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WOMEN IN POLITICS AND POLICY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum (CPPF) was launched in October 2000 to help the United Nations strengthen its understanding of conflicts, including their causes, dynamics, and possible solutions. CPPF supports UN policymaking and operations by providing UN decision makers with rapid access to leading scholars, experts, and practitioners outside the UN system through informal consultations, off-the-record briefings, and commissioned research.

ABOUT THE SERIES

One of the central tools for achieving gender parity is to increase women's presence in spaces of political representation. Even when greater representation is achieved, however, a central question remains: will having more women in decision-making positions result in more gender-sensitive policies? The CPPF Working Papers on Women in Politics series looks at how four different regions—the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa—have encouraged women's political participation, and it evaluates the success of these efforts, examining the correlation between wider participation and changes in the political agenda, and noting specific policy measures that have been implemented and that may be needed to overcome barriers to gender parity.

WOMEN IN POLITICS AND POLICY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Women's participation in politics in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has grown steadily in the last fifteen years.¹ Their share of parliamentary seats rose from an average of 13 percent in 2000 to 18 percent in 2010 and 20 percent in 2014.² Yet there are important differences across countries and subregions. Countries with statutory gender quotas tend to have more women in power. The influence of quotas outweighs the effects of economic development and other socioeconomic indicators, allowing countries with high levels of poverty and inequality to offer women a "fast track" to political office.

By 2014, sixteen of twenty Latin American countries had adopted gender quota laws for national legislatures. Virtually all also applied quotas at lower levels of government, such as for election to municipal and provincial assemblies. In fewer, quotas had diffused to executive and judicial branches, as well as civil society organizations. Although the effects of quotas are still uneven, and problems with compliance remain, their pervasiveness reflects the consolidation of a political consensus throughout Latin America that governments should take positive action to promote women's presence in politics. Less of a consensus exists in the Caribbean, where only one of twelve countries has introduced a quota law for the national legislature.

* Erratum: In table 3, Ecuador's 50 percent quota applies to the departmental and municipal levels, not just the municipal level.

Many women in elected office have formed women's parliamentary caucuses to raise awareness of and present proposals to advance women's rights. Their growing presence in power has generated more attention to bills and produced changes in some policies related to women and their rights. As a result of the mobilization of women in civil society and in parliament, most countries have adopted measures to prevent and punish violence against women, though problems of impunity persist (Htun, O'Brien, and Weldon 2014). LAC nations have passed laws criminalizing sex discrimination and guaranteeing equal access to employment and education; most have adopted gender equality plans, either through the legislature or within the executive branch. In addition, many have introduced antipoverty programs known as conditional cash transfers, which improve women's economic well-being.

Still, policy change on one issue remains elusive: abortion. Latin America—with the exception of Uruguay and Mexico City—presides over restrictive abortion laws that are out of sync with most citizens' preferences and global trends. In some countries, laws on abortion have grown even stricter in recent decades. Those in the Caribbean are slightly more permissive than in Latin America, but only one country—Guyana—permits elective abortion.

This discussion addresses the political participation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. We examine trends in the LAC region as a whole, as well as those in three subregions: South America, Central America, and the Anglophone Caribbean. Central America includes Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. The Anglophone Caribbean includes Belize, the English-speaking countries of mainland South America (Guyana and Suriname), and the English-speaking islands that are either fully independent (Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago) or part of the British Commonwealth (Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines).

Countries in South America and Central America are presidential democracies; they hold separate elections for the president and the legislature. Countries in the Anglophone Caribbean are parliamentary democracies, meaning the prime minister is chosen from the party holding the most seats in the parliament. Some nations, however, elect a parliament *and* a president, and the president then appoints the prime minister.³ The structure of the legislative branch—a unicameral or bicameral assembly—is mixed throughout the LAC region. Representatives in the upper houses in

the Anglophone Caribbean are appointed, however, rather than elected, and women's presence is considerably greater than in lower houses.

WOMEN IN THE EXECUTIVE

A significant number of LAC countries have elected women as heads of state. Of the thirty-three in the region, nine have elected female presidents or prime ministers to serve full terms, an achievement unparalleled elsewhere in the developing world.

In 2014, the large countries in the Southern Cone of South America all had women presidents: Dilma Rousseff of Brazil (2011–15), Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina (2007–15), and Michelle Bachelet of Chile (for her second term; Bachelet previously served as president from 2006 to 2010). Bachelet's opponent in Chile's 2013 presidential race was also a woman: Evelyn Matthei of the right-wing Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI) party. Another woman, Laura Chinchilla, serves as president of Costa Rica (2010–14). Women have also been viable contenders for the presidency in recent races in Peru and Mexico.

Latin America's first female presidents—both widows of prominent political figures—emerged in Central America: Violeta Chamorro in Nicaragua (1990–94) and Mireya Moscoso in Panama (1999–2004). Bolivia, Haiti, and Ecuador have had women presidents who served terms of less than one year.

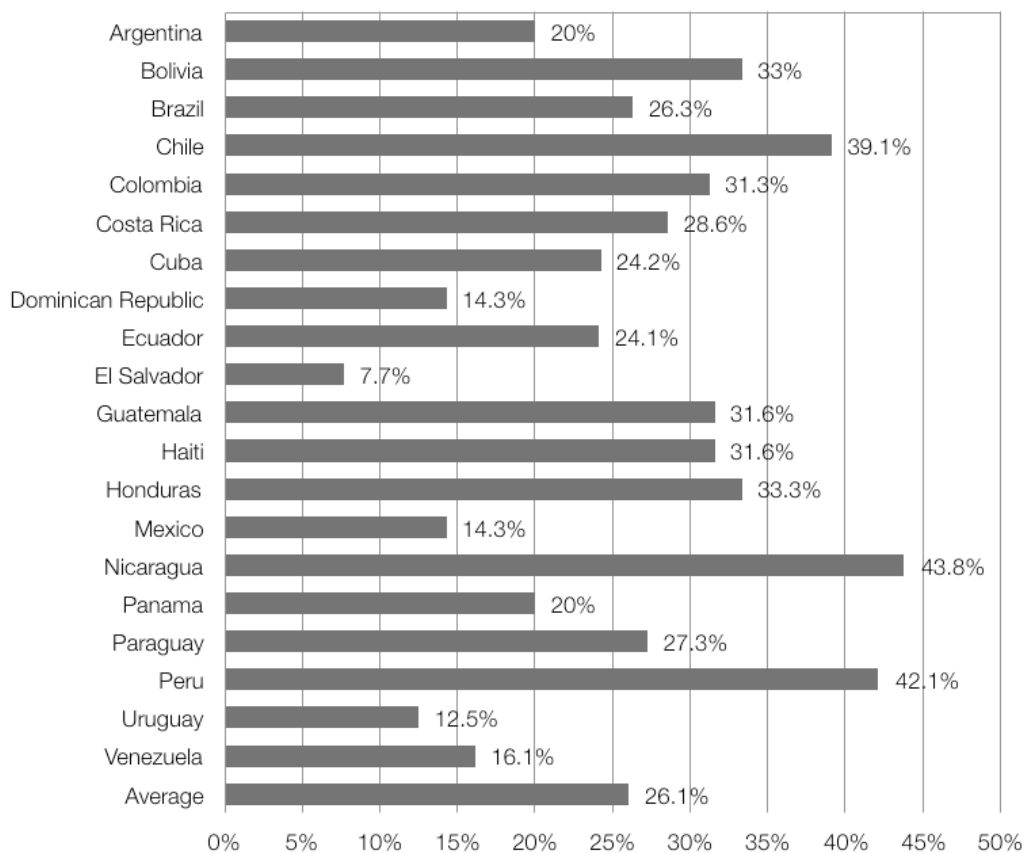
In the Anglophone Caribbean, three women have served as prime minister: Maria Eugenia Charles of Dominica (1980–95), Portia Simpson-Miller of Jamaica (2006–7), and Kamla Persad-Bissessar of Trinidad and Tobago (beginning in 2010). In addition, Janet Jagan served as president of Guyana (1997–99).

Women's share of cabinet positions has likewise grown. In 2000, women comprised 10 percent of ministers in South America and 16 percent in Mexico and Central America; in 2010, these figures had increased to 22 percent and 21 percent, respectively.⁴ By 2014, women held an average of 26 percent of cabinet posts in Latin America.

