Women Rule, But Do They Make A Difference? Women in Politics, Social Policy and Social Conditions in Latin America

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Women Rule, But Do They Make A Difference? Women in Politics, Social Policy and Social Conditions in Latin America

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of New Orleans in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

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Abstract

Since the transitions to democracy in Latin America, women in the region have undergone major changes in their roles in society. From traditionally only present in the home to participating in collective action efforts, and finally participating at increasing numbers in governments, women have made incredible strides in the Latin American region. Latin American countries have successfully advocated for the inclusion of women in government, but few studies in academia focus on determining whether their inclusion has made a difference in government processes or in society. Borrowing from the literature positing that women are behaviorally different from men as well as their identification with motherhood and as wives in their collective action efforts in Latin America, I argue that women have different concerns from men both outside and inside of the public sphere and therefore make a difference in government with regards to policy priorities and government budget allocations. Studying 18 Latin American countries, I find that there is a gender gap in public opinion, which demonstrates that women are more concerned with social welfare matters than men. I also find that female concerns are carried into their behavior once in government as observed by female legislators’ heightened support for social welfare policies. Furthermore, I find that women in legislatures affect government behavior differently from their male counterparts as observed with female legislators’ positive effects on the allocation of the budget towards social welfare areas.

Comparative Politics, Women in Politics, Latin American Politics, Women in Latin America, Social Welfare Policies
Chapter 1. Introduction

Though Latin America has been praised for its widespread democratic transformation, much is still needed for it to be deemed a success story. Given years of economic and political instability, the region has had various hurdles while attempting to develop. One hurdle that has been hard to move past is that of social conditions. Social conditions in the area do not meet the expectations that many of us have when discussing democracies. Poverty remains high and inequality remains higher. Thus it is no surprise that the international community has been advocating for solutions to this trend for some time.

According to the World Bank, Latin America and Sub Saharan Africa stand alone as the two most unequal regions in the world. High inequality means that there is a large portion of the population that is living under poverty lines. This is an area of concern not only because of its decreasing effect on growth or development, but also because of its various implications on human welfare conditions. Studies show that higher rates of poverty are conducive to individual’s finding other activities outside of the legal realm, such as crime (Lopez and Perry 2008). Higher levels of inequality are also correlated with fewer opportunities and thus less availability for investing in education or health (ibid). Less availability of goods that are necessary for human development brings about various concerns.

Lack of social services is a widespread problem in the region and a problem that is affected by increasing inequality between the poor and the rich in Latin America (Chant 2003). The poorest populations in Latin America do not have many healthcare services at their disposal. Most of the healthcare services available to the poor are decreasing in quality because doctors that are highly trained rather take jobs in areas that offer better pay, which generally means in medical facilities in higher income areas (Chant 2003). The same is the case for the quality of
education for the poor. Higher paying jobs for teachers are usually in private or public schools in richer areas. Lacking social mobility or the resources for proper human development, individuals lack the opportunity for survival and things deemed necessary for the availability of basic human rights and as a result the Latin American region has a large constraint on its development. Given these social conditions, it is important to determine what avenues countries can take that will ensure the availability and maintenance of basic human rights to all of their citizens. I believe that one such avenue that countries can take to better social conditions is that of women’s empowerment. By empowering women a new perspective is introduced to the political sphere. Women’s entry into government introduces greater support for social welfare policies that could have an important influence on the social conditions in the region.

Until recently, women in Latin American societies were typically excluded from several public and private sectors of society, specifically from the male-dominated positions outside of the home. Since democratization, Latin America’s new democracies have made efforts to increase women’s empowerment in most areas of society. For instance, studies show that a gender gap no longer exists in schooling, in fact, in most cases girls in Latin America attain higher educational levels than boys (Htun and Piscopo 2010, Htun 2003, Kentworthy and Malami 1999, Aviel 1981). This is an important finding considering that women’s educational attainment and their electoral success are correlated (McDonagh 2002).

Efforts to promote women’s empowerment can also be seen as it regards women’s empowerment in government.¹ Women now participate in all levels of government, including the executive. Since the 1980s, there have been five women elected president in Latin America’s democracies: Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in Nicaragua, Mireya Moscoso de Arias in Panama,

¹ For the purposes of this study, women’s empowerment is defined as the inclusion of women into governmental positions.
Michelle Bachelet in Chile, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner in Argentina, and Dilma Rousseff in Brazil. After years of authoritarian governments and patriarchal norms, Latin American countries have grown conscious of the importance of inclusion, particularly women’s inclusion into government. This importance is evidenced when observing the statistics on the subject in individual countries. For instance, women in countries like Argentina and Peru now comprise 37.4 percent and 21.5 percent of the total membership in the lower house of each country’s respective legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2011). These are great strides for the female population in the Latin American region.

Some of the advances that women have made in government can be attributed to the fact that most countries have adopted measures (with many enshrining these measures in their constitutions) that encourage the participation of women in government. Joni Lovenduski and Assa Karam (2002) state that among certain tools that can effectively increase women’s ascension into politics, pressure to include gender quotas for political parties, creating mechanisms that ensure female presence in parliamentary positions, and designing legislation that institutionalizes female representation in government, are most effective. These tools have already been implemented in countries around the world. Countries in the Latin American region have also instituted these tools, demonstrating their growing support and realization that democracies must be gender inclusive, as well as including minorities, and therefore must evolve out of their patriarchal traditions. Miki Caul (2001) finds that in advanced European democracies, gender quotas within parties emerge due to the higher participation of women in positions within parties, the adoption of these types of quotas by other parties in the same country, and the influence of ideologically liberal parties within the country. A large majority of Latin American countries as well as parties within these countries have institutionalized and
implemented gender quota systems in order to increase the rates of women’s participation in government. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, “by 2011, 12 of 18 countries in the region had some form of gender quota law” (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2011). Traditionally women were only present in the home due to the patriarchal nature of society. Now, women are encouraged to work in the public sphere as part of a basic modern norm. This substantial change in women’s roles in society gives way to several new research opportunities. Women’s strides in the public and private sector in Latin America has sparked many questions in academia as to both how women have fared in government as well as what effects their increased participation has had on policy outcomes in these countries.

Due to the major changes women have had in their role in society in Latin America, I explore how those changes affect government and society. I aim to find whether women have differing policy concerns than men and whether these differing concerns translate into female behavior once in government, eventually leading to a change in government behavior. I expect that Latin American women are more likely to support issues regarding social welfare and that these concerns will result in heightened support for social welfare policies among female legislators. I also expect that heightened female participation in legislatures will not only increase support for social welfare policies, but also government spending in this policy area. If this is the case, then women might hold the key to bettering social conditions in the region. This is, of course, if one assumes that heightened support for social welfare policies and government spending on these policies will directly affect the availability of social services for citizens. Overall, with this research, I aim to expand our knowledge about women’s participation in government and women’s effects on social welfare policy areas once they are in government in Latin America.
Differences Between Women and Men

Many academics focus on the changing roles of women in Latin America, particularly when comparing their roles to that of males in the public sphere. One of the biggest questions on the subject of female participation in politics is whether women have a different effect from men on government and society once included in the public sphere, or, in other words, whether women’s participation in government has a different effect from men participating in government on policy priorities or the policy agenda. Scholars have tried to discover whether women bring something different to the table than their male counterparts when it comes to their participation in government, a previously male dominated sector. The short answer to the questions is yes; according to the literature, women are different from men in terms of their political behavior. In fact, when advocating for female suffrage in Latin American countries, arguments were founded on the perception that women were different from men and therefore would add something different to the political scene (Chant 2003).

Regarding the differences between men and women, the literature varies in terms of the sources of these differences (or at least the potential differences). Some scholars believe that the differences in gender behavior stem from social constructions (Rosaldo 1980). According to this line of thinking, women are different from men because of the interactions between men and women in society over time. Both women and men have constructed the idea that women are fundamentally different from men in what they are able to do as well as how they perceive the world. This line of thinking in the literature helps bring forth the gender stereotypes that we so often encounter. Other scholars attribute the behavioral differences between men and women to biological reasons (Ruddick 1987). Biological determinism denotes that women are biologically
able to reproduce and therefore their experience as life givers creates an understanding of the world that is different from men.

When it comes to the behavioral differences between men and women, scholars have noted differences in conceptions of morality that differ depending on gender. Regarding morality, women are more likely to think about a moral conflict focusing on care and men are more likely to think about a moral conflict focusing on justice (Gilligan 1982). Ford and Lowery (1986) observe these two moral perspectives that guide the decision making process in a moral conflict for both genders. The authors determine whether women and men are more care-oriented, meaning that they will perceive a situation using empathy and compassion as a frame of reference, or justice-oriented, meaning that they will perceive a situation using rights and rules or laws as their frame of reference. In essence, a care-oriented individual will be more concerned with others while a justice-oriented individual is characterized more as an impartial judge and thus more concerned with laws or contracts than with understanding or concern for others. Ford and Lowery (1986) find that women tend to be more care-oriented, thus supporting other findings stating women’s characterization as caregivers, while men are more justice-oriented. If women are care-oriented, they are more likely to care for others, therefore once in government, women may be more likely than men to support and advocate for policies that will help others. Women may be more likely than men to support social welfare policies that entail aid for those that need it.

Other identifications or characterizations given to women in previous scholarship are that they are more socially-oriented or selfless than men, while men tend to be more individually-oriented or selfish. (Eckel and Grossman 1998). Eckel and Grossman (1998) conduct an experiment to discover the behavioral differences between men and women. They find that when
given the authority as “dictator” in their double-anonymous dictator game experiment, women are more likely than men to split the $10.00 given to the player evenly with their anonymous partner, while men, when given the authority as “dictator” are more likely to keep the entire $10.00 for themselves. In fact, the authors find that women donate about twice as much what men are willing to donate, thus denoting women as less selfish than men in their economic behavior. Therefore, if women are more socially oriented and selfless in their economic behavior, they may behave similarly in the political arena. We may observe women supporting policies that aid society and have the potential to heighten people’s quality of life. Women’s selflessness may implicate that they are more willing to work towards policies that will benefit all of society and make for a better future.

Craske (1999) also finds differences between men and women in Latin America. Craske (1999) explains that women in Latin America tend to characterize themselves with motherhood, as nurturers and caretakers. This characterization enables women to bring a different and important dimension to the political system. Most identify women with the concern for the wellbeing of the community because of their role as mothers. This resonates with Elsa Chaney’s (1979) work depicting Latin American women as supermadres, explaining that women’s experiences as mothers and caregivers guide their behavior when participating in government. Women are supermadres (super mothers) because once in government they view the political arena as a much larger version of the home. Women identifying with motherhood and as wives act accordingly creating and increasing support for policies such as protection for children, the family, education and healthcare.

Though the debate as to what accounts for the attitudinal differences between men and women still continues, the consensus in the literature holds that these differences between men
and women affect their behavior. Thus, the overwhelming increase of women’s participation in government in Latin America provides the perfect scenario to determine whether gender has an effect on government matters.

Women Outside of the Home in Latin America

Women’s different identifications and characterizations than men’s are observable in previous literature focusing on women’s roles prior to their participation in government offices. Previous scholarship about women in Latin America focused on women outside of government. Most of the research conducted centered around women involved in movements advocating for democracy and a political voice (Schwindt-Bayer 2012). Traditionally, women’s voices in the public sector were present not in government, but in various social movements. Latin American women would voice their stance through collective actions, but not participate directly in the making of policy.

In order to understand the fact that collective action was the chosen avenue for women to voice their concerns, a glance into women’s domain is necessary. Women were traditionally viewed as the gender in charge of protecting the private domain of the family (Safa 1990). Having a long-standing history with authoritarianism had an impact on women’s experiences inside and outside of the home. Women were among the biggest demographic to experience the levels of terror the regime subjected into their homes against their children and their loved ones. Due to the pain and suffering mothers in most Latin American countries had to endure, collective action among women in most Latin American countries developed out of a sense of unity between mothers and wives, using this platform to protest their “inability to effectively carry out
these roles, as military governments take away their children or the rising cost of living prevents them from feeding their families adequately” (Safa 1990 p. 355).

Women’s use of their identification as mothers and wives in collective action is evident in movements such as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Movement, which to this day continues to mobilize for human rights. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo movement emerged in the 1970s and 1980s in Argentina. A group of mothers organized against the authoritarian regime to demand information about their loved ones’ disappearance (Maier and Lebon 2010). The movement began despite and as a result of a regime that institutionalized terror and forced silence upon society. During this time, the armed forces were in charge of the country and obliterated any opposition to the regime (Femenia and Gil 1987). The regime’s efforts to annihilate any means of opposition included kidnapping and killing several people, among them children and elders. The amount of people who disappeared still remains unknown, but most accounts state that around 10,000 to 30,000 people disappeared and were never found (Schrimer 1988, Loveman 1998). It was women’s identification as mothers and wives and the regime’s blatant infringement on their ability to conduct their duties as mothers and wives that led to their mobilization against the regime. Though most of the women in the movement never received information or closure about their loved ones, the movement continues to this day. Not only is the movement said to be the first human rights movement in Latin America, but the movement continues and now successfully focuses on the promotion of human rights world wide (Maier and Lebon 2010). This very identification that women had as mothers and wives that led them to mobilize against the regime before democracy spread through the region has continued to prevail even after women received entry into government and is observed in other collective action efforts.
After the transition to democracy, collective action among women continues to stem from similar experiences and identifications as they did prior to the transitions in the region. Vivienne Bennet (1995) finds that when women organize they tend to advocate solutions to daily problems and emphasize services that are necessary for a better quality of life. They do so because women tend to be affected more directly than men when it comes to these types of matters, such as availability of clean water, which directly affects their ability to take care of the home. Thus, being issues that women encounter daily, leaves women in a position where they must protest and fight for solutions to the problems that disable them from carrying out their duties as wives and mothers. This type of mobilization is still present in the region today.

A more recent example of how women’s identification as wives and mothers carries over into collective action is the mobilization efforts in Cheran, Michoacan, Mexico over the recent years. On April of 2011, groups of mostly women mobilized against drug cartels to stop the destruction of a large portion of the forests located in Cheran in Michoacan, Mexico, despite the participants either being or knowing victims of extortion and intimidation by the very same illegal loggers backed by the drug cartels that were destroying the forests. The forests are a great resource for communities around the area. Therefore, women being affected by the problems arising and resulting from the destruction of the forest and unconvinced that the government appointed police would help, mobilized the community in an effort to solve the problem.

Therefore, it seems as though women do behave according to their identifications as wives and mothers and these identifications lead them to concerns regarding everyday needs of society. Considering that their collective action platforms seem to coincide with problems they come across that intervene with their ability to provide for their families and community, it should be the case that with entry into the political sphere, this very identification should lead to
support for policies that deal with these very things, such as social welfare policies. Observing that Latin American women have a long-standing tradition of identifying as mothers and wives even in the public sector outside of the home, it is plausible to expect this same identification to carry out in matters regarding female participation in governmental positions.

Women and Policy Preferences

On the more generalized topic of women and politics, scholars generally focus on the gender gap in attitudes, political preferences, and public opinion. Scholars note that men are typically more conservative than women when it comes to different types of political issues (Kaufmann 2006). Men are more conservative than women on matters of social welfare spending such as spending on the poor and social services (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999).

Studies analyzing the gender gap also demonstrate a similar pattern regarding other types of policy issues. For instance, studies show that women are more likely to support policies of protection and prevention while men are more likely to support policies of punishment. Jon Hurwitz and Shannon Smithey (1998) find that women are largely concerned with preventing crime because of their concern for the wellbeing of others, while men are more likely to focus on punishment when given the option between prevention and punishment. This particular study relates to the literature mentioned above stating that women are more care-oriented and selfless than men. Being more care-oriented, women support policies that prevent crime in order to prevent what will inevitably negatively affect a person/s. Prevention is better for everyone. Men are more likely to support a policy of punishment because they are less care-oriented and maybe they are not as concerned with the consequences of the crime itself. Studies analyzing the gender gap also demonstrate a similar pattern regarding other types of policy issues. Women are less
likely than men to support policies dealing with militarism and defense spending, but more likely to support policies dealing with social welfare and safety nets for the poor (Jaquette 1997).

In studies analyzing the gender gap in several different countries, scholars show a similar pattern emerging from postindustrial countries. Women are more liberal in ideology than men in these countries and therefore advocate more progressive policies (Inglehart and Norris 2000). Women tend to align with parties that are left of center because of modernization, which changes traditional gender roles and causes ideological shifts that make women more likely to support more progressive policies. Though there are associations between Latin American women and the right of the political spectrum, I expect that this association is no longer observable. Women in Latin America have now experienced various forms of participation; including community involvement, mobilization efforts and collective action. Women in the region typically mobilize around social issues, such as health, education, and poverty relief. These experiences suggest that women are ideologically leaning towards the left of the political spectrum rather than to the right of it. Also, the household or family hierarchy in Latin America, which is typically used as the justification for women’s lack of participation and the direction of their policy preferences in the region, has shifted as a cause of modernity. There are growing numbers of female-headed households and there is evidence that even married women are becoming employed in growing numbers (Molyneux 2002). The advent of female-headed households is evident by the shift in policies regarding government assistance from the traditional universal programs to targeting women specifically. Increasingly, programs focused on aiding citizens are targeting women because of the heightened number of female-headed households in the region (Chant 2003). These types of programs are being structured based on the platform of children’s rights, protection and welfare in an effort to increase their quality of life.
The break-up of the traditional patriarchal family could signify a shift in women’s ideology. Having different concerns than those allotted to them prior to their involvement in the public sphere, it seems as though Latin American women are shifting their political identity towards the left of the political center. As stated above, prior literature denotes that women are more likely than men to support social welfare policies, particularly in the well developed Western democracies of the world. Thus, I believe that with modernity, a similar development has occurred in Latin American countries and therefore we should observe higher rates of female support for social welfare.

The gender gap in opinions is also evident at the governmental level and not just via constituency public opinion. When analyzing welfare policy specifically, women in government tend to be more liberal in ideology and opinion than men (Poggione 2004). These findings also apply to women’s opinions in conservative parties. Sarah Poggione (2004) finds that in the United States, female legislators belonging to conservative parties are still more liberal in ideology regarding welfare than their male counterparts. Therefore, studies find that not only are women in general more likely to support progressive policies and issues, but also women once in government tend to be supportive of the same types of issues, at least in the more developed areas of the world.

Women in Politics

allows women to attain government positions, rather than the impact women’s attainment of such positions has on the government or society. Most of the scholarship that focuses on the effects women have once they are empowered involves findings that depict women’s participation as correlating with greater human rights (Melander 2005), a decreased level of corruption, the promotion of honest government (Dollar et al. 1998), and a decreased use of violence or militarized disputes between countries (Ragen and Paskeviciute 2003, and Caprioli 2000). Therefore, women in government change government priorities and behavior by shifting government behavior towards the more peaceful option as well as decreasing levels of corruption. This research alludes to the fact that women influence government differently than their male counterparts with regards to their policy preferences and governing style.

