulness’ after about ‘100 countries (approximately 20 in Latin America, 25 in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, 30 in sub-Saharan Africa, 10 in Asia and 5 in the Middle East) were thrown into the conceptual pot of the transition paradigm’ (Carothers 2002, pp. 6–7).

The impeachment Dilma Rousseff illustrates how quickly the convergent pressures of a weak economy and weak political parties derailed 30 years of Brazil’s democratic continuity. Inability to control corruption is particularly damaging for women leaders, as they are seen clad in an aura of personal and political ‘purity,’ suggesting they have higher ethical standards and greater commitment to the common good. Voters appear to punish women more harshly than men, but as Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer (2016) argue, the assumed relationship between women’s representation and corruption does not always hold.

## GENDER IMAGERY AND EXECUTIVE POWER

A country's first female president or prime minister is unquestionably provocative and eye-catching. This historical first attracts multiple audiences, not just the politically involved. She becomes an important focus for children, entertainers, religious authorities and others who judge the *faux pas*, the incongruous, and the exemplary as either confirmation of folly or proof of delayed justice.

The transfer of executive power to a woman signals impending socio-cultural change; it goes beyond political representation to amplify the expressive functions of executive politics, with consequences for national and group identity. It activates strong feelings and deep resistance. A woman performing executive functions surrounded by the splendor of décor, the formality of protocol and the grandeur of her office is inaugurated by denouncing democracy's shortcomings. Executive office has been previously reserved for a different category of citizens, and her arrival shows how long it took to see a leader who looks and sounds different from all her predecessors. And, of course, it also brings questions; will she succeed or fail? Will this experiment be repeated?

Unlike the collective nature of parliaments, the executive is focused on a single individual. Personality traits, trustworthiness, oratory and other dimensions of charismatic leadership are central to political performance. The previous political exclusion of women gains evidentiary force in the materiality of a female body taking center stage in the ornate spaces of executive power, where politics are full of ritualistic choreography, acoustic and visual props: flags, flowers and uniforms. Because enactments were historically carried out by an exclusively male ensemble, like Kabuki theater, women presidents and prime ministers are often described in journalistic accounts and informal conversation as re-presenting the bizarre, a deviation that disturbs deep-seated beliefs about gender, power and leadership. The rare woman who breaks the old masculine political mold discovers that in this highly visible role, her personality and body are infused with special political meaning and carefully scrutinized as potent, and possibly subversive political discourse (Coupland and Gwyn 2003).<sup>28</sup> The leader's female body is prodded and judged against the harsh light typically used to justify the social devaluation of women. Her body speaks; it is often showcased and vilified in ways that reflect the misogyny of conventional politics and the media. The gendered language of politics serves critics well: former German chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, said in 2016 that Angela Merkel had a 'heart, but no plan' when deciding to accept refugees (Cohen 2016).

As embodiment of the nation, the woman leader reveals the gendered nature of power. Deborah Gruenfeld's studies show how the body language of power (the use of space and gestures, among other elements) is less acceptable when used by women (Huang et al. 2011). Authoritativeness and other leadership qualities are stereotypically associated with men while women are linked to nurturing qualities like warmth and kindness. These studies show that women who display competency risk being disliked. Men do not face this trade-off. The relevance of these issues is addressed in Chaps. 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 13.

Women leaders force adjustments in the protocol of executive politics. Consider the sartorial dimension of summit meetings. In the past, the simple elimination of neckties seemed sufficient to induce an atmosphere of informality, implying more open communication and trust among leaders. Since that uniformity of clothing no longer applies, the symbolic meaning of executive attire is more open to misunderstandings (Campus 2013, pp. 84–85).<sup>29</sup> US military etiquette specifies 'Madam President' as the appropriate form of address, while the press almost everywhere ignores all proprieties by calling women leaders by their first names. Women politicians at the head of military parades are still a novelty. The North Korean military talked about the 'venomous swish' of incoming President Park Geun-hye's skirt. And male leaders frequently seem at a loss in interactions with female counterparts (for instance, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez kissed the hand of the new president Bachelet with exaggerated gallantry, and George W. Bush gave Chancellor Merkel a back rub during the G-8 summit in 2006).

The absence of a first lady also troubles protocol officials. Historically, they were the only prominent females within executive quarters, acting as hostesses, unpaid goodwill ambassadors, advocates for children and other uncontroversial causes (and less frequently as the incumbent's surrogate).<sup>30</sup> Powerful husbands or ambitious sons are perceived to be less politically pliable or self-effacing than the typical first lady. If not plainly declining to forgo their own pursuits for an ill-defined, demanding but subordinate role, the male political spouse often appears to wield inordinate influence to the point of undermining the executive's own credibility, legitimacy and prestige, as some alleged in the case of Argentina's Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Fraga 2010).

The cultural significance of women leaders is amplified by the greater personalization of contemporary politics and the increasing emotional closeness between leader and citizenry that the media expands and exploits

(Mezey 2013). In the era of continuous media coverage, high-level politics is more and more a spectacle, full of well-choreographed dramatic displays (Miroff 2010). The way the media operate in relation to hegemonic cultural constructs and gendered norms is one of the most investigated aspects in the literature. Comparative studies show pervasive gender stereotyping in media coverage of women competing for or holding executive office (Murray 2010; Campus 2013).

Traditional gender biases may be strengthened or eroded as a result of women's enhanced political visibility, but in the short term, it seems to reinforce generalized sexist attitudes, as in the case of Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, who faced attacks on her appearance, her clothes, her hair, her voice (Gillard 2012; Summers 2014).<sup>31</sup> In June 2013, Gillard accepted her electoral defeat with these words: 'The reaction to being the first female prime minister does not explain everything about my prime ministership, nor does it explain nothing about my prime ministership. [...] What I am absolutely confident of is it will be easier for the next woman and the woman after that and the woman after that. And I'm proud of that' (ABC 2013).

From a cultural perspective, the ascent of women to the highest political office is particularly meaningful when it occurs independently from dynastic ties. As political heirs, female executives are less likely to be seen as crossing the boundaries of acceptable behavior. The femaleness of daughters or widows of assassinated political leaders seems more easily 'forgiven' when called to serve in the latter's place. The ideological foundations of gender and political hierarchies appear less threatened when attributes of a male kin—his heroism or political skills, even his class privileges—are successfully transferred to a female relative, as mentioned in Chaps. 10 and 11. In the end, of course, women's performance is evaluated less on their heritage and more on their ability to manage coalitions, crises and the clientelistic web of relations that maintain popular support for dynastic parties.

Post-transition democracies come about in traumatized societies, haunted by the memories of loss as much as by the loss of memory. For many citizens, the transition from authoritarian rule toward democracy paralleled personal recovery from living under a repressive regime. Microlevel resilience ebbs in tandem with the flow of societal endurance and its failures. The importance attributed to Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in several post-transition democracies reflects this powerful meeting of the social and the personal. By entering the historical record giving a formal, ceremonial character to the recounting of horror, the



testimonies of victims and perpetrators are thought to leave the private inferno. Offended and shocked by the crimes of uncontrolled power, societies resolved to rebuild their rules and rejoin the community of nations. Several post-transition women leaders personify the confluence of complex currents that go from personal feelings to social and political awareness and commitment, including the transnational links that carry policy models and normative ideals from place to place.

As the country chapters show, these political executives experienced in various degrees the uncertainty brought by family death, separation and exile; their bodies are material evidence of what lack of democracy can mean: torture, fear and clandestine escape. In balancing the strains between role expectations related to their gender and the exigencies of their posts, they were required to convincingly display, often simultaneously, the markers of femininity and masculinity, a challenge common to women in politics and in other male-dominated fields. These women mirror multiple identities in ways that are alien to their male counterparts who rarely perceive the centrality of their gender or confront gendered judgments of their political performance.

The leader's gender gains an exaggeratedly vivid presence when a woman performs the functions of power. Her body, clothes and movements remind the public they are being led by a mostly untested political figure purportedly lacking the fortitude attributed to models of patriarchal and military authority. At the microlevel, a woman performing masculine markers of the role may be seen as a symptom of progressiveness, but she risks being frowned upon for transgressing gender rubrics, a form of 'gender bending' (Lorber 1994). Women must satisfy conventional gender expectations, but their femininity is typically deemed offensive in this most formal, protocol-regulated position.

The emergence of a woman as a political executive generates a dual legitimization challenge, culturally and institutionally grounded. The macropolitics of executive femaleness is also problematic: her empathy and 'soft power' might charm a citizenry hungry for change, yet in times of crisis that leadership style is blamed for not being tough and decisive enough. Given the many challenges of post-authoritarian democracies, women are particularly vulnerable to attacks for being too emotional, inexperienced or incompetent. Democracy itself appears destabilized, not only in the eyes of the opposition. Gendered criticisms may intensify, with voters vowing never to support another woman. As a consequence of this backlash, potential candidates may reexamine their political prospects and

their willingness to enter electoral contests (Hayes and Lawless 2016). Leadership failures attributed to the gender of women executives, however unjustified, may thus reduce the possibility of a more balanced gender composition of executives in the future. Women's symbolic representation (Pitkin 1967) was supposed to promote respect and legitimacy for women leaders; instead it may have the opposite effect, especially in times of crisis.

The question is complicated, however, for the symbolic impact of women leaders is not necessarily felt in the short term, not even within a single generation, and certainly not within the boundaries of a single country. Women leaders, especially in newer democracies, typically come to power personifying transformative projects, with rhetorical appeals to national unity and reconciliation. They emphasize empathy and consensus, a more participatory, responsive government and attention to redistribution that have broad appeal as they affect people's personal lives and families. Gender difference supposedly implies a softer political style, associated with maternal images in the eyes of citizens and political strategists alike. In some cases, this is intentionally calculated to minimize 'the risk of being labeled feminists' (Christie 2016, p. 118).

The dearth of women executives has turned several of them into easily recognizable international celebrities, icons of courage and resilience, admired for their extraordinary accomplishments and even their elegance. In many cases, if they have experience as foreign policy or defense ministers, they may be seen as competent representatives of their country's interests, while encouraging the participation of women in peace negotiations and increasing the number of women in the diplomatic corps, a career that has traditionally imposed great obstacles to women's access and advancement (McCarthy 2014). The regional and global proliferation of summit meetings enhances their own international prominence. Women executives often go from national leadership to serve in international organizations, or special missions, as members of select groups of former leaders (e.g. the Club of Madrid or the Group of Elders), and as high-level advocates in transnational civil society organizations.<sup>32</sup> Women presidents and prime ministers also interact as members of the Council of Women Leaders. Created in 1996 and located in Washington, the Council's mission is to promote good governance and gender equality and increase the number, effectiveness and visibility of women national leaders. Many have received highly prestigious invitations and awards, appearing in various world rankings of influential women. Thus they may have as much or greater influence after they leave office, as international policy-makers, role models and mentors.

Global audiences seem to find women leaders in *other* countries to be a source of inspiring visions or useful lessons, helped by the selective attention of the international media. The tragic death of Benazir Bhutto enlarged her world standing, although not necessarily her support within Pakistan; the assassination of Agathe Uwilingiyimana of Rwanda is less known. Many observers saw the simultaneous presidencies of three South American women as an astonishing indicator of political change. Specific crises or momentous decisions also raise the profile of women leaders, whether they act in accordance with conventional femininity or disregard those conventions. Johnson Sirleaf faced the dangers of a spreading Ebola outbreak; Wu Yi, who was Vice-Premier of the State Council (so far China's highest-ranking woman politician), received international praise for her intervention in the spread of SARS, classified as a worldwide health threat.<sup>33</sup>

## INSTITUTIONS: ACCESS TO POWER AND GENDER POLICYMAKING

Currently, about an even number of women executives are heads of government and heads of state, although some leaders are both. Their trajectories, tenure in office and policy performance vary greatly. Their prerogatives also vary (Jalalzai 2013), although it often requires detailed research to determine the leader's influence over budget, legislation and appointments (Fortin 2013). There are differences among presidential systems and also among prime ministerial offices (Elgie 2012). In mixed systems, the power of the president may shift to the prime minister or vice versa, and the relationship between the two is dynamic and may change, depending on whether one of the leader's parties suffer electoral losses (or gains). In addition, informal mechanisms may undermine the leaders' authority. By contrast, their powers may be extended, for example, by assuming several cabinet positions simultaneously.

Since the executive has historically been a masculine domain, the influence of women executives is contingent on institutional context, formal as well as informal. Their authority is likely to be questioned without an extensive network of loyal supporters, especially when gender equality is not recognized as a desirable goal. A leader's legitimacy and efforts to support gender legislation are both weakened without an active women's movement pressuring authorities to act on behalf of their interests, but those movements will expect results that even a committed feminist leader

cannot deliver. A positive international milieu is helpful to the extent that egalitarian standards become more than just convenient window-dressing at the national level.<sup>34</sup> The imbalanced gender composition of the political system may not be altered until other institutional changes are made. Without public financing of political campaigns, political parties may continue to rely on men who can attract more resources than potential women candidates. The absence of term limits also reduces the electoral chances of women due to the advantages of incumbents. New electoral systems may be necessary to facilitate the election of women to legislative assemblies, as proportional representation and multimember districts are more likely to elect women. Quotas have been effective in many cases, depending on how they are designed and implemented (Krook 2009). Women leaders may have little or no effect on other measures of women's empowerment, if private corporations, the courts and other relevant policy actors do not modify their recruitment practices and priorities. In 2015, with a gender equality law failing several times in the National Assembly, South Korea ranked only 115 in the Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum, despite having a woman president. The global diffusion of government agencies dealing with gender equality (gender machineries) vary in their budget, bureaucratic status and effectiveness, although higher levels of democratization are also important (McBride and Mazur 2011). In parliamentary systems, ministers are typically selected among members of parliament, connecting the gender make-up of the cabinet to the availability of women in the assembly. In presidential systems, the president appoints the ministers, often in consultation with parties, which gives the executive greater latitude to appoint or ignore potential women candidates. Since 2000, gender parity cabinets have been adopted in Spain, Chile and Canada; in Switzerland, women occupied the majority of cabinet posts in 2010. In early 2015, however, women represented only 17.7 percent of government ministers and since 2005 the proportion had only increased 3.5 percent, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2015).

Women executives differ ideologically. The political left has been traditionally more likely to advance women in politics, but rightist parties have lately supported women's candidacies. Thus far, women leaders in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa have been associated primarily with the left, while in Asia and the former Eastern bloc (as in Western Europe) they were mainly linked to the political right and the center (Skard 2014, p. 477). Electoral competitions between women are now more common, as seen recently in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, but also in Taiwan, Peru and elsewhere.

Women leaders may be rewarded for avoiding the most controversial aspects of gender policymaking when doing so is deemed a threat to political stability or established alliances. Others may be punished for wasting their extraordinary historical chance to alter the gender status quo. And yet, many of the factors involved in policy outcomes, as it is true for their male counterparts, may rest beyond the control of the leader, independently of their skills and commitment (Rockman and Waterman 2008).

Women executives who encourage stronger claims for gender equality generally count on the support of organized women. Avoiding gender reformist positions may reflect strategic calculation, not necessarily lack of concern for the issues involved. In post-transition contexts it is common for governments to face the urgency of other priorities (economic crises, ethnic conflict) or unyielding political parties and bureaucracies. The identification of women's interests is itself far from clear, as women constitute a diverse category with different perceptions of their priorities and different approaches to feminist proposals (Dahlerup 2014). Leaders may change their policy commitments over time, or frame gender policies as part of broader efforts to reduce poverty, unemployment and violence. Women's groups may also alter their positions regarding the need to mobilize in favor of specific policies, cooperate with official programs, or privilege the defense of class or ethnic equality over gender. The legitimacy of gender equality in the electorate also contributes to the timing and articulation of policy, especially when countries face conflicting messages from political and religious elites. Attention to specific issues may change depending on overall political circumstances, making possible to reform what in the past was considered too risky or unacceptable, or reversing earlier reforms.

The introduction of gender plans or gender units is no guarantee of adequate implementation. Budgetary constraints may prove effective in distorting official policy statements or slowing the pace of change. The state apparatus contains relatively autonomous spaces that can also resist or delay policy outcomes. Also, the executive is not unified. The gender policy preferences of presidents or prime ministers will not be successfully implemented when other members of her team espouse different views on which policies should be pursued. In sum, the gender policy performance of a woman leader will always be a balance between expectations of results, and the political and policy instruments at her disposal.

The chapter summaries presented in the next pages point to many relevant findings. These findings suggest, however, that more research is needed for a deeper understanding of gender in executive politics.

Systematic comparisons between the election of women leaders in post-transition and more established democracies, as well as studies of why executive masculinity is so pervasive and persistent, will give us a better idea of what we should expect and demand from democracy in the future.

### THEMES ADDRESSED IN THIS BOOK

In Chap. 2, Jane Jaquette urges adding levels of complexity to analyses of the roots and significance of women's executive leadership. Democratization does not proceed linearly to ever more inclusive forms of representation, nor does the political ascent of women in post-transition polities necessarily imply consistent improvements in gender equality, or assure strengthening of democratic rule. Her chapter warns against the risks of excessive optimism, for transitions fail and fizzle, and in the face of new challenges, even established democracies show signs of distress. Jaquette points to the pitfalls of generalization. Democratic transitions have responded to different circumstances, followed diverse trajectories, and addressed gender differently in various regions, countries and times. There is no standard blueprint, although global trends suggest an unprecedented rebalancing of gender political leadership. Assessing the powers of office also complicates judgment, as formally weak female leaders may prove potent ushers of deeper change. Conversely, they may—and have—preserved undemocratic practices, provoking public disillusionment and authoritarian reversals.

Farida Jalalzai, in Chap. 3, offers a global panorama of the ascent of women to executive power: out of the total number of cases considered (108 women in 68 different countries), two-thirds correspond to post-transition democracies. Jalalzai identifies some of the factors that may have facilitated the larger presence of women executives in some places, such as the institutional features of political systems and the impact of family connections. She also explores differences in the trajectory of female and male leaders as well as regional patterns in the most common type of executive post occupied by women.

Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer and Catherine Reyes-Housholder argue, in Chap. 4, that less institutionalized parties and other conditions specific to post-transition democracies constitute political environments in which the rise of women to high office could become more likely. Conventionally disadvantageous circumstances, such as gender biases and the marginalization of political outsiders may be converted into favorable opportunities

because the endorsement of women might be seen as a novel solution to entrenched corruption and inequality, for example, or as an effective strategy to enhance international legitimacy. The authors contend that arguments based on the interplay of gender and politics in established democracies need to be reexamined—and probed through extensive empirical research—to account for executive political dynamics affecting women’s access and governing behavior in post-transition settings.

Chapter 5, by Melanie Hughes and Elizabeth Yates, presents some of the cultural factors that explain the prevalence of masculine executives and hinder the rise of women to high-level politics. Gender ideologies and stereotypes influence hierarchies of power and prestige from early socialization. Media images, the rules of cultural and political institutions, the perceptions of voters and the behavior of candidates are everywhere contributing to disadvantage women who appear as political outsiders, less prepared and competent to lead. Focusing on the deployment of masculinity, the authors emphasize how gender norms are enacted and, in the process, political actors, both men and women, contribute, often inadvertently, to reinforce biased expectations and inequality. They also stress the impermanence of gender dynamics, which change according to context and over time. Thus, they argue, regime transitions have in some instances opened paths to women, which Hughes and Yates relate to women’s mobilization in support of democracy and the emergence of social demands for a different type of leadership, closer to dominant definitions of femininity, that could result in more cooperative and clean, less corrupt governments. They conclude, however, that as women leaders are required to display mixed gender personas, and the culture of political institutions as well as the systemic privileges of men prove resistant to change, the pattern of masculine hegemony is likely to persist.

## THE CASES

Dilma Rousseff, a former minister with a technocratic profile who suffered the harsh methods of military repression as a young leftist militant, took office as Brazil’s first woman president in 2010, and won a highly contested reelection campaign in 2014 that featured another favorite woman candidate. She was expected to continue a period of national stability, growing international influence and popular redistributive programs introduced by her predecessor. Instead, Rousseff temporarily left the presidential palace on 12 May 2016, after a majority of the Senate voted in

favor of her impeachment. Dilma told an attentive world that she was the victim of a coup. Fiona Macaulay (Chap. 6) identifies various phases in Brazilian post-transition politics and a constellation of factors to show how this extraordinary reversal came about. A political culture newly altered by conservative and religious fundamentalist groups intent on unleashing ‘moral panics,’ party fragmentation, coalition breakdown, economic decline, entrenched and scandalous corruption and a steep fall in presidential popularity added fuel to the current crisis. The chapter also indicates that Rousseff’s suspension and constraints on her leadership, including ambiguities in her adoption of feminist discourse and goals, result from the concurrence of structural and short-term developments in Brazil’s post-transition democracy.

Michelle Bachelet became Chile’s first woman president in 2006 with a clear, if not explicitly feminist, gender agenda. Chile’s post-transition democracy had not tackled many of the demands women made during the 1980s struggle for democracy. At the conclusion of her term, important gender issues remained unaddressed, despite significant accomplishments and an over 80 percent popular approval. After serving as the first director of UN Women in New York, Bachelet was reelected in 2014 with bolder legislative proposals, including a bill to eliminate the total ban on abortion and a comprehensive electoral reform with quotas to improve women’s legislative representation. As the country became immersed in the most serious political crisis since the return of democracy, and the economy deteriorated, public support for the president collapsed. Verónica Montecinos contrasts in Chap. 7 the pace of gender policy change since 1990 with the country’s record of progressive pluralism in the pre-coup period. The gendering of transition was constrained not only by authoritarian legacies, but also by a transition trapped in a self-fulfilling prophecy of limited democracy, which Bachelet’s presidencies could only partially alter in spite of her extraordinary institutional prerogatives and popularity. This case reveals that harsh punishment is dispensed for crisis management deemed inadequate even when delegitimized opponents are at their feeblest.

Appointed prime minister in Mozambique’s dual executive system (the president is head of state and government) in 2004, Luísa Dias Diogo rose above the institutional limitations of her office to achieve international recognition as an effective national leader. She combined the urgency of economic reforms and poverty reduction in the aftermath of a damaging civil war with improvements in gender equality, especially women’s access to education and health care. In Chap. 8, Frances Henderson explains how



Diogo, an economist and former finance minister, successfully promoted women's interests by relying on the achievements of organized women, the women-friendly rhetoric of the FRELIMO party, regional agreements and international development cooperation. Henderson also traces the impact of colonialism on traditional gender practices, as well as the gender aspects of independence struggle, to contextualize Diogo's policy performance, which included stronger institutional bases for women-friendly state action. This chapter warns, however, that in an androcentric polity, progress toward equality may be reversed, even after major improvements in women's legislative representation (currently 40 percent of the National Assembly).

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first elected president, was reelected in 2011, the year she was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkol Karman 'for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work.' Her case illustrates some of the obstacles that even strong leaders who are committed to gender equality commonly face. As the analysis of Melinda Adams (Chap. 9) shows, the election of a woman with distinguished professional credentials and support from organized women may lead to partial, mostly symbolic representation of women's interests. President Johnson Sirleaf, a former political prisoner, exile and finance minister, successfully linked her extensive political and professional experience with traditional understandings of femininity to enhance her legitimacy. She appointed more women to influential positions, signed international treaties favoring greater equality and promoted women-friendly policies. Her gender priorities, however, competed with other major challenges: high levels of poverty, civil conflict and the Ebola epidemic. Without a new constitution and difficulties passing supporting legislation, Liberia remains without an enforceable gender quota law and inadequate mechanisms to address violence against women.

Corazon Aquino, who presided over the Philippines first post-authoritarian government, is among the group of unlikely leaders precipitously called to carry the legacy of an assassinated politician, thus conforming to the dynastic model of women executives in Asia. Her name is associated with the massive civil mobilization that toppled the dictatorship in 1986, but as Chap. 10 by Diana Mendoza and Maria Elissa Lao makes clear, the institutional barriers Aquino confronted were hard to overcome. The army, the Catholic Church and former dictator Ferdinand Marcos' supporters remained powerful and uncompromising.

Lacking political experience and party affiliation, Aquino could not have developed programs vetoed by those forces. Especially on controversial gender issues, Aquino was unwilling to deviate from religious guidelines. Several military coups were thwarted, and even her ministers behaved disloyally. Interestingly, in less than a decade, a second woman president came to power (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo), but her record did not match Aquino's standing as 'mother of the nation.' Aquino's son, elected in 2010, reinforced the dynastic pattern, but the most controversial reproductive health legislation that women's groups supported for years was passed under his term.

Habibul Khondker argues, in Chap. 11, that the concept of transferred charisma can help account for the dynastic quality of leadership in the case of Sheik Hasina and other women executives in Asia (with the exception of Taiwan's Tsai Ing-wen). Hasina had accumulated significant political experience within the Awami League by the time she took office as the prime minister of Bangladesh, but her father's role as the country's founder—assassinated soon after independence from Pakistan—contributed to the development of her political identity and campaigns. Critical of international media representations of the famous power alternation between two women prime ministers, Khondker places their complex rivalry, which was preceded by cooperation against authoritarian rule, in the context of patriarchy, weak political institutions and the increasingly intense struggles between secular and religious fundamentalism. Hasina's determination to govern over a poor and progressively polarized Bangladesh has been tested by attempts on her life. Her achievements and moderate pro-women policies, Khondker emphasizes, are a reflection of her political skills. Ideological and institutional circumstances, however, keep democracy vulnerable, and, at times, Hasina's own leadership has turned authoritarian. Moreover, in trying to legitimize her position she may have validated patriarchal norms: in fact, she insists in being addressed as 'Sir.'

Iveta Radicova was Slovakia's first woman prime minister. Sharon L. Wolchik analyzes in Chap. 12 Radicova's multidimensional career as a respected academic sociologist and activist, Member of Parliament, cabinet minister, presidential candidate and party leader, to show that she came to the office with a substantial record of public service. Her political style stressed dialog. Her priorities included improved ethnic relations; closer ties with the EU; greater government accountability; and corruption controls. She achieved significant public support, especially among

women, although she had not made gender equality a campaign objective. Women's groups, certain parties in the government coalition and leading figures in her own party were less enthusiastic supporters. The 2008–2009 economic crisis, public protests and debates over Slovakia's role in Europe cut her government short. She left politics but continues to be actively engaged in international affairs. As in other post-communist European countries, Wolchik notes, gender politics in Slovakia were influenced by a backlash immediately after the end of communism. People reacted against previous policies toward women's role in the workforce and their largely symbolic presence in politics and the fact that women's equality was ostensibly a goal of the communist regime. As the transition continued, women's issues once again became subjects of public debate, in part as a result of EU encouragement. The chapter concludes by warning against premature evaluations of women leaders' impact. Radicova did focus on women's interests in a variety of policy areas, for this had been a long-term concern in her work. Her own expectations for women's increased political involvement, however, remain unfulfilled, at least thus far.

Vaira Vike-Freiberga is probably an extreme illustration of the political outsider rising to presidential rank in 1999. She was hardly known in Latvia after spending most of her life abroad. As Daina Eglitis and Laura Ardava argue in Chap. 13, however, her unexpected emergence as a compromise political figure was eased by her status as a westerner with no ties to the former communist regime. Although the formal powers of her office were limited, superb professional credentials, a cosmopolitan outlook and a distinctive leadership style (cooperative—even nurturing—), allowed her to achieve consistently high popularity, particularly as she heralded a new beginning for Latvia after joining the European Community and NATO. While Vike-Freiberga's presidential agenda did not reflect explicit feminist commitments during her two terms as president, she turned into an active gender advocate after leaving office. As one of several former women executives who remain engaged in international circles, she has enhanced women's symbolic representation in Latvia and elsewhere.

The ascent of women to executive leadership, now a diverse and global trend, supports the quest for gender egalitarianism in symbolic and other ways. By framing the examination of women executives in the context of post-transition democracies, we have explored some of the conditions under which this trend had its largest expansion in recent decades. While some of the most widely studied cases in Western Europe, Oceania and North America are not covered, we hope that historically

and geographically specific insights on the interactions between regime change and women's leadership will bring greater scholarly attention to the promises and pitfalls of democratizing processes around the world.

## NOTES

1. The rise of Prime Minister Theresa May in the UK in 2016 is the latest example.
2. Studies have mostly focused on the US, including Kellerman and Rhode (2007) and Rhode (2016).
3. Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of an assassinated independence hero and a Burma's ambassador, should have been counted among these leaders were it not for a custom-made constitution clause by which the military prevented her from becoming president. She spent 15 years under house arrest for her pro-democracy activism, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. Her party won a by a landslide in November 2015. She currently occupies a new position created by the Parliament, State Councilor (similar to a prime minister).
4. The current 22 percent global average, the highest ever, reflects a very small growth, which has been interpreted to be the result of the declining impact of quotas.
5. Sweden is the only Scandinavian country in this category.
6. Skard notes that 8 of the 13 women leaders in this region had earned a Ph.D. (2014, p. 369).
7. In the Americas, presidential politics has become less predictable in terms of gender class and race. Apart from the simultaneous presidencies of three women in South America, the elections of Evo Morales (Bolivia's first indigenous president), Brazil's Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (the first working class president in that country) and Barack Obama (the first black president in the USA) suggest that well-established political elites can no longer count on keeping high office in their hands.
8. The 2014 documentary directed by Heather Arnet, 'Madame Presidenta: Why Not U.S.?', inspired by the election of Dilma Rousseff, illustrates the point.
9. Mary Robinson, the former Irish president, recently said, 'it is morally inexcusable to allow the secretary general selection process to remain as it stands' (Seddon 2016). See Campaign to Elect a Woman UN Secretary-General (2016).
10. After Hillary Clinton's defeated candidacy in 2008, the contentious 2016 presidential campaign in the US surprised many feminists when younger women, even in the face of explicitly sexist attacks and no other woman in the primary race, found her candidacy uninspiring and inadequate,

- pledging their support to her rival, Bernie Sanders. A journalist wrote about her 80-year-old aunt, who ‘tells everyone who’ll listen that she’s staying alive until Clinton becomes president. [...] It’s tragic that [women like her] are largely unseen by most campaign coverage’ (Walsh 2016).
11. The gender bar moved immediately. A columnist reflected: ‘no openly gay, lesbian or bisexual person has ever emerged as a plausible presidential candidate. How soon might that change? Could we look up a dozen or more years from now and see a same-sex couple in the White House?’ (Bruni 2016). Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir of Iceland (2009–2013) was the first openly lesbian head of government, and so far the only world leader to have a same-sex spouse. Since then, homosexual men served as prime ministers in Belgium and Luxembourg.
  12. Countries ratifying the CEDAW submit a report on how they are implementing the treaty every four years. Only six countries have not yet ratified CEDAW: the US, Iran, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Palau.
  13. Examples include the 1994 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (the Convention of Belém do Pará), and the 2003 ‘Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa’ (the Maputo Protocol).
  14. Resolution A/RES/66/130, adopted at the 89th plenary meeting, 19 December 2011. Available from: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/130](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/130) [Accessed 16 June 2016].
  15. Women have protested against their subordinate political status since the beginning of modern democracy. The end of absolutism turned into a gender performance in the streets of Paris as public fury targeted the queen’s exquisite wardrobe (Weber 2006). Soon after, Mary Wollstonecraft published her groundbreaking feminist treatise, and Olympe de Gouges went to the guillotine for defending women’s rights.
  16. The Global Gender Gap Report was first published in 2006.
  17. The inaugural HeForShe Parity Report was presented at Davos in 2016, with figures provided by several of the world’s leading companies. See: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/1/heforshe-parity-report#sthash.nYu5GcPI.dpuf> [Accessed 16 June 2016].
  18. In this context, ‘masculinity as the genderless gender’ implies, for example, that male hegemony in the executive has remained invisible and unquestioned. Seemingly, countries are unaware that their leaders have, in Kimmel’s words, ‘gendered selves’ (Kimmel 1993).
  19. See, for example, Presidential Gender Watch 2016. Available from: <http://presidentialgenderwatch.org> [Accessed 16 June 2016].
  20. Women rulers from 4500 BCE to the present are identified in: [http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Women\\_State\\_3.html](http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Women_State_3.html) [Accessed 16 June 2016].

21. Kristina of Sweden wrote in her autobiography: ‘Women who rule [...] only make themselves ridiculous one way or the other’ (Bawer 2004).
22. More than 130 countries have adopted various types of gender quotas, from about twenty countries prior to the 1990s.
23. See, for example, Diamond and Morlino (2005).
24. Mary Robinson, the first woman President of Ireland, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and a member of The Elders, focused on some of the complexities of this issue in her speech ‘Women against fundamentalism and for equality’ (Robinson 2011).
25. Jeffrey Sachs, economic adviser to many transitional governments, responds: ‘There is [a] narrative that says that I was ruthlessly in favor of a market economy and uninterested in the rule of law, institutions, or social justice. This is [...] patently wrongheaded. I have always regarded economic reform, institution building, and social justice to go hand in hand’ (Sachs 2012).
26. In an unexpectedly critical assessment, economists at the IMF’s Research Department conceded that the distributional effects of fiscal austerity and financial liberalization increase inequality ‘appreciably’ (Ostry et al. 2016).
27. See also Bork (2015).
28. In reference to the 2008 campaign in the US, Sheeler and Anderson labeled the unprecedented sexualization of political images of Clinton and Palin as the ‘pornification’ of the presidential body (2013, p. 133).
29. At the APEC summits, a tradition of gifts offered by the hosting country began in 1993, when Bill Clinton gave leather bombardier jackets to attending world leaders. Several dresses had to be included among the gifts at the Beijing APEC Summit of 2014.
30. There are rising calls to eliminate the position of first lady in a variety of national contexts. Single, divorced or separated leaders are now more common and the ‘first family’ is less likely to stand for idealized images of this institution.
31. First ladies are not exempt from this treatment. A *Time* magazine article that recognized Lady Bird for her role in the Democrats’ triumph in 1960 mentioned that: ‘her nose is a bit too long, her mouth a bit too wide, her ankles a bit less than trim, and she is not outstanding at clothesmanship’ (Neath 2014).
32. Examples include Gro Harlem Brundtland (Deputy Chair of The Elders, Director-General of the World Health Organization, UN Special Envoy on Climate Change); Mary Robinson (Member of The Elders, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Envoy on Climate Change); Michelle Bachelet (Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women); and Vaira Vike-Freiberga (Special envoy on the reform of the United Nations in 2005).

33. Wu Yi also received special treatment in the international press for being the only member of the country's political elite who did not dye her hair.
34. CEDAW's lack of enforcement mechanisms and poor implementation led to an Optional Protocol, which entered into force in 2000.

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## Women at the Top: Leadership, Institutions and the Quality of Democracy

*Jane S. Jaquette*

During the third wave transitions to democracy (Huntington 1991) in the late twentieth century, women's participation helped define what 'democracy' would look like to publics that had lived, sometimes for decades, under authoritarian and/or exclusionary regimes.<sup>1</sup> During the democratization process, the need to bring divided factions together, write new constitutions, take account of human rights, and address the concerns of marginalized groups favored leadership qualities in leaders typically seen as more 'feminine,' while the widespread adoption of gender quotas and the appointment of more women to cabinet positions created a larger pool of women with political experience. Political agendas expanded and public attitudes changed, accepting and even welcoming more women in positions of political power.

As women's political representation has increased, most feminist research has focused on the gap between descriptive and substantive representation, showing that legislative outcomes for women have not kept pace with the growing number of women elected to office. Although many more women are now being elected to top executive roles, few have made women's issues a priority. With a few exceptions, women presidents and prime ministers do not appoint more women to cabinets than their male counterparts do.

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Using a gender lens to study democratization has often meant measuring the quality of democracy by the number of women elected and legislation on women's issues. Questions about whether women's leadership has strengthened or weakened democratic institutions themselves are rarely asked. Instead, a 'women and democracy' narrative has emerged in an ideal space in which other issues of democratic institutionalization are ignored. In that space, all good things go together: the quality of democracy, the political representation of women and the achievement of feminist agendas. Broader threats to democracy remain understudied and under-theorized.

Failed transitions in the Middle East, the disturbing rise in the number of democratic authoritarian states and the recent surge of right-wing movements in established democracies suggest that the third wave has receded. Democracies are facing challenges quite different from those envisioned in the 1980s and 1990s, while the term 'democratic' has been stretched to include a wide range of regimes that have decidedly authoritarian characteristics (e.g., Levitsky and Way 2010; Brancati 2014). There has been little systematic study of how women gain and exercise power in very different post-transition political systems that now share the democratic label. For example, how are informal institutions (Helmke and Levitsky 2006) gendered? In what ways do sectarian conflict and populism condition women's access to power and their political options in office?

### WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRACY: THE THIRD WAVE TRANSITIONS

The third wave of democratic transitions began in Portugal in 1974 and continued in the 1990s; the Arab Spring and liberalization in Myanmar suggest that we are not yet at the end of historical phase. In many countries, women's movements were active and recognized agents of change during the transition from authoritarian regimes toward democracy (Jaquette 1989; Waylen 2007; Walsh 2012), giving them some say in how the new or restored democracies should represent women and recognize women's rights. During this same period, UN Decade for Women (1975–1985) and Beijing (1995) strongly reinforced the trend toward greater political incorporation of women. Many countries and political parties adopted gender quotas. In several countries, these have made a significant difference in the number of women elected to national legislatures and/or local governments (Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009).

The transition period helped establish a new narrative about the linkage between democracy and women's participation. Women's movements gave democracy a new image—less elitist and hierarchical, more pluralistic, attentive to human rights and, despite the economic austerity of the 1980s and early 1990s, responsive to social needs. Democracy, which had been attacked by both the left and the right during much of the twentieth century, and was sometimes dismissed as a luxury of the rich in the developed world, became the norm to which all countries were expected to aspire (Dunn 2014).

Many feminists were critical of the failure to sufficiently gender transition politics (e.g., Waylen 2007). Few women were elected in the immediate post-transition period. Women's demands for changes in family law or reproductive rights often met with resistance. There was a strong sense of disillusionment among activists, especially in those countries where women's movements had been the most involved in bringing an end to authoritarian rule (Stevenson 2007). Many countries established women's ministries, but these were subject to executive whim and criticized as elitist. Quotas raised the percentage of women in legislatures and increased the number of bills proposed on women's issues, but these often failed to lead to new laws (e.g., Franceschet and Piscopo 2008), while those that passed were often not enforced, especially those addressing violence against women (Piovesan 2009; Weldon and Htun 2010). Women's movements that had been active during the transitions lost momentum as their leaders went into government; feminists lamented the loss of momentum as women's movements were increasingly replaced by professionalized non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that competed with other interest groups and service providers for limited domestic and international resources (Alvarez 1999).<sup>2</sup>

Although a very positive women and democracy narrative emerged, based on a few well-researched cases including Chile, Brazil, South Africa, Poland and the Philippines, the roles of women in many other Third Wave transitions have not been studied in any detail. Anecdotal data suggest that they present a more complex picture. In Central Europe and Eastern Europe, women activists did not follow the script: they were skeptical of Western feminists and rejected much of the feminist agenda (Jaquette and Wolchik 1998). Women leaders in established but embattled democracies in South and Southeast Asia paid little attention to women's issues. In South Africa, as in Latin America, they were marginalized, while in many other African countries, civil wars and a persistent tradition of military leadership made it difficult for women to gain power at the top (see Jalalzai, this volume).

Nonetheless, there has been significant progress. It is now widely accepted that women should participate politically at all levels of government. There has been a steady accretion of legislation to address women's issues, while a robust civil society, often relying on women's activism on a range of issues, has become the democratic norm. Two research foci are lacking, however. How do women's issues and participation fare as electoral democracies become more authoritarian and repressive, in Venezuela, Turkey or Bangladesh, for example? And how have women leaders fared in the other transitions—including the governments that became democracies by default? Among these are several post-Communist cases, where governments were established to fill the vacuum left by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but had neither popular movements nor historical experience with democracy. Do the women who have gained executive power in several post-Communist countries exercise real power, and to what effect?

### WOMEN LEADERS (1960–2015): GAINS OVER TIME

Table 2.1 below shows that the number of women who serve in top power positions in countries around the globe has increased dramatically since the mid-1970s. The historical tendency to associate leadership with masculine attributes such as assertiveness, decisiveness and physical strength (Klenke 1996) has been changing to include or even favor qualities commonly seen as stereotypically feminine, such as sensitivity, consultative consensus-building and other forms of soft power (Brown 2014).<sup>3</sup> Of course, this may be the result of an historical moment and may change again now that the relative peace of the unipolar 1990s gives way to more geopolitical conflicts and increasing concerns about security. A global climate of fear may cause publics to demand more authoritarian—and more masculine—forms of leadership (Ignatieff 2014).

Some researchers have argued that women's leadership is particularly valued in times of crisis (e.g., Hodson 1997; Jalalzai 2008; Beckwith 2015). Again, this generalization may be misleading. Different kinds of crises demand different qualities of leadership. But, like transitions from authoritarian rule toward democracy, which require leaders who can bridge often bitter divisions between those who supported the authoritarian government and those in opposition (Bitar and Lowenthal 2015), periods of crisis seem to favor women who can be seen as above politics, able to reconcile differences and reinforce peaceful, democratic change. Women in post-conflict societies—two obvious examples would be Ellen Sirleaf Johnson in



Liberia (Adams 2008, her and chapter in this volume; Jalalzai 2013) and Violeta Chamorro in Nicaragua (Saint-Germain 2013)—are seen as having qualities and personal histories that have enabled them to unify deeply divided populations, portraying themselves as mothers of the country as a whole. Crises have also been used to explain the paths to power in other cases, including Roza Otunbayeva in Kyrgyzstan, Atifete Jahjaga in Kosovo and Catherine Samba-Panza in the Central African Republic.

One reason is that political crises may make candidates with personal histories that bridge political divisions particularly attractive. Angela Merkel's background as a Protestant from the former East Germany and her qualities as a consensus builder are said to have helped her become Chancellor in Germany's post-reunification unusual times (Wiliarty 2008). Similarly Michelle Bachelet's personal history was a source of strength, while her motherly image and her energetic and open personal style helped her navigate Chile's often-treacherous political waters (Ríos Tobar 2008; Montecinos, this volume).

Table 2.1 lists women presidents and prime ministers from 1960 to 2015 who served more than a year in office. Women held only three top positions during the 1960s, and only four in the 1970s. The number of women executive leaders increases as more countries become democratic, rising to 9 in the 1980s and 16 in the 1990s. There were 22 women presidents and prime ministers in the first decade of the twenty-first century, and in the first half of the current decade, already 26 (including women who were elected in 2015, and are included but had not yet served a year at the time of writing). Tsai Ing-wen was elected president of Taiwan in January 2016, making a total of 27.

Farida Jalalzai (2008, and this volume) observes that women are more often chosen in systems where the president and prime minister share power and that women are usually in the weaker role. Table 2.1, by including only women who served more than a year, excludes the weakest cases: women who served on an interim basis or who were replaced before they could actually have much of an impact. As a result, this list offers a more positive assessment. I have identified women who held power in bold, based on their formal roles in parliamentary democracies (PMM) or presidential systems (PresP). Twelve of the 27 women presidents and 40 of 53 prime ministers held such roles. In addition, I have bolded the names of presidents and prime ministers whose online biographies indicate they held more than symbolic power.

Table 2.1 Women presidents and prime ministers, 1960–2015, by date, time in office, position and region

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i> <i>Year/month</i>	<i>Time</i> <i>Years/days</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Region</i>
1960s					
<b>Sirimavo Bandaranaike</b>	1960/7	4/249	Ceylon	PM	S. Asia
<b>Indira Gandhi</b>	1966/1	11/90	India	PMM	S. Asia
<b>Golda Meir</b>	1969/3	5/78	Israel	PMM	MENA
1970s					
<b>Sirimavo Bandaranaike</b>	1970/5	7/55	Sri Lanka	PM	S. Asia
<b>Isabel Martínez de Perón*</b>	1974/7	1/267	Argentina	PresP	Lat Am
<b>Elisabeth Domitien*</b>	1975/1	1/96	Cent. Afr. Rep	PM	Africa
<b>Margaret Thatcher</b>	1979/5	11/28	UK	PMM	W. Eur
1980s					
<b>Indira Gandhi</b>	1980/1	4/290	India	PMM	S. Asia
<b>Eugenia Charles</b>	1980/7	14/328	Dominica	PMM	Caribbean
<b>Vigdís Finnbogadóttir</b>	1980/8	16/0	Iceland	Pres	Scandinavia
<b>Gro Harlem Brundtland</b>	1980/2	252 (r)	Norway	PMM	Scandinavia
<b>Agatha Barbara</b>	1982/2	5/0	Malta	Pres	W. Eur
<b>Milka Planinc</b>	1982/5	5/364	Yugoslavia	PM	E/C Eur
<b>Corazon Aquino</b>	1986/2	6/126	Philippines	PresP	SE Asia
<b>Gro Harlem Brundtland</b>	1986/5	3/160	Norway	PMM	Scandinavia
<b>Benazir Bhutto</b>	1988/12	1/216 (r)	Pakistan	PMM	S. Asia
1990s					
<b>Violeta Chamorro</b>	1990/4	6/250	Nicaragua	PresP	Lat Am
<b>Gro Harlem Brundtland</b>	1990/11	3/160	Norway	PMM	Scandinavia
<b>Mary Robinson</b>	1990/12	6/283	Ireland	Pres	W. Eur
<b>Khaleda Zia</b>	1991/2	5/32	Bangladesh	PMM	S. Asia

Hanna Suchocka *	1992/7	1/100	Poland	PMM	E/C Eur PostC
Tansu Çiller	1993/6	2/267	Turkey	PMM	MENA
<b>Benazir Bhutto</b>	1993/10	3/17	Pakistan	PMM	S. Asia
Chandrika Kumaratunga	1994/11	11/7	Sri Lanka	Pres	S. Asia
<b>Sirimavo Bandaranike</b>	1994/11	5/239	Sri Lanka	PM	S. Asia
<b>Sheikh Hasina</b>	1996/6	5/33	Bangladesh	PMM	S. Asia
Mary McAleese	1997/11	13/364	Ireland	Pres	W. Eur
<b>Janet Jagan *</b>	1997/12	1/235	Guyana	Pres	Lat Am
<b>Jenny Shipley</b>	1997/12	2/0	New Zealand	PMM	Commonw
Vaira Vike-Freiberga	1999/7	8/0	Latvia	Pres	Baltics PostC
<b>Mireya Moscoso</b>	1999/9	5/0	Panama	PresP	Lat Am
<b>Helen Clark</b>	1999/12	8/350	New Zealand	PMM	Commonw
2000s					
<b>Tarja Halonen</b>	2000/3	12/0	Finland	Pres	Scandinavia
<b>Gloria Macapagal Arroyo</b>	2001/1	9/161	Philippines	PresP	SE Asia
Mame Madior Boye *	2001/3	1/246	Senegal	PM	Africa
<b>Megawati Sukarnoputri</b>	2001/7	3/89	Indonesia	PresP	SE Asia
<b>Khaleda Zia</b>	2001/10	5/28	Bangladesh	PMM	S. Asia
Maria das Neves *	2002/10	1/351	Sao Tome	PM	Africa
Natasa Micić *	2002/12	1/29	Serbia	acting Pres	C/E Eur PostC
Luisa Diogo	2004/2	5/333	Mozambique	PM	Africa
<b>Yulia Tymoshenko</b>	2005/1	225 (r)	Ukraine	PM	C/E Eur PostC
<b>Angela Merkel</b>	2005/12	incumbent	Germany	Chancellor	W. Eur
<b>Ellen Johnson Sirleaf</b>	2006/1	incumbent	Liberia	PresP	Africa
<b>Portia Simpson-Miller</b>	2006/3	1/165 (r)	Jamaica	PMM	Caribbean
<b>Michelle Bachelet</b>	2006/3	4/0	Chile	PresP	Lat Am
Pratibha Patil	2007/7	5/0	India	Pres	S. Asia

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i> <i>Year/month</i>	<i>Time</i> <i>Years/days</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Region</i>
<b>Cristina Fernández de Kirchner</b>	2007/12	8/0	Argentina	PresP	Lat Am
<b>Yulia Tymoshenko</b>	2007/12	2/7	Ukraine	PM	C/E Eur PostC
<b>Zinada Greceanii*</b>	2008/3	1/167	Moldova	PMM	C/E Eur PostC
<b>Michèle Pierre-Louis*</b>	2008/9	1/67	Haiti	PM	Caribbean
<b>Sheikh Hasina</b>	2009/1	6/359	Bangladesh	PMM	S. Asia
<b>Johanna Siguroardottir</b>	2009/2	4/111	Iceland	PMM	Scandinavia
<b>Dalia Grybauskaitė</b>	2009/7	incumbent	Lithuania	PMM	Baltic PostC
<b>Jadranka Kosor</b>	2009/7	2/170	Croatia	PMM	C/E Eur PostC
2010–					
<b>Dilma Rousseff</b>	2010/1	incumbent	Brazil	PresP	Lat Am
<b>Roza Otunbayeva*</b>	2010/4	1/238	Kyrgyzstan	Pres	Stan PostC
<b>Laura Chinchilla</b>	2010/5	4/0	Costa Rica	PresP	Lat Am
<b>Kamla Persad-Bissessar</b>	2010/5	5/106	Trinidad/Tobago	PMM	Caribbean
<b>Julia Gillard</b>	2010/6	3/3	Australia	PMM	Commonw
<b>Iveta Radicová*</b>	2010/6	1/271	Slovakia	PMM	C/E Eur PostC
<b>Atifete Jahjaga</b>	2011/4	incumbent	Kosovo	Pres	C/E Eur PostC
<b>Mari Kiviniemi*</b>	2011/6	1/0	Finland	PMM	Scandinavia
<b>Yingluck Shinawatra</b>	2011/7	2/308	Thailand	PM	SE Asia
<b>Helle Thorning Schmidt</b>	2011/10	3/268	Denmark	PMM	Scandinavia
<b>Portia Simpson-Miller</b>	2012/1	3/360	Jamaica	PMM	Caribbean
<b>Joyce Banda</b>	2012/4	2/54	Malawi	PresP	Africa
<b>Park Geun-hye</b>	2013/2	incumbent	South Korea	Pres	E. Asia
<b>Alenka Bratusek*</b>	2013/3	1/182	Slovenia	PMM	C/E Eur PostC
<b>Tatiana Turanskaya</b>	2013/6	2/125 (inc <sup>†</sup> )	Transnistria	PM	C/E Eur PostC
<b>Erna Solberg</b>	2013/10	2/76	Norway	PMM	Scandinavia
<b>Laimdota Straujuma*</b>	2014/1	1/343	Latvia	PMM	Baltics PostC

<b>Catherine Samba-Panza</b>	2014	incumbent				Pres	Africa
<b>Michelle Bachelet</b>	2014/3	incumbent	Chile		PresP		Lat Am
<b>Marie Louise Coleiro Preca</b>	2014/4	incumbent	Malta		PMM		Eur
<b>Ewa Kopacz</b>	2014/9	1/55	Poland		PMM		E/C Eur PostC
<b>Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic</b>	2015/2	incumbent	Croatia		PMM		E/C Eur PostC
<b>Saara Kuugongelwa</b>	2015/3	incumbent	Namibia		PM		Africa
<b>Amena Gurib</b>	2015/6	incumbent	Mauritius		PM		Africa
<b>Bidhya Devi Bhandari</b>	2015/10	incumbent	Nepal		PMM		S. Asia
<b>Beata Szydlo</b>	2015/11	incumbent	Poland		PMM		E/C Eur PostC
<b>Tsai Ing-wen</b>	2016/1	incumbent	Taiwan		Pres		E. Asia

*Note:* The list includes only those who served more than one year; \* = served less than 2 years in that position; PresP = presidents in presidential systems; PMM = prime ministers in systems where prime minister is formally the executive (parliamentary republics and constitutional monarchies); (t) served less than a year but were re-elected later. Tsai Ing-wen is included, elected in 2016

*Sources:* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_elected\\_and\\_appointed\\_female\\_heads\\_of\\_state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_elected_and_appointed_female_heads_of_state); [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_elected\\_female\\_heads\\_of\\_state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_elected_female_heads_of_state); [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_elected\\_or\\_appointed\\_female\\_heads\\_of\\_government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_elected_or_appointed_female_heads_of_government). Accessed December 30, 2015. Biographical data from various internet sources and from chapters in Genovese and Steckenrider (2013), and Adams (2008), Holli (2008), Jalalzai (2008) and Wilfarty (2008)

Power-sharing is complex, and deciding whether the president or prime minister is dominant in a mixed system is a matter of judgment. It is particularly difficult to assess among the women who were most recently elected and have not yet established a record in office. The formal assignment of executive power may not coincide with effective power. For example, Turkey and Poland are both categorized as parliamentary republics, with executive power formally in the hands of the prime minister. But the fact that Hanna Suchocka was the prime minister while Lech Walesa was the president of Poland, and that Tansu Çiller held the post of prime minister but Turkey's current strongman, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is its president, not its prime minister, suggests that formal typologies cannot be taken at face value.<sup>4</sup> From the biographies of these two leaders, I concluded that Çiller wielded considerably more power than Suchocka, so her name is in bold, though Suchocka's is not.<sup>5</sup> Constitutions can change. Finland, for example, cut back sharply on presidential prerogatives in the 1990s. Even when women's representation at this level is symbolic, it is still significant, however, because it helps normalize the presence of women in top political roles. Most of the women in Table 2.1 who held ceremonial roles often had impressive careers with substantial public recognition and political influence.