This average obscures significant variation, as shown in figure 1. Women's share of cabinet posts ranges from a low of 8 percent in El Salvador to more

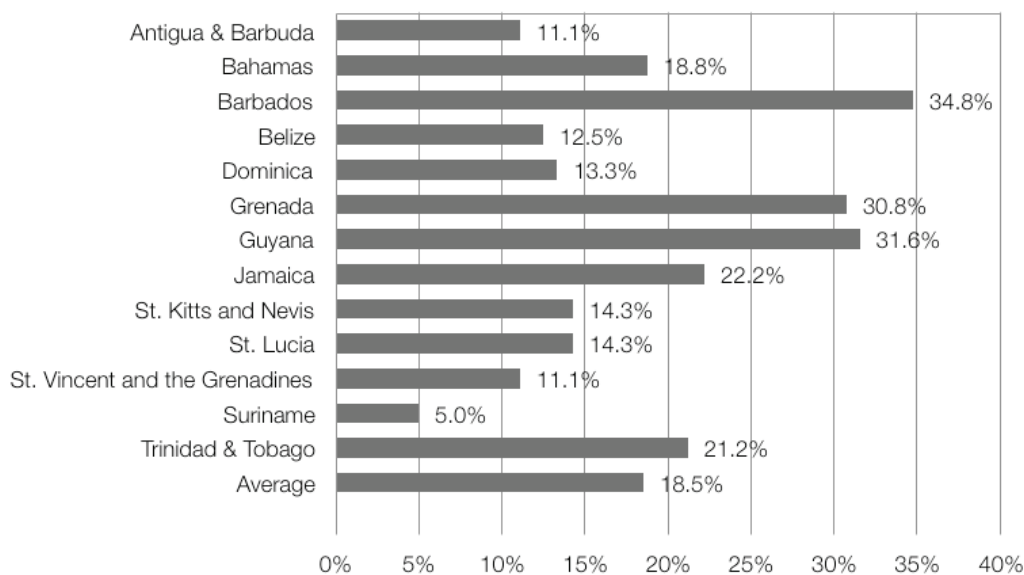
than 40 percent in Nicaragua and Peru. It is not always women presidents who have nominated the most women to their cabinets, however; although women make up some 40 percent of Michele Bachelet's cabinet, they comprise only 20 percent of Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner's cabinet (lower than the regional average).

FIGURE 1. Cabinet Seats Held by Women in Latin America, 2014



Source: Individual country websites and the Database of World Leaders, published by the US Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/>, all accessed January 2014.

In the Anglophone Caribbean, women hold fewer cabinet positions—an average of 19 percent of ministerial portfolios. As in Latin America, variation is significant, ranging from a low of 5 percent in Suriname to a high of 35 percent in Barbados, as seen in figure 2.

FIGURE 2. Cabinet Seats Held by Women in the Anglophone Caribbean, 2014

Source: Individual country websites and the Database of World Leaders, published by the US Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/>, all accessed January 2014.

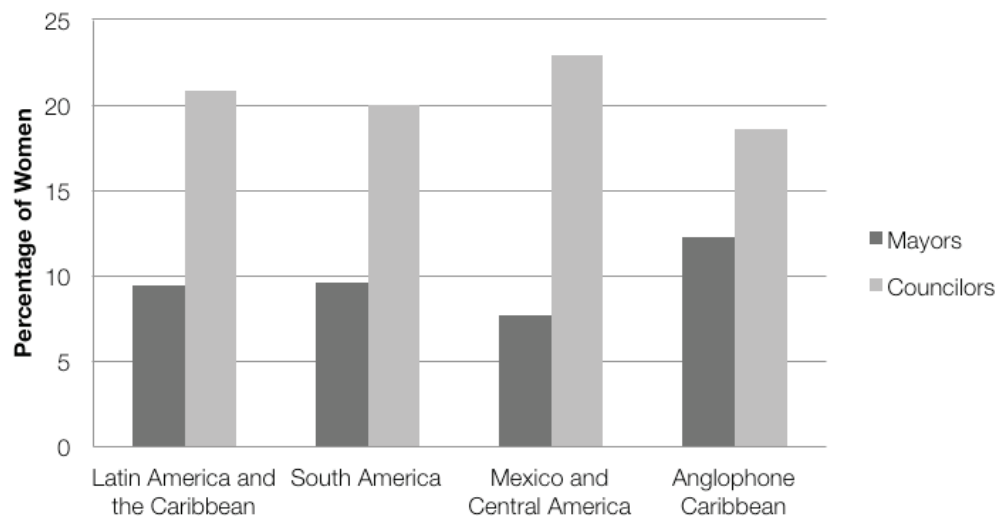
In the past, analysts have observed, women ministers tended to cluster in the “soft” portfolios, such as social services, education, tourism, culture, and housing (Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson 2005). This trend largely continues, though in Latin America women have begun to make greater inroads into the “hard” domains of commerce, industry, foreign affairs, work, development, and finance. In 2014, ministers of defense were women in three of the twenty Latin American countries. Women held the portfolios of justice in five, foreign affairs in three, and finance in two. In the Anglophone Caribbean, by contrast, only one of the twelve countries had a woman in a justice or foreign affairs role, though two had women with finance portfolios.

At the subnational level, women have faced barriers to gaining access to executive authority. Few have been elected as governors in LAC’s federal countries. Argentina elected its first female governors in 2007, and Mexico and Brazil have elected only a handful since the mid-1980s. In the newly autonomous subnational governments of Bolivia, no women were elected as leaders in the 2010 elections (PNUD 2013).

Across the LAC region in 2010, women held an average of 9 percent of mayoral posts, as shown in figure 3.⁵ The percentages do show some improvement

over 1990 and 2000, when women made up some 5 percent of mayors (Htun 2001), but their share is far lower than their share of legislative positions.

FIGURE 3. Women’s Participation in Local Government in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010



Source: The United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), as published on the Gender Equality Observatory website, accessed December 2010.

Why are women scarce in executive office? The posts of governor and mayor are highly valuable to politicians and parties because they control local budgets (political “pork”), and trends toward decentralization have tended to enhance the powers associated with local office. As a result, competition for these positions is fierce. Franceschet and Piscopo (2013b) found that women in the Argentine national Congress, who otherwise bear an impressive array of political credentials, are significantly less likely than male legislators to have occupied “high pork” offices, such as governor and mayor.

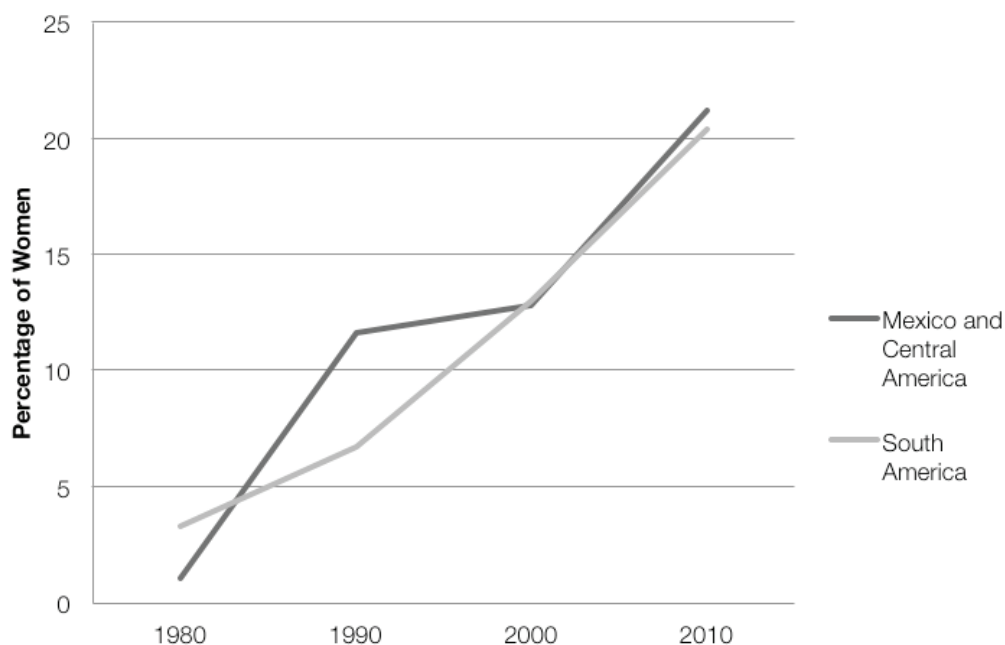
The mode of electing people to executive office also tends to be disadvantageous to women. In elections held according to majority- or plurality-rule principles, and where only one position is being contested, parties tend to field the strongest candidates, who tend to be men. Women generally do better in races held according to proportional representation, and when many seats are to be filled per district (high district magnitude). This system—more typical in legislative elections—gives parties an incentive to “balance the ticket” with a diverse slate of candidates (Matland 2002; Norris 2004). Consequently, women are far more likely to gain access to legislative than

executive office at the local level. Figure 3 shows that women comprised 21 percent of city councilors in LAC in 2010, roughly the same as their share in national parliaments that year.

WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN NATIONAL LEGISLATURES

Women's presence in national office has grown significantly in recent decades in the LAC region, as shown in figure 4. In Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Latin America, women's share of seats in single or lower houses of parliament climbed steadily between 1980 and 2014, from an average of 9 percent in 1990, to 13 percent in 2000, to 21 percent in 2010, and to 25 percent in 2014. For the region as a whole, women occupied 23 percent of seats in upper chambers and 20 percent in lower or unicameral chambers in 2014.

Figure 4. Women's Representation in the Single or Lower Houses of Parliament in Latin America.



Note : Only the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries are included.

Source: Htun (2001) for 1980, 1990, and 2000; the Inter-Parliamentary Union for 2010, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>, accessed December 2010.

Overall, women's presence in single or lower houses of national parliaments is greater in Latin America than in the Anglophone Caribbean, as shown in table 1 and figure 5. The subregional averages are nearly 26 percent for Mexico and Central America and 20 percent for South America, compared to 16 percent for the Anglophone Caribbean.

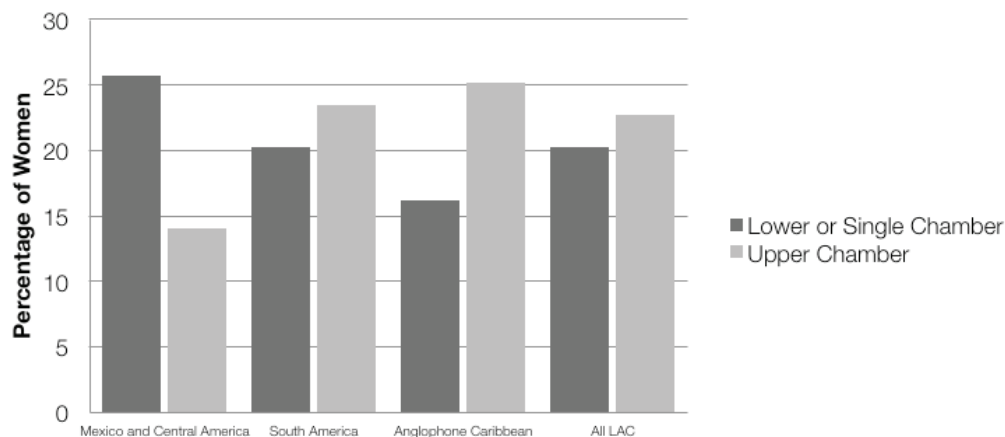
TABLE 1. Women in Congress in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2014

	Election Year	Women in Lower House (Percent)	Women in Upper House (Percent)	Quota in Effect at Election
<i>Mexico and Central America</i>				
Costa Rica	2010	38.6		Y
Cuba	2013	48.9		N
Dominican Republic	2010	20.8	9.4	Y
El Salvador	2012	26.2		N
Guatemala	2011	13.3		N
Haiti	2010	4.2	0	N
Honduras	2009	19.5		Y
Mexico	2012	36.8	32.8	Y
Nicaragua	2011	40.2		N
Panama	2009	8.5		Y
Average		25.7	14.1	N
<i>South America</i>				
Argentina	2013	36.2	39.4	Y
Bolivia	2009	25.4	47.2	Y
Brazil	2010	8.6	16	Y
Chile	2009	14.2	13.2	N
Colombia	2010	12.1	16	N
Ecuador	2013	38.7		Y
Paraguay	2013	17.5	20	Y
Peru	2011	21.5		Y
Uruguay	2009	12.1	12.9	N
Venezuela	2010	17		N
Average		20.3	23.5	
<i>Anglophone Caribbean</i>				
Antigua and Barbuda	2009	10.5	29.4	N

	Election Year	Women in Lower House (Percent)	Women in Upper House (Percent)	Quota in Effect at Election
Bahamas	2012	13.2	25	N
Barbados	2013	16.7	28.6	N
Belize	2012	3.1	38.5	N
Dominica	2009	12.5		N
Grenada	2013	33.3	15.4	N
Guyana	2011	31.3		Y
Jamaica	2011	12.7	23.8	N
St. Kitts and Nevis	2010	6.7		N
St. Lucia	2011	16.7	18.2	N
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	2010	13		N
Suriname	2010	11.8		N
Trinidad and Tobago	2010	28.6	22.6	N
Average		16.16	25.2	

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union for the Congress, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>, accessed January 2014, and authors' elaboration for presence of quota.

FIGURE 5. Average Representation of Women in Congress in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2014



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>, accessed January 2014.

When it comes to the senate, however, Mexico and Central America lag South America and the Caribbean. Women hold only 14 percent of senate seats in Mexico and Central America, compared to 25 percent in the Anglophone Caribbean and almost 24 percent in South America. In South America and the Anglophone Caribbean, women are—on average—better represented in the senate than in the lower chamber. The high levels of female senators in the Anglophone countries can be explained by the fact that most senators in the subregion are appointed rather than elected.

EXPLAINING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

Women's presence in Latin American legislatures, as well as its growth over time, is relatively strong, owing largely to the adoption of gender quotas. These statutory mechanisms—typically laws or constitutional amendments—require that women make up a certain percentage of candidates put forward by political parties in popular elections.

Gender Quotas

First adopted by Argentina in 1991, gender quota laws are now used in the large majority of Latin American countries (sixteen of twenty; see table 2). Countries applying quota laws to their most recent elections included Argentina (30 percent of candidates had to be women), Bolivia (50 percent), Brazil (30 percent), Costa Rica (40 percent), the Dominican Republic (33 percent), Ecuador (50 percent), Haiti (30 percent), Honduras (40 percent), Mexico (40 percent), Panama (50 percent), Paraguay (20 percent), and Peru (30 percent). Quotas were scarcer in the Anglophone Caribbean; only Guyana applied a quota law to its most recent election (one-third of candidates had to be women).

TABLE 2. Legislative Quota Laws in Latin America and the Caribbean, as of 2014

Country	Quota Rule for Percentage of Female Legislators	Year First Adopted
Argentina	Both chambers, 30%	1991
Bolivia	Both chambers, 50%	1997
Brazil	Lower chamber, 30%	1997
Colombia	Both chambers, 30%	1998, repealed; readopted in 2013
Costa Rica	Unicameral, 40%	1996

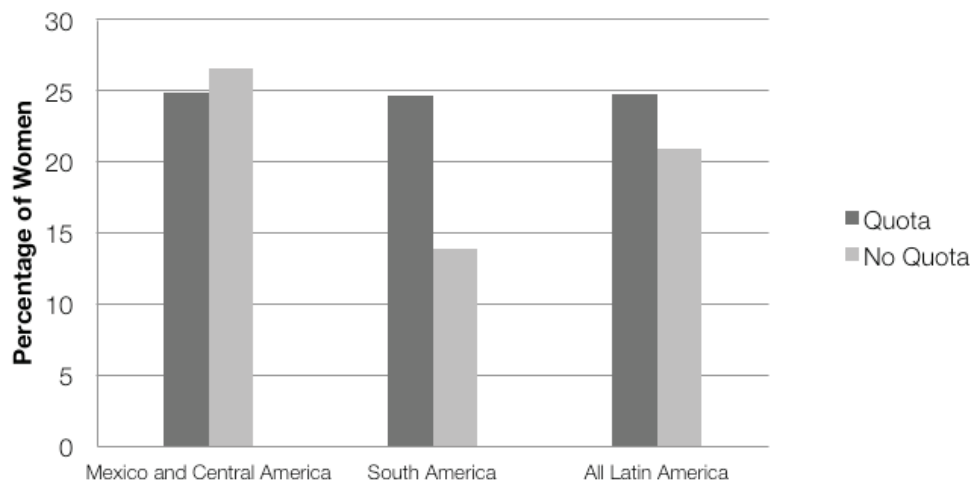
Country	Quota Rule for Percentage of Female Legislators	Year First Adopted
Dominican Republic	Lower chamber, 33%	1997
Ecuador	Unicameral, 50%	1997
El Salvador	Unicameral, 30%	2013
Guyana	Unicameral, 33%	2000
Haiti	Both chambers, 30%	2011
Honduras	Unicameral, 40%	2000
Mexico	Both chambers, 40%	1996
Nicaragua	Unicameral, 50%	2012
Panama	Unicameral, 50%	1997
Paraguay	Both chambers, 20%	1996
Peru	Both chambers, 30%	1997
Uruguay	Both chambers, 33%	2009
Venezuela	Both chambers, 30%	1997, repealed

Source: Piscopo 2013.