Outside of the Latin American region, studies have proposed that women’s presence in government does have a different effect on government’s policy preferences compared to the male-dominated governments of the past. Arend Lijphart (1991) finds that democracies that have higher rates of women in legislatures tend to pass more laws that benefit children. In line with Lijphart’s findings, Susan Carroll (2001) finds that women in government in the United States have made strides in policies of concern to women, children, family and feminist issues. Raghabendra Chattopadhyay and Esther Duflo (2004) find that women in leadership positions in certain village councils in India focus on providing different kinds of goods to their villages than men in the same positions. Their study shows that once women are in power, the focus shifts to policies pertaining to public goods provisions indicative of women’s concerns and directly affecting people’s everyday necessities.

In a more detailed effort to determine female concerns once in legislature, Wangnerud (2006) studies female versus male legislator’s priorities over time in Sweden. The author finds
that overall, female legislators mentioned social policy, family policy, elderly care, and health care in their campaigns at a higher rate than their male counterparts. Furthermore, the author finds that female legislators were more likely than male legislators to mention these policies as policies of personal interest (Wangnerud 2006). Similarly, Bratton and Haynie (1999) find that in state legislatures in the U.S., female representatives are more likely than male representatives to introduce bills on education, health care, welfare, and children’s rights.

What the above findings have in common is the recognition that there is a trend stemming out of women’s empowerment in the public realm: as women gain power, different types of issues come up to the forefront. However, though many academics focus on these types of studies, most are conducted outside of the Latin American region in more developed countries.

There is some indication that women in governmental positions in Latin America and elsewhere are more likely to support social welfare policy areas. Women have been associated with “soft” issues, such as health, gender equality and education when in government offices (Buvinic and Roza 2004). In a study done across different states within the United States, Amy Caiazza (2002) finds that greater women’s representation is correlated positively with women-friendly policies. She finds that women in legislatures increase the amount of policies having to do with welfare, child support, violence against women, reproductive rights, and employment.

In researching women in politics in Latin America, scholars find that women, once in power, typically hold cabinet positions or portfolios that have lower prestige, but that are deemed part of the social welfare policy realm. This includes portfolios such as Children and Family, Tourism, Women’s Affairs, Education, and Environment portfolios as opposed to Finance and Economic portfolios and Defense portfolios that are deem outside of the social welfare policy
realm (Maria Escobar-Lemmon and Michelle Taylor-Robinson (2005), Htun and Piscopo 2010). Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2005) find that very rarely women are able to attain cabinet posts that hold higher prestige, such as Defense and Public Security, Foreign Affairs, and Finance and Economy portfolios. Htun and Piscopo (2010) find support for the above statement and explain that in Latin America specifically, women that have made it to cabinet posts typically are in charge of policies that are deemed “less-powerful policy areas.” In other words, women tend to be in charge of policies regarding social welfare. Similarly, Thomas (1994) finds that female legislators voting records, issue attitudes, and policy priorities are different from male legislators’ priorities and that women focus more on things like women’s issues and issues on children and the family. This finding suggests that women do prioritize differently from men and that once in power, these priorities remain in place.

Leslie Schwindt-Bayer (2012), studying the subject in Latin American countries, finds that women are more likely than men to sponsor and cosponsor bills that are indicative of “women’s domain.” In Argentina, female legislators are more likely to cosponsor bills on education and health and less likely to sponsor bills on issues such as the economy. The same is the case with female legislators in Colombia: female legislators are more likely to sponsor bills relating to health than relating to agriculture. Also, aside from being more likely to sponsor these types of bills, female representatives appear to take female constituent’s concerns into consideration more so than their male counterparts. This includes attending various types of activities held by women’s groups.

The findings mentioned above indicate that women do not only end up participating in cabinets in charge of what is typically deemed traditionally women’s domain, but also are more likely to produce legislation in this domain and be involved in what their female constituents are
doing as well. However, even though scholars find evidence that women tend to be the gender that works within and around these types of policy issues and tend to legislate these types of policies, studies are still lacking when it comes to assessing whether women actually have a different effect on government’s policy priorities towards more social welfare policies in Latin America than their male counterparts.

Women’s Representation

If women have different policy preferences than men, where women are inclined to support social welfare and are associated with the types of portfolios mentioned above, it is important to consider what their empowerment means in terms of representation. Scholars discuss the term “substantive representation,” or the occurrence of legislators of a certain group carrying out the groups’ preferences and policy concerns and actually making policy changes (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). In this case, women are representing female concerns and making a difference regarding these concerns in their policy efforts. Other scholars explain that historically disadvantaged groups, those that have not been represented in government in the past, should be represented by members of the same group (Dovi 2002). Scholars exploring this idea discuss the term “descriptive representation,” or the assumption that groups that have not been represented in the past in government, should now be represented by people of that same group. In line with Anne Phillips’ (1998) argument in support for descriptive representation, women are better equipped to represent women because it gives the female population a chance to have their interests and concerns heard in the public sphere. Studies show that descriptive representation increases the groups’ participation in government, trust in government, and strengthened links between legislators and their constituents (Banducci et al. 2004). Thus, having
an increase in female legislators in the region is already a positive factor in terms of democratic principles. Whether the increasing descriptive representation in Latin America is producing better substantive representation of women’s interests is relatively underexplored. I expect that this is the case. Women should represent women because historically in Latin America women have been disadvantaged and ignored politically and have differing concerns from men and therefore are the best representatives of the female population. Furthermore, the increase in female representatives in the region should change policy priorities in government towards policies of concern to women. Therefore, I expect that heightened descriptive representation in Latin America will result in better substantive representation. This, of course, would only be the case if it is found that women do have differing concerns from men in Latin America and that female legislators represent these very concerns and make a difference regarding these concerns in government.

The cause for the lack of female participation in politics in Latin American countries can be summed up as follows: Latin American politics have been predominantly authoritarian and have lacked support for widespread participation. This coupled with the fact that patriarchal traditions have reigned supreme, where politics has been known as a man’s world and there is no place for women at the “boys club” has made it so that women have been excluded from the public sphere for some time. Thus, with a history of lacking representation in government, women should know best in terms of the interests and policies that have not been voiced sufficiently in government because of their obliged participatory absence and should be able to represent these interest and change policy accordingly. Therefore, it is important to determine what female concerns are and whether these concerns are translated into female legislative behavior to discover what kinds of representation the population is experiencing, which would
tell an informative story about democracy in the region. If what has been found about women and government in the literature in other regions of the world is present in the Latin American region, we should see women supporting social welfare issues as well as women representing these very issues in government.

Author’s Expectations

I borrow from the literature depicting women as different from men in policy preferences and political behavior and apply it to determine whether women display similar preferences and behavior in Latin America. I also use knowledge from prior literature on female and male differences to determine whether women, once in government, have a different effect from men on government’s policy priorities. I expect the gender gap in public opinion to be present in Latin America as it is in more developed regions of the world because, just as other postindustrial societies, the region has experienced a similar transition into modernity, which has changed traditional gender roles. With these changes, I suspect that female concerns will be more aligned with progressive ideology as has been the case elsewhere. I also expect that descriptive representation of women will increase substantive representation of women’s issues. I believe that gender plays a large role in legislative behavior and considering that women in the region have continually mobilized to advocate for issues considered part of the social welfare domain (or the “women’s domain”), I expect this to also be the case when they are elected into office.

Going further with these expectations, I think that gender will have such an important impact that it will be observable at a grander scale; mainly in overall government behavior. I expect that having higher percentages of female legislators in Latin American legislatures will change government policy priorities and this will be observable in government budget allocations.
towards social welfare. Therefore, I will be observing the relationship between gender and social welfare policy from various angles. I will test this relationship and demonstrate its existence in public opinion, legislative voting behavior, and government spending priorities. I provide a case study and large N analysis at the country level as well as the Latin American region in order to demonstrate that gender has a positive effect on social welfare policy. To test this relationship I ask the following questions:

1. Is women’s support for social welfare observable in public opinion?
2. Are women’s concerns observed in public opinion evident at the legislative level? Do female legislators vote in support for social welfare policies?
3. Do female legislators have an overall effect on government? Do higher percentages of female legislators increase social welfare spending?

If women are more care-oriented, are the gender that predominantly becomes involved with social issues, and identify with motherhood, then I expect female presence in government will have a direct effect on policies regarding social welfare, which are associated with society’s wellbeing- i.e. quality of life and social conditions in the area. Literature on the effects of women’s empowerment in Latin America is minute; therefore this study will add to the literature on women and politics by analyzing female effects on social welfare at different analytical levels in Latin America to discover whether what has been studied in the Western well-developed regions of the world is applicable and generalizable to less developed regions and new democracies. If it is the case that women affect social welfare policies positively in the region, women’s empowerment could have several implications beyond that of better social conditions.

To begin with, finding that women do make a difference regarding policies of concern to women advances our knowledge about representation in the Latin American region. This finding
would support claims in more developed countries such as Canada, where female legislators have been found to represent an array of different policies of concern to women (Tremblay 1998). This would signify not only that women in this region behave similarly to women in other regions of the world, but also that democracies in this region are becoming more representative of the population as a whole, starting with one minority: women.

Also, exploring female effects on social welfare in the Latin American region has implications regarding democratization and its effects on wellbeing and quality of life. If having a democratic system of governance means being more inclusive of gender and female representation has positive effects on social welfare, then it would provide more support to the claim that democratic forms of government lead to a better quality of life. Wickrama and Mulford (1996) find that democracy has a positive effect on social wellbeing even after controlling for economic development. These results could possibly be tied to democratic principles that advocate for an inclusive decision-making body, where women are encouraged to participate and represent women’s concerns that purport government aid in matters that directly affect citizens’ wellbeing. It is possible that gender effects are mostly present in democratic forms of government, thus explaining why better quality of life is linked to a democratic form of government. Furthermore, specifically studying the Latin American region, Huber et al. (2006) find that politics matters when assessing inequality. The authors find that democratic governance allows leaders interested in increasing welfare to create parties and a support base that will enable the increase of welfare and these redistributive policies directly influence the poorest sections of the population, resulting in decreased inequality. They also find that government spending on welfare policies has a decreasing effect on inequality in countries that have a strong democracy versus those with a weak and less consolidated democracy. This suggests that how
the government structures welfare policies and what the government allocates towards these policies has an impact on inequality and can help bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, thereby, improving social conditions in the area. If women are found to have a positive influence on welfare policies and spending, it could be the case that what is most useful in solving inequality is not just a democratic form of governance, but one that encourages heightened female presence in government where women can represent women’s interests in support of social welfare.

Organization of Dissertation

My dissertation is organized as follows. I begin by analyzing women’s concerns compared to men’s concerns outside of government in 18 Latin American countries in Chapter 2. I use survey data compiled in Latin America to discover whether gender gaps in opinion are present in the region and use this information to determine female concerns. I specifically analyze the gender gap in public opinion on issues regarding health and education, government efficacy in dealing with social issues, satisfaction with social services available and support for female leadership in the region. By determining what kinds of issues women are concerned with outside of government, I can explore whether their issue priorities outside of government affect female behavior once involved in government.

I explore this particular issue in Chapter 3. I expect that female concerns will involve social welfare issues and that, once in government, we will observe female legislative behavior in support of social welfare policies. I use the case of Mexico’s 60th legislature to discover whether female legislators vote on roll call votes in accordance to female concerns as depicted in

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2 Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela.
Chapter 2. I analyze the effect that female legislators in Mexico have on policies regarding social welfare in general and policies regarding health as well as education specifically.

In Chapter 4, I test whether women in the legislatures affect budget allocations towards social welfare policies differently than men in the legislature in the hopes of determining whether female participation in the legislature has an effect on government behavior. I specifically analyze whether female presence in legislatures in Latin America increases government spending on matters regarding health and education. I expect that higher percentages of women in the legislatures will increase government spending on matters of social welfare.

In Chapter 5, I provide a summary of the findings in the three previous empirical chapters and discuss their implications followed by concluding remarks. During the discussion of the findings I discuss how they relate to the larger body of literature on the subject and demonstrate how the results largely confirm the findings of previous research conducted in other countries.

Overall, throughout the chapters in this dissertation, I expect to find that women in Latin America behave similarly to women in other regions of the world. If women are said identify with motherhood, are more care oriented, tend to be the gender more likely to support social policies, and are representative of women’s concerns once in politics as shown in the more developed countries of the world, then this should also be the case in Latin America, where women have gone through similar role changes in society.
Chapter 2. What do Women Want With Regards to Policy? Women and Public Opinion in Latin America

In this chapter I explore women’s policy preferences in Latin America. Academics studying public opinion trends find a gender opinion gap in public opinion. Men are found more likely than women to support policies on defense, while women are found more likely than men to support policies on social welfare. Research on this topic consists mostly of analyses in highly developed Western countries rather than in less developed countries. Most studies exclude the Latin American region. To fill this lacuna in the literature, I explore the gender gap in Latin America in order to find whether the gender gap seen elsewhere is present in the region. With the changes in both governmental structures and the traditional family hierarchy, female policy preferences might be shifting in the same way that it has in more developed Western countries, from conservative to more progressive ones that include government involvement in social welfare.

Women have become an important aspect of the development literature noting that women might be the answer to underdevelopment and inequality. Some scholars state that, “the reproductive and nurturing roles of women are central to understanding the well-being of individuals, households, communities, and indeed nations” (Mkandawire 2001, 6). With high inequality levels and low standards of living in the Latin American region, it is important to find a solution. If women are more likely to support social policy, their entrance into politics may make a difference with regards to the amount of social welfare policy purported by government, and therefore women might have the ability to increase the availability of social welfare programs that heighten citizen’s standards of living. Before delving into women’s effects on social policies and their overall effect on available social programs, I explore whether prior to female participation in governmental positions, women have positive attitudes to governmental
social welfare policies. If women are more inclined than men to support social welfare policies, they should carry this concern for social issues once empowered (a subject I explore in later chapters). Women’s natural identification as caretakers may translate into higher concerns for social issues, particularly issues that affect people’s wellbeing. Furthermore, I briefly explore attitudes about female leadership to determine whether women are more supportive of female participation in government than men.

Women’s identification as nurturers is very much ingrained into Latin American societies. This is evident when investigating different types of legislation in the area. For instance, in Guatemala, the law denotes that women, when married, are obliged to care for their children and the home (Chant 2003). There is no law like this for men. In fact, aside from Costa Rica, women have been the main targets of family planning initiatives, thus leaving women as the gender responsible for family planning (Chant 2003). In Nicaragua, the law requires women to take care of their husband’s home once they are legally married (Chant 2003). Laws like these are still in place, despite of the fact that two income households are increasingly becoming the norm in the region. Laws like these, in addition to the fact that care for the elderly remains part of women’s domestic roles, demonstrate that women are still expected to be the primary caretakers in the family and thus continue to identify themselves in this way (Chant 2003).

However, considering the change in gender roles in Latin America, where women are now in the public sphere and still responsible for the household, it should be the case female policy preferences will align with policies that will alleviate their workload by increasing the wellbeing of their family as well as the rest of society. I expect that women, because of their

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3 In Costa Rica, the government passed the Responsible Paternity Law, which states that men who are fathers of out-of-wedlock children must have a DNA test to prove their paternity and once their paternity is proven they must pay alimony and help with the mother’s maternity costs, thus providing financial support necessary for the child. This is one of the first laws of its kind in Latin America (Chant 2003).
responsibilities mandated by law, and their ability to give birth, and their more recent
empowerment will be more supportive of government policy provisions in matters of social
welfare than their male counterparts. Furthermore, I expect women to be more supportive of
female political leaders than men because of this very reason; female politicians may be more
likely to advocate for social welfare policies.

The chapter is organized as follows. I first outline the relevant literature purported by
scholarship on the subject. I then state the theory and hypotheses that drive the analysis, followed
by details about the data used. Later, I describe the concepts and operationalizations used in the
methods testing the hypotheses and, lastly, I discuss the results and state their implications.

**Literature Review**

There seems to be a consensus among scholars, at least in studies conducted in the United
States, that there is a gender gap in public opinion. The gender gap in public opinion explains
that women and men differ in their political behavior, whether it is how they vote, what policies
they support, or their political identification. Scholarship has found that a divide exists between
men and women’s political affiliation (Norrander 1999). And in an effort to explain this divide,
academics have focused on both men and women separately as the cause for the gender gap
(Kaufmann 2006). Scholarly research on the gender gap has found that it is women’s and men’s
different policy views that explains the gap in their political behavior and the consensus is that
men are more conservative than women when it comes to various political issues (Ibid). Scholars
also assert that the gender gap is driven by the differences in how men and women prioritize
certain political issues (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999). In other words, men and women place a
different level of importance to some policies over others and this results in larger or smaller
divides depending on the issue analyzed. Overall, however, the literature finds that women and men are different when it comes to matters of the political domain.

Initially, what was coined the gender gap began with studies noting that women were more supportive of Democratic candidates in the United States and that men were more supportive of Republican candidates (Norrander 1999). Scholars studying the gender gap later began to focus on gender differences in support for force abroad as well as compassion issues domestically (Conover and Sapiro 1993, Norrander 1999). Tom Smith (1984) explains that most of the research conducted on the subject denotes that women and men differ in their approval of violence in areas such as international relations, defense spending and social control. In these studies, men were more likely than women to support the “violent or forceful option” (Smith 1984, 384). Daniel Wirls (1986) provides a study focusing on the gender gap in American politics. Wirls (1986) offers a description of what the public opinion gap means explaining that the conventional view is that the gap in public opinion refers to women’s more liberal policy positions as compared to men’s. The gender gap is mostly noted in policy areas having to do with force, compassion, and risk. More specifically, the policy areas that women are found to be most supportive of are governmental involvement in social welfare policies, health policies, environmental protection policies, and gender equality policies, while men are most supportive of policy areas having to do with militarism and defense spending as well as nuclear power. Barbara Norrander (1999) finds that in the United States, men are increasingly leaning towards more conservative positions, while women are increasingly leaning towards more progressive positions supporting policies that fall under the guise of compassion issues. Similarly, Karen Kaufmann and John Petrocik (1999) find that in the United States, men are more conservative on issues regarding social spending. Thus, throughout the literature on the gender gap in public
opinion in the United States, women are found to be greater supporters of matters regarding social welfare than their male counterparts.

Will Arts and John Gelissen (2001) study citizens’ attitudes towards solidarity and justice principles when determining income differences in 20 different welfare states to determine whether these attitudes affect the type of welfare regime constructed. They find that gender does play a role in attitudes towards these two notions, stating that women, more so than men, prefer a high level of solidarity and are more supportive of the need principle. The authors explain that the need principle denotes that government spending or aid towards welfare issues are justified because people need that aid from the government (Arts and Gelissen 2001). This particular finding speaks towards the idea that women are more likely than men to be aware of societal needs and are more likely to be in support of government intervention to aid in those needs. Morten Blekesaune and Jill Quadagno (2003) study public attitudes towards welfare state policies in 24 countries, not including Latin American countries. Among their results, the authors find that women are more likely than men to have positive attitudes, are more supportive towards the unemployed, the sick and the elderly and have greater egalitarian ideology overall, which explains a high amount of the gender differences in opinion (Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003). Overall the authors find that at the individual level, women are more supportive of welfare state policies than men, again speaking towards the idea that women are more attune with societal needs. The study includes countries that are not solely Western well-developed countries, thus positing that women are more likely to be supportive of social welfare issues even in countries that can be considered less developed. However, whether women’s more progressive ideology is present in the Latin American region overall remains underexplored.
Scholars have several different explanations as to why the gender gap exists. Susan Howell and Christine Day (2000) study the sources of the gender gap in the United States using the 1996 National Elections Study. Howell and Day (2000) analyze the socioeconomic explanation for the gender gap, the social role explanation to the gender gap, the basic values explanation for the gender gap, and the women’s autonomy explanation to the gender gap. The socioeconomic explanation denotes that differences in public opinion between men and women have to do with family income, education, and occupational status. The social role explanation denotes that the differences in public opinion between men and women are due to variables such as how many children are living in a household as well as whether the individual has a redistributive occupation where the occupation is highly affected by redistributive government policies. The basic values explanation denotes that the gender gap may be influenced by things like how egalitarian a person believes he/she is, how helpful the person believes he/she is, and how religious a person believes he/she is. The women’s autonomy explanation denotes that the gender gap may be influenced by things like the level of education of an individual, their marital status, their profession, as well as whether the person came of age during the women’s movement. Using these kinds of explanations and variables and using six issues that most scholars have found expose a gender gap in public opinion, Howell and Day (2000) find that the gender gap is a complex phenomenon and that it is caused by “the cultural role of women expressed through economics, social roles, and basic values” (871). The authors also find that women are more inclined to support liberal views on political issues, which could be a result of women’s tendency to have more egalitarian and helping values than their male counterparts. Thus, it appears that across several studies and controlling for multiple factors, there is a gender gap and it results in a pattern; women tend to be more supportive of social welfare policies and
less supportive of political issues having to do with force. Whether this is the case outside of the United States remains relatively underexplored.