The three women, all prime ministers, who gained power in the 1960s—Bandaranaike, Gandhi and Meir—exercised real power, which was also true of women leaders in the 1970s, except Elisabeth Domitien, who was chosen to enhance the Central African Republic's prestige during the UN's International Year of the Woman (1975). The cases of Thatcher and Bandaranaike are well known. Isabel Perón (Weir 2013) was the woman president of a presidential system. The third wife of Argentine President Juan Perón and his elected vice president became president in 1974 when he died in office, and was overthrown in a military coup in 1976.

Five of the eight women elected during the 1980s indisputably exercised real power: Eugenia Charles in Dominica; Gro Harlem Brundtland in Norway, who served less than a year in 1980, but elected again in 1986 and in 1990 (Henderson 2013); Indira Gandhi, who had served as India's prime minister for less than a year in 1966–1967, but was the prime minister again from 1980 until she was assassinated in 1984; and Benazir Bhutto, elected in Pakistan in 1988 and again in 1993. Cory Aquino led a popular movement against the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, and was elected president in 1986. Both Aquino and Bhutto can be considered transition leaders. In 1990, Violeta Chamorro presided over the shift from a revolutionary to a market-oriented economy in Nicaragua, but she is

not a transition president; her opponent and predecessor, Sandinista Daniel Ortega, was democratically elected in 1984. How much power Aquino and Chamorro actually had is a matter of debate. Aquino managed to survive several coup attempts against her (Col 2013) and, although Chamorro is sometimes dismissed as a stand in, her ‘accomplishments—staying alive, staying in power, and keeping the country from full-blown civil war—were by no means trivial’ (Saint-Germain 2013, p. 140).

Although most transitions took place in the 1980s and 1990s, the increase in women’s leadership lagged a decade or more. In countries where political experience is a salient criterion for both male and female leaders, this can be at least partly explained by the fact that women needed time to establish careers as legislators, party heads and cabinet ministers in order to be credible candidates. In other settings, political acumen, membership in a political dynasty and other criteria may be more relevant. Electorates may be responding to an international demonstration effect showing that women leaders are electable; they are often assets to male political elites.

During the 2000s, 10 of the 22 women prime ministers and presidents led countries that went through third wave transitions, including Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in the Philippines and Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesia, as well as Michelle Bachelet in Chile and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina; they were joined by Dilma Rousseff, elected in Brazil in 2010. Several women leaders during this decade held office in post-Communist states: Yulia Tymoshenko (Ukraine), Natasa Micić (Serbia), Zinaida Greceanii (Moldova), Dalia Grybouskaite (Lithuania) and Jadranka Kosor (Croatia), as is true of 9 of the 23 presidents and prime ministers taking office since 2000. Perhaps surprisingly, the majority of these have governed in peripheral states, not in the former Communist countries that joined the European Union, where the establishment of liberal democratic institutions was a requirement for entry.

## CONTEXTS COUNT

Women gain and exercise power in very different political and cultural settings. The broad-brush regional comparisons that follow suggest that more comparative research would be valuable and that context matters in the relationship between women’s leadership, substantive representation and the strength of democratic institutions.

Women’s roles in several Latin American transitions have been crucial to the development of the women and democracy narrative. In this

region, political culture and constitutional provisions grant presidents a great deal of power. Chile, Brazil and Argentina, all of which experienced democratic transitions, have been headed by women, and each was elected for a second term; all were from leftist parties. Centrist Laura Chinchilla (Costa Rica) was elected in an established democracy. Argentina and Costa Rica both have effective gender quotas in place, with women holding 33 percent of the legislative seats in Costa Rica and 37 percent in Argentina; these percentages are among the highest in the world.<sup>6</sup>

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, president of Argentina from 2007 to 2015, was the wife of President Néstor Kirchner who died in 2010; she had her own political career and was elected in her own right. Michelle Bachelet (Chile), Dilma Rousseff (Brazil) and Laura Chinchilla (Costa Rica) were not related by blood or marriage to a male political leader, yet all were groomed as successors by their popular male predecessors (see accounts in other chapters in this book). Only Bachelet was committed to women's issues, appointing a parity cabinet in her first term, and seeking a constitutional reform that would make gender quotas possible in both her first and second terms. Rousseff and Fernández de Kirchner did not advocate for gender issues or appoint many women to their cabinets, and Chinchilla's administration 'stopped promoting women's rights' (Fernández Ramil and Espinosa 2012, p. 131).

Liberal democratic checks and balances, judicial independence, freedom of the press and respect for private property remained norms in Chile, Brazil and Costa Rica, although they were not always fully respected in practice. Cristina Fernández identified with the radical populism of the so-called Bolivarian states to the north, Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador. Unlike her Bolivarian counterparts, however, she did not challenge term limits and conceded victory to the opposition when her party lost the presidency in December 2015. The Kirchners' opposition to neoliberalism, the recovery from Argentina's economic crisis of 2001–2002, and their spending on social programs made *kirchnerismo* popular, as did their firm efforts to bring military leaders of the 'dirty war' (1976–1983) to justice. Fernández de Kirchner's government recognized gay marriage and other LGBT rights (Fernández Ramil and Espinosa 2012). But her attacks on the press, her polarizing political rhetoric, and her interference with the judiciary weakened rather than strengthened democratic institutions.

The positive impression many had of strong female leadership in Latin America was recently challenged when both Bachelet and Rousseff were hit by serious corruption scandals. These cost them substantial public support



at a time when their economies were reeling from dropping commodity prices. Yet, in both cases, the demand for greater transparency can be seen as the result of a healthy civil society and a relatively independent judiciary—important criteria of democratic institutionalization. Ironically, as Bachelet and Rouseff lost popular support, Fernández de Kirchner, whose personal fortune (according to official filings) has multiplied during her term in office, retained her popularity.

The Central and Eastern European cases do not fit the conventional women and democracy narrative. Although women were active in Solidarity in Poland and in the Charter 77 movement in Czechoslovakia, activists distanced themselves from Western feminists, calling feminism ‘another ism,’ arguing that under Communism they had already experienced equality and that it did not work; and pointing out that the family, far from being a patriarchal cage, was a site of freedom in a totalitarian society. As market societies replaced state socialism, women lost many of the gains feminists in the west were demanding, including state supported childcare and the right to abortion. Quotas for women in legislatures were dropped, tainted by their association with the outgoing Communist regimes (Jaquette and Wolchik 1998), and fewer women were elected to legislatures. Today women are 24 percent of legislators in Poland, 20 percent in the Czech Republic, 12 percent in Ukraine and only 9 percent in Hungary (Gulyas 2014; see also Rueschemeyer and Wolchik 2009).

Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania and Ukraine are on the list of countries in Table 2.1 that have had women prime ministers, along with Serbia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Croatia and Transnistria. I found little information on these cases. Interviews I did in the mid-1990s suggested that women in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic (then Czechoslovakia) were joining NGOs that promoted the interests of women entrepreneurs—an indicator that ambitious women were moving away from what was clearly shaping up to be a male-dominated political arena.<sup>7</sup> Today, Eastern and Central European countries have the highest percentage of women CEOs of any region in the world (Foy 2015). As the former Eastern bloc countries that joined the European Union seem to be turning inward and to the right in the face of economic challenges and an unprecedented influx of refugees, it is not yet clear what role women’s leadership and political participation will play.

A third regional pattern can be found in South and Southeast Asia. As Mark Thompson (2015) points out, the relatively large numbers of female leaders in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Philippines are

something of a paradox.<sup>8</sup> These countries are patriarchal, with coercive restrictions on female mobility and sexual behavior and limited access to education and employment for women. Nonetheless, women have played outsized political roles in the region, with Benazir Bhutto, Sheikh Hasina and Cory Aquino leading or inspiring mass opposition movements, then going from being opposition leaders to positions of power in democratizing governments. Aung San Suu Kyi, legally barred from the top job, is now Myanmar's leader state counselor, a position newly created by the legislature and potentially more powerful than the president.

Thompson describes these women as dynasts and argues that their paths to power fit a common pattern. All are members of prominent political families. All are wives or daughters of male politicians who were assassinated and who, though they may have been controversial in life, became martyrs in death, representing 'nostalgia for better times' (2015, p. 540).<sup>9</sup> As women leaders, they are perceived as above politics, as moral rather than political; their lack of political experience may be seen as a political asset. In several of the cases he reviews, they were not politically ambitious, but were recruited to lead family-based parties when potential male candidates refused to do so. Because women are seen as traditional by nature, their campaigns did not appear as attacks on traditional religious values. They were credited with being personally honest (though other members of their families might be egregiously corrupt). They succeeded in part, he argues, because they were less threatening to the male leaders of party factions (Thompson 2015, p. 545).

But, Thompson adds, once in power, women leaders often find these female advantages turned against them. They may be relegated to symbolic roles, be ridiculed as weak and ineffective, or be attacked for inappropriate behavior, as their public roles will often conflict with gender expectations. Dynastic rule does not nurture liberal democratic institutions. Political parties are family-based networks that rely heavily on clientelism and patronage, not on policy platforms to address social and economic issues. Public cynicism grows when these women, idealized as mothers or sisters of the nation, turn out to be interested primarily in serving dynastic interests. There is wide agreement that the ongoing intra-elite battle between Sheikh Hasina and Khaled Zia in Bangladesh has been a barrier to democratic consolidation (Thompson 2015, p. 552). 'The ruling dynasties of Bangladesh are the expression of a feudalistic patronage system,' and both women, 'once perceived by their supporters as "saviors" of the country,' disappointed many who witnessed 'how daily living conditions

were deteriorating rather than improving' (Gerlach 2013, p. 143). Today Bangladesh is increasingly known for its repression of dissent.

Although this combination of dynastic rule and clientelist politics is most often associated with political systems in South and Southeast Asia, it is also present in varying degrees in other regions where modern Weberian institutions are not fully in place. Violeta Chamorro's successful race against Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua in 1990 relied on her dynastic attributes as a member of the upper class and the wife of a martyr (her husband, a newspaper editor, was killed by the Somoza dictatorship). Her motherly image was reinforced by the fact that one of her sons was a Sandinista, and another a leader of the opposition. In 2016, Peruvians almost elected a woman who in some ways fits the dynastic mold. The leading candidate was Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of disgraced president Alberto Fujimori (1990–2001).<sup>10</sup> He is now in jail, serving time for corruption and human rights violations, but his followers view him as unjustly imprisoned. They are also loyal to Keiko because they benefitted from her father's clientelist social programs—and they expect their loyalty will be rewarded in the future if a Fujimori returns to the presidential palace.

Seeing the differences among the roles of women leaders in the political systems of these three regions suggests that much could be learned from a more rigorous comparison of political contexts, perhaps organized explicitly by regime type or by degree of democratic institutionalization as well as by region. Such research would call attention to how governments that have undergone democratization are evolving, and would examine how women lead in settings where liberal democracy is under threat. More insights could obviously be gained by comparing cases in Africa and Asia, as well.<sup>11</sup> It is time to move feminist research beyond the transitional women and democracy narrative to examine the roles women leaders play in strengthening or weakening democratic institutions.

The contemporary women and democracy narrative is based on transitions in the Global South, but the liberal democratic model emerged in the developed West, in Western Europe and Scandinavia, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Decades of peace and economic prosperity have helped lock in public support for constitutional democracy as the only legitimate form of government for a modern society. Except for the United States, all are parliamentary democracies.

Among these Western established democracies, the Scandinavian states have been most successful at electing women to executive leadership roles. The lack of external threats, their small size and the salience of welfare

issues in countries with what until recently have been largely homogeneous populations may allow voters to respond positively to women's skills and experiences. Finland and Norway, but also Iceland and Denmark, have produced disproportionately high percentage of women at the top. Countries on Europe's periphery (e.g., Ireland and Malta) have also had women leaders, but largely in symbolic positions. Among the Western European countries, only Belgium, Spain, Portugal and France have legislative quotas, although it is common for political parties in these countries to have them (Krook 2009, pp. 229–237). Until the 2016 election of Theresa May, the second woman to lead Great Britain, none had had a woman prime minister except France.<sup>12</sup> Women have held the top posts in New Zealand and Australia, and in several countries in the English-speaking Caribbean. North America lags behind: Canada's one female Prime Minister, Kim Campbell, served only briefly (Campbell 1996), and the United States has yet to elect a woman president.

The United States does not have national legislative, party, or even local government quotas; for both ideological reasons and practical considerations (winner-take-all rather than PR electoral systems), Americans have never even debated the issue, although the US government imposed gender quotas in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the absence of quotas, women's representation in Congress (around 18–19 percent) remains below the global average (around 22 percent). Women currently hold six US governorships; three women have recently served as Secretary of State, and women have held important roles on Congressional committees. If she wins, Hillary Clinton will be the first woman president of the United States, but at this writing (mid 2016), the outcome is far from assured.<sup>13</sup>

The data in Table 2.1 suggests that having a modern, liberal democracy, active feminist movements, women in the pipeline, and even a crisis do not produce anything like gender equality at the top. Timing and a country's geopolitical power position may be factors. Today, the United States and the countries of Western Europe seem to be caught in the middle: women's leadership is not yet normalized (so there is resistance); at the same time, the threat environment creates demand for a masculine projection of power and decisiveness. The US setting has been hard for women. It is telling that in a campaign debate in 1984, George H.W. Bush gained ground by asking Democratic vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro whether she would be capable of 'pushing the nuclear button.' Clinton has had to position herself as someone willing to use US force abroad (e.g., in Iraq and Libya); ironically, her experience is held against her in this campaign year of revolt against the establishments of both parties.

Angela Merkel and now Theresa May are important contemporary exceptions to the generalization that a woman cannot get to the top in a country that sees itself as a major power. Comparing Thatcher and Merkel, the two powerful European women leaders who have played highly visible roles on the world stage, suggests that today there is public tolerance for a more 'female' style of leadership than was the case during the Cold War. Thatcher was competitive, hardnosed and responded single-mindedly to an economic crisis with what many saw as harsh economic reforms, despite the consequences for Britain's unions, welfare state and the poor (Genovese 2013). By contrast, Merkel has governed during a period of economic prosperity in Germany; her style is low key, open to dialogue, but firm. In a world that is no longer neatly divided between East and West, Merkel has shown her skills as a negotiator, going head to head with the world's powerful male leaders. She has taken a tough stand on bailing out Greece, and a brave, politically costly, if likely unsustainable, approach to accepting large numbers of migrants from Syria and other parts of the war that has torn the Middle East.

These women responded in quite different ways to the international challenge of their political careers. Thatcher's forceful response to the Argentine invasion of the Falklands/Malvinas islands was fully in keeping with her personality and boosted her flagging public support. Merkel's willingness to welcome the tens of thousands of refugees crossing German borders may be motivated in part by the German commitment to atone for its Nazi past, but it can also be seen as feminine expression of care. Her generosity could bring down her government, and deprive Europe, and the world, of its most effective voice for those who are fleeing the violence in the Middle East.

Over five decades, the dramatic increase in the number of women presidents and prime ministers has broadened the definition of what constitutes political leadership. As more women reach the top, it will be increasingly difficult to stereotype them. But normalization will also take away some of the current advantages women candidates enjoy because they are different from, rather than directly competitive with, men. Research on women's leadership faces a larger challenge. Democracy is not inevitable; measuring the quality of democracy by women's descriptive and substantive representation cannot mark the limit of what feminist scholarship should aspire to. Skepticism about the value and effectiveness of democratic governments is growing, and public attitudes in some countries seem to be moving toward greater acceptance, even admiration, for authoritarianism.<sup>14</sup>

To meet this challenge, the women and democracy narrative must expand to incorporate the connections between women's political participation, leadership and the strengthening of liberal democratic institutions. Despite feminist criticisms, these institutions are the only true guarantors of women's rights and equity, and of the political values that nurture women's lives and choices, from civility to transparency and social peace. That democratic ethos cannot be taken for granted.

## NOTES

1. The author is grateful to Verónica Montecinos, Abraham F. Lowenthal, and Jennifer Piscopo for their very helpful comments on drafts of this chapter; any errors that remain are mine.
2. This disenchantment was visible among Latin American activists by the late 1980s, concerned that the return to politics as usual would be dominated by men (Jaquette 1989, pp. 206–207). In some Latin American cases, authoritarian governments proved more progressive on gender issues than democratic ones (Htun 2003). Globally, public opinion surveys do not show that women support democracy more than men, but this seems to be a result of levels of education and urbanization rather than gender (Diamond and Plattner 2008, Chap. 3).
3. At one time, financial management was also seen as a male job, but that barrier has been broken by the appointment of Janet Yellen as head of the US Federal Reserve, Christine Lagarde as Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, and the rising number of female finance ministers. See also Duerst-Lahti (1997).
4. Systems of government (Presidential, taken from website 'SystemsofGovernment,' at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_system\\_of\\_government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_system_of_government)).
5. Çiller drew international attention as the first powerful woman leader to leave office because of corruption charges, later dismissed. There is still an assumption that women are likely to be less corrupt than men, but their failures seem to elicit greater public anger than similar charges against men. See Esarey and Schwindt-Beyer (2016).
6. See International IDEA, Global Database of Quotas for Women. Brazil's quota law is very weak; Chile has had party quotas but its binomial electoral system (recently reformed) made it difficult to implement quotas. For a comparison of Brazil and Argentina, see Marx et al. (2009).
7. See also Kristen Ghodsee's fascinating studies of women in post-Communist Bulgaria (e.g., Ghodsee 2011).
8. See also Richter (1990/1991) and Anderson (2013); there is a more detailed analysis of female dynasts in Derichs and Thompson (2013).

9. In Latin America, by contrast, a political martyr would connote the revolutionary promise of the future, not nostalgia for the past.
10. Fujimori tried to use his pro-woman stance to burnish his democratic credentials internationally. He was the only president to attend the UN 4th Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. He promoted population control in defiance of the Catholic Church's increasingly conservative resistance to women's reproductive rights under Pope John Paul II, but in ways that were racist and coercive. See Boesten (2010).
11. As suggested by Farida Jalalzai's chapter in this volume. See also chapters in Tadros (2014). Park Geun-hye, the current president of South Korea, is the daughter of Park Chung-hee, the authoritarian president of the country from 1962 to 1979, when he was assassinated. Female Kuomintang (KMT) candidate, Hung Hsiu-chu, who dropped out of the race and Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party, who won the election, won a margin of 56 percent to 31 percent (Ramzy 2016).
12. French Prime Minister Edith Cresson is not listed in Table 2.1 because she served less than a year.
13. The lack of support for Hillary among young women in the early primaries has puzzled analysts and led to soul searching (and angry outbursts) among older feminists. See, for example, Faludi (2016).
14. See, for example, John Dunn (2014): 'Many anywhere in the world must view democracy's presence or prospective arrival with misgivings; and few anywhere can be wholly confident that it offers them any personal guarantee of safety, prosperity, or existential reassurance' (p. 38). See also Berggruen and Gardels (2012).

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# Global Trends in Women's Executive Leadership

*Farida Jalalzai*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores global trends related to women's attainment of presidencies and prime ministerships. Women govern diverse countries at all levels of development and democracy and places where women in the general population still lack access to educational, economic, and professional opportunities. A combination of factors, including political institutions, structural influences, and personal backgrounds, explains women's success. Women disproportionately hold prime ministerial positions rather than presidencies. In dual executive systems with a prime minister and president, women often occupy the less powerful post. Women frequently enter politics as activists, particularly in transitional contexts, and rely on family ties in certain cultural backdrops. Democratic transition facilitates women's rise to executive power, although their powers and paths remain limited to specific geographical regions. The very conditions opening political space to women including executive configurations and political instability, however, also present obstacles to governance. Still, women at

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the helms of power offer numerous benefits for gender equality and the quality of democracy.

This chapter outlines the number, positions, and regions where women gained ground, particularly in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Africa. It also explains women's success, or lack thereof, in attaining executive office, including transition, and assesses the implications of the dearth of women executives and their limited paths and powers. It suggests that women executives may promote policies on behalf of women, improve women's political engagement, and views about women's leadership among the public.

## TRENDS

Since 1960, when Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the first woman to break the executive glass ceiling in Sri Lanka, 108 women (through August of 2015) have held positions of heads of state or government and governed 68 different countries.<sup>1</sup> Women have yet to crack the executive ceiling in other areas, however, including the Middle East (with the exception of Israel) and North Africa, as well as in some of the most high-profile countries including the United States, Russia, and China (see Table 3.1). Notably, more than one woman has come to power in many places (such as Finland, Haiti, Argentina, New Zealand, and Bangladesh). The same countries generate women leaders as the conditions benefitting women's rise initially then facilitate subsequent cases; here women's leadership is normalized (see Jalalzai, 2016b).

Women executives made fairly limited progress until the 1990s when their numbers nearly quadrupled. Over three-quarters of all female presidents and prime ministers ascended in the last 20 years (see Fig. 3.1). A combination of factors shapes women's executive advancement including political institutions (offices, executive powers and pathways, and selection procedures) and political transition. These operate in tandem with personal features such as activism and family connections.

## CONDITIONS FACILITATING THE RISE OF WOMEN EXECUTIVES

Political institutions account for women's success. Although more varied, political systems can be classified into three main types—presidential, parliamentary, and semi-presidential (Elgie 2009). Though presidencies are actually more prevalent worldwide (see Jalalzai 2013) women have most success ascending to prime ministerships, comprising 62 of the 108

**Table 3.1** Women leaders and their dates in office by region and country, 1960–2015

<i>Region Country</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Dates in office</i>	<i>Transition</i>	<i>Path</i>	<i>Power</i>	<i>Family ties</i>
Africa							
Burundi	Prime Minister	Sylvie Kinigi	07/10/1993–02/11/1994	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Central African Republic	Prime Minister	Elisabeth Domitien	01/03/1975–04/07/1976	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Central African Republic	President*	Catherine Samba-Panza	01/23/2014–present	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Gabon	President*	Rose Francine Rogombé*	06/10/2009–10/16/2009	Yes	Temp. Appointed	Weak	No
Guinea Bissau	President*	Carmen Pereira	05/14/1984–05/16/1984	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Guinea Bissau	Prime Minister*	Maria Adiatu Diallo Nandigna	02/10/2012–04/12/2012	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Liberia	President	Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	01/16/2006–present	Yes	Pop. Elected	Dominant	No
Madagascar	Prime Minister*	Cécile Manoroahanta	12/18/2009–12/20/2009	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Malawi	President	Joyce Banda	04/07/2012–05/31/2014	Yes	Succession	Dominant	No
Mali	Prime Minister	Cissé Mariam Kaidama Sidibé	04/03/2011–03/22/2012	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Mauritius	President*	Catherine Samba-Panza	03/31/2012–07/21/2012 05/29/2015–06/05/2015	No	Temp. Appointed	–	No

*(continued)*

Table 3.1 (continued)

<i>Region Country</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Dates in office</i>	<i>Transition</i>	<i>Path</i>	<i>Power</i>	<i>Family ties</i>
Mauritius	President	Ameenah Gurib- Fakim	05/06/2015–present	No	Ind. Elected	Weak	No
Mozambique	Prime Minister	Luisa Dias Diogo	02/17/2004–01/18/2010	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Namibia	Prime Minister	Saara Kuugongelwa- Amadhila	03/21/2015–present	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Rwanda	Prime Minister	Agathe Uwilingiyimana	07/18/1993–04/07/1994	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Sao Tome and Principe	Prime Minister	Maria das Neves Ceita Batista de Sousa	10/07/2002–07/16/2003	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Sao Tome and Principe	Prime Minister	Maria do Carmo Silveira	06/08/2005–04/21/2006	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Senegal	Prime Minister	Madior Boye	03/03/2001–11/04/2002	No	Appointed	Weak	No
Senegal	Prime Minister	Aminata Touré	09/01/2013–07/08/2014	No	Appointed	Weak	No
South Africa	President*	Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri	09/14/2005–09/18/2005 09/25/2008	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Asia							
Bangladesh (South Asia)	Prime Minister	Khaleda Zia	03/20/1991–03/30/1996	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	Yes
Bangladesh (South Asia)	Prime Minister	Sheikh Hasina	10/10/2001–10/29/2006	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	Yes
India (South Asia)	Prime Minister	Indira Gandhi	06/23/1996–07/15/2001 01/06/2009–present	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	Yes
India (South Asia)	President	Pratibha Patil	01/19/1966–03/24/1977 07/25/2007–07/25/2012	No	Appointed	Dominant	Yes
					Ind. Elected	Weak	Yes

Indonesia (Southeast Asia)	President	Megawati Sukarnoputri	07/23/2001–10/20/2004	Yes	Succession	Dominant	Yes
Kyrgyzstan (Central Asia)	President	Roza Otunbayeva	05/19/2010–12/1/2011	Yes	Appointed <sup>a</sup>	Dominant	No
Mongolia (Central Asia)	Prime Minister*	Nyam Osoriyn Tuyaa	07/22/1999–07/30/1999	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Pakistan (South Asia)	Prime Minister	Benazir Bhutto	12/02/1988–08/06/1990	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	Yes
Philippines (Southeast Asia)	President	Corazon Aquino	02/25/1986–06/30/1992	Yes	Pop. Elected	Dominant	Yes
Philippines (Southeast Asia)	President	Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	01/20/2001–06/30/2010	Yes	Succession <sup>b</sup>	Dominant	Yes
South Korea (East Asia/ Pacific)	Prime Minister*	Sang Chang	07/11/2002–07/31/2002	Yes	Temp. Appointed <sup>c</sup>	–	No
South Korea (East Asia/ Pacific)	Prime Minister	Myeong-Sook Han	04/19/2006–03/07/2007	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
South Korea (East Asia/ Pacific)	President	Park Geun-hye	2/25/13–present	Yes	Pop. Elected	Dominant	Yes
Sri Lanka (South Asia)	Prime Minister	Sirimavo Bandaranaike	07/21/1960–03/27/1965	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	Yes
			05/29/1970–07/23/1977	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	Yes
			11/14/1994–08/10/2000	Yes	Appointed	Weak	Yes
Sri Lanka (South Asia)	President	Chandrika Kumaratunga	11/14/1994–11/19/2005	Yes	Pop. Elected	Dominant	Yes

*(continued)*

Table 3.1 (continued)

<i>Region Country</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Dates in office</i>	<i>Transition</i>	<i>Path</i>	<i>Power</i>	<i>Family ties</i>
Thailand (Southeast Asia)	Prime Minister	Yingluck Shinawatra	5/8/2011–7/5/2014	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	Yes
Caribbean							
Bahamas	Prime Minister*	Cynthia A. Pratt	5/4/2005–6/6/2005	No	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Dominica	Prime Minister	Eugenia Charles	07/21/1980–06/14/1995	No	Appointed	Dominant	No
Jamaica	Prime Minister	Portia Simpson-Miller	03/30/2006–09/11/2007	No	Appointed	Dominant	No
Haiti	Minister President*	Ertha Pascal-Trouillot	01/05/2012–present 03/13/1990–02/07/1991	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Haiti	Prime Minister	Claudette Werleigh	11/07/1995–02/27/1996	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Haiti	Prime Minister	Michèle Pierre-Louis	09/05/2008–11/08/2009	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Haiti	Prime Minister*	Florence Duperval Guillaume	12/20/2014–01/16/2015	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Trinidad and Tobago	Prime Minister	Kamla Persad-Bissessar	05/26/2010–present	No	Appointed	Dominant	No
Europe							
Bulgaria	Prime Minister*	Reneta Indzhova	10/16/1994–01/25/1995	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Croatia	Prime Minister	Jadranka Kosor	07/06/2009–12/23/2011	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	No
Croatia	President	Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic	02/19/15–present	Yes	Pop. Elected	Powerful	No



Georgia	President*	Nino Burdzhanadze	11/23/2003–01/25/2004	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Germany(East)	President*	Sabine Bergmann-Pohl	04/05/1990–10/02/1990	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Kosovo	President	Atifete Jahjaga	04/07/2011–present	Yes	Ind. Elected	Powerful	No
Latvia	President	Vaira Vike-Freiberga	06/17/1999–07/08/2007	Yes	Ind. Elected	Weak	No
Latvia	Prime Minister	Laimdota Straujuma	01/22/2014–present	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	No
Lithuania	Prime Minister	Kazimiera Danuta Prunskiene	03/17/1990–01/10/1991	Yes	Appointed	Unclear	No
Lithuania	President	Dalia Grybauskaitė	07/12/2009–present	Yes	Pop. Elected	Powerful	No
Lithuania	Prime Minister*	Irena Degutiene	05/04/1999–05/18/1999	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Macedonia	Prime Minister*	Radmila Sekerinska	05/12/2004–06/12/2004	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Moldova	Prime Minister	Zinaida Greceanii	11/18/2004–12/17/2004	Yes	Temp. Appointed	Dominant	No
Moldova	Prime Minister*	Natalia Gherman	03/31/2008–09/14/2009	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Moldova	Prime Minister*	Natalia Gherman	06/22/2015–07/30/2015	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Serbia	President*	Natasa Micić	12/29/2002–02/04/2004	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Serbia	President*	Slavica Đukić Dejanović	04/05/2012–05/31/2012	Yes	Temp. Appointed	–	No
Slovenia	Prime Minister	Alenka Bratušek	03/20/2013–09/18/2014	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	No

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

<i>Region Country</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Dates in office</i>	<i>Transition</i>	<i>Path</i>	<i>Power</i>	<i>Family ties</i>
Slovakia	Prime Minister	Iveta Radicová	07/08/2010–04/04/2012	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	No
Ukraine	Prime Minister	Yuliya Tymoshenko	01/04/2005–09/08/2005	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Yugoslavia	Prime Minister	Milka Planinc	12/18/2007–03/04/2010	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
			05/16/1982–05/15/1986	Yes	Appointed	Dominant	No
Latin America							
Argentina	President	Isabel Martínez de Perón	07/01/1974–03/24/1976	No	Succession	Dominant	Yes
Argentina	President	Cristina Fernández	12/10/2007–12/9/2015	Yes	Pop. Elected	Dominant	Yes
Brazil	President	Dilma Rousseff	01/01/2011–present	Yes	Pop. Elected	Dominant	No
Bolivia	President*	Lidia Gueiler	11/17/1979–07/18/1980	Yes	Temp.	Dominant	No
					Appointed		
Chile	President	Michelle Bachelet	03/11/2006–03/11/2010	Yes	Pop. Elected	Dominant	Yes
			03/11/2014–present				
Costa Rica	President	Laura Chinchilla	05/08/2010–05/08/2014	No	Pop. Elected	Dominant	No
Ecuador	President*	Rosalía Arteaga	02/09/1997–02/11/1997	Yes	Temp.	–	No
					Appointed		
Guyana	Prime Minister	Janet Jagan	03/06/1997–12/19/1997	Yes	Appointed	Weak	Yes
Nicaragua	President	Violeta Chamorro	12/19/1997–08/11/1999	Yes	Ind. Elected	Dominant	Yes
Panama	President	Mireya Moscoso	04/25/1990–01/10/1997	Yes	Pop. Elected	Dominant	Yes
			09/01/1999–09/01/2004	Yes	Pop. Elected	Dominant	Yes
Peru	Prime Minister <sup>d</sup>	Beatriz Merino	06/28/2003–12/15/2003	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No

Peru	Prime Minister	Rosario Fernández	03/19/2011–07/28/2011	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No
Peru	Prime Minister	Ana Jara	07/22/2014–04/02/2015	Yes	Appointed	Weak	No

<sup>a</sup>Afterward, she remained in office with public approval through referendum

<sup>b</sup>Afterward, she gained office through popular election

<sup>c</sup>Appointment never confirmed by legislature

<sup>d</sup>Peru is a presidential system and the prime minister does not act in the same capacity as a traditional prime minister in a parliamentary system or semi-presidential system

*Key:*

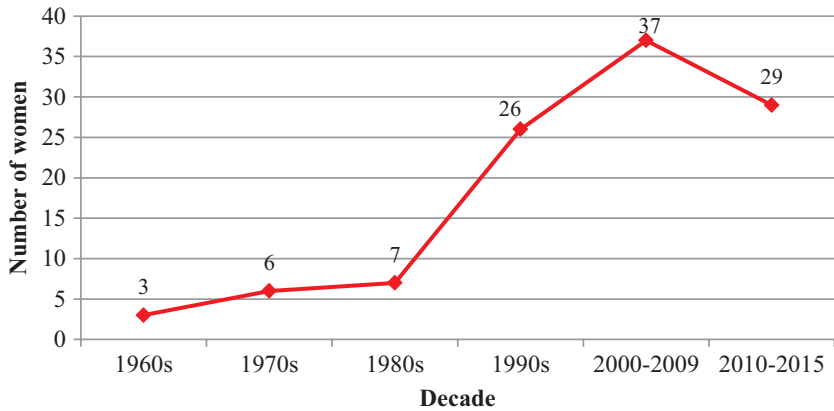
\* Interim Leader: Interim leaders are not coded in terms of powers since their do not exercise the same authorities as nonacting executives. Countries undergoing democratic transition beginning from the third wave (1974) and onward

Ind. Elected = Indirectly elected by a political body such as the parliament

Pop. Elected = Popularly elected by a vote

Temp. Appointed = Temporarily appointed as an interim, acting, or provisional leader

*Source:* Author's analysis of data from Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership (Christensen 2016), Zárate's Political Collections (Ortiz de Zárate 2014), country constitutions, media reports, the Presidential Power database (Doyle and Elgie 2016) and scholarly articles by Doorenspleet (2000), Siaroff (2003), and Jalalzai (2013)



**Fig. 3.1** Women executives over time

*Note:* Women counted in the decade she entered office the first time.

*Sources:* Author analysis of *Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership* (Christensen 2016) and Zárate's Political Collections (ZPC) 1996–2013 (Ortiz de Zárate 2014)

women executives (57 percent) versus 46 (43 percent) presidents. Twenty-five of these leaders acted in provisional capacities, 13 presidents and 12 prime ministers. The 83 remaining leaders are distributed between 50 prime ministers (60 percent) and 33 presidents (40 percent). Perceptions of women's inability to act unilaterally, aggressively, and decisively—all necessary presidential traits—likely explain their relative dearth as presidents while consensus and collegiality are stressed for prime ministers due to the institutional characteristics of parliamentary systems.

Women gain power in dual executive systems, signifying less concentration of powers and women's odds of assuming executive office increase with more available posts (Jalalzai 2013). While 56 percent of countries implement dual executives (Jalalzai 2013, p. 122), women are statistically more prone to serve as executives in these systems (Jalalzai 2013). Power imbalances often relegate women to the weaker position. We may view presidents exercising authority as the only executive within a presidential system, or other presidents governing with a less powerful prime minister as particularly strong and influential (Jalalzai 2010). Few women secure presidencies where they do not share power with a prime minister; those operating in systems where a president dominates almost always serve as prime ministers (Jalalzai 2013). Women executives also disproportionately

govern parliamentary systems (Thames and Williams 2013). Though exceptions exist, parties generally select prime ministers, whereas the public typically votes for presidents. Moreover, prime ministerial governance depends heavily upon parliamentary collaboration and perceptions of women's skills in this regard to facilitate their success.

Women executives also hold power in multiparty systems with coalition governments and often represent left leaning parties and coalitions or, if they are symbolic presidents, may lack party affiliations (Jalalzai 2010). Women's legislative presence appears relevant to their executive rise as a pipeline to power (Jalalzai 2013; Thames and Williams 2013) though this is not true for women cabinet ministers (Jalalzai 2008, 2013; Krook and O'Brien 2012).

Socio-structural conditions register mixed effects. Women executives have risen in contexts where women, on average, trail behind men in educational and professional attainment (Jalalzai 2008, 2013; Thames and Williams 2013). Still, women national leaders tend to be educated and politically experienced (Jalalzai 2013).

Women executives arise amidst political transition, particularly following the third democratic wave of democratization (beginning in 1974) which affected Africa, Asia, Latin America, parts of the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. Table 3.1 lists all the women executives within these locations, noting whether they ascended in countries following this transitional period. This includes 77 women, 65 of whom accessed office during the transition to democracy, representing 84.4 percent of the sample. Moreover, while the universe of women executives worldwide is 108, nearly two-thirds arose during transition.

Numbers substantially increased from the 1990s onward, in the midst of changes in the international environment which furthered gender equality. The global diffusion of quotas enhanced the legislative political pipeline of women; the power of military and traditional political elites eroded as authoritarianism waned, and the participation of women in democratic movements facilitated democratic practices and institutions. As this volume repeatedly demonstrates, democratization is indeed central to the recent expansion of women's high-level political incorporation.

Several other points are worth raising. Only 12 of the 77 women (16 percent) first came to power through popular vote; most were appointed to their posts, elected by the legislature, or accessed the position when an opening surfaced. When interim leaders are set aside, necessary because their powers are difficult to ascertain, 32 of the remaining 55 leaders

(58 percent) exercised dominant powers while most of the remaining ones occupied weak positions.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, among the dominant executives, half (16 leaders) possessed family connections to executive power (see Table 3.1).

### TRANSITION AS A PATH FOR WOMEN EXECUTIVES

As stated, at least 22 of the 77 women executives in these locations acted in provisional capacities.<sup>3</sup> The difficulty in studying acting leaders is that they surface suddenly, enjoy brief tenures, and occasionally exercise power essentially on a *de facto* basis. In other circumstances, women are tapped to lead temporarily in order to prepare new elections or oversee a change in political institutions (or both). We can often explain the paths of some acting women executives by their positioning within the system as appropriate, albeit temporary, successors. Positions like vice president or speaker of parliament seem to be such pathways. These women, therefore, were not newly empowered. Others were selected because of their perceived distance from politics and their commitment to democracy.

Scholars (Katzenstein 1978; Richter 1991) assert that practical necessity draws women into politics during independence movements, offering them a degree of personal autonomy they would otherwise lack (Hodson 1997, p. 37).<sup>4</sup> Over one-third of women leaders gained experience as political activists prior to their presidencies and prime ministerships (Jalalzai 2013). Moreover, women, compared to their male counterparts, disproportionately undergo this trajectory from independence or democracy activist to politician (Jalalzai 2013). While women regularly participated in democratization movements (Alvarez 1990), they rarely moved into leadership posts during and after transition (Waylen 1996). Women's ability to shape the subsequent policy agenda depends highly on political institutions as well as the wider political context (Waylen 2008). For example, this is the case regarding the degree to which women engaged in negotiations shaped their subsequent influence on political parties and policy agendas related to women's issues (Waylen 2010, p. 229). Women in some regions, including Asia and Latin America, repeatedly stood at the forefront of democratic regime change, first toppling dictators, then holding formal political office. These women were not just anyone; they were the daughters and wives of former leaders, primarily in Asia (Thompson 2002, p. 536).

Nearly one-quarter of women executives worldwide hailed from political families, and they are greatly overrepresented among the strongest

women presidents (Jalalzai 2013, p. 92). The family path for women presidents and prime ministers, however, is limited to two regions—Asia and Latin America. Through 2015, 11 of 14 noninterim women leaders in Asia possessed family ties (79 percent).<sup>5</sup> In Latin America, six of the eight (75 percent) nonprovisional women presidents had some sort of blood or marital link to a former president or opposition figure.<sup>6</sup> Latin America features very strong presidencies and experienced political tumult. Women's reliance on kinship connections in Latin America at all levels of politics is well noted (Hinojosa 2012). The two most recent women presidents, Laura Chinchilla of Costa Rica and Dilma Rousseff of Brazil, however, lack such ties, though Rousseff fits the political activist model and both Chinchilla and Rousseff benefitted from their successor designation by the outgoing presidents (see Jalalzai 2016).<sup>7</sup> Costa Rica, however, is not a case of political transition. While women's paths to executive power grew more varied in Latin America, the South and Southeast Asia family route remains unaltered.

Studies also point to name recognition, press coverage, networks, and political socialization, as well as public trust for well-known families as particular benefits to these linkages (Derichs et al. 2006; Hinojosa 2012, pp. 119–120). While women and men both benefit from kinship (and from being handpicked presidential successors), women's success is more often credited to their personal connections as opposed to their professional merits (Hinojosa 2012, pp. 118–119). The fact that several women executives hail from political families among the few women gaining power overall (particularly strong presidents as opposed to more symbolic ones), only reinforces women's associations with kinship (Jalalzai 2013).<sup>8</sup>

While parties recruit male heirs of assassinated, prosecuted, or ousted leaders first, they occasionally promote daughters and wives (Jalalzai 2013). Some political elites perceive women as less threatening and more malleable, and these stereotypes coincide with the placeholders parties are seeking (Thompson 2002, pp. 544–545). 'The exceptional political situation created by martyrdom made it more tolerable to break with traditional female roles,' and women were depicted as selfless advocates of their deceased male relative (Thompson 2002, p. 545). Gendered ideologies furthering women's political careers are compelling. Women politicians used gender stereotypes related to 'femininity,' including healing, unifying, reforming, helpful, empathetic, intuitive, and creative (Ryan and Haslam 2007). 'The nurturing frame,' depicting women to be good at 'taking care and cleaning up [a mess]' is emphasized after a period of

turmoil, crisis, or corruption, and women have been described as healers of the country (Campus 2013, p. 44). Women are perceived to be more honest than men, and relatively free from political corruption (Wiliarty 2010; Campus 2013, p. 47). These qualities seem particularly useful in post-conflict societies and times of crisis (Thompson 2002; Jalalzai 2013). In business, companies (particularly unsuccessful ones) occasionally select women executives to lead under difficult conditions, assuring their more volatile and fragile tenures (Ryan and Haslam 2007). Thus, women emerge as alternatives and problem solvers in times of political difficulty, yet they are also set up for failure, given the sheer enormity of strife and complications.

In Africa, women executives have governed countries experiencing extreme volatility and violence (Adams 2008; Bauer 2009) yet still face obstacles since democracy continues to be elusive throughout the continent. According to Gretchen Bauer:

Part of the explanation for this executive power deficit lies in sub-Saharan Africa's post-colonial trajectory of single party rule and military regimes that precluded women's independent organizing and denied free and fair election to women or men candidates. (Bauer 2011, p. 85)

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia fits within the framework of women leading a country to peace and stability (Adams 2008), though most African women executives hold far weaker positions as prime ministers. Most African systems are presidential, with prime ministers serving at the will of the president, who freely appoint and dismiss them. Other women were presidents only temporarily, when a political vacuum surfaced, such as the death or removal of the president. Women tapped as acting leaders have not been successful in holding executive posts beyond this temporary basis. We see that transitions offer no guarantee of women's executive representation in the long run, as was the case with Joyce Banda of Malawi, who succeeded to the presidency but subsequently failed to win the elections. Women generally do not amass power where authoritarian tendencies reign supreme, and they struggle to win popular election. Not only do most African women presidential candidates lose their bids, but they do not even come close to winning (Jalalzai 2013). While men have benefitted from their family connections to former presidents in several African countries, this has not been a route to the presidency for women in this region (Jalalzai 2013).



Political transition has also been pivotal for women in Eastern Europe. Semi-presidentialism is the most common regime type here since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Elgie and Moestrup 2008, p. 2), although prime ministerial powers vary more than in Africa. Some systems feature symbolic presidents sharing power with stronger prime ministers, while presidents dominate in others. Since the transition, numerous countries instituted presidential dominance systems, making women's incorporation more difficult, although some now disperse powers more evenly between presidents and prime ministers. Women's future presidential aspirations may, in turn, benefit 'in the context of destabilization of the presidency' (Forest 2011, p. 75). As in Africa, we do not see family ties as a prevailing pathway for women in executive office here, confirming the diversity within transitional contexts. Several women were elected or appointed in the lead up to democratization or just after the fall of Communism, while others were charged to lead temporarily in response to various scenarios, including rigged elections. Women's share of the legislatures in Eastern Europe is 20 percent or less, a notably smaller share than in their Western counterparts (IPU 2015), limiting the legislative pipeline to executive office.

We also see cases in which change results in the weakening of women's roles. Sri Lanka initially implemented a dual executive with a weak presidency and dominant prime minister. In 1978, the presidential dominance system was established to alleviate ethnic tensions. Opponents saw Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike as incapable of providing unity, while the alterations to the presidency deliberately sought to keep her from exercising dominance, suggesting that not all change empowers women.

### POLITICAL TRANSITION AND WOMEN EXECUTIVES: IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRACY

The fast growing number of women executives over the last few decades corresponds with the dismantlement of authoritarianism as part of the third wave of democracy. Political transition not only offers opportunities to women but also constrains them. Worldwide in 2015, nearly twice as many democratic declines occurred as opposed to gains (Freedom House 2015); not all transitions move democracy forward. As women are expected to provide unity, peace, and transparency, democratic failings may reinforce gender stereotypes. Women may be set up for failure given the sheer enormity of the strife and complications inherent in politically unstable environments, and ostensibly pushed off the glass cliff (Ryan and

Haslam 2007). While some women helped topple dictatorships, their own political downfalls occurred soon after. Corazon Aquino of the Philippines survived several coup attempts during her term and advisors kept her out of many important governmental negotiations, denied her access to information, and usurped powers (Roces 2000). Macapagal-Arroyo, also of the Philippines, faced several aborted military coups and survived impeachment proceedings. When she largely adhered to their demands, military officials protected her from opposition parties and the public's call for her resignation (Jalalzai 2013). Yingluck Shinawatra, of Thailand, was forced out of office by the Constitutional Court for abuses of power. Shortly thereafter, the military suspended the constitution and seized authority in the aftermath of protests (BBC News 2015). Many of these leaders engaged in undemocratic tactics to protect their power. Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan and Agathe Uwilingiyimana of Rwanda were slain by political opponents (Jalalzai 2013).

While transitions to democracy may have contributed to women's political rise, consolidating democracy proves difficult. Some women leaders have been criticized for pursuing their own dynastic interests (Thompson 2002, p. 540). With the belief in women's greater honesty and transparency, women face greater demands to break the cycle of corruption (see Dilma Rousseff's massive downfall among the Brazilian public on her handling of corruption as just one recent case). Women, especially those with family ties, also encounter sexist attitudes and beliefs that they are unqualified and controllable. Women face a great deal of biased scrutiny once they rise to power, some of which is a result of gender stereotypes, including that they are more honest and motivated to act on behalf of the greater societal good (Ryan and Haslam 2007).

Women encounter obstacles in obtaining positions affording real executive power in the first place. If wielding dominant power remains largely confined to women from political dynasties, we may question whether women have truly advanced. We see that some regions and countries have yet to elect or appoint any women to presidencies or prime ministerships. The United States remains a country where the glass ceiling is firmly intact. The relative stability of the country may work against women's incorporation as do the presidential system utilizing the popular vote and a relatively short political pipeline of women. Even if Hillary Clinton wins in 2016, she would still follow the traditional model of exercising dominant presidential power by way of the family path.

Continued limitations on women's advancement to executive office are not merely about numbers (descriptive representation). Women executives influence policy (substantive representation) as well as perceptions of and engagement of women in politics (symbolic representation). We see varied results but also a great deal of optimism for the difference they make. Corazon Aquino did little to advance women's issues (Col 2013, p. 39). Benazir Bhutto had a somewhat mixed record on promoting women's rights, although she instituted important reforms (Anderson 2013, p. 97). Women's issues prove significant in Michelle Bachelet's Chilean presidencies. Dilma Rousseff of Brazil, to a lesser degree, has also made women's issues an important part of her program, at least during her first term (Jalalzai and dos Santos 2015). Little prioritization of women's issues characterized Cristina Fernández's and Laura Chinchilla's presidencies, although some aspects of women's empowerment improved (Jalalzai 2016). As many women leaders succeeded men from the same political party (usually leftist) and may, particularly in Latin America, be handpicked by their predecessors, women's greater tendency to act on behalf of these issues than their predecessors is especially worth noting (Jalalzai 2016).

Women's political engagement could increase where women prime ministers and presidents ascend (Genovese and Steckenrider 2013). Visible examples of powerful women erode stereotypes associating men and masculinity with executive posts and heighten support for women political leaders. Seeing women operate at the highest levels in politics sends a strong message that women belong in the public sphere. Women executives send cues that politics is more democratic, ultimately enhancing levels of political involvement (Alexander and Jalalzai 2015). Women executives may increase voter engagement at the local level and political interest among women. Voter engagement at the national level is higher for women and men where women govern as heads of state or government (Alexander and Jalalzai 2015). In fact, the potential representational effects of a woman president and prime minister seem profound and should form part of the future agenda within the gender and politics literature. These works can shed even more light on the ways political transition ushers in long-lasting effects on the political status of women globally.

## NOTES

1. This is simply a count of the total number of women elected or appointed to executive offices. Several women held multiple terms.
2. I categorize executives in this chapter as one of the following: weak, powerful, or dominant. These assessments are based on country constitutions, media reports, the Presidential Power database (Doyle and Elgie 2016) as well as Siaroff (2003) and Jalalzai (2013). I did not code interim leaders in terms of powers because they generally lack the powers of nonacting executives. In two countries—Guyana and Sri Lanka—the powers of women leaders changed over time. In these cases, since they each held dominant power for a longer period of time, I counted them as dominant executives.
3. This number is approximate since these cases are harder to track, especially those who served very briefly, as the mainstream media may not report them.
4. I am not arguing that independence movements and democratic movements are duplicate struggles, though both present opportunities for women's political activism and incorporation.
5. The three exceptions are easily explained. Han Myung-sook, former prime minister of South Korea, held a fairly weak role given that the president exercises most powers. Former Indian President Patil also held a fairly nominal and indirectly elected post. Roza Otunbayeva was first appointed and then retained the position after a referendum until new elections were held.
6. Three Peruvian women, Beatriz Merino, Rosario Fernández, and Ana Jara, have served in prime ministerships holding substantially less power, since Peru is a presidential system. Lidia Gueilar Tejada (Bolivia) and Rosalía Arteaga (Ecuador) were acting presidents. To my knowledge, none came from political families.
7. While possessing perhaps a less direct family tie to power through her father (Alberto Bachelet, Air Force General and 1973 coup opponent), most rightly consider Bachelet a self-made politician (Thomas and Adams 2010). President Lagos's selection of Bachelet for his cabinet afforded her the visibility to forge a presidential run (Jalalzai 2016).
8. Tsai Ing Wen was recently elected president of Taiwan and also lacks family ties. As her case does not correspond with the time frame of this chapter, it must be a topic for future analysis.

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## Gender and Institutions in Post-Transition Executives

*Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer and Catherine Reyes-Housholder*

Since the third wave of democratization, more and more women have been elected and appointed to legislative and executive offices throughout the world. Research has increasingly identified the importance of the formal and informal institutional environments in which legislatures and executives operate as critical for explaining the election and appointment of women and how they govern once in office. The vast majority of this research has focused on legislatures and parliaments. Only in more recent years has research on female executives, both presidents and prime ministers, emerged.