Many countries have set their threshold percentages to increase in the future; for their next elections, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Mexico will apply quotas of 50 percent. Recently adopted quota laws will apply to the next elections in Nicaragua (50 percent), Uruguay (33 percent), and El Salvador, Colombia, and Haiti (30 percent).⁶ These requirements mean that, by 2016, the only Latin American countries electing their legislatures without quotas will be Chile, Guatemala, and Venezuela.

Countries with quota laws tend to have more women in power. Figure 6 compares their numbers in lower or unicameral chambers that applied quotas at the time of election to those that did not. Women's share of the single or lower house of parliament was nearly 25 percent in countries with quota laws, compared to 21 percent in countries without them.⁷

FIGURE 6. Women's Representation in Unicameral or Lower Houses with and without Quotas



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>, accessed January 2014.

Quotas also explain differences in senate elections across LAC. In the Mexican and Central American subregion, women comprise only 14 percent of senators. The only three countries there with senates, however, are Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti, and only Mexico applied a quota law in the most recent senate elections. The low subregional average is thus explained by the high proportion of women in the Mexican Senate (nearly 33 percent) averaged with the low proportions in the Dominican and Haitian senates (9 percent and 0 percent, respectively). Likewise, women do well in South America when quotas apply to senate elections. The Andean region stands out: women comprise about 47 percent of the Senate in Bolivia and almost 39 percent in Ecuador. In the Southern Cone, Argentina leads the way, with women comprising nearly 40 percent of senators elected in October 2013.

Although the use of quotas has been largely successful in getting more women elected, the results are uneven. Their effectiveness depends on additional factors, including the type of electoral system, the details of the quota law, and the vigor of implementation (Jones 2009; Htun and Jones 2002).

Quotas work best when parties compete in closed-list, proportional representation electoral systems with large party magnitudes.⁸ In these systems,

political parties present rank-ordered slates of candidates, whom voters cannot reorder (hence the term “closed lists”). Candidates are elected off each slate in proportion to the percentage of votes received by the party.

The details of the quota law are also important; it must contain placement mandates, eliminate loopholes, and dictate penalties for noncompliance. When quota laws contain placement mandates—requirements that women’s names alternate with men’s names on the lists—parties are unable to cluster female candidates at the bottom, where they stand little chance of getting elected.

Commonly, parties evade the quota by exploiting loopholes in the law. For example, if the law does not stipulate that women be placed in titular positions on party lists, parties often comply by naming them as alternates, which means a woman will only enter parliament if the titular candidate becomes unable to serve. Another loophole appeared in Brazil, where the quota law used to require parties to reserve positions for women on party lists but not actually fill them. Since parties were allowed to field 50 percent more candidates than seats in dispute, a party could, in theory, submit an all-male list while technically complying with the quota! This aspect of the electoral law was reformed in 2009 (at which time parties were also required to dedicate a small percentage of funds and TV time to training and promoting women candidates),⁹ but the overall numbers of women in the Brazilian Congress have remained low (9 percent of the lower house in 2010–14).

Lax enforcement is also a problem. In several countries, such as Mexico and Bolivia, evidence indicates party leaders have forced female legislators-elect to resign their positions in favor of male alternates (a practice called gender-based political assault—*acoso político por razón de género*). In addition, parties have substituted male for female names on electoral lists after the lists have been approved by courts. While gender-based political assault has been banned in countries where it was occurring, the practices—especially altering the lists approved by the courts—may continue in some places. Even in countries with strict laws and rigorous enforcement, parties typically treat threshold percentages as ceilings rather than floors, contributing to the general tendency to comply minimally with quotas (Jones 1998, 2009).

The interaction with diverse electoral systems, variation in the details of the law, and noncompliance by parties, coupled with low oversight, explain why

the effects of quotas have been uneven throughout Latin America. In some countries, women's presence remains far below the levels specified by the quota laws, while in others, such as Argentina, Costa Rica, and Mexico, numbers of women meet or exceed the threshold percentages of the quotas.

Except for Guyana, no country in the Anglophone Caribbean has adopted a gender quota law, but some women ministers and party members continue to press the issue. For example, the minister of state for labor and social development in the Bahamas, Loretta Butler-Turner, called in 2011 for greater discussion about adopting gender quotas.¹⁰ That same year, the Port-of-Spain Consensus on Transformational Leadership for Gender Equality—adopted at the Caribbean Colloquium sponsored by UN Women, the Organization of American States, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership—endorsed the setting of 40 percent targets on candidate lists for parliamentary and local government elections.

Other Factors Shaping Women's Presence

What factors beyond quotas and electoral systems may explain which countries succeed in electing more women to their national legislatures? Many scholars have identified the importance of overall patterns of economic, social, and cultural development to women's opportunities to gain access to elected office (for example, Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008; Inglehart and Norris 2003). As women acquire more education and professional experience, the difference between their profiles and those of men decreases, which means more qualified women have entered the "supply" for, or the "pipeline" to, public office (Paxton, Kunovich, and Hughes 2007). Greater income and skills enable more women to run in and win national elections.

Analysis of trends in Latin America and the Caribbean, however, reveals that structural variables alone—such as national wealth and social development—do not fully explain variations in women's legislative presence. Quota laws intervene in the relationship between structural, contextual factors and women's numbers in elected office.

First, the correlation between a country's wealth (as a proxy for developmental level) and the proportion of women in parliament is very low.¹¹ The Bahamas, for instance, has the highest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita for the region (nearly US\$22,000) but a relatively low proportion

of women in power (13 percent of the lower house). The wealthiest Latin American country—Chile—has below-average proportions of women in the Congress (14 percent in the lower house and 12 percent in the Senate). By contrast, Bolivia has one of the lowest GDPs per capita for the region (about US\$2,575) but average to high levels of women’s representation (25 percent in the Chamber of Deputies and 47 percent in the Senate), due to the application of gender quotas.

Second, patterns appearing in LAC countries’ scores on the 2012 Human Development Index (HDI) are inconsistent.¹² The correlation between women’s representation and human development is stronger than that between women’s representation and wealth but still very low and, thus, not determinate.¹³ Latin American countries with relatively high levels of human development, such as Argentina and Costa Rica, do elect many women to their legislatures, but similarly highly ranked countries, such as Chile and Panama, elect very few.

The Anglophone Caribbean presents mixed evidence of the relationship between human development and women’s presence in power. The Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago have high HDI scores, and while they also have many female senators, only Trinidad and Tobago elects similarly high numbers of female deputies. In the lower chamber of Trinidad’s Parliament, women occupy 29 percent of seats, compared to just 13 percent in the Bahamas and 17 percent in Barbados.

Third, women’s education levels are not systematically related to their electoral success. In the LAC region, female literacy is very high, averaging 90 percent, with lower rates in Central America and higher rates in the Anglophone Caribbean and South America.¹⁴ On the one hand, better literacy rates positively correlate with women’s representation in both lower and upper chambers, although the relationship is moderate.¹⁵ It is somewhat stronger for the Senate, where seats are more prestigious and may require more qualified and prepared officeholders, irrespective of whether female senators are appointed (as in the Anglophone Caribbean) or elected under quotas (as in South America).

On the other hand, overall educational attainment does not correlate with patterns in women’s legislative representation. With few exceptions, women in LAC spend an average of one more year in school than men (an average of fourteen compared to an average of thirteen years). More women are

enrolled in secondary and tertiary school than men.¹⁶ Nonetheless, LAC women's educational advantage may not translate into a political advantage, as no strong correlation exists between women's legislative representation and either their expected or actual years of schooling.¹⁷ The strongest correlation, as with literacy, is between women's educational attainment and election to the upper house, especially for Latin America.¹⁸

Finally, women's labor force participation and their legislative presence are indirectly correlated; and although the relationship is very weak for the upper house, it is stronger for the lower, suggesting women's economic gains may not translate into political gains.¹⁹ For example, Anglophone Caribbean countries such as the Bahamas, Barbados, and St. Lucia have some of the highest rates of employment for females between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four; their jobs, however, are most likely to be in the tourism industry, and the service sector does not typically enable women to enter the pipeline for political careers. Likewise, countries with lower rates of female labor force participation elect both relatively high (Costa Rica) and relatively low (Honduras) numbers of female legislators.