In one of the only studies on the gender gap in public opinion inclusive of less developed countries, Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2000) depict whether the gender gap denoting women as more left-wing than men is evident in the United States as well as elsewhere. Inglehart and Norris (2000) find that there has been a realignment in gender differences in postindustrial societies where female voters are more left-wing than male voters. This finding is what the authors coin as the “modern gender gap.” This is opposed to what the authors call the “traditional gender gap,” which posits that women were more likely than men to support center-right policies. Inglehart and Norris’ (2000) findings are relevant in most West European states and the United States and their reasoning for the shift in the gender gap stems from the new roles given to women in postindustrial societies due to new structural and cultural trends common to these societies. They suggest that as modernization changes the traditional roles that are given to women and men, so to will their policy opinions change along with their ideology. Their findings hold and are robust for the developed countries examined, but they do not find evidence that the “modern gender gap” exists in developing countries, particularly the four Latin American countries examined. The authors use the World Values Survey questionnaires for their analysis of the “modern gender gap.” For the data collected for their key variable, “left-right ideology scale,” respondents were asked to place themselves on an ideological scale. Self-placements have several methodological faults; for instance, the left-right scale, particularly the location of the center is sensitive to context where the left-right scale does not necessarily mean the same thing

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4 The countries/regions included in Inglehart and Norris’ (2000) study are as follows: United States, France, West Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Australia, Spain, Finland, East Germany, Estonia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Poland, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Japan, Norway, Netherlands, Britain, Sweden, North Ireland, Belgium, Italy.

5 They test their hypotheses using Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico as their developing countries.
from one country or region to the next (particularly when analyzing Western well-developed countries with less-developed ones). These problems may partly explain why the gender gap was not observable in the Latin American countries studied. Also, self-placement on an ideological scale in the early 1990s should be different than respondents’ self-placements on a scale in the late 1990s and 2000s in the Latin American region. Women’s entrance into government has been increasing astonishingly since the 1990s and the traditional family hierarchy has changed dramatically as well, thus possibly changing people’s ideology or a demonstration of this very change; things that may not have been captured or present around the time the authors conducted their study. Inglehart and Norris’s (2000) study examines these Latin American countries in the 1990s, thus, it is reasonable to expect that at the time that the survey data was collected, a majority of women had not yet experienced the shift in gender roles, including increasing empowerment and the increasing breakup of the traditional nuclear family, that is associated with modernity. As women are and have become more active in the political sphere since then in Latin America, their policy opinion and ideological ties seem to be shifting towards more liberal factions of the political parties. Changes have been abundant in the area from 1990s to the 2000s. Figure 1 below shows a comparison in women’s participation in the lower houses of the legislatures in the 18 countries studied in the year 1990 as compared to their participation in the year 2010. Note that there has been a substantial increase in the inclusion of women in legislatures in all Latin American countries. Thus, I suspect that due to the more recent changes in women’s roles in society, the modern gender gap could be observable now rather than at the time that Inglehart and Norris (2000) conducted their study.

Most of the literature on the gender gap in public opinion, whether in the U.S. or elsewhere, explains that women are increasingly aligning with the left side of the political
spectrum, thus becoming more inclined to support social welfare policies than their male counterparts. Some of the literature posits the possibility that “women prefer larger government because they are more likely to benefit from the services provided and less likely to pay for them through progressive taxation…[women] are more inclined to support social spending on social

Figure 1. Women’s Participation in Legislature in 1990 and 2010

insurance and public provision of private goods such as education, health and housing, as they are more exposed to economic hardship than men in case of marital breakdown or widowhood” (Aidt and Dallal 2008). Now that the more traditional family hierarchy is changing in the Latin American region, with women increasingly becoming a single parent or working mothers, and their increased empowerment, I expect the modern gender gap to be observable in Latin American countries.

I expect women in Latin America are becoming more progressive in ideology and are more concerned with social welfare issues that they will be more exposed to personally. Thus, I
expect to observe a gender gap in opinion towards social welfare issue areas, such as health and education. Furthermore, I expect that women show more approval and support than men towards the idea of female representation and empowerment. I expect this to be the case because, among other things, women might suspect that having female representation will be more likely to shift the agenda towards issues of concern to women; mainly social welfare issues.

**Theory and Hypotheses**

Given the existing literature on the gender gap in several countries, I expect that the same pattern exists in Latin American countries. If the gender gap exists in Latin America, we should observe, through responses in survey data, that women have different issue preferences than men when it comes to social welfare issues such as health and education as well as opinions on female leadership. We should observe a gender gap in opinion when analyzing questions about the wellbeing of citizens in Latin American countries.

Therefore, I hypothesize that,

*H1: Women are less likely than men to support the force option when government is trying to solve problems.*

*H2: Women are more likely than men to view health services and education as important problems faced by their country.*

*H3: Women are more likely than men to have a poor opinion of the government combating things like poverty and unemployment as well as the extent to which they support human rights.*

*H4: Women are more likely than men to be concerned or unsatisfied with the education system and availability of health services in their town of residence.*
If women have differing concerns from men on matters relating to social welfare, it is important to determine how these concerns are better represented. Morgan and Buice (2013) find that in Latin America trends that increase opportunities for women only affect women’s attitudes towards their own advancement. In fact, the authors find that in countries where women have more opportunities for advancement, such as economic advancement, men are less likely to support female equality. Morgan and Buice (2013) also find that men’s attitudes about female empowerment are contingent on decisions made by political elites, where it is only if elites support female entry into political positions, that they will be supportive as well. Their findings suggest that men find it threatening when women are able to climb up the latter. Furthermore, their findings suggest that what may be most beneficial for women’s empowerment is women’s empowerment itself. As women achieve higher political offices, people will become more supportive of female leadership. With these findings in mind, I expect to find a gender gap in opinions towards female leadership, where women are more likely than men to support policies that will increase female representation in government. It may be the case that women in government better represent women’s differing concerns. Thus women are more supportive of female representation in government.

I hypothesize that:

\textit{H5: Women are more likely than men to support the use of gender quotas to elect women to legislature.}

\textit{H6: Women are more likely than men to believe that men are not better leaders than women.}
**About the Data**

I use survey data from Vanderbilt University’s Latin American Public Opinion Project’s (LAPOP) Americas Barometer\(^6\) to test the hypotheses. Americas Barometer data are a compilation of survey data consisting of random representative samples of all Latin American countries in the years 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012, where respondents are asked to respond to different questions concerning political views in their country as well as some information about the individual respondent.\(^7\) I will use data compiled by LAPOP for 18 Latin American countries in the years for which the surveys are available.\(^8\) Combined, there are over 100,000 respondents to the questionnaires in the 18 Latin American countries examined.

The following is a description of the concepts and variable operationalizations used to test the hypotheses.

**Concepts and Operationalizations**

I use various dependent variables to test the overall theory. I construct each dependent variable using survey data from Vanderbilt University’s Latin American Public Opinion Project’s (LAPOP) Americas Barometer. For \(H1\), I want to determine whether there is a gender gap when examining respondent’s feelings towards having a government that rules with force. In order to do so I use the question “*Do you think that our country needs a government with an iron*...”

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\(^8\) In the analysis, I only use data and responses from questions from the LAPOP’s Americas Barometer core questionnaire that stay consistent over years and across countries for the time and countries studied.
fist, or that problems can be resolved with everyone’s participation?” The respondents were given two options to choose from, thus I construct a dichotomous dependent variable where 1 signifies that the respondent answered a government with an iron fist and 0 if the respondent answered everyone’s participation. This particular question can get at two different things. I can get at support from respondents for democratic principles and I can also get at respondents feelings about the use of force or peace. Here I can test whether men, more so than women, support the force option in accordance with previous scholarly literature.

For $H2$, I want to determine whether women and men have different concerns when it comes to what they think are the major issues faced by their country in an effort to determine whether women are more concerned with social welfare problems than men. In order to get at these differences I use the question “In your opinion, what is the most serious problem faced by the country?” This question can help get at the idea of whether there is a gender gap when it comes to issues of social welfare, using education and health as an example of social welfare issues. The respondents are given a list of options from which they can only choose one. These options include social welfare issues such as a lack of health services and a lack of or poor quality of education. If the respondents choose one of these options the dependent variable is coded as 1 and 0 if the respondent chooses a different option.

For $H3$, I want to determine whether men and women view the government’s efforts to combat social type issues differently. I use three questions to test $H3$. The first question is, “To what extent do you think the government combats poverty?” This question can help determine which gender is more critical of the government regarding its efforts to combat poverty. The

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9 The question is coded DEM11 in the Americas Barometer core questionnaire.
10 The question is coded A4 in the Americas Barometer core questionnaire. Each response was coded using a different identification number. (i.e. Lack of Health Services = 22, Problems with Transportation =60, etc….).
11 The question is coded as N1 in the Americas Barometer core questionnaire.
second question I use to test $H_3$ is, “To what extent do you think the government combats unemployment?”\(^{12}\) This question can help determine which gender is more critical of the government regarding its efforts to combat unemployment. The third question I use to test $H_3$ is the question “To what extent do you think the government supports human rights?”\(^{13}\) This question can help determine which gender is more critical of the government’s protection of human rights. The three questions are constructed into dependent variables which are coded as 1-7 scales where 1 signifies that the respondent answered not at all, while 7 signifies that the respondent answered very much.

For $H_4$ I want to determine the extent to which women and men differ in their satisfaction with social welfare services in their towns in an effort to depict a gender gap in satisfaction with government provisions of social welfare. In order to get at these differences I use the question “In the town/area where you reside, are you satisfied or unsatisfied with the system of education and schools?”\(^{14}\) I also use the question “In the town/area where you reside, are you satisfied or unsatisfied with the availability and quality of health services?”\(^{15}\) The dependent variable is coded as 1 if the respondents are satisfied and 0 if the respondents are not satisfied.\(^{16}\)

Hypotheses 1 through 4 are dedicated to finding and exploring gender differences in opinions on social welfare and government. Hypotheses 5 and 6 focus on finding and exploring the gender gap in attitudes towards female political participation and leadership. For $H_5$, I want to explore women’s and men’s opinion on government policies with the aim of increasing female

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\(^{12}\) The question is coded as N12 in the Americas Barometer core questionnaire.

\(^{13}\) The question is coded as N10 in the Americas Barometer core questionnaire.

\(^{14}\) The question is coded SD3 in the Americas Barometer core questionnaire.

\(^{15}\) The question is coded SD6 in the Americas Barometer core questionnaire.

\(^{16}\) Though obviously there are other social welfare services that government can provide, health and education are the two main services that I am concerned with in the entirety of my analyses.
representation in government. In order to do so I use the question “To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the implementation of gender quotas to increase elected female legislators?”17 The dependent variable is constructed as a scale from 1 through 10 where 1 signifies that the respondent strongly disapproves and 10 signifies that the respondent strongly approves.

For H6, I want to observe women’s and men’s perceptions of female leaders. In order to get at these perceptions I use the question “Some say that in general, men are better political leaders than women. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?”18 I construct the dependent variable as a dichotomy where 1 signifies that the respondent agrees with the statement and 0 signifies that the respondent disagrees with the statement.

In order to determine whether there is a gender gap in public opinion, I use different questions in the Americas Barometer survey that can measure or depict public opinion on matters concerning social welfare and female empowerment. Overall, I am interested in testing whether female respondents are more likely than men to be concerned with social welfare issues and whether female respondents are more supportive of the idea of female political participation and leadership.

I construct the independent variable, Gender, using LAPOP’s survey data. The variable equals 1 if the respondent is a female and 0 if the respondent is a male. The data for the variable Gender comes from the survey question “Q1: ”Sex: 1.Male 2.Female.”

In order to determine that it is gender that is driving the rise in support for social welfare and support for female empowerment rather than other factors, I control for several variables that

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17 In Americas Barometer core questionnaire the question is coded as EREF1.
18 The question is coded VB50 in the Americas Barometer core questionnaire.
might obstruct the relationship observed between women and support for social welfare as well as women and support for female political participation and leadership.

I control for various demographic factors. I control for Age because several studies find that age has an affect on policy preferences and government spending (Aidt and Dallal 2008, Neto and Borsani 2004, Kaufman and Segura-Umbriega 2001, Brown and Hunter 1999). The literature notes that the larger the section of the population that is young and elderly, the more likely that they support social welfare policies. Studies also show that individuals form their opinions based on characteristics such as age, education, religion and marital status (Pizmony-Levy and Ponce 2013, Hayes and Guardino 2011). Therefore, because age affects an individual’s policy preference, I control for it in order to eliminate the possibility of a spurious relationship between gender and preferences. I create three different variables to control for age: Age, 25 years and younger and 55 years and older. The continuous age variable is added to most of the regressions in order to control for general age patterns. However, for some models I use the variables 25 years or younger and 55 years and older in order to explore the effect that these two sections of the population have on the dependent variable. Due to what scholarship has noted in the literature, the younger portion of the population and the elder portion of the population should be more likely to support social welfare and therefore these variables are useful to capture this very effect in the Latin American region.

I also control for the political ideology of the respondent. If the respondent places himself/herself to the left of the political spectrum, I expect them, and according to prior literature (Huber et al. 2008), to be more supportive of social welfare and female political leadership than if the respondent places himself/herself to the right of the political spectrum regardless of gender. I use the LI question in the Americas Barometer questionnaire to construct
this variable. The variable consists of the ideological self-placement of respondents on a left to right scale where 1 is left and 10 is right. By controlling for the political ideology of respondents, a variable that affects policy preferences, I can test the relationship between women and support for social welfare and female leadership without letting ideological effects disrupt these relationships.

I control for whether the respondent has children because it is more likely that support for health and education and other social services will come from respondents that have a necessity for it, such as having children that need good health and educational services. I expect that those respondents with children will be more likely to support social welfare policies than those without children regardless of their gender. Therefore, I control for this because I want to observe women’s concerns independent from other factors that have an effect on individual policy preferences. I construct this variable using the question “Q12: Do you have Children? How many children do you have?” The variable is constructed as a dummy variable where 1 signifies that the respondent has children and 0 signifies that they do not.

I also control for marital status. Marital status might have an effect on a respondent’s opinion on social welfare issues. Marital status could be a proxy for a two-income household where, with a combined income, social welfare assistance is less necessary. Also, being married may decrease the need for social welfare aid because a home with a more traditional role for women and men, where women are meant to do household chores while men go out into the public sphere, leaves respondents, particularly female respondents, with less of a need for social welfare assistance such as with child care. It could also be the case that women in these households are more susceptible to the vote preference of their husband, thus causing a decrease in social welfare support. That being said, there is a possibility of finding higher support for
social welfare among married respondents because modernization has changed traditional roles and if both partners work, it is more likely that when thinking about future children, they will be concerned with policies such as child care, education, and health care. Due to the possible effects that marital status can have on an individual’s policy or issue preference, I control for the variable in order to demonstrate female support for social issues without the influence of these factors. I will also control for whether the respondent is divorced because studies show that individuals who have been previously married are more likely to be progressive or lean towards the left of the political spectrum (Kingston and Finkel 1987), thus making them more likely than married individuals to support social welfare.

I control for income because several studies show that income affects ideological orientations and policy preferences (Norrander and Wilcox 2008). I expect that personal income will have a linear relationship with support for left leaning policies. I expect that the lower the personal income, the higher the support for social welfare because the individual will be personally and positively affected by them. I expect that as income rises, support for social welfare decreases because there is less need for it as individuals become more able to afford better services for themselves. Because income has an effect on the dependent variable, I control for it in order to avoid the possibility of a spurious relationship between gender and preferences. Originally, in order to construct the variable I used the Americas Barometer survey question “Q10. Into which of the following income ranges does the total monthly income of this household fit, including remittances from abroad and the income for all the working adults and children?” The variable was constructed as a continuous variable, where the higher numbers represent higher incomes and lower numbers represent lower incomes. This variable ranges from 0 to 10 where 0 signifies the respondent has no income and 10 signifies that the respondent’s income is
above $750 monthly. However, after exploring the data, I realized that this particular question had a very low response rate; low enough to significantly affect the results of the models. In an effort to still capture income, I compiled data that amounts to a measure of wealth. The Americas Barometer survey data contains responses to questions asking respondents to state whether they own items like cars, televisions, washing machines, etc. Using these questions, I develop a proxy for Wealth to control for some level of monetary status in the analyses. Those respondents that own most of these valuable belongings, are considered wealthier, while those that do not are considered less wealthy. I construct the variable as a scale where 1 signifies that the respondent does not own or have any of these items and 6 indicates that he/she has all of the items. Though this is a less-than-perfect indicator, it is a necessary and a useful proxy to control for income.

I also control for the religion of the respondent. Religion is an important control because the literature suggests that different religions have different effects on societal behavior, particularly women’s behavior (McMurry 1978, Gill 2001, Vohra 2003, Fox and Flores 2009). There is a correlation between religiosity and the traditional patriarchic role for women (McMurry 1978). Women who are religious are less likely to be involved in the public sphere and more involved in domestic duties, such as taking care of the home and family. Churches encourage women to stay at home and become mothers (Aune 2008). Religious doctrines purport ideas of domestic life for women (Vohra 2003). However, as secularization theory explains, with modernity religion becomes less relevant, leading to changes in gender roles. Women that are more involved in the public sphere tend to be less religious (Aune 2008). Regardless of the changes modernization has brought to the countries of study, I still expect religion to have an

19 I construct the Wealth variable using questions R1 (whether or not the respondent owns a television), R5 (whether or not the respondent owns a vehicle), R6 (whether or not the respondent owns a washing machine), R12 (whether or not the respondent has potable water in their home), and R15 (whether or no the respondent owns a computer) from the Americas Barometer core questionnaire.
effect on policy preferences, thus potentially hindering the relationship studied. To control for religious effects I construct the variable *Secular* where 1 signifies that the respondent is either an atheist or agnostic and 0 signifies that the respondent belongs to a religion. I also construct the variable *Protestant* where 1 signifies that the respondent is a Protestant and 0 signifies that he/she is not. I control for the respondent being a Protestant because Protestants in the region tend to be very conservative and therefore this may have an effect on individual’s public opinion.