In this chapter, we examine how institutions shape and are shaped by female executives in post-transition democracies, focusing on two dimensions of women in the executive—their election to office and how they govern.<sup>1</sup> The new literature on female presidents and prime ministers has focused primarily on explaining where women are most likely to be executives (i.e., the ‘election’ dimension), highlighting institutional factors alongside cultural, socioeconomic, and political factors (Jalalzai and Krook 2010; Jalalzai 2013; Thames and Williams 2013). Much less research has systematically

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analyzed how female presidents and prime ministers govern,<sup>2</sup> and as the introduction to this volume makes clear, neither of these literatures isolates the particular challenges that post-transition democracies create for the gendered executive. Thus, this chapter explores institutional dimensions of women's election and governing in post-transition democracies.

We argue that institutions, defined broadly as rules and norms about how politics operates (Helmke and Levitsky 2004), shape the election of women to executive office and how women govern, and we argue that post-transition democracies pose particular opportunities and challenges for women. Post-transition democracies are unique in that they share two important institutional characteristics: (1) a recent political opening and (2) weakly institutionalized democratic rules. These characteristics can create different incentive structures for political actors, and, at the same time, moderate the ways in which other political rules and norms affect women's access to executives and their actions in office.

In the following pages, we first discuss three institutional factors that affect women's access to the executive—gender norms, the type of executive (presidential or parliamentary), and interbranch contagion—and we theorize the role they may play in post-transition democracies. We then elaborate how institutions influence female executives' governing and specifically focus on the extent to which they promote a feminist political agenda, defined as policies and programs aimed at gender equality and women's rights issues. Although men sometimes advance a feminist political agenda, we argue that female executives are more likely to do so. We then describe how formal and informal institutions may moderate women's ability to promote a feminist agenda and highlight ways in which this may be unique in the new and weakly institutionalized environment of post-transition democracies.

## INSTITUTIONS, GENDER, AND EXECUTIVE ELECTION

Institutions, both formal and informal, can have important effects on the election of women to executive office. Here, we present three institutional mechanisms that both help and hinder the election of women to executives.

### *Gender Norms*

One of the most prominent explanations for whether and how women become presidents and prime ministers relates to gender norms—the beliefs, values, and informal rules about traits and behaviors of men and women. Gender norms have usually been considered an obstacle to women's access

to executive office (Duerst-Lahti 1997; Sykes 2009; Thames and Williams 2013), but we suggest that in post-transition democracies, they may facilitate women's pathway to executive office. These democracies' fluid institutional rules, struggles to consolidate democracy, and efforts to secure international recognition could proffer opportunities for gender norms to help women reach the executive as some countries seek new leaders with different traits than dominated during the authoritarian period. Here, we review some of the main arguments for why gender norms could have a positive effect on women's access to executives and then describe ways in which they operate in post-transition democracies.

Gender norms have usually been identified as an impediment to women with chief executive ambitions because the exercise of executive power is believed to require more masculine traits (e.g., assertiveness, decisiveness, and vertical leadership styles) than feminine ones (compassion, cooperation, and horizontal leadership styles) (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995; Sykes 2009). Facing the classic 'double-bind' problem, women seeking the top office must walk a tight rope between not appearing too masculine or too feminine (Murray 2010b). This challenge is often amplified by the media during elections when so much public attention focuses on executive candidates, and they must constantly pay attention to gender norms when they appear in public, speak, and interact with other political officials and citizens (Duerst-Lahti 1997). For example, Murray (2010a, p. 50) argues that gendered media coverage of French presidential candidate Ségolène Royal was one of the reasons she failed to win the election: 'Royal was also framed in very different ways from her male opponents. She was frequently referred to by her first name. ... Her attractive appearance and her relationship with the party leader were framed in such ways as further to erode her credibility.' While women running for all offices face the challenge of gendered media treatment and double binds, some scholars have found that it is more difficult for women aspiring to the executive than the legislature (Thames and Williams 2013; Duerst-Lahti 1997).

Clearly, gender norms can inhibit women's entry into the executive, but we argue here that they sometimes may facilitate women's access to the executive in post-transition democracies. We offer two main reasons for this. First, countries' legacies of recent regime change and weak formal institutions open the door to new political actors with less traditional executive characteristics. The recent authoritarian past may have been associated with military regimes or dictators whose leadership styles tended to be strongly masculine. Women running for executive office in a post-transition setting may distance themselves from that highly masculinized political

period by emphasizing more feminine traits and qualities. For example, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became president of Liberia in 2005 with a campaign that ‘depicted her as “Ma Ellen,” the mother and grandmother who would care for Liberia’s population by promoting peace, education, and development’ alongside emphasizing her toughness, experience, and intolerance for corruption (Adams 2010). And voters might welcome such change of style. Being female in an executive election in a post-transition democracy can be a way to use traditional gender norms to one’s strategic advantage (Adams 2010; Franceschet and Thomas 2010).

Why might women using this strategy of emphasizing gender difference and more feminine attributes prove successful in post-transition democracies? First, the fluidity of party systems in post-transition democracies may benefit women. Weakly institutionalized party systems have numerous disadvantages—they are volatile from election to election, often highly fragmented, and lack deep ties between parties and constituents (Mainwaring and Scully 1995), but because traditional gender norms may be more deeply embedded in institutionalized party systems than in inchoate systems, institutional fluidity actually could create room for executives with traits that defy traditional gender norms.

Moreover, post-transition democracies can also experience popular discontent with the political establishment, widespread corruption, and public demand for greater social equality (Mainwaring et al. 2006), leading to the election of political outsiders (Roberts 2007; Corrales 2008). Women’s ‘outsider status’ may help them use these circumstances to their political advantage. Studies show that women have been viewed as being less corrupt than men due to stereotypes linking women with honesty (Barnes and Beaulieu 2014). They have also found that the public infers that female candidates will perform better on ‘compassion issues,’ namely those related to social welfare (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). These issues could be particularly salient in post-transition democracies often characterized by inequality.

The rise of female executives has indeed occurred in countries where we might least expect it—post-transition democracies with more traditional social and cultural norms about gender equality. The election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia and Park Guen-hye in South Korea was unexpected because of the traditional roles still attributed to women in Africa and Asian countries. Latin America also is an example of a set of post-transition countries where women’s outsider status may have helped them perform comparatively well in executive elections. Since 1990, 13 out of 18 Latin American countries have had at least one viable female

presidential candidate, defined as obtaining at least 15 percent of the vote in the first round (Thomas and Reyes-Housholder 2016). And since 1999, women have been elected president eight times in five Latin American countries. In Chile and Costa Rica, specifically, some political elites argued that female presidential candidates could be possible solutions to public dissatisfaction with parties (Franceschet and Thomas 2010; Thomas 2014), and in Brazil, the former Energy Minister and later Chief of Staff, Dilma Rousseff, emerged on the national scene during the *mensalão* corruption scandal that rocked the Lula administration in 2005. Some viewed her as a *faxineira*, or ‘cleaning lady’ of Brazilian politics (Thomas and Reyes-Housholder 2016). Rousseff was elected president of Brazil in 2010 and was reelected in 2014.

The second way in which gender norms may actually help women in post-transition democracies is through international pro-women and gender equality norms. These norms emanate from organizations such as the European Union (EU) or the United Nations and work to modify domestic cultures in ways that could propel the rise of female executives. Post-transition democracies may be particularly sensitive to global pro-women norms because of a desire to court international support and legitimacy as new democracies. Börzel and Risse (2003), for example, suggest that the European Union’s gender equality policies work via socialization and learning to internalize gender equality norms in EU countries and post-transition Eastern European countries seeking to enter the EU.

Towns (2010) argues that international norms of gender equality explain the rapid spread of sex quotas in ‘third-world’ countries, and in a similar way, we think they could help increase women’s access to the executive. According to Towns, new democracies often seek to rise in the social hierarchy of states—that is, to join the ‘first’ or ‘developed’ world. Embracing gender equality is believed to help these countries achieve ‘modernity’ and eschew ‘traditionalism.’ International pro-women norms could also facilitate the rise of female chief executives in post-transition democracies by creating incentives for a country to show off its gender equality credentials. Nominating and voting for a female chief executive could be a sign of ‘modernity’—a way to reverse a country’s image as a traditional society—and help to secure international legitimacy for the new democracy. International pro-women norms, thus, could change the negative impact of traditional gender norms at the domestic level. This combined with public demand for new, perhaps more ‘feminine,’ leadership may help women with chief executive ambitions in post-transition democracies.

*Type of Executive (Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism)*

Existing research has argued that women are more likely to be prime ministers than presidents, and early studies of women in the executive reported empirical support for this. Later research, however, has been much more mixed. We suggest that one reason for the contradictory results may be that post-transition democracies confound the empirics. In consolidated democracies, women may be more likely to enter the executive as prime ministers than as presidents, but in post-transition democracies, the opposite may be true: presidential systems may be *more* auspicious settings for the rise of female chief executives than parliamentary systems.

Scholars have offered several reasons why women may serve as prime ministers more often than as presidents. The first set of reasons relates to differences in how executives attain office in parliamentary and presidential systems. One difference is that presidents must run national campaigns and sell themselves to a national public, whereas prime ministers rise to office via party selection (Whicker and Isaacs 1999; Thames and Williams 2013). Thames and Williams (2013) argue that the challenges of campaigning for president may deter women more than the party service required for prime ministers. A second difference is that presidential elections may be more competitive than prime ministerial elections, again related to the distinction between competing in a nationwide electoral contest compared to internal party and local district contests. Studies have argued that the competitiveness of presidential elections deters women from presidencies (Thames and Williams 2013) because women are more likely than men to avoid competitive political settings (e.g., Lawless and Fox 2005).<sup>3</sup>

The second set of reasons relates to the gendered nature of politics in parliamentary systems compared to presidential systems. Scholars have long described parliamentary systems as power-sharing and presidential systems as power-concentrating (Lijphart 1999; Powell 2000; Norris 2008). Gender politics scholars have equated the power-sharing tendencies of parliamentary systems with a range of feminine characteristics and argued that this makes them more amenable to female chief executives (Jalalzai 2008; Thames and Williams 2013). Jalalzai and Krook (2010, p. 9) describe this as follows:

[T]he fusion of executive and legislative authority within parliamentary systems features a prime minister who shares power with cabinet and party members. In these systems, collaboration is fundamental: the qualities necessary

for successfully formulating programs are negotiation, collaboration, and deliberation, all typically considered more feminine. In contrast, presidents in presidential systems act independently of the legislature and generally are expected to lead in a quick and decisive manner, traits which are more often associated with masculinity.

The gendered nature of the power associated with different types of executive office also has been argued to deter women's access to executives. Jalalzai (2013) argues that unified presidential systems are more powerful than parliamentary or semi-presidential systems,<sup>4</sup> and that more women have been executives in dual executive systems than unipersonal executive systems because the power-sharing inherent in dual executive systems fits gendered perceptions of women's governing traits (Jalalzai 2008, 2013). In sum, women may be less likely to be elected to powerful political positions because powerful offices are more masculine and thus facilitate even more the election of men (Duerst-Lahti 1997; Jalalzai 2008).

These rationales underlie the expectation that women will serve more often as prime ministers than as presidents, and some research on women chief executives has found that, indeed, of the small number of women who have actually held executive posts, more women have served as prime ministers than as presidents (Jalalzai 2004; Thames and Williams 2013). Interestingly, however, other research shows that presidential systems have more women executives than parliamentary systems (Jalalzai 2008) or finds no significant differences based on the type of executive (Jalalzai 2013). The recent rise of Latin American *presidentas* further challenges the notion that women are less likely to be elected to powerful presidencies (Thomas and Reyes-Housholder 2016). One characteristic of Latin American presidencies is the high concentration of constitutional power in the executive branch, where the president acts as chief executive and chief legislator (Payne 2007). Extant statistical analyses of female executives globally—employing datasets from 1945 to 2006 (Thames and Williams 2013) or from 2000 to 2010 (Jalalzai 2013)—do not include some of these data points, namely Argentina in 2007 and 2011, Brazil in 2011 and 2015, Costa Rica in 2010, and Chile in 2006 and 2014.

The mixed empirics and the emergence of female presidents in Latin America, Asia, and Africa suggest that another variable may be moderating the relationship between the type of executive and women's access to executive office. One possibility, particularly relevant to this volume, is the type of democracy. In consolidated democracies, the challenges of national

campaigns, election competitiveness, and the gendered norms associated with executive power may indeed deter women from presidential office. However, in new or post-transition democracies, the fresh political opening and uninstitutionalized nature of electoral politics may actually produce the opposite effect: presidential systems could be more amenable to women than parliamentary ones.

As mentioned previously, institutionally fluid settings have been associated with the rise of political outsiders, and it has been particularly notable in presidential systems because of the independent election of the president that is inherent to the separation of power systems (Mainwaring 1993; Linz and Valenzuela 1994; Carreras 2012). Post-conflict, new African democracies have successfully elected women to both legislatures and presidencies, in part because of the way that conflicts break down gender norms (Tripp et al. 2006; Adams 2008). If women executives come to power in settings of institutional change or political opening and this is more common in post-transition democracies and presidential systems, then it is likely that women will have advantages in these settings. In sum, it may be that the newness of democracy counteracts the benefits for women traditionally associated with parliamentary systems and, instead, facilitates women's access to presidencies.

### *Interbranch Contagion*

Another important institutional explanation for women's increased access to executives is interbranch contagion—in other words, the movement of women from one government institution to another. Thames and Williams (2013) identified contagion as an important explanation for increased representation of women in executives, legislatures, and courts. In this section, we extend our general argument that post-transition democracies present particular opportunities and challenges for the election of female chief executives, contending that the recent political opening and/or uninstitutionalized rules and norms associated with new democracies may be associated with a smaller contagion effect. New and post-transition democracies may indeed have more women in executives, legislatures, and courts, but it may not occur due to contagion from one branch to another.

Thames and Williams (2013) argued that contagion operates via women's legislative representation and the adoption of legislative gender quotas to increase the probability of electing a female chief executive. They show statistically that countries with more women in legislatures and

countries that have adopted gender quota laws are more likely to have female executives and the time to office is shorter, and they argue that this occurs because ‘the importance of women building a substantial presence in one political institution and having that presence spill over into another institution is the creation of a tradition of women’s participation in the country, supplying a pool of candidates to serve in various office’ (2013, p. 59). In other words, the primary way in which contagion takes place is by increasing the political experience and qualifications of women in office, such that they can move from political office to political office.

Indeed, experience and political qualifications have long been considered important for election to a chief executive office (Norris 1997). In parliamentary systems, for example, prime ministers are selected out of the parliament from the largest political party, and so establishing tight party ties and a solid record of experience and leadership within the party is critical for rising to the top leadership post. In presidential systems, the election of the president is independent from the election of the legislature, but still, many presidential systems have norms about who is qualified to be president and prior political experience is often one of those norms.<sup>5</sup>

However, this idea about the importance of political experience and qualifications derives largely from executive recruitment in consolidated democracies, not new democracies. In consolidated democracies, clear political career paths exist that run from the national legislature to the national executive, and prior experience in the legislature is often a norm for running for executive office. In new and post-transition democracies, however, their recent political opening and lack of institutionalized political rules and norms may mean that these career path norms do not yet exist. Many less democratic states have low levels of legislative turnover and non-professionalized legislatures (Matland and Studlar 2004), which could decrease the value of legislative experience as a requirement for an office such as the executive. Additionally, the increased importance of outsider status in post-transition democracies, referenced previously, means that executives in new democracies may be more likely to win office when they *lack* prior political experience rather than when they have it. Therefore, theoretically speaking, contagion theory may be much less important in post-transition democracies.

Nevertheless, the question of whether contagion matters in post-transition democracies is an empirical one, and we detect some problems in the ways that scholars have tested contagion hypotheses. Importantly, identifying a statistical relationship between the percentage of women



in the legislature and women's probability of being chief executive does not necessarily indicate a contagion effect. That effect only occurs when a woman *who previously served in the legislature* is elected president or prime minister. Thus, empirical tests of this relationship should be sure to take into account exactly which women serve in the legislature and whether they later become executives rather than assuming that the women elected president or prime minister have prior legislative or parliamentary experience. In summary, contagion presents theoretical problems for post-transition democracies, and empirically speaking, the theory has yet to be adequately tested.

### INSTITUTIONS, GENDER, AND GOVERNING

The growing number of women reaching executive office around the world has raised questions concerning the impact of female executives on governing. Evaluating the gendered nature of the executive is critical to advancing knowledge of both executive politics and gender politics (Duerst-Lahti 1997; Sykes 2009), and initial evidence suggests that some women executives are representing women by promoting a feminist policy agenda (Barnes and Jones 2011; Bauer 2011; Reyes-Housholder 2016; Staab and Waylen 2016). They do this by supporting electoral reforms to implement gender quota laws, helping push through relaxed abortion and divorce restrictions, increasing funding to childcare programs for working mothers, and sometimes deploying their appointment powers to augment women's presence in cabinets (O'Brien et al., 2015; Reyes-Housholder 2016).

The small sample of women executives to date means that our conclusions about how gender affects executive governing are tentative (Sykes 2009; Barnes and Jones 2011; Forest 2011). Here, we use the experience of women in legislatures to show that the phenomenon of women promoting a feminist policy agenda occurs often, and we then describe reasons why this may also occur with female executives. Yet, the extent to which female executives will promote a feminist policy agenda is likely to be conditional upon characteristics of the country's institutional and political context, particularly the institutionalization of democracy.

#### *Women in Legislatures and Feminist Policy Agendas*

Research on gender and legislatures has shown that the presence of women in office does lead to greater attention to a feminist policy agenda—policy and programs aimed at women's equality and women's rights. This

occurs in a variety of ways: women in legislatures and parliaments are more likely than their male counterparts to prioritize feminist issues, sponsor bills on women-friendly issues, sit on women's issue committees, and discuss and speak on behalf of these issues during legislative or parliamentary debates (Thomas 1994; Goetz and Hassim 2003; Childs 2004; Bauer and Britton 2006; Saint-Germain and Metoyer 2008; Schwindt-Bayer 2010). Women have not, however, had as much impact outside of this specific policy area. Research has found that women and men are not very different in terms of how they prioritize traditional political issues, from social programs to economic management (Thomas 1994; Jones 1996; Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003; Schwindt-Bayer 2010). In some countries, male and female legislators are no different in the extent to which they work on issues ranging from education and health to economics. In other countries, women are much less likely to be assigned to 'masculine' and high-prestige legislative committees such as finance and foreign affairs, which suggests that one negative consequence of the election of women is marginalization in political office (Heath et al. 2005). This is further evidenced by the finding that women are not gaining access to leadership posts in all legislatures and parliaments in proportion to their numbers in office (Schwindt-Bayer 2010). Thus, the impacts of women in legislatures have largely centered on policy and programming improvements in women's rights and gender equality.

### *Female Executives and a Feminist Policy Agenda*

Ample evidence exists that female legislators tend to promote a feminist agenda more than their male counterparts, but it remains an open question whether a similar relationship between descriptive and substantive representation would hold for female chief executives. We first acknowledge arguments for why this relationship would not hold for female chief executives, and then we advance two reasons why it would: constituencies and feminist networks.

Some institutional scholarship leads to the prediction that female chief executives would be less likely than female legislators to 'make a difference' in terms of feminist policy. One classic institutional difference between legislators and executives is their constituency, meaning the citizens in their electoral district. Chief executives are elected to represent the entire country, not just one regional district or one subnational constituency. This institutional environment is believed to incentivize national programmatic

policymaking over region-specific or group-specific particularistic policy (Howell et al. 2013; Kriner and Reeves 2015). Legislators and members of parliament, by contrast, would be more likely to cater to the needs of specific constituencies—including women’s and feminist organizations. Taken together, this would suggest that female executives have little incentive to cater to specific constituencies by promoting women’s rights and feminist policies.

We challenge this argument for three reasons. First, the argument rests upon the premise that feminist policy issues are ‘niche’ issues that are specific to a numerically small constituency. Women constitute at least half of the population, and thus policies that benefit women, more generally, could potentially reach a much larger target population than ‘niche’ policies usually do. For example, women-friendly social security reforms could benefit a wide range of low-income women—a group that is often geographically dispersed. Thus, the argument that female executives are unlikely to pursue a feminist agenda because such an agenda represents ‘niche’ issues is dubious.

Related to this, recent scholarship on the presidency casts doubt on the conventional dichotomy of the ‘universalistic’ presidency and ‘particularistic’ legislatures (i.e., the fact that they have different constituencies). Kriner and Reeves (2015) argue that executives, like legislators, are concerned about particular constituencies. In the case of the United States, core constituencies located in ‘swing states’ can motivate substantial decision-making on the part of the president. Following this intuition of the influence of particular constituencies for presidential decision-making, we maintain that female chief executives are more likely than male chief executives to sustain a constituency of women and, more specifically, a constituency of feminists who demand gender equality policies. Because of a shared identity, female citizens may be more likely to vote for a female executive candidate because they believe that a female candidate will understand their problems better and better defend their interests than a male candidate (Morgan 2015; Reyes-Housholder 2017). In other words, female candidates for executive office could be perceived as more credible when they make promises to groups of women voters and feminist groups.

The second reason that the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation may hold for executives has to do with their access to feminist networks. Female chief executives may be more likely than their male counterparts to pursue a feminist agenda because they have greater contact with elite feminists—that is, citizens who advocate on behalf of the feminist cause often through a political party or through organized civil society (Reyes-Housholder 2017). Feminists, almost by definition, seek the advancement of women

in politics (sometimes regardless of political party and ideology), and therefore they are more likely to seek access to networks and inner circles of female chief executives than male chief executives. Why would contact with feminist networks matter? Light (1999) argues that the more information a president has about a particular issue, the more likely this issue will rise to the top of the presidential agenda. Thanks to their ties to elite feminists, female chief executives are more likely to have access to political and technical information about pro-women and feminist policymaking. Female chief executives are more likely than their male counterparts to have this information because they are more likely to have contact with women, women's groups, and feminist organizations.

### *Institutional Constraints on Gendered Governing in the Executive*

Because of constituencies and feminist networks, female chief executives may be more likely to promote a feminist political agenda than their male counterparts. However, their ability to do this is still likely to depend upon a country's institutional and political context. We outline four institutional and political characteristics of countries that may mediate the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation for executives: the executive's party, executive powers, electoral accountability, and post-transition democracies.

First, the likelihood of a female chief executive pursuing a feminist agenda depends to a great extent on her party. In both consolidated and post-transition democracies, left-leaning parties tend to sustain more ties with the global women's and feminist movement (Alvarez 1990; Threlfall 1996; Beckwith 2000), and therefore, they are more likely to incorporate women's equality and feminist political demands into their platforms than right-leaning parties. Executives representing parties from the left will be more likely to promote a feminist political agenda even though they are elected to represent the country as a whole.

Second, the degree of executive power may also make it easier to promote a feminist political agenda. In systems where presidents have strong legislative powers, female chief executives with a feminist platform should be better able to issue executive decrees and exercise agenda-setting authority to pass gender equality legislation, such as gender quotas or funding for women's health programs (Reyes-Housholder 2016). Agenda-setting power, in particular, can be useful for female

chief executives with women-friendly political platforms. Prime ministers and some presidents have the power to set parliamentary agendas. Where agenda-setting power is in presidents' hands, it can allow executives to introduce or push onto the agenda female-friendly policies. In presidential systems, it can also help to encourage legislators to independently sponsor legislation in these areas, knowing that presidential support can help legislation get through the policymaking process.

Furthermore, appointment powers can allow some executives to appoint more women to their cabinets. This may be particularly relevant in post-transition democracies trying to comply with international pro-women norms and achieve greater legitimacy. Studies have shown that female presidents in Latin America appoint more women to their cabinets than their male counterparts (Reyes-Housholder 2016), but female prime ministers in advanced industrial states do not (O'Brien et al., 2015). This difference also could be driven by the fact that Latin American presidents have virtually no formal restrictions on their nomination powers, whereas prime ministers usually have to select their ministers from the legislature.

Third, electoral accountability rules, such as term limits and the separation of powers, can make it easier for chief executives to promote gender-focused policies. When the government can be voted out at any time, accountability is higher (Linz 1990, 1994). Accountability increases ties between elites and the electorate and could lead chief executives to promote women's issues if demanded by the electorate. If the party and constituency do not demand those issues, however, a female chief executive who may be interested in those concerns is unlikely to promote them if support is not there and they can be held accountable for straying from the party's or electorate's core concerns. Where accountability is low, however, a female chief executive may have more flexibility to push through women's equality issues because negative consequences for doing so are reduced. Therefore, electoral accountability could either help or hinder a female chief executive who seeks to promote gender equality.

Fourth, the degree of institutionalization of democracy could affect the extent to which female executives promote a feminist political agenda. The recent political opening and institutional fluidity of post-transition democracies create opportunities for female executives to promote a feminist political agenda. Because institutions are in flux, bringing a gendered perspective to institutional reform could more easily result in new rules and norms—such as gender quotas or parity laws. Then also, as described in the first section of this essay, post-transition democracies have incentives to secure

international legitimacy by creating new pro-women policies and programs (and increasing numerical gender equality in governments) (Towns 2010). Thus, female executives in post-transition democracies may be able to get more political support to push a feminist policy agenda through when institutions are still malleable and the country needs pro-women programs and policies as part of an effort to increase democratic legitimacy.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed existing literature on executives and highlighted how executive institutions may shape and be shaped by women executives, particularly in post-transition environments. Much work remains to be done, both theoretically and empirically. Scholarship on women executives in post-transition democracies needs to analyze institutional arguments more deeply and further develop theories based upon those empirical analyses. Several paths for this exist. The first is the case studies presented in the second part of this volume. They offer an initial analysis of how institutions in post-transition democracies affect women's entry into executive office and how they govern once there. Additional cross-national research is important, as well, using some new datasets on executives (Goemans et al. 2009) and even candidates to executive office (Baker and Greene 2011). As more and more women are elected president and prime minister in consolidated and post-transition democracies, we can develop better understandings of the gendered executive and variations across different types of democracies.

## NOTES

1. In this chapter, we use the term 'executive' in reference to presidents and prime ministers. We do not include the broader executive branch or cabinets.
2. The studies that have explored the governing of women presidents and prime ministers are case studies of individual female executives (e.g., Murray 2010b) or regional assessments based on a handful of women executives (Bauer and Tremblay 2011). Some studies have begun to explore women in the executive beyond chief executives—their staff and/or cabinet ministers (Atchison and Down 2009; Annesley and Gains 2010; Escobar-Lemmon et al. 2014). Most of these studies have largely highlighted the challenges of citizen and media-gender stereotypes for women trying to govern as chief executives. One cross-national exception is Staab and Waylen (2016), which uses the lens of feminist institutionalism to analyze executive policymaking.

3. Note that Thames and Williams' (2013) argument compares executives to legislatures—not parliamentary and presidential systems. They suggest that women will be less likely to be executives than elected legislators because of the greater competitiveness associated with executive elections.
4. Her study offers a five-point classification scheme for executive office and political power. In the analysis, however, none of the variables are statistically significant.
5. This paragraph implies that contagion is likely to operate differently in parliamentary and presidential systems and, in fact, may be more or less likely because of separation of powers. This also is an important line of reasoning for future research.

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## Cultural Explanations for Men's Dominance of National Leadership Worldwide

*Elizabeth A. Yates and Melanie M. Hughes*

In January 2015, 93 percent of current heads of state and government were men (IPU 2015). A growing body of literature—including the scholarship in this volume—has sought to explain the success of the few women who have assumed the highest political offices in the world (e.g., Murray 2010a; Jalalzai 2013). But, what about the complementary perspective: why so many men? Scholars of masculinity argue that focusing directly on men is a powerful strategy to ‘render .... visible’ the gendered privilege that men enjoy in a patriarchal world (Beasley 2008, p. 87). With this in mind, our chapter focuses on the reasons for men’s continued dominance of executive political office, zeroing in on the role of culture.

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Culture is a contested concept with varied meanings and definitions.<sup>1</sup> When considering the relationship between ‘culture’ and women’s political representation, scholars typically unpack the ways that attitudes, beliefs, and norms shape gender inequalities in politics (Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Murray 2010a; Paxton and Hughes 2016). Our attitudes toward men and women, beliefs about how they should behave and how they are the same or different, influence who rises to national leadership in myriad ways—nearly always benefitting men. And yet, this gender privilege is not entirely automatic: in order to take full advantage of such benefits, men candidates must also embody the cultural practices and expressions of manhood (Butler 1990; Coe et al. 2007). Men vying to become (and stay) national leaders must actively construct their masculinity in line with cultural expectations and ideals.

Political transitions change these dynamics, in some cases making women more attractive candidates for political leadership (Thompson and Lennartz 2006; Murray 2010a; Thomas and Adams 2010; Jalalzai 2013; Beckwith 2014; O’Brien 2015; Tripp 2015). As countries exit civil war or authoritarian rule, established political elites may be weak or have been discredited, allowing women to take advantage of their status as political outsiders. Stereotypes that women are more ethical, honest, trustworthy, and caring become political assets (Goetz 2007; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Barnes and Beaulieu 2014; Tripp 2015). Women’s organized resistance against authoritarian regimes also paves the way for women politicians, in part by transforming attitudes toward women and ideas about their capabilities (Waylen 2007; Schwindt-Bayer 2010). And yet, more often than not, the so-called Third Wave of democratization has not resulted in the election of women as presidents or prime ministers. Even if a woman is successful at rising to national leadership, ‘politics as usual’ may soon return—and, with it, the election of a man (Craske 1998).

In the following sections, we (1) introduce the attitudes and beliefs that advantage men in politics, (2) discuss how men politicians take advantage of and contribute to a masculinized political culture, and (3) consider how transitions to democracy shift cultural dynamics—in rare cases helping a woman to become president or prime minister.

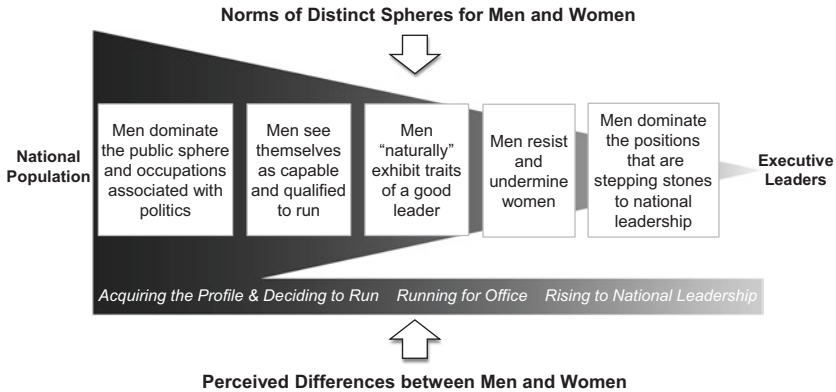
## HOW GENDER IDEOLOGY AND STEREOTYPES CONSISTENTLY ADVANTAGE MEN ALONG THE PATH TO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Gender ideology—attitudes and beliefs about the ways that men and women should behave in society—varies greatly across and within societies and over time. Yet, in all parts of the world, men and women are seen as different from one another. Ideas about how men and women are (and should be) different permeate all aspects of social life. These ideas influence, for example, candidate emergence, how media follows and portrays politicians, and the voting decisions of the public, and they consistently—although not exclusively, advantage men in politics—especially at the executive level.

Broadly speaking, there are two pervasive sets of ideas that have advantaged men in politics: (1) ideas about men's and women's proper place in society and (2) those about men's and women's inherent nature or capabilities (Paxton and Hughes 2016). First, throughout history and in many parts of the world today, societal norms suggest that women's proper place is in the home, or private sphere, ceding the public sphere to men. Second, societies generally construct men and women as naturally or inherently different. It is common, especially in Western cultures, for men and women to be defined in opposition to one another: men are rational—women are emotional; men are competitive—women are cooperative; men are assertive—women are compliant; and so on (D'Amico and Beckman 1994, pp. 1–11).

Figure 5.1 shows how these ideas operate along the path to executive political leadership to advantage men, looking at three simplified stages: (1) acquiring the profile and deciding to run; (2) running for office; and (3) rising to leadership (Paxton and Hughes 2016). At each stage, we provide examples of how culture shapes men's experiences and behaviors in ways that benefit them politically.

In order to become a national leader, one has to be ready, willing, and able. Culture influences the resources and skills that men and women bring to political competition, and the kinds of careers considered as a preparation for a political career. In most countries, men are still much more likely than women to work and lead in law, business, the military, and local politics—all considered 'pipeline occupations' for politics in many countries.<sup>2</sup> That people may see a businessman as more 'ready to lead' than a social worker is tied to culture.



**Fig. 5.1** Ways that culture advantages men along the path to executive political leadership

*Source:* Prepared by the authors

Even if women have the ‘right’ skills and resources to compete, they must also be willing to participate. If men are the only ones socialized to focus on the public sphere or to believe they are capable of political rule, then men may be the only ones with political ambition (Paxton and Hughes 2016, p. 110). Indeed, research shows that even among similarly ‘qualified’ men and women, men are much more likely to aspire to run for office, and to consider themselves qualified when asked (Lawless and Fox 2010). Women may also need greater encouragement to run for office or, once in politics, to compete for leadership positions.

Culture may also give men a leg up with voters. Because women have traditionally held subordinate positions to men in society, people may assume that men are more competent leaders than are women (Ridgeway 2001). Further, because men are the status quo politicians, the criteria for judging candidates are biased in favor of men (Murray 2014). Therefore, to be successful in politics women candidates may need to be even more qualified than men (Fulton 2012).

Stereotypes about what makes a ‘good leader’ also benefit men. Traditionally, effective leadership has been associated with aggression, competitiveness, dominance, and decisiveness—traits associated with men (Paxton and Hughes 2016). Men benefit from displaying this stereotypically masculine behavior (Eagly and Carli 2007). Women, on the other hand, face a double bind: if they do not ‘act like men,’ they may be seen

as poor leaders, but if they do display stereotypically masculine behavior, they may face criticism for not being feminine enough (Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Carli 2007; Murray 2010a).

By treating men and women candidates differently, the media reinforce the attitudes and beliefs that hinder women in politics, or even create new ones (Murray 2010b; Burns et al. 2013; Raicheva and Ibroscheva 2014). In some elections, men candidates are simply more likely to receive coverage. In others, the quality of the coverage of men and women candidates differs. Often, media reports are more likely to focus on non-political characteristics of women candidates, like their physical appearance, clothing, or family status (Nichols 2014; Murray 2010b). When they do address political issues, they are more likely to link women to stereotypically feminine issues and to portray women as overly emotional, irrational, or unprepared (Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Murray 2010b). Media coverage implies that men are 'normal' in politics, while women are 'different' (Coulomb-Gully 2009; Raicheva-Stover and Ibroscheva 2014).

For women who make it through this gauntlet into politics, gender ideology and stereotypes continue to shape their political experiences and resumes in ways that limit their access to leadership. Women are often channeled into committee and cabinet positions in traditionally feminine issue areas, such as family and youth, which are generally considered lower status (Duerst-Lahti 1997; Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2009; Krook and O'Brien 2012). Men are much more likely to serve in high-status positions and those that serve as stepping stones to national leadership, such as finance and defense. (For examples of women who have overcome these obstacles to assume powerful cabinet posts, including finance or defense, see Chaps. 6 through 10 and 12 in this volume.)

The culture of political parties serves as a further obstacle to women's political leadership. Political parties are critical gatekeepers: for a man or a woman to become a national leader, he or she is first selected and supported by a political party (Kunovich and Paxton 2005). Many political parties—especially those in the majority or ruling coalition—have entrenched norms of masculine leadership and few incentives to challenge them (O'Brien 2015). And just like voters, party selectors judge women against norms and expectations created by men (Franceschet et al. 2012). These unwritten and unofficial rules that guide the selection of party leaders are particularly difficult to challenge, since they are often hidden from view (Franceschet and Piscopo 2014; Waylen 2014).

The broader culture of political institutions also reinforces men's political overrepresentation. In some countries, aggressive masculinity dominates the political culture. Formal political activities like debate come with jeers, shouting, and insults, and informal negotiations happen in closed-door smoking rooms, complemented by heavy drinking—all of which may alienate women (Htun 2005). Men may also take more direct actions to undermine women's political success, from being uncooperative to outright harassing them (Tamale 1999; Bardall 2011). Consider Botswana, where women parliamentarians reported 'being repeatedly badgered and harangued by their male counterparts in the National Assembly when trying to introduce motions or even to speak on the house floor' (Bauer and Burnet 2013, p. 109). Women executives, too, have testified to harassment by men politicians during and after their campaigns.

One way of making sense of men's harassment of women in politics is by understanding gender embodiment. In these political spaces, men's bodies are normalized and their presence is unquestioned; women's bodies and their presence are thus abnormal (Puwar 2004; Starck and Sauer 2014). As women move into politics, men feel the encroachment from women on 'their' territory, heightening feelings of threat. Women's lower numbers also may mean that they are put under the microscope, with any mistakes they make amplified (Puwar 2004). These dynamics can lead women to leave politics sooner than men, hinder women's chances of moving up the ranks within their political parties, or—if they do become leaders—limit the opportunities of women who hope to follow in their footsteps.<sup>3</sup>

### *Cultural Variation Across Place and Time*

Before moving on, it is important to return to the reality that gender ideology and stereotypes—and their influence on politics—vary greatly across societies, individuals, and time. How do we make sense of this cultural variation? Where does it come from? One place to start is with religion. Patriarchal religious institutions have long been a source of messages that women are inferior to men, that women should stay at home, and even that women should not serve as political leaders. In societies where these beliefs are deeply felt, women have a difficult road to political leadership. Gender ideology also diverges between adherents of distinct religious traditions. Although historically all major world religions have treated women as subordinate to men, views concerning the place of women in



the religious hierarchy, in society, and in political life differ across religious traditions. Yet, no religious tradition has proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for women leaders.

Traditional ideas about women's roles clearly do not preclude women from rising to national leadership (Jalalzai 2013). At times, they may actually be advantageous. Where traditional gender ideology is dominant, women have risen to national leadership following powerful men in their families, often when these men have died (D'Amico 1995). Seeing women as submissive to the men in their lives makes it easier to see them as stand-ins for their husbands or fathers (Derichs and Thompson 2013, pp. 11–26; Jalalzai 2013). This path to leadership—sometimes dubbed the ‘widow walk’—was more common for early women leaders, particularly in Asia. Nearly half of the women who became national leaders before 1995 were preceded by their husbands or fathers, including Corazon Aquino and Khaleda Zia (Paxton and Hughes 2016, p. 90; see also Chaps. 10 and 11 in this volume).

Looking at communist regimes also reveals a complex relationship between gender ideology and women's political leadership. On the one hand, communist regimes nearly always champion the idea of gender inclusiveness and work to undermine public-private divides (Gal and Kligman 2000; Matland and Montgomery 2003). On the other hand, women's formal participation in politics in communist countries was often only symbolic. Although communist countries used informal quotas to ensure women's presence in legislatures, these women had little, if any, real power (Waylen 1994). Indeed, women have only rarely been included in communist politburos—the seat of power for the Communist Party. And to this day, women have never headed up a ruling Communist Party. That a society or its elites espouse gender equality is not enough for women to rise to national leadership in a formal capacity.

Gender ideology and stereotypes also vary over time. Indeed, in recent decades, global norms of gender equality and human rights have expanded and increasingly emphasized women's full political participation and representation (Paxton et al. 2006; Fallon et al. 2012). The Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 is often identified as a turning point, ratcheting up pressure on countries to incorporate women into political decision-making, even if they had to use affirmative action measures to do so (Fallon et al. 2012; Hughes et al. 2015). These shifting global norms help explain why women are increasingly breaking through cultural barriers to rise to national executive leadership.

## GENDERED POLITICAL CULTURE AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF MASCULINITY

So far, we have discussed how gender ideology and stereotypes generally favor men in contests for political leadership. However, simply existing in a male body is not enough to fully enjoy the benefits of being a man. Masculinity and femininity are ephemeral presentations that require constant reproduction to successfully portray ‘man’ and ‘woman’ (Butler 1990, 1993). That is, to benefit from the ‘currency of manhood,’ men must embody certain cultural practices and expressions (Coe et al. 2007, p. 33). In an election, men candidates actively construct their masculinity in line with cultural expectations and ideals. In doing so, they construct and reinforce gendered political culture.

To deploy masculinity is complicated (Kimmel 2003, p. 605). All societies have dominant or honored ways of being a man—sometimes known as hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2002; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Yet, societal ideals of masculinity are neither static nor entirely homogenous, and hegemonic masculinity is not accessible to all men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Men occupy varying positions in social hierarchies, and thus are simultaneously constrained and enabled by their own identities and statuses. The masculinities they produce compete with others and operate in relation to one another and to women (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Women, too, participate in this process, and yet they are handicapped (Duerst-Lahti 2014). This is no accident. Hegemonic masculinity ideologically legitimates the subordination of women (Connell 2002; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Scholars highlight many ways that national leaders—and candidates for president and prime minister—deploy masculinity (Ducat 2004; Messerschmidt 2010; Wuokko 2011; Katz 2012; Cannen 2013; Duerst-Lahti 2014; Sperling 2014). One way that men in politics deploy masculinity is by performing heterosexuality. In the popular imagination, normative masculine performances are read as implying heterosexuality, and are thus strengthened by direct references to virility, sex appeal, and prowess (Butler 1993). In other words, men show their masculinity by demonstrating their sexual appeal to—and even sexual dominance over—women. Take as an illustration Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has deliberately cultivated a public image as virile and sexually ideal (Sperling 2014).

Men politicians also deploy masculinity via athletic performances (Wuokko 2011; Moore and Dewberry 2012). This strategy is commonplace in politics, even as different countries and regions favor sports that emphasize different kinds of skills and strengths. For example, Finnish President Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, who served as head of state for over 25 years, built up his achievements in skiing and other national sports to almost mythical proportions, to construct an image of power and competence (Wuokko 2011).

Another way for men to take advantage of their masculinity is to emphasize their ties to the military. Typically, one of the jobs of a chief executive is to oversee the military. By playing up their ties to the military, men accomplish two tasks at the same time—showing their readiness to lead and helping them to display masculinity. For example, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, a former military officer, relied heavily on militaristic rhetoric and policies that projected masculinity (Cannen 2013). This included actively integrating the military into social services in the community and dressing in paramilitary uniforms frequently.

In addition to shoring up their own masculinity, political candidates and their supporters also seek to emasculate their competitors. Homophobic derisions are also a classic strategy to delegitimize the opposition and shore up one's own masculinity (Pascoe 2007). For example, Putin once commented on the Georgian 'Rose Revolution' by saying 'next they'll come up with a light blue one,' knowing that 'light blue' in Russian is a slang term for gay man (Sperling 2014, p. 78).

Women politicians have a much more difficult time deploying masculinity than do men. There are certain types of performance—such as showing their sexual dominance over women or playing sports—that are not open to women; if enacted by women, they would mean very different things. However, this is not to say that women are entirely excluded. In fact, once in power, many women global leaders have been described as strategically embodying masculine traits. Georgia Duerst-Lahti (2014) argues that women are more likely to be successful deploying what she terms 'expertise masculinity.' Rather than exhibiting general dominance, men and women candidates present themselves as experts in particular areas that are associated with masculinity, such as military affairs or economics. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet pursued such a strategy, emphasizing her expertise in military affairs, satisfying masculinist demands, in addition to claiming a 'feminine leadership style' that relied on compassion and skills in negotiation (Thomas and Adams 2010).

Like Bachelet, many women who have risen to national leadership have strategically deployed a mix of stereotypically masculine and feminine traits and behaviors. For example, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher developed a reputation for a masculine negotiating style—she was described as aggressive, ruthless, and even rude—but she also sometimes flattered the men politicians around her to get her way (Genovese and Steckenrider 2013; Young 2013). In Brazil, Dilma Rousseff’s presidential campaign worked to offset her reputation as a tough and abrasive cabinet minister by feminizing her appearance and using maternal language (dos Santos and Jalalzai 2014).

The deployment of masculinity is not an equally effective political tool across societies. One important factor is the depth and structure of patriarchal gender norms, or ‘regulatory sexual regimes’ (Butler 1993, p. 15; Sperling 2014). The more attached people are to traditional gender norms, the more likely they are to approve of masculine political figures. In these contexts, women use their ties to men to gain power. For example, Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto made sure her father—a previous national leader—appeared in the background of her official portraits (Anderson 2013, p. 93; see also Chap. 11). During her campaign for president of Nicaragua, Violeta Chamorro spoke often of her martyred husband: ‘I am not a politician, but I believe this is my destiny. I am doing this for Pedro and for my country’ (Saint-Germain 2013, p. 125).

## DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND CULTURAL SHIFTS IN THE GENDERED STATUS QUO

So far, we have explained how gender ideology, stereotypes, and the deployment of masculinity all typically benefit men in ways that contribute to their political dominance in executive office. Yet, not all political contexts are the same. Women’s rise to national leadership is particularly unlikely under authoritarianism. The world’s supreme leaders, ruling monarchs, and military dictators are men. These regimes both draw from and reinforce traditional gender attitudes and hegemonic masculinity (Sperling 2014). When authoritarian rule breaks down, however, gender dynamics tend to shift.

This volume shows that post-transition democracies elect women presidents and prime ministers. What is happening culturally to disrupt men’s dominance and facilitate women’s political success? This section introduces two cultural shifts in post-transition democracies that help explain the rise

of women executives: (1) greater support for political outsiders and for stereotypically feminine traits and (2) women's increased participation in social movements. Ultimately, however, men presidents and prime ministers remain the norm, even in post-transition democracies. Thus, in discussing these shifts, we address the experiences of men and show how they, too, benefit during such periods of intense change.

### *Support for Outsiders and Stereotypically Feminine Traits*

Citizens in post-transition democracies may look for different qualities in their leaders. New democracies may be vulnerable to swift economic downturns and high levels of corruption, which increase the popularity of political outsiders (Mainwaring et al. 2006). Because of their historical exclusion from power, women are natural outsider candidates (Jalalzai 2013). Voters see women as bringers of change (Wiliarty 2008; Murray 2010a; O'Brien 2015). Because of the widespread belief that women are less corrupt than men, the average voter may see women as capable of 'cleansing politics' (Thompson and Lennartz 2006, p. 106; Barnes and Beaulieu 2014). When the political establishment loses favor, women may gain new political legitimacy (Adams 2008).

As countries try to leave their pasts behind, other stereotypical feminine traits may also become politically advantageous. In countries recovering from repressive regimes or the atrocities of war, stereotypes that women are more peaceful, softer, and more cooperative may work to women's advantage (Adams 2008; Hughes 2009; Tripp 2015). Women candidates also invoke maternal frames, running as mothers who can heal or unite their countries. For example, in Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf claimed that she could heal the wounds of war by bringing 'a motherly sensitivity' to the presidency (BBC News 2005; see also Chap. 9 in this volume). Cases like Brazil's Dilma Rousseff also show that even after years of relatively peaceful democracy, these maternal frames may continue to resonate (dos Santos and Jalalzai 2014).

And yet, the very forces that increase the popularity of outsiders and feminine traits create other barriers women must overcome. During the last few decades, democratization has been tied to neoliberalism, bringing with it a focus on market deregulation, debt control and repayment, trade liberalization, and privatization—and an ideology of individualism that fueled lasting economic inequalities (Cornwall 2016). Arguably, popular dissatisfaction with the socioeconomic consequences of neoliberalism

helps explain the success of political outsiders in some post-transition democracies. However, the neoliberal state otherwise provides few opportunities for women; leadership is typically dominated by professional cadres of policy experts and economists, who are less likely to include women (Montecinos 2001).

Women do not have the monopoly on outsider status or on stereotypically feminine traits. Men from nongoverning parties or movements, and men from outside of politics altogether, also run and win as political outsiders. Some men break out as ‘mavericks,’ leaving their political parties and rebranding themselves as antiestablishment (Carreras 2012). Men from historically marginalized groups also make good outsiders (e.g., indigenous Bolivian President Evo Morales). Men may also be seen as ethical, honest, trustworthy, and caring. For example, in 1998, Venezuelan voters concerned about political corruption supported Hugo Chávez, who they saw as honest (Hawkins 2010). In circumstances where stereotypically feminine traits prove appealing, voters may choose men that display feminine characteristics—what Michael Messner calls ‘hybrid masculinity’ (2007, p. 461).

Playing up their outsider status or accentuating stereotypically feminine traits also has pitfalls for women. Candidates running on ‘change’ are often perceived as less experienced a stereotype women candidates already face (Murray 2010a). The public may also change its mind about what it wants; once prized feminine characteristics may lose their appeal. Under these circumstances, women who built popularity portraying themselves along traditional feminine lines may have difficulty pivoting to display themselves in more masculine ways. Ultimately, the political success of women who emphasize stereotypically feminine traits is far from guaranteed, especially in the long term.

### *Women’s Participation in Social Movements*

Women’s political success in post-transition democracies is also linked to their participation in social movements. In many countries, women played key roles in organized resistance against authoritarian regimes, transforming gender ideology and stereotypes in the process (Waylen 2007; Viterna and Fallon 2008; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Viterna 2013). Women have participated in political violence (as armed combatants or guerillas) and in the struggle for regime change (as peace or human rights activists). These experiences spurred women to participate in formal politics, and

ultimately changed the ways that societies see women, opening doors for their rise to leadership. In her global analysis, Jalalzai (2013) finds that more than one-third of women presidents and prime ministers had participated in independence or democratization movements prior to their rise to power. Two examples are Presidents Michelle Bachelet of Chile and Dilma Rousseff of Brazil, who both participated in resistance movements against authoritarian governments in their countries (see Chaps. 6 and 7 in this volume).

Transitions to democracy also contributed to the rise, strength, and popularity of women's movements in various ways. Many women active in pro-democracy and peace movements later turned their attention to gender-based concerns (Viterna and Fallon 2008; Hughes 2009; Tripp 2015). Civil liberties like free speech and a free press created space for women's movements to organize and pressure governments for women's greater inclusion (Hassim 2010; Paxton et al. 2010). In some countries, the hardships for women created by neoliberal economic policies spurred their mass mobilization and the formation of women's organizations (Alvarez 1999; Borland and Sutton 2007; Maier and Lebon 2010).<sup>4</sup> And, women's participation in pro-democracy and peace movements changed the way people saw women's organizing. For instance, in Liberia, the women's movement was credited with helping to speed up the peace process, leading to record levels of popularity around the time that Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president (Tripp 2015).

Women's movements improve women's political fortunes in numerous ways. Some forms of influence are direct, such as when they pressure governments to adopt gender quotas, advocate for women's inclusion in cabinets, or support women's political campaigns (Hughes et al. 2015; Tripp 2015). Other forms of influence are indirect: women's movements seek to empower women in their homes, schools, workplaces, and societies more broadly, along the way challenging gender stereotypes and traditional gender norms. Indeed, in some parts of the world, women's movements have dramatically transformed attitudes toward women in politics (Ferree 2006; Duerst-Lahti 2014).

Of course, not all democratic transitions fuel women's movements. In particular, countries transitioning from communism did not see a simultaneous rise of strong women's movements (Rueschemeyer 1994; Waylen 1994; Matland and Montgomery 2003). In post-communist Europe, 'gender equality' became associated with the former regime, whereas 'feminism' was still thought of as western, conditions that limited

the formation of women's organizations (Rueschemeyer 1994, p. 233). Without strong independent women's movements, women's rise to political leadership may be slower. Indeed, the two women prime ministers from Central and Eastern Europe who are profiled in this volume came to power several years after the fall of communism.

Some transitions from communism also undermined women's political success because of the proliferation of nationalist ideas and discourse. Although nationalism's emancipatory orientation has inspired and enabled women to address gendered oppression throughout the world, nationalist governments often involve a patriarchal element (Enloe 2014). Women become symbols of, rather than actors in, independence, a status that excludes them as serious contenders for leadership.

Ultimately, women's participation in social movements does not ensure that women will be leaders in post-transition democracies (Viterna and Fallon 2008). In many cases, women's critical roles in democratic and independence movements go unrecognized (Waylen 1994, 2007; Jaquette and Wolchik 1998). Women's participation in democratic movements provides pathways to executive leadership, but does not guarantee that they will successfully integrate into the transition or post-transition government.