Still, although women's legislative representation is not systematically correlated with indicators that represent the supply of qualified female candidates (Paxton, Kunovich, and Hughes 2003), individual women who aspire to public office should not eschew higher education or professional advancement. Studies comparing qualifications of female and male legislators in Latin American countries have found that female parliamentarians—like their male counterparts—possess graduate and postgraduate degrees, and that women typically come from the high-profile professions, such as law, medicine, and business (Schwindt-Bayer 2011; Franceschet and Piscopo 2013b). In fact, individual female legislators frequently have more education and political experience than individual male legislators, illustrating that women often face greater pressure than men to demonstrate their preparedness and credentials (Franceschet and Piscopo 2013b).

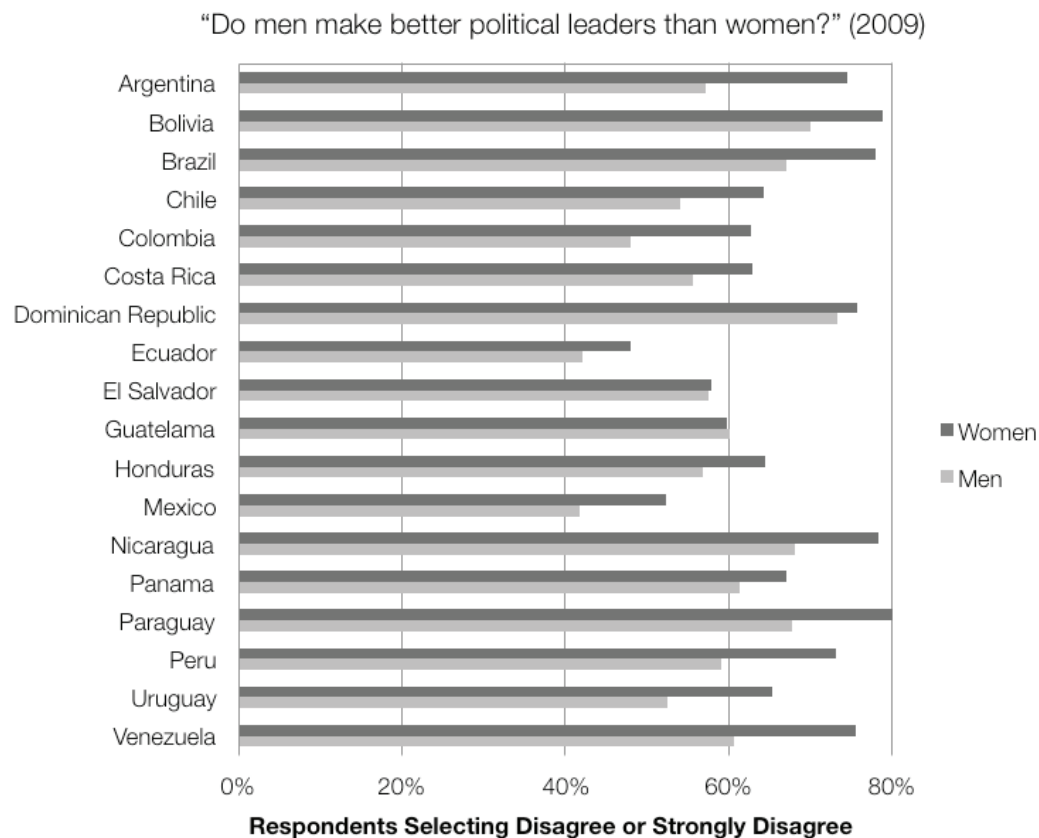
Improvement in economic and social development alone will not push more women into elected office. Latin American experiences suggest quota laws offer a “fast track” to high levels of women's representation (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005). They help open informal networks and power monopolies by forcing parties, on threat of sanction, to nominate more women as candidates in national elections. While nomination cannot guarantee election, the combination of closed-list proportional representation electoral

systems, large districts, placement mandates, and vigorous enforcement has produced results close to the threshold percentages of quota laws in many countries.

PUBLIC OPINION ON WOMEN IN POLITICS

Evidence suggests citizens in LAC view women’s leadership favorably, though their views vary across countries and between men and women. The 2009 wave of the Latinobarómetro (Latinobarometer) survey asked respondents in eighteen Latin American countries whether “men make better political leaders than women.” As shown in figure 7, with the exception of Ecuador, the majority of respondents in each country answered “disagree” or “strongly disagree.”

FIGURE 7. Attitudes toward Male and Female Leaders in Latin America.

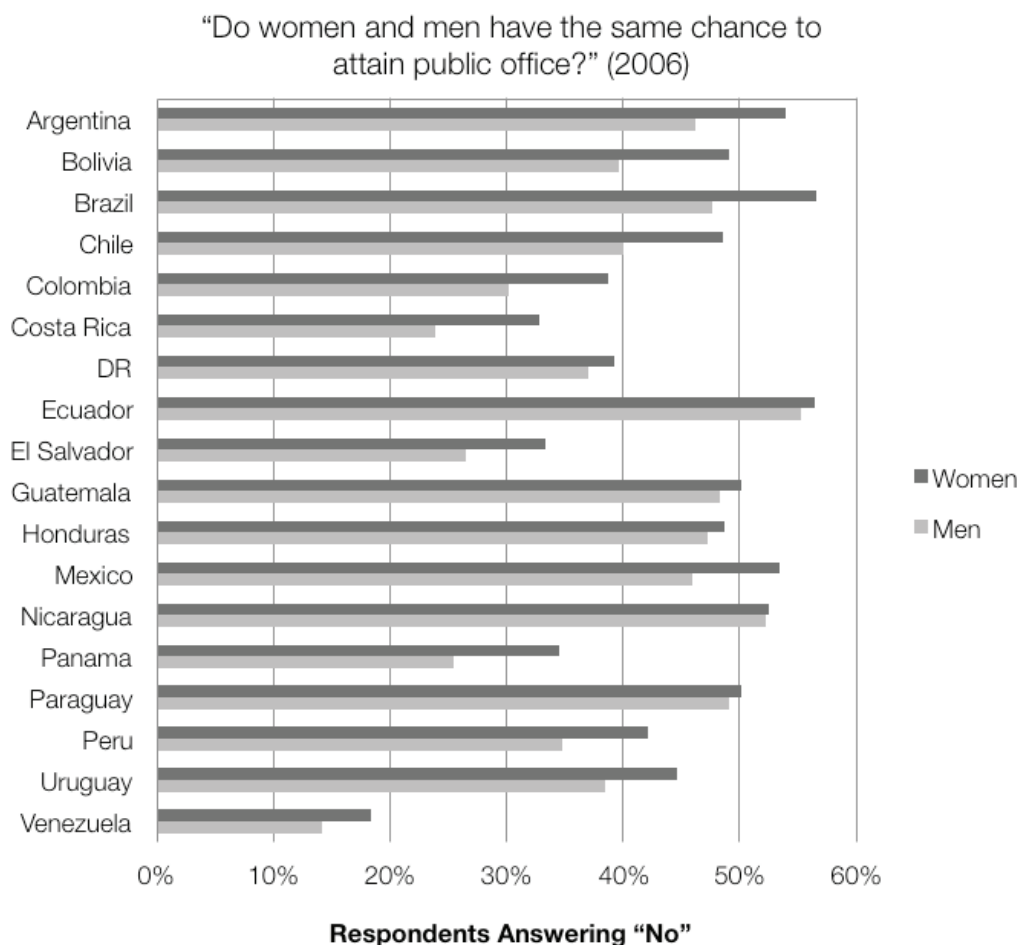


Source: Latinobarómetro 2009, <http://www.latinobarometro.org/latOnline.jsp>.

While these responses indicate low sex bias toward female leaders, the bias was more prevalent among men than women. Only in El Salvador and Guatemala did male and female respondents disagree in similar proportions (60 percent and 58 percent, respectively). In all other countries, female respondents disagreed much more frequently than men, with an average gap of nine percentage points. The largest gaps emerged in Argentina, Colombia, Paraguay, and Venezuela; for example, only 57 percent of Argentine men disagreed that men are better suited for political leadership, compared to 75 percent of Argentine women.

These data suggest that, while public attitudes about women's capabilities have shifted, men may remain more attached to traditional gender roles than women. Likewise, men may be less likely than women to recognize that gender inequality exists. The 2006 Latinobarómetro survey tapped into this perception by asking whether "women and men have the same chances to attain public office." Figure 8 shows the percentage of respondents answering no. Only in Argentina, Ecuador, and Nicaragua did a majority of male and female respondents answer no, showing low perceptions of sex bias throughout the region. Again, however, in nearly every country, female respondents were more likely to perceive obstacles to women's election than male respondents, with an average gap of six percentage points.