Lastly, I control for the educational attainment of the respondent. I control for education because studies show that it has an effect on policy preferences and policy formation, among other things (Hetherington and Globetti 2002, Mughan and Paxton, Farrar et al. 2009, Hayes and Guardino 2011). I use the Americas Barometer questionnaire question coded ED that asks respondents to state what their last year of schooling was. I code the variable *Education* as a continuous variable where 0 signifies that the respondent had no schooling and 15 signifies that the respondent had at least 3 years of schooling post university.

Below I provide an explanation of the methods used to test the hypothesis. I later provide the results of the analysis followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications.

**Methodology**

I use LAPOP’s Americas Barometer data for all 18 Latin American countries to construct the various variables to test the hypotheses. Due to the nature of the dependent variables, I use both logistic regressions and ordered logistic regressions to test the hypotheses. Most of the dependent variables are constructed as discrete variables; thus an Ordinary Least Squares regression would result in invalid standard errors and hypotheses tests. Logistic and

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20 Please note that data that are coded or categorized as the “no response” category, the “I don’t know” category and the “not applicable” category, I code as missing in the analyses.
ordered logistic regressions for the various models allows for the inclusion of the dichotomous dependent variables where there are two response categories and the ordered dependent variables where the response categories are placed on an ordered scale. Because the dataset includes data across countries for various years, I control for both country fixed effects and years in all the models included in the analyses to prevent any differences present from country to country and year to year that may not be controlled for by the variables included.\textsuperscript{21}

Results- Section 1: Gender gap and Social Welfare

In this section I report the results for the models testing whether a gender gap exists in public opinion regarding social welfare in 18 Latin American countries. Table 1 below reports the results of the model testing whether there is a gender gap in opinions about the use of force by government. The results demonstrate that the hypothesis is supported and suggest that women are more likely than men to support democratic values of participation as well as a peaceful option regarding governance. Table 2 reports the change in probability of responding with the force option when going from a male to a female respondent. There is a 1.3 percent decrease in the probability of responding a government with an iron fist when going from a male respondent to a female respondent. These results demonstrate that there is a gender gap in opinions about how the government should govern, and women are more likely than men to support the peaceful option, while men are more likely than women to support the force option. Thus, it appears that women are more supportive of democratic principles and are overall less supportive of a forceful approach to governance than men. These results are in accordance with previous literature.

\textsuperscript{21} In some models I was able to also control for within region fixed effects. If so, it is noted in the particular models.
Table 1. Gender Gap in Public Opinion on Force vs. Peaceful Options of Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.068***</td>
<td>(.021)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>-.287***</td>
<td>(.042)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>(.045)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>-.293***</td>
<td>(.087)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-.064**</td>
<td>(.0244)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>.117***</td>
<td>(.029)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>(.069)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 years and younger</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>(.029)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 years and older</td>
<td>.206***</td>
<td>(.027)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
<td>.025***</td>
<td>(.004)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.007***</td>
<td>(.065)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R square</td>
<td>.0363</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p value <.05  **p value <.01  ***p value <.001  † p value <.10
Logit Regression analysis conducted accounting for complex sample design.
Robust Standard Errors reported in Parenthesis.
Country fixed effects included but not shown.
Controls for years included but not shown.

denoting a gender gap in opinions on forceful versus peaceful means of governance. The results in Table 1 also show that respondents who are wealthier, secular, protestant, and married

22 The author recognizes that the question used for the model does not capture exactly what other scholars have captured in their analysis of gender gaps regarding the use of force. Typically the gender gap on the use of force focuses on defense matters such as military spending or war (Wirls 1986), however, in an effort to get at the gender gap on opinions of “force” in Latin America and with the data that is available, this is the closest proxy to meet those ends.
are more likely to support the peaceful option, while respondents with children, 55 years of age or older, or right of center on the political spectrum, are more likely to support the force option. The overall results are in accordance to previous literature on the gender gap. Smith (1984) finds that when analyzing polls, men are more likely than women to support the use of force, such as military intervention or gun control, while women tend to pick the more peaceful option. Studies also show that women not only pick the peaceful option, but that higher percentages of women in the legislatures results in fewer militarized disputes, thus causing the government to behave more peacefully (Caprioli 2000). Therefore, it appears that women have consistently been more likely to pick a more peaceful option in other countries where studies have been conducted and the results here suggest that women in Latin America behave similarly.

**Table 2. Percent Changes in Probabilities of Responding Rule with Iron Fist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Rule with Iron Fist</th>
<th>Percent Change in probability of responding from Male to Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.0134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other variables held at median

The above results establish that there is a gender gap in Latin America concerning the use of force in governance versus the use of peace. However, is there also a gender gap when it comes to social welfare issues as noted in previous literature outside of Latin America?

Table 3 below reports the results of the model testing whether women are more likely than men to be concerned with issues of social welfare—specifically, matters of health and education. The results show that there is such a gender gap. Using health and education as proxies for social welfare policy concerns, the results show that women are more likely than men
Table 3. Gender Gap in Public Opinion on Social Welfare in Latin America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.144**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.057)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>.370**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.138)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.004**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.002)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.057***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
<td>-.030**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-.078</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.071)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.180)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.074)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Public Health Service</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.120)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big sized city</td>
<td>.267*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.129)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium sized city</td>
<td>.189#</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.128)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small sized city</td>
<td>.243*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.134)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural area</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.130)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.959***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.514)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>44332</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p value <.05  **p value <.01  ***p value <.001  † p value <.10
Logit Regression analysis conducted accounting for complex sample design.
Metropolitan area/national capital left out as comparison category.
Design-based Robust Standard Errors reported in Parenthesis.
Within Country Region fixed effects included but not shown in truncated table.
Controls for years included but not shown in truncated model.

to respond that health and education are among their top concerns when asked what major
problems their country faces, indicating that women are more likely to be concerned with matters
regarding social welfare than men. Table 4 below reports the percent change in probability of responding health and education going from a male respondent to a female respondent. The percent change in the probability of answering health and education increases by .5 percent when going from a male respondent to a female respondent. The results confirm the hypothesis showing that women have concerns for social welfare issues. The gender gap is present and shows that women do have different attitudes than their male counterparts in Latin America. This is an important finding, because it is consistent with what scholarship has found in the more developed regions of the world.

Table 4. Percent Changes in the Probability of Responding Health or Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Health or Education</th>
<th>Percent Change in probability of responding from Male to Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.0047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other variables held at median

The results in Table 3 also show that as wealth, age, and education of the respondent increase, so does their likelihood of concern for health and education issues. These results are somewhat in the expected direction. As respondents become older, their concerns should shift towards social welfare because these are the age groups that are more likely to rely on government assistance. As respondents become more educated, his/her concern for health and education increases. This might be the case because those with higher education are generally more likely to be ideologically to the left of center and therefore more likely to be concerned or supportive of social welfare policies. This argument is supported by the fact that the results also

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23 These results hold even after controlling for country fixed effects, within country region fixed effects and controlling for type of city or town where the respondent resides. The controls for type of city or town where respondent resides are reported in Table 2 with metropolitan areas left out as the comparison category.
demonstrate that as political ideology of the respondent moves towards the right they are less likely to be concerned with matters of health and education. Therefore, being ideologically closer to the right makes the respondent less likely to support or be concerned with social welfare matters. These results remain consistent with previous literature. However, the direction of the coefficient for wealth is somewhat puzzling. The results suggest that wealthier respondents are more likely to be concerned with matters of health and education, which seems counterintuitive. One would assume that wealthier respondents are more likely to have the ability to provide for themselves when it comes to matters of health care and education, via their own medical insurance and private schooling, therefore making them less likely to be concerned with these types of matters. However, the results say otherwise. As mentioned in the concepts and operationalization section, the variable wealth is a proxy for a measure of personal income and it is less than perfect. It could be the case that the variable is capturing income as well as something different. Unfortunately, there are no other data available in the dataset that can serve as better proxies for this control.

If women are more likely than men to be concerned with social welfare, are they more critical of the government’s job when dealing with social issues? Table 5 below reports the results of the models testing whether there is a gender gap in public opinion towards government efficiency in handling these matters. The first model tests whether the respondents feel the government is combating poverty. The second model tests whether the respondents feel the government is combating unemployment. The third model tests whether the respondents feel the government supports human rights. The results are in the expected direction. Women are more likely than men to have poorer attitudes towards government when it comes to these endeavors, thus indicating that women are more critical than men when evaluating the government’s job as a
provider of social welfare. Women are more likely than men to respond that the government is not doing a good job combating poverty, unemployment, or supporting human rights. These are issues that fall under the domain of women’s concerns under the realm of social issues. If women are more likely to have negative feelings about government efficiency, maybe they are more likely to support changes in these policies in order to see some improvement. If women are more critical of the government when it comes to social matters, it would be logical for them to act in accordance to what they believe will improve these deficiencies if elected to office. I will delve more into this idea in the next chapter. For now, it appears that women are more critical than

Table 5. Gender Gap in Opinions of Government Efficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1 (combats Poverty)</th>
<th>Model 2 (combats unemployment)</th>
<th>Model 3 (supports human rights)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.019* (.011)</td>
<td>-.049*** (.014)</td>
<td>-.037* (.019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
<td>.024*** (.002)</td>
<td>.011*** (.002)</td>
<td>.049*** (.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.003*** (.000)</td>
<td>-.004*** (.001)</td>
<td>-.002* (.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.021*** (.002)</td>
<td>-.021*** (.002)</td>
<td>-.018*** (.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>-.147*** (.025)</td>
<td>-.114*** (.031)</td>
<td>-.177*** (.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-.003 (.013)</td>
<td>.004 (.016)</td>
<td>-.005 (.023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-.016 (.015)</td>
<td>-.041* (.019)</td>
<td>-.010 (.027)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>-.111** (.039)</td>
<td>-.058 (.049)</td>
<td>.109† (.070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R square</td>
<td>.0196</td>
<td>.0305</td>
<td>.0303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>104395</td>
<td>65710</td>
<td>32849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p value <.05 **p value <.01 ***p value <.001 †p value <.10
Ordered Logistic Regression analysis conducted accounting for complex sample design. Robust Standard Errors reported in Parenthesis. Country fixed effects included but not shown. Controls for years included but not shown.
men when it comes to government efficiency in taking care of social welfare issues; an expected result. Table 6, 7 and 8 below report the percent changes in the probability of responding favorably to the government’s efforts when going from a male respondent to a female respondent. Table 6 demonstrates that there is a .25 percent change in the probability of answering that the government is not combating poverty at all when going from a male respondent to a female one. In contrast, there is a .15 percent decrease in the probability of answering that the government is entirely combating poverty in the country when going from a male respondent to a female one. Table 7 demonstrates that there is a similar pattern when examining responses to whether the government is combating unemployment. Table 7 shows that there is a .54 percent increase in the probability of answering that the government is not combating unemployment while a .39 percent decrease in answering that the government is

### Table 6. Percent Changes in Responding Government Combats Poverty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Government Combats Poverty</th>
<th>Percent Change in probability of responding from Male to Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Change</strong></td>
<td>.00137199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1=Not at All</td>
<td>.00247698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.00125531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.00106966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-.00006302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-.00154226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-.00161855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Entirely</td>
<td>-.00157813</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other variables held at median
Table 7. Percent Changes in Responding Government Combats Unemployment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Government Combats Unemployment</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change in probability of responding from Male to Female</td>
<td>Average Change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1=Not at All</td>
<td>.00343443</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.00542438</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.00316498</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.00297245</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.00045869</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-.00369465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Entirely</td>
<td>-.00442143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other variables held at median

Table 8. Percent Changes in Responding Government Supports Human Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Government Combats Unemployment</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change in probability of responding from Male to Female</td>
<td>Average Change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1=Not at All</td>
<td>.00259661</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.00391693</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.00239595</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.00044613</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-.00246899</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-.00325356</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7= Entirely</td>
<td>-.00336558</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other variables held at median

effectively combatting unemployment when going from a male respondent to a female one. Table 8
shows the same pattern. There is a .39 percent increase in the probability of answering that the
government is not doing a good job in supporting human rights and a .34 percent decrease in the
probability of answering that the government does do a good job in supporting human rights
when going from a male respondent to a female respondent. Therefore demonstrating a gender
gap in opinions about the efficacy of government regarding these matters.
The results in Table 5 also show that as the political ideology of the respondents shift to the right, they are more likely to believe that the government is doing a good job in combatting poverty, unemployment, and support human rights. The direction and effect of the coefficient makes sense given previous literature. Rightist ideology tends not to advocate for things having to do with social welfare. Therefore, the results showing that the right of center is more likely to give the government a better report card when it comes to these issues falls in line with the argument that they are less likely to be concerned with these issues in the first place. The results also demonstrate that respondents who are older, more educated, have children, are divorced or are wealthier are more likely to have negative attitudes towards government efficiency on these matters. These results are somewhat in the expected directions. As mentioned earlier, those who are older are more likely to be concerned with social welfare issues, and thus use a more judgmental eye when evaluating the government’s job relating to these matters. The same is the case with educational attainment. As educational attainment increases, there is a decrease in satisfaction towards the government’s job. The respondents’ negative attitudes towards government efficiency because they have children can be easily explained. Those with children might be more likely to be concerned with issues such as poverty, unemployment and human rights because they directly influence current or future quality of life. Parents may be more likely to advocate fixing issues that are likely to affect their children (currently or in the future). Thus, it is logical that having children gives you motivation to judge government efforts more negatively. Again, the results for the Wealth variable are puzzling. The coefficient is in the negative direction signifying that wealthier respondents are more likely to have negative views.

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24 Having children only decreases positive attitudes towards government efficiency statistically and significantly for model 2, however, the coefficients are in the same direction in model 1 and 3.

25 Being divorced only decreases positive attitudes towards government efficiency statistically and significantly for model 1 and model 3 (at .10 level of significance), however, though not statistically significant, the coefficient is in the same direction for model 2.
towards the government’s efficiency in dealing with social welfare matters, such as poverty, unemployment, and human rights. One would expect wealthier people to be less judgmental or critical when it comes to evaluating government efficacy with matters relating social welfare. However these results could be interpreted as intuitive. Wealthier people may be more judgmental of the government’s role in combating poverty, unemployment, and supporting human rights because they do not believe that the government should be spending money to do so in the first place. Therefore, having more of a stake on how much money they are being taxed for the government to be efficient in these matters, the wealthy may be overly critical about the entire concept and therefore, as demonstrated in the analysis, are more likely to be critical about the government’s job.

Now that we have evidence that a gender gap exists in both social welfare concerns as well as how the government handles social problems, I explore whether women are more critical than men of the education and health services available in the areas where they reside. If women are more concerned about social welfare issues such as health and education, maybe their concern stems from what is available closest to them. Table 9 below shows the results of the models testing whether there is a gender gap in satisfaction with the quality and availability of health services and education in the respondents’ towns. The results suggest that there is a gender gap, but it is not in the expected direction. Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to say that they were satisfied with the quality and availability of health services in their own town. Table 10 below reports the results of the percent changes in probability of being satisfied with health when going from a male respondent to a female one. The results show that there is a 2.4 percent increase in the probability of answering satisfied with health services in your town/area of residence when going from a male respondent to a female respondent. Thus
Table 9. Female Satisfaction with Health and Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1 Health</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Model 2 Education</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.144***</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>(.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>.225***</td>
<td>(.056)</td>
<td>(.067)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.007***</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>(.002)</td>
<td>(.173)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
<td>.038***</td>
<td>.051***</td>
<td>(.009)</td>
<td>(.010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>-.467***</td>
<td>(.096)</td>
<td>(.095)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>(.049)</td>
<td>(.052)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>-.241*</td>
<td>-.344**</td>
<td>(.148)</td>
<td>(.159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Public Health Services</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>(.148)</td>
<td>(.9642)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.288*</td>
<td>1.257**</td>
<td>(.149)</td>
<td>(.518)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>11209</td>
<td>11120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p value < .05  **p value < .01  ***p value < .001  ?p value < .10
Logit Regression analysis conducted accounting for complex sample design.
Robust Standard Errors reported in Parenthesis.
Country fixed effects and within country region fixed effects included but not shown.
Controls for years included but not shown.

signifying that women are more satisfied with these services than men. Table 9 shows that the gender variable does not reach statistical significance for model 2 testing respondents’ satisfaction for the quality of education. However the coefficient is in the same unexpected

Table 10. Percent Change in Probability of Responding Satisfied with Health Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Satisfied with Health Services</th>
<th>Percent Change in probability of responding from Male to Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change in probability of responding from Male to Female</td>
<td>.0244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other variables held at median
direction. The results demonstrate that women are more likely to be satisfied with these services in their towns than their male counterparts, which runs counter to what was hypothesized. Though contrary to what was originally expected, it could be the case that women are satisfied with these services in their towns of residence, but this does not mean that it is the case that they are satisfied with these types of services nationwide. In other words, satisfaction with quality and availability of social welfare services such as health and education in the respondent’s town does not necessarily translate to satisfaction with these services elsewhere. Also, being satisfied with the services provided locally does not necessarily mean that women lack concerns about these services. It could be the case that the services provided are satisfactory, with the expectation that they could be better provided for. Therefore, though women seem to be more satisfied than men with health and education services in their towns, they may still be concerned with matters of social welfare provisions as indicated by the results reported in Table 5. It could also be the case that these findings are a result of a long standing patriarchal system that has instilled a sense of gratitude in women in the hopes of keeping women from challenging men’s decisions. If this is the case, the finding would suggest that women may be grateful for what they have simply because of what has been engrained in them through patriarchal socialization, thus explaining the results. Unfortunately, given the data available, this speculation cannot be tested.

The results in Table 9 also demonstrate that for model 1, as the age of the respondent increases or the political ideology of the respondent shifts towards the right, the respondent is more likely to be satisfied with the health services provided in their town while respondents who are divorced are less likely to be satisfied with health services. The table demonstrates that, for model 2, respondents with children or who are placed left of center on the political spectrum are more likely to be satisfied with the quality of education in their town, while respondents who are
younger, less wealthy, and divorced are more likely to be unsatisfied with the quality of education in their town.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the gender gap is present in Latin America. As per prior literature, women in Latin America seem to lean more towards progressive attitudes. They are more likely than men to support peaceful governance rather than the use of force in governance, women are more likely than men to be concerned with matters of social welfare, specifically health and education, and women are also more likely than men to be critical of how the government handles social issues such as poverty, unemployment, and human rights issues. Now that there is evidence that the gender gap in Latin America exists similarly to the gap in more developed Western countries and democracies, I briefly explore whether there is a gender gap in public opinion towards female leadership. Noting that there has been an exceptional increase in female participation in government in the region in the last 10 to 15 years, it should be the case that there is public support for such participation, however, whether this support comes from both genders, remains to be explored. I expect that if there is a gender gap in opinions about female participation in government, it will be the case that women are more likely than men to support it. It may be the case that women support female participation in government because they feel that women in government will better represent their concerns.