### *Are Post-Transition Democracies Favorable to Women Leaders?*

Transitions to democracy can and do shift cultural dynamics. Yet, women presidents and prime ministers are not the norm. To illustrate the continued dominance of men and masculinity, one only has to look at the numbers. Of the 68 countries that transitioned to democracy since 1975, less than half (28) have elected a woman president or prime minister in the years since the transition.<sup>5</sup> And, only in Liberia and Bangladesh have women held national leadership for more years than men. The fact that 28 countries elected women leaders shows an impressive break with the past. However, even if we focus on countries that have elected women leaders, their numbers and time in office are outpaced by men. Table 5.1 shows our analysis of the eight countries that are given the greatest attention in this volume. In the years since their transition to democracy, these eight countries have elected 31 more men than women. And, out of all of the years since each country transitioned to democracy, rule by men has outpaced rule by women by 108 years.



**Table 5.1** Statistics on men and women presidents and prime ministers in countries that transitioned to democracy after 1975 (from transition year to 2015)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Transition year</i>	<i># Leaders since transition</i>		<i># Years of leadership</i>		<i>Women executive leaders</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	
Brazil	1985	5	1	26	4	Dilma Rousseff (P, 2011–)
Chile	1990	4	1	20	5	Michelle Bachelet (P, 2006–2010, 2014–)
Liberia	2005	0	1	0	10	Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2005–)
Philippines	1987	3	2	14	14	Corazón Aquino (P, 1987–1992) Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001–2010)
Bangladesh	1991	1	2	4	20	Khaleda Zia (PM, 1991–1996, 2001–2006) Sheikh Hasina Wajed (PM, 1996–2001, 2009–)
Latvia	1990	11	1	23	2	Laimdota Straujuma (PM, 2013–)
Mozambique	1994	7	1	36	6	Luísia Dias Diogo (PM, 2004–2010)
Slovakia	1990	10	1	48	2	Iveta Radičová (PM, 2010–2012)
<i>Average</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>8</i>	
<i>Sum</i>		<i>41</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>171</i>	<i>63</i>	

*Note:* The analysis includes only those leadership positions that are most powerful in a country, excluding leaders with mainly symbolic power. Under these rules, we exclude Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, President of Latvia between 1999 and 2007 (see Paxton and Hughes 2016 for more on this distinction). M = Men; W = Women; P = President; PM = Prime Minister

*Source:* Prepared by the authors

## CONCLUSION

Culture helps explain women's complete exclusion from politics in the past and their difficulty in attaining power in the present. Gender ideology and stereotypes that favor men in politics persist at all stages of the political process. In some countries, citizens still openly express a preference for men to be their leaders. In other countries, the cultural advantages men experience are harder to see. In all countries, men embody and deploy masculinity to appeal to parties and voters.

There is also cause for optimism. Culture is not static. Attitudes toward women and men in politics have changed dramatically in some places. These changes have created opportunities for women once unimaginable. With women's political representation on the rise, the political cultures of some parties and institutions are becoming more inclusive. Men today do not have an exclusive claim on masculinity in the political arena, and societies increasingly are seeing value in feminine characteristics and styles. Although the numbers of women leaders are rising slowly, they are rising nonetheless.

But even in post-transition democracies, where cultural shifts can create opportunities for women, there is also cause for pessimism. For every explanation of the political success of a woman leader, there are examples where similar conditions benefited men. As cultural expectations change, men also shift their behavior and gender performance, and different types of men may have opportunities to lead. Women must also navigate a political terrain rife with double binds. Ultimately, the path for women to access national executive office remains a narrow one.

What will the future bring? Continued progress toward gender equality in executive leadership will be tied to democratization. Yet, democracy itself is not enough to ensure gains for women in executive leadership. Citizens, social movements, parties, and the media must confront the attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes that reinforce the norms of masculine leadership and limit progress toward gender equality at the highest rungs of political power.

## NOTES

1. We see culture as the 'symbolic dimension of all structures, institutions, and practices' (Polletta 2004, p. 100)—a definition that captures the ways that culture permeates all aspects of social life, while also linking culture directly to social structure and human behavior.
2. As research in this volume shows, if women can break into these fields, these same credentials can serve them politically. For example, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Luisa Diogo, and Dilma Rousseff all trained in economics, and Michelle Bachelet studied military affairs (see Chaps. 6 through 9).
3. Consider the effects of Dilma Rousseff's suspension from office in 2016. After her removal, Interim President Michel Temer appointed a new cabinet composed entirely of men.

4. This is not to say neoliberalism is always a positive force for women's movements. Indeed, neoliberalism has contributed to the demobilization and co-optation of women's movements.
5. This count focuses on only the most powerful executives in a country, excluding interim and symbolic leaders (for more on this distinction, see Paxton and Hughes 2016).

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## Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016): A Crisis of Governance and Consensus in Brazil

*Fiona Macaulay*

### INTRODUCTION

On 31 August 2016, the Senate of the Brazilian Congress voted, by a 61–20 majority, to impeach President Dilma Rousseff. Brazil's first woman president, she also became the first elected female head of state in the world to suffer such a fate.<sup>1</sup> She had been put in office as the candidate of the center-left Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*—PT) in 2010 and enjoyed high approval ratings of 77 percent in her first year. However, after she squeaked re-election in October 2014, she had to govern with a much reduced base of support in Congress. Hostility from key legislators, opposition parties and cross-party interest alliances, criminal investigations revealing the involvement of major para-statal agencies in unprecedented kickback schemes with many leading politicians, and allegations of incompetent, even illegal, management of the economy led in combination to moves to topple her. Dilma found herself reaping the consequences not just of her own political mistakes, but also those of both her predecessors and the corruption and questionable governance practices long ingrained in Brazilian political culture and institutions. Her presidency also coincided with a shift in political culture and public

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attitudes, as the positive impact of redistributive policies over the last decade began to collide with the constraints of the economy and governance system.

This chapter analyzes the role that gender politics and discourses played in Dilma's two presidencies and in the political environment (voters, legislators, parties, laws, and policies) within which the impeachment process unfolded. The chapter first locates her presidencies in Brazil's phases of transition and democratization. It then traces her political background and nomination as successor to President Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva, and how her bid for the presidency was framed and contested in gendered terms. The next section examines the politics of her first term in relation to the substantive policy issues facing her, the governance tools available, the extent to which these were affected by gender dynamics, and the impact of her presidencies on gender representation and policy. The chapter concludes with analysis of the crisis of her second term.

### CYCLES OF TRANSITION AND POST-TRANSITION

Dilma's two terms in office coincided with the end of a 20-year post-transitional cycle that saw consolidation and reform in some democratic governance institutions but stagnation, even decay, in others. Modern Brazil had little sustained electoral democracy until the end of the 1964–1985 military regime. The latter, with its five military presidents, also went through a 20-year cycle, with regime hardening followed by a protracted 'opening' from 1975 to 1985. In 1980, the official two-party system was replaced by a multiparty system in which the PT emerged unexpectedly as the new party of the left. The next decade was a bridge to the post-transitional phase. The first civilian president was (indirectly) elected in 1985, the new Constitution was promulgated in 1988, and the first direct presidential election took place in 1989.

Although the winner President Fernando Collor de Melo was impeached in 1992 on corruption charges, the 1994 elections ushered in two decades of unprecedented political stability.<sup>2</sup> Two parties, the Brazilian Party of Social Democracy (*Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*—PSDB) and the PT, dominated all six presidential contests between 1994 and 2014. The PSDB's founder and leader Fernando Henrique Cardoso held presidential office for two terms (1995–2002), followed by Lula, the PT's founder and leader, for another two terms (2003–2010). Both had been prominent opponents of military rule (Cardoso as an intellectual, then politician; Lula as a trade union leader) and founded new, center-left

political parties, which endowed them with recognition, legitimacy, and leadership both inside and outside their parties, and internationally.

They and their parties have existed in symbiosis, supporting one another in political contests against the authoritarian right in the early years as often as they later competed against each other for the centrist vote. The PSDB/PT duopoly created a bi-coalitional system, with considerable policy consensus in the political center (Power 2014). However, such continuity could not last forever. First, these party founders faced a succession crisis. Second, the social, political, and institutional landscape of the country had changed, largely due to their leadership, thus leaving a very different set of governance issues and political environment for their successor, Dilma.

## DILMA'S POLITICAL BACKGROUND, SELECTION, AND ELECTION

### *Personal History*

Like her predecessors, Dilma had also participated in the opposition to military rule and, like other senior members of the PT, had been involved in underground armed struggle, for which she paid a price even higher than Cardoso's exile, or Lula's arrest and harassment. She was born in 1947 into an upper-middle-class family in Belo Horizonte, in the state of Minas Gerais, her father a Bulgarian immigrant and ex-communist. A member of various Communist and left-wing organizations, she was arrested in 1970. She was passed between police and military authorities in the states of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Rio de Janeiro, where she had been active, enduring repeated torture sessions in all three. She was subjected to electric shocks, beatings, suspension, mock execution, and physical and psychological threats. A uterine bleed hospitalized her, while repeated blows to the face left her jaw permanently damaged. She testified years later, 'The stress was horrendous, unimaginable. I found out for the first time that I was truly alone. I had to face death and loneliness. ... When you are young you deal with it better at the time, but the marks go deeper. The scars of torture *are* me, they are a part of me.'<sup>3</sup>

These personal experiences shaped her personally and politically, and may explain both her later governing style (technocratic, guarded) and her positions around such issues as women's rights and investigation of human rights abuses committed by the military.<sup>4</sup> Yet, her life history did not accord her the same legitimacy as her male predecessors because she

conducted her opposition to the military regime clandestinely, speaking little of it during her ensuing career. Also, she had not been a founder or high-profile activist in an opposition party during the transition to democracy. A generational shift had also occurred: by 2014, nearly 60 percent of the electorate had been born after 1970 and come of age during the political transition of the 1980s, their political expectations shaped mainly by the ensuing PSDB/PT cycle, in which the existential opposition to authoritarian rule seemed less salient. Dilma was of the same political generation as her predecessors but her electorate, increasingly, was not.

### *Political Career and Nomination as Presidential Candidate*

On her release, she graduated in economics in the southern State of Rio Grande do Sul, where she and her partner became involved in the revival of one of Brazil's predictorship leftist parties, the Democratic Labour Party (*Partido Democrático Trabalhista*—PDT). She served as Treasury Secretary under a PDT mayor, Alceu Collares, in the state capital Porto Alegre in the mid-1980s, and then in the state government as Secretary for Mines, Energy and Communications, first under Collares' PDT governorship, then under Olívio Dutra's PT administration, gaining recognition for her efficiency in maintaining energy supplies to the state while the rest of the country was experiencing power cuts. In 2000 she left the PDT, and joined the PT.

In 2002, she joined Lula's opposition kitchen cabinet, advising on energy policy and assisting in his fourth, this time victorious, presidential electoral campaign. She served initially as his Minister of Mines and Energy, also chairing the massive state-run oil concern Petrobras from 2003 until 2010. In 2005 she became his Chief of Staff—a 'prime ministerial' position in a presidentialist system—after José Dirceu resigned in the wake of the *mensalão* scandal that broke in the second half of Lula's first term. Government and party officials were caught using public funds to make monthly payments to legislators in the sprawling governing coalition in exchange for their political support. Despite that, Lula won comfortable re-election in 2006. However, the Constitution bars a third consecutive term in office. As Lula had been the PT's uncontested presidential candidate in nearly every election, and many in his inner circle of (male) party grandees had been prosecuted on corruption charges,<sup>5</sup> it was not obvious who would continue his legacy. Dilma's relatively recent arrival in the party, detachment from internal party factions, technocratic profile, political back-history, and closeness to Lula all explain why he handpicked her as his successor in 2009.

This was accepted by the PT, even with the party's long tradition of internal democracy, because of the expectation that Lula's extraordinarily high personal poll ratings would rub off on his heir apparent.

Neither was Dilma, the PT's first female presidential candidate, drawn from the party's existing pool of notable female politicians. The PT had emerged from social movement, church, and trade union opposition to military rule, with many local women founders. In consequence it led the way consistently in gender equality through the 1980s and 1990s. It was the first party to require that women fill 30 percent of offices in all its internal decision-making bodies, it promoted a national gender quota law, and, of the major parties, elected the highest proportion of women to legislative positions (Macaulay 2006). It also successfully ran women for key majoritarian posts, including two mayors of São Paulo, Brazil's largest city and the world's ninth most populous (Luiza Erundina and Marta Suplicy), and the governor of Rio de Janeiro state (Benedita da Silva). Former PT Senator Marina da Silva had served as Lula's Minister for the Environment. Yet, top female vote-getters never formed part of the PT's leadership, revealing persistent tensions in the party's gendered political culture. Some switched to other left-wing parties and three ran for the presidency, including against Dilma in 2010 and 2014. When Lula entered national government, he promoted male trade union leaders to key government posts. Dilma had no connection with the party's women activists, although they campaigned hard for her election. She had sympathies with, but no real roots in, the women's caucus in Congress, or in the wider women's movement, which had so effectively mobilized during the transition to democracy to get gender equality enshrined in the 1988 Constitution. However, as she came under attack in her second term, it became clear that these hard-won rights were also going to be undermined by elements of the pro-impeachment coalition.

### *The 2010 Election Campaign*

Dilma's candidacy was confirmed, unanimously and unopposed, at the party's Fourth Congress in February 2010 and she became the country's first female presidential candidate with a realistic prospect of victory. Despite the head-start afforded by Lula's vigorous endorsement, she still had to convince voters that she could sustain and extend the best aspects of his legacy and avoid the negative aspects of the PT's governance, that she would not be his puppet, and that *as a woman* she could govern. Brazil

has had relatively few women governors or mayors of major cities,<sup>6</sup> or indeed ministers,<sup>7</sup> posts typically deemed to qualify a candidate or provide a public platform for high executive office (although Lula had only ever been a federal deputy). However, the greater challenge came in fending off the gender-specific attacks to which her opponents resorted.

The PT's campaign strategists presented Dilma through a frame of maternal feminism. This hinged on two aspects: her personal gendered 'performance' as a female politician and the gender policy positions that she and the party espoused. In relation to her personality, when she was a minister the press had characterized her as 'tough,' 'cold,' and prone to upsetting officials by upbraiding them publicly, character traits that likely would have been praised in a male politician. In 2009 her hair and body had already attracted interest as she had treatment for lymphatic cancer and then teeth whitening and cosmetic surgery, and during the campaign her look and language were softened. Most of her campaign jingles focused on 'female strength,' on her as a mother and head of household, and thus as 'mother of the Brazilian people' (Gomes 2011; Pires 2011). The marianist trope, that is, reference to women's supposedly primary maternal identity and character, has recurrently been invoked across Latin America, from the first demands for suffrage in the nineteenth century, to support, or reject, women's claims for entrance into political life (Craske 1999). It appears to have been deployed around Dilma to offset specifically her 'unfeminine' image as guerrilla fighter and tough technocrat, and the absence of a strong 'family' narrative (by 2000 she was separated from her long-time common-law husband with whom she had a daughter, and remained single). Prior to her nomination, Lula himself shifted from speaking about women predominantly as 'mothers, wives and providers' to referencing women as qualified professionals (Biroli 2010). Thus, the future Mother of the Nation (Dilma the President) was combined with the competent manager (Dilma the Minister) when Lula presented her as 'mother of the PAC' (the Programme for Accelerated Growth, a major infrastructural initiative with a US\$130 billion budget), claiming she would 'make sure things got done.' When women aspire to political leadership, they or their supporters are often inclined to reframe government as a matter of (feminine) housekeeping and nurturing, rather than of (masculine) power and authority, in order to resolve the social paradox of a woman taking on a role so strongly associated with men.

The campaign was unsure whether Dilma was simply pro-women, or actually feminist. Her party political broadcasts had her interviewees, or the background music, referring constantly to mothers/grandmothers/

daughters/workers, to women ‘who won’t put up with it anymore’ and are ‘divine towers of strength’ (Lima and Costa 2012). The PT focused its annual convention that year on Brazilian women in politics in order to get the party behind Dilma on a gender-equality platform. Yet, although in early 2010 she was polling strongly, she was the only candidate with fewer vote intentions among women than men. This gender gap, which had also affected Lula, fluctuated between seven and ten points, and Dilma’s direct representational appeal as a woman was never enough to overcome it.

With Dilma leading in the polls for most of the campaign, riding on a still buoyant economy and the popularity of Lula’s income distribution policies such as the *Bolsa Família*,<sup>8</sup> the opposition used abortion as a gendered wedge issue. Before 2002 the PT had never advocated decriminalization as party policy fearing it would lose them not only the progressive Catholic but also the neo-Pentecostal vote among the poorer sectors of society. Its legislators did, however, push for the state health service to provide terminations as currently allowed by law,<sup>9</sup> presenting this as a public health rather than a reproductive rights issue. This position also enjoyed the backing of the PSDB and Cardoso’s Minister of Health, José Serra, and formed part of the social-liberal policy consensus between the two parties. The Lula government maintained this framing until 2007, when the PT voted in favor of decriminalization at its Third Party Congress. Although neither Lula, nor Dilma, put forward any such legislation, they tackled the issue in other ways that gave religious opponents an easy rallying point (Machado 2012). In 2005, Lula set up a tripartite commission to revise the criminal law on abortion, in 2007 held a public hearing and in 2009 included this as a public health matter in the third iteration of the National Human Rights Plan. An article in the latter pledged ‘support for a bill to decriminalize abortion’ and such was the backlash from religious groups that Lula was forced to retract this wording via decree.

Dilma had publicly concurred with the party’s position in 2007, and her campaign team, from the progressive wing of the party, wanted decriminalization on her agenda. This was turned against her by Christian groups and their political allies and, eventually, by the PSDB, which was desperate to differentiate itself from the PT, whose policy positions on the economy, foreign policy, human rights, and welfare provision it broadly shared. In mid-September 2010, the wife of PSDB candidate José Serra was widely reported as having commented that Dilma was ‘in favour of killing little children’ (Ramos 2012). Two days before the first round of voting, Dilma was forced to declare that she was personally against abortion and believed that every

woman sees abortion as a form of violence.<sup>10</sup> This got Serra into the second round, which Dilma won with 56 percent of the vote. Her feminist supporters were both unsurprised by the opposition's maneuver and trusted that, once elected, what she did in terms of gender policy would count for more than what she felt obliged to say on the stump (Nublat 2010).

### POLITICS AND POLICY UNDER DILMA

Once in office, she faced specific institutional governance legacies of the preceding 16 years. Cardoso's two presidencies had stabilized the economy, and introduced economic and institutional reforms. Lula's presidencies had tackled persistent inequality and poverty, and his social distribution policies had been greatly assisted by revenues from commodity exports to China. Dilma's challenge was how to maintain growth once this boom petered out. Growth had peaked under Lula, at 6.1 percent in 2007 and 7.6 percent in 2010. However, by 2015 it had dropped to virtually zero. Regardless of whether this downturn was due to her government's economic management strategy or external factors, it led to increasing public dissatisfaction, on the part of both the traditional middle classes, who felt their relative status was being eroded by the social uplift of the lower classes (through increased income and spending power, and policies such as income- and race-based quotas for entrance into public universities) and the newly elevated lower-middle classes whose daily lives still depended on public services. This unhappiness spilled onto the streets in June 2013, in mass protests at the white elephant stadia being built around the country for the 2014 World Cup, seemingly at the expense of investment in basic services. Unlike her predecessors, Dilma had no new 'Big Bang' policies to offer: she had been elected on the promise of improving the *quality* of those social and public services (health, education, *Bolsa Família*) to which universal access had already been achieved. There were also areas, such as law enforcement, where reform had been negligible and blocked by interest groups. All such reforms would require a high degree of intergovernmental cooperation, both horizontal (between ministries) and vertical (between levels of government), as well as with civil society. However, her terms in office coincided with a legitimacy crisis in the party system that affected her control of the legislative agenda and made her governing coalition so unwieldy that political considerations outweighed managerial ones. Thus, by comparison to Lula, she ended up focused far more on domestic politics and was far less visible on the world stage.



### *Parties, Caucuses, Coalitions, and Governance*

A major constraint on her room for maneuver was the accelerating fractionalization of the party system. In 2003, after the political and economic stability of the Cardoso post-transition presidencies, the effective number of parties was 8.4. By 2015 this had risen to 13.2, one of the highest in the world. Not only were the deputies in Congress spread more thinly across a larger number of parties, but there were also many more micro-parties, complicating the maintenance of a governing coalition with each successive government (Santos and Canello 2015, p. 119). This weak party system institutionalization arguably led indirectly to an unexpected woman president, since the PT's illegal strategies for holding together such a heterogeneous multiparty coalition destroyed many of its senior male politicians' careers. On the other hand, it also made Dilma's first term in government extremely difficult, and her second term impossible, due to tougher levels of external oversight and her own governing style.

Initially, she retained some of Lula's team to ensure continuity, but allegations of mismanagement led her to remove seven cabinet ministers in 15 months, earning her the nickname of 'the cleaning lady' (*faxineira*). She also had to balance the distribution of key political posts across the factions within the PT and the nine parties in her governing alliance. Her government started relatively well but it soon became clear that she would not pander to the parties and legislators, and used far fewer discretionary decree laws than her predecessors. Dilma could not reproduce Lula's negotiating skill, honed over years as a trade union leader, of man-to-man talks in a very male-dominated horse-trading polity, and so she increasingly relied on her new executive team.

Following the sacking of several key ministers, she appointed Miriam Belchior as the Minister of Planning, Gleisi Hoffman as the Chief of Staff, and Ideli Salvati as the Minister of Institutional Relations. Her second appointee as head of the Secretariat for Policies on Women (*Secretaria de Política para as Mulheres*—SPM), which had become a full ministry under Lula, was Eleonora Menicucci, a long-time associate who had been imprisoned and tortured alongside Dilma. She also appointed women to head other key government bodies and state enterprises such as Petrobras and the Brazilian Geographical Institute, which generates key social data and runs the census for the government, as well as to the higher courts. Overall, she appointed twice as many women to executive posts as Lula, setting a new bar in Brazil (Jalalzai and dos Santos 2015), although this was eroded by coalition-management concerns in the super-fractionalized environment of her second term.

### *Political Representation of Women*

Her impact on female legislative representation is less clear. In Brazil, it was not the case that increased numbers of women in elected positions prompted interbranch contagion, laying the ground for a female president by changing the culture of political institutions or providing a pool of experienced female politicians. Although it was one of the first countries in Latin America to introduce a statutory quota for women on party electoral lists, requiring party lists for federal and state deputy after 1998 to have at least 30 percent female candidates (senators are elected by simple majority), Brazil now ranks last in the region and 118th in the world. The percentage of women in legislative office has barely moved in two decades, as Table 6.1 demonstrates.

This failure is largely attributable to the characteristics of the electoral system and its institutions. The electoral courts did not punish parties that failed to run sufficient women candidates, even after a 2009 rewording of the quota law to require parties to actually ‘fill’ 30 percent of candidate slots with women rather than ‘set them aside.’ It was only from the municipal elections of 2012 onward that the electoral courts finally cracked down on noncompliance. The increase in women candidates did not translate into greater representation due to the logic of the open-list proportional system. Voters choose an individual not a party, and female candidates are disadvantaged in relation to the necessary resources—finance, networks, access to public goods, time, clout in the party—required to run successfully for office in a state-wide electoral district.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 6.1** Proportion of women candidates and women elected to legislatures. Brazil, 2002–2014

<i>Election</i>	<i>Federal deputy</i>		<i>State deputy</i>		<i>Senator</i>	
	<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Elected</i>	<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Elected</i>	<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Elected</i>
2002 Lula	11.7	8.2	14.8	12.8	12.6	14.3
2006 Lula	12.7	8.8	14.3	11.6	15.8	14.8
2010 Dilma	19.1	8.8	21.4	13.3	13.0	13.0
2014 Dilma	29.2	9.9	29.1	11.3	20.6	13.6

*Source:* Prepared by the author

This will not change without a political reform of both the electoral and party systems, and a shift in political culture. Even the PT showed signs of increased masculinization. Its female candidates for federal deputy were just slightly more successful than its male candidates in 2002, but only two-thirds as successful in 2006, and only one-third as successful in 2010. The inability of the women's caucus in Congress to grow, and its changing party composition in contrast to the previous two decades (it now contains representatives from 15 different parties, with PT women constituting only one fifth), gave Dilma little support for feminist policies, or capacity to resist the increasing threat of conservative-religious forces, whose focus on issues of personal morality has changed the political currency of elections and reframed the political agenda.

### *Religion, Politics, and Gender Policy*

By Dilma's presidencies a number of cross-party sectarian groups had largely taken over from parties the aggregation and representation of social interests. The so-called *bancada evangélica* is an interparty grouping composed of members of various neo-Pentecostal churches, which boomed in Brazil and rapidly displaced the Catholic Church in terms of adherents (now around 22 percent of the population), especially in large urban areas. It grew steadily from the 1980s onward, when it first mobilized around the Constitutional Assembly and the election of Collor de Mello. Under Cardoso, it rose to 51 members and then to 59 in 2002 in response to an increasingly likely Lula victory, precisely because the PT as a party clearly intended to maintain its manifesto positions on gender issues. It suffered a setback in the 2006 elections following high-profile political scandals involving some of its members, but recovered in 2010 to elect some 70 sympathizers in Congress, boosted by highly gendered moral/religious discourses in the presidential election and its organizational efforts within Congress to block legislation such as gay civil union, the criminalization of homophobia, and abortion liberalization.

Nonetheless, the 2010 elections revealed both inter- and intra-group disagreements as neo-Pentecostal, older evangelical, and Catholic groups were divided in their support for the three main candidates: the PSDB's José Serra, Marina da Silva (an evangelical Christian herself), and Dilma Rousseff. Until the end of the first Dilma term, this *bancada* voted with the government, except on domestic policies affecting family, sexuality, and reproduction. Given the precariousness of the coalitional arrangements of

Dilma's mandates, she and the PT found themselves held hostage on gender issues. For example, 2007 saw the revival of a bill calling for the creation of a 'fetal bill of rights' (*Estatuto do Nascituro*), aimed at giving the fetus legal rights, thus outlawing abortion completely and reclassifying it as a heinous crime, and prohibiting all embryo-based research. It was passed by a couple of House committees during Dilma's first term, and was carried over into her second term, awaiting final approval in the justice and constitution committee and on the floor of Congress. It was perhaps this that made Dilma apparently pander to the religious sector with early 'motherist' initiatives such as the *Rede Cegonha* (Stork Network), established in 2012 to increase social assistance to pregnant women and newborn babies, and lower infant and maternal mortality. It required all pregnant women to be registered and monitored and was designed without consultation with the SPM. In the face of feminist protests that this invaded poor women's privacy and treated them like baby incubators, the program was quietly dropped.

Yet Dilma made several moves that brought her into conflict with her confessional political allies. SPM head, Eleonora Menicucci, a professor of women's health, was a known advocate of decriminalizing abortion. In 2012 the law was changed to allow anencephalic fetuses (those lacking a brain) to be aborted, and in 2013 Dilma approved a law put forward by a PT feminist and the women's caucus in Congress extending to private hospitals the requirement on state hospitals to provide currently permissible terminations.

Indeed, despite all these obstacles, during Dilma's first term in office 475 gender-equality bills were introduced in Brazil's Chamber of Deputies. Of these, 27 were passed as laws, and others continued to be under consideration in her second term. Although other parties also presented more gender-related bills than previously, the PT presented the most, and got the most declared urgent, and passed.<sup>12</sup> PT women deputies introduced one-third of all the bills, supported by the women's caucus (Ribas 2015).

The executive branch was assisted by Dilma's boost to the SPM whose 2013 budget allocation was higher than under Lula, the highest total since its 2003 inception, and the highest ratio of funds in relation to the whole federal budget. This undoubtedly helped her first administration introduce more gender-equality legislation than in any of the Cardoso or Lula governments, in a two-pronged effort by legislators and the executive. Bills benefitted from being fast-tracked and supported by the leaders of the major parties, especially those in the coalition and, of the eight executive-sponsored bills, six were passed into law.

But, naturally, the changed configuration of Congress resulted in selectivity and self-censorship: no executive-sponsored bill that passed was opposed by the *bancada evangélica*. The Dilma government's focus was squarely on poverty reduction, economic empowerment, and women's practical, rather than strategic, gender interests (Miranda 2012). Successful bills dealt largely with gender-related aspects of existing social policy, such as the issuing of birth-related documentation by hospitals, prioritizing female heads of household in allocating social housing and places on vocational training courses, and adjusting housewives' social security contributions to give them equal access to certain key benefits. The shifts in the base of the PT in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as the party abandoned some of its more radical, distributional social policies, had also led to an exodus of left-leaning Catholics (Machado 2012). Although 93 percent of the *Bolsa Família* payments go to women (and 73 percent to non-white Brazilians), the electoral benefits garnered were insufficient to erode the PT's gender gap. Thus Dilma's emphasis on policies to benefit poorer women, such as the amendment to the 'My House, My Life' social housing program to allow women to retain public housing after divorce, and 'Caring Brazil,' an extension of the *Bolsa Família* to very low-income women with preschool children, could be seen as a means of winning their support.

### THE SECOND TERM: THE END OF CONSENSUS

Dilma's 2014 re-election bid occurred in a very different political context. One presidential candidate, Eduardo Campos of the center-left PSB, died in a plane crash. His running mate and then replacement, Marina da Silva, suddenly soared in the polls, level-pegging with Dilma. Another former *petista* and presidential candidate, Luciana Genro of PSOL, placed a distant fourth, so that in the first round a remarkable 64 percent of all votes cast went to female candidates, all current or former PT politicians. But there was little sisterhood on display and the campaign overall was marked by a tone of bitterness and incivility. Any positive narrative about Dilma evaporated as the PT campaigned negatively against Marina in particular. Her PSDB rival, Aécio Neves, clearly appealed to the disgruntled middle classes, while the PT's base among poorer Brazilians was just enough to secure Dilma a victory in the second round runoff with 51.5 percent over Neves' 48.4 percent, making this the tightest election in 25 years.

The new Congress was highly fragmented, with 28 parties represented, and Dilma had to stitch together a coalition of ten parties to give her

control of the necessary two-thirds majority needed to pass constitutional amendments. However, she had little leverage or control. She had been unable to get a single executive-sponsored bill approved in 2014—a sign of things to come—and her second term saw the wholesale capture of Congress by interest groups, both opportunists and ideologues, with the most politically conservative profile since the transition to democracy. First, the PT lost control of the Lower House, as their candidate for Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies was heavily defeated by Eduardo Cunha of the PMDB, a large centrist, patronage-seeking party that has been pivotal to governing coalitions since the mid-1980s. Although he should have controlled the Chamber of Deputies in order to steer through Dilma's legislative priorities, Cunha, an evangelical conservative, turned out to have his own ideological agenda.

In his first five months Cunha presided over 121 roll-call votes, many on legislation intended to roll back key parts of the PSDB-PT secular, liberal consensus on human rights and gender issues. Indeed, there had been a concerted effort at religious entryism in the 2014 elections: 328 candidates identified themselves as religious professionals (calling themselves 'pastor,' 'bishop,' or 'missionary' on the ballot form), a 45 percent rise over 2010 (Braga 2014). The membership of the *bancada evangélica* rose, reaching nearly 80 by 2016, meaning that if it were a political party, it would have been the third largest in the Lower House, with 15 percent of seats (Estadão 2010). It also began to join forces more consistently with the interest groups representing large landowners, and law-and-order professionals and the gun lobby. This new counter-coalition became known as the BBB, or *bancada da bíblia, boi, e bala*, literally, the 'bible, bull, and bullet benches.' Cunha's discourse—and that of his BBB allies—combined moral panics about gender roles, sexuality, family and reproduction, sin, crime, and minority rights. Thus, he fast-tracked legislation to reduce the age of criminal responsibility, to overturn the Firearms Statute (introduced under Lula and credited with reducing gun deaths in the country), and to roll back demarcation of indigenous territory. He also introduced bills on 'heterosexual rights,' a new Family Statute that would define a family as an exclusively heterosexual, two-parent unit, and an amendment that would make it harder for rape victims to access abortion services. These moves horrified many, and brought women out into the streets, for the first time in years, to protect their rights. In early 2016, an apparent outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus in Brazil, which causes serious cranial deformities in babies, prompted regional and international

organizations to appeal for relaxation of the abortion law, which may yet lead to clashes over women's reproductive rights and public health policy inside and outside the Brazilian Congress.

In addition to this loss of control in Congress, Dilma came under fire with allegations that a massive kickback scheme inside Petrobras had allowed up to 3 percent of all contracts, that is, billions of dollars, to be funneled into the campaign funds of the PT and its key allies. As these accusations gained traction, the conservative counter-coalition in Congress mobilized to demand Dilma's impeachment, even though Cunha himself and most of those who voted to start the impeachment proceedings also found themselves under investigation on corruption charges. Cunha himself was removed as Speaker in July 2016, and was stripped of his parliamentary seat on 12 September 2016 on charges of bribery and corruption. Yet, the official reason given on the impeachment petition was that the President allegedly manipulated the federal budget to disguise a growing deficit, thus violating the Constitution and the Law on Fiscal Responsibility. However, for those who vehemently supported or opposed her impeachment, legal, party-political, electoral, budgetary, fiscal, and moral arguments all became scrambled together in a highly divisive social debate. The televised special session of the Chamber of Deputies on 17 April 2016 to vote on whether the Senate should initiate the impeachment process saw those representatives in favor making impassioned references to God and family, and ignoring the actual legal charges. One notorious right winger dedicated his vote to the memory of a former military officer in charge of one of the main torture centers in São Paulo during the dictatorship, whom he praised as 'the dread of Dilma Rousseff,' alluding not just to her biography but also to an incident in December 2014, when Dilma had wept publicly as she unveiled the long-awaited report on human rights abuses during that period. Following the Senate vote in May 2016 removing her temporarily pending the impeachment trial, Vice-President Michel Temer took over as the acting president, and remained in post after the final impeachment decision. However, this was no caretaker government. It became evident very quickly that a highly conservative, religiously oriented coalition was backing him with a political agenda that went far beyond, and was quite distinct from, Dilma's alleged budgetary mismanagement and the unfolding corruption scandals. In his first few days Temer announced his new Cabinet—in which there were no women. He also closed down a number of ministries, including those for women's policies (SPM), racial equality, and human rights, folding them back into

the Ministry of Justice. He announced that his government would have four guiding principles: economy, morality in public life, calming down the country, and religion. His government had a clear counter-vision for Brazilian society, and a number of the gender-regressive bills backed by the *bancada evangélica*, previously held at bay by the Dilma government, received full backing. His very much younger wife was profiled in the mainstream media as ‘beautiful, retiring and homely,’ and after Dilma’s impeachment was appointed ‘ambassador for children,’ performing to a tee the feminine role of a dedicated mother and a dutiful wife.

So, what role did gender play in the crisis? The gender conservatism of the current Congress was enabled, mechanically, by institutional rules that facilitated a porous and fragmented party system. The ideological nature of this capture revealed a backlash fuelled by unresolved anxiety around issues such as social cohesion, mobility, and race relations in a Brazil that seemed to have changed dramatically over the last 25 years, yet had not eradicated many of the structural and cultural underpinnings of inequality. Dilma, as a left-wing woman president, became to some extent a lightning rod for this backlash, which was expressed in many sexist ways in public discourse and representation (cartoons, Internet memes, etc.). Indeed, the gendered promises that Dilma felt obliged to make, of running the nation like a good, caring housewife, competently managing resources, getting things done, without corruption and backroom dealings, were never realistic or deliverable in a political system with the institutions and culture that she inherited, and a political environment in which secular liberal consensus was rapidly decaying, and gender discourses were hijacked and deployed opportunistically in response to deeper social shifts that led many to view gender equality as an ‘ideology’ that threatened Brazil’s very social fabric.

## NOTES

1. Other female Latin American presidents have failed to finish their term in office. Three were toppled by military coups: Isabel Perón in Argentina (1976), Lidia Gueiler Tejada (Bolivia 1980), and Ertha Pascal-Trouillot (Haiti 1991). However, none had been directly elected, serving as interim presidents after the death of the incumbent (the first case) or in a context of political instability and uncertainty (the latter two cases).
2. In the last 70 years, only three of Brazil’s directly elected presidents have finished their terms in office. Five presidencies have now ended up with the vice president stepping in to govern following suicide (Vargas), resignation (Quadros), death (Neves), or impeachment (Collor and Rouseff).



3. Testimony given to the Committee for Compensating Political Prisoners from Rio Grande do Sul, 25 October 2001 (Folha de São Paulo 2012).
4. She went further than any previous president, setting up a comprehensive Truth Commission to examine state repression in the period 1946–1988.
5. The party had also diverted illegal kickbacks from private contractors in the cities it governed into an illegal campaign slush-fund.
6. In the six elections between 1994 and 2014, women have held 10 out of 162 gubernatorial terms (6 percent) across the 27 states, with an average two out of 26 women mayors of state capitals each term.
7. Lula started his eight years in office with one-third female ministers, but this dropped as he reshuffled his cabinet to accommodate coalition parties.
8. A highly successful conditional cash-transfer scheme that by the end of 2010 was benefitting 12.8 million of Brazil's poorest families with school-age children.
9. Abortion is legal in Brazil only in the case of risk to the mother's life, rape or incest, and the specific medical condition of anencephaly.
10. However, she called it neither a crime nor a sin, suggesting a very careful choice of words.
11. For example, in 2010, the 14 largest parties gave only 8 percent of their campaign resources to women even though they constituted nearly 20 percent of candidates (SPM 2014).
12. The PT held 17 percent of seats and proposed 16.4 percent of gender-equality bills.

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## Michelle Bachelet: Engendering Chile's Democratization

*Verónica Montecinos*

### INTRODUCTION

Democracy has never entirely fulfilled its ideals but hope for change is typical of democratic transitions. As the fourth transition president of Chile, Michelle Bachelet (2006–2010 and 2014–present) personified aspirations for renewal. In the realm of political symbols, her presidencies transformed Chilean democracy, long internationally notable for its stability, notwithstanding its brutal collapse in 1973, and accomplishments since 1990. Many commentators took the view that Bachelet's groundbreaking ascension was incongruous in this retrograde society. Quite to the contrary, she embodied the hallmarks of the Chilean tradition of pluralism that was reversed during Pinochet's dictatorial interregnum. The heritage of the Pinochet dictatorship—an authoritarian constitution, military threats, patriarchal anachronisms, and a neoliberal political economy—trapped the transition in a self-fulfilling prophecy of limited democracy. Bachelet's gender politics moved the transition axis closer to expectations of equality and feminist demands, testing configurations of political decision-making more than her three predecessors

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had done. Yet, the entrenched institutional order succeeded in maintaining coalition pacts and technocratic politics in place. In consequence, the liberalizing impetus of the Chilean past has not been recaptured.

Bachelet, a leftist woman with a gender agenda, has governed without the benefit of a unified women's movement or a strong feminist legislative contingent. In spite of significant achievements, her enormous popularity had faded by the middle of her second term and it remains unclear whether her coalition will realize key policy proposals or even outlive her presidency. These considerations suggest three premises for a political historiography of the Bachelet presidency that will be explored in this chapter. First, by breaking open the significance of gender in politics, the Bachelet era invites reconsideration of Chile's historical record. Second, the inauguration of a visibly gendered presidency made the consequences of political masculinity both more salient and more intelligible. Finally, without a sustained commitment to women's rights, democratization will remain an unfulfilled promise.

### POLITICAL MYTH

In April 2006, Bachelet is quoted declaring: 'I think the important thing is that my candidacy was born from citizens themselves [...] and which the parties picked up favourably' (Bachelet, cited in Dixon 2006). A Socialist pediatrician with no experience as a national candidate, Michelle Bachelet became Chile's first woman in a list of presidents going back to 1826. She was the 11th woman ever elected to high office and the first woman elected president in Latin America. After serving as Minister of Health, she was the first woman Minister of Defense in South America, in 2002.

Bachelet's climb to the presidency was backed by extraordinary public support but belatedly endorsed by leaders of the Concertación, the center-left coalition that governed uninterruptedly between 1990 and 2010. Although widely credited for presiding over an exemplary regime transition, the Concertación was losing appeal and cohesiveness when the charismatic Bachelet promised to rekindle the spirit of democratization. Critics thought her charm was an insufficient credential to govern, her long-term party militancy too undistinguished. It was said she lacked the necessary web of party loyalists and her ministerial experience was too limited. In a word, she was too much of a political outsider, benefiting from the popularity and economic successes of her predecessor, the economist Ricardo Lagos (Ph.D. Duke University). Indeed, in a politics heavily influenced by economists-turned-politicians, Bachelet's credentials seem suspect.

Two rightwing economists (trained at Harvard and Chicago) outvoted her in the first round. She won handily in the second (See Table 7.2). 'My victory [...] is the defeat of exclusion,' said Bachelet.<sup>1</sup>

At the close of her first term, after facing early public criticism and acknowledging errors, the surprise candidate had become the most popular president in the country's history (Navia and Osorio 2015, p. 129). Constitutionally her term could not be extended, but Bachelet had become a political myth.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes portrayed as a feminist icon, she was propelled to lead the new UN Women in New York, which enhanced her global status as a women's advocate.

Bachelet regained a historically unusual second term in 2013. No other politician could match her standing in the polls, especially among women (Morales 2008). She promised to tackle controversial gender issues, persistently high inequality, and democratization woes.<sup>3</sup> 'We are facing the exhaustion of "private solutions for public problems,"' she said, endorsing the replacement of neoliberalism hegemony with a new paradigm of social rights (Atria et al. 2013). Deeper reforms and a broader coalition (Nueva Mayoría, which included the Communist Party) would stray from the Concertación moderate path to respond to citizens' demands. As discussed below, this would test her leadership capabilities soon enough.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS

In a speech to evangelical ministers in 2005, Bachelet stressed a central message of her campaign: 'I'm agnostic [...] I believe the state has an important role in guaranteeing the diversity of men and women in Chile' (Bachelet, cited in Reel 2005). She became a Socialist party militant in 1970 when the student mobilization, in tune with similar movements in other places, had just achieved great political impact. Like other presidents featured in this volume, political violence stroke Bachelet's life. In 1975, she was imprisoned with her mother, Angela Jeria. They are listed among torture victims at Villa Grimaldi, a secret camp for dissident captives. Both joined the exiled diaspora; Bachelet continued her medical training and party militancy in East Germany. Her mother became a human rights crusader. Bachelet's father, General Alberto Bachelet, was also tortured and died in prison at age 50. On human rights, Bachelet's personal experience mixed with presidential politics at many levels: days before leaving office in 2010, she inaugurated the Museum of Memory, important to amend the state's 'aloofness over memorialization' (Collins and Hite 2013, p. 156).

### BACHELET ELECTED: A CULTURAL IMPROBABILITY?

The international press repeatedly presented Bachelet's election as an improbable phenomenon. 'How did it happen?,' marveled a delegate of The White House Project in Santiago: 'Unlike other notable female world leaders, Bachelet came to power not on the coattails of her father or husband, or through a parliamentary system' (Wilson 2011). The country's ostensive conservatism seemed at odds with Bachelet's biography: an agnostic, mother of three, who after the end of her marriage gave birth to a daughter out of wedlock. The case flabbergasted those who described Chile as the most 'straight-lace' country in Latin America, a traditionalist Catholic society that lagged behind in the legalization of divorce, where abortion was banned in all cases and in which women's presence in Congress remained below the regional average. Foreign scholars puzzled over Chile's blend of economic modernization and social conservatism.

This picture provides a miscontextualized background for Bachelet's political rise and governance. Instead of widespread public criticism, her gender equality rhetoric, which stressed the secular and pluralist character of the state, was popular: 70 percent approved the appointment of women to half of the cabinet, one of her first initiatives. In her second term, the bill to decriminalize abortion under three circumstances counted 70 percent support in opinion polls. This matches various indicators of Chileans' social liberalism: low fertility rate (1.9); over half of births registered to unmarried mothers; women's average marriage age is 32.65. Atheists or agnostics are now 25 percent.

### PRESIDENT BACHELET, 'DAUGHTER OF CHILEAN DEMOCRACY'<sup>4</sup>

Presidential history is not an established academic field in Chile but the scholarly literature on Bachelet is copious.<sup>5</sup> Antecedents of cultural pluralism come from mid-nineteenth-century spread of liberal, positivist, secular, and meritocratic ideals. The valuing of achieved over ascribed status supported women's non-domestic identities. International conferences and visiting feminists did buttress Chile's public female voice, but its autochthonous impetus remains inadequately acknowledged precisely for its prematureness, as in other world peripheries (Markoff 2003). One of two women's parties in the early 1920s was openly feminist with a well-versed vocabulary (the term 'masculinism' was used in 1910 in reference

to enforced segregation); expansive agendas included contraception and abortion (Gaviola et al. 1986, p. 19; Htun 2003). Some women mobilized early to defend Catholicism against the expanding jurisdiction of a secularizing state. Others focused on social, civil, and political rights. The state created dozens of industrial schools for women, starting in 1887, and middle-class women enjoyed early entry to law,<sup>6</sup> medicine, and other professions; many pursued careers, relying on the help of low-paid domestic workers, one of the largest segments of the female labor force. Pioneering social legislation recognized the realities of working women: day care centers and lactation time (1917); maternity leave—40 days before and 20 days after birth (1925) (Casas and Valenzuela 2012).

At the separation of church and state (1925 constitution), the number of secondary female and male students, although small, was almost equal. Female suffrage was delayed until 1949 since allies in Congress believed the political right would benefit (López and Gamboa 2015). Then feminism entered a so-called period of ‘silence,’ absorbed by highly institutionalized, male-dominated political parties, a warning lesson for late century feminists, hard-pressed to postpone their demands on behalf of democratization.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, political radicalization further liberalized social norms, including women’s involvement in public roles. However, gender stayed absent from class-focused debates and politics maintained a ‘patriarchal understanding of the family’ (Thomas 2011a, p. 16). The two immediate pre-coup governments largely relied on maternalist frameworks to foster women’s political mobilization. President Frei (1964–70) sponsored the first sex education and family planning initiatives, with foreign support and church acquiescence (Power 2003; Jones 2010). President Allende (1970–73) proposed a Women’s Ministry and a new *Estatuto de la Familia* to amplify women’s legal rights, maternity leave, divorce, and domestic workers unions, among other measures. Chile’s decades-old version of an expansive welfare state was associated to improvements in family wellbeing as well as in the status of women, often justified in reference to their roles as wives and mothers, but resulting in higher levels of female education and militancy.

These reformist trends were blocked precisely when the international diffusion of new ideas on gender gained currency around the world. Pluralistic ‘old Chile’ was submerged in ignominy under General Pinochet (1973–1990), ‘the master of historical amnesia’ (McClennen 1999)—known for sanctioning extreme market liberalization inserted in a radical anti-politics strategy. The internationally isolated regime sought legitimation through a

form of political religion (Cristi 2001). Patriarchal public morality camouflaged corruption, state terror, and widespread sexual torture (Hiner 2015). Paradoxically, in the context of persecution and exile, a reawakening of gender consciousness reconnected with earlier and transnational feminist projects (Pieper-Mooney 2010). Organized women opposed the anachronistic gender policies of the dictatorship and chastised the Left's neglect of women's issues (Ríos Tobar 2003a).

In sum, far from a mystery, Bachelet's electability and women advocacy are embedded in Chile's relatively open cultural politics. Her agnosticism and professional standing reflect that heritage. An illustration: the inaugural Dr Eloísa Díaz medal conferred to Bachelet in 2006 commemorated a public health reformist, the first woman to receive a medical degree, in 1887. Ernestina Pérez graduated days later, a feminist who, like Bachelet in the late 1970s, was a medical student at Humboldt University of Berlin (in 1888). By mid-century, two of Chile's most celebrated women—Nobel laureate (1945) Gabriela Mistral and Amanda Labarca, representative to the United Nations (1946)—were internationally renowned as educators, diplomats, and feminist intellectuals.

Like most women executives, Bachelet found a path to power in the context of transition. She is also the daughter of Chilean democracy, which pioneered multiple forms of cosmopolitan progressivism and was built across several generations. Thus Bachelet's still contested significance and legacy are valuable to interpret worldwide executive feminization as well as Chile's long-standing democratization.

## TRANSITION CONTEXT

In Chile, regime change was delayed by years of painstaking negotiations within the democratic opposition and the outgoing dictatorship. The authoritarian constitution, dating from the fraudulent 1980 plebiscite, was not replaced (Fuentes 2013). Authoritarian legacies included an electoral system that unfairly favored the political right and severely constrained change. Bachelet faced punishing conditions as she sought to alter class and gender privileges beyond the agreed-upon limits of transition pacts.

For two decades, the Concertación coalition prioritized stability through pragmatism in policymaking, civil-military relations, and human rights. Socialists and Christian Democrats—historically rival parties with distinctive political cultures and doctrines on class, gender, and religion—safeguarded an equilibrated alliance. Chile was celebrated as a model of



post-authoritarian governance. It appeared ahead in regional comparisons and even in global orderings, including transparency and poverty decline. It was, according to many, the country's best performance ever, and 'one of the most successful transitions' (Arriagada 2015, p. 55).

Nevertheless, criticisms accumulated. Decision-making was unduly concentrated, citizens' participation declined, technocratic elites were too influential; social mobilization was excessively discouraged; parties grew more fractious, unrepresentative, and uncompetitive, captured by cliques and powerful interests. Pressures to promote economic growth and smooth ideological conflict had neglected a comprehensive, long-term development vision. The transition opted, in some accounts, for a politics of oblivion (Cleary 2016), failing to properly honor the victims of dictatorship (Collins et al. 2013). The constitutional reform of 2005 eliminated some distortions to democratic governance, like appointed senators and inadequate civilian control over the armed forces, but biased electoral rules (*sistema binominal*) and a strong presidentialism remained (Siavelis 2014). Persistently high inequality had not been rooted out with targeted antipoverty programs.<sup>7</sup> Institutionally, the rights of women, gays, and indigenous peoples became more visible, although advancing only at the periphery (Ríos Tobar 2003b; Robles 2008; Fernández Ramil and Oliva 2012; Richards 2013).

After massive student-led protests in 2011, clamors gained urgency for more transparency and a new constitution, one of Bachelet's campaign promises. Critics argued that Bachelet and Nueva Mayoría erred in the diagnosis, for protesters wanted more access to the benefits of market-based modernity rather than state palliatives.

Above all, transitional politics ended stifling democratic innovativeness. 'Power makes one extremely conservative,' a presidential adviser said.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps obsessed by the recognition that a transformative political project would not survive without a national majority and a successful market economy, the center-left chose competent policy management to save democracy from populist temptations. Economists converted into political actors of symbolic import (Montecinos 1998), assisted by transition political engineering (Rebecca 2015). The fertile thinking of Pinochet's opposers turned into technocratic calculation, lucrative private consultancy, and lobbying. Without a critical politics of ideas, the narrow focus on pragmatic governability marched toward anti-intellectual forms of democratic politics. Corruption spread, together with other democratic malpractices, becoming scandalously obvious in 2015. A perverse

example: Pinochet's former son-in-law, beneficiary of state assets privatization during his rule, surfaced as chief illegal financier of right and leftwing politicians, reaping the spoils of subornment (Ramírez 2015). Allegations of irregularities in Bachelet's 2013 campaign funding are being investigated (Bonnefoy 2016).

The Concertación was particularly reluctant to absorb feminist critiques of democratic citizenship and politics. Some gender issues were gradually incorporated into government programs from the start, since legal and policy frameworks had fallen notoriously out of step with the rest of world. Negotiations were less workable in areas where the church exercised veto power through the Christian Democrats and rightwing parties (Blofield 2001). The Left had fewer reservations on issues affecting poor women than on women's political representation. 'If presented in a confrontational, militant tone,' told me a Socialist official, 'debates reach only the already convinced.' A feminist said: 'The Socialist Party is misogynist. There are no allies like the Spanish PSOE.' But a former SERNAM Director offered a less caustic account: 'They do not understand us.'<sup>9</sup> A broader approach to gender reforms was further hindered by limited pressure from the previously vigorous women's movement. Divided among partisans, gender experts, and autonomous feminists, women did not benefit from the post-transition brightest achievements.