FIGURE 8. Beliefs about Women’s Opportunities to Hold Political Office in Latin America.



Source: Latinobarómetro 2006, <http://www.latinobarometro.org/latOnline.jsp>.

Interestingly, a comparison of the 2006 to the 1997 responses to this question shows most Latin American countries increased their proportion of respondents answering no—in other words, over time, perceptions of sex bias in elections increased rather than decreased. While we cannot know for certain why this trend occurred, it could be that region-wide debates over gender equality and quota laws have made the problem of women’s underrepresentation more salient. When the 2006 Latinobarometer asked respondents in selected countries why women were not holding political office, respondents were more likely to choose the answer “because the political system discriminates against them” or “because men discriminate

against them” rather than “women are not qualified” or “politics is not a woman’s place.”²⁰

Yet little systematic evidence supports the idea that women’s leadership has promoted greater support for gender equality among the public at large, even though many scholars have hypothesized such an effect (cf. Htun 2003; Mansbridge 1999). Some evidence does, however, support more limited claims. Experimental studies in India, for instance, found that the “exposure” to female leaders changed sexist attitudes about women’s ability to speak and act in public but left unaltered beliefs about women’s responsibility for domestic work (Beaman, Pande, and Cirone 2012).

Others have contended that the presence of women in office would increase public confidence in political institutions or the political engagement of female citizens (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005; Lawless 2004). Here again, the evidence is mixed. Zetterberg’s study of Mexico, for example, revealed no relationship between women’s leadership and public beliefs in the legitimacy of political parties and legislatures; nor was a relationship found between women’s legislative representation and the increased political interest of female citizens (Zetterberg 2011). Schwindt-Bayer’s study of Latin America as a whole, however (2010), concluded that women’s legislative representation did increase citizens’ positive valuations of their governments’ representativeness and inclusiveness. Moreover, high levels of women’s representation were correlated with low perceptions of corruption, increased trust in legislatures, and greater satisfaction with democracy. The benefits of women’s public presence, then, may extend beyond gender equality and into factors associated with democratic stability.

THE DIFFUSION OF GENDER QUOTAS

Latin America’s legislative quota laws, discussed above, also govern elections to regional and municipal assemblies, as shown in table 3. Quota laws in the subregion have also spread beyond the legislative branch of government, as shown in table 4.²¹ By contrast, Guyana’s quota law applies to the national assembly only.

TABLE 3. Legislative Quota Laws at the Subnational Level in Latin America

Country	Quota Rule for Percentage of Female Legislators	Year First Adopted
Argentina	Provinces apply quotas; varies	
Bolivia	Departmental, municipal, 50%	2009
Brazil	Municipal, state, 30%	1995
Colombia	Departmental, 30%	2011
Costa Rica	Municipal, 50%	2009
Dominican Republic	Municipal, 33%	1997
Ecuador	Municipal, 50%	2000
El Salvador	Municipal, 30%	2013
Honduras	Regional, municipal, 30%	2009
Nicaragua	Municipal, 50%	2012
Mexico	States apply quotas; varies	
Paraguay	Departmental, 20%	1996
Peru	Regional, municipal, 30%	1998
Uruguay	Departmental, 33%	2009
Venezuela	Regional, municipal, 50%	2008

Source: Piscopo 2013.

TABLE 4. Quota Laws across Latin America and the Caribbean, as of 2014

	National Legislature	Subnational Legislatures	National Executive	Subnational Executives	Judiciary	Civil Society
<i>Mexico and Central America</i>						
Costa Rica	X	X	X			X
Cuba						
Dom. Republic	X	X		X		
El Salvador	X	X				
Guatemala						
Haiti	X					
Honduras	X	X		X		

	National Legislature	Subnational Legislatures	National Executive	Subnational Executives	Judiciary	Civil Society
Mexico	X	X				
Nicaragua	X	X		X		
Panama	X					
<i>South America</i>						
Argentina	X	X				X
Bolivia	X	X	X	X	X	
Brazil	X	X				
Chile						
Colombia	X	X	X			
Ecuador	X	X	X	X	X	
Paraguay	X	X				
Peru	X	X				
Uruguay	X	X				
Venezuela		X				

Note: The presence of a quota law is indicated by an "X."

Source: Elaborated from Piscopo 2013.

Quotas for the executive branch currently exist in Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. These executive quotas are much more varied in design and scope than legislative ones. In the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Nicaragua, for example, an executive quota of 50 percent applies to the mayoralty and the vice mayoralty, the highest positions of power at the municipal level. Other executive quotas mandate the placement of women in national-level posts. In Colombia, for instance, a 30 percent gender quota has applied to the "highest positions" in the executive branch at all government levels since 2000. In Costa Rica, a quota of 50 percent applies to one of the two positions of vice president, though this post is largely ornamental (Moreno 1995).

Bolivia and Ecuador have the strongest executive quotas, demanding men's and women's equal representation (50 percent) in all executive positions at all levels, including in the Foreign Service and the autonomous indigenous territories. Strictly speaking, these countries practice parity, not quotas, reflecting the principle that good government and governance cannot

proceed without full equality (Archenti 2011). While countries in the Mexican and Central American subregion—namely, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama—have pursued parity for the legislature, Bolivia and Ecuador have pursued it across the entire structure of government.

Bolivia's and Ecuador's constitutions stipulate that parity constitutes a principle of representative democracy. The 2008 Ecuadorian constitution specifies the right of all citizens to hold and discharge public office in a system that "guarantees their participation on the basis of the criteria of gender equity and parity" (Article 61.7) and decrees the government's positive obligation to foster a "parity approach" or "parity membership" in composing each government branch. The 2009 Bolivian constitution likewise recognized the "equivalence of conditions" between men and women in the practice of democracy (Article 11). Political reforms in 2010 then guaranteed parity in the "election and designation of all authorities and representatives of the state" (Htun and Ossa 2013, 12). Parity in Ecuador and Bolivia extends to the judiciary, where women must comprise 50 percent of judges seated at all levels.

Finally, Latin American countries also have quotas to increase women's leadership in associational life, applying the measures to various civil society organizations. Argentina has applied a 30 percent quota for trade union directorates since 2003, and Costa Rica has required parity on the boards of trade unions, charity organizations, and voluntary organizations since 2011. The Costa Rican quota proved problematic, however, as many charitable organizations faced problems recruiting sufficient numbers of men to comply with the law. This unanticipated challenge led the National Office for Community Development—which certifies civic organizations—to decree that boards must either comply with parity or demonstrate credible evidence for falling short, in which case they would receive an exemption.

Countries such as Argentina, Nicaragua, and Peru have debated proposals to adopt their own executive and judicial quotas and have taken rhetorical measures. For instance, a 2003 decree issued by then Argentine president Néstor Kirchner stipulated that "gender diversity" must be "considered" when presidents select nominees for the Supreme Court.²² Several Latin American presidents have also deliberately appointed parity cabinets, including Michelle Bachelet of Chile (upon her first election in 2006), Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua (upon his election in 2007), and Ollanta Humala of Peru (in 2013, during the middle of his term).

Non-legislative quotas are less documented and analyzed than legislative ones. Many are recent developments, and, as with first-generation legislative quotas, problems remain with loopholes, oversight, and enforcement. Nonetheless, the diffusion of quotas to executive and judicial branches and to civil society organizations signifies Latin American countries' efforts to undertake a "profound gendering of public space and leadership" (Franceschet and Piscopo 2013a, 310).

WOMEN'S PRESENCE AND POLICY CHANGE

Does women's greater presence in power lead to policy outcomes more favorable to women's rights? The trends identified here show women are achieving greater inclusion in political office. Yet inclusion does not lead automatically to the substantive activity of representation. Changing policies to benefit women involves introducing bills and amendments, lobbying, voting, raising consciousness, making speeches, issuing executive decrees and administrative decisions, and carrying out myriad other political tasks.

An additional concern is whether women are sufficiently powerful and influential to secure policy change. Even when they act in favor of women's interests by making speeches and introducing legislation, women politicians may be unable to get legislation, budgets, or executive decisions approved. Women face numerous obstacles to achieving policy success. For instance, they may encounter principled opposition to their proposals; they may be excluded from the agendas of busy committees; or they may lack the political clout to ensure their proposals are discussed in plenary sessions.