**Results - Section 2: Gender Gap and Female Leadership**

In this section I report the results for the models testing whether there is a gender gap in public opinion and attitudes regarding women’s participation in government. Table 11 below reports the results of the model testing the gender gap in opinion on gender quota systems in Latin America as a proxy for women’s and men’s attitudes towards female leadership. The table
Table 11. Gender Gap in Opinions on Gender Quota Systems in Latin America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.314***</td>
<td>(.054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 years or younger</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>(7.097)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 years or older</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>(.077)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
<td>.053***</td>
<td>(.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>(.062)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>-.213</td>
<td>(.276)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-.065</td>
<td>(.077)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R square</td>
<td>.0070</td>
<td>N 4475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p value <.05  **p value <.01  ***p value <.001  †p value <.10
Logit Regression analysis conducted accounting for complex sample design.
Robust Standard Errors reported in Parenthesis.
Country fixed effects included but not shown.
Controls for years included but not shown.

shows that the hypothesis is supported. Women are more likely to support gender quotas for heightened female representation in their legislatures. Table 12 below reports the percent changes in responding with support or disapproval for gender quota systems when going from a male respondent to a female respondent. The table shows that there is a decrease of 2.2 percent when going from a male respondent to a female respondent when answering strongly disapprove of gender quota systems and a 5.8 percent increase in the probability of answering strongly approve of gender quota systems when going from a male respondent to a female respondent. The results demonstrate that women are more likely to want female representation, which is logical. If women have different concerns or policy preferences, as explored in the previous hypotheses testing, they may be more likely to want female representation in order for their
concerns or policy preferences to be represented. The results in Table 11 also demonstrate that respondents who lean more towards the right of the political spectrum are also more likely to support gender quotas. This is somewhat of a puzzling finding. Advocating for women’s representation is usually associated with left of center parties or left of center ideology. Parties that are left of center are usually more willing to accept women as their candidates because they tend to advocate for gender equality more so than do parties that are right of center (Caul 2001). However, it could be the case that what is reflected here is support for a policy that the

Table 12. Percent Changes in Probability of Responding Approve of Gender Quotas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Approve of Gender Quotas</th>
<th>Percent Change in probability of responding from Male to Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Change</td>
<td>.01534209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1=Strongly Disapproves</td>
<td>- .022263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-.00753612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-.00854024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-.01067795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-.0161359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-.00836498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-.00319224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>.00593311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>.01274185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10=Strongly Approves</td>
<td>.05803548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other variables held at median

respondent might feel ultimately will have no effect. In other words, since gender quota laws only dictate that a certain amount of women should be positioned as candidates and not that they must be elected, the respondent may feel that the quota does not actually affect the amount of women that are present in the legislature. Unfortunately, there are no data to get at this argument and explain the counterintuitive results.
There appears to be a gender gap in attitudes towards policies favorable to women’s representation in Latin America. However, do these feelings translate when asking whether respondents believe women are good leaders? To try to get at this answer, I test whether there is a gender gap on attitudes towards women as leaders. Table 13 below reports these results. The results suggest that the hypothesis is supported; women are more likely than men to support female leaders. Table 14 below reports the percent changes in responding that men are better political leaders than women. As shown, there is a 15.3 percent decrease in the probability of answering that men are better political leaders than women when going from a male respondent to a female respondent. These statistics demonstrate that there is a large gap in opinion on leadership depending on gender. The results also show that respondents that are married, divorced, secular, are working, or are students, are also more likely to support female leaders by responding that male leaders are not better than female ones. These results are as expected.

Among those who support the notion that men are better leaders than women are those that fall to the right of the political spectrum, are protestant, and those respondents that are 55 years of age or older. These results are expected as well. Respondents who are older experienced a time when men dominated the political arena and may be more skeptical of female representation. Protestants tend to be more conservative, therefore less progressive making them less likely to support female leadership over male leadership. The effect that political ideology has on perceptions of male leadership is also to be expected. Those that are right of center ideologically are more likely to think that men are better leaders. This is in line with the literature denoting that leftist ideology is more attune to equal rights and female empowerment (Beckwith 1986, Caul 2001). If rightist ideology is less likely to support female leadership, then respondents that
are right of center on the political spectrum should be more likely to support the notion that men are better leaders than women.
Overall, the results in Section 2 reporting the models testing for a gender gap in attitudes towards female participation in Latin America indicate that women are more likely than men to support female participation in government. The gender gap in attitudes towards gender quotas in Latin America depicts that female respondents are more likely to favor these types of policies than male respondents. The results also demonstrate that women are more likely to deny the notion that men are better political leaders than women. Both of these results suggest that women in Latin America are more likely to embrace the idea of female participation in government branches. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to delve into why this is the case. However, one can speculate that it could be the case that women believe that women in government better represent their different concerns as depicted in the first results section.

Implications and Conclusions

The results of the models testing the various hypotheses provide support for the idea that there is a gender gap in public opinion present in the Latin American region. The results show that there is a difference between female and male concerns within their country; women are more likely to be concerned with matters of social welfare. These findings indicate that there may be a possibility that if women are more likely to be concerned with social welfare matters, they may be more likely to shift the agenda towards these types of matters once in government (I explore this further in the next chapter). The results also show that women are more likely than

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Men are Better Leaders</th>
<th>Percent Change in probability of responding from Male to Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.1532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other variables held at median

Table 14. Percent Change in Responding Men Are Better Leaders Than Women
men to support female leadership in Latin America, which may signify that women support their own empowerment in the political sphere as well as the possibility that women might want female representation because they believe that only women will represent their different concerns. What is certain from the analysis above is that a gender gap in public opinion on certain matters is present in Latin America, much like in previous analyses conducted outside of this region.

In the beginning of the chapter I mentioned that women have become an important aspect in the development literature. Many note that women are central to understanding societal wellbeing. Considering that the Latin American region experiences high levels of inequality and low standards of living, it is important to explore different solutions to problems that keep these patterns stable across the region, one solution being women. In this chapter I observed differences between women and men in their opinions of the very things that should affect social conditions in the region. I find that women are more likely than men to be concerned with these matters. I also find that women are more likely to support female participation in government and female leadership. These two findings are intuitive. Women support female representation because women may be better at representing female interests than men. Maybe the gender gap discovered in the analyses means that women are important for wellbeing because female concerns lean towards those that will better societal needs. If women are different, then it is logical to expect different concerns or policy preferences depending on gender. If this is the case, which the results suggest, then it is important to explore whether these concerns are observable at the governmental level—that is, when women are elected into governmental positions.

Furthermore, the results are also interesting relative to previous literature. Literature on the gender gap is abundant in American politics literature and European politics literature, but
less so in the literature on less developed countries or regions. Finding that there is a gender gap in Latin America supports the notion that women around the world, whether in developed or less developed democracies, are shifting towards more progressive preferences. In the more developed world, scholarship finds that women are supportive of policies increasing government involvement in social welfare policies, including health policies, environmental policies, human rights policies, and equal rights policies and are less supportive of policies or issues regarding force or violence. It appears that this isn’t just a factor coming out of the developed world; women in less developed regions and in newer democracies such as those in Latin America are also becoming more supportive of these types of policies. What Inglehart and Norris (2000) proposed in their comprehensive analysis of the modern gender gap—that there was no evidence of a modern gender gap in the four less developed Latin American countries in their analysis—does not seem to be the case any longer. Public opinion in the region suggests that at least starting in 2004, the modern gender gap as they explained is present in the Latin American region. These opposing results suggest that modernization may be causing Latin American women to behave similarly to women in other regions. Modernization may be giving women and men new roles in society and therefore shifting their policy preferences. What continues to remain underexplored is whether women’s shifting policy preferences towards the left are observable once women become empowered and find themselves in government offices. I explore this very subject in the next chapter.
Chapter 3. How Female Legislators Vote- Legislative Behavior in Mexico

In the previous chapter I explore women’s general concerns as citizens. If women are more likely than men to be concerned with social welfare issues, does this concern translate to how women behave or participate in governmental positions? Here, I determine whether female legislators behave differently from their male counterparts in the legislature. I ask the question: do female legislators vote in support of social welfare policy at a higher rate than male legislators? To answer this question I use Mexico as a case study. I use data on roll call votes among legislators in Mexico from 2006 through 2009 to determine whether women in government vote in accordance to female concerns, in this case, in support of social welfare policies.

I use Mexico as a case study for various reasons. First and foremost, Mexico provides a control for one of the biggest constraints on legislative voting behavior purported by scholarship: reelection. Legislators in Mexico are not legally allowed to run for legislature consecutively. Since the object of study in this chapter is to determine whether gender has an independent effect on policy preferences, controlling for the effects that reelection have on voting behavior is key in preventing certain biases in the analysis. Mexico also provides for a good case study because the legislature records all votes on policies and these data along with state demographic data are readily available, therefore offering good and complete sources of data to use for the analysis. Data for roll call votes and pertinent demographic data are very hard to find in other Latin American countries. Furthermore, examining legislative behavior in Mexico provides for a good case for generalization in the Latin American region because like so many other Latin American countries, it is known for a strong sense of machismo engrained within their culture (Baldez 2004), thus making the study of gender effects in legislatures rather interesting. Also, the case of
Mexico is generalizable because it is not the only country in the region with a ban on legislative reelection. Bolivia, Colombia, and Costa Rica also have a ban on reelection. Mexico has also experienced heightened female participation in the legislature, much like the rest of Latin America. In 1990, Mexico’s legislature was composed of about 12% female legislators, while in 2010 the legislature was composed of almost 27% female legislators (look at Figure 1 in Chapter 2). This pattern of increasing female participation in government witnessed in Latin American countries in the last two decades brings to question whether increased female participation has caused changes in government policy priorities. I speculate that the pattern has made a difference and I use Mexico as a case study to determine whether female legislators are changing government policy priorities and supporting social welfare policies at a higher rate than their male counterparts.

Below I provide a review of the relevant literature followed by the theory and hypotheses that drive this chapter. I later provide a description of the data and the variables and their operationalizations I use to test the hypotheses. Following these sections I provide the results and discuss the findings.

**Literature Review**

Legislative voting behavior is a topic of debate that has long interested political scientists. In a perfect world, legislators represent the population’s ideology and vote according to their constituents’ interests. However, many factors play a role in the way legislators vote. Scholarship focuses on legislative voting behavior to determine what motivates a member to vote in a particular way. Specifically studying the subject in the United States, David R. Mayhew (1974) and Richard F. Fenno (1978) maintain that the largest motivator in a member’s legislative
behavior is his/her chance of reelection. A legislator will engage in as many activities as possible and behave in accordance to how those activities enable his/her reelection. Thus, a certain degree of accountability to the interests of constituents and to their party is necessary. However, as discussed further below, Mexico’s law dictates that legislators cannot run for reelection.

Among other factors influencing legislative behavior is party affiliation. The study of legislative behavior in academia has consistently found that party is a significant predictor of legislative voting behavior. Jeffrey A. Jenkins (1999) studies the effect that party has on vote choice by observing legislative votes in a nonparty scenario, in the Confederate House, and in a strong two-party scenario, in the U.S. House, and finds that votes are much more predictable when political parties are present. These findings suggest that party does affect the way a legislator votes. Keith Poole and Steven Daniels (1985) also find that party affects legislators’ roll call votes, but also note that party becomes a stronger predictor for vote choice when voting on particular types of policy, in particular social welfare policies. Evidence suggests that the predictive power of party is sometimes contingent on what types of policies are being voted on. Similarly, Stephen Ansolabehere, James M. Snyder, and Charles Stewart (2001) study the influences on roll call votes in the U.S. Congress and find that when party affects legislative voting behavior, its effect is very strong. Party influence becomes the strongest when the House is evenly divided, when there are procedural decisions, and when voting on issues that “define” the party. In particular, the authors find that party influences a legislator’s vote when issues such as budgetary legislation or social insurance or health care are up for a vote as opposed to when moral or religious issues are up for a vote, thus demonstrating that parties have issue preferences that can be observed when examining their roll call voting (Ansolabehere et al. 2001). Along this line of argument, scholarship suggests that party has a large effect on roll call votes with
evidence that when representatives switch to a different party, their voting patterns change, sometimes dramatically (McCarty et al. 2001, Hager and Talbert 2000). James Snyder and Tim Groseclose (2000) also find that party has a stronger impact on vote choice in roll calls regarding particular issues areas; issues such as budget resolutions, tax policy, and social welfare policy. These findings suggest that party influences legislators voting behavior, but the extent of that effect varies depending on the policy.

John M. Carey (2007), using roll-call data from 19 countries, finds similar results to those mentioned above. However he notes that party is not the sole predictor of how a legislator votes. The author finds that the extent to which party has an effect on legislative behavior is intertwined with institutions and institutional rules. He finds that electoral rules that encourage intraparty competition decrease the effect that party has on voting behavior while federalism increases party unity in legislative voting. He also finds that presidential systems and parliamentary systems yield different effects on legislative behavior as well. In parliamentary systems, Carey (2007) states that parties that are part of the governing coalition are much more unified in their legislative voting patterns than parties that are not part of the governing coalition. In presidential systems, Carey (2007) demonstrates that there are no differences between party unity among parties in the executive and parties outside of the executive. However parties in presidential systems are less unified in their voting than parties in parliamentary systems. These findings are in line with previous scholarship denoting that presidential systems tend to advocate for strong separation of powers between the branches and this separation fails to provide incentives to cooperate, thus making legislative behavior more individualistic rather than disciplined (Cheibub Figueiredo and Limongi 2000). According to the findings in the literature on the effects of these types of institutions, we should expect Mexico to have higher levels of personalized voting
resulting in lower levels of party effects on legislative voting behavior because it is a presidential system. Since all of the Latin American countries included in this analysis are presidential, it should be the case that, comparatively speaking, legislative voting behavior is more individualistic rather than disciplined and therefore, overall, the effect that party has on legislative voting should be lower than in other countries that have a parliamentary system. If this is the case, other factors may play a larger role in legislative voting behavior in the region than party. Gender could be one of the variables affecting behavior. If gender denotes different concerns regarding policies, as noted in the previous chapter, then it could be the case that female legislators vote according to their gender or gender’s interests.

Other studies on institutions and party effects on legislative behavior have also been conducted outside of the United States. Carey (2003) states that in Latin American countries, legislative parties tend to meet regularly to decide on group positions on any particular issue. The issue position is ideologically driven and mainly dictated by the national party leaders who can discipline party members if they do not vote according to the party line, thus becoming a mechanism by which to predict voting behavior (Carey 2003, Desposato 2004). With the ability to discipline or impose sanctions to legislators that do not vote according to the party’s ideological stance, the legislators have an incentive to keep in line with the party they belong to. Among other institutional factors that play a role in legislative voting behavior, Argelina Cheibub Figueiredo and Fernando Limongi (2000), find that having open list systems prevents party leaders to control the legislative behavior of representatives, thus making party discipline low. Studying legislative behavior in Brazil, the authors find that the president’s legislative power and the centralized decision-making system in the legislature, limits the incentive for representatives to vote opposite the party’s agenda (Cheibub Figueiredo and Limongi 2000);
therefore suggesting that institutional rules and party systems produce different legislative voting behavior; the result being either highly disciplined legislators or legislators more likely to vote individualistically.

Also among the most motivating reasons to keep in line with the party’s ideological position on issues on the agenda is the prospect of a political career. Most legislators will vote in accordance to the party’s stance because they want a future in politics and, specifically in Latin American countries, political careers are partisan (Carey 2007). Party leaders can influence legislators’ voting patterns by emphasizing their ability to provide resources for reelection or other appointments to other political offices (Carey 2007). It is important to note that in Mexico, the country of study in this chapter, legislators do not have the constitutional right of reelection. Instead, Mexican legislators can only participate in the legislature for one three year term, thus the motivation of reelection, thoroughly studied in the United States, does not have an effect on legislative behavior in the Mexican legislature. That being said and despite having no option for reelection, the prospect of a political career does exist in Mexico. Once a legislator has concluded their term in the legislature, parties or party leaders can offer him/her a different political position. Therefore, some motivation to keep in line with the party does exist and allows for the generalization of the Mexican case with other Latin American countries where the same effect is present.

The particular ban on reelection in Mexico has led scholars to believe that a result of the ban is heightened centralized power in the executive (Taylor 1997). Scholars also note that the ban on reelection in Mexico has led to distance between the legislator and the constituents because future political careers depend on higher political figures, like the executive, rather than the electorate (Taylor 1997). Therefore, Mexican legislators have an incentive to behave in their
party’s liking because the leaders hold the key to their future success making party discipline very high. Benito Nacif and Scott Morgenstern (2002) find that after the demise of the one-party system in Mexico in 1997 and the requirement disabling a consecutive run for Congress, party leaders outside of Congress hold the power to give future political careers to legislators, therefore causing legislators to follow their lead politically making party unity in the Mexican Congress very high. Scholars also argue that not having a chance for reelection provides for legislators that will not confront the president, thus resulting in a legislature that does not provide a check on the executive (Taylor 1997). That being said, not having the option for reelection doesn’t mean that a legislator cannot run ever again; it simply means that legislators may not run for consecutive terms (Taylor 1997). This suggests that other matters aside from reelection motivations must be observed and analyzed to determine factors that help predict legislative behavior in the country. Other mechanisms also give way to party discipline in both the Mexican legislature and others. The availability of public voting also influences legislative discipline by way of offering accountability with an accessible record of how legislators vote (Carey 2003). In fact, Mexico has had electronic voting equipment since 1998, thus keeping track of voting since (Carey 2003). However, individualistic or personal voting, in other words voting against the ideology of the party does occur in Mexico and other Latin American legislatures. The existence of individualistic voting provides evidence that there are other factors that are affecting legislators’ vote choice.

David W. Brady and Charles S. Bullock III (1983) note that the changes in electoral laws in the 1960s in Mexico encouraged Mexican legislators to serve their constituents and contact them with information on legislation and some scholars have found that those who do serve a constituency tend to rise up in the party ranks rapidly, more so than legislators that do not do so.
Thus, it is possible that legislators, even without the guise of reelection will break away from the party. In other countries legislators do break discipline because their constituents want them to do so, motivated by the fact that their constituents will vote for them again, particularly in personal vote systems (Carey 2003). Legislators can use roll call votes to publicly separate themselves from a party in order to create a reputation and target supporters. The fact that legislators will on occasion vote against the party line, whether in Mexico or otherwise, suggests that there are other factors, aside from party discipline and institutional rules that may influence legislator vote choice.

Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes (1963) find that representatives in the U.S. Congress are influenced by their own preferences as well as by what they believe are the constituents’ preferences. Whether the legislator’s perception on constituent preferences is correct, is not clear, however constituency preferences do seem to have an effect on how a representative behaves in Congress. Bullock and Brady (1983) study the effect that party and constituency have on vote choice by observing how U.S. senators in the same district vote and find that both have a statistically significant effect on legislative behavior. James C. Garand (2010) also finds that constituent factors affect legislative voting behavior in the U.S. Senate. The author finds that levels of income inequality of constituents as well as state mass polarization have an effect on Senate vote choice and polarization. Similarly, Joshua Clinton (2006) finds constituency effects in legislative behavior in the United States; noting that Republicans in Congress are responsive to constituency preferences of those identified with the same party, while Democrats are responsive to the constituency preferences of those that are not of the same party. These results suggest that constituency preferences have a different effect depending on the party being observed.
The literature purports several constituency related variables that have an effect on voting preferences. Jon A. Krosnick (1988) states that educational attainment is related to people’s ability to understand politics in general, and thus has an effect on policy preferences. James B. Kau and Paul H. Rubin (1993) measure constituent ideology using descriptive variables about the constituents, such as age, income, and educational attainment, and find that they are significant when predicting legislative voting. Educational attainment, age, and income also play a role in various related topics in the field. John E. Filer, Lawrence W. Kenny and Rebecca B. Morton (1993) find that both wealth and education increase voter turnout. Having access to higher levels of education and higher levels of income lower costs to participate, thus increasing participation. If participation is increased by these factors, then it is reasonable to expect that people with a higher level of education and higher levels of wealth are more politically inclined and therefore more likely to voice their preferences to their representatives. Wealth, education and age have also been found to affect attitudes towards government (Banducci et al. 2004). In their study, Susan A. Banducci, Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp (2004) find that educational attainment, gender, age, and income are influential variables increasing citizen participation in government and attitudes towards government in both New Zealand and the United States.