### PRESIDENTIAL MASCULINITY

Much was expected of Bachelet's pioneer presidency, her 'citizens' government,' social protection platform and horizontal decision-making style. A majority of women voted for the Concertación for the first time. But by stressing the feminine qualities of leadership (Thomas 2011b), Bachelet disturbed a political pattern: the masculine attributes of presidential authority. She confronted a perilous duality: responding to accumulated gender equality expectations while confronting masculinist executive norms. The hegemony of presidential masculinity was invisible, despite recurrent associations with the male-only ethos of masons, the military, and parties. Now presidential imagery and rhetoric served as iconic reminders that a new gender dynamics called for a different politics of accommodation, which the parties seemed unfit to undertake.

In 2005, the Concertación faced a presidential primary between two women, Soledad Alvear, a conservative Christian Democrat, and Bachelet.<sup>10</sup> Accepted notions of power were probed, but the institutional implications

of presidential masculinity became fully exposed with Bachelet in office. Her performance was judged substandard: 'They question your leadership, minimize it and say you do not have it, because you do not lead like a man' (El Mostrador 2016, my translation). Charges of ineffective leadership continued in Bachelet's difficult second term when coalition discipline had declined and even key ministers dared gestures of insubordination.

Bachelet balanced her supposedly deficient presidential femaleness with charismatic appeal, a wobbly formulation in times of crisis. Conventional gender mystification attributes women in power perfidious intents. The devoted pediatrician transmuted into a sinister, closeted radical, possibly with military training like fellow exiles under Honecker. Contemptuously, a commentator called her '*milica de izquierda*' (a leftist trooper), to be mistrusted.

Perhaps in lieu of the manly bonds of typical politicians, Bachelet highlighted attachment to the masonic and military families, which after the coup had betrayed her. Speaking in 2014 to the Grand Lodge, Bachelet declared Freemasonry part of her history, claiming that masonic principles were valid now that she sought to transform education from a consumer good into a social right (Gran Logia de Chile 2014). Indeed, the masonic imprint is strong in Chile. Since the anticlerical campaigns of the nineteenth century, masons promoted state authority over education and public policy. The transnational connections of masons contributed to the cosmopolitan outlook of parties, intellectual and professional groups. Every president was a mason during the crucial 1920–1958 democratic period, when social demands were mediated by a system of negotiations and the Radical party occupied the political center, creating a distinctive freethinking political subculture, the '*cultura radical*' (Lomnitz and Melnick 1998).<sup>11</sup>

Cooperative relations with the armed forces bolstered Bachelet's presidential legitimacy from the start—on occasions she marched and dressed in military garb. 'I always say that if I had not been Minister of Defense, probably I would have never been elected president,' she has said (Álvarez 2015). Her expertise in military affairs<sup>12</sup> allowed the formerly persecuted president to 'talk shop' with the generals and credibly undertake a kinfolk reunion and reconciliation.

The masculine disciplinary codes of economics also helped Bachelet exhibit presidential firmness, despite strategic tensions with her feminist proposals. The employment of economists as a governing device, consistently used since the 1960s, continued after 1990, as '[p]olitics was seen through the prism of the Finance Ministry' (Angel 2014, p. xiv). She also supported efforts to

increase Chile's international visibility through the expert-laden strategy of 'nation branding' (Aronczyk 2013) and continued a politics of trade agreements. Her first Foreign Affairs minister was a former Finance minister and another was appointed to the cabinet in the second term. Bachelet's first term Finance Minister, a Harvard professor of economics with no party militancy, maintained pro-market orthodoxy as the most powerful of her ministers. He led a team of experts (*Expansiva*) (Silva 2008) occupying influential posts, a sign that Bachelet favored policy continuity. Her second term started with a more heterodox Finance minister (a key actor in the her 2008 pension restructuring) who was criticized for a redistributive tax reform that allegedly hurt investments. A mainstream economist replaced him in the cabinet reshuffle of 2015, in which the head of the cabinet and other 'Bacheletistas' were sacked. Subsequently, the government declared the end of the reformist phase and a renewed emphasis on economic growth.

Bachelet approached the masculine world of church officials through influential Jesuits, the religious order of the new Pope whose gender views seemed less rigid (priests' absolution to abortion sinners was permitted during 2016, a jubilee year). The current political director of her staff, a critic of the *Concertación* model, was previously dean at a Jesuit university. In 2014, Bachelet named her former Education Minister ambassador to the Vatican, one of the 21 female ambassadors she appointed, the largest number ever, and one of only 12 female ambassadors to the Vatican. 'Bachelet is respected here,' she told me in June 2015.

### GOVERNING AS A WOMAN

Bachelet, with a trajectory as party, not feminist, militant, resorted to hybrid appeals aimed at multiple constituencies. Her gender discourse combined maternalist, social welfare, and liberal arguments, showing a commitment to equality that appealed to common sense and resonated with a variety of electorates.

Formally, Bachelet enjoyed the significant prerogatives and legislative functions of the executive. Yet the informal institutional arrangements that had previously eased political negotiations worked less smoothly or to her disadvantage. The male-dominated scaffolding of transition politics was not only unprepared to boost presidential feminization but was functional to scurrilous criticism. Soon after taking office, ferocious attacks focused on the president's inapt leadership. The machinations were described as 'political femicide' (Cabieses 2007). Bachelet appropriated the label: 'There

is a striking campaign of femicide against the figure of the president. [...] I always comment that when Lagos became emotional, he was a sensitive man. If I do it, it is because I do not control my emotions. [...] It is as if only masculine rules of the game existed' (Revista Cosas 2007).

Bachelet paid political costs for turning gender into an inclusiveness factor. Her gender equality cabinet, popular and emulated in several countries (Luna et al. 2008), was criticized. Some feminists argued that parity 'from above' preserved elitist rules instead of democratizing power.<sup>13</sup> Others equated parity to an 'assault on merit.'<sup>14</sup> Appointing more women not only diminished the career prospects of the parties' favorites but also strained party and feminist identifiers (Burotto and Torres 2010). Eventually, Bachelet turned to party elites to replace key ministers, sacrificing cohesiveness. Exact ministerial parity (undersecretaries and other posts were included) was not maintained in the first term and was not attempted in the second (Table 7.1).

Tensions involving ministers and presidential advisers are a common but insufficiently studied phenomenon (Arana 2012). In Bachelet's explicitly gendered presidency, the always-fluid intersection of formal prerogatives and informal influence was often linked to her personal attributes. Her predecessors counted on teams of well-connected men to deal with policy and political players. As political liaisons, the effectiveness of Bachelet's trusted female advisers was limited, brief, or both.<sup>15</sup> A weak presidential staff left the president exposed to accusations of incompetence. The media talked about a penchant for secrecy, typical of Bachelet's mistrustful, obstinate personality; her exile in oppressive East Germany was often mentioned as explanation. She may be a doctor, a columnist wrote, but somehow she is 'closer to a rural healer,' who surrounds herself with individuals of rudimentary thinking instead of stimulating minds, like presidents Aylwin, Frei, and Lagos had done (Herrera 2016).

Bachelet's popularity did not avert the defeat of a divided Concertación in 2010, giving the Right its first electoral victory since 1958. The hitherto largest protests erupted in 2011 under President Sebastián Piñera, a billionaire with a Ph.D. in Economics. For the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coup, in a surprising departure from memory erasure, Piñera admitted that 'passive accomplices,' not just the military, had been responsible for human rights violations. He was much criticized, as this affected the candidacy of former senator and Minister Evelyn Matthei against Bachelet in 2013. That year, poignant historical references were inevitable as daughters of two generals competed. Matthei's father, a member of the military junta, denied in court involvement in the death of Bachelet's father (Castillo and Montes 2013, pp. 161–165).

**Table 7.1** Chile, women ministers, 1946–2015

<i>President</i>	<i>Women ministers</i>	<i>Cabinet positions</i>
Gabriel González Videla (1946–1952)	1	Justice (P. Radical)*
Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1952–1958)	1	Education (P. Femenino)*
Jorge Alessandri (1958–1964)	0	
Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964–1970)	0	
Salvador Allende (1970–1973)	2	Labor (PC)*; Family (MAPU)**
Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990)	2	Justice; Labor*
Patricio Aylwin (1990–1994)	1	SERNAM (DC)
Eduardo Frei Ruíz-Tagle (1994–2000)	3	Justice (DC); National Resources (PPD); SERNAM (Ind.)
Ricardo Lagos (2000–2006)	9	Foreign Affairs (DC); Defense (PS) Planning (DC)(Ind.)(DC); Education (DC)(DC); Health (PS); Housing (PS) SERNAM (PPD)(Ind.)
Michelle Bachelet (2006–2010)	18	Defense (PPD); Sec. Presidency (PS); Sec. Government (PPD)*(PPD)* Planning (PS)(PS); Education (DC)(DC); Labor (PS); Health (PS); Housing (DC)(PPD); Agriculture (DC); Mining (PPD); National Resources (PPD)* SERNAM (DC)(PS)*; Com. Culture (Ind.); Com. Environment (PS);
Sebastián Piñera (2010–2014)	11	Sec. Government (UDI)(RN) Education (Ind.)*; Justice (Ind.); Labor (Ind.)*(UDI); Housing (UDI); Public Works (Ind.); National Resources (RN); Environment (UDI) SERNAM (Ind.)(UDI)*
Michelle Bachelet (2014–)	9	Sec. Presidency (DC) Social Development (PS); Education (PPD); Justice (Ind.); Labor (Ind.)(DC); Health (PPD)*(Ind.); Mining (PRSD); Sports (MAS) SERNAM (PC); Com. Culture (Ind.)

*Note:* Political party indicates ministerial changes. Ministries listed according to ceremonial ranking

*Key:* \* Served less than one year; \*\* Law created ministry days before the coup

*Source:* Prepared by the author

**Table 7.2** Chile presidential elections and women candidates, 1989–2013

<i>Election year</i>	<i>President/Party</i>	<i>Women candidates</i>	<i>Vote share</i>	<i>Coalition</i>
1989	Patricio Aylwin (DC)		55.17	Concertación
1993	Eduardo Frei (DC)		57.98	Concertación
1999	Ricardo Lagos (PS)		51.3*	Concertación
		Gladys Marín (PC)	3.19	
		Sara Larrain (Green)	0.44	
2005	Michelle Bachelet (PS)		53.49*	Concertación
2010	Sebastián Piñera (RN)		51.61*	Alianza por Chile
2013	Michelle Bachelet (PS)		62.17*	Nueva Mayoría
		Evelyn Matthei (UDI)	37.83*	
		Roxana Miranda (IGUAL)	1.4	

*Key:* \* Second election round

*Source:* Prepared by the author

Gender equality lost primacy under Piñera, although he signed bills that had been prepared under Bachelet, like one against femicide and one extending post-maternity leave to six months, the longest in Latin America (Blofield and Martínez 2014). In 2014, Piñera announced birth rate decline had stopped, the best indicator that the country was doing better, he said.

Bachelet was re-elected by a significant margin (Table 7.2). Opponents deemed the campaign platform dangerously tilted to the left: it promised major reforms to reduce inequality and improve democratic governance, including previously avoided or failed initiatives: electoral quotas for women, gay marriage, and abortion decriminalization. Advocates of deeper changes remarked that the foundations of the market-oriented economic model would be kept.

The new term began at an accelerated pace with reforms to the electoral system, education, and taxation policies. In a startling shift, however, only a year into Bachelet's second presidency, her popularity declined as Chileans became overwhelmed by corruption scandals that further discredited parties and Congress. Revelations swept away Chile's reputation as the least corrupt country in the region. Business conglomerates had funded electoral campaigns across the political spectrum. Indignation resulted in unprecedented scrutiny and public rebuke. Bachelet's aura of trustworthiness was damaged as her son testified in court for trafficking influence and her daughter-in-law was charged with tax evasion.

A series of anticorruption measures were adopted. A stunned public accustomed to the president's empathetic persona of austere, disciplined forbearance now saw her emotionally shaken. She was said to be acting more as a *mamá* than as president. The twice-elected president was pinned to her gender. Since her first campaign, Bachelet had been portrayed as a political neophyte whose smile won supporters but who lacked the hardiness to lead. Political commentators and the media (both press and TV are controlled by opposition conglomerates) posed Bachelet as conflicted between her private and official roles. While the country's alleged status as a model polity faltered, the president's womanhood turned into an emblem of incompetence. Gendered assessments of presidential leadership resurfaced through 2015, with some going as far as suggesting that the president's resignation was an option and what the country needed in the current turmoil was indeed a father, not a mother. Former president Lagos then emerged as an alternative to guarantee governability, a statesman who transmitted a 'sense of calm.' His competitor in 2017 would be Piñera. Senator Isabel Allende, the former president's daughter, also emerged as a potential candidate.

## GENDER POLICIES

Differences in gender policies during Bachelet's split mandate point to contextual changes and gender learning among policy actors across the ideological spectrum. Bachelet's leadership advanced new standards in gender politics and inspired women to regain collective agency from the beginning. The political environment opened over time, gradually matching the liberality of social practices and demands. By the middle of Bachelet's second term, women senators Allende (PS) and Goic (CD) headed the two principal parties of the governing coalition. It is 'the time of women,' Allende said at her party 2016 congress, 'gender inequality is an unacceptable obstacle for our progress as a society.'

Chile's presidentialism permitted Bachelet to promote a transformative gender agenda—'The President said' would assuage many foes. Formerly avoided gender equality subjects moved to the foreground.<sup>16</sup> This is likely to intensify with recent institutional reforms in the political system. The straightjacket of elite consensus policymaking seems, at times, waning under the banner of dysfunctional 'old politics.' A promised new constitution could enhance women's rights, contingent on the level of women's mobilization and the equality perspective adopted



(Lambert and Scribner 2009). The constitutional process started but will not be completed during Bachelet's second presidency, and it is not clear whether a constitutional assembly will be the chosen mechanism, as many demand.

Bachelet's first presidency marked a departure from post-transition debts with women (Franceschet 2005; Haas 2010; PNUD 2010; Haas and Blofield 2014). Despite resistance, Bachelet expanded narrowly conceived gender programs, encouraged enforcement, inter-ministerial coordination, and a broad legislative gender agenda ranging from job discrimination to violence against women, and from equal vacation days for live-in domestic workers to workers' breaks to nurse their children.

The 2006–2010 gender agenda, in its framing and content, acknowledged ideological and institutional restrictions. Feminists generally supported Bachelet's initiatives, although her rhetoric evaded an explicit feminist identification. Instead, Bachelet strategically opted for a feminine, less threatening discourse (Christie 2016). Social policies that focused on the family economy allowed her to safeguard legitimacy and seek distance from the patriarchal codes of neoliberalism (p. 122). The menace of backlash against governance feminization may have led Bachelet to 'mask' a rights-based program (p. 131), expanding women's rights through a non-disruptive ethic of care.

An emphasis on socio-economic rights facilitated political negotiations within a coalition built on technocratic consensus and reluctant to define gender equality as fundamental to democratization ('She ended up doing what the parties wanted,' complained to me a feminist in 2012). UDI, the party most identified with the dictatorship, having achieved in 2005 the largest congressional representation, forced compromises in the legislature (eager to strengthen its policy role), and relied on the judicialization of inter-branch powers to limit the executive, particularly through interventions of the Constitutional Tribunal (Scribner 2010).

The most celebrated gender-related policy during this period, apart from gender parity and free early child care (*Chile Crece Contigo*), was the fiscally onerous reform of the private pension system, introduced in 1981. The state assumed a larger role through non-contributory pensions, over 60 percent of which were to be received by women. Expanded coverage and benefits (like a subsidy for every child) recognized women's responsibilities in the family and the labor market. Tellingly, in a politics ruled by economic discipline considerations, the Finance Ministry was a central player from concept to legislative negotiations, although Bachelet

advocated for women more than once (Arenas 2010). She appointed a new presidential commission on pension reform in 2014. There is growing fear of old-age poverty with individually financed retirement accounts; pensions remain insufficient, especially for women, whose life expectancy is almost 82 years. This time, however, no agreement was reached and the reform was indefinitely postponed.

Therapeutic abortion was explicitly left out of Bachelet's first term agenda, although it had been available since 1931 until banned in the last days of the dictatorship. The church and its political allies exerted enormous pressure, arguing that abortion could never be therapeutic. Thus, feminists were most critical of the moderate progress on sexual and reproductive rights, despite presidential commitment, and eventual success regarding the public distribution of contraceptives. The negotiated approach to violence against women was also questioned for it focused on intra-family violence at the expense of recognizing women's structural subordination (Corn 2014) (Table 7.3).

The second term was initiated with an empowered Bachelet and a legislative majority. The Ministry of Women and Gender Equity was created in 2015; in her first administration, the projected ministry would have likely focused on women and the family, and the idea was abandoned. Two gender initiatives that previously appeared unachievable became law. A gender quota was approved with an electoral reform that eliminated the binomial district system (2015). An abortion bill passed the Chamber of Deputies in 2016, with 59 votes in case of rape (47 opposed), 62 votes in case of fetal non-viability (46 opposed), and 67 votes when the mother's life is at risk (43 opposed). It is currently debated in the more conservative Senate. Also, a 2016 law on political parties and campaign financing will ease women's candidacies. It mandates a minimum of 40 percent of either gender in party collegial bodies.

This time, the gender agenda responded to a different setting. Piñera had emphasized traditional notions of family and womanhood showing the risk of gender policy reversals and the need for greater women activism. Opponents to gender reform were somewhat delegitimized. The church moral authority was debilitated by the global magnitude of sex abuse by priests. This became most scandalous when Chilean cardinals' concealment efforts became public (in 2015) and when clergymen famous for growing piousness among the wealthy were sanctioned. Two acclaimed 2015 Chilean films on the matter amplified public outrage.

**Table 7.3** Chile Gender Laws 2006–2010 and 2014–2016

<i>First presidency</i>	<i>Second presidency</i>
<b><i>Labor</i></b>	
Law 20.215 (2007)* Work schedules and holidays service sector	Law 20.786 (2014) Regulates labor contracts of domestic workers
Law 20.279 (2008)*** Minimum wage domestic workers	
Law 20.336 (2009) Weekly rest time domestic workers	
Law 20.348 (2009) Equal pay for equal work	
Law 20.399 (2009) Expands working parents right to child care	
<b><i>Family</i></b>	
Law 20.166 (2007) Expands working mothers' right to breastfeed	Law 20.761 (2014) Extends to fathers' right to feed children under 2
Law 20.152 (2007) Child support improved enforcement	Law 20.830 (2015) Civil unions, including same-sex couples
Law 20.239 (2008)* Tax exemption divorce	Law 20.891 (2016) Improves post-natal leave
Law 20.286 (2008) Improvements to Family Courts	
Law 20.367 (2009) Extends family leave for adoptive parents	
<b><i>Reproductive rights</i></b>	
Law 20.418 (2010)* Public distribution of emergency contraceptives	Bill (2015)* To decriminalize abortion under three conditions. Passed to Senate debate.
<b><i>Pensions</i></b>	
Law 20.255 (2008)* Creates non-contributory pensions	
<b><i>Representation</i></b>	
	Law 20.820 (2015)* Creates Min. of Women and Gender Equity
	Law 20.840 (2015)* Electoral reform and gender quotas
	Law (2016)** Public funding political campaigns
	Law (2016)** Gender quotas in political parties
<b><i>Violence</i></b>	
	Bill (2015) Sanctions harassment in public and semipublic spaces. Passed to Senate debate.

*Key:* \* Executive simple urgency (30 days for congressional dispatch); \*\* Executive *Suma urgencia* (15 days); \*\*\* Executive immediate discussion (6 days)

*Source:* Prepared by the author

Politicians' blatant chauvinism, now openly derided, led conspicuous figures to declare support for women's rights, defensively in some cases, compellingly in others. The Right, fracturing between religious fundamentalists and social liberals, has tried to increase women's party engagement. Some Christian Democrats insisted theirs was not a confessional party but it remained deeply divided on abortion: prominent leaders disclosed they had undergone the procedure while female comrades led the pro-life camp, in which abortion was equated to disappeared persons under Pinochet. The Health Minister resigned in 2014 when she asserted that conservative families resorted to banned abortions in private clinics. The issue remains highly contentious.

### FINAL REMARKS

In light of the above analysis of Bachelet's presidencies, it should be evident that firm conclusions regarding her impact as a symbol of new forms of power and gender governance in Chile would be premature. Her presidencies reveal that the limits of post-transition democracy that kept the country looking as a paradoxical oddity in gender matters did not prevent progress for women and other disadvantaged groups. More could have been achieved under a democratic constitution, a fair electoral system, and higher legislative representation of women, but even the strongest president would have struggled to uproot excessive inequality in Chile's entrenched political economy model. A quarter-century after the end of dictatorship, society is increasingly impatient with the enduring legacy of authoritarian neoliberalism that crippled the state, exalted business interests, depoliticized social conflict, and undermined secular republicanism. Systemic knots could loosen as the scope of the current political crisis is aggravated by unfavorable economic conditions. In the process, Bachelet lost popular support and stature as a reformer. The gendering of Chilean democracy looks partly assured, but the future of the 'Chilean miracle' that rewarded pragmatic stasis over structural transformation is too indeterminate to assert so with certainty.

### NOTES

1. Speech, Washington, 8 June 2006 (Bachelet 2007, p. 560).
2. TIME ranked Bachelet as the world's 15th most influential person in 2008, and in 2014 among the 100 most influential people.
3. Chile was classified as a 'flawed democracy' by the Democracy Index 2014.

4. Gabriela Mistral's self-description, available at: [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1945/mistral-speech.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1945/mistral-speech.html) [Accessed 26 April, 2016].
5. Some recent works include Sehnbruch and Siavelis (2014); Waylen (2016); Jalalzai (2016).
6. My own maternal grandmother entered law school in 1921; my mother did so in 1945. In the early 1970s, 10 percent of lawyers and 28 percent of judges were women (Chaney 1973). Currently, an estimated 40 percent of lawyers are women.
7. Per capita income increased (\$4,500 in 1990 to \$20,000 in 2013) but Chile is the most unequal of OECD countries (López et al. 2013).
8. Interview, June 2012.
9. Interviews, June 2012.
10. Alvear, a three-time minister and party leader, withdrew her candidacy.
11. Bachelet's grandfather was a mason, like her father, who voted Radical (Subercaseaux and Sierra 2005, p. 47).
12. In the mid-1990s, Bachelet studied political and strategic studies and later attended the Inter-American Defense College in Washington.
13. See Nelly Richard's interview with Alejandra Castillo (Richard 2015).
14. Fernández Ramil (2007). See also the interview with former Defense Minister, Vivianne Blanlot in González (2007).
15. In 2015 Bachelet's presidential staff included five women in a team of seven. Journalists dubbed it 'Lulu's club.'
16. Before his disputed election against a conservative, Opus Dei candidate, the agnostic Lagos backtracked on legal abortion. As Education Minister, he consulted the cardinal before allowing pregnant students to stay in schools (Lagos 2012, pp. 131–132).

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## Luísa Dias Diogo: Gender and Political Leadership in Mozambique

*Frances B. Henderson*

### GENDERED OPPORTUNITIES AND GOVERNING: LUÍSA DIOGO

The rise of women to the highest executive ranks in some African states is a phenomenon that has only occurred in the last 30 years. Historically, female leaders in Africa have been rare, and the continent has been among the last to select women as national leaders, with relatively few women obtaining positions of top executive leadership in the 1990s. However, in recent years African women have risen to cabinet ministries, prime ministerial posts and presidential offices, thereby making inroads into every aspect of the executive branch. The expansion of women's political representation in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) over the last 40 years has been rapid and remarkable. By the 2010s, some of the poorest countries in the world showed the highest levels of women in legislative bodies, and as of 2014, African women on average held 22.4 percent of the national legislative seats (Hughes and Tripp 2015, p. 1513). Nonetheless, women in executive positions in the continent are still few and far between. In places where women have obtained national executive positions their impact has been varied, especially in terms of advancing policies that promote

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women and gender equity. While the hypotheses that account for the rise of women executives worldwide are diverse, many have one thing in common; (African) politics remains largely androcentric and dominated by male norms and values. Despite what is now a global awareness of gender concerns, women remain marginalized in the political process and in governing in the African context, as many governments approach gender reforms by ‘highlighting a global vision of the situation of the country’ while at the same time insufficiently reflecting ‘the specificities of the female condition in the context of democratic transition’ (Osorio 2007, p. 58). Official commitment to and signing of regional gender platforms or agreements, and party rhetoric with regard to the role of women in party and politics articulate a commitment to gender symmetry on the part of the government, while allowing it to simultaneously promote women and the defense of the rights of women in very general terms. This can result in pronouncements that are rhetoric-heavy but in policy actions that do little to challenge prevailing androcentric norms.

It has been suggested that policies on gender symmetry that female executives implement, especially in the context of African cases, are the result of the power of the office *and* of ongoing work by women’s organizations, gender machinery, women parliamentarians and women’s wings of political parties. This chapter interrogates that assertion by focusing on the ascension of Luísa Diogo to the position of prime minister of Mozambique. I suggest that gendered power relations within party organizations, cultural and political norms, and views of women who participate in the decision-making process shaped the way Diogo executed her job as prime minister as well as her administration’s policies.

Within the context of SSA, Bauer and Tremblay (2011) found that the ideological orientation of political parties and their views on gender symmetry have a significant impact on women’s opportunities for appointment or election to executive position. While Bauer and Tremblay suggest that the impact is most keenly felt in cabinet ministries, here I suggest that in the case of Luísa Diogo’s ascent to the office of prime minister, ‘contextual factors’ such as political party orientation, ‘accession to regional or international organizations, the role of women’s movements and the diffusion of norms’ also had an impact on her prospects of becoming prime minister and her success in implementing gender-based policies while in office (Bauer and Okpotor 2013, pp. 79–80).

### *Luísa Diogo: Background*

Luísa Diogo was born Luísa Dias in Tete Province on 11 April 1958. Upon graduation from secondary school, she attended Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Economics in 1983. She earned her Master's in financial economics from the University of London in 1992. In 1980, while still at university, Diogo began working for the Mozambique Ministry of Finance, which at the time was struggling to manage the country's financial matters in the midst of a civil war. She became department head in 1986 and then budget director in 1989. She held that position until 1992, at which time she went to work for the World Bank as Program Officer in Mozambique (Nzegwu 2007, pp. 2–3; Henderson 2011). Soon after, she was appointed Deputy Finance Minister by Mozambique's first democratically elected president, Joaquim Chissano. After his victory in the 1999 presidential elections, Chissano selected Diogo to lead the Ministry of Finance. In 2004, Chissano appointed Diogo prime minister, replacing Pascoal Mocumbi, who left office to take a position with the World Bank. In 2005 Mozambique's second democratically elected president, Armando Guebuza, appointed Diogo to serve as prime minister in his administration. Diogo was often heralded as an extraordinary example of what women could achieve in politics. Nonetheless, limited progress was made in terms of women's descriptive representation during her time in office, as women remained underrepresented in elected municipal and provincial posts. Diogo's expressed commitment to economic growth, poverty reduction and government transparency were manifest in legislation and programs which met some resistance, but were an important part of advancing gender symmetry and women's issues on a national level. Embedded in those programs, and explicit in others, was her commitment to advancing women's and girls' access to education and healthcare.

Diogo's appointment came at a time of post-democratic transition in Mozambique. Fairly new to democratic multiparty politics, Mozambicans have only participated in five national election cycles, the most recent in October 2014. Mozambique ranks low on the Human Development Index (180 out of 188 countries) and is one of the poorest countries in the world (UNDP 2015). It has experienced rapid economic growth in the past ten years as real GDP grew by 7.4 percent in 2014 and by 7.6 percent in 2015 (part of Diogo's legacy as prime minister, which will be discussed later), but the country continues to be laden with debt from international lenders

(World Bank 2015). Unemployment remains around 22 percent and the working poor below the \$2 PPP is 85.8 percent (UNDP 2015), indicating that rapid economic growth has had little impact on poverty reduction and improvement in social indicators. Approximately 70 percent of Mozambicans live in rural areas, and many are subsistence farmers. The country ranks 135th out of 155 countries on the UNDP Human Development Report's gender inequality index (GII), and only 1.4 percent of women have finished secondary school, compared to 6.2 percent of adult males in the country. Female participation in the labor market is slightly higher than men's participation, 85.5 percent and 82.8 percent, respectively (UNDP 2015, p. 226).

In SSA, post-conflict societies have experienced significant growth in women's representation (Tripp et al. 2009) and Mozambique, like South Africa, Uganda and other post-conflict states in Africa, has experienced significant gains in women's legislative representation nationally. The Mozambican parliament (Assembly of the Republic) boasts high numbers of women parliamentarians (39.6 percent) and the government (cabinet ministries) also includes women in various portfolios. Women are not well represented in local, provincial politics, and are almost always relegated to female positions. The pathway to political power typically involves either kinship/party networks or ethnic/kinship networks. Osorio notes that women, '[R]egardless of their party or ethnic or other characteristics, achieve power via men, whether this achievement is mediated by ethnic, religious or social factors' (2005, p. 140).

The Assembly of the Republic holds 250 representatives, each elected by the public through a PR open list system. The three largest political parties in Mozambique are the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the Democratic Movement of Mozambique who hold 144, 89 and 17 parliamentary seats, respectively. The majority of the seats held by women correspond to FRELIMO, the only party that has implemented a gender quota. Mozambique is categorized as a parliamentary, presidential dominant system in which the president has unilateral authority to appoint and dismiss the prime minister at her/his discretion (Jalalzai 2010).

When Diogo was appointed prime minister by Mozambican President Armando Guebuza in 2005, she was one of eight women in his cabinet of 26 members (Valy 2005). Diogo's appointment flew in the face of dominant norms in Mozambican politics that asserted that women were not qualified to participate in politics. However, what we also find is that Diogo's powers and authority remained circumscribed by Mozambique's executive system, political party and cultural norms.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: WOMEN'S STATUS, POLITICAL POWER AND ORGANIZATIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE

As has been the case in other SSA contexts, the power that Mozambican women wielded in the public sphere was greatly diminished under colonialism and was never fully restored after independence (O'Barr 1984). The economic and social oppression of women under Portuguese colonialism was undergirded by a migrant labor system that dominated southern Africa, and a gendered division of labor, which placed most of the heavy agricultural labor in the hands of women. Women were excluded from land ownership and subjected to *lobola* (bride price). Although they were primarily responsible for productive and reproductive work under poor conditions, they lacked decision-making power in village affairs and political life (Urdang 1984, p. 159). The Portuguese colonial administrations propped up 'traditional customs' that facilitated the relegation of women to the private sphere and perpetuated the perception (among women and men) that women were inferior. The inclusion of women and gender issues would prove important in the anti-colonial rhetoric of FRELIMO, the armed struggle for independence and in post-democratic transition governing.

### *Women and Gender in FRELIMO*

FRELIMO was founded in 1962 as an amalgamation of three other nationalist groups. Eduardo Mondlane was named president (Sheldon 2002, p. 118) and FRELIMO promised to transform Mozambique into a more egalitarian society, creating an equitable social structure for women and men, rural peasants and urban elites, the poor and the rich, upon independence from Portuguese colonialism. FRELIMO's rhetoric posited a direct relationship between 'the total transformation of society and the liberation of women' (Urdang 1989, p. 94). However, this discourse constructed women and women's liberation as determined by FRELIMO male leadership. It was only within this context that the women's movement would be included in the national project (Osorio 2005, p. 138).

The creation of the Organization for Mozambican Women (Organização da Mulher Moçambicana, OMM) in 1972 was a concrete manifestation of FRELIMO rhetoric on the centrality of women to independence struggle. OMM was 'established as the arm of FRELIMO in charge of mobilizing, organizing and uniting all women so that they will become involved in the revolutionary process' (OMM 1980, p. 2). Despite FRELIMO's

discourse, it still carefully circumscribed women's struggle for equality within the confines of the party. After independence, the FRELIMO Central Committee continued to exert major influence over OMM, and was heavily involved in the formation of the OMM platform. OMM was not a social movement with its own identity, but instead, FRELIMO defined its strategies and agendas. Women who rose to the leadership ranks of party organizations were mostly wives or kin of political leaders, or those who had in some other way built up a significant reserve of political capital through their role in the liberation struggle. Within FRELIMO and OMM, gender relations 'were built around a discourse of equality that made women's visibility rely on strategies of male domination' (Osorio 2005, p. 139).

By the 1990s and the peace negotiations, the contradictions and ambiguities of FRELIMO's rhetoric had not gone unnoticed as former women militants challenged gendered norms and stereotypes. This is the party background from which Luísa Diogo's leadership emerged. There was little to no autonomy for the women's organization or female party members around issues of women's rights outside of the platform, and seemingly little room to question the platform from within. Party discipline was important, and to an extent would continue to be in post-civil war Mozambique. Diogo's poverty and gender policies stemmed from the party's stated commitment to women's emancipation, but the ability to implement them would be influenced by the gender norms that governed party politics. The next section examines the ways in which the post-civil war position of women influenced Diogo's opportunity to become PM.

### *FRELIMO's Commitment to Gender Equality During the Democratic Transition*

'The post war place reserved for these women is either in the women's organizations or in the subordinate positions in the party' (Osorio 2005, p. 140).

From 1976 to 1992, Mozambicans were in the midst of conflict between FRELIMO and RENAMO. The 16-year civil war devastated Mozambique, leaving more than one million people killed (at the time this represented 7 percent of the population) and more than 4 million internal or external refugees. Infrastructure suffered upwards of 2 billion dollars in damage, including the ruin of bridges, railways, health centers and schools (Jacobson 1995, p. 30). Women at the local and village levels had developed networks and responses which helped them survive the conflict

and were using these strategies to participate in the peace process (Moran and Pitcher 2004, p. 512). In the years after the civil war, women's political participation continued to take shape outside of the OMM, as civil society emerged more active during the democratic transition. Women's organizations continued to press the FRELIMO Party to recognize and address social inequality and women's status in all corners of life, notably in the political and legal spheres. Women's NGOs were part of the civic education process leading up to the first multiparty election in that they already had existing community-based structures which had been active under the conditions of civil war. These organizations had the ability to reach the illiterate sectors of urban and rural populations, but were often left without access to resources (Jacobson 1995).

As such, the 1990 Constitution formalized the nation's commitment to gender equality before the law, penalizing discrimination based on sex or gender. Article 57 of the Constitution states that '[t]he State shall promote and support the emancipation of women, and shall provide incentives to increase the role of women in society. ... The State recognizes the value of, and shall encourage, the participation of women in the defense of the country and in all spheres of the country's political, economic, social and cultural activity' (1990, Article 57). While the constitution shored up legal commitment to women's equal status in society, The Rome Accord of 1992 (signed by FRELIMO and RENAMO, and which ended the civil war) included guidelines for establishing multiparty, democratic elections and ensured universal suffrage and thus guaranteed women's right to participate in the elections. New to the political process, women often 'referred to having to "squeeze" themselves into a suit of ready-made clothes imported from the West,' as new types of education, mobilization and participation did not always fit with the cultural and political norms which governed their lives (Jacobson 1995, p. 30). Thus, women's participation in the electoral process was stilted by their lack of experience, limited representation in electoral bodies, and lack of education, leading both men and women to assume that women were not ready to play an extensive political role.

Many policies were initiated to include women in the political process, and one tangible result was FRELIMO's decision to adopt gender party quotas prior to the first multiparty elections. Both internal and external pressure contributed to this decision, as, by the 1990s, discussions of gender equity, women's political representation and policies in the Southern African Development Community (SADCC) region had begun to intensify and international donors began to place priority on this when considering



whether to provide assistance. In 1994, FRELIMO adopted its first gender quota, stating that 30 percent of the candidates would be women in both parliamentary elections. In 1997, the southern African regional organization, SADC (Southern African Development Community) completed and circulated the SADC Gender Protocol, recommending to all member states that the number of women representatives reach a threshold of 30 percent in national legislative bodies by 2005. FRELIMO raised its minimum to 35 percent and then 40 percent for the 2004 national election. Women candidates have made up 40 percent of the list for Assembly of the Republic since 2004, and women candidates are distributed throughout the PR list, as opposed to being tacked on to the bottom where they have less chances of winning a seat (Nuvunga 2005, p. 51). As political liberalization continued and the opportunity for political participation emerged, FRELIMO actively recruited women in its governing process at the highest levels.

There was an increase in the number of women in the Assembly of the Republic and in government positions. When Diogo was appointed to her first full term as prime minister, women held 27 percent of the cabinet positions, including, among others, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Labor, the Minister of Mineral Resources and the Minister of Women Affairs and Social Welfare. The brief list above suggests that while women held fewer ministerial positions in Guebuza's cabinet than in Chissano's, women still occupied at least 25 percent of the positions. Diogo represents a change of the political guard to the extent that she was not a member of FRELIMO. While her appointment shows that being a veteran of the struggle for independence was not a prerequisite for inclusion in Guebuza's government, it also suggests that she may have been a beneficiary of women's previous efforts to challenge gender norms. The fact that several women in Guebuza's cabinet were prominent party members and one was a former parliament deputy attests to the centrality of the party. Diogo was never a member of the FRELIMO Political Commission but was elected to the Central Committee in 2002. She was primarily noted for her technical expertise.

### *Institutions and Structures*

Structures and institutional forms shaped Diogo's tenure in office. As prime minister, she was tasked with assisting and advising the president with the running of the government. The Council of Ministers is chaired and coordinated by the prime minister, who remains accountable to the president. The prime minister also encourages and supports entrepreneurial

activity and the exercise of private initiatives, while protecting the interests of consumers and the general public. As Jalalzai found, women are more represented in executive positions as prime ministers, in systems where dual executives exist and where unified presidential and unified parliamentary systems are present: ‘A woman prime minister sharing power with a party, one who is responsible to the parliament and has the possibility of being removed is seen as more tolerable than a woman president exercising independent power without the possibility of recall until the next election’ (Jalalzai 2010, p. 210). Jalalzai and Krook (2010, p. 12) note that most female leaders have served as prime ministers, in positions secured through legislative or presidential appointment, and, in the case of Africa, women have served as relatively weak prime ministers under strong presidents. Diogo’s appointment is consistent with this characterization. The role of the PM in these settings is circumscribed by the party’s ideological agenda. It can be argued that Diogo’s appointment went against the grain, representing a break from the old guard and the emergence of a group of prominent new political actors. President Chissano’s initial appointment of Diogo after announcing that he would not seek reelection gave Diogo some flexibility in her policies without straying far from the ideological platform of the party, except for her attempts to bring transparency to the governing process. While Chissano maintained the technocratic nature of his cabinet, the fact that he was serving his final term as head of state exposed a deepening factional divide within FRELIMO. At the time, it was suggested that Guebuza and a group of FRELIMO old guards controlling the party would be opposed to the liberalization of the Mozambican economy and the expansion of foreign investment. However, his appointment of Diogo to a full term as prime minister demonstrates that he valued her experience and expertise as a policy economist, and was indeed willing to move the country forward in that direction (ISSA 2015).

### ECONOMIC POLICY AND STABILIZATION: ECONOMIC PROWESS ON DISPLAY

Despite internal party rifts, Diogo continued to push through economic reforms, working with the IMF to diminish Mozambican international debt and reduce poverty. In the initial year of her first appointment, Diogo’s implementation of the five-year plan centered not only on the nation’s economic health, but also on the health of citizens. In a 2009 interview, she reflected upon the progress that had been made under her

tenure as finance minister and prime minister. She noted that, whereas in 1975 Mozambique had an illiteracy rate of around 98 percent, by the time of the 1992 peace agreement, the rate had dropped to the 80-percent range. As mentioned earlier, the infrastructure which supported education was decimated during the war for independence, and nearly 50 percent of the schools had been destroyed or were inoperable immediately following independence. But, in less than ten years, the education infrastructure was fully restored. In 2009, the literacy rate hovered at 52 percent, 69 percent for women (Norbrook 2009). Diogo clearly saw the intersection between poverty reduction and education. During her tenure as PM, she maintained a focus on education with an eye toward increasing workforce participation and thereby attracting more international investors and businesses. Under the government's five-year plans, PARPA I (Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty 2001–2005) and PARPA II (2005–2010), the government dedicated 20 percent of its overall budget to education and, as a result, there was a general increase in levels of literacy among women. Diogo hired thousands of teachers, health workers and literacy workers to expand the country's commitment and move toward a health and education reform. In addition, she focused on reforming the police system and judicial system, which had been plagued by corruption, raising money for development and economic growth. By the end of 2004, Diogo had obtained 790 billion dollars in aid from the World Bank, most of which went toward financing telecommunication projects, the AIDS Emergency Initiative and agricultural development (Nzegwu 2007, p. 5). The 2004 five-year plan included funding for technical education, the formation of 'poverty observatories' (accountability councils populated by citizens and media intended to provide oversight and assessment of government strategies) and, in the process, advocated for government transparency and accountability. By the end of her term she had garnered international recognition for her poverty reduction plan and was seen as having turned around a failed state that the world had long since written off, but that now possessed the economic growth of an Asian tiger (Time magazine, 2004, cited in Nzegwu 2007, p. 5).

Diogo was also known for her willingness to include various stakeholders in the process of economic development. She identified consensus and the engagement of civil society as important for the success of development programs. 'This development agenda was built on a mechanism of discussions with civil society, so that every bill approved in the parliament had already been vetted by the society at large' (Diogo 2006). Her inclusion of

various stakeholders was touted as a way to increase accountability within the political and the financial sectors, thus reducing corruption and stimulating leaders to take initiatives and create spaces for ownership of those processes and sectors.

### GENDER POLICIES: WOMEN AND DECISION MAKING, EDUCATION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Mozambique has a long tradition of emphasizing gender equality and women's emancipation which dates back to FRELIMO post-independence government. It has signed regional (SADCC) and international (CEDAW) agreements on gender equality, and the equal rights of women and men are enshrined in the constitution. In keeping with FRELIMO's expressed commitment to equality between men and women, Diogo's administration put gender equality policies at the center of many of its major economic and social reforms. Under Diogo's watch, the Mozambican gender machinery was strengthened and policy and legislation were geared toward addressing women and girl's issues.

Gender equality was a major objective in the country's poverty reduction strategy (PARPA II), which specifically recognized that the empowerment of women is a decisive factor in endeavors to eradicate poverty. The list of gender policy and related strategies in PARPA II included the institutionalization of gender units in all sectors at central and provincial government levels; the revision of all legislation discriminatory to women, particularly that which relates to domestic violence; the integration of women into strategies for the development of small- and medium-scale companies, including access to suitable credit; and the implementation of actions intended to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, including promotion of the role of men in this context, among several others (Tvedten et al. 2008, p. 1). As a primary developer of this plan, Diogo was instrumental in highlighting the connection between the empowerment of women and the reduction of poverty, by identifying the central role that women play in agriculture and reproduction. One of Diogo's first acts in office was to address the issue of HIV/AIDS and directly link it to women's productivity and reproductive role. In 2006, she urged African health ministers to make serious and concerted efforts to ensure that reproductive and sexual health services be made free of charge throughout the continent. Diogo firmly believed that only through services that are free at the point of delivery, disease and poverty could be fought (Mozambique

News Agency 2006). Diogo's call to make reproductive healthcare services free of charge was a bold move for any leader, and especially bold for a female prime minister in a region still dominated by patriarchal norms. She adroitly justified her call for rethinking poverty and development through the lens of gender. While Diogo was in office, the government adopted several key plans that focused on women and gender issues, most notably the Gender Policy and its Implementation Strategy (PGEI), adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2006. The PGEI aimed at 'guaranteeing gender-equal participation, access to rights, and opportunities, so that every person can contribute to economic development and reduction of absolute poverty in Mozambique' (JICA 2014, p. 12). This national-level policy affirms the government's commitment to the Beijing Platform, the promotion of gender equality, the coordination of the nation's gender machinery and further protection and resources for women and girls victims of gender-based violence. The government implemented the National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women 2010–2014, which includes policies for increasing women's visibility and participation in decision-making in armed conflict resolution, guaranteeing access for and the participation of women in all sectors and levels in the area of defense and security.

Cooperation, coordination, transparency and accountability were central parts of Diogo's efforts to address gender inequality in Mozambique, building relationships between civil society and the government to fight for gender equality in the social, political and economic realms. Institutional mechanisms established while Diogo was in office included the repurposing of the Ministry of Women and Social Action (MMAS) in 2004, to 'coordinate, monitor and implement actions for women's issues' (Ministry of Women and Social Action 2014). The same year, the government created the National Council for the Advancement of Women as the primary vehicle to bridge the gap and coordinate efforts between women's organizations and the state. Although chaired by the head of MMAS, it remains a distinct and independent entity designed to coordinate information and policies. Much of the national policy formation and the expansion of the gender machinery were facilitated by the appointment of women in key ministerial positions while Diogo was prime minister. The number of women in high-profile senior government posts continued to increase while she was in office. In 2006 there were six female ministers, four vice ministers and six permanent secretaries in the Council of Ministers, which she coordinated as prime minister (SIDA 2007, p. 49).

Legislative actions were also an important part of the expansion of gender equality under Diogo's administration. The FRELIMO Party continued to boast high numbers of women in the national legislature due to the party's gender quota (in 2005, women made up 35 percent of the parliamentarians). This high rate of political representation at the national level was one factor that facilitated the passing of bills on gender issues in the Assembly between 2004 and 2011. As The Women's Caucus in the Parliament is not recognized as an official organ, and recommendations from that caucus must go through parliamentary commissions, the Caucus's efficacy is limited. High levels of descriptive representation do not ensure formulation or passage of gender-based legislation as attitudes toward gender issues vary from member to member, and given that there is a general tendency to follow party lines (JICA 2014). This was evident during the debate on the Family Law. Women MPs made it clear that they would not vote as a block for the law. This continues to raise concerns about the sustainability of these legislative gains. Nonetheless, significant legislative achievements were made while Diogo was in office, including the Law on the Trafficking of People (2006), The Family Law (2004), which recognizes joint head of households, unmarried couples and equal right between men and women, and the Law on Domestic Violence, which makes violence against women and girls a crime punishable by law. There is little consensus as to whether these reforms have been successfully implemented. In many ways, progress has been slow due to social and cultural norms that continue to circumscribe women's activities. In some instances, such as the case of the Land Law and land tenure and access, the majority of women do not know their rights and consequently do not benefit from the law. In other instances, customary law continues to be used to deny access to the benefits of state laws. Successful implementation is still hampered by male domination and the centrality of men in the political process.

### *Cultural Norms About Women Politicians*

Women's political participation remains hampered by relegation, as well as by cultural and social traditions that posit women as caring and nurturing. Those who wish to participate in the decision-making process are marked as men or bad women; they face perceptions of incompetence and inadequacy. Diogo possessed a no-nonsense leadership style which quickly put to rest any allusion of ineptitude. Friend and colleague Rachel Glennester,

Executive Director of The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, notes the following about Diogo in negotiations for debt reduction,

As the only female member of the IMF negotiating team, I loved to watch then-Minister Diogo dominate meetings through superior argument as well as force of personality. She would heap withering scorn on poorly thought-through proposals (including from her own central-bank governor). The result was that everyone went into meetings with her very well prepared. (Glennester 2016)

Diogo's ability to secure international investments, large international grants and donors' support for economic growth flies in the face of widely held assumptions that women are not good negotiators, and that they are passive and inept at managing money. Even with her demonstrated expertise, Luísa Diogo was not immune to biased perceptions. Female politicians often have a tense relationship with the media and the public and bear the brunt of negative portrayals by the media. Journalists complain that women politicians and experts are less accessible, avoid interviews even when asked, deferring to their male counterparts (Gender Links 2011, p. 10). While many Mozambican journalists identified Prime Minister Diogo as a politician who they believed to be media savvy, she still had to navigate unfair gender norms. In articles featuring Diogo, the press frequently referred to her as a mother and a wife, making her gender a focal point and conflating her role as leader with her culturally assigned role as a nurturing woman. Both male and female politicians were often quick to comment on her competence; often men's comments implied that she had transcended her gender to become a competent political leader, while women's comments focused on the fact that women are capable, thoughtful, caring, committed and able to handle many things simultaneously. This characterization of Diogo as an exception to widely accepted androcentric norms suggests that her term as prime minister might have challenged gender norms regarding women's participation in politics temporarily, but has not had a lasting impact.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that Luísa Diogo's appointment as prime minister of Mozambique is consistent with the literature on women in the executive in important ways. First, Diogo's appointment indicates that

gendered ideologies do matter, but in complex ways. The FRELIMO Party has maintained a rhetorical commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality since its inception, although the implementation of this commitment has been partial, often reproducing gendered roles and power relations, privileging male leadership. Women associated with the upper echelons of the FRELIMO Party mostly through the women's arm, the OMM. Party loyalty was rewarded with high-ranking places in the political decision-making process. The selection of women apparently 'depends more on the correlation of forces within the party than on the inclusion of a gender perspective' (Osorio 2007, p. 81). While Diogo may have been a beneficiary of this correlation of forces, there is no doubt that she was also recognized for her technical skill and policy experience.

Second, Diogo was appointed in a dual executive system, and served under a strong president, with vertical accountability mainly to him, and to the party. In the SSA context, this arrangement has proven more palatable to the rise of women executives. Finally, in the immediate and later post-war period, given the plethora of women's organizations in civil society, the OMM served as the best vehicle for defending women's rights in the political arena or in the FRELIMO Party. Women's organizations in civil society, the longstanding ideological commitment to gender symmetry within the Mozambican state, as well as new international norms and treaties, facilitated Diogo's ability to successfully pursue gender equality policies. Gendered attitudes, however, continue to hinder full implementation of the policies she advanced, both nationally and locally. As these factors influenced Diogo's political ascent, they also explain her ability to address women's rights outside of the context of the FRELIMO Party platform.

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## Assessing Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Presidency: Effects on Substantive Representation in Liberia

*Melinda Adams*

On January 16, 2006, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was inaugurated as the president of Liberia, becoming the first elected female head of state in Africa.<sup>1</sup> Johnson Sirleaf's election coincided with Liberia's transition to a more democratic polity. Before the 2005 elections, Freedom House classified Liberia as 'not free.' In 2005, the year Liberia organized presidential and legislative elections, Freedom House upgraded its rating to 'partly free.' During Johnson Sirleaf's first two years in office, Liberia's democratic status continued to improve, though Freedom House still considers it only 'partly free' (Freedom House 2015). Liberia's trajectory mirrors regional trends. Between 1990 and 2009, the number of major armed conflicts in Africa declined from a height of 11 in 1998 and 1999 to a low of 1 in 2006 and 2007, while at the same time the number of democracies in the region grew, tripling between 1989 and 1999 (Tripp 2015, p. 16). Liberia's partial political transition has coincided with Johnson Sirleaf's time in power, providing an opportunity to examine how the dual processes of democratization and feminization of executive leadership intersect.

In 2011, Johnson Sirleaf was reelected as president, providing a relatively rare opportunity to examine two successful presidential campaigns

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by a female candidate and to explore how gender plays out differently in the first and second terms. This chapter examines how culture, institutions, and policy priorities at the same time shape Johnson Sirleaf's presidency and are shaped by her. It argues that while Johnson Sirleaf has expressed a commitment to promote gender equality, reduce corruption, and increase government accountability and transparency, it has been difficult to implement many of these changes. Ingrained practices, crises (most notably the 2014 Ebola epidemic), and lack of legislative support for many of Johnson Sirleaf's policies have created significant barriers to change. During Johnson Sirleaf's tenure as president, the most significant progress has been achieved in the area of symbolic representation. As Liberia's first woman president, Johnson Sirleaf has challenged traditional gender norms and served as a role model for Liberian girls. Limited gains have occurred in the area of descriptive representation. Women's presence in appointed positions has increased dramatically, but women are still significantly underrepresented in elected posts. Johnson Sirleaf has championed legislation that advances gender equality in political representation and access to education, and has supported stronger legislation to combat violence against women. To date, however, her government has failed to gain legislative support for these initiatives.

The chapter also identifies some differences between her first and second terms. While her second term is ongoing (making definitive conclusions premature), there have been a number of important differences between her two terms. The second term has been characterized by a declining emphasis on motherhood and the defining role of the Ebola epidemic, which forced Johnson Sirleaf to devote nearly all of her time and resources in the second half of 2014 to combatting the spread of the virus. A year after the peak of the outbreak, Liberia continues to recover from the social, economic, and political effects of the crisis. Johnson Sirleaf's government is still working on two legislative initiatives—the Gender Equity Bill and the Domestic Violence Bill. The passage of one or both pieces of legislation would create a positive legacy for her administration.