Female Legislators and Policy Advocacy

Franceschet and Piscopo's 2008 study of the Argentine Congress confirms that women will take action on women's rights, but it also illustrates some of the obstacles to making feminist policy. Women's rising presence led to greater advocacy for progressive policies on violence against women, reproductive health, labor rights, and sexual harassment—advocacy that occurred because most female legislators associated their election under quota laws with a mandate to represent women by promoting gender equality policies. Yet bills related to women's rights were more than twice as likely to fail as other types of bills. Lacking the support of party presidents and chairs of congressional committees, the bills sponsored by female legislators tended to die before they arrived for a full vote in the plenary

(Franceschet and Piscopo 2008, 416–17). Htun, Lacalle, and Micozzi's 2013 analysis of the Argentine Congress revealed that women's greater numbers were associated with the introduction of more women's rights bills by both male and female legislators, but not necessarily with their passage.

Research from elsewhere in Latin America has repeatedly underscored that female legislators are more likely than their male counterparts to advocate for women's interests, irrespective of success. Schwindt-Bayer (2010), for example, found that female deputies in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica were more likely than male deputies to prioritize women and women's issues. Other research found a similar pattern in Brazil (Miguel 2012). In a study of the Costa Rican legislature since the introduction of gender quotas, Hinojosa and Woodall (2011) found that, in their legislative speeches, women invoke their gender and their roles as mothers and wives.

Yet research has also shown that across Latin American countries, women tend to be clustered in the legislatures' less prestigious committees, which deal with social issues. They also tend to be overrepresented in committees devoted to women's, family, or gender issues. Women are virtually excluded from powerful committees, such as those distributing federal funds or dealing with economics or foreign affairs (Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Miguel 2012). In some cases, their committee assignments may result from the women's own specialization in social and gender policy, based on their professional backgrounds and expressed preferences. According to Pär Zetterberg's 2008 study of Mexican state legislatures, women often asked to be placed on justice and education committees, and rarely requested the more powerful finance and budget committees.

Women politicians in the executive branch also face barriers to policy advocacy. As with their counterparts in the legislative branch, women have tended to occupy "soft" ministerial positions, though some inroads have been made, as noted above. Scattered evidence also suggests many women ministers have introduced small policy changes to support women's rights. In Argentina, for example, the female minister of defense created a department on gender issues and revoked a rule requiring pregnant women to be discharged from the armed forces.²³ In Chile, the female leaders of the national women's agency are credited with the effective implementation of the new domestic violence law, particularly with respect to raising public awareness and developing victim services (Franceschet 2010b).

Among female heads of state, Michele Bachelet of Chile stands out as the most vocal supporter of women's rights. During her first presidential term, she expanded Chilean women's access to contraception, passed laws that protected working mothers from employment discrimination, and presented an (unsuccessful) quota bill to the Chilean Congress (Jaquette 2010; Franceschet 2010a). By contrast, other female heads of state, such as Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina and Laura Chinchilla in Costa Rica, have eschewed the "feminist" label and distanced themselves from organized constituencies of women.

Policy Changes

Progressive policy changes have occurred in some policy areas but not others. Policies that challenge religious doctrine are harder to change than those that do not. Laws on abortion, which are highly contentious, have remained largely unchanged for half a century or longer, with some exceptions (such as Mexico City and Uruguay). In other countries, such as Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, laws on abortion have grown more restrictive. By contrast, Latin American countries have seen major advances in policies combatting violence against women and in electoral laws adopting gender quotas. Neither type of policy has provoked organized religious opposition (Htun and Weldon 2010, 2008).

Violence against women (VAW) is a serious problem in LAC. A 2013 Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) report on VAW in twelve LAC countries, drawing from surveys conducted between 2003 and 2009, found that between 17 and 53 percent of women surveyed had suffered physical or sexual violence inflicted by an intimate partner. Among those abused, between 28 and 64 percent did not seek help or speak to anyone about their experiences.

The problem persists in spite of considerable progress made in Latin American and Caribbean countries in the 1990s and 2000s on policies to prevent VAW and punish those who commit it. Htun and Weldon (2012) developed a "VAW Index" to evaluate and compare governments' responsiveness to violence against women. A score of 10 means a country has a comprehensive array of policies on domestic and sexual violence, including shelters, rape crisis centers, and other facilities; public awareness campaigns; and training programs for judges, police, and other law enforcement personnel. Their data show that policies in the ten Latin American countries included in

their study evolved from having an average score of 0 in 1975 (no measures to address VAW) to over 6 in 2005; specific scores for each country from 1975 to 2005, as well as the decade averages, are presented in table 5 (as the table shows, Cuba's inaction on VAW depresses the regional average).

TABLE 5. Laws on Violence against Women in Latin America

Country	1975	1985	1995	2005
Argentina	0	0	7	8
Brazil	0	2	7	8
Chile	0	0	6	7
Colombia	0	1	5	5
Costa Rica	2	2	7	8
Cuba	1	1	1	2
Mexico	1	1	5	7
Peru	0	0	6	7
Uruguay	0	0	4	5
Venezuela	0	4	4	6
Average	0.4	1.1	5.2	6.3

VAW Index: 10 = most government responsiveness; 0 = no government responsiveness.
Source: Htun and Weldon 2012.

These legal advances are owing to the combined efforts of women's movements in civil society, women politicians, and transnational advocacy networks. Multilevel and multisectoral activism first helped consolidate international and regional norms (embodied in treaties such as the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, adopted by the Organization of American States in 1994). Activists then brought these norms home by mobilizing to raise public awareness and lobby governments for policy change. In legislatures across Latin America, female politicians formed coalitions for change and convinced male legislators to support their proposals (Stevenson 1999; Piscopo 2011; Walsh 2011; Htun and Weldon 2012).

Yet results from the PAHO study reveal that impunity remains a huge problem. Public authorities fail to address many of the violent episodes reported to them, allowing perpetrators to continue their offenses unhindered. Police negligence and failure to investigate complaints are common in the region, even in countries like Brazil that were global pioneers in proactive public policies, such as the creation of women-run police stations. In the

rare cases that make it to the courts, judges and prosecutors often discriminate against women by, for example, questioning plaintiffs about their past sexual behavior.

Case studies from the Anglophone Caribbean reveal fewer policy changes than in Latin America. By the 2000s, all countries except Suriname had passed legislation addressing gender-based violence. Yet these statutes—which recognize psychological violence and assign severe criminal penalties—are confined largely to cases of domestic abuse. Laws fail to address situations where a woman’s assailant is not a family member or intimate partner (Robinson 2000, 2004). Some statutes fail to recognize marital rape, as in the Bahamas, or stranger assault, as in Barbados (Robinson 2007).

In the Caribbean, most domestic violence cases are heard in family courts, which tend to emphasize reconciliation instead of protection of the victim and punishment of the perpetrator (Lazarus-Black 2008). These courts are overburdened, and bureaucratic systems are weak. As a result, most of the advocacy work—raising awareness about domestic violence and providing victim services—is undertaken not by Caribbean governments, but by foreign aid organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and grassroots groups (Muturi and Donald 2006).

Legal change on other women’s issues has developed unevenly in the Anglophone Caribbean. While Guyana’s constitution affirms women’s right to equal participation with men in all aspects of public life and mandates laws to recognize their participation in management in the public and private sectors (Vassell 2006), those of Jamaica and Barbados do not recognize sex as a basis for freedom from discrimination (Barrett 2005/2006; Robinson 2007). Only the Bahamas, Belize, and St. Lucia have legislation recognizing sexual harassment as a criminal offense (Robinson 2004). Sexual harassment bills have been proposed and debated—but not passed—in Jamaica and in St. Kitts and Nevis (Rollins 2009; Tindigarukayo 2006). In general, while Caribbean states have developed myriad equality plans, a “lack of political will to realize gender equity” remains throughout the region (Charles-Gumbs and Stuart 2011, 39).

In the entire LAC region, abortion laws have changed the least, as illustrated by the Index of Abortion Law, shown in table 6 (Htun and Weldon 2008). The index rates countries’ abortion laws on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 indicates

the most permissive (elective abortion in the first and second trimesters without restriction) and 0 the least (bans on abortions in all circumstances).

TABLE 6. Abortion Laws in Latin America and the Anglophone Caribbean

Country Name	1975	1985	1995	2005
Antigua & Barbuda	1	1	1	1
Argentina	3	3	3	3
Bahamas	2	2	2	2
Barbados	5	5	5	5
Belize	5	5	5	5
Brazil	2	2	2	3
Chile	1	1	0	0
Colombia	1	1	1	1
Costa Rica	1	1	1	1
Cuba	9	9	9	9
Dominica	1	1	1	1
Dominican Republic	0	0	0	0
El Salvador	3	3	3	0
Grenada	2	2	2	2
Guyana	9	9	9	9
Jamaica	5	5	5	5
Mexico	3	3	3	3
Nicaragua	2	2	2	0
Peru	2	2	2	2
St. Kitts & Nevis	5	5	5	5
St. Lucia	2	2	2	5
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	5	5	5	5
Suriname	1	1	1	1
Trinidad and Tobago	5	5	5	5
Uruguay	5	5	5	5

Country Name	1975	1985	1995	2005
Venezuela	1	1	1	1
LAC Average	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.1

Index of Abortion Law: 10 = most permissive; 0 = least permissive.