Benjamin O. Fordham and Timothy J. McKeown (2003) find that education, age, and income of constituents have an effect, though small, on feelings towards specific policy when examining roll call voting in Congress. Robert K. Fleck and Christopher Kilby (2002) find similar results in their analysis of roll call votes in the U.S. Congress. The authors find that constituency variables such as income, age, ethnicity, and education have predictive power on roll call votes in the U.S. Congress by way of helping to place representatives on the NOMINATE space and therefore predict how the representative will vote. Therefore, as indicated by the literature discussed, it
appears that constituent level factors have an effect on policy preferences observed in roll call votes independent from the party of the legislator and institutional rules.

The literature above provides both institutional, constituency and electoral factors that influence legislative voting behavior. Combined, the literature demonstrates that constituent descriptors, institutional rules, electoral rules, party allegiance, have an effect on how legislators decide to vote on roll call votes. Relevant to this study, scholarship also denotes that some of these factors are stronger predictors of legislators’ voting behavior when certain policies are up for a vote; specifically social welfare policies that typically are deemed party defining. Aage R. Clausen and Richard B. Cheney (1970), for example, find that there are two policy dimensions in congressional voting. The first is economic, which is influenced by differences between the parties. The second is welfare, which is less influenced by the party and more influenced by constituency factors. Edith J. Barrett and Fay Lomax Cook (1991) also study congressional voting on particular policies and find that congressmen’s voting behavior towards social welfare policies is influenced by their own ideological preferences as well as their party affiliation. In this particular study they found that party did have a highly significant predictive effect and that district characteristics did not add much to the analysis, which is not what was found in the previous study mentioned. The different findings may be a result of temporal changes; the latter study was conducted in the 1990s while the previous study encompassed Congress in the 1950s and 1960s. Despite the different results, academic work remains consistent in finding that legislators’ voting behavior is affected by different factors and the particular effect of these factors can be contingent on the type of policy that comes up for a vote. However, I believe that some variables are lacking from the analysis of legislative behavior in the literature. Mainly, I believe that gender affects legislative voting behavior.
The matter of gender and its influence on legislative behavior remains relatively underexplored. Some studies, mostly conducted in the United States, explore the idea that gender affects legislative behavior individually from other constraints on legislative behavior. Arturo Vega and Juanita M. Fireston (1995) study the subject in the U.S. Congress. The authors find that there are some differences in voting behavior between female and male representatives. They find that female members of Congress represent women’s issues more so than men and that female members have more liberal voting patterns than their male counterparts (Vega and Firestone 1995). Conversely, Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer and Renato Corbetta (2004) study female legislative behavior in the U.S. House of Representatives and find that gender does not influence the degree of liberalism observed in legislators’ roll call voting patterns. Instead, the authors find that constituency effects rather than personal characteristics have an effect on the degree of liberalism in roll call votes. The authors state that their findings do not suggest that female representatives are not ideologically more liberal than men, rather that in roll call voting, legislators’ gender does not predict their ideology. The authors also note that their findings do not suggest that women are more or less likely to vote on pieces of women’s interest legislation, instead when it comes to their roll call voting, other matters have more influence on how they will vote. To this end, and in a future study, Schwindt-Bayer (2010) finds that female legislators in Argentina, Costa Rica, and Colombia, are more likely to participate in activities regarding women’s rights and women’s issues with their female constituents and are more likely than male representatives to sponsor bills regarding women’s issues. Thus, some differences in the ways female legislators and male legislators behave have been identified by scholarship and drive my research to expect there to be a relationship between gender and support for particular policy in Latin American legislatures. This subject, particularly the study of whether gender affects
legislators’ voting behavior on issues of social welfare remains underexplored. Thus, in this chapter I explore legislative behavior and how it is affected by gender, regardless of the existence of party discipline, political ideology, constituency effects as well as other constraints on legislative behavior. I expect gender to have an independent effect on legislative voting behavior in the 60th Mexican legislative session.

Theory and Hypotheses

In Mexico, discourse for women’s rights and equality did not exist until President Lazaro Cardenas in the 1930s created the Fuente Unico Pro Derechos de la Mujer (Unitary Front for Women’s Rights or FUPDM) and even then, women did not have the right to vote and were not given citizenship, only a state-endorsed space where women could influence policy-making (Craske 2005). It wasn’t until the late 1980s that Mexican politicians began to see women as an untapped resource for support. By this time, women were targeted by the creation of gender legislation, such as promoting equal opportunity for women, and by a new social welfare programme that focused on women and their role in development and advocated women’s participation in the public sphere (Craske 2005). In early studies about women in government in Mexico, scholars found that women who were more likely to be recruited into politics where those representing women’s organizations (Camp 1979). Thus, indicating that women’s participation in the Mexican government was viewed as “special” because they are better equipped to represent female constituents. In this case, citizens view women as different and predict that female legislators would do a better job at representing the female population. As mentioned above, in an effort to meet the demands for a better and more inclusive democracy, Mexico has now enforced a national gender quota law in order to create a more representative
legislative arena. Gender quotas force political parties to make sure that women hold a particular number of candidate slots (Baldez 2007). These quotas have significantly increased the percent of women participating in the legislature in Mexico (Baldez 2007). The increase in women’s representation in Mexico has led to questions concerning female representation: do female legislators vote in accordance to female interests? Do female representatives change the agenda once in political office? Do female legislators vote differently than male legislators? These are some of the questions that I explore in this chapter. With a long-standing tradition of gendered roles coupled with the recent newfound female political voice and following what has been noted in the literature, I expect female legislators to represent female concerns, particularly when it comes to matters of social welfare policy.

Vivienne Bennett (1995) studies women’s involvement in social action in Mexico. The author notes that women in Mexico continue to play a large role in the domestic realm as household managers and it is this role that leads them to be the primary gender to be involved in protests over resources that are necessary to manage a household and aid in a better standard of living. Specifically, Bennett (1995) states that women are the gender most involved in protests over water issues in Monterrey because they are the gender most likely to be affected by lack of clean water, being that women are the ones who typically bear the burden of household chores. Women’s involvement in mobilizations for public services and goods necessary for a better quality of life is noted all over Latin America, signifying that women are more attune with the daily needs of society; needs such as clean water, public education, public health services, etc. If women are more likely to be concerned with social welfare services, then they may be more likely to be concerned with social welfare policies when they participate in government offices. I expect that female representatives vote in support for social welfare policies more so than male
representatives because of their experience as “household managers” (Bennett 1995) and their identity as caretakers (Craske 1999). Though legislators have several constraints on their ability to pass or vote for certain types of legislation, including their party responsibilities, constituency preferences, concern for reelection, and ideology of the majority in power, I expect gender will have an independent effect on how legislators vote. In other words, since women are concerned with social welfare policy, once in government, this concern should surpass other factors that affect legislative behavior. Therefore I expect to observe female legislators voting in support of social welfare policies. Whether this is the case, particularly in Latin America, where women’s empowerment has been on the rise, has not yet been explored. I intend to add to the literature the effect of gender on legislative behavior in Latin America by observing the way legislators vote on policies concerning women’s issues. If women are associated with a heightened support for social welfare policy, I expect this gender effect to be observable amongst women in legislative positions. Female legislators’ roll call votes should demonstrate female support for social welfare policies. Therefore, I hypothesize that,

**H1:** Female legislators vote in support of social welfare policies at a higher rate than their male counterparts.

I also expect that female support for social welfare policies will be observable when investigating legislators’ roll call votes on different and more specific types of social welfare policies. Therefore I also hypothesize that,

**H2:** Female legislators vote in support of policies relating to health services at a higher rate than their male counterparts.

**H3:** Female legislators vote in support of policies relating to public education at a higher rate than their male counterparts.
In order to test whether female legislators vote in support for social welfare policies, I use roll call data from Mexico’s 60th Legislature, which spans from 2006 through 2009. I use the case of Mexico’s 60th Legislature because the data are readily available and shows a record of roll call votes and also, as noted in the previous chapter, the gender gap in public opinion on social policy is observable starting in 2004 in the Latin American region. Mexico’s 60th legislature began in 2006, thus I believe, this provides enough time for the different concerns purported by women generally to be observable at the legislative level with female legislative voting behavior. Mexico is a good case study to determine whether female legislators vote in accordance to women’s interests because it is generalizable to the rest of Latin America. Mexico has a presidential system, has experienced heightened female participation in government, and has a multi party system, as do the rest of the countries in the region. The biggest difference between Mexico and the rest of the countries in the region is the ban on reelection for legislators. However, as stated earlier, the effect that a future political career has on legislative behavior continues to be present, therefore the study of Mexico allows for generalization to other cases in the region.

I use three different models to test the three different hypotheses mentioned above. The dependent variable for the model testing the effect of gender on social welfare policy support by legislators is an index of total votes for social policies by legislators in the 60th legislative session. The dependent variable for the model testing the effect of gender on support for policies regarding health by legislators is also an index of total votes in support of health related policies in the same legislative session. The dependent variable for the third model testing the effect of gender on support for policies regarding education is an index of total votes in support of
education related policies in the same legislative session. As stated, the dependent variables for each model are constructed as indices. The indices are created by dividing the total number of votes per legislator for the particular type of policy divided by the total number of that particular policy available to vote for in Mexico’s 60th legislative session. I use data from Cantu, et al.’s (2010) dataset to construct the indices for each model. The outcome of the construction of the variable is a percentage for each legislator depicting his or her support for a particular policy.

The key independent variable for all models is Female Legislator. I collect data for the independent variable using Cantu et al. (2010) data, which includes the name of the legislator and their vote. I will determine the gender of the legislator by his/her name as well as cross checking the gender of the legislator with the Mexican legislature’s website. I code female legislators as 1 and male legislators as 0.

There are several factors that could obstruct the expected direct relationship between female legislators and roll call votes in support for the types of social welfare policies. The first is ideology. The individual legislator’s ideology could change the results of the relationship

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26 I read over every policy that went up for a vote in the 60th legislature and separated them out into categories. For the dependent variable Social Policy Index I included policies having to do with social issues available for roll call votes in the three years studied (health policy, education policy, indigenous groups policy, vulnerable groups policy, housing policy, youth and sports policy, human and children’s rights policy, equal rights policy, environmental protection policy, and social security policy). For the dependent variable Health Policy Index I included only the policies relating to health care. For the dependent variable Education Policy Index I included only the policies relating to education. In some cases policies were introduced that had both health and education components. For those, I included both of them in each category.


28 For example, the dependent variable for H1 depicting female effects on social welfare policies is an index, Social Policy Index, which consists of the number of votes in support of social welfare policies divided by the number of social welfare policies available to vote for per legislator in Mexico’s 60th legislative session. The dependent variable for H2 depicting female effects on policies relating to public health services is an index, Health Policy Index, which consists of the number of votes in support for public health services policies divided by the number of total public health services policies available to vote per legislator in that legislative session.

29 www.diputados.gob.mx
tested because a left of center ideology could influence legislative behavior towards more support for social welfare policy, while a right of center ideology could influence behavior against social welfare policy. Therefore, I include a variable controlling for ideology using The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) data that includes a measure of ideology based on expert placements for each party.\textsuperscript{30} The variable is constructed as a scale from 1 to 7 where 7 signifies the right of center and 1 signifies the left of center.\textsuperscript{31} Because a legislator’s party affiliation can also have an effect on vote choice in addition to ideology, I control for party discipline. In order to capture the effect that party discipline may have on legislative behavior, I use Cantu et al. (2010) data to document the name of the political party each legislator is affiliated with. I create dummy variables of all the parties included in Mexico’s 60\textsuperscript{th} legislature where 1 signifies the particular party and 0 signifies it is a different party.\textsuperscript{32}

Constituency factors might also have an effect on legislative behavior. Therefore I control for demographic factors in each representative’s state. I control for the average educational attainment of the population in the representative’s state. People who have completed higher levels of education tend to be more politically aware as well as more likely to show up to vote (Schraugnagel and Sgouraki 2005, Aviel 1998). Educational attainment is also found to create differences in policy preferences (Krosnick 1998) thus suggesting constituency policy preferences will differ depending on the level of education of the constituent. I also control for the size of the population that has completed primary schooling, secondary schooling, and has completed their bachelor’s degree. I also control for the size of the population that is

\textsuperscript{31} Ideology scale: PAN=7, PRD=2, PRI=5, PV=6, PT=1, CD=2, PNA=6, and PA=1
\textsuperscript{32} The parties included in the data are the Partido Accion Nacional (PAN), Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (PRD), Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido del Trabajo (PT), Partido Verde Ecologista de Mexico (PV), Convergencia Democratica (CD), Partido Alternativa (PA), Partido Alianza Socialista (PAS), Partido Nueva Alianza (PNA), and Partido de la Sociedad Nacionalista (PSN).
under 15 as well as the size of the population over 60 in each representative’s state because of its effects on policy preference. Scholars find that age has an effect on policy preferences when it comes to social welfare due to the demand for these policies from the younger percentages of the population and the elderly percentages of the population (Neto and Borsani 2004). All of these demographic level factors could obstruct the relationship being studied between female legislators and roll call votes in support for social welfare policies. Therefore, I control for them in an effort to get a more accurate result when testing the key relationships studied.  

Methodology

The three models include data for the relevant variables discussed above in the case of Mexico during its 60th legislative term. Because the dependent variables are a continuous measure, I use an OLS regression for each model to determine whether female legislators vote in support of social welfare policies at higher rates than their male counterparts. Ordinary Least Squares regression allows for an analysis of the linear relationship studied.

Results

The results of the three models testing female legislators votes in support of social welfare policies, health related policies, and education related policies are reported in Table 1 below. The results for Model 1 indicate that female legislators do vote in support of social welfare policies more so than their male counterparts. Therefore, the first hypothesis is supported; female legislators have a positive and statistically significant effect on total votes for

33 All state level data variables were constructed using data from the Banco de Informacion INEGI (http://www.inegi.org.mx/default.aspx).
Table 1. Female Legislators’ Effect on Policy in Mexico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Legislator</td>
<td>2.221* *(1.488)</td>
<td>1.741 *(1.688)</td>
<td>4.328* *(1.992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>3.566** *(1.280)</td>
<td>4.408** *(1.461)</td>
<td>.638 *(1.719)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD</td>
<td>5.546* *(3.759)</td>
<td>7.961* *(4.294)</td>
<td>-6.263 *(5.063)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>-3.038 *(6.413)</td>
<td>3.499 *(7.316)</td>
<td>-11.921 *(8.757)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>-.125 *(3.750)</td>
<td>-1.146 *(4.339)</td>
<td>6.137 *(5.169)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNA</td>
<td>-6.635 *(5.401)</td>
<td>-8.527* *(6.161)</td>
<td>4.216 *(7.251)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>-.021* *(.093)</td>
<td>-.033* *(.111)</td>
<td>-.032* *(.101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>.038** *(.013)</td>
<td>.054*** *(.015)</td>
<td>.058*** *(.018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>-.021* *(.098)</td>
<td>-.023* *(.011)</td>
<td>-.037** *(.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population under 15</td>
<td>.679* *(.341)</td>
<td>1.206** *(.396)</td>
<td>.756* *(.466)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population over 60</td>
<td>1.268* *(.692)</td>
<td>1.474* *(.791)</td>
<td>1.349* *(.932)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R square</td>
<td>.2558</td>
<td>.1930</td>
<td>.1507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p value <.05  **p value <.01  ***p value <.001  †p value <.10
Ordinary Least Squares Regression
Standard Errors reported in parenthesis
DV Model 1= Social Policy Index in percentages
DV Model 2= Health Policy Index in percentages
DV Model 3= Education Policy Index in percentages
One-tailed test
Divided education variables by 100 for coefficients to show up on table
PRI left out as reference category
social welfare policies in Mexico’s 60th legislature. In fact, female legislators increase votes for social welfare policies by approximately 2.2 percent. This suggests further that female legislators are more likely to be concerned with social welfare policies. This finding is striking considering that female legislators vote for social welfare policies at a higher rate than male legislators even after controlling for the effect that political affiliation or discipline has on voting behavior.

Model 1 also provides interesting results with regards to how party affiliation or party discipline affects votes for or against social welfare policies. The PAN and the PRD have the largest statistically significant and positive effect on votes for social policies. This signifies that legislators belonging to both the largest leftist and rightist parties have a 5 percent increasing effect on votes for social welfare policies. Legislators belonging to smaller parties, both on the left and the right of center show no statistically significant effect on social welfare policy votes. Model 1 also shows that party ideology has a statistically significant effect: showing that as parties move towards the right of the political system, they increase votes for social welfare policies by approximately 3.6 percent. Though one would expect leftist ideology or left of center parties to be more progressive and increase total votes for social welfare policies, it appears that the opposite is true in this case; legislators belonging to parties that are left of center are less likely to vote for social welfare policies and parties that are right of center are more likely to vote for social welfare policies. This contradictory effect could be a result of the types of social welfare policies purported in this particular legislative session. There could be an effect that is not accounted for in the variables. More specifically, there could be some sort of discipline effect instituted not by the national party, but by the executive at the time of study that is not accounted for in the variables included in the model. It could be the case that some of the policies in the legislative session were mostly introduced or supported by the executive and the legislators are
voting in accordance with their disapproval or approval of the executive. This argument is in line with the literature denoting that legislators in Latin America are more likely to vote in accordance to what is favorable for those in higher office, like the executive, because in some cases these are the people that have more control over their future political career (Taylor 1997). During the time frame of this study (2006-2009), Federico Calderon, a member of the PAN was elected president. The election was very close between votes for Calderon and votes for Andres Obrador, a member of the PRD. The matter of who was elected was fought legally and Calderon was the victor, but members of the PRD did not recognize Calderon as president, making their opposition very clear (Connolly 2006). The tension between members of the PRD and members of the PAN was very obvious during Calderon’s presidential term and provides a possible explanation for the curious results found in Model 1. President Calderon, though ideologically right of center, implemented various programs during his presidency that could have been considered part of a leftist platform; for instance, he pushed for universal healthcare, better environmental policies domestically and abroad, and advocated for jobs for women and university graduates. Thus, it is possible that as a demonstration of their opposition to the president, the policies purported in legislature that had to do with some of the very platforms that the president stood by were fully opposed by parties belonging to the left of center and fully supported by parties belonging to the right of center despite being ideological matters. After all, the analyses in this chapter is built on observations of recorded votes, thus a perfect scenario for legislators of different parties to make known their positions on issue policies, whether it be a statement of their beliefs or a statement of their support or opposition towards the current executive. This argument is reminiscent of Cesar Zucco’s (2009) study of legislative behavior in Brazil. Zucco (2009) finds that in some cases, ideology does not predict legislative behavior
accurately, rather, closeness to the president and the presidents platform predicts how legislators will vote. In other words, members of parties in the executive are much more inclined to support the president’s position than one would expect when examining their ideology. The findings in this model suggest that Zucco’s argument may also apply to what was occurring during Mexico’s 60th legislature. It is beyond the scope of this project, however further research should be conducted in order to determine whether this effect is present.