### THE LIBERIAN CONTEXT

Liberia may seem an unexpected place for the emergence of Africa's first elected female head of state. While the scholarship on women's political representation has identified a positive relationship between economic development and women's participation in politics (Inglehart and

Norris 2003), Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Post-conflict societies in Africa have experienced some of the greatest growth in women's representation (Hughes 2009; Tripp et al. 2009; Tripp 2015); however, unlike Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, and a number of other post-conflict African states, Liberia has not experienced significant gains in women's legislative representation. In fact, women's participation in Liberia's House of Representatives peaked at just 12.5 percent (8 out of 64) following the 2005 elections and declined to 11 percent (8 out of 73) after the 2011 elections (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2015). Johnson Sirleaf, unlike many women executives in the developing world, is not part of a political dynasty, another factor sometimes associated with women executives, especially in Asia (Jalalzai 2013). Despite these factors that seem to work against the emergence of a female executive in Liberia, Johnson Sirleaf unexpectedly won the 2005 elections and was reelected for a second six-year term in 2011.

Liberia's recent history of conflict and political instability has created an environment that is in many ways hostile to women, though it has also contributed to the emergence of an active and effective women's movement that helped propel Johnson Sirleaf to power. Liberia became an independent state in 1847. The True Whig Party, controlled by the Americo-Liberian elite, dominated Liberia politically and economically for over a century. In 1980, Samuel Doe led a coup that violently overthrew the old political order and established the first indigenous-led government in Liberia. Under Doe's leadership, ethnic tensions increased, which ultimately led to a civil war. On December 24, 1989, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia invaded Liberia from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire, sparking a seven-year conflict. After numerous failed peace agreements, a ceasefire was finally reached in August 1996, which paved the way for a political transition. Despite the heavy presence of international observers, the 1997 presidential election was held in a precarious security environment. Taylor easily won the election, receiving over 75 percent of the vote. Johnson Sirleaf came in a distant second with 9.6 percent of the vote. Taylor's victory was largely attributed to his control of the media and the widespread belief that if he did not win the election, he would reignite the civil war. Nonetheless, peace was short-lived. A second civil war began in 1999 and lasted until 2003. The Accra Peace Agreement negotiated in August 2003 led to Taylor's flight to Nigeria and the installation of a transitional government. The peace agreement also paved the way for the organization of the 2005 presidential and legislative elections.

During Liberia's civil war, women's organizations like the Liberian Women's Initiative, Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET), the Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia (AFELL), and the Mano River Union Women Peace Network (MARWOPNET) actively promoted peace (AWPSG 2004). Comparing women's activism in Mozambique and Liberia, Mary Moran and Anne Pitcher (2004, p. 504) find that 'there was far more peace-oriented activity by explicitly women's organizations going on in Liberia; furthermore, these organizations existed at all levels from the most powerful urban elites to illiterate villagers.' The women's movement played a critical role in ending violence in Liberia, successfully lobbying for the appointment of Ruth Perry as the head of Liberia's Council of State in 1996, pressuring faction leaders to participate in peace talks, and advocating for the inclusion of women in formal peace negotiations, including several MARWOPNET observers at the 2003 Accra peace talks. After the civil war, activists drew on the skills and networks acquired through their peace activism to take on issues like women's political representation. Many of these women's groups played a critical role in Johnson Sirleaf's election, participating in a voter registration drive, campaigning for her, and maintaining a high level of mobilization during the presidential campaign's second-round runoff phase (Adams 2008; Bauer 2009; Tripp 2015). The post-conflict electoral environment, lack of an incumbent candidate, and support from women's advocacy groups all contributed to Johnson Sirleaf's 2005 electoral victory (Harris 2006). The next section explores the ways that Johnson Sirleaf's political campaigns and presidency influenced Liberian culture, specifically conceptions of gender and leadership.

### GENDER, MOTHERHOOD, AND LEADERSHIP

In Western societies, motherhood creates a double bind for women aspiring to be political leaders, since choosing to have children and choosing not to have children both have detrimental effects on women's political careers (Murray 2010; Lewis 2015). Women who are mothers struggle to ascend to leadership positions due to gendered expectations regarding caregiving. Mothers are viewed as lacking the time and devotion necessary to take on top leadership roles. Women who do not become mothers are also disadvantaged since they are often perceived as selfish and unable to understand and identify with the lives of ordinary voters (Lewis 2015).

In the African context, however, the effects of motherhood on women's access to leadership roles are different, and generally more positive. Motherhood in many African societies serves as an important source of authority for women. Judith Van Allen discusses the African concept of the 'powerful mother':

'mother' is a powerful female role, not a subservient one; a mother is nurturing and will sacrifice her own personal interests for the sake of her child, but she does this from a position of power. A mother has authority not only over children, but over her adult sons as well as her daughters and daughters-in-law, who are expected to treat her with respect and deference. (Van Allen 2009, p. 71)

While Van Allen draws on her research in Botswana to develop this concept, it is also valid in Liberia. Moran's (2012, p. 59) research on male non-combatants in Liberia finds that mothers and other senior women played a decisive role in helping these men avoid participating in violence during the war.

Conflict in many African states has opened space for women to take on new roles and created opportunities to redesign key institutions. During the Liberian civil war, the value of motherhood increased, since it was associated with everything that opposed violence and war. In her study of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, Filomina Chioma Steady (2011, p. 21) links motherhood with 'creativity, caring, continuity, and peace.' War created an environment in which the values associated with motherhood were prioritized, and this context provided an opportunity for the emergence of a female leader.

During the war and transitional period, Liberian peace activists and politicians deployed motherhood as a political strategy to highlight women's leadership potential. Drawing on discourse analysis of Liberian peace activists, Allison Prash (2015, p. 3) argues that motherhood 'affords a special type of agency to women who frame their actions as motivated by maternal concerns.' Ruth Perry, the chair of the Liberian Council of State from 1996–1997, notes 'I projected myself as a true *mother* and stabilizer, using faith, discipline, courage, patience, and tolerance' (Steady 2011, p. 106, original emphasis).

Johnson Sirleaf's 2005 presidential campaign called attention to her maternal characteristics, emphasizing how her status as a mother and a grandmother provided her with important leadership qualities. Her campaign made frequent references to her as 'Ma Ellen' and the 'Old Ma.'

One of Johnson Sirleaf's campaign slogans was 'All the men have failed, let's try a woman,' referencing gender stereotypes that associate men with violence and women with peace. In an interview with *Time* discussing differences between women and men as political leaders, Johnson Sirleaf stated: 'I think when women have equal qualifications, experience, and capabilities, they bring to the task a certain dimension that may be missing in men—a sensitivity to humankind. Maybe it comes from being a mother' (cited in Steady 2011, p. 117). Johnson Sirleaf has noted that she has deployed motherhood 'as an attempt to soften my image' (Steady 2011, p. 119). Particularly in the 2005 campaign, when the memory of the war was still vivid, Johnson Sirleaf's maternal qualities and ability to represent a different type of leadership—one that at least partly reflects Van Allen's concept of the 'powerful mother'—provided a way for her to distinguish herself from her main competitor, George Weah, who in addition to being a man was considerably younger (he turned 39 just days before the first round of the election).

In her 2005 campaign, Johnson Sirleaf successfully combined two personas: 'Ma Ellen' and the 'Iron Lady' (Adams 2010; Moran 2012). She not only drew on the authority conferred by motherhood but also complemented this persona with one that highlighted her accomplishments in traditionally masculine realms (Moran 2012). She is the 'Old Ma,' the mother of the nation who cares for, but also demands respect from, her citizens/children. She is also Liberia's 'Iron Lady,' who has a long history of political involvement and expertise in traditionally masculine areas, like finance.

In 2011, Johnson Sirleaf's campaign placed less of an emphasis on her role as a mother. This strategy makes sense: as Liberia moved further away from conflict, the attributes of a mother, particularly its associations with mediation and peace, were less relevant. In 2011, campaign materials continued to employ her first name, Ellen, but rarely used 'Ma Ellen' or 'Old Ma.' Campaign materials emphasized the importance of staying on course, Johnson Sirleaf's expertise, and her administration's accomplishments. Continuity was the central theme expressed in colorful slogans such as 'Monkey still working, let baboon wait small' and 'Don't change the pilot when the plan e'en land yet.' Expertise was emphasized through a series of campaign posters that showed images of 'Ellen' and 'Joe' (Joseph Boakai, Liberia's vice president) and listed a range of issue areas, including accountability, education, fighting corruption, international respect, and women's rights.



Media outlets in 2011 also directed less attention to Johnson Sirleaf's maternal status. An analysis of over 200 newspaper articles from five newspapers during the four weeks of the 2011 runoff campaign revealed that none of the articles used the nicknames 'Ma Ellen' or 'Old Ma.' Newspaper coverage of Johnson Sirleaf's campaign in 2005, in contrast, made frequent references to Johnson Sirleaf's maternal status (Adams 2010). Comparisons between 2005 and 2011 campaign strategies and media coverage suggest that maternal characteristics are especially desirable during periods of crisis.

Despite toning down her emphasis on motherhood in the 2011 campaign, Johnson Sirleaf continues to challenge and change conceptions of leadership in Liberia. She is an empirical manifestation of Van Allen's 'powerful mother' who has drawn on maternal sources of authority and has the ability to shape Liberia's political agenda. The next section explores how formal and informal institutions in Liberia mediate these goals.

### INSTITUTIONS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Existing institutional structures have created both opportunities and challenges for Johnson Sirleaf. The president came to power after a civil conflict when some institutions—like traditional gender roles—were in flux. Unlike some post-conflict states in sub-Saharan Africa, however, Liberia maintained its previous constitution, drafted in 1986, which has made it more difficult to implement new initiatives like gender quotas, though Liberia is currently undertaking a constitutional review process. During her time in office, Johnson Sirleaf has sought to shape Liberia's institutional landscape through efforts to promote gender equality; create a more open, transparent, and democratic government; and limit corruption. While she has made some significant progress on the first two goals, her government has had less success reducing corruption.

Institutions shape what is possible. Liberia's electoral system, for example, played an important role in facilitating Johnson Sirleaf's rise to the presidency (Jalalzai 2012). For the office of president, Liberia has a two-round electoral system. If no candidate wins a majority of the votes in the first round, then the top two candidates move to a runoff. This electoral system creates opportunities for candidates who can gain the support of candidates who fail to qualify for runoff and voters whose first choice candidate does not make it to the second round. In 2005, Weah, running

as the standard bearer of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), led after the first round, receiving 28.3 percent of the vote to the Unity Party's (UP) Johnson Sirleaf's 19.8 percent.<sup>2</sup> In the second round of voting, Johnson Sirleaf reversed this order, placing first with 59.4 percent of the votes, while Weah trailed with only 40.6 percent. Without a two-round system, Johnson Sirleaf would have failed to reach the presidency. While overall voter turnout declined from the first to the second round, literate women—one of Johnson Sirleaf's most loyal constituencies—maintained high turnout levels throughout both rounds. In fact, in both the October and November elections, literate women had the highest level of turnout with 77.1 percent turnout in the October 2005 election and 69.9 percent turnout in the November 2005 runoff, compared with overall turnout rates of 74.9 percent and 61 percent in the October and November elections, respectively (Bauer 2009).<sup>3</sup> Women's high level of mobilization secured Johnson Sirleaf's victory, which she specifically acknowledged in her 2006 inaugural address:

It is therefore not surprising that during the period of our elections, Liberian women were galvanized—and demonstrated unmatched passion, enthusiasm, and support for my candidacy. They stood with me; they defended me; they prayed for me. The same can be said for the women throughout Africa. I want to here and now, gratefully acknowledge the powerful voice of women of all walks of life whose votes significantly contributed to my victory. (Johnson Sirleaf 2006)

Liberia's two-round electoral system and the sustained support of women helped Johnson Sirleaf win the 2005 presidential election.

In 2005, voters chose between very different candidates: Johnson Sirleaf and Weah. Johnson Sirleaf offered experience, education, and a woman's perspective. Johnson Sirleaf worked in the Treasury Department in William Tubman's administration. She left government service to pursue a Masters in Public Administration at Harvard University, but then returned to public service in the 1970s, reaching the position of Minister of Finance in 1979. After being imprisoned by Samuel Doe's government, she left the country, working for Citibank, Equator Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and the World Bank while living abroad. Weah, a soccer player and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, was associated with youth, outsider status, and a common touch. In 2011, Johnson Sirleaf faced a very different opponent—Winston Tubman—and

one that looked a lot more like her.<sup>4</sup> Like Johnson Sirleaf, Tubman had a high level of education, was in his 70s, and had experience working in international organizations. In contrast to 2005, Johnson Sirleaf led after the first round of presidential elections in 2011, but she failed to net a majority of votes. Once again, the National Elections Commission (NEC) scheduled a runoff for the top two candidates—Johnson Sirleaf and Tubman. As in 2005, Johnson Sirleaf demonstrated her ability to connect with the failed presidential candidates and their supporters. She secured the endorsement of Prince Yormie Johnson, the third place candidate who had received 11.6 percent of the vote in the first round, which made a Tubman victory unlikely in the runoff vote. Tubman ultimately boycotted the runoff election, citing electoral irregularities despite international observers' assessment that the election was relatively free and fair. Johnson Sirleaf overwhelmingly won the second round, receiving 90.7 percent of the votes; however, turnout was low, dropping from 71.6 percent of registered voters in October to just 38.6 percent in November (NEC 2011). Liberia's electoral system shapes candidates' political strategies. Since Liberian elections are characterized by a large number of candidates (22 in 2005 and 16 in 2011), it is unlikely that a candidate will win in the first round.<sup>5</sup> To win the second round, candidates must employ strategies that do not alienate their opponents or their opponents' supporters. The two-round system also creates opportunities for candidates who do not make it to the second round to negotiate deals with the finalists, asking for cabinet appointments or other favors to secure an endorsement.

In terms of legislative-executive relations, Liberia has a strong presidency and a relatively weak legislature. Despite weak oversight powers, the legislature does have the ability to block bills, especially since Johnson Sirleaf's UP lacks a parliamentary majority. Legislative-executive relations are influenced by Liberia's diffuse party system in which many parties are represented in parliament. Following the 2005 legislative elections, ten parties gained representation in the legislature. In addition, independents won seven (out of 64) seats in the House and three (out of 30) seats in the Senate. Johnson Sirleaf's UP held just eight (out of 64) seats in the House and four (out of 30) in the Senate. With so few UP legislators, it has been difficult for Johnson Sirleaf to build legislative support for her policies. Following the 2011 elections, the UP increased its share of the seats in both houses, winning 24 (out of 73) seats in the House and ten (out of 30) seats in the Senate. Nonetheless, the legislature continues to lack cohesion, with 12 parties represented and a large number of independents (nine in the House and three in the Senate).

The large number of parties and low level of UP representation create challenges for Johnson Sirleaf, and it is often difficult for her to build legislative support for her policy priorities. A proposed Gender Equity Bill, for example, has failed twice to gain support since many incumbent (primarily male) legislators view a gender quota that increases the proportion of women in the legislature as threatening. The results from the December 2014 Senate elections suggest that a high level of party fractionalization will persist in Liberia. Out of the 15 constituencies that held elections, seven parties and three independents are represented. Only three parties, the UP (4), Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) (2), and the Liberty Party (2) won more than one seat. Only one woman (Jewel Howard Taylor) was elected and only 20 women (14 percent of the total candidates) ran. Johnson Sirleaf's lack of support in the legislature has stymied efforts to pass transformative legislature.

### GENDER POLICIES: WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, AND EDUCATION

Johnson Sirleaf's 2006 inaugural address concluded with a powerful statement on gender equality:

My Administration shall empower Liberian women in all areas of our national life. We will support and increase the writ of laws that restore their dignities and deal drastically with crimes that dehumanize them. We will enforce without fear or favor the law against rape recently passed by the National Transitional Legislature. We shall encourage families to educate all children, particularly the girl child. We shall also try to provide economic programs that enable Liberian women to assume their proper place in our economic revitalization process. (Johnson Sirleaf 2006)

She has followed through on many of these commitments, appointing a record number of women to government positions, supporting a Gender Equity Bill that includes gender quotas, promoting comprehensive domestic violence legislation, launching an anti-rape campaign, and taking steps to improve girls' school enrollment and completion rates. Bills on gender equality in decision-making and domestic violence, however, have languished in the legislature. Efforts to curtail rape and sexual violence have been limited by weak enforcement mechanisms and limited resources. The gender climate in Liberia has improved during Johnson Sirleaf's tenure, but women continue to face numerous challenges.<sup>6</sup>

One area of progress under Johnson Sirleaf is Liberia's increased willingness to sign onto regional and international treaties addressing women's rights and gender equality and to follow through on existing international commitments. While Liberia acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1984, it had never submitted a single report to the CEDAW committee. In 2008, Johnson Sirleaf's government submitted Liberia's first CEDAW report, fulfilling its first through sixth periodic report requirement. The Liberian government submitted a second report in March 2014 (covering the seventh and eighth periodic reports). Johnson Sirleaf's administration further demonstrated its commitment to gender equality by signing and ratifying the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2008.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most visible effects of Johnson Sirleaf's presidency is the increased presence of women in appointed positions. In her initial government, Johnson Sirleaf appointed women to lead five (out of 21) key portfolios, including finance, justice, commerce, youth and sport, and gender and development (Jalalzai 2012). Having served as minister of finance, it is perhaps not surprising that Johnson Sirleaf placed women in strategic positions, including finance. Discussing these appointments, Johnson Sirleaf stated: 'although ... we didn't dare have an all-woman cabinet, I toyed with the idea. What we did achieve was to make sure that we put women in all the strategic places ... finance, justice, commerce ... police director. ... And I think that sends a strong signal that we believe that women who have the competence ... do have a higher level of integrity' (Council on Foreign Relations 2006). In 2012, Johnson Sirleaf included even more women (six) in her cabinet, but they tended to have slightly lower profile portfolios (justice, agriculture, commerce, gender and development, education, and labor) (Jalalzai 2012).

Beyond the cabinet, Johnson Sirleaf has demonstrated a commitment to including women in all levels of government. A 2009 Ministry of Gender and Development survey of women's participation in government revealed that of the 35 ministries, agencies, and government corporations, women comprised 26 percent of the heads and 38 percent of the deputy heads (Government of Liberia 2014, p. 26). Women held six out of 17 ambassadorial appointments (35.3 percent), including high-prestige posts to China, Germany, South Africa, and other important diplomatic partners (Holmgren 2013; Government of Liberia 2014, p. 27). At the local government level, five out of the 15 county superintendents were women (CEDAW 2014). Two of the five members of the Supreme Court

(40 percent), three out of seven members of the NEC (42.9 percent), and four out of nine members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (44.4 percent) were women (Government of Liberia 2014, p. 27).

Gains in women's presence in appointed positions, however, have not led to increases in the number of women elected to political office. The number of women elected to the legislature declined between the 2005 and 2011 elections, and the 2014 Senate elections did not reverse this pattern. While the NEC set a target of 30 percent women for all political parties' nominations, parties have ignored this suggestion. In 2011, women comprised only 11 percent of candidates for House and Senate seats. The low percentage of women as candidates and representatives raises questions about the sustainability of the gains made in women's participation in decision-making during Johnson Sirleaf's administration. A new president who does not share Johnson Sirleaf's commitment to gender equality could reverse these gains since they are not enshrined in laws.

Johnson Sirleaf has supported efforts to increase women's legislative representation through the adoption of a Gender Equity Bill. A draft bill employs gender-neutral language, stating, 'no political party list of elected officers and candidates for public office shall contain less than 30 percent and no more than 70 percent of a single gender' (National Democratic Institute 2013). Initially proposed in May 2010 by the Women's Legislative Caucus and supported by Johnson Sirleaf, the bill was thrown out of the legislature on March 8, 2011, ironically International Women's Day (Williams 2011). Women's groups, with support from Johnson Sirleaf and international organizations, have continued to push for gender equity legislation. In 2011, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) partnered with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus and the Coalition of Political Parties Women of Liberia to draft gender equity legislation and mobilize support for the bill (Kaladadze 2011). Along with the NEC, International IDEA also helped organize a workshop that brought together representatives from 25 political parties to discuss gender equity issues. In May 2013, the National Democratic Institute collaborating with the House Committee on Gender Equity and Child Development, Senate Committee on Gender, Health, Social Welfare, Women and Children's Affairs and the Women's Legislative Caucus sponsored a seminar to discuss the revised Gender Equity Bill. Failing to gain legislative support for the bill, advocates of gender quotas have sought to integrate gender equality policies into the constitutional review process and electoral reform legislation. In March 2014, the Liberian Senate voted

in favor of an Electoral Reform Bill that included calls for gender equality in representation; however, the House rejected the bill (Carter 2014). Over four years since the Gender Equity Bill was first launched, Liberia still lacks an enforceable gender quota. Recognizing the ineffectiveness of past strategies, the Ministry of Gender and Development argues that past strategies were 'abrasive and confrontational' and indicates that advocates for the gender equality are developing new strategies to lobby male legislators more effectively (CEDAW 2014, p. 16). Johnson Sirleaf's administration continues to work toward gender equity legislation and is integrating this discussion into the constitutional review process.

Violence against women, especially sexual violence, is a significant issue in Liberia. According to the World Health Organization, 77 percent of women and girls in Liberia have been victims of sexual violence (The Advocates for Human Rights 2015, p. 2). In 2005, the National Transitional Legislative Assembly passed a law specifically focused on rape. This law was an important step forward, but its ability to end rape and other forms of sexual violence has been limited. In 2006, Liberia adopted the National Action Plan on Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence, which included the establishment of a Women and Children Protection Section within the police, a Sexual and Gender-based Violence Crimes Unit at the Ministry of Justice, and a special Criminal Court ('E') to try sexual offenses. The Liberian government has also established 'Safe Homes' for survivors of violence in seven out of Liberia's 15 counties, though not all of these homes are currently functional (CEDAW 2015a, pp. 3-4). The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, which runs the Safe Homes and many other programs, is underfunded; in 2014, for example, it was allocated just 1.4 percent of the national budget (WONGOSOL 2015, p. 8).

After reviewing Liberia's first CEDAW report, the CEDAW committee urged the Liberian government 'to prioritize the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive legal framework to address all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence' (CEDAW 2009). Johnson Sirleaf's administration complied by drafting a Domestic Violence Bill. As part of the drafting process, the Law Reform Commission, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Gender and Development organized a one-day consultation in November 2013 with advocacy groups including WIPNET, AFELL, and others to gather input on the bill. As of June 2015, the cabinet had endorsed the draft legislation, and it was moving to the legislature for discussion (Executive Mansion, Government of

Liberia 2015). Progress toward the adoption of domestic violence legislation highlights the collaborative relationship between domestic and international actors. When states join international treaties like CEDAW, it provides domestic actors with standards to which they can hold their governments accountable. International organizations can also pressure states to fulfill these commitments and support domestic groups working to promote change on the ground.

Johnson Sirleaf has also promoted girls' access to education. In her January 2012 Annual Address, Johnson Sirleaf noted: 'We must pay special attention to our girls. It will be to Liberia's benefit when our women are educated and contribute as equal partners in government and the private sector.' (Johnson Sirleaf 2012) Johnson Sirleaf's government passed an Education Reform Act in 2011 that includes a number of gender equality initiatives including commitments to recruit more female teachers, provide counseling in schools to girls, sanction teachers who commit sexual abuse, and increase scholarships for girls (CEDAW 2014, p. 19). In 2013, the government revised its Policy on Girls' Education to bring it in line with the new Education Reform Act. This policy seeks to address social and cultural barriers to education, to provide girls greater access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education, and to protect girls from gender-based violence.

While school enrollment rates for girls are improving, they continue to lag behind boys' enrollment rates. Girls remain underrepresented at all educational levels. They comprise 47 percent of students enrolled in primary school but only 42 percent of students in secondary school (CEDAW 2014, p. 21). Barriers to girls' access to education include the costs of education (including uniform fees and school supplies), social norms that girls are responsible for household tasks such as gathering firewood and carrying water, safety concerns, and rules against pregnant girls attending school (The Advocates for Human Rights 2015, pp. 7–8). Girls' high dropout rates are often caused by pregnancy, early marriage, and economic needs. Recognizing these challenges, the government has built hostels for girls to help at-risk girls remain in school and improve girls' school completion rates. There is also a lack of role models for girls within schools. The vast majority of teachers at the secondary level are men. Female teachers in secondary schools range from 0 percent in Rivercess County, to 11 percent in Montserrado County, where the capital, Monrovia, is located (CEDAW 2014, p. 22).



Efforts to improve girls' school enrollment and completion rates have been thwarted by the recent Ebola crisis, which led to school closings across the country. The Ebola crisis disproportionately affected women and girls, who are more likely to be responsible for caretaking roles within families (CEDAW 2015b, p. 2). Beyond increasing girls' attendance rates, Johnson Sirleaf has also recognized the challenge of increasing the quality of education. Liberia's education system is weak, and students perform poorly on regional assessment exams.

Coming to power immediately following a civil conflict, Johnson Sirleaf has had to juggle numerous policy priorities. Her ability to fulfill the promise that she made to women in her 2006 inaugural address has been challenged by her need to address a range of issues, including corruption, reconciliation, and economic development. In her second term, she has faced the additional burden of addressing the Ebola crisis, which forced her to focus most of her energy and resources on combatting the spread of virus in 2014. Liberia is still recovering from this crisis, and Johnson Sirleaf has a limited amount of time before her term ends in January 2018 to reach her gender equality goals.

## CONCLUSIONS

Culture, institutions, and policies intersect with Hanna Pitkin's (1967) conceptions of symbolic, descriptive, and substantive representation. During Johnson Sirleaf's tenure, there have been positive changes in symbolic representation as Johnson Sirleaf challenges masculine conceptions of leadership and serves as a role model to Liberian women and girls. Johnson Sirleaf's legacy in terms of descriptive representation is mixed: women have gained a stronger voice in the executive branch and in appointed positions, but their growing prominence in these posts has not spilled over into the electoral realm. In terms of substantive representation, Johnson Sirleaf's government has supported initiatives that advance women's interests in terms of gender equity policies, domestic violence legislation, and increasing girls' access to education. The effects of these policies, however, have been limited due to the lack of legislative support, inadequate resources, and weak institutions.

Symbolic representation captures the role-model function of representatives. Women in powerful positions can change girls' conceptions of what is normal or what is possible. Evidence from Liberia suggests that a woman president is creating new expectations for girls and women.

In a 2008 speech, Johnson Sirleaf noted: ‘When I go into the countryside and meet young girls, when we ask them “What do you want to do when you grow up?,” they say, “President!”’ (Johnson Sirleaf 2008). During field research in Liberia, Aili Tripp (2015) spoke with a leader of a local women’s organization who articulated some of the changes initiated by the Johnson Sirleaf presidency:

When Ellen [Johnson-Sirleaf] took over, things changed for women. We praise God for the leaders God gave us. There is no way women could speak in the past. If we did, nothing would happen. Women can speak anywhere [in public] now. In the past, women were in the back and were silent. Now we speak well at meetings. We say what we want. I can speak well in front of men and women. Women stayed at the back too long, and now we have decided to speak for ourselves. The voice of women should be heard. When Ellen took over, no more women at the back, men in the front, now men and women 50–50 side by side. (Tripp 2015, p. 107)

In Liberia, 79.2 percent of respondents indicate that they agree with the statement: ‘Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men’ (Afrobarometer 2015). In Sierra Leone, a neighboring country with a comparable level of socioeconomic development, similar social norms, and a history of civil conflict, only 62.4 percent of respondents agreed with this statement. The experience of having a woman president may account for part of this difference.

Descriptive representation focuses on the extent to which representatives reflect the demographic characteristics of their constituencies. In some ways, Liberia has made great gains in descriptive representation under Johnson Sirleaf’s leadership. She has appointed women to high profile, high-prestige posts, including the minister of finance, the minister of foreign affairs, the ambassador to China, Germany, and South Africa, the mayor of Monrovia, and the chief of the national police force. These appointments create a government that better reflects women’s presence in society. While women have not yet reached parity in any area of government, women currently hold 30 percent of cabinet positions. The inclusion of more women in appointed positions has also occurred under Dilma Rousseff’s leadership in Brazil (Jalalzai and dos Santos 2015). Evidence from Liberia and Brazil suggests that a president intent on increasing women’s presence in decision-making posts can quickly implement changes in the executive branch. Increasing women’s participation in elected positions, however, is not as easy. Increasing women’s

legislative representation requires changes in laws or party practices (such as the adoption of legislative or voluntary quotas) or changes in voters' preferences. Without legislation to lock in these gains, new leaders not committed to gender equality could easily reverse these increases in women's participation.

Substantive representation refers to 'acting for' the electorate and advancing the policy preferences of those being represented. While Johnson Sirleaf has expressed a commitment to adopting policies that empower women, her administration has struggled to pass gender equity legislation. Constraining factors such as the Ebola crisis and an obstructive legislature have made it difficult to effect change; however, Johnson Sirleaf still has two full years in office, and there is a possibility that she could achieve some of these legislative goals in her remaining time in office. In addition, Liberian citizens generally approve of the way that she has handled gender empowerment. In 2008–2009 (Round 4), 73 percent of the respondents to the Afrobarometer survey indicated that she was doing fairly well or very well on empowering women. And even a higher proportion of respondents—82 percent—rated her performance highly on this issue in 2011–2012 (Round 5; Afrobarometer 2015). Given the diverse challenges facing Johnson Sirleaf in the immediate post-conflict environment, Liberian citizens are relatively pleased with her attempts to promote gender equality despite her inability to pass new laws.

## NOTES

1. Several women have served as heads of state in Africa, but only Johnson Sirleaf was elected to this position. In Guinea-Bissau, Carmen Pereira briefly served as the country's acting president from May 14 to 16, 1984. Sylvie Kinigi served as the president of Burundi for three months, from October 27, 1993, to February 5, 1994. Agathe Uwilingiyimana, the prime minister of Rwanda between July 18, 1993 and April 7, 1994, served as the acting head of state for several hours between President Juvénal Habyarimana's death and her assassination. In Liberia, Ruth Perry was selected as the head of the Liberian Council of State, serving as the head of state from September 3, 1996 until August 2, 1997. In April 2012, Joyce Banda assumed the presidency in Malawi following Bingu wa Mutharika's death.
2. The CDC is a relatively new party, formed in 2004. Before the 2011 elections, the CDC merged with the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), Tubman's party in 2005. Edward Kesselly founded the UP in 1984 and ran as the UP presidential candidate in the 1985 elections.

- Johnson Sirleaf ran as the UP's presidential candidate in the 1997, 2005, and 2011 elections.
3. According to Liberia's 7th and 8th Periodic Report to the Committee on the Elimination on Discrimination against Women, the country's overall literacy rate is 56 percent. Literacy rates for women (44 percent) lag behind those for men (66 percent) (CEDAW 2014, p. 23).
  4. After the CDC merged with the NDPL, the party selected Tubman, who placed fourth in the 2005 elections, as the CDC's 2011 presidential candidate and Weah as the vice presidential candidate.
  5. Out of the 22 candidates, two were women. In addition to Johnson Sirleaf, Margaret Tor-Thompson ran in 2005, placing 13th with 0.9 percent of the vote. In 2011, 3 out of the 16 candidates were women—Johnson Sirleaf, Gladys Beyan, who came in fifth with 1.1 percent of the vote, and Manjergie Cecelia Ndebe, who came in ninth with 0.5 percent of the vote.
  6. To give just a sense of these numerous challenges, 38 percent of women between the ages of 20 and 24 are married or in union by the age of 18. Thirty-eight percent of women aged 20–24 also give birth before the age of 18. (UNICEF 2015).
  7. The Protocol, which includes 32 articles that address political, economic, and cultural rights, supplements the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. It was adopted in July 2003 and entered into force in November 2005. Currently, 36 African countries are state parties to this charter.

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## Corazon Aquino: The Reluctant First Female President of the Philippines

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### INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, women have been most adept in navigating the informal spaces in Philippine politics. As Roces (1998) described: ‘As long as women were the support system in kinship politics, the proverbial go between behind the scenes, they were relegated to unofficial power rather than official power.’ Although the number of women in elective positions has increased over time through their own efforts, the dominant entry point is still via the backing of male politicians (Balili-Gener and Urbiztondo 2002, p. 8).

One of the first to offer change to the template of male/official and female/unofficial political space was the presidency of Corazon C. Aquino. The Marcos dictatorship spanned 14 years, costed an estimated 10 billion US dollars, and took thousands of lives. It ended after the peaceful EDSA revolution<sup>1</sup> that provided a strong counter-establishment narrative: a woman wrestling control from a strongman. Aquino earned a place in political mythology. Marcos’s widow, Imelda, also tested the limits of unofficial power, carving out an infamous place in the global discourse on authoritarian regimes.<sup>2</sup>

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Ironically, Cory Aquino, as she was popularly known, was cut from the same political cloth as the Marcoses, perhaps more bountifully so: she came from a local political dynasty whose base of power was vast tracts of land from the province of Tarlac, the Cojuangcos. Patron–client relations between landlords and their tenant farmers have prolonged political power over generations, creating an elite class that until the present day continues to dominate Philippine politics.

But Cory was no ordinary leader. Although she was a product of the political elite class that defined her role as the supportive wife to a political leader, her life was also affected by the Marcos dictatorship. She went through the marginalization of a political prisoner’s wife, and carried the burden of being the ‘free’ spouse.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter examines the first female Philippine president and her politics vis-à-vis the women’s movements during the period 1986–1992. There are two views on the presidential gender discourse of this period: one that positively constructs the Cory Aquino presidency as having a pro-women’s agenda (Aguilar 1993; Javate-De Dios 2004) and another, critical of her contributions for not addressing the key women’s rights issues of the day (Aquino 1994; Rallonza 2001). This chapter looks more deeply into the context of the time: the various actors involved, the policy constraints, and the decision-makers’ own biases and perceptions, and how these factors affected the reproductive health policy agenda.

## THE PHILIPPINES AND THE 1986 PEOPLE POWER REVOLUTION

The 1986 People Power Revolution was partly the doing of a politicized military, protected by a politicized Roman Catholic Church, and rallied by a decidedly Manila-based middle class (Timberman 1991). The confluence of these factors heavily influenced Aquino’s politics and her presidency.

Ferdinand Marcos became president in 1965 and was re-elected four years later. Unlike his predecessors, Marcos did not base his power exclusively on land control and vital export crops. Instead, he centralized economic planning with handpicked US-educated technocrats who were amply funded by the president’s office (Abinales 2004). Marcos also courted the Armed Forces of the Philippines by integrating the military into his presidential national development program. As a result, the military received special support and patronage (Hernandez 1979 cited in Abinales 2004).

Marcos also undermined Congress, which he depicted as a major obstacle to reform and development (Mendoza and Melegrito 2016).

In 1972, Marcos declared Martial Law using the discourse of a national crisis based on threats from the communists, on the one hand, and conservative extremists within the traditional national oligarchy, on the other (Timberman 1991). The declaration of Martial Law caused the immediate and unprecedented curtailment of civil liberties. Marcos closed down Congress and most newspapers and radio and television stations; he ordered the arrest and indefinite detention of hundreds of political leaders, journalists, and publishers, including delegates to the Constitutional Convention who were critical of him. With the military as his principal partner, he wielded overwhelming power for over 13 years. Unrestrained and intimidating use of power forced the judiciary, the bureaucracy, local governments, and the populace into submission. The Supreme Court quickly lost its customary independence and became the visible legitimizer of his actions in the instances when these were challenged. Under the Marcos 'national security' or garrison state, human rights violations were rampant and the perpetrators were not held to account (Abueva 1997, p. 7 cited in Mendoza and Melegrito 2016, p. 44).

Violence, economic mismanagement, and failing physical health eroded Marcos's authority six years after declaring Martial Law. An organized opposition emerged during this period, and women's groups linked their actions to the anti-Marcos struggle. An alarming number of activists, including many women, were imprisoned and/or killed. Repression pushed social movements to ally with the political Left (Mendoza 2013). Some militant women joined the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Others became involved in the Preparatory Commission of the National Democratic Front or worked with social democratic groups like the Philippine Democratic Socialist Party (Javate-De Dios 1996).

The 1983 assassination of Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino Jr., Cory Aquino's husband, accelerated the downfall of the Marcos regime, which at the time was already on the brink of collapse. Ninoy Aquino, the arch-rival of Ferdinand Marcos, planned to run for the presidency in 1973, but elections never took place due to the declaration of Martial Law. Marcos jailed Ninoy Aquino but freed him in 1980 to have heart surgery in the USA. In 1983, Ninoy Aquino returned to the Philippines despite warnings that he would be arrested or even killed.

The assassination of Ninoy Aquino led the traditional elite to increasingly abandon Ferdinand Marcos. The opposition to Marcos grew over time, prompting the dictator to call for the February 1986 'snap elections.' What happened after was never expected. Hundreds of thousands of people marched into the streets to protest against the regime's blatant electoral fraud. In the wake of what became popularly known as the People Power Revolution of 1986, Cory Aquino was catapulted to the presidency.

Against the counsel of her senior political and policy advisers, Cory Aquino abolished the 1973 Philippine Constitution and replaced it with her Freedom Constitution, promulgated by Presidential Proclamation on 26 March 1986. The Freedom Constitution provided the legal framework of her interim, revolutionary government during her first year in the presidency. It allowed her to exercise both executive and legislative powers until the 1987 Philippine Constitution was ratified in February 1987. The democratic order was restored with a presidential form and unitary system of government, separation of powers, and a system of checks and balances.

### GENDER ISSUES IN RE-DEMOCRATIZING PHILIPPINES

The overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986 created unprecedented political pluralism. Increased political liberalization benefited women's movements and other civil society groups (Aguilar 1995, p. 4). Different types of feminist organizations were founded immediately after the ouster of Marcos. These included action-oriented collectives and non-governmental organizations, coalitions and issue-and identity-based networks, both formal and informal (Mendoza 2013).

Women's groups steadily became more active under Cory Aquino's presidency. They focused on a wide range of gender issues. For instance, women's groups took part in terminating the US military bases, joined the coalition against the foreign debt service payments, protested against government's neglect of migrant workers, particularly women migrant workers, and opposed the government plan to hasten the reduction of trade tariffs. They also raised the issues of reproductive and sexual health and rights along with the casualization of labor and the attendant loss of labor and social security benefits with adverse effects on maternal and child health and welfare (Fabros et al. 1998).

The issues pursued were not only diverse but women's groups lacked the organizational and political cohesiveness found in the anti-imperialist and anti-dictatorship struggles of the previous decades (Angeles 1989, 2003).

While the anti-dictatorship movement facilitated the formation of a broad tactical alliance among women across class and ideological lines, the end of the dictatorship led the different groups to go separate ways, partly to build their own political stock under the Aquino regime (Raquiza 1997). Agendas were, to some extent, shaped by the different ideological lines that the women's movements embraced. In the Philippines, women's groups do not share the same position on all policy issues or even the strategies needed for action and change (Mendoza 2013). Women's groups forge unity on some policy issues through tactical alliances and decentralized operations while remaining divided on others (Santos-Maranan et al. 2007). With the exception of the anti-Marcos movement, alliances of women's groups have been mostly short-lived and project- or issue-based (Raquiza 1997).

This fragmentation also led to divisions regarding state collaboration. The more militant women's groups considered collaboration with the state as 'palliatives' and 'window dressing,' accusing the government of political maneuvering to deflect women's attention from the more pressing issues of poverty and militarization (Sobritchea 2004).

Lourdes Veneracion Rallonza (2001) writes that the task of re-democratization after the ouster of Marcos required Cory Aquino to frame policy 'based on the rule of law, peace, and participation,' with a focus on resolving internal conflicts. However, her agenda did not challenge the Roman Catholic Church's stand on controversial issues such as birth control, reproductive health, and divorce. Cory Aquino pursued 'safer' and less controversial policies of poverty alleviation that also targeted women as a marginalized sector.

Adopting a more feminist lens would have required Cory Aquino to use 'gender as an analytical tool to guide policy-making,' which would in turn 'open to her more spaces to become a transformative leader who is cognizant of transversal politics' (Rallonza 2009, p. 105; 2001). Lourdes Veneracion Rallonza decries that, not just Cory but none of the women political leaders who followed her have manifested such a transformative line and therefore politics just continues in the 'schema of masculinized politics.'

Nevertheless, it still can be said that there were negotiated spaces that did open up during her time. Aguilar (1993) pointed out that 'during the Aquino government, there has been a more intelligent direction of the women's movement,' citing opportunities for 'networking and dialogue' and sustained engagement in a diverse number of policy issues from the US military bases, the nuclear weapons ban, agrarian reform, and the recovery of Marcos's ill-gotten wealth.

Moreover, a number of important legislative and institutional reforms can be credited as part of Cory Aquino's achievements. These include Republic Act 7192 or the Women in Development and Nation-Building Act, which promotes the equal stature of women in public life, and the renewal of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) (Javate-De Dios 2004). Another policy contribution of Cory Aquino that can be seen as 'revolutionary' in nature was the enactment of the Family Code on 6 July 1987. To quote Raissa Robles (2014):

Pres. Cory's achievement is even more remarkable given that she was a very devout Catholic. The Family Code contains sections that the Catholic Church would have strongly objected to, had it known beforehand. Here are three examples: (1). The Family Code legalized artificial insemination within the context of marriage and recognized the resulting offspring as "legitimate." The Catholic Church condemns this up to now as "morally unacceptable" and "contrary to divine and natural law." (2). The Family Code legally recognized the property rights of live-in couples or "unions without marriage." (3). The Family Code relaxed rules for legal separation and annulment.

#### INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS AND POLICY CONSEQUENCES

Using the vast executive and legislative powers of the presidency under the Freedom Constitution, Cory Aquino closed the legislature, the *Batasang Pambansa*, replaced administrators and local officials associated with Marcos with her own appointees, and named the members of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the 1987 Constitution. During this time, she could have easily initiated fundamental public policy reforms, including those aimed at promoting women's welfare and women's rights, namely, birth control, family planning, reproductive freedom and rights, and divorce. Instead, she used her vast powers reluctantly on these issues. That turned out later to be not only highly divisive and politically contentious but also morally compelling. In her critique of the treatment of women's issues by the Aquino presidency, Belinda Aquino, a prominent academic in Philippine studies, wrote:

Her presidency was lackluster; and when it came to women's issues, it was even more dismal. She appointed only one woman to her cabinet. She did not support population control, undoubtedly due to religious reasons. She never pushed legislation related to women who were her natural constituency. Her role with regard to the women's movement was largely ceremonial or peripheral. For many women who supported her candidacy and presidency, they were greatly disappointed to say the least. (Aquino 1994, p. 48)

In the beginning of her term, Cory Aquino was opposed to the renewal of the US military bases. Many women's groups including the non-governmental umbrella organization, the General Assembly Binding for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action (GABRIELA), urged her to oppose the renewal of the military bases, and to consider the welfare of women who had worked in the sex industry. Cory Aquino cautiously noted it was too soon to make a decision. Instead of supporting women's groups in their opposition to the military bases, Aquino closed family planning centers, aligning herself more with the Church, and alienating women's groups who relied on the Marcos-era family planning centers (Niu 1999).

An analysis of a number of institutional constraints could help explain Cory Aquino's policy performance in relation to the women's movements agenda. First, Cory Aquino had to make compromises with the established political dynasties and loyalists of the deposed Marcos regime (Mendoza 2013). The need to reach a compromise with those who had benefited from the Marcos regime was a huge cost she had to pay for the re-democratization process.

Faced with seven abortive military coups during the first three years of her presidency, with four coup attempts during her first year in office, Cory Aquino was 'torn between forces of the right (the army), the left (the national democratic movement), and the centrist traditional politicians, whom she interpreted as pulling her back to the political dynamics prominent in the era before Martial Law' (Roces 2000, p. 80). In such an environment, women's movements policy reform agenda had to be relegated to the margins, treated with secondary importance to restoring democratic institutions against those trying to revert the country to Marcosian rule. As Roces (2000, p. 81) succinctly puts it, '[Cory] invariably portrayed herself as a "transition president," one whose main duty was to restore democratic institutions. Beyond that, she did not have other agendas for national policy.'

The lack of party affiliation and support also prevented Cory Aquino from advancing the women's agenda. When she assumed the presidency in 1986, she was bereft of political support. She was not affiliated with any political party and did not attempt to form her own political party when she became president (Mendoza and Melegrito 2016).

The lack of party support became a liability to Cory Aquino as soon as loyalists and supporters of Marcos returned to power in the House of Representatives and local governments, when elections were held in 1987. Under the 1987 Constitution, the approval of the House of Representatives is needed for the passage of all laws. With Marcos loyalists working as an opposition bloc in Congress, it was not possible for Cory Aquino to get the necessary congressional approval.

Cory Aquino also had to endure chauvinistic attitudes toward female leaders by her Cabinet members. Thompson notes that

Upon her inauguration as president in February 1986, Aquino faced two deeply antagonistic male rivals in her own cabinet. Her defense minister, Juan Ponce Enrile [...] and vice president, Salvador Laurel [...]. Both Enrile and Laurel demanded new presidential elections immediately. When she refused, Enrile and the 'RAM boys'<sup>4</sup> supported a coup attempt by so-called Marcos loyalists in July 1986, only four months after Aquino had taken office. Enrile and Laurel were behind another putsch effort in November 1986 that was revealingly dubbed 'God Save the Queen.' Enrile and Laurel claimed only to want to return Aquino to her 'proper' symbolic role, while seizing power for themselves. (Thompson 2002, p. 550)

The Roman Catholic Church also played a major role in shaping the policy agenda and performance of the Cory presidency. While the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship created unprecedented political pluralism, the Church solidified its position and influence in Philippine politics and society. It remained a unitary, central actor in contrast to the fragmented women's movements (Mendoza 2013).

Being conservative in her upbringing and having close ties to the Catholic Church, it was not surprising that the Church was able to influence Cory's government, especially because she was propelled to the presidency with its help. The Church attempted to shape Cory Aquino's population policy direction, first by proposing broad changes in the Marcos-led population control program, and second, by campaigning intensely to insert an article into the 1986 constitution that would protect the life of the unborn (Mendoza 2013).

Upon Cory Aquino's assumption of the presidency, the Church prepared a draft Executive Order (EO) for the president signature calling for the abolition of the Commission on Population (POPCOM). The draft EO also called for the repeal of laws and practices supporting incentives for limiting family size, setting population or family-size goals or targets,



and promoting or dispensing abortifacient contraceptives such as the pill and intra-uterine devices (Dixon-Mueller and Germain 1994).

Marcos had created POPCOM in 1969 through Executive Order No. 171. As the policy-coordinating body for population matters, POPCOM was mandated to 'formulate policy and program recommendations on population as it relates to economic and social development' (Office of the President of the Philippines 1969) among its other functions and duties. The Church proposal to abolish the POPCOM was, in effect, aimed at prohibiting the use of government funds for anything other than natural family planning methods (Fabros et al. 1998).

The Executive Order (EO) drafted by the Church was never signed by Cory Aquino, as left-leaning women's groups mobilized successfully to oppose it. Women activists together with population and health professionals went public through media coverage, telegrams, and a petition to Cory Aquino to expose the threat to the national family planning program (Dixon-Mueller 1993).

The Church also proposed a provision to the 48-member Constitutional Commission working on the draft constitution that would protect the 'right to life of the fertilised ovum' (Fabros et al. 1998). The proposal was supported by a conservative alliance of lay Catholics, fundamentalist Christians, and groups such as Pro-Life Philippines (Dixon-Mueller and Germain 1994).

Women's groups, particularly GABRIELA, embarked on a petition campaign and lobbied the Constitutional Commission not to include the proposed provision in the constitution. To these groups, the 'right to life of the unborn' is a discrimination against women who lack the education and resources to access safe medical services. Women's organizing and mobilization were not as successful as those against the Church's draft Executive Order ending POPCOM. They were unable to convince the Commission to strike out the proposed clause. Nonetheless, the Commission approved a clause that guaranteed the equal protection of the mother and the unborn as a result of a compromise among its members (Fabros et al. 1998).

While Cory Aquino's government began with a balanced representation of cause-oriented groups, NGO activists, and reformists from leftist groups, it eventually drifted to the right as conservatives gradually replaced reformers (Kessler and Ruland 2008). For instance, Cory Aquino appointed a staunch Catholic as secretary of the Department of Health (DOH). Under his leadership, the government pursued family

planning not as fertility reduction intervention but as a health intervention promoting maternal and child health (Carroll 2006). Cory Aquino, under Church influence, also transferred the institutional and operational responsibility of the family planning program from the Commission on Population (POPCOM) to the DOH (SEPO 2009).

In sum, subservient to the Roman Catholic Church, Cory Aquino abandoned her predecessor's reproductive health and family planning policies. She proscribed modern contraceptive services and supplies, and promoted natural family planning consistent with the Church's teachings about contraception and the sanctity of life, family, and marriage (Mendoza 2013).

Four years into her presidency, Cory Aquino's government adopted the Philippine Family Planning Programme (PFPP). Women's groups were asked to help train government health and family planning personnel. Some groups, however, became wary of the implications of working together with the government. They feared that collaboration with the state would lead to co-optation, and consequently, would undermine their primary mission of organizing and strengthening the mass base of the movement (Fabros et al. 1998).

There were also groups reluctant to work together with the population-control forces dominant during the Marcos regime, or with any organization funded by the US government or US foundations. These included groups made up of nationalist, left-leaning feminists and activists. But other groups were less critical of state collaboration. They shared the view that alliances or collaborations with the government or any other agency or organization of the Marcos administration were essential for ensuring women's access to a full range of family planning information and services (Dixon-Mueller and Germain 1994).

More tensions among women's groups ensued when the DOH chose only a few women for membership in key committees of the technical secretariat of the Philippine Family Planning Program (PFPP). This prompted debates about who should determine the so-called experts among women's groups (Fabros et al. 1998, Note 12).

Another flashpoint was the state machinery on women (Mendoza 2013). Some claimed appointments to the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) were based on personal ties and political endorsements and the appointed commissioners were not or had not been part of the women's movement (Yang and Masilungan 2011). Neither did they have specific expertise in women's issues or related sectoral concerns (Honculada and Pineda-Ofreneo 2000).

It is important to note that immediately after the overthrow of Marcos there was also a revival of women civic and charity groups. Members of these groups generally hold conservative views about women and gender relations and have sided with either the Catholic Church or the government on various issues (Sobritchea 2004). These groups include lay organizations established by the Catholic Church beginning in the 1920s and 1930s to bridge the distance between the Church and the people. For example, the Catholic Women's League and Couples for Christ not only adhere to the Church moral and doctrinal teachings, but also defend the Church institutional interests and agenda (Kessler and Ruland 2008).

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001–2010), the second female president in the post-Marcos period, succeeded Joseph Estrada to the presidency after the latter was ousted from office, charged with corruption and lack of moral ascendancy. For the second time in Philippine political history, the Church played a vital role in removing a corrupt government and installing a female president, although Macapagal-Arroyo was the legal successor, being the duly elected vice president at the time.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's subservience to the Church was a matter of political survival (Mendoza 2013). She won the 2004 presidential elections with a narrow margin over Fernando Poe Jr., and her electoral victory was overshadowed by allegations of fraud. In addition, she had to confront three impeachment attempts and several feeble coup attempts as well as a series of scandals involving her husband, son, and brother-in-law (Thompson 2013). She carried out a conservative policy on reproductive health. For instance, she dismantled national programs for the delivery of family health services and appointed two POPCOM commissioners from the conservative Couples for Christ and Opus Dei (Romuladez 2012).

## CONCLUSION

Some political analysts believe that Cory Aquino was more of a looming figure over Philippine politics as a former president than she ever was as a leader in power. The post-Cory Aquino years were fraught with issues of secession, military restiveness, and political scandal. She re-emerged from retirement and spoke with the gravitas of EDSA as her mandate to call for the ouster of Joseph Estrada (known as People Power II Revolution) and later for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation.