Source: Htun and Weldon (n.d.) for Latin America; Boland and Katzive (2008) for the Anglophone Caribbean.

Except for Colombia and Uruguay, no Latin American country has liberalized restrictive laws on abortion. Colombia's changes, introduced through a Constitutional Court decision in 2006, added rape and mental health concerns to the limited grounds under which abortion is not subject to criminal punishment. In 2012, Uruguayan law was reformed to exempt from criminal penalties abortions performed up to the twelfth week of pregnancy, when certain conditions—such as consultation with health practitioners and a five-day waiting period—are met. Only one subnational entity—Mexico City—decriminalized the practice, though this move provoked a backlash, as seventeen Mexican states amended their constitutions to protect life from the moment of conception (Htun 2010, 15).

In other countries, laws have become more restrictive. Three that used to permit abortion under very limited circumstances (Chile, El Salvador, and Nicaragua) have now banned the procedure completely, even when the mother's life is in danger. For this reason, the Mexican and Central American subregion's scores on the Index of Abortion Law show a slight decline between 1975 and 2005 (see table 7).

TABLE 7. Abortion Laws in Latin America and the Caribbean by Subregion

Country	1975	1985	1995	2005
Mexico and Central America	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.2
South America	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1
Anglophone Caribbean	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.9

Index of Abortion Law: 10 = most permissive; 0 = least permissive.

Source: Htun and Weldon (n.d.) for Latin America; Boland and Katzive (2008) for the Anglophone Caribbean.

Abortion laws in the Anglophone Caribbean tend to be more liberal than in Latin America (see averages compared in table 8). This does not mean abortions are actually affordable and available to all citizens, however. Only

Guyana provides unrestricted, safe, and affordable access to abortion services (Antrobus 2006).

In sum, the depth and breadth of gender-related public policy in Latin America and the Caribbean are as varied as the numbers of women in public office. In the Anglophone Caribbean, Guyana stands out as a success story; the country elects many women under a gender quota regime, and its constitution and policies reflect the principles of sex equality, freedom from violence, and reproductive health. Other Anglophone Caribbean countries show mixed gains; for instance, abortion is legally available in Jamaica and Barbados, but these countries fail to address sex discrimination in their constitutions.

Nearly all LAC countries have signed the myriad international conventions that recognize women's rights and suggest policy reforms, including the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Yet large gaps remain between international commitments and domestic statute change, and between statute change and effective implementation.

CONCLUSION

In Latin America and the Caribbean, women's presence in the legislative and executive branches of government has increased significantly over time. Although broader social and economic changes shaping women's overall status have played a role in this growth, contextual changes are inadequate, on their own, to expand women's opportunities to gain access to elective office. The decisive factor behind the spectacular jumps in women's political presence in countries such as Argentina, Costa Rica, and Mexico has been the adoption and effective implementation of national gender quota laws. Quotas have both embodied and helped consolidate a national political consensus on the importance of promoting more women to positions of power.

What else can be done? Political parties are largely responsible for identifying, training, and nominating women for elected office, and they can do more to increase their chances of getting elected. For example, they can dedicate a minimum proportion of party funds to the training, recruitment, and promotion of female candidates. In Latin American countries such as Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Honduras, quota laws were extended to govern political parties' internal elections. In Mexico, the 2008 gender quota law

compelled parties to allocate 2 percent of their budgets to such programs, and similar funding requirements were adopted in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Panama. Brazil's reforms also required parties to allocate 10 percent of their state-given, non-campaign-related television time to promoting women's leadership. In the Anglophone Caribbean, political parties in Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago have provided training for female leaders (Vassell 2006). These initiatives will help more women enter the recruitment pipeline.

To facilitate women's collective action, politicians can work to formalize their caucuses in congress. These institutions—which function in only a handful of Latin American countries—encourage cross-party cooperation among female legislators, facilitate communication between women legislators and feminist groups, and facilitate the development of and advocacy for bills and other proposals. They have proved effective (González and Sample 2010). The Mexican Congress's Bicameral Commission on Gender and Equity, for example, has helped female legislators write and secure approval of reforms to domestic violence legislation, social welfare laws, and quota mechanisms (Piscopo 2011).

The connection between women's presence and their empowerment depends not only on their having a "critical mass" in political office but also on the social beliefs and institutional arrangements that structure their opportunities to act effectively. Policies have changed when domestic and international actors worked together to hold political leaders—male and female—accountable for advancing women's rights.

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NOTES

1. This is a revised and updated version of a paper from December 2010. The authors are grateful to Sophia von Bergen, Anna Calasanti, and Abraham Painter for research assistance.
2. Data from 2000 are drawn from Htun (2001). Data from 2010 and 2014 are drawn from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>). Averages refer to the lower house of parliament.
3. The one exception is Suriname, where the Assembly elects the president.
4. The 2014 data on women in national cabinets are drawn from individual countries' websites and the United States Central Intelligence Agency World Leaders Database (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/>). Data from 2000 are from Htun (2001).
5. Data on women's political participation at the local level are drawn from the 2010 Gender Equality Observatory, organized and published by the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Data from the Anglophone Caribbean are limited to Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Data on the proportion of women mayors in Jamaica are from the country's Bureau of Women's Affairs.

6. Uruguay's quota law will apply only to the 2014 elections.
7. Averages do not include the Anglophone Caribbean. Note that women's representation is high in some countries without national quota laws. As figure 6 shows, their legislative presence in the Mexican and Central American subregion is around 25 percent in countries with quota laws but around 27 percent in countries without them. This difference can be largely attributed to the high numbers of women legislators in Cuba (where the Communist Party applies informal quotas to the nomination of women and other social groups) and Nicaragua (where the dominant Sandinista party has historically applied a gender quota voluntarily).
8. Party magnitude—a concept derived from district magnitude (the number of legislators elected per district, mentioned earlier)—refers to the number of legislators elected from a district who belong to a particular party. The higher the number, the greater the likelihood that the group will include women, as parties pull politicians from lower positions on their party lists (Matland 2002; Jones 1996).
9. Patricia Rangel, "Reforma eleitoral: o que as mulheres ganham?" [Electoral reform: How many women won?], CFEMEA, September 23, 2009, http://www.cfemea.org.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2768:reforma-eleitoral-o-que-as-mulheres-ganham&catid=213:noticias-e-eventos&Itemid=148.
10. "Gender Quotas: Do They Work?" Bahamas Weekly, April 19, 2011, http://www.thebahamasweekly.com/publish/bis-news-updates/Gender_Quotas_Do_They_Work15535.shtml.
11. Data on GDP are drawn from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (http://data.worldbank.org/topic/economy-and-growth#tp_wdi). The correlation between 2012 GDP per capita in U.S. dollars and women's representation is $-.194$ for the lower house and $.129$ for the upper.
12. United Nations data from 2012 are used for the Human Development Index (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi>).
13. The correlation between a country's human development score and the representation of women is $.146$ for the lower house and $.356$ for the upper.
14. Literacy rates for 2011 are from the World Bank's "GenderStats" database (<http://data.worldbank.org/topic/gender>).
15. The correlation between literacy and representation is $.542$ for the upper house and $.411$ for the lower house.
16. Data on men's and women's average years of schooling, as well as on the female to male ratio of secondary school enrollment, are for 2010 and from the World Bank's "GenderStats" database.
17. All relationships are less than $.20$.

18. This correlation between women's election to upper chambers and their educational attainment in years for Latin America is .594, and .85 when looking just at the Mexican and Central American subregion. This result should be interpreted cautiously, however, because we do not have observations for this indicator for every country in our study.

19. The correlation between the labor force participation of women between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four (as a percentage of the total female population) and their legislative presence is $-.337$ for the lower house and $-.092$ for the upper house.

20. We looked at answers from Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, and Mexico.

21. The discussion in this section is drawn partly from Hinojosa and Piscopo (2013).

22. Decree 222/2003.

23. Jennifer Piscopo, interview with civil society leader, Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 2, 2009; Mala Htun, interview at Ministry of Defense, Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 2009.

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