The results also show that the average population age of the state has a statistically significant effect on how legislators vote. Having a higher percentage of the population in a state under 15 increases support for social welfare policies. The same is true with having a higher percentage of the population in a state over 60. These results suggest that constituents more likely to need social welfare legislation have an effect on their representatives’ voting behavior. Though this is to be expected, the results depicting educational attainment of the constituents are a little less so. It appears that states with a higher percentage of children that already attained a primary education are less likely to advocate for more social welfare policy support from their representatives. States with a higher percentage of people that have attained a high school degree are more likely to increase support for social welfare policies from their representatives, while states that have a higher percent of people with a higher education decrease support for those policies. It could be the case that there is a correlation between needing more help via social welfare if the person has not gotten a higher education or a correlation between having a higher education and having a better job, thus being better equipped financially. However, it is important to note that the effects for the three demographic variables are very small, indicating that in this case party affiliation, ideology, and gender have the highest effect on voting behavior.
Model 1, reported in Table 1 above, demonstrates that women do have different policy preferences than men. However, does this effect exist when looking at different types of social welfare policies? I attempt to get at this specific effect in Model 2 and Model 3. The results of Model 2, testing female legislators’ effect on support for health related policies in Mexico’s 60th legislative session, are also reported in Table 1 above. The results show that the second hypothesis is not supported; female legislators are not more likely to support health related policies than their male counterparts. This is a strange result given the previous results for the first model that demonstrate that female legislators do vote in support of social welfare policies in general more so than their male counterparts and considering that health policies are usually classified as part of the social welfare policy category. It could be the case that during the time studied, constituency effects outperformed gender effects on the way legislators voted on roll call votes regarding public health services, thus causing a statistically insignificant effect of female legislators and total votes in support of such policies. It could also be the case that for this particular issue, party ideology or party discipline had the strongest and superseding effect because of the known rivalry between the national parties at the time studied and the unexplored executive effect that may exist (look at discussion above for Model 1 results on PRD vs. PAN during the time studied). More data are necessary to determine that this is the case, however. As noted below, constituency preferences and party ideology have a statistically significant effect on policies regarding health, therefore having an effect on legislators’ voting behavior. It is also important to note that though there is no statistically significant gender effect, the variable’s coefficient is in the expected direction, thus suggesting that gender may in fact have some sort of effect and increase total votes for policies regarding health care.
Model 2 shows that the variables for legislators belonging to the parties PRD and PNA have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. The results demonstrate that legislators belonging to the PRD party, a party on the left side of the spectrum, increase votes for health related policies by approximately 8 percent and legislators belonging to the PNA party, a party on the right side of the political spectrum decrease votes for health related policies by approximately 8.5 percent. The rest of the parties included in the model do not show a statistically significant effect. These results are in accordance to what was previously expected: parties considered left of center, like the PRD, should be more likely to support health related policies and parties considered right of center, like the PNA, should be less likely to support these policies. Though, these results are in the expected direction, the variable controlling for ideology is less so. Similar to the results in Model 1, Model 2 shows that as parties move towards the right of center they are more likely to support health related policies. As parties move towards the right they increase votes for health policies by approximately 4.5 percent. Again, a possible reason for these results is the continuing battle between the executive’s preferences at the time studied and the rivalry created between the members of the PRD and the members of the PAN. This case is a perfect example of this scenario because of the right-wing President’s supportive position on universal healthcare (Miller 2011). President Calderon’s push for universal health care could be the reason for the right’s complete support for health related policies as well as the left’s complete opposition to these policies. Due to the fact that the observations are on recorded votes, parties to the left of the political spectrum could have taken this as the opportunity to record their opposition for the executive and parties to the right could have taken this as an opportunity to show their support for the executive. Further research must be conducted to determine whether this is the case.
The results for Model 2 for the rest of the control variables are similar to those reported for Model 1. The percentage of the population in a state that are 15 and under and 60 and over has a positive and statistically significant effect on legislators voting in support for health related policies. This is to be expected because, generally, this is the demographic that mostly benefits from the implementation of these types of policies. The variables depicting the percentage of the population within a state with a primary education, secondary education, and university education, are also statistically significant and in the same direction as previously found. A secondary education positively influences votes for health related policies, while a higher education negatively affects it. Again, we see that these variables have a very small effect relative to that of gender and ideology. It appears that consistently, states with higher percentages of people with a higher degree do not press for more policies regarding health services from the government. Speculatively, it appears that government aid in the form of health services is more deeply a concern for those that do not have a higher education. This is possibly a sign that they are better equipped financially and can afford private health services.

The results for the third hypothesis, testing the effect that gender has on votes for policies pertaining education, are reported in Table 1 under Model 3 above. The results suggest that the third hypothesis is supported; female legislators are more likely to vote in support of education policies than their male counterparts. Female legislators increase total votes for policies having to do with education by approximately 4.3 percent in Mexico’s 60th legislature even after controlling for the effect ideology and party discipline has on voting behavior.

Model 3 also shows that legislators belonging to the PAN, a party to the right of center, have a positive and statistically significant effect on education related policies. Legislators affiliated with the PAN increase votes for education by approximately 11.6 percent. All other
parties had no statistically significant effect on education policies. Again, this is a finding contrary to what was expected. The results indicate that the right of center is more likely to take a progressive stance when it comes to policies relating to education. However, unlike the results in Model 1 and 2, the variable controlling for ideology, though in the same direction as before, has no statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. It appears that when analyzing legislative voting behavior on policies regarding education, ideology does not play a role in how a legislator will vote. This finding further suggests that gender plays a large role in the way a legislator will vote when social welfare policies are up for a vote in the legislature and sometimes this effect supersedes ideology. This finding reinforces the argument that gender must be taken into consideration when analyzing legislative voting behavior.

The variables controlling for educational attainment in the representatives’ states are also in the same direction as in the two previous models. States with a higher percentage of the population with a high school education are more likely to heighten votes in support of education policy and those with a university education lessen votes in support for those types of policies. This might be the case because those with a university education are more than likely done with their educational careers, thus not as concerned with education as they are when only having a high school degree. Because of the consistency of the results in most of the models, it appears that a higher education could be associated with a better standard of living and lessened need for government assistance, explaining the statistical effect that higher education has on social welfare policy support.

The directions of the effects of the rest of the control variables in Model 3 are similar to those in Model 1 and 2. States with a higher percentage of the population under the age of 15 and over the age of 60 affect legislative voting behavior towards heightened support for education
related policies. These results are in accordance to what the literature notes as the types of demographics more likely to support social welfare policies in general. The models show that analyzing voting behavior on specific social welfare policies, such as education, also confirms this generalization.

Overall, the results show that two out of the three hypotheses are supported. Female legislators are more likely to support social policies in Mexico’s 60th legislative session. Female legislators are also more likely to support policies pertaining to education. However, gender does not seem to have an effect when it comes to votes regarding health policy. Though no statistically significant gender effect was found for the model testing hypothesis 2, the direction of the coefficient is in the expected direction, suggesting that female legislators may have an increasing effect on total votes in support of policies regarding health. These particular findings suggest that further research should focus on finding gender effects in specific types of social welfare policies rather than a generalization of all things social. It appears that the gender effect is not always present when analyzing particular social welfare policies such as with policies regarding health. Overall, however, the models do show that gender does have an effect on legislative voting behavior separate from constituency effects and party discipline and ideology.

**Implications and Conclusions**

The results in this chapter confirm that female legislators do make a difference when it comes to social welfare policies. Female concerns that were noted in the previous chapter affect how women behave once in power. Not only are female legislators concerned with social welfare policies in general, but the concern is consistent when examining some particular types of policies such as policies regarding education, therefore supporting the idea that women are more
concerned with these issues than their male counterparts and they remain concerned with them whether they are constituents or in government. More importantly, the analyses above suggest that women heighten the social welfare agenda despite other mentioned constraints.

The results in this chapter also tell a story about gender effects in legislative voting behavior. Gender does play a role in legislative voting behavior even after controlling for what the literature denotes affects it the most. Consistently the results show that controlling for constituency preferences and party discipline, gender makes a difference when it comes to legislators’ roll call votes. Thus, though constituency preferences and party affiliation still play a role in legislative behavior, gender has an independent effect on how or what legislators will be more likely to support and vote for. The size of the gender effect also demonstrates that gender is not merely marginal. Rather the gender effect is quite large, comparatively speaking, and therefore important in predicting legislative behavior. In the future, scholars analyzing legislative behavior need to take gender into consideration and control for it in order to get at the true relationship being studied.

The results also show that the inclusion of women into government bodes well for democracy. If women’s concerns are being represented in government by female representatives, as seen in this chapter, then an inclusive democracy where women are included in government, whether by gender quotas or otherwise, is something to be desired. Not only do women appear to be concerned with the same matters out of government as well as in government, but also women once in government behave in accordance with these concerns, bringing social welfare policies to the forefront. The results also suggest that women’s representation is not purely descriptive, but also substantive. Women represent women’s interests and in this case, women’s interests and concerns are for more social welfare policies. Studies show that descriptive representation
increases the groups’ participation in government, trust in government, and strengthened links between legislators and their constituents (Banducci, et al. 2004). Thus, already having female legislators is a positive factor in terms of participation and citizen’s perceptions of government. The results presented here also suggest that there is substantive representation occurring as well. Previous studies show that substantive representation occurs when legislators carry out certain groups’ preferences and increase the likelihood that these preferences will result in actual policy changes (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). We observed female representatives shifting policy priorities towards social welfare policies, thus representing female concerns. Therefore, the results demonstrate that not only is having women in government effective as a participatory tool in democracy, but also effective in strengthening representation of women via changes in legislative agendas.

Furthermore, women’s support for social welfare policies could have implications for structure of the welfare state. As women become more present in government, it could be the case that women could expand the welfare state in Latin America by shifting the focus to policies regarding social welfare. If representation of women’s issues by women invigorates social welfare policies in Latin American countries, maybe women’s participation in government is partly a panacea for the region’s current inequality problems as well as the current social conditions, eventually creating a better quality of life for the population via the institutionalization of these policies.

In this chapter, we have observed women’s concerns as constituents are translated into women’s legislative behavior once actively part of the government. Women are being substantively represented and not just descriptively represented by women in the legislature and social welfare policies are greatly affected by this representation. The next chapter delves into
whether gender has this same effect at a grander scale. I determine whether female concerns have an effect on budget allocations in Latin America. If women, at the legislative level, increase support for social welfare policies, we should see the same occur during the creation of the budget.
Chapter 4. Women in the Legislature and Their Effect on Government Social Spending

In chapter 2, I determined whether women were more likely to be concerned with issues regarding social welfare and found that women are more likely than men to be concerned with these issues. In chapter 3, I explored whether women’s differing concerns from men’s translated into female behavior in the legislature and found that female legislators do behave in accordance to gender concerns. Female legislators were more supportive of social welfare policies than their male counterparts with regards to their roll call votes. In an effort to get at the effect of gender on the issue agenda rather than legislative behavior, in this chapter, I determine whether women in Latin American legislatures change the nature of government’s behavior by looking at their effect on social welfare spending.

Since the “Third Wave” of democratization, many scholars studying the Latin American region have focused on the changing roles of women in society and their role in governments in the region. Many Latin American countries have fostered positive environments and successfully advocate for an increase in women’s representation in government. As we have seen in previous chapters, a more inclusive democracy, regarding gender, does make a difference when analyzing social welfare concerns and policies. Now I aim to explore the impact that women have on government behavior once they attain governmental positions in order to determine whether the heightened inclusion of women into government coupled with female concerns has an overall effect on governments’ budget allocations, but more importantly, in order to determine whether female inclusion into governmental branches has an effect on the types of policies that fund a better quality of life for society. If it is the case that women have an effect on budget

34 For the purposes of this chapter, the following countries are included in the analysis: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela.
allocations, then this brings us closer to finding whether women’s empowerment can aid in the fight for better social conditions and heightened quality of life in the region.

By exploring the impact that women have once in the legislature on government spending, one can also determine whether women’s effects in the Latin American region coincide with previous literature on women’s effects in other regions of the world. As noted previously, the consensus in the Western well-developed world is that women have a positive effect on matters of social policies (Cook and Wilcox 1991, Rusciano 1992, Jackette 1997, Abrams and Settle 1999, Schlesinger and Heldman 2001, Aidt and Dallal 2008). As women are included as participants in government, government priorities shift towards policies regarding social welfare. Thus, if it is the case that women have a similar effect on social welfare in Latin America than in other regions where this subject has been explored, it can be said that gender is a very important factor when determining policy orientations and government’s policy priorities in general. Gender may be a factor that supersedes ideology when it comes to predicting the types of policies governments focus on when formulating their budgets.

**Literature Review**

Bountiful literature exists on the role of women in society, particularly with regards to how women become empowered, but few studies focus on women’s roles within government and fewer still examine how women’s inclusion into government affects society. Most academics begin their analyses with the understanding that women are fundamentally different from men and their findings indicate that women do bring a different je ne sais quoi to the table. The small amount of scholarship studying the subject find the following; empowering women leads to

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35 In this context, women’s empowerment refers to their ability to engage and participate in government. Throughout the rest of the chapter, empowerment will refer to women’s participation in government, particularly in the legislature.
human and social development (Campbell and Teghtsoonian 2010), stability (Hunt and Posa 2001), and a decline in political extremism and terrorism (Kristof and Wuduun 2009).

Women’s participation in government has also been correlated with greater human rights (Melander 2005), promoting honest government and reducing corruption (Dollar et al. 1998). Specifically in Latin America, Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer (2012) finds that countries where there are higher rates of women in legislatures and women’s issue bills are passed, constituents are more trusting of the government, perceive less corruption, and are overall more satisfied with democracy. Some scholars deem women “development panaceas” because helping women seems to be one of the most effective ways to combat things like poverty, underdevelopment, lack of welfare, and decreasing standards of living (Chant 2003). These findings suggest that women do have a different effect in government than their male counterparts and aid in my suspicion that women might be more inclined to support social policies and therefore change government’s allocation of the budget towards these types of policies.

Academics conducting studies on gender and politics outside of Latin America find that women’s presence in government has a different effect on different types of policies than men’s presence in government. Arend Lijphart (1991) finds that democracies with high rates of women in legislatures pass more laws that benefit children. Susan Carroll (2001) finds that women in government in the United States make a difference in policies pertaining to women, children, family, as well as policy that supports feminist issues. Similar findings appear in studies done in other countries as well. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) find that in India female leaders were more concerned with policies pertaining to public goods than male leaders. The authors show that women that were elected to be leaders were more concerned with policies pertaining to public goods that were indicative of women’s concerns. Here we see more evidence of a
behavioral difference between men and women in government positions. However, this particular study focused on India and observed women in power at the local level, rather than nationally, thus one must be judicious in making claims about other regions or about the effects that women might have at the national level.

Scholars also argue that women are more likely to support social policies in their country of residence (Cook and Wilcox 1991, Rusciano 1992, Schlesinger and Heldman 2001). To this effect, scholars provide evidence that women seem to be more attune with the need for social services and thus social policies. Vivienne Bennet (1995) finds that when women organize they tend to concentrate on issues that arise on a daily basis, such as the need for services that are necessary for a better quality of life. This alludes to the fact that women’s participation in government might affect the political agenda by adding to it the importance of social services such as education and healthcare. In studies focusing on the gender gap in public opinion, scholars also find evidence that women tend to support social welfare policy more so than men (Inglehart and Norris 2000, Kaufman and Petrocik 1999, Seltzer et al. 1997, Jaquette 1997, Conover and Sapiro 1993, Wirls 1986). Scholars find that women are less likely than men to support policies dealing with militarism and defense spending, but are more likely to support policies dealing with social welfare and safety nets for the poor (Jaquette 1997). Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2000) analyze survey data for 60 countries and find that while women in the United States are deemed more progressive in ideology and therefore advocate for more social welfare policies, so too are women in most postindustrial societies; thus indicating that women’s alignment with the left-leaning policies, in terms of voting preferences, has become the norm. Thus, there is evidence that denotes women as the gender most likely to support social policies in scholarly literature and in the previous two chapters, however, some
questions regarding the subject remain unanswered. Does women’s support for social policies translate into a change in government behavior resulting in an increase in social welfare spending once they are in the legislature in the Latin American region?

As noted so far, women do seem to behave differently from men once they enter into positions in government. Whether due to stereotypes or the fact that women are more likely to want to participate in activities relating to social policies, many scholars note that women once empowered end up in governmental positions having to do with these types of policies. Women tend to be associated with issues such as health, gender and education, issues considered “soft issues,” when participating in government office (Buvinic and Roza 2004). The term “soft issues” has been adopted by the literature to signify issues that relate to domestic, social, and environmental policy, rather than “hard issues” that typically signify issues related to the economy or international policy. Htun and Piscopo state that “women tend to control portfolios such as social services, education, tourism culture, and housing” (2010, 3). Maria Escobar-Lemmon and Michelle Taylor-Robinson (2005) also find that in Latin America women, once in power, typically hold cabinet positions or portfolios that the authors deem have lower prestige: portfolios such as Children and Family, Tourism, Women’s Affairs, Education, and Environment portfolios. These types of portfolios are considered part of the social domain rather than portfolios having to do with Finance, Defense and Economic portfolios that the authors deem have higher prestige and are outside of the social domain. The authors find that of the cabinet posts that have higher prestige, women are more likely to hold those involving education, health, or welfare. Though the literature points to the fact that women tend to hold positions that focus on social services and the like, few studies assess whether women actually affect the amount of policy made or the amount the government spends on these particular issues.
In a study conducted across different states in the United States, Caiazza (2002) finds that greater women’s representation is correlated with women-friendly policies. In other words, women participating in the legislature, increase the amount or existence of policies having to do with welfare, child support, violence against women, reproductive rights, and employment. This suggests that female representatives, more so than male representatives, seem to focus on issues that concern the social progress of society. In a comparative analysis of women’s representation and politics in Latin America, Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer (2012) has similar findings and discusses various interesting results involving the experiences that female politicians, specifically legislators, have had in Latin America since the transitions from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones. While analyzing Colombia, Argentina and Costa Rica, the author finds that women do in fact represent women’s issues more so than male representatives. She also finds that women are more likely than men to represent all spectrums of society rather than solely their same gender or even only minorities. Observing female representatives in legislatures in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica, Schwindt-Bayer (2012) also finds that female legislators are more likely than male legislators to cosponsor bills that have to do with women’s issues and that they are more likely to sponsor bills having to do with health and education than bills having to do with agriculture, economics or fiscal affairs; bills more likely to be sponsored by male representatives. This last finding is important for this particular chapter. Schwindt-Bayer (2012) finds that women are more likely to sponsor bills that are related to social issues or bills deemed part of the “women’s domain” and less likely to sponsor bills that are part of “men’s domain.” In other words, female legislators are more likely to sponsor bills that have to do with children, family issues, education and health, while they are less likely to sponsor bills on agriculture, the economy, and foreign affairs. However, though Schwindt-Bayer
(2012) focuses on the subject of women in politics in Latin America, she does not focus on different and more aggregate aspects of women’s possible effects, such as their effect on budgetary formations or allocations, rather the author focuses on descriptive, symbolic, formal and substantive representation to conduct a very comprehensive and informative piece on female representation. Though Schwindt-Bayer (2012) investigates women’s cosponsorship of social welfare policy bills, she leaves unexplored whether, at a grander scale, female representatives change the overall budget structure and increase government social welfare spending.