She continued to champion the economic empowerment of women through microfinance programs while remaining silent on reproductive

health issues. National fervor for the mother of the modern Philippine nation was in evidence in 2012 when thousands of mourners brought Cory to her final resting place, thus reliving the passionate eagerness for democracy that led her to power more than 20 years before. This sparked the sudden presidential run of her only son, Benigno Simeon Aquino III and his election as the 15th President of the Philippines in 2010. ‘Noynoy,’ as he is popularly known, had spent most of his political years representing the 2nd District of Tarlac as member of the Philippine House of Representatives. In 2007, he made a successful run for the Philippine Senate. While at the time his political ambitions seemed confined to keeping the legacy of elected Aquinos in office, the evidence of his mother’s enduring presence as a symbol of democracy placed Noynoy on the presidential path.

Ironically, it was during the presidential term of her son that the Reproductive Health (RH) Bill was finally passed into law in December 2012, after 14 years in the legislative mill. Championed by some female legislators, the RH Law, as it became known, was the most contentious policy reform lobbied by women’s groups against the powerful veto of the Roman Catholic Church (Mendoza 2013). The RH Law met significant challenges along the way, including efforts to have the Supreme Court nullify the law on grounds of unconstitutionality. The Supreme Court decision of April 2014 stated that:

While the RH law seeks to provide freedom of choice through informed consent, freedom of choice guarantees the liberty of the religious conscience and prohibits any degree of compulsion or burden, whether direct or indirect, in the practice of one’s religion. (Supreme Court of the Republic of the Philippines 2014, p. 73)

In the years between the presidency of Corazon Aquino and that of her son, many changes facilitated the bill to finally pass into law: the growing number of women in the legislature and in other key positions in government and in the private sector, among others. These changes will likely make possible for future generations to cover the ground that Cory, as the first female President, found difficult to tread.

## NOTES

1. The EDSA People Power Revolution, a series of demonstrations on the main Manila thoroughfare known as Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue (EDSA), was heralded for the ‘bloodless’ transition from the Marcos dictatorship to the Aquino administration.

2. As First Lady of the Philippines, Imelda Marcos was able to conduct official business on behalf of the Philippines abroad, held positions as Minister of Human Settlements and Governor of Metropolitan Manila. After the Marcoses returned from exile, Imelda was able to win a seat in the Congress as Representative of the Ilocos Norte province.
3. As the wife of popular opposition leader Benigno Aquino, Jr., she remained at his side as he rose from Mayor to Senator and later on as a political detainee, as well as during his exile in the USA.
4. The Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) was the rebellious faction of the politicized military establishment under the Marcos regime.

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# Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh: Politics, Personality and Policies

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, the prime minister of Bangladesh (1996–2001, 2009–present) and daughter of the founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in the context of the social, economic and political transformation of Bangladesh. Praised and castigated at the same time, to her supporters Sheikh Hasina is a leader bred in courage and conviction, yet, for her detractors, she is Machiavellian. People in Bangladesh often have extreme views about the leaders of their choice. Going beyond the polemic, I discuss here the larger context of the rise of women’s political leadership in Asia in terms of institutions and political culture. Political leaders make choices, but only under the circumstances they inherit. The narrative of the rise of Sheikh Hasina and an analysis of her leadership style illustrate complex processes of Bangladeshi political history, political culture, the challenges of democracy and the overcoming of economic difficulties, especially in the context of the democratic transition in Bangladesh since 1990, after years of military dictatorship.

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Sheikh Hasina's election manifesto in 2008 incorporated the trial of war criminals, those who were accused of committing crimes against humanity during the war of liberation in 1971, and the creation of a 'digital Bangladesh' to usher Bangladesh into the age of the Internet. At the beginning of 2016, some of the war criminals were duly sentenced, a task that many doubted would ever be accomplished. By 2015, over 133 million of Bangladesh's 160 million people (83 percent) had access to mobile phones, and over 54 million (nearly 34 percent) had Internet connectivity by the end of 2015 (BTRC 2016a, b). The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) gave Hasina the 'ICT Sustainable Development Award' in 2015 (ITU 2015). She also received the 'Champion of the Earth' award from the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP 2015) for adopting positive steps on climate change. These two awards were added to a list of accolades she received during her two tenures as prime minister.

In both poverty reduction and gender equality, Bangladesh has done remarkably well. Bangladesh graduated from a lower-income to a lower-middle-income country, according to the World Bank classification. Women's social development and political empowerment received special attention from Sheikh Hasina's administration. Under her watch, reserved seats for women in parliament have been increased from 30 to 50.<sup>1</sup> In her cabinet, five women ministers were appointed to such important portfolios as Agriculture, Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs (Internal Security). Women have been promoted to the rank of four-star generals in the army, judges of the high court and bureaucratic heads of government departments (Hasina 2011, p. 139). She also appointed the country's first female speaker of the parliament. In 1997, Sheikh Hasina's government introduced direct election of the three reserved seats for women at the local government, which resulted in 13,000 directly elected female union council members. Not only did they become elected as members of the union council, the lowest elective tier of the local government, it was also required that at least 25 percent of the 12 standing committees of each union council be headed by women (Khan and Ara 2006, pp. 83–84), which gave rural women a chance to enhance their leadership skills. Women's presence in the Bangladesh parliament has increased under the female leadership. In 1996, of 330 members of parliament, women made up 11 percent, which rate rose to 15 percent in 2001, 19 percent in 2008 and 20.2 percent, or 71 of the 350-member parliament, in 2016 (BDAWL 2010; Bangladesh Parliament 2013). In 2011, Hasina's government adopted the National Women Development Policy that emphasized women's education. Decline in maternal mortality and

improvements in gender equity are success stories: ‘Bangladesh is a textbook example of what is possible when women are involved in decision-making’ (Khatiwada 2014). Bangladesh was ranked 64 in the Gender Gap Index among 145 countries in the world, ahead of Sri Lanka (84), India (108) and Pakistan (144). The number of women at the Class 1 level officers in the civil service of Bangladesh increased from 18 percent in 2010 to 21 percent in 2013, while eight female diplomats headed Bangladesh foreign missions, two as ambassadors (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs 2015, pp. 30–31).

### FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN SOUTH ASIA

Female leaders have played an important role in the transition from authoritarian rule. For Thompson (2003), women executives of Asia ‘were at the forefront of mass movements that have overthrown unyielding dictatorships and resulted in democratization’ (Thompson 2003, p. 536). Yet, democracy is fragile in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s female leaders, when acting in unison, could bring down an authoritarian ruler, a usurper of high office, but it is partly in their bitter rivalry that democracy remains at risk of an authoritarian turn.

Bangladesh, with 89 percent Muslim population, is both part of an Asian trend of women political leaders and also an exception, where women leaders compete with one another for the top political office. The phenomenon of women leaders in South Asia has been a subject of considerable discussion (Jahan 1987; Derichs and Thompson 2013; Fernandes 2014; Skard 2015). Elora Shehabuddin (2014) agrees with the popular assumption that female leaders are overrepresented in democratic transitions in Asia because they are seen as ‘less threatening’ and as ‘nonpolitical advocates’ of the causes they uphold. Rounaq Jahan argued that the South Asian women leaders are ‘remarkable not only for their rare achievement in gaining the highest political office, but more importantly for their tenacity in remaining in power’ (Jahan 1987, p. 850). She includes those in both executive office and leaders of major political parties. Jahan also remarks on South Asian female leaders who were born in wealth, had western education and grew up in a cosmopolitan environment, for example, Indira Gandhi (1917–1984), whose grandfather was a prominent lawyer and politician at the turn of the twentieth century and whose illustrious father, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a Cambridge educated scholar. Table 11.1 summarizes the background of the South Asian female leaders.

**Table 11.1** Socioeconomic and political background of South Asian female leaders

<i>Country/female leader</i>	<i>Generation in politics</i>	<i>Economic background</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Political background</i>
Sri Lanka/Srimavo Bandarnaike	First	Wealthy/ higher official	High School	No background
Sri Lanka/Chandrika Kumaratunga	Second	Wealthy/ president	University of Sciences Po, Paris	Socialized in a political family
India/Indira Gandhi	Third	Wealthy/ professionals	Switzerland, Oxford, Santiniketan	Yes, direct experience
Pakistan/Benazir Bhutto	Second	Wealthy/ landlord	Harvard, Oxford	Socialized in a political family
Bangladesh/Khaleda Zia	First	Middle class	High School	Initially no. Later in pro-democracy movement
Bangladesh/Sheikh Hasina	Second	Middle class	Dhaka University	Yes, direct experience in pro-democracy movement

*Source:* Prepared by the author

Of the five South Asian female leaders, Indira Gandhi was the only one who held a high political position prior to assuming the post of prime minister. She was elected president of the Indian National Congress in 1959.<sup>2</sup> The Congress leadership was mistaken in assuming that they would transform ‘from queen makers to puppet masters’ (Moraes 1980, p. 123). Indira Gandhi’s exceptional leadership was tested in handling the crisis of Bangladesh’s liberation war in 1971. South Asian democracies preceded the Third Wave democratization with a legacy of female leadership that owed in part to aristocratic politics and in part to a more inclusive anti-colonial struggle (Table 11.2)

**Table 11.2** Female heads of government in Asia

<i>Head of government</i>	<i>Region/country</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Kinship</i>
<i>Prime ministers</i>			
<i>South Asia</i>			
Sirimavo Bandaranaike	Sri Lanka	1960–1965, 1970–1977, 1994–2000	Wife of Solomon Bandaranaike
Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga	Sri Lanka	1994–2000	Daughter of Sirimavo and Solomon Bandaranaike
Indira Gandhi	India	1966–1975, 1977–1984	Daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru
Benazir Bhutto	Pakistan	1988–1990, 1993–1996	Daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
Khaleda Zia	Bangladesh	1990–1995; 2001–2006	Wife of Ziaur Rahman
Sheikh Hasina	Bangladesh	1996–2001; 2009–2016	Daughter of Mujibur Rahman
<i>Presidents</i>			
<i>Southeast Asia</i>			
Corazon Aquino (1933–2009)	Philippines	1986–1992	Wife of Benigno Aquino
Megawati Sukarnoputri (1947–)	Indonesia	2001–2004	Daughter of Sukarno
Gloria M Arroyo (1947–)	Philippines	2001–2010	Daughter of Diosdado Macapagal
Yingluck Shinawatra (1967–)	Thailand	2011–2013	Sister of Thaksin Shinawatra
<i>East Asia</i>			
Park Geun-hye (1952–)	South Korea	2013–	Daughter of Park Chung-hee
Tsai Ing-wen (1956–)	Taiwan	2016–	Unrelated

*Source:* Prepared by the author

## ENTER SHEIKH HASINA: A CASE OF TRANSFERRED CHARISMA

Hasina was made president of the Awami League<sup>3</sup> in 1981, a party riven by factionalism and opportunism, with some members defecting and even conspiring with military dictators. Sheikh Hasina successfully organized a factious party. When elected prime minister in 1996, she had 15 years of experience leading and reorganizing a major political party. Sheikh Hasina's political career began when she was a student activist in college (Hasina 2010). As a part of India, Bengal (present-day Bangladesh) was no stranger to female politicians. In addition to female politicians from

powerful political families, there was a venerated tradition of women's involvement in radical politics fighting British colonialism. Female freedom fighters such as Shanti Das, Suniti Das or Pritilata Waddedar have left a legacy of courage and sacrifice (Bandyopadhyay 1991; Forbes 1996).

Some writers suggest that the rise of female leadership is linked to lack of institutionalization of politics. They argue, women leaders 'brought a fresh clean image which was a sharp contrast to other established leaders whose political images were often tainted with broken promises and corruption.' And that '[i]n an environment of amoral politics, these women seemed to be standing for certain principles' (Jahan 1987, p. 851). Such a position essentializes the role of women in politics. Empirically, corruption is not a male monopoly.

Much of the rise to female leadership, as well as male political heirs, can be attributed to what I would call 'transferred or derivative charisma.' Following Weber's notion of charisma as the basis of one form of leadership, distinct from traditional and rational leadership, it can be hypothesized that many of the developing countries undergoing a process of democratization experience a period of charismatic leadership. Sheikh Mujib won a landslide national election in 1970 as a legitimate claimant of the post of prime minister of Pakistan. Circumstances catapulted him to inaugurate a new nation, leading a struggle for national emancipation. He displayed a great deal of charisma through his self-sacrifice, firebrand political speeches and steadfast determination to mobilize a people into an emerging country. Sheikh Hasina was heir to that charisma. Here, we view charisma as validating extraordinary forms of actions on the part of a leader, outside the routine of the everyday and opposed to both rational and traditional authority (Weber 1947, pp. 361–362). This may explain why in 1981 the senior leaders of the Awami League agreed to pass the mantle of leadership to Sheikh Hasina.

In the post-1975 period, as the military rulers embarked on the civilianization of government to acquire legitimacy and allowed an electoral contest, a battered Awami League along with other smaller opposition parties put forth as candidate General M.A.G. Osmani, the chief of staff of the Bangladesh armed forces during the liberation war. He lost the election amidst charges of poll rigging (Franda 1979, p. 3). In the November 1981 presidential election, the Awami League fielded Kamal Hossain as its candidate, the successful Foreign Minister and Law Minister of Sheikh Mujib's administration and the principal drafter of Bangladesh's Constitution. He too lost. The electoral defeat could be partly attributed to a highly partisan electoral process (Bertocci 1982). Kamal Hossain received 26 percent of

the votes against Abdus Sattar of Bangladesh Nationalist Party, who received 65.5 percent of the votes (Nohlen et al. 2001). The lack of charisma of these two Awami League candidates played a role in their electoral defeat. The rise of Sheikh Hasina exemplifies the phenomenon of transferred charisma.

Transferred charisma would also explain the so-called dynastic leaders in several other Asian cases. An examination of the political strategies of Sheikh Hasina or Begum Khaleda Zia reveals their studied use of the symbols and rituals of their families of origin. The images of Sheikh Mujib adorned posters and placards of Sheikh Hasina. In large public rallies, people would bring huge life-size portraits of the leaders of the past. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a charismatic leader, adoringly called *Bangabandhu* (friend of Bengal) and the putative father of the nation, continues to influence present-day politics in Bangladesh. Large portraits of Sheikh Mujib decorate public places and government offices. His memory has a higher impact for sustaining the derivative charisma of Sheikh Hasina. One author observed that the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the two leading political parties of Bangladesh, displayed the portraits of their two leading figures on their campaign posters, ‘and campaign speeches dwelt on the qualities of the two charismatic but departed [male] leaders’ (Opfell 1993, p. 197). Recent posters visible in all public places poignantly capture the dynastic nature of politics by depicting the images of three generations.

Derivative or transferred charisma may give an aspiring politician a point of entry into the center of the political arena, but if the carrier of transferred charisma fails to prove her or his own ability, the charisma quickly wears off. This fate is best illustrated in the Indonesian case of Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Sukarno, the founding leader of Indonesia. In Asia, the wives or daughters of former leaders usually benefit from their family legacies. The president of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen, who has no dynastic connections, is an exception (Goto 2016). Unlike the other Asian cases of dynastic politics, Bangladesh stands out where dead males continue to hover over their female heirs to oversee if things are all right.

## HISTORY, POLITICS AND BIOGRAPHY

Since 1990, when the last long-term, military dictator vacated power, Bangladesh saw an alternation of two strong female leaders, with a short interregnum of a military-backed caretaker government in 2007–2008. Begum Khaleda Zia, the wife of General Ziaur Rahman, a former Army chief and President, became the first female prime minister of Bangladesh. The anti-authoritarian political mobilization brought Begum Zia and

Sheikh Hasina to the political battlefield, organizing, mobilizing and honing their political leadership skills, finally ending authoritarian rule. Of the two leaders, Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of the founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has had a more intriguing life experience. She was born on September 28, 1946, in Tungipara, Faridpur, at her ancestral home. It was the same household where her father was born (Rahman 2012). Like her father, Hasina too was raised in a milieu of political resistance and was witness to and victim of repression.

All leaders are products of their time; an intricate interplay of biography and history shapes their mental universe. The uniqueness of Hasina's biography is scarred by a tragedy with rare parallels in history. Less than four years after the independence of Bangladesh, she lost her parents, three brothers and altogether 18 close relatives in a hail of bullets shot by disgruntled soldiers. Sheikh Hasina survived the coup, as she was overseas with her husband. After six years in exile, she returned home in 1981. The tragedy played a determining role in her leadership style. She viewed her main task as completing the mission of her father. The family tragedy has been a source of her determination and dogged persistence. The Western media has often been harsh and patronizing to her (Kristof 2012).

Sheikh Hasina was brought back from exile to Bangladesh in 1981 to lead the Awami League. Khaleda Zia was drawn out of her sequestered housewife role into the leadership role of the BNP in 1983. The two female leaders came together in their campaign to remove Ershad from power in 1990. National elections were held in 1991, and Khaleda Zia prevailed over Sheikh Hasina, who did not accept her defeat gracefully. Instead, she complained of electoral fraud and irregularities. The western media often fails to delve into the history and political culture of Bangladesh and resorts to caricature of a so-called feud between the 'battling Begums' (The Economist 2013) or 'drama queens' (The Economist 2015). Notwithstanding the implicit misogyny, such characterizations betray a form of neo-orientalism where women leaders are perceived as quarrelsome, vain and irrational; they also ignore the complexities and nuances of the politics of female rivalry in Bangladesh.

## RELIGION, CULTURE AND CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN BANGLADESH

The debate over the extent and nature of secularity has been a dominant part of the political discourse in Bangladesh almost since the emergence of this nation, and more forcefully since the 1990s (Khondker 1999, 2010; Riaz 2003, 2004, 2008). While at various times the BNP made both

tactical and ideological partnerships with Islamist political parties, Hasina has maintained a moderate position by distancing herself from the religious parties but not dissociating herself from Islam. While the hardline, secular and feminist author Taslima Nasreen, now in exile, wrote critical tracts in the early 1990s, neither Sheikh Hasina nor her party supported her publicly, but did so privately (Khondker 1999). Hasina, representing a moderate feminist position on women's rights and gender equality at all levels, did not want to endorse a radical feminist position popular with the left-leaning intellectuals in Bangladesh. In the same way, during Hasina's tenure as prime minister (2009–present), her government distanced from some of the freethinking bloggers who wrote atheistic blogs. It was only when the extremist Islamist groups murdered some of the so-called bloggers and writers that the police took action. Online Islamist groups accused Hasina of being a threat to Islam and the liberal intelligentsia accused her of being soft on religious extremists. Hasina did not create the deep-seated ideological divide that presents a huge challenge to Bangladesh, but merely inherited it. Her predecessors formed alliances with the right-wing Islamist parties to secure electoral victories. Invocation of Islam—the majority religion in Bangladesh—has become a powerful tool, an ideological force that gained weight in the last two decades of the twentieth century. 'It was an ironic moment for a nation that had emerged in 1971 on the basis of secular-socialist principles, and whose first constitution—framed in November 1972—imposed an embargo on the use of religion in politics. Thirty years later an election had brought a coalition to power with two Islamist parties as partners' (Riaz 2003, p. 301). Women's rights activists were adversely affected by the rise of Islamic extremism.

It was political expediency, rather than religious commitment, that brought Islam back on the national stage. One of the challenges for Sheikh Hasina was how to revert to the secular constitution that the founding leaders laid out. The constitution included secularism as a fundamental, even a foundational, principle. Since the late 1970s, a number of military rulers have chiseled away the secular cornerstone of the constitution expunging secularism. Ziaur Rahman inserted phrases such as 'faith in almighty Allah' in the constitution and a declaration of 'Islam as state religion' was issued by Hossain Muhammad Ershad (Shehabuddin 1999, p. 1015). Sheikh Hasina has handled this highly sensitive issue with care by reintegrating secularism but not reinstating the 1972 constitution in toto. Personally pious, Hasina has maintained a firm secular stand, rallying the support of a major section of the liberal intelligentsia. With considerable skill and equanimity, she has often walked a fine line between religious extremism and hardline secularism.



Sheikh Hasina served as Leader of the Opposition from 2001 to 2006. The third crisis of her life was a major assassination attempt in August 2004. By then a former prime minister and a popular opposition leader, she was addressing a huge political rally in the middle of Dhaka to protest against mounting government violence. As Hasina spoke from a makeshift platform atop a truck, 13 hand grenades were tossed into the middle of the crowd and toward the truck, which missed the target. She escaped narrowly as her party leaders, some of them injured, shielded her with their bodies in a huddle. Sixteen party activists died instantaneously, and 200 others were injured (The Daily Star 2004). A senior female leader, Ivy Rahman, was among the six victims who later succumbed to their injuries. As the angry and bereaved party members protested, police took action against them and a bomb squad quickly detonated the unexploded grenades, removing important evidence and creating suspicion of official complicity. An attempt on Hasina's life had been made earlier, while she was attending a political rally in Chittagong, the port city, on January 24, 1988. Police killed two dozen of her supporters and she had a narrow escape (Ahmed 1988; M. Ahmed 1995). In 2000, a huge 76-kg explosive was planted under the platform from which Hasina was supposed to address a rally in a village near her ancestral home. By sheer chance, this plot was unearthed by an unsuspecting tea boy in the village. These crises made her fearless and uncompromising. Hasina became convinced that she has a mission to fulfill. In many of her addresses, Hasina states that she has nothing to fear since she is not afraid to die.

Khaleda Zia's administration ended amidst mass protest leading to a military-backed interim government that prepared a clean electoral roll and conducted a neutral election in December 2008 in which Sheikh Hasina won resoundingly. The Awami League-led coalition won 263 of the 300 seats, and Hasina became prime minister for the second time in January 2009. The next crisis dogged her shortly after her huge victory. A bloody mutiny among the Bangladesh Border guards killed 74 people, most of them army officers deployed in the paramilitary force. This tragedy put her leadership to test.

During her first term as prime minister, she initiated the trial of the murderers Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family in a civilian court. This trial was suspended during the BNP rule between 2001 and 2006. When Sheikh Hasina was returned to power in 2009, the trial was resumed and those found guilty were punished. In 2010, during her second tenure, she also commissioned an International Crime Tribunal to try war criminals

that collaborated with the murderous troops of Pakistan. Pakistani soldiers and their quislings were accused of raping tens of thousands of women in Bangladesh. The trial for war crimes polarized the nation between the left, the liberals and the feminists, on one side, and the religious right and the center-right party (the BNP), on the other. Sheikh Hasina gained the support of the intelligentsia and the feminist groups who were in favor of the trial of the war criminals. Hasina's popularity, however, waned when, in 2011, the caretaker government system was revoked by a constitutional amendment arguing that democracy in the country was mature enough to conduct fair elections and should not be entrusted to an unelected caretaker administration. The annulment was met with strong protests from the opposition. Amidst massive protests, the opposition resorted to extreme violence in a bid to block the election. Hasina's administration, however, bulldozed through an election in early 2013 with a very low turnout. The experience of the caretaker government that ruled the country for two years, instead of the constitutionally sanctioned three months, must have weighed a part. Critics, however, claimed Hasina's will to retain power was the main reason. In self-defense, Hasina used the excuse that her main rival had boycotted the election that gave her a walkover.

### PATRIARCHY AND GENDER ROLE TRANSFORMATION

Upon assuming the office of prime minister in 1996, Sheikh Hasina demanded to be addressed as 'sir,' not 'madam.' When returned to her second-term premiership, officials remembered that and continued to address her as 'sir.' For Hasina, this was an attempt to break gender-role stereotypes. She may have sought to reinforce her authority by giving the impression that as the prime minister, a traditionally male position, she embodied the same powers and privileges and should therefore be addressed as 'sir.' Inadvertently, by reducing the visibility of her femaleness, she might be aiding the perpetuation of patriarchy as well as the 'cyborg' image of the female leadership. There has been a perception of women in several cultures as sentimental, emotional and given to lack of logical understanding. When there were fewer women leaders, Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1993) summarized the stereotypes of male and female behaviors (if not leadership qualities). Women's nurturing and consensus-building skills are not valued in high positions. Swedish researcher Sara Louise Muhr (2011) calls women who make it to the top 'cyborgs.' They are more than masculinized women. They are androgynous, human

beings who transcend gender in the ordinary sense of the term. The way women leaders present themselves leads to some confusion. Should they appear as motherly figures, nurturing and caring? Or, should they perform as more masculine than men themselves? Indira Gandhi was at some point regarded as the only man in a cabinet of old women! A similar story is also attributed to Sheikh Hasina.

In Bangladesh, poverty and *purdah*, the veiling and segregation of women, combine to reinforce ‘not only the view that society is dichotomized into public and private spaces but also the stereotyped gender roles that assign women to the seclusion of the domestic sphere’ (Chowdhury 1994). ‘Yet patriarchy did not block women from heading anti-dictatorship struggles. Rather, gender stereotyping proved to be of political advantage,’ counters Thompson, adding: ‘As for supposedly female-unfriendly Islam, aside from the “special case” of Afghanistan and the micro-state of Brunei, every other predominantly Muslim country in South and Southeast Asia has had a prominent female leader, either as head of state, or as opposition leader’ (Thompson 2003, p. 538). In Bangladesh, in 2016, women hold the positions of prime minister, leader of the opposition and leader of one of the largest political parties outside parliament.

In East Asia, compared to parity in access to education and entry-level professional positions, gender differences widen greatly in senior positions. Asia lags behind Europe and North America in women’s representation on boards of companies. The Asian average is 6 compared to 35 in Norway and 15 in the USA. Asia itself is quite varied, ranging from 9 and 8 percent in Hong Kong and China, respectively, to 1 and 2 percent in South Korea and Japan, respectively (McKinsey 2015, p. 2).<sup>4</sup>

### WEAK INSTITUTIONS, STRONG PERSONALITIES

Montesquieu observed that at the birth of new polities, leaders mold institutions, whereas, afterwards, institutions mold leaders (cited in Putnam 1993, p. 26). There are instances when female executives circumvent the limits of institutions, as shown by Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder (Chap. 3, this volume). Institutions can best be viewed as structured social norms and rules that limit the actions of people, including those in positions of power. It may be worthwhile to distinguish between large, overarching social institutions and specific institutions. It is ironical that Hasina and Khaleda fought in unison to shake off authoritarian rule of the male leaders. They even successfully replaced the presidential form

with the apparently more democratic, parliamentary form of government. Upon taking the office of prime minister, however, they chose to rule in an authoritarian style. The culture of authoritarianism and hero-worship goes deep in the local tradition. Regardless of gender, the ruler is supposed to command absolute allegiance. These two leaders of competing parties illustrate that in varying degrees.

Robert Putnam's study of the Italian South in the 1980s provides some parallel for Bangladesh politics. Bangladesh can be characterized as a weak democracy, but most important, a polity where citizens have minuscule political rights. In the face of towering political personalities and an ossified bureaucracy, ordinary citizens look for protection under their leaders. 'Two centuries of constitution-writing around the world warn us, however, that designers of new institutions are often writing on water. ... As Deschalen characterized politics and government in the French Fourth Republic: "The Republic on top and the empire underneath"' (Putnam 1993, p. 17).

While many Third-World leaders deviate from institutional paths to achieve personal gains and glory, contrary to allegations, this may not be the case of Sheikh Hasina. She often ignored the limitations of institutions and norms to establish not just her personal legacy but that of her father, whose memory the BNP administration sought to erase. Nation-making through memory work and its political ramifications weave into the story of Hasina's political leadership. Although she builds legitimacy through economic development, especially infrastructural development, Sheikh Hasina also sought to advance democracy through political reform. She helped build the institution of caretaker government to officiate a neutral election as a check against self-serving governments, and, over time, through the judiciary, she oversaw the reversal of the caretaker system, defying public protests.

Political controversies are never in short supply in Bangladesh. The argumentative nature of Bengalis, the people of Bangladesh, is well known (Sen 2005). While Sheikh Hasina's role in responding to climate change brought her international acclaim, her critics in Bangladesh had a different take. Environmental activists pointed out the various failings of her government in protecting the environment, especially the *Sundarbans*, the world's largest mangrove forest in the coastal region of the Bay of Bengal (Ahsan 2011; South Asians for Human Rights 2015). The gains in the development of social indicators in Bangladesh are due to efforts of the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as well as the government.

Yet, Hasina's government rarely acknowledges the role of NGOs and tends to monopolize the credit, largely, to purchase political legitimacy. The course of Bangladesh politics will bring changes in the developmental and historical narratives, but nothing will erase the political imprint of Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh, or for that matter in South Asia.

## NOTES

1. The elected parties in parliament fill the reserved seats in proportion to their own seats.
2. Indian Congress party, established in 1885, had female leaders without political family lineage in charge at various points in time. The first female president of the Indian National Congress was Annie Besant (1847–1933) of Irish descent, in 1917. Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949) in 1925 and Nellie Sengupta (1886–1973) in 1933 were the other female presidents of Congress in the early twentieth century.
3. Awami League was a party born in 1949 that fought for the political and economic rights of the people of East Bengal (formerly, the eastern part of Pakistan) and provided leadership during the war of independence in 1971.
4. In female labor participation rates, only China (74 percent), Japan (62 percent) and Singapore (60 percent) approximate the European levels. Taiwan's female participation rate is 47 percent and Malaysia's is 35 percent (McKinsey 2015, p. 2). Female participation in labor force was 36 percent in 2010 (Government of Bangladesh 2014).

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## Iveta Radičová: The First Female Prime Minister in Slovakia

*Sharon L. Wolchik*

From 2010 to 2012 Iveta Radičová served as the prime minister of Slovakia. The first woman to hold this office, Radičová came to politics after a career as a sociologist and an activist. The pages to follow examine her background, education, and career as a professor and researcher. They then turn to her political activities, including her role as a spokesperson for Public Against Violence in 1989, her experiences as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) founder and director from 1991 to 2005, and later Minister of Labor, Social Affairs, and the Family; her entrance into politics as a member of Parliament, first as an independent and later as a member of the center-right Slovak Democratic and Christian Union-Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS) coalition; her candidacy for the office of President; and her activities and policies as the prime

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minister. They conclude with an assessment of her time in office and an evaluation of the impact of gender on her political career and the impact of her service as a political leader on gender issues and the role of women in politics in Slovakia.

### BACKGROUND: ACADEMIC RESEARCHER AND PROFESSOR

Born in Bratislava in 1956, Radičová studied sociology at Comenius University, the largest university in Slovakia. She earned her Ph.D. in sociology from the Slovak Academy of Sciences in 1981, where from 1979 to 1989 she led the Academy's family policy research team. In 1990, she became a member of the Department of Sociology at Comenius University. Her teaching focused on welfare systems, political science, and foreign policy in Central and Eastern Europe. Her research prior to the end of communism in 1989 dealt primarily with social and family policies in Slovakia and other communist bloc countries. Immediately after the fall of communism, she spent a year at Oxford University, where she met and worked with Ralph Dahrendorf, who had a major impact on her intellectual development (Radičová and Lesná 2013). After returning to Bratislava she founded the nonprofit Social Policy Analysis Center (SPACE) and served as its Director from 1992 to 2005. She also taught in the newly established Department of Political Science as well as in the sociology and social work departments at Comenius University and began doing research on gender issues. Meanwhile, she continued her work at SPACE, where she led an extensive study of gender roles and women's perspectives (Filadelfiová et al. 2000; Radičová 1998; Radičová 1999). She also held a Fulbright Fellowship at New York University in 1998–1999. In 2005, she became the first woman Professor of Sociology in Slovakia and was named head of the Sociology Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences that same year.

### POLITICAL APPRENTICESHIP

Radičová first entered public life in 1989 when she became spokeswoman for Public Against Violence (PAV), the umbrella organization that was formed in Bratislava during the Velvet Revolution, the mass demonstrations

that began in November 1989 that brought about the end of communism in Czechoslovakia. As a spokesperson, Radičová was one of the few women to assume a prominent, visible role in PAV and the activities of the ‘Nezna Revolucia,’ or Gentle Revolution, as it was termed in Slovakia, in contrast to most women who were active but were confined or chose to play largely supportive roles (Mad’arová 2011). This activity both reflected and solidified her ties to the group of professionals and intellectuals who participated in what Martin Butora, a fellow sociologist and an independent activist under communism who was one of the founders of Public Against Violence (and who founded, with Zora Bútorová, the Institute for Public Affairs, later serving as Slovakia’s ambassador to the USA), has termed ‘islands of creative deviation’ during the communist period. These consisted of people who still held positions in the official world but participated in nonconformist activities, often under the cover of officially approved organizations such as the Guardians of Nature (Wolchik 1990; Wheaton and Kavan 1992; Krapfl 2009).

In 1998, OK’98, a citizens’ campaign that helped increase voter turnout, especially among young people, led to the inability of Vladimír Mečiar, the semi-authoritarian leader of Slovakia from 1992 to 1998, to form a government. He was replaced as prime minister by a broad opposition coalition headed by Mikulas Dzurinda, which presided over a return to democracy in Slovakia (Bútorá et al. 1999a; Bútorá et al. 1999b; Fisher 2006; Forbrig and Demes 2007; Bunce and Wolchik 2011). The template of what became a series of electoral revolutions, in which oppositions and citizens brought about a change of regime, in this case a return to democracy through elections, this event also put Slovakia back on track to NATO and EU membership again. Although the center-right party led by Mikulas Dzurinda was the largest party in the coalition, it was a broad alliance that included the reformed communist party as well as other center-right parties.

In the 2002 parliamentary elections, the center right won with enough votes to form a coalition led once again by Mikulas Dzurinda as prime minister, but without the support of the reformed communists, the Party of the Democratic Left. From 2005 to 2006, Radičová served as the Minister of Labor, Social Affairs, and the Family in this government, although she served in this capacity as a professional with demonstrated expertise in the areas her ministry oversaw.

## ENTRY INTO PARTISAN POLITICS

Up to this point, Radičová's role in public life had been as a democratic activist, an NGO founder and a leader and, as a minister, a 'technocrat,' that is, someone appointed due to her expertise in a particular area. Beginning in 2006, she moved into partisan politics and unusually ran for office in both a winner takes all race (for the presidency) and a race based on proportional representation. She also had experience at all three levels of the government: as a minister in the government, member of parliament, and prime minister and, for several months, acting minister of defense.

In 2006, based on her success as Minister of Labor, Social Affairs, and the Family, she ran her first political campaign as a nonparty member on the list of the SDKÚ-DS. She was in the third place on the candidate list and received the highest number of preference votes. In November 2006, Radičová officially became a member of the center-right SDKÚ-DS, which was in opposition at the time. Known as one of the most trusted politicians in Slovakia, she served on the Committee of Social Affairs and Housing. Press reports indicate that she was particularly active on issues related to family and welfare issues. Since her party was in opposition, Radičová's ability to pass legislation was limited.

In 2009, Radičová ran for President of Slovakia as the candidate of the SDKÚ-DS and garnered the second highest number of votes (38.1 percent). She lost in the second round of the elections to the incumbent, President Ivan Gasparovic, who received 55.5 percent of the vote, compared to the 44.5 percent she received. Although Radičová lost this election, it is significant that she made it to the second round, as the candidate with the second largest number of votes in the first round. This achievement contrasts with the fate of the first woman to run for President in Slovakia, Magdalena Vasaryova, former actress, ambassador, and founder of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, who received only 6.6 percent of the vote in the 1999 presidential elections. More women as well as voters of both genders with higher education, urbanites, white-collar workers, and professionals voted for Radičová in the first round (Lesná 2009; Terenzani 2009).

In her run for president, Radičová was supported by all three of the parties in parliament that were in opposition: the SDKÚ-DS, the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), and the Party of the Hungarian Coalition

(SMK), as well as an extra-parliamentary party, the Citizens' Conservative Party (OKS). Leaders of the KDH were the most hesitant to support Radičová, due to her more liberal views on issues related to gender and the family. Pavol Hrusovsky, the party's chair at the time, noted in April that the KDH and Radičová had, 'after long, difficult, but correct negotiations,' agreed on a joint statement which allowed the party to support her, despite their different views on some 'cultural-ethical issues.' The joint statement noted that '[f]amily life, marriage and parenthood, which are sensitive and fragile, require strong support and legal protection. Any change in the legal protection of such a complex issue can be made only after extensive public discussion and after having been agreed upon by all (of) society' (Lesná 2008).

The Hungarian party, the SMK, decided to support her in March and maintained that support despite disagreement over opposition to the Press Code enacted by the government. An advocate for better relations between the majority Slovaks and minority Hungarian population, as well as a longtime advocate for better treatment of the Roma in Slovakia, Radičová was perceived as more sympathetic to Hungarian issues than her opponents (Lesná 2008; see also Felvidék Ma 2010).<sup>1</sup>

Analysts of the presidential debates and campaign note that Radičová's style differed significantly from that of her opponent in the second round. Thus, she was described as using a calm, logical manner of speaking. As would be the case in her other campaigns for public office, she refused to become embroiled in name calling and other tactics commonly used by her male political opponents, insisting instead, as a book she published in 2010 indicated, that she was for 'politeness, (also) in politics' (Radičová 2010a). Asked how her style as a politician differed, if at all, from that of her male colleagues, she stated: 'I was always polite. And ... I was judged to be one of the most honest politicians. So, no lying, no fighting with the enemy.' She also emphasized her efforts to always maintain a dialog with her opponents (Radičová 2016). This difference was commented upon by analysts. They also claimed that her unwillingness to aggressively refute charges made by her opponent, the then President Gasparovic, showed that she never really had the interests of the Slovak nation at heart. Her opposition to the break-up of Czechoslovakia and the perception that she represented the interests of the Hungarian minority to the detriment of Slovaks may have created doubts among

voters as to whether she had enough toughness, political experience, and the personal characteristics needed to be president (Bútorová and Gyárfášová 2010, p. 273). These charges were echoed repeatedly after she successfully made it to the second round of the presidential election (Paraméter 2009). The status and rights of the approximately 600,000 ethnic Hungarians living in Slovakia have played an important part in Slovak politics since the end of communism. Concentrated in the southern part of the country that borders Hungary, most have lived in the region for generations. This part of Slovakia was ruled by Hungary for 1000 years before it became part of Czechoslovakia after World War I. Certain Hungarian politicians, including the current prime minister, and some citizens, although forswearing border changes, still consider this region ‘Northern Hungary,’ and issues related to the situation of the Hungarian minority have frequently complicated Slovakia’s relations with Hungary as well as Slovak politics.

Although she lost in the presidential election, her bid gained her both greater visibility and greater popularity. In April 2009, Radičová resigned her parliamentary seat after it was revealed that she had cast a vote for an absent colleague, Tatiana Rosova, which was a violation of parliamentary procedure. At the time, this incident generated a great deal of press coverage, as some analysts claimed it would be the end of her political career (Tódoová 2009a, b).

Despite this episode, which might have derailed her political career, Radičová continued to be an active presence in public life. In 2010, she ran in a party election for the post of electoral leader of the party in the upcoming elections (Bútorová and Filadelfiová 2011). A somewhat unlikely candidate to head the SDKÚ’s electoral list, since she was not the party’s leader but rather its vice president, Radičová won the election to head the party’s list of candidates, despite the opposition of Mikulas Dzurinda, who kept the post of party leader when he resigned his parliamentary seat in February 2010 due to allegations that he was involved in party financing scandals. Reasons given for Radičová’s victory in the contest over the party’s electoral leader include the need to find a candidate with greater appeal to the public than former Prime Minister Dzurinda, who consistently was ranked below Radičová in trustworthiness by supporters of the SDKÚ-DS. In February 2010, for example, 59 percent of SDKÚ-DS voters trusted Radičová. In addition, counties with significant Hungarian populations clearly favored Radičová. She was perceived as a candidate who could build a unifying consensus between the SDKÚ

and the DS, the smaller party that aligned with the SDKÚ in the 2010 election ( Felvidék Ma 2010). Moreover, Radičová was perceived by many as a leader who could fully address, and even resolve the divisive nationality and ethnic issues that had continued to strain Slovakia's relations with Hungary (Felvidék Ma 2010). Although Smer, the party of the then incumbent Prime Minister Robert Fico, won the largest number of votes in the 2010 elections, the poor performance of his coalition partners meant that he could not form a government. Radičová, as the electoral leader of the party with the second largest number of votes, thus was charged with forming a government and became prime minister. In November 2011 she also became the acting Minister of Defense when the incumbent was forced to resign due to misuse of his office (Benedikovičová and Mihaliková 2011; Tódová 2011).

Sometimes termed an 'accidental' prime minister, Radičová in fact came to office with a solid background of public service in several arenas. Since her party selected her to head the party list in 2010, she was the appropriate person, as electoral leader of the largest party in the winning coalition, to assume the post of prime minister. However, despite this fact, as well as her record of public service and her popularity, analysts have frequently noted that she did not receive the full backing of her party's leaders. These included former Prime Minister Dzurinda, who served as Foreign Minister in her government. During Radičová's tenure in office, these strained relations, as well as those with Ivan Miklos, the then Minister of Finance, became open conflict (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2012; Radičová 2016).

After the election, Radičová also had only qualified support from other parties in her coalition government, including the conservative Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), the newly formed Hungarian splinter party Most-Híd (Bridge), and the Freedom and Solidarity Party (SaS). This factor became important when SaS joined the opposition in refusing to vote to support the EU's European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), in 2011. In an attempt to induce the leader of SaS to remain loyal to the coalition, Radičová linked the vote on this issue to a vote of confidence in her government. When SaS refused to support the government's position, her government fell. Ironically, the opposition agreed to support the bailout after the government fell in return for an agreement on early elections. In an open letter explaining the decision to link the two votes, Radičová, along with other SDKÚ-DS leaders, noted that '[t]he fall of the government was the price we had to pay so that the [EFSF] would pass

and so that Slovakia would not ever be on the edge of Europe. So that it would not again be a black hole somewhere on the edge of that world' (SME 2011).

Conflict with her own party and her coalition partners also hindered the effectiveness of her government in other areas. Thus, she was forced to change nominees for several appointments from her own party due to corruption scandals, and there was also conflict over several important laws, including a proposal to replace the General Prosecutor (Radičová 2016).

The ability of the government to achieve its objectives was also influenced by the time in which it was in power and its short duration. Asked about what impact being a woman had had on her performance as prime minister, Radičová noted that it was difficult to be prime minister during a period in which Slovakia was still suffering greatly from the 2008–2009 economic crisis: 'To be PM during a crisis is a real problem. You have to face widespread protests of citizens; the squares in all EU towns were full of dissatisfied and very angry citizens. It was a very complicated and a terrible time' (Radičová 2016). The short duration of her government (less than two years) also influenced her ability to achieve her objectives.

Radičová identified dealing with various aspects of the economic crisis as her main objectives. These included Slovakia's very large deficit in public finances, debt, one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe (14.5 percent), as well as low-income levels and standards of living, the poor quality of health care and education, and lack of sufficient infrastructure, particularly highways. She also identified the high level of corruption as one of the country's main problems (Radičová 2016).

Radičová highlighted the progress her government had made in its short time in office in dealing with a number of economic issues, in comparison with the performance of the center-left government of Robert Fico's Smer party that followed her. Thus, she noted that between 2010 and 2012, unemployment decreased by 0.8 percent to 13.6 percent; the percentage of citizens working abroad decreased by 0.23 percent, and the percentage of those working in Slovakia increased by nearly 1 percent (Radičová 2016). She also identified her Open Government initiative as one of her major achievements while in office. New family and employment policies, judicial reform, change in the office of the general prosecutor, and an entrepreneurship program were also successful areas (Radičová 2016).

Radičová's government's success was particularly evident in the measures it passed to reduce corruption and make government more transparent. These included steps to reduce political pressures faced by journalists



in efforts to establish a more open media (Mesežnikov et al. 2013). Most notably, to promote public transparency and accountability, Radičová mandated that all public procurement contracts be published online (The Economist 2011). According to Transparency International Slovakia, the implementation of electronic auctions in government tenders significantly increased companies' participation compared to 2009, resulting in more efficient public spending (Transparency International Slovensko 2012).<sup>2</sup>

The positive impact of these measures, which addressed a problem that large segments of the electorate identified as among the most pressing problems in the country (Bútorová and Gyárfášová 2010),<sup>3</sup> was, however, blunted by the so-called Gorilla scandal which broke in December 2011. Sparked by the leaking of a wiretap conducted by the secret service, allegedly documenting inappropriate meetings between a business group and several top-ranking politicians, including top leaders of the SDKÚ, the scandal led to protests and also contributed to the victory of the center left in the early parliamentary elections held in 2012.

The government also faced protests as the result of the changes to the labor law passed in 2011. Popular with employers because it gave them more flexibility in hiring and firing employees, the changes were very unpopular with labor unions, whose leaders claimed they reduced employment security for employees. The new version of the code did provide more protection for new mothers and pregnant women (Balogová 2011, p. 1). These measures were among those Radičová cited as her successes in advocating for women (Radičová 2016).

## THE GENDER FACTOR

Women's political representation in Slovakia after the end of communism shows trends common to other post-communist countries. These include an immediate decline in the number of women elected to parliament, followed by a gradual increase (see Table 12.1). The decrease in women's parliamentary representation in the first post-communist election does not in fact reflect a real decrease in their political power, as the legislatures under communism were symbolic, rather than effective decision-making bodies and because most of the women who occupied seats in these bodies differed markedly from their male counterparts in that they were far more likely to be agricultural and manual workers than their male colleagues, who tended to have careers centered in the communist party's apparatus. Thus, they were chosen because they filled two categories that it was important to have represented in the legislatures, not because they

**Table 12.1** Proportion of women in the Slovak National Parliament, 1990–2016

<i>Year</i>	1990	1992	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2012	2016
Percentage (of 150 total seats)	29.0	12.0	14.7	12.7	17.3 <sup>a</sup>	20.0 <sup>a</sup>	15.3	18.7	20.0

Sources: Bitušiková (2005), Table 1 and Fig. 1, for 1990 data; IPU (2016); and Gyárfášová et al. (2008, p. 251) for 1992 data

<sup>a</sup>14.7 percent and 16 percent women were directly elected in 2002 and in 2006, respectively

had any real power or even possibility of influence (Wolchik 1981). Thus, rather than seeing women's roles in the exercise of power as having markedly declined after the end of communism, we should view their limited representation in parliament as the continued marginalization of women from such exercise (Wolchik 1998).

Significantly, between 1998 and 2006, women comprised a much smaller proportion of candidates than men (from 16.9 percent in 1998, to 22.7 percent in 2006) (Gyárfášová et al. 2008, p. 250). Women have tended to comprise a somewhat higher proportion of deputies from the center-left parties and least from the Christian Democratic Movement. They are seldom placed at the top of party lists (Gyárfášová et al. 2008, pp. 251–252).

Particularly in the early years after the end of communism, Slovakia, as well as other post-communist European countries, also experienced a backlash against the whole idea of gender equality. Based on the view that communism had mistakenly overemphasized women's economic roles, many political leaders and analysts called for more emphasis on women's roles as mothers and homemakers and argued that women should have a choice as to whether they entered paid employment outside the home (Bútorová 1996; Wolchik 1998; Wolchik 2009; Bútorová 2008, 2009).<sup>4</sup>

This attitude was also reflected in public and academic discourse about women's issues. Although there were a number of academics who examined women's roles and attempted to establish women's studies programs, they were largely unsuccessful in the early years, in contrast to the success of groups such as the Gender Studies Center in Prague. The main exception to this trend was the feminist magazine ASPEKT, which, based in Bratislava, translated Western feminist writings and also published the works of Czech and Slovak women activists and analysts. Focus on gender issues by other, more mainstream researchers, followed, in part as the result of funding by

the EU and other international sources (Bútorová et al. 1999; Filadelfiová et al. 1999). Radičová herself also devoted a good deal of attention to gender issues as a scholar and an NGO activist (Filadelfiová et al. 2000).

But, although outside support for focus on gender equality, particularly from the EU, succeeded in opening up greater discussion of gender issues at the elite level, among ordinary citizens, the view that politics was dirty business, not quite appropriate for women, prevailed during the first decade after the end of communism (Bútorová 1996). This was evident even among women who were active in the events that brought about the end of communism in 1989. When interviewed in 2010, they saw participation in civil society and VPN as something different (Mad'arová 2011, pp. 43–44). However, by the early 2000s, a majority of women and almost a majority of men surveyed in a study by Zora Bútorová and Ol'ga Gyárfášová of the Institute for Public Affairs were critical of the lack of gender equality in politics and wanted greater participation by women in decision-making (Bútorová and Gyárfášová 2009).

Public opinion studies conducted in 2006 indicate that men and women differ to some extent in their evaluations of public issues. Women were somewhat more likely to identify issues such as unemployment, health care, and education as the most important public issues, compared to men, who favored corruption, regional economic and social disparities, abuse of power, issues related to the judiciary and law, economic performance, protection of employees' rights, and the quality of democracy. At the same time, the authors of the study note that women's and men's opinions were 'rather heterogeneous' and varied significantly by age and education (Gyárfášová et al. 2008, pp. 240–41). Women also tended to have somewhat greater trust in government at all levels, although these differences were not large (Gyárfášová et al. 2008, p. 243). Women were also more likely than men to trust NGOs, a difference that increased slightly after 2000, although differences were small, as were differences in the evaluations of men and women in the usefulness of NGOs in various areas. The main exception in the latter rankings concerned views of the usefulness of NGOs in 'dealing with the problems of women and furthering their rights.' In this area, 86 percent of women surveyed, compared to 69 percent of men, agreed that NGOs were useful (Gyárfášová et al. 2008, p. 244). The authors also found that women were in general somewhat less active than men in the 12 forms of political participation examined, although these differences, again, were generally small. Women's participation varied somewhat by age, as women aged over 45 were more likely to be active than those below that age. Interestingly, the

authors found that differences between men and women were greater among those with university education than those with primary education (Gyárfášová et al. 2008, pp. 248–49), a factor that has important implications for women’s representation in positions of leadership, as it is women in the first group who would be more likely to be successful candidates for public office.

Asked whether she had made special appeals to women in her campaigns, Radičová indicated that she had not because, as a sociologist, she knew that women did not disproportionately support women candidates. ‘The public opinion of some part of the population is a problem,’ she noted. ‘Some traditionally-oriented citizens do not like to see women being so active. There are real stereotypes in the evaluation of women in high level positions. What is accepted behavior in men is not [viewed as] acceptable for women. There are many prejudices.’ (Radičová 2016).

In this context, Radičová, as many women who have succeeded in entering parliament in the post-communist world (Rueschemeyer and Wolchik 2009), did not emphasize her role as a woman in her campaigns or public statements. Nor did she focus on the issue of gender inequality. However, as Bútorová and Gyárfášová note,

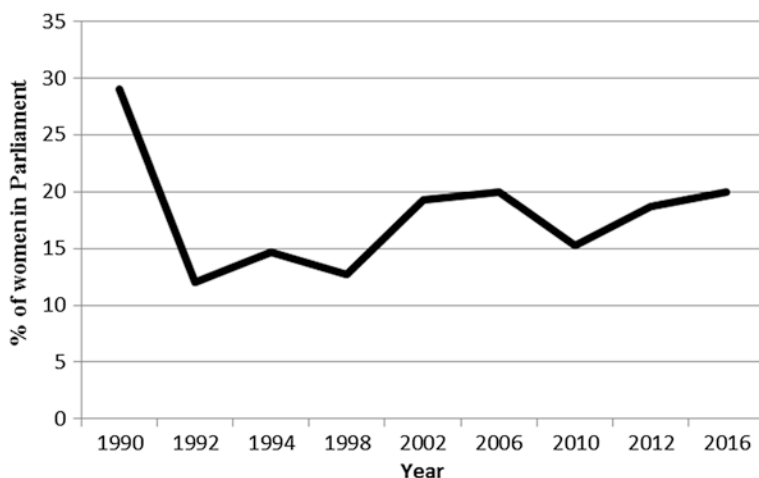
the gender aspects of her candidacy were implicitly present. Although Radičová did not talk much about the lower chances of women for professional and political careers, she herself represented a model of a successful woman, who had already succeeded in breaking through the glass ceiling in two different public areas—in the academic world as the first professor of sociology in Slovakia and in the political world as the minister of labor, social affairs and the family (2010, p. 272).

Voting studies conducted after the 2009 elections indicate that there was also another gender dimension to these elections, as more women voted than ever before. In the first round of the elections, women in all parties were more likely than men to vote for Radičová; in the second round, women in all but one party were more likely than men to have done so. Bútorová and Gyárfášová also attribute the greater turnout for these elections to the fact that women had a viable woman candidate they could vote for (2010, p. 274).

Bútorová and Gyárfášová note, based on public opinion surveys, that part of the electorate viewed Radičová in the terms her opponent emphasized in his campaign rhetoric as overly concerned with the rights of minorities to the detriment of Slovaks, and insufficiently committed to

Slovakia due to her opposition to the break-up of the Czechoslovak state in 1993. Another part of those surveyed viewed her as a chief proponent of women's right to abortion and an advocate for equality between men and women. Still, a dominant group among those who supported her electorally saw her as a modern, liberal alternative who had greater compassion for the socially disadvantaged. 'It is interesting,' the authors note, 'that her electorate place emphasis on her contribution to equal opportunities for women and men—despite the fact that the candidate herself in her electoral campaign did not put this theme in a central place' (Bútorová and Gyárfášová 2010, p. 275).

Despite her hope that her selection as prime minister would unleash a 'tsunami' of women in politics (Radičová 2010b), her service as prime minister has not been followed up by a great increase in the number of women elected to parliament in Slovakia (Table 12.1 and Fig. 12.1). Nor has it led to a marked improvement in the overall status of women in Slovakia. The European Institute for Gender Equality Index scores, based on 2010 data, indicate that Slovakia had an overall score of 40.9 (where 100 equals full equality, 1 equals total inequality), compared to the EU average of 54. Slovakia ranked below the EU average in all six domains scored, including



**Fig. 12.1** Proportion of women in the Slovak National Parliament, 1990–2016  
*Sources:* Bitušíková (2005), Table 1 and Fig. 1, for 1990 data; IPU (2016); and Gyárfášová et al. (2008, p. 251) for 1992 data

‘power.’ This discrepancy was especially marked in the latter dimension in looking at political power where Slovakia received a score of 31.8 compared to the EU average of 49.9 (EIGE 2013, pp. 132–36). In 2005, Slovakia’s Gender Equality Index was 41.5, still under the EU average of that year, which was 51.3, and in 2010, Slovakia’s Gender Equality Index fell to 39.8, still remaining under the EU average of 52.4 for 2010 (Humbert et al. 2015).

When asked whether it was an advantage or disadvantage to be a woman in politics, Radičová stated that, when one is prime minister during a crisis, ‘it doesn’t matter if you are a man or a woman.’ At the same time, she felt that many of the policies she worked on as a member of parliament, minister, and prime minister had a special impact on women. These included changes in the labor law noted above that allowed a better work-life balance, employment policy, changes in family policy, women’s rights, maternity and childcare policies, and support of NGOs (Radičová 2016).

Regarding her relations with women in other political parties while a deputy, Radičová, like women parliamentarians in other studies (Ruschemeyer and Wolchik 2009), noted that party affiliations, not gender, were the critical affiliations (Radičová 2016). She also noted that she received no support from women’s groups, but rather was very frequently criticized by them (Radičová 2016).

### POSTSCRIPT: LIFE AFTER POLITICS

After the fall of her government in 2011, Radičová remained in office as a caretaker prime minister until early parliamentary elections were held in March 2012 (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2012). When Robert Fico, leader of the Smer movement, became prime minister again in April 2012, Radičová returned to her life as a researcher and academic. Asked if she would consider a return to politics, she replied, ‘Never’ (Radičová 2016).

Instead, she remains active as a public figure on the international scene. Thus, she frequently lectures at the Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts and at universities in Europe and around the world. She is a member of the Club of Madrid, a nonprofit organization of democratic former heads of state and prime ministers that seeks to promote democracy, as well as the CWWP, the Council of Women World Leaders. She also serves as a Special Advisor to the EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers, and Gender Equality.

## CONCLUSIONS

As the preceding pages illustrate, Iveta Radičová was an exceptional leader in Slovak politics in many ways. In addition to being the first and so far only female prime minister of Slovakia, she also ran for the office of president of the republic and served as both an appointed member of the government and an elected deputy. From her activities as an independent activist and academic prior to the fall of communism, she moved on to nonpartisan public activities and later entered the sphere of partisan politics.

Her career as a politician was influenced by both cultural and institutional factors, including prevailing views of women's 'proper' roles and relationship to politics, and women's status more generally. Her activities as prime minister were also influenced to a large extent by the times in which she served, as Slovakia had yet to emerge from the economic crisis of 2008–2009, and by the short time she was in office.

In the area of institutions, two of the most important factors were the fact that Slovakia has a parliamentary system based on proportional representation (with closed party lists and the possibility of preference votes), as well as by the multiparty nature of Slovak politics. The electoral system makes political parties extremely important for candidates to be nominated and gives party leaders the main role in determining the order of candidates on the list. However, as Radičová's electoral results in 2006 illustrate, obtaining a large number of preference votes (in her case the largest gained by her party) can translate into power within a political party, even if as in her case the top party leader is opposed. Radičová is also exceptional in that she came close to winning office in a winner-takes-all race, that is, her 2009 race to be president of Slovakia. Finally, Slovakia's party system is fluid and, with the exception of the results of the 2012 election that followed the fall of her government, governments are composed of coalitions which also influenced both her policies and her time in office. Thus, her government fell when one of her coalition partners failed to support a government measure that she linked to a vote of confidence in her government because she felt it was crucial for Europe as a whole and for Slovakia's place in Europe. In Radičová's case, the impact of the factors that led to the fall of her government, when a key ally would not vote for the EFSE, was compounded by the lack of support she received from some of the most important leaders in her own party, including her Minister of Finance. She nonetheless was able to accomplish a number of very

significant goals, including, perhaps most notably, an aggressive campaign to counteract corruption and increase government transparency.

Exceptional as Radičová's career and circumstances were, however, in many ways they resemble the patterns found in the careers of other women leaders. Thus, although she herself was an expert who had done extensive research on gender inequality, as well as on other social issues, and although she identified numerous policies adopted under her leadership as especially beneficial to women, she did not focus on her gender or present herself as a 'woman's candidate' or specifically raise issues related to gender inequality in her campaign. As a parliamentary deputy and prime minister, party affiliation was a more important determinant of her relations with other deputies than gender. And women's groups, rather than supporting her as prime minister, were more often critical.

Radičová's activities were also influenced by views of gender roles that prevailed at the time and by women's continued marginalization from high politics. As both director of S.P.A.C.E. and an academic who focused on social issues, as well as during her tenure as an expert minister, she did research on and undertook measures that benefitted women. She also served as the Deputy Chairwoman of the Parliamentary Committee on Social Affairs and Housing as a member of parliament. Although her style has been described by herself and by others as different in important ways from that of many of her male colleagues, in that she was less combative and insisted that politeness and honesty were critical in politics, she did not openly raise issues related to gender inequality in her campaigns or explicitly in her activities as prime minister.

However, she was clearly aware of the prejudices and barriers women political leaders face. When queried as to whether she took action on issues of particular importance to women as a deputy, minister, or prime minister, she answered, 'Oh, yes, all the time,' and cited a number of areas in which she had actively pursued policies of benefit to women, including 'changes in the Labor Code for balance of work and family life, crucial changes in family policy, employment policy, rights for women, maternity, child care, ... support of NGOs, and many others' (Radičová 2016).

As these patterns indicate, a woman as top leader may be more important, from a gender perspective, as a symbol that women can achieve such positions than practically, at least in the short run. Radičová's service as prime minister was not followed by a marked increase in women's representation in parliament or on candidate lists. Since there have only been two elections



since she was prime minister, however, it may be too soon to draw any meaningful conclusions about the long-term impact of her role. It may be that the path-breaking example she set will yet inspire more women to enter the political realm. At the very least, she has illustrated that a woman can indeed succeed in obtaining a top leadership position in her country.

## NOTES

1. All Hungarian source materials have been translated by Allison Beresford.
2. See also Mesežnikov et al. (2012) for evaluations of the government's actions during this period.
3. See Sicakova-Beblava and Sipos for a discussion of previous government attempts to deal with this issue.
4. See also Filadelfiová (2002, pp. 16–81) for additional information about trends in women's political participation and government policies toward women in Slovakia.

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# Challenges of a Post-Communist Presidency: Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga and the Leadership of Latvia

*Daina S. Eglitis and Laura Ardava*

## INTRODUCTION

In 1999, eight years after Latvia regained its independence from the Soviet Union following half a century of occupation, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga (popularly known as VVF, the moniker we use here) became the first woman president of Latvia, as well as the first in the post-communist region. She was elected by Latvia's unicameral legislature, the *Saeima*, to a four-year term and reelected in 2003. In a country deeply skeptical about politics and politicians, she enjoyed record-high-approval ratings throughout her presidency. No less significant, she exercised considerable political power in spite of the institutional limitations of the presidency in Latvia's parliamentary system and cultural obstacles imposed by persisting patriarchal norms and practices.

VVF's presidency is widely recalled in Latvia as substantive and successful. Domestically, she fostered public dialogue on Latvian and European

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identity, social issues, and fundamental societal values. In foreign policy, she was instrumental in securing membership in the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for Latvia. As president, VVF did not embrace an explicitly feminist agenda: faced with economic challenges in a newly capitalist country, societal challenges in a country experiencing ethnic tensions between the majority Latvian and minority Russian populations, and security challenges posed by a revanchist Russian neighbor, she focused on building consensus for progress around those issues. At the same time, Latvia's pursuit of membership in the EU, shepherded by VVF, helped bring about new policies and initiatives on gender equality. In her post-presidency, VVF has been an active advocate for both her country and women's issues globally.

We begin this chapter with a biographical background and description of the political process that brought VVF to the presidency in 1999. We then consider gender culture in Latvia, highlighting conservative and progressive aspects of the country's twentieth-century history and discussing VVF's place in this shifting political and cultural environment. Next, we look at the institutional characteristics of the presidency and their influence on VVF's power. We follow with a review of key political achievements of her presidency. We end with a consideration of VVF's presidency as a gendered legacy and her enduring influence in Latvia's political and cultural life.

## BACKGROUND

Vaira Viķe-Freiberga was born in 1937 in Riga, Latvia. To escape the devastation of World War II and Soviet occupation of the country, her family fled Latvia in 1945. From 1945 to 1949, she and her family lived in a displaced persons camp near Lübeck, Germany, with hundreds of other World War II refugees from East and Central Europe. Her family moved to Morocco in 1949 when her stepfather got a job in that country. In Morocco, she attended a French school for five years before the family made another dramatic move, this time to Canada. There she met and married her husband, Imants Freibergs, a Latvian exile, and became the mother of two children.

In Canada, VVF completed several college degrees. After finishing her doctoral studies at McGill University, she taught psychology and linguistics at the University of Montreal. She was prominent outside of her institution as well, serving on the board of the Canadian Psychological Association, and assuming the presidency of the Canadian Social Sciences

Federation and vice presidency of the Canadian Science Council, the latter of which was an appointment by the prime minister's office. She was active in the exile Latvian community, assuming leadership in several organizations, including the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, an academic organization. In 1998, VVF was elected Professor Emerita at the University of Montreal.

After retiring from the university, VVF returned to Latvia to take leadership of the newly created Latvian Institute, a state-established entity that promotes Latvia's recognition and image abroad. The following year, she ascended to an even loftier position as the president of Latvia. When VVF was elected president in 1999, she was 61 years old; she had spent only eight of those years in Latvia, seven of them in early childhood.

Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Householder (this volume) suggest that post-transition political systems may hold some advantages for women, even where patriarchal norms inform societal attitudes and practices. Post-transition systems open doors for 'outsiders,' including women, when political experience comes to be perceived as a liability. Gender in this instance may be less salient than the new executive's embodiment of values and experiences perceived to challenge the rejected political order. Indeed, shortly before the election, prominent Latvian intellectuals published an open letter urging VVF's consideration as a candidate. They wrote that, '[w]e believe that ... the President must be non-partisan. That person must be highly educated, must have personally experienced Western democracy and must be a respected citizen and patriot.' They urged that VVF be nominated 'for the sake of a free, democratic and humane Latvia in the twenty-first century' (cited in Cimdiņa 2003, pp. 139–140).

Factions in the *Saeima* had nominated five candidates, but after several rounds of voting, none of the candidates had garnered a majority. VVF was not a formal candidate and had not been considered in the first rounds of voting. She emerged as a compromise candidate, offered by representatives from three of the *Saeima*'s five nominating parties. On the day of her nomination, she stood with six other candidates for election, winning in the seventh round of voting with a bare majority of 53 percent of the votes. Just short of midnight, VVF was asked to address the nation on television as the newly elected president. Here she encountered the first questions about her public image: VVF insisted on taking her handbag to the podium, which evoked a 'bit of a fuss' because 'presidents don't usually march around with handbags on their arms' (Cimdiņa 2003, p. 142). VVF, however, refused to part from her bag, which contained a folk talisman for good luck.

VVF would need luck, but she would also need patience, skill, and resilience in her presidency. Among the first questions she confronted was, ‘who is she?’ She had lived in Latvia for just a year in her adulthood, spent most of her life in Canada, and interacted largely in Latvian intellectual and cultural circles. She was little known outside these exclusive circles. One of her biographers quotes a German newspaper’s characterization of the situation: ‘If someone had asked the day before yesterday who is Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, even in Latvia that person would have received the response, “No idea”’ (cited in Cimdiņa 2003, pp. 146–147). On the one hand, her position as an outsider was a potential obstacle in a political system that functioned largely on the basis of insider networks and knowledge. On the other hand, VVF was presented with a powerful opportunity to craft an image of leadership and progress on a clean political slate in a county that was seeking to build a modern democratic state and establish its place in European political, economic, and military structures. One of VVF’s ardent supporters, Sanda Kalniete, who was active in the anti-Soviet opposition of the 1980s and was later to become Latvia’s Foreign Minister, wrote that, ‘[w]ith the election of Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga who never had any link to the communist party, our post-Soviet era had ended’ (Kalniete 2000). Indeed, at this moment in history, gender was less important than the perception of the candidate as untainted by the Soviet experience of communism, repression, and corruption.

### CULTURE: PATRIARCHY, PATRIOTISM, AND PROGRESS

VVF’s election to the Latvian presidency in 1999 represents the continuation of a twentieth century in Latvia that was characterized by both progressive and conservative trends around women’s involvement in political and economic life. Women in independent interwar Latvia (1918–1940) gained suffrage in 1918, well before many of their European sisters. The country’s 1922 Constitution enshrined equal political rights for men and women. Even under Soviet rule (1940–1941, 1944–1991),<sup>1</sup> women were granted equal citizenship rights and held a substantial proportion of positions in (nondemocratic) legislative bodies.

At the same time, VVF’s presidency represents a dramatic development in women’s achievement of leadership status. In interwar Latvia, women participated in political life as voters, but few held elected office: The 1920 elections saw six seats on the Riga City Council go to women and the national election of 1931 brought a single woman legislator to parliament.



The civil rights of women were more limited than their political rights because their husbands held, by law, decisive decision-making authority in the family.

In the post-war Soviet period, the ‘woman question’ was declared by Joseph Stalin to have been ‘solved,’ a position that assumed that communism’s ideological commitment had been successfully translated into societal, political, and economic practices. However, while women had ample educational opportunities and entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, they disproportionately occupied low status and poorly remunerated positions, continued to be responsible for household tasks, and spent hours in lines waiting for goods and groceries in the deficit-riven Soviet economy, a phenomenon often referred to as the ‘triple burden’ (Johnson and Novitskaya 2016, p. 216). Also, while women occupied about a third of legislative positions in the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, this body had very limited power in an authoritarian state and women were still excluded from the highest echelons of the Soviet state and Communist Party.

The first decade of post-communism (1991–2001) formed the context for VVF’s election. In this period, public discourse highlighted the imperative of ‘normalization’ after a half century of Soviet rule, which was widely perceived as having deformed and degraded national norms, institutions, and traditions. ‘Normalization’ also encompassed gender roles and practices. *The National Report on the Situation of Women*, produced by several women’s organizations in Latvia in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Women in 1995, lamented the ‘destruction of individuality brought on by socialism generally [that] led to the asexualization of behavioral norms, disdain for women and traditionally “feminine” work, [and] ignorance of female characteristics.’ The report included a chapter that noted, a ‘good portion of a woman’s life is occupied by bearing and raising children, caring for the home and family. For men, raising children and caring for children do not require leaving work. This division of labor is natural and acceptable to all’ (cited in Eglitis 2002, pp. 202–203). Significantly, this discourse characterized a common position taken by the state and civil society. While there was no active movement to restrict women’s opportunities in an environment where women’s mean educational attainment was higher than men’s and most women of working age were economically active, there was a broad normative consensus about the imperative to ‘normalize’ traditional gender roles and relations perceived to have been disrupted by the Soviet order. Significantly, while this

offered women the opportunity to fully embrace domestic roles, the manifestation of this ‘normalization’ was largely discursive and most women continued to work for pay.

VVF was Latvia’s first woman president and its first (and to this point, only) president who had lived most of her life outside of Latvia. While her ‘outsider’ status offered her some benefits, her social and political acceptability as a leader was not given. In addition to the fact that she had been elected in closed balloting in the legislature just hours after her nomination and was little known in Latvia, her gender was a novelty in a country with little history of women’s political leadership. Askolds Rodins, a commentator in Latvia’s newspaper of record at the time, *Diena*, wrote,

For Latvia, where the President of the state’s chair had been so far been occupied by men only, a woman is definitely a refreshing change, however, it can hardly be considered a revolutionary shift of the lawmakers’ consciousness, it is more likely to highlight the natural order of development of society. ... Her first steps were much more closely observed than they would be, if a man well known in political circles and socially were elected President. (Rodins 1999, p. 2)

The shift of gender roles in the new presidential couple was a subject of interest in the press: The Russian-language daily *Chas* mused about the new duties of her husband, who had come to Latvia from Canada with VVF: ‘Interesting, how her husband will be called? The first gentleman? Or maybe prince-consort as the queen’s husband?’ (Zdanova 1999, pp. 1–3). In the same article the new president was called ‘mother of the nation,’ shifting her back into a more traditional feminine category that she would, arguably, even embrace during her tenure.

From the outset, VVF took strong moral positions on issues, including women’s and children’s issues. In the early months of her presidency, she spoke at a conference on ‘Women and Democracy at the Dawn of the New Millennium’ in Reykjavik, Iceland, addressing the risks to women and the young in less advanced European economies. She pointed out that there was a demand in Western Europe for commercial sex services and pornography which, ‘when taken together with radical differences in standards of living, has created a dangerous and debasing international trade in human flesh’ (cited in Cimdiņa 2003, p. 205). The key subject of the conference was the strengthening of the role of women and promotion of democracy in Russia and the Baltic countries of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. At the conference, VVF argued that a national economy can

flourish and be competitive only when women are in a position to make significant contributions. In democratic countries, she posited, women must get support so they can fully participate in public life.

The President admitted that there was still a lot to do in Latvia for women to become ‘full-fledged players in the decision-making process in the field of Latvian education, economy and politics’ (cited in Daukšte 1999, p. 3). She suggested that,

At the time of the Soviet occupation gender equality was a declared a fundamental right, however, it was not applied practically. What Baltic women actually acquired was the ‘privilege’ of doing hard labor in the Gulag or filling the hardest and the most badly paid positions. Women were strikingly invisible in the first rows of the communist political and economic elite. ... With the revival of democracy in Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania women regained the rights to be heard, however, their social status did not improve as fast as it was hoped for. The transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy and open trade created acute circumstances for several sectors of society. Women, children and the elderly are among those who were most affected by these non-violent, but still dramatic social changes ... the destruction of totalitarian regime was followed by a collapse of certain social security systems. (Viķe-Freiberga 1999, p. 2)

VVF’s evolution into a popular and productive president in a country where there was deep skepticism about politics and politicians was at least in part the product of a carefully cultivated image of moral force, independence, and leadership. Her projected image, however, was not without paradoxes. On the one hand, she was often compared to ‘the Iron Lady,’ Margaret Thatcher, in will and appearance: among her boldest political decisions was the acceptance of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invitation to European heads of state to mark the 60th anniversary of the Soviet Army’s victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. As Russia has never acknowledged the illegality of its occupation of Latvia and its Baltic neighbors, VVF’s decision to join the Russian celebration of May 9, 1945, was controversial. She stood behind her decision, noting that while recognizing the victory and the sacrifices of the Soviet Army, she was also ‘commemorating, with great sadness, the renewed Soviet occupation of my country, and the immense human suffering that ensued as a result’ (cited in Dixon 2006, p. 140).

On the other hand, it was not uncommon for VVF to address the nation in a nurturing manner that pushed the boundaries of traditional

masculinist politics, entreating the population to greater morality, self-confidence, and sacrifice for the common good. In a 2005 address marking the May 4, 1990, declaration of independence by Latvia from the USSR, she proclaimed that,

I am deeply proud of my nation as I can see what it can achieve, and I see that this little nation is capable of beautiful and great achievements. I see the talent, I see the ardor in your hearts and in your minds, and in your eyes.

Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid of yourself, don't be afraid of the people around you, don't be afraid of the outside world! Be brave, be proud of yourselves, be Latvians, love your fellow citizens and your country! (cited in Dixon 2006, pp. 141–142)

The intimate style of address VVF used on some occasions arguably contributed to a quasi-maternal image and a relationship of familiarity not characteristic of politicians and the public in Latvia: many in Latvia refer to her, as noted, as VVF or even by her first name, Vaira.

In many respects, VVF was a consensus-builder, seeking to ensure progress and stability in a period of dramatic change and an environment of shifting political power: during VVF's presidency, the country had six different prime ministers from four different parties, all of whom represented coalition governments. Arguably, the post-communist environment in Latvia and throughout the region was inimical to what might be construed as a gendered, or certainly a feminist, agenda. While VVF brought women's issues to the fore early in her presidency, the latter years of her tenure saw a retreat from overt attention to gender and women's issues: priority would be given to the pursuit of membership in European institutions and domestic issues like ensuring the status of Latvian language and culture while maintaining stability in majority–minority relations. At the same time, her position as a powerful public figure would continue to offer a role model for a society with shifting gender roles and relations. We discuss the practices and challenges of governance as a post-transition executive in greater detail below.

## INSTITUTIONS: POWERS AND LIMITS OF THE LATVIAN PRESIDENCY

The president of Latvia acts as the head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces. Among the powers of the presidency are the signing of treaties, the representation of Latvia abroad, and the appointment of ambassadors. The president nominates the prime minister, may veto legislation,

and has the power to call for a referendum on legislation. At the same time, Latvia is a parliamentary democracy and the formal powers of the executive are circumscribed. Primary policy-making power in Latvia is vested in the *Saeima*, the 100-member parliament elected by voters through a list system that requires parties to reach or pass a 5 percent threshold to be seated. The president may introduce legislative initiatives, but influences policy largely through his or her public statements or actions.

As president, VVF often expressed a commitment to social justice and addressing the consequences of socioeconomic stratification that grew dramatically with the country's rapid shift to capitalism. While she was publicly disapproving of the small but ostentatious class of *nouveaux riches*, noting that '[in] that social milieu, people are essentially concerned with pleasure-seeking in their personal lives, with self-indulgence, without any interest or desire to contribute to the welfare of society,' she recognized the limits of her office in shaping pragmatic policies to support the economically marginalized and reduce inequality. She lamented that, 'I would like things to be better, to satisfy everybody. ... I have absolutely no power where money is concerned. There are people like this old lady who has just written to me, who don't understand this and it really makes them cross as they are sure that if I don't help them, it is because I don't want to' (cited in Dixon 2006, pp. 105–106).

In spite of legislative limits, the presidency carries a powerful bully pulpit, and VVF took advantage of her public position and persona to build a national and international agenda. In a 2012 interview, she reflected on the institution of the presidency in Latvia, suggesting that,

the instruments of power available to the president are seriously limited in comparison with those of the legislature and bureaucracy, however, his or her moral responsibilities—those are limitless. The president as head of state and symbol of statehood fulfills representational functions. ... That is not just passive reaction, like a marionette in a theater, or even a show like an actor on a stage, but active cooperation that fosters the protection of Latvia's statehood and the support of [its] national interests. (Latvijas Universitāte 2012)

In this role, the question of accountability is compelling because Latvia's president is elected by the parliament rather than in open elections. The president is elected by a secret ballot and he or she must secure an absolute majority to claim the office. There is no long-term electioneering and none of Latvia's five elected presidents, including VVF, have earned a significant proportion of the votes in their first election. As noted, VVF

was elected in June 1999 with only 53 parliamentary votes. In 2003, she was elected to a second term with 88 out of 96 votes. No president before or since has achieved such a sizable majority. While the lack of balloting transparency renders it difficult to identify motives of deputies, one might speculate that her enduring popularity, as well as her determined efforts to press forward on policies that she valued and that found broad public favor, contributed to her success in earning the legislators' support.

Below, we discuss more fully VVF's active participation in policy making and the political context in which her priorities were established. While limited in her formal powers, she used her position effectively to influence Latvia's politics domestically and globally.

### POLICY: VVF'S POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

VVF was not a member of a political party at the time of her election or during her tenure as president. Most of Latvia's residents are unaffiliated with political parties, which have largely been unstable and shifting in the post-communist period; parties are perceived as essentially elite entities organized around narrow sets of leaders and interests. Two of Latvia's five presidents have been independent at the time of election. VVF came into office unassociated with particular party interests or programs and unsupported by a party structure or established political allies. She defined her leadership role in terms that were not circumscribed by a party program. VVF painted her goals for the nation in broad strokes, declaring that, '[w]e must have economic growth, we must have social justice and we must have legal and moral order. Latvia must become a partner in the negotiations for accession to the European Union, Latvia must become a member of NATO. ... I call on every citizen and resident of Latvia to remember that our destinies are inextricably linked. ... Let us live so that we respect one another, understand one another, enrich one another's lives' (cited in Dixon 2006, p. 92).

The president's political goals were perhaps most fully realized in the area of foreign policy. VVF played an important role in facilitating Latvia's accession to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. One of VVF's biographers writes that, 'Even though Latvia's official course toward the West had been a part of the country's policy since the restoration of independence, Latvia's prospects in terms of integration into the EU and NATO were still rather uncertain when

Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga took over the presidency in 1999' (Cimdiņa 2003, p. 213). One key obstacle was Western concern that Baltic accession, particularly to NATO, would exacerbate tensions with Russia by bringing the countries of the alliance up to Russia's western border. NATO membership was a broadly coveted goal and was widely seen as a fundamental part of assuring Latvia's security, particularly in light of continuing tensions with Russia. In an address at Oxford University, VVF noted that, 'We felt we needed the NATO Alliance for our security and with our history in the [Twentieth] century, I think we cannot be blamed for seeing security as a very high priority' (cited in Dixon 2006, p. 133). In April 2004, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia became full members of NATO.

EU accession was less contentious, but not without obstacles. It was the position of the so-called Eurosceptics that accession would be economically and politically unfavorable for average citizens. The national referendum on EU accession was held on September 20, 2003. Prior to the referendum, VVF toured Latvia, seeking support for accession. In a speech in the city of Jelgava, she conceded that, 'joining the European Union is not the same thing as entering Paradise. This union of countries is no gold mine, manna does not fall from heaven, and roast piglets do not soar through the air with forks stuck in their sides. People work, people struggle.' Alas, she suggested, 'they do so in a much more orderly and favourable environment than the one which prevails in most of the world's other countries' (Dixon 2006, p. 215). While the outcome of the referendum was close, a majority favored membership and on May 1, 2004, Latvia, together with nine other countries, became a full member of the EU.

Interestingly, accession to the EU created an important platform for the expansion of gender equality initiatives despite their marginality on the country's political agenda. Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Householder (this volume) point out that a woman-friendly agenda may be facilitated in post-transition democracies by a country's pursuit of democratic legitimacy, an image of 'modernity,' and accession to international bodies. Integration into the European Union entailed the adoption of EU *acquis communautaire* on gender equality, including initiatives on equal pay, equal employment access and conditions, and harmonization of work and family life (European Commission 2014). The concept of 'gender mainstreaming,' fundamental to EU integration, was accepted by the government in 2001 and, in 2003, the Latvian Ministry of Welfare created a Gender Equality Division to oversee implementation.

VVF's political successes were bolstered by her popularity among ethnic Latvians. Baltic Barometer data (Rose 2002) show that in 2001, two years into her first term, the president enjoyed a degree of trust unparalleled by any national institution. In response to the question, 'To what extent do you trust each of these institutions to look after your interests?', 78 percent of ethnic Latvian respondents indicated that they trusted the president. By contrast, just 6 percent trusted political parties, 7 percent indicated trust in the parliament, and 39 percent trusted the prime minister. Even figures for the police (26 percent), newspapers (46 percent), and the church (53 percent) were lower.

The level of trust in the president, however, was not shared across Latvia's ethnic groups. Latvia is home to a large Russian-speaking minority, a fact that has sometimes produced tensions between Latvians, who have dominated politics in the post-communist period, and Russians, who were more politically and socially powerful in the Soviet period, but continue to hold significant economic power. At the time of her election, it was noted that VVF was not conversant in Russian, the mother tongue of over a third of Latvia's inhabitants. Commentator Leonid Fedoseev (1999) wrote: 'Of course, her understanding of non-Latvian problems in Latvia is poor because of the fact that she does not speak Russian and catches only one-sided information from the Latvian press' (Fedoseev 1999, p. 1). While Latvians and Russians living in Latvia shared low levels of trust in political parties (9 percent for Russians) and parliament (10 percent for Russians), as well as a moderate degree of trust in the prime minister (29 percent for Russians), the gap in terms of trust in the president is striking. In comparison to the 78 percent of Latvian respondents indicating trust in the president 'to look after [their] interests,' 36 percent of ethnic Russians said they trusted the president. While the level was higher than for other political institutions, the ethnic difference was considerable.

The imperative of protecting and furthering Latvian language and identity after half a century in the Russophone-oriented Soviet Union was widely embraced by Latvians. VVF had presented herself from the time of her election as well prepared to address majority–minority issues, suggesting that as a Latvian living outside the country for most of her life—and even as a resident of French-speaking Quebec in majority-English Canada—she had personal experience being a minority (Kuzmina 1999, pp. 2–3). Contentious ethnic issues, particularly relations between Latvians and Russians and the relative status of the Latvian and Russian languages in society and education, bookended her tenure in office.



Among the duties of the Latvian presidency is to sign into law bills passed by the *Saeima*. The first bill to land on VVF's post-election desk was a new law on the status of Latvian, the official language of the state. The bill was the object of sharp debate and was challenged by minority groups, as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which suggested that the bill was discriminatory because it favored (and sometimes required) Latvian language use in official business and some public spaces. Just a week after assuming office, VVF took the politically risky decision to send the bill back for revision (Cimdiņa 2003, pp. 154–155). Near the end of her presidency, she was confronted with another dramatic challenge in majority–minority relations in a proposed school reform. While the plan for reform in language instruction, which foresaw the gradual increase of Latvian language use in minority schools, had been adopted by the parliament in 1998, the practical implementation of the law was delayed until 2004. The law foresaw the use of Latvian in 60 percent of school subjects in Russian-language schools. Opponents of the policy characterized it as a virtual liquidation of Russian schools, evoking strong reactions on both sides of the debate.

The president lauded Russian-language school directors who supported reform. In April 2004, she noted that, '[s]everal directors of Russian schools who are realizing the transition to the Latvian language successfully have received not only condemnation, but also physical intimidation. Russian-language mass media also speaks about this issue in one-sided manner and does not promote the integration of society' (cited in Krūmiņa 2004, p. 4). VVF's position was that in balancing majority and minority rights in language, the public primacy of Latvian, which was not commonly spoken or learned by minority residents in the Soviet period, was to take precedence; while there could be no restrictions on personal interactions or cultural use of minority languages, state educational institutions would be charged with promoting the state language. In the years after her presidency, school reform has been fully implemented: a 2014 broadcast of the news program *DeFacto* suggested that the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as most schools, are satisfied with the results. Minority and Latvian school students now write the standardized state exam in Latvian. Average results are similar, with minority students lagging behind only in writing. Notably as well, today about 90 percent of non-Latvians in the country speak Latvian. By comparison, in 2000 only half were proficient in Latvian (Dragileva 2014).

VVF's most tangible achievements in politics were not, domestically or internationally, linked to a gender agenda. At the same time, as we suggest in the conclusion, she leaves a political and cultural legacy as a role model for women and she has used her post-presidency status to pursue expanded rights and protections for women and girls. We end this section with VVF's own reflection on her presidency, prepared especially for this chapter:

During the eight years of my presidency, Latvia's first and last priority was to adopt EU legislation, to enter negotiations with the EU commission and very actively take care of Latvia's inclusion in NATO. In this context, key requirements for Latvia related to human rights, strengthening defense forces, and necessary reforms in the justice system. There were no special complaints against Latvia in the context of women's rights—just the opposite: there were compliments for its achievements. There were exceptions in spheres related to the spread of prostitution and human trafficking that are common problems for all relatively poor post-communist countries. My core belief that I have always had is that a human is first of all a human, individual personality and only then a woman or a man. I reject discrimination as harmful to society no matter on what aspects it is based. In Latvia, I personally focused on a wide range of different problems. Regularly and actively I participated in anti-cancer campaigns, I supported centers for abused mothers and children and shelters for minors and single mothers, I took an interest in educational opportunities for women prisoners and their children, I interacted with deputies of Parliament, as well as female teachers and librarians, which are mostly feminized professions. (Viķe-Freiberga 2016)

### THE POST-PRESIDENTIAL LEGACY OF VVF

VVF has continued to be an object of interest in Latvia after her presidency. A 2008 exhibition was dedicated to the President's style: the show 'Global and Latvian' was exhibited in the Hall of Columns of the museum of Riga History and Navigation. The show featured theme of enduring interest: How VVF was 'transformed literally overnight from a timid foreign Latvian lady in a multi-colored checkered blouse into a bright world politics celebrity in superb suits' (Dravniece 2015). The exhibit offered,

the opportunity to see with one's own eyes the things so much talked, written about and discussed—the President of the State's magnificent inauguration attire, the elegant suits she wore performing daily functions, ...

exquisite hats she had on when meeting other states' crowned heads: for instance, the Queen of England. ... The exhibition is the expression of style of one bright personality—Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga—and at the same time a way for the museum staff to show dedication and respect to the woman who with her elegant and stylish image was able to honorably deliver the image of Latvia to the world. (cited in Bormane 2008, p. 28)

VVF's style evolution evoked enormous interest and became a hallmark of her presidency. The significance of this is challenging to assess. Does it point to a valuing of style over substance or is VVF's distinctive image embraced as part of her power on the domestic and international stage? An examination of VVF's political achievements, as well as her continued leadership on the global stage after her presidency, suggests that while her image is entwined with her style—which began with the critique of her possession of a handbag as she addressed the nation as a new president and ended with a broad consensus on her classic elegance—her enduring legacies are substantive and powerful. We point to three key aspects of VVF's gendered legacy.

First, women's representation in political life has grown in the period since VVF's election. While public opinion surveys continue to show attitudes about gender roles in the family that are conservative—for instance, a GfK survey taken in 2013 ( $N = 510$ ) found that 73 percent of respondents agreed that, 'a man must assume the greater responsibility for financial care of the family'—most respondents did *not* agree with the statement that 'men are better politicians' (GfK 2013). In 1999, when VVF was elected, women held 17 seats in parliament. During her presidency, the figure grew to 22 and, in 2014, women comprised 25 percent of the *Saeima* and 31 percent of the national cabinet, and Laimdota Straujuma became Latvia's first woman Prime Minister.

Second, the powers of the presidency set limits on VVF's agenda, as did the absence of a party structure for a politically independent president. She exercised considerable agency and achieved many of her goals, but her success was dependent on public support. While this was present for goals like accession to the EU and NATO, it did not materialize for an overt women's rights agenda. At the same time, VVF remains a political icon with a record of substance. Arguably, the capacity and capability of women to achieve high political office is today taken for granted: In what might be considered a marker of progress, Straujuma's rise to the position of prime minister in 2014 was greeted in the press with scant attention to her gender.

Third, in her post-presidency, VVF has used her prominence on the global stage to draw attention to issues that affect women and girls. In addition to her work with institutions like the United Nations, where she was named Special Envoy to the Secretary General on United Nations Reform and was a candidate for Secretary General in 2006, she has lent her voice to initiatives like Why We Care, a global organization that seeks to advance reproductive health and rights as part of sustainable global development. VVF sits on the Global Leaders Council of the organization alongside public and political luminaries like Ted Turner and former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. Her statement on the organization's webpage links her personal history and pursuit of women's rights:

Less than a month after leaving Latvia, my baby sister died in a German transit camp. A year later, in Lübeck, my mother gave birth to my brother at a Red Cross Hospital. ... In the bed next to her was an eighteen year-old Latvian refugee girl who had just given birth. ... At the end of the war, her family had become caught in the wild rampages of the victorious Red Army in East Germany. Jadwiga had been brutally gang-raped by a band of Russian soldiers. She endured the enforced pregnancy that followed, but when her newborn was brought to her in the hospital, she turned her face to the wall and refused to breastfeed that child of gang-rape or even to look at it. ... I saw all of this as a seven and eight year old: how vulnerable and unprotected were women and children, both during a war and in a post-war period. I had thought such things would come to an end when peace finally came to Europe. But they continue across the world to this day. (United Nations Foundation's Universal Access Project [n.d.](#))

As a member of the Club of Madrid, a group of democratic former presidents and prime ministers from around the globe committed to using their experience and knowledge to address global problems, VVF has embraced women's issues, including women's property rights and the need to criminalize sexual violence where laws fail to protect women and girls. While the post-communist political and social context in Latvia was inimical to the pursuit of an overtly gendered agenda, VVF has translated her post-presidency position into a platform that merges her status as a prominent global figure and a woman into a powerful formula for change.

## NOTE

1. The Soviet occupation was interrupted during World War II by Germany's occupation of the country, which lasted from 1941 to 1944.

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## Postscript

*Verónica Montecinos*

The study of elected women executives, a nonexistent political form until 1960, is in need of imaginative theorizing and empirical research. This book does just that. The preceding chapters show commonalities across countries: women leaders faced unique challenges because of their gender. Gender as a ‘master status’ often obscured other aspects of these leaders’ identity and they faced overt sexism, as well as the subtler tendency to see only the woman and not the politician. Since the late twentieth century, the number of women executives has risen as gender egalitarianism spread, women’s political involvement increased, and institutional arrangements changed with democratization. Post-transition democracies vary greatly and pose significant challenges to women leaders: women presidents and prime ministers have to maneuver the legacies of authoritarian rule and the demands of struggling democracies while breaking the association of maleness and executive power (Raicheva-Stover and Ibroscheva 2016).

Women’s increasing access to political power is part of a broader, likely irreversible trend. Signs of a new flexibility in recruitment patterns for executive positions already exist in corporations, multilateral agencies,

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universities and a variety of areas that never before had women leaders. Women's access to professional roles, however, illustrates that new obstacles are erected to preserve older privileges and hierarchies. Yet, with more women occupying powerful and visible roles in the public arena, women can no longer be excluded without injuring people's sense of justice.

### ANALYTICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

The Quota Project notes that '[i]ncreasing women's participation and representation in political life requires efforts to address political, economic, social, cultural and religious constraints within both formal and informal public and private spheres.'<sup>1</sup> This acknowledges that, as a practical and analytical project, the gendering of democratic politics is highly complex. Our volume confirms that the interplay of gender and power is multidimensional and variable across time and space. The comparative study of gendered politics obliges detailed, comprehensive readings of femininities and masculinities, which not only vary across countries but also intersect with class and ethnicity. The tendency to transfer interpretative tools from well-researched to less-studied countries is likely to miss the specificities of history and culture, the subtleties of local practices, including speech, emotionality, and the less visible and less measurable manifestations of political loyalty or collective memory. To capture these intricacies, more interdisciplinary work is needed.

The specialized languages of academia, prone to disciplinary insularity, often disregard insights from competing paradigms and intellectual traditions. Many rules discourage borrowing and learning from neighboring camps, and even sub-disciplines have trouble talking to each other. In academic investigations of women in politics, political science is significantly overrepresented. This is a field where, until recently, the denial of women's full political citizenship hardly raised any eyebrows. In general, democracy scholars continue to leave gender issues to gender specialists. The understanding of women's political representation in various institutional domains and national milieus has advanced, but future inquiries would benefit from the formulation of a wider scope of questions, greater use of mixed methodologies, and the integration of diverse styles of theoretical argumentation. The advantages of interdisciplinarity may have been overstated (Jacobs 2013), but the collaboration of more diverse groups of scholars needs to be encouraged, especially in the study of executive feminization, where, because of newness and complexity, many facets remain understudied.



Comparative perspectives on women's political participation and representation have so far centered primarily on parliamentary research where existing data facilitate large-scale analyses. Reliance on quantitative analyses to the exclusion of other research methods is common to scholarly enterprises in which professional worth and prestige depend on universal applicability and what is taken for scientific sophistication. Thus, for example, modeling in economics that discounts contextual variability has been widely criticized for producing faulty diagnoses and policy recommendations. Yet, the economists' claim to rigorous thinking and measurement has no lack of emulators among others in the social sciences, despite typically ignoring the historical and social embeddedness of individual actors. As feminist scholars have emphasized, women are particularly constrained by gender codes, which are not easily recognizable or quantifiable.

Transformations in the study of the executive that moved the field from an exaggerated descriptiveness to greater formalism and hypotheses testing have been celebrated (Moe 2009). Methodological individualism has pitfalls, in economics and elsewhere. Recently, however, studies have explored gender in game theory, for women are assumed to be less competitive and more averse to risk than men (Brañas-Garza 2008; Eckel and Grossman 2008). Some scholars have advocated reducing the distance between rational choice theory (known for its positivist bent) and politically engaged feminist inquiry. The resulting synthesis, a feminist-rational choice approach, would arguably bring benefits to the understanding of institutions and decision-making, including gender-informed policies (Driscoll and Krook 2012).

These explorations point to an important facet of the executive: it constitutes a case of small-number politics. Although numbers establish a crucial difference with legislative politics, the literature on women executives has been partly oriented by knowledge of women's descriptive representation gathered in legislative studies. There are limitations in this comparison. For example, the argument that the pool of eligible women candidates influences access to elected office is less valid, particularly in presidential systems. Several women leaders emerged as last-minute solutions on the bases of their irreplaceable characteristics. Whether perceived as acquiescent puppets, attractive cosmopolitans or charismatic figures, they make good compromise candidates, able to prevail over established party leaders who are typically men. The distinctiveness of these women's personae is what counts, not the availability of other potential women candidates. The same is true for women heirs of extraordinary leaders or

popular predecessors. Until the gender demography of political organizations becomes more balanced, the recruitment of women into high office may, in many circumstances, rely primarily on personal uniqueness and the political value derived from their small numbers. Of course, many more women are now running but usually they get a small percentage of the vote, unless it is a two-women race.

Small numbers call for the type of analytical lenses offered by micro-sociological or social psychological paradigms rather than the large-scale surveys common in studies of legislative recruitment and behavior. Personal archives, political autobiographies and memoirs may be valuable sources of information to understand how gender is performed in the executive office. These sources could provide clues as to how women leaders (or their advisers) perceive and manage the influence of gender in the executive selection process and in their ability to govern. Also, those sources may reveal how gender affects the women's decision to accept such demanding posts, even if doing so conflicts with their personal plans or ambitions.<sup>2</sup>

Another indication of the prominence of small-number politics can be found in summit meetings where executive leaders interact directly with each other, especially in those involving bilateral or trilateral high-level negotiations. As pioneer sociologist Georg Simmel argued in his essay 'Quantitative Aspects of the Group,' dyads and triads differ because with the addition of a participant the survival of the group no longer depends on reciprocity (Simmel 1950). The third participant permits other strategies and results, such as the formation of shifting coalitions. It is enough to remember how the alliance that Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt built during the war years changed when both met at Yalta with Stalin. Churchill found himself in a frustrating, diminished position as the other two began shaping the course of the Cold War. The gender dimension of Simmel's formal analysis, and its methodological implications, would become apparent in studies of comparable summit conferences that include one or more women leaders.<sup>3</sup>

The numbers question in executive politics emerges also in relation with the leader's spouse, traditionally the only woman playing a relatively visible role in that terrain. Several contemporary women executives have been spouses (mostly widows) and daughters who served as first ladies to their powerful fathers, such as Park Geun-hye and the almost victorious Keiko Fujimori in Peru. Historically, mothers, spouses and concubines were not prevented from informally exerting political influence even after

the bureaucratization of state authority. Their unofficial importance as surrogates, counsels, envoys, propagandists and decoys of the men in charge was not always exercised behind the scenes. The better-known twentieth century examples, like Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Eleanor Roosevelt or Eva Perón (as well as the lesser studied significance of Clementine Churchill, Margot Honecker and Elena Ceaușescu), are indicative of the complexity of executive politics, still mostly unexplored from a comparative angle.<sup>4</sup> Apart from Hillary Clinton, a growing number of political spouses are entering presidential contests,<sup>5</sup> unsuccessfully (Mojisola Adegunla-Obasanjo in Nigeria, Xiomara Castro de Zelaya in Honduras, Sandra Torres Casanova in Guatemala) and successfully (Cristina Fernández in Argentina served simultaneously as first lady and member of the Senate). Former presidential candidate Marie-Ségolène Royal was appointed to the cabinet during the second term of François Hollande, the father of her children, and she has since occasionally performed ceremonial duties typical of first ladies, although the couple is no longer together.

The study of executive power has recently embraced comparative approaches, although without addressing gender issues in post-transition contexts beyond a single country or a region. Some studies have focused on women leaders (Genovese and Steckenrider 2013; Jalalzai 2013, 2016; Skard 2014, Martin and Borelli 2016). Bauer and Tremblay (2011) include both women executives and cabinet members. Others have covered only men leaders in transition politics, although not focusing on the normative importance of masculinity (Bitar and Lowenthal 2015). The comparative study of political masculinity is receiving more attention, but few analyses have dealt with executive office.<sup>6</sup> The much-needed comparativism in executive gendering may profit from existing scholarship on varieties of executives,<sup>7</sup> even when gender is not included as a relevant dimension. The plethora of presidential studies focused on the USA suggests many avenues for comparative analysis. The rhetorical dimension of executive leadership (Tulis 1988; Campbell and Jamieson 2008), for example, may reveal how the pitch and volume of the leader's voice crucially influences how audiences receive the words, for public speaking—the authority to speak—is still defined in masculine terms. As James Martin states: 'Political rhetoric works in and through representations of gender' (2014, p. 160). Because national leaders inhabit a sphere controlled by powerful symbols, they present themselves in cautiously fabricated backdrops and invoke hegemonic political constructs of masculinities and femininities. High office imposes strict constraints on the gendered body, a

principal element in the esthetics of power (Entwistle and Wilson 2001). For women, sartorial politics is a decisive accompaniment of rhetorical abilities (Roces and Edwards 2007). Western styles in men's formal attire limit shape and color, leaving only hands and neck exposed; even minor deviations may raise doubts regarding their masculinity. Knowing that their clothes would speak, women campaign adheres to feminine sartorial codes to soften displays of firmness and competence. As incoming presidents, Bachelet, Rouseff and Fernández delivered speeches dressed in white (so did Johnson Sirleaf and other women leaders), a color that in many places is ritually linked to new beginnings and positive feelings.<sup>8</sup> In the scripted ceremonial inauguration, women's performance is subjected to what could be called double accountability: assessed for displaying aptitudes as women and also capabilities as heads of state. On that conspicuous platform, the dramatization of gender involves high risks: expressing femininity could mount resistance to their authority (West and Zimmerman 1987).<sup>9</sup> More damaging, they could fail to conform to stereotypical features of males (competence) and females (empathy), as reportedly is the case for women politicians (Schneider and Bos 2014). To legitimate their leadership, women must redefine the stigmatized attributes of political subordination through distinctive rhetorical strategies: they make their womanhood transformative. In a different context, this process has been called 'stigma conversion' (Humphreys 1972).

In sum, the field is open for the elaboration of a wide variety of theoretical and methodological innovations. This chapter concludes by suggesting some promising subjects for further study.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Executive power has always rested on a gendered foundation needful of cultural appeals and institutional reinforcements. We examined this general proposition by looking at the particularities of post-transition contexts, analyzing eight national cases in four world regions. In attempting to clarify some of the issues involved, the essays in this volume reveal how vast the ground remains for future comparative, historical and interdisciplinary scholarship.

As suggested earlier, particularly in Chaps. 2, 3 and 4, the institutional configurations of political systems may enhance or impede women's executive representation as well as women leaders' impact on the quality of democracy. There is a need for more systematic comparisons between gendered

executives in established and post-transition democracies. Learning about the differential barriers posed by formal political institutions and informal political practices may offer significant practical lessons for women candidates and their supporters. The institutional role played by organized women in executive regendering was repeatedly mentioned in the previous chapters, but the complexities of the issue (should gender trump ideology?) are insufficiently studied. Chapter 5 discussed men's ubiquitous advantages in accessing the highest office and keeping it in the hands of people like them. The homophily principle exerts a powerful influence in social life (McPherson et al. 2001), is typical of high-level political networks, and has important implications for democracy. It deserves greater scrutiny in light of the uneven timing and global geography of executive feminization. The literature on 'worlding men' (Jones 2006, p. xiv) and other works in the men's studies field (Kimmel and Messner 2013) demonstrate that shifting conceptions of masculinity vary within and among societies. More research is needed to assess the likelihood of future changes in politicians' resistance to women's political prominence and the significance of patriarchal privilege at the executive level. Likewise, comparative studies of media coverage of executive masculinity could provide a valuable complement to analyses of sexist media framing of women politicians.<sup>10</sup> Investigating the relationship between the gendered executive and masculinized state institutions, like the top echelons of the bureaucracy or the military could elucidate barriers to gender representation and effective governance (Schroeder 2015). Also, future comparative projects could explore how women's national leadership relates to women's executive roles at various levels of government (Rose 2013). The reelection of women leaders is not uncommon (Chaps. 6, 7, 9, 11 and 14). Because only a few countries have elected more than one woman to executive office (Chaps. 2 and 3), many questions cannot yet be addressed; for example, how are gender policies undertaken under successive women leaders? How backlash against one woman affects the governing prospects of another? Finally, it seems important to examine how gender influences the way executive leaders confront their foreign policy responsibilities, how women leaders relate to each other on the global stage and how external actors (media, publics, international agencies) react to women executives. Some of our chapters suggest a paradoxical gap in the level of prestige at home and abroad (e.g., Chap. 11). Other puzzles will no doubt emerge in the coming years as more women are elected to govern and executive power is gradually transformed into a more gender-neutral political space.

## NOTES

1. The website Global Database of Quotas for Women is a collaborative effort of International IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union and Stockholm University. Available from: <http://www.quotaproject.org/aboutProject.cfm> [Accessed 20 June 2016].
2. Autobiographies of women leaders include Benazir Bhutto's *Daughter of Destiny* (1989), Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's *This Child Will Be Great: Memoir of a Remarkable Life* (2009) and Gro Harlem Brundtland's *Madam Prime Minister: A Life in Power and Politics* (2002).
3. At Yalta, women accompanied each of the three leaders. Sarah Churchill and FDR's daughter Anna joined their fathers. Stalin took along his mistress, Valentina Istomina.
4. A rare cross-national comparison of the political campaigns of two first ladies with presidential aspirations is Kalyango and Winfield (2009).
5. List of women presidential candidates from 2000, according to <http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/candidates2000.htm> [Accessed 19 June 2016].
6. For a cultural analysis, see Starck and Sauer (2014). Also relevant are Hooper (2001) and Conroy (2015). Messerschmidt (2016) compares global hegemonic masculinities in the speeches of presidents G.W. Bush and B. Obama. See also Katz 2016.
7. Comparative studies would benefit from lessons some economists have taken to heart—the world and their models are not always in sync. Stopping shortly in a place, or gazing only at executive actors' recent performances, may do little justice to those realities, and the gathered data, once plugged into interpretative frameworks, may yield less than claimed.
8. Marketing is known to employ 'color psychology,' not a fully established discipline.
9. Tellingly, the professional credentials of Bachelet, Rousseff and Fernández (in medicine, economics and law) were questioned.
10. See, <http://www.lakeresearch.com/news/NameItChangeIt/NameItChangeIt.pres.pdf> [Accessed 20 June 2016].

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