Some studies do posit that female participation in government has an effect on governmental behavior specifically. Mary Caprioli (2000) finds that women’s participation in government has a “peaceful effect” on state behavior. Her study demonstrates that a greater participation of women in the legislature results in governments less likely to act violently or with force internationally as well as domestically. Similarly, Patrick Ragen and Aida Paskeviciute (2003) demonstrate that as the percentage of female participation in government increases, countries become less likely to enter into militarized interstate disputes. This particular study suggests that government behavior does have the potential to change and the change can be a result of gender inclusion into politics, however the question still remains as to whether female participation in government affects government policy priorities regarding social welfare.

Getting deeper into female effects when it comes to government behavior towards social welfare and mostly focusing on the Western developed world, Burton Abrams and Russel Settle (1999) find that in Switzerland, extending the right to vote to women at the federal level substantially changed the allocation of the budget; redirecting resources to social welfare spending. In a study of six Western European countries, Toke S. Aidt and Bianca Dallal (2008) find that social spending for things such as collective goods increases in countries where women
have the right to vote. Thus, women’s suffrage increases social spending. Aidt and Dallal (2008) also find that women’s voting participation shifted government policy concerns towards social policies or portfolios. Though these analyses get closer to examining female effects on government behavior regarding social welfare, these analyses only observe the relationship between women’s participation in government via voting and social policies or spending and leaves unexplored how other means of female participation affect social policies, government behavior, and spending.

I focus on the effects that the increase in rates of women participating in legislatures in all 18 Latin American democracies have on social welfare spending. Taking into consideration the literature that denotes the fundamental differences between men and women’s behavior in the political arena, women’s identity as caretakers, as well the unprecedented increase in women’s empowerment in the region, I suspect that higher percentages of women in the legislature will result in an increase in government spending on social welfare policies, indicating that female participation does affect government behavior. In order to analyze whether this is the case I focus particularly on health and education spending; policies that affect overall quality of life and wellbeing.

In the following section I describe my theory and state my hypothesis regarding women’s effects on social spending. I proceed by describing the nature of the data and stating the concepts and operationalizations as well as methods I use to test the hypothesis. Furthermore I provide a section with the results of the model and a discussion of the findings followed by a section stating the implications of the study and my concluding remarks.
Theory and Hypotheses

According to the literature discussed above, there is evidence that women do bring different policies up to the forefront from men once they are empowered. Women are more likely to focus on women’s issues and social welfare issues. They are also more likely to support social welfare policies than their male counterparts. Thus, given the evidence provided by the literature, I expect that as the percentage of women increases in the legislatures in Latin America, they will influence the nature of government and policy outcomes differently from men. I expect that as women participate more in government, policy priorities will shift due to women’s identification as caregivers. This identification will drive women’s policy priorities to include those that will benefit the wellbeing of society. In order to depict the shift in policy priorities brought on by female participation in the public sector, I observe women’s presence in legislatures and government budget allocations.

Despite the power of the president to introduce the budget in Latin American countries, I focus on the relationship between women in the lower house of the legislature, rather than the upper house of the legislature, and budget spending because the lower chambers of congress in the region are powerful decision-making institutions (Mainwaring and Welna 2003), relative to the U.S. House of Representatives, and the executive, knowing that he or she needs the legislature’s approval, will cater to the desires of a sufficient portion of deputies needed to pass the budget. As the percent of women representatives in the legislature increases, it incentivizes the executive to attend to women’s interest in the budget proposal. Therefore, though the power to introduce the budget lies with the executive, legislatures ultimately have to vote on the budget bill in order to pass it. Thus, the executive and members of the legislature share the power to allocate spending towards social policy.
I expect that because gender affects policy preferences, as noted in the literature review, and because women are correlated with social policies and issues, that as women increasingly participate in the legislature, policy priorities will shift towards policy issues of concern to women, particularly social welfare policies. If governments’ policy priorities are different when women are included in the legislature, we should see a greater focus on social policies pertaining to a better future and quality of life for society. In order to test these expectations, I focus on government spending on policies pertaining to health and education in Latin American countries where the subject remains relatively underexplored. I expect that women’s empowerment, in the form of legislative participation, will have a positive and increasing effect on health and education spending. Thus, I hypothesize that:

_As the percent of women in the lower house of the legislature increases, government spending on health and education in Latin American countries will increase._

Below I provide a description of the data used in the analysis, followed by a section discussing the concepts and operationalizations used to test the hypothesis.

_About the Data_

To test the hypothesis stated above I use two models. The first tests the effects that women in the legislature have on government health spending and the second model tests the effects that women in the legislature have on government education spending. I test the two models using data from 18 Latin American countries from the years 1990 through 2012. The unit of analysis in the study is country-year.

Though both the health spending and education spending models are similar in the variables I include, they are different in the data I include. In the first model I test whether
women’s presence in the legislature increases government health spending. This model includes all variables described in the concepts and operationalization section below as well as all 18 Latin American countries studied for the years 1990 through 2012. I am able to use all 18 countries because data on health spending are readily available. In the second model I test whether women’s presence in the legislature increases government spending on education. Due to missing data, I constrain the model to only include 9 Latin American countries. The countries included in this model are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. The rest of the countries are excluded from the model because the missing data on government spending on education extends to decade long gaps and therefore would provide potentially skewed results. For instance, there are no data for Honduras on government spending on education from the year 1999 through 2009 and data for Venezuela are only available for two years within the studied time frame. Thus, to ensure the robustness of the results, I focus on the 9 Latin American countries with available data to conduct the analysis on women’s effects on education spending.

*Concepts and Operationalizations*

In order to test whether women have a different effect from men on government spending on social welfare policy at the legislative level, I construct two models. While testing the hypothesis I also include control variables to account for alternative hypotheses that might influence or mask the effect that women in the legislature have on government spending. The following is an overview of the variables and their operationalizations, which I use to test the hypothesis.
I use two different models testing women’s effects, first on health and then on education spending. In the first model I test women’s effects on health spending and therefore the dependent variable for the model is government spending on health, *Health Spending*, per country and year of study. The health spending variable is constructed with data on the percent of spending on health as a total percent of GDP. In the second model I test women’s effects on education spending and therefore the dependent variable is government spending on education, *Education Spending*, per country and year of study. The education spending variable is constructed with data on the percent of spending on health as a total percent of GDP.\(^{36}\) I collect data for both dependent variables using data from the World Bank Development Indicators Database\(^ {37}\) for 18 Latin American countries\(^ {38}\) for the years 1990 through 2012. I use government spending on health and education as indicators of government spending on policies related to social welfare.

The key independent variable of study is the percent of women in the lower or only house of the legislature, *% Female Legislators*. As stated above, I use data from the lower house of the legislature rather than the upper house because the lower chambers are powerful decision makers in the region, particularly relative to the United States’ House of Representatives. I construct the variable, *% Female Legislators*, using the percentage of women in the legislature in each year and country of study. The Inter-Parliamentary Union provide data on percentages of women in the lower house of the legislature in all of Latin America for all countries and years of study.\(^ {39}\)

\(^{36}\) As discussed in the above section, data on the percent of education spending as a total percent of GDP is lacking for several of the countries of study. To account for the large gaps in the data I only include nine countries for which the data are available.

\(^{37}\) data.worldbank.org

\(^{38}\) The countries of study in alphabetical order are: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela.

\(^{39}\) www.ipu.org
For each model I control for several factors that may confound the relationship between women’s presence in the legislature and government spending on health and education. These include political, economic and institutional factors; all factors that the literature posits have an effect on countries’ allocation of the budget and therefore all factors that could obstruct the relationship studied.

I control for political ideology of the executive as well as the majority party in the legislature because it influences government spending on specific policy (Rudolf and Evans 2005). A left leaning legislature is more likely to encourage budget allocations towards social policies than a right leaning legislature (Huber et al. 2008). Not only does political ideology affect types of government spending, but it also affects women’s empowerment. The closer the ideology is to the left side of the political spectrum, the higher the percentage of women in the largest parties in government (Caul 2001). The political ideology of the executive should also have an effect on spending because if the executive introduces the budget and he/she is aligned with the more progressive party, then a higher allocation of the budget towards social welfare spending should be included in the budget proposal. I should note, however, that the strength of the president’s power to enforce his/her original budget depends on the constitutional powers given to the legislature in the budget process. Regardless, because the executive introduces the original budget proposal, his/her ideology could have an effect on social welfare spending. I expect that because the left is associated with more progressive policies that left wing control of both the executive and the majority in the legislature will increase social spending. I also expect the opposite to be the case when the right controls both branches because of their association with more conservative policies. I construct five dummy variables to control for political ideology in the executive and the majority party in the legislature. The variable Left Executive,
controls for when the executive is part of a leftist party and when a different party controls the majority of the legislature. The variable *Left Executive & Legislature* controls for when the left controls both the executive and the majority party in the legislature. The variable *Right Executive* controls for when the executive is part of a rightist party and the majority party in the legislature is part of a different party. The variable *Right Executive & Legislature* controls for when the right controls both the executive and the majority party in the legislature. The variable *Centrist Executive & Legislature* controls for when a party to the center of the political spectrum controls both the executive and the majority party in the legislature. The variable *Centrist Executive* denotes that a centrist party controls the executive, but a different party controls the majority in the legislature. This last dummy variable is left out as the baseline category. The data I use to construct these dummy variables are collected from Andrew Clem’s online dataset, which provides political ideology data for each president in each country and year of study as well as the World Bank’s Database for Political Institutions (DPI) (Beck et al. 2001), which provides data on whether the executive party also controls the majority in the legislature.

I also control for whether the particular year of study is an executive election year. Anticipating a presidential election, the executive might be more likely to increase spending in areas of concern to the voter. These areas typically involve policy that affects the quality of life of individuals, thus social welfare spending might become greater in the hopes that voters will vote for the executive if their quality of life has been positively affected prior to the election. I construct *Exelec* using data from the DPI (Beck et al. 2001). I expect that approaching an executive election year, social spending will increase. Consequently, I also expect that approaching a legislative election spending on matters of concern to the voter will increase, thus

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40 www.andrewclem.com
I control for whether it is a legislative election year. I construct, \textit{Legelec}, using data from the DPI (Beck et al. 2001).

Scholars focusing on government spending, particularly in political economy literature, find that the type of electoral system has an effect on the amount and ways governments spend their money (Persson and Tabellini 2000, Milesi-Ferretti et al. 2002, Persson and Tabellini 2003). Most of these studies compare forms of government with majoritarian systems that have single-member districts with forms of government that have proportional systems. Single member districts are those that have winner-take all rules that generally result in supporting large parties and eliminating small ones. Proportional systems are voting systems where the number of seats won by political parties, are more proportional to the number of votes for those parties. Persson et al. (2000) find that electoral regimes with proportional representation affect the size of government with regards to their spending. Persson and Tabellini (2000) find that countries with proportional representation spend more on welfare. The rational behind the finding is that in countries with proportional representation there is an incentive for politicians to seek votes from larger portions of the electorate, and in order to do so they are more likely to heighten spending programs (Persson and Tabellini 2003). In order to control for the relationship between proportional representation and the size of government spending, I create the variable \textit{PR} using data from the DPI (Beck et al. 2001). I code the variable 1 if the electoral system in a country denotes that candidates are elected based on the number of votes received and 0 if otherwise.

Several scholars also find that the age of the electorate has an effect on the type and amount of government spending in a country (Aidt and Dallal 2008, Neto and Borsani 2004, Kaufman and Segura-Umbriega 2001, Brown and Hunter 1999). In most Latin American countries, persons of age 55 or older begin their pension coverage (Brown and Hunter 1999),
therefore, I control for the percent of the older part of the population in each country and year of study. Octavio Neto and Hugo Borsani (2004) rationalize the use of population age as a control variable in their analysis, specifically the size of the population aged under 15 and above 65, by explaining that the higher the percent of these populations, the more the government will have to spend on things like health care, education, and social security, and therefore will be pressured to raise the budget. Therefore, as per prior findings, I expect that the higher the percent of the population under 15 and over 65 years of age, the higher the spending on social welfare policy areas. I construct a variable for the percent of the population ages 15 and under as well as a variable for the percent of the population ages 65 and over, \((Population\ under\ 16\ and\ Population\ over\ 64)\). The data for both variables comes from the World Bank Development Indicators. I use the variable \(Population\ over\ 64\), rather than the variable \(Population\ under\ 16\) in the model testing women’s effects on health spending because I assume that the people most likely to be affected by health spending are the elder portion of the population, particularly since they are more likely to begin their pension coverage. I use the variable for \(Population\ under\ 16\), rather than the variable \(Population\ over\ 64\) in the model testing women’s effects on education spending because I assume that the people most likely to be affected by education spending are the younger portion of the population.

I also control for the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in each country and year of study. Not only does GDP indicate a country’s economic development, but it also has an effect on government spending because money is necessary for spending. As David Brown and Wendy Hunter note, “poor countries cannot marshal the kind of resources that wealthier countries devote to social spending” (1999, 782-783). Therefore, GDP is a relevant variable that I control for in order to get at the relationship between women’s empowerment and government social welfare
spending. I construct the variable $GDP$ using data on GDP in US currency from the World Bank Development Indicators. I expect that higher GDP will have an increasing effect on all budget allocations.

I also include data on the level of democracy as a control variable. I construct the variable $Democracy$ using POLITY IV\(^{41}\) data in order to determine the level of democratic consolidation in each country per year of study. I expect that the higher the level of democracy, the higher the spending will be on social welfare policies because in many democracies the poor are part of the majority and having better institutions and accountability, compared to the previous authoritarian regimes, should lead to more redistribution. Also, higher levels of democracy have been correlated with higher standards of living and higher GDPs, suggesting that government might spend more money on social policies as democracy levels rise (Barro 1999). The level of democracy in a country is also an important control because scholars find that “the more political participation a system provides for, the more the government spends on public goods” (Plumper and Martin 2003). Thus, I expect that the higher the level of democracy within a country, the more the government will spend on matters of social welfare.

Considering that my research consists of budgetary allocations, particularly the policy areas that the government puts money towards, constitutional veto powers allotted to politicians are an important factor to include and control for because of their ability to constrain politicians’ voting behavior on legislative and executive bills. Veto powers or rules and regulations on how bills are made and passed represent the institutional constraints placed on the legislature or the executive when it comes to passing a bill (Alesina and Perotti 1999). These powers can be described as allotting discretion to particular actors in policy and decision-making, thus making it an important explanation as to how different bills are passed (Henisz 2000). In Latin American

countries, the power to introduce the budget lies universally with the executive, however, the legislatures in the region have several constitutional powers at their disposal to modify the budget at several stages of the approval process. On average, the review process for a budget bill for Latin American legislatures is ninety days; after the review, legislators can modify the executive bill. However, the ability to modify the budget varies by country due to different amendment powers given to the legislature. Generally, the public believes that the executive is dominant in the budget bill process, but even if the president vetoes the bill, legislatures have the right to push for amendments and override the veto if the necessary majority is present (Santiso 2005). Thus, though the president can veto a legislative modification to the budget,\footnote{With the exception of Ecuador, where the President does not have veto power and Costa Rica and Honduras where the president’s veto power exists, but is not constitutionally allowed for matters having to do with the budget.} the legislature still has the power to insist on the change after his or her veto.

In all Latin American countries studied the legislature must vote to approve the budget bill. In many cases, such as in Argentina, the legislature has the power to intervene in the process of the budget’s execution. Most of the constitutions in the region have provisions that provide the executive and the legislative branches close to equal power when it comes to decide on the budget bill for the fiscal year. However, the constitutions also provide alternatives in the case that neither branch can come to a compromise on the proposed budget. If it is the case that the legislatures do not approve the proposed budgets, at least four alternatives are in place. In Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Venezuela, one alternative is to use the status quo. In Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica and Peru, they use the president’s budget proposal as if it were approved. In Brazil, El Salvador and Honduras, they reintroduce a completely different budget proposal. And, as an extreme measure, in Mexico,
an alternative is to have a freeze on all spending during the budgetary year. (Rodriguez and Bonvecchi 2004).

I expect that when the legislature is more dominant than the executive in the budgetary process there will be higher spending because with the legislature there is an increase in veto points. With more veto points the legislature is more capable of generating legislative coalitions that can pass the policy of their choosing leaving the executive with less power to pass the policy of his/her choosing. Using information compiled by Jesus Rodriguez and Alejandro Bonvecchi (2004), I construct a dummy variable, Dominant Legislature, depicting whether the legislature is more dominant in the actual passage of the budget bill or whether the executive is more dominant in its passage. As stated above, certain countries give the legislature more constitutional power than the executive in the formation of the budget bill. For instance, though the president introduces the budget in all Latin American countries, in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Paraguay the legislature has the ability to change and modify the president’s budget proposal without restriction. In Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Panama and Uruguay the legislature can only change the budget if it does not increase spending or the deficit. Thus, in these countries the legislature can modify the president’s proposed budget, but they have certain restrictions. However, in places like Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru, after the legislature has modified the president’s proposed budget, the president can change it without congressional approval, thus giving the executive more power as to the passage of the budget bill. (Rodriguez and Bonvecchi 2004).

I use the variables described above in both of the models testing the hypothesis. Below I describe the methods used to test the hypothesis and later state the results of the tests and discuss
the findings. I later proceed by providing the implications of the findings and concluding remarks.

Methodology

I use two different models to test the hypothesis. The first tests how women in the legislature affect government spending on health. The second tests how women in the legislature affect government spending on education. I use data from 18 Latin American countries to test the first model and data from 9 Latin American countries to test the second model.\textsuperscript{43} Both of the models include data from the years 1990 through 2012. The unit of analysis in the study is country-year. The data collected and described above create a time-series cross-sectional (TSCS) data set, which includes observations in each country as well as observations across time. Time series cross-sectional data are problematic because there is concern for autocorrelation and heteroskedasticity. One cannot use a simple Ordinary Least Squares regression with these data because “the estimates of the standard error can be misleading due to panel heteroskedasticity or special correlation of the errors” (Brown and Hunter 1999). Due to the nature of the data, I use a random effects model with robust standard errors to test each model. This particular methodology accounts for the fact that the data available are panel data across countries over time.\textsuperscript{44}

Before running the model, there are other statistical tests that I incorporate in order to be certain that the model used is the proper one for the data available. For instance, I conducted Fisher unit root tests to determine whether I have any unit root problems. The tests show that

\footnotesize

\textsuperscript{43} Please refer to the Information About the Data section where I explain why I only use 9 countries in the second model.

\textsuperscript{44} I also cross check the results using other models, including fixed effect models and OLS with panel corrected standard errors. For more information look at footnote 45.
there are in fact unit root problems. To correct for this, I use Prais-Winsten partial differencing to address AR(1) disturbances.

Results

The results for the first model, testing the relationship between the amount the government spends on health and the percentage of women in the legislature in Latin America, are reported in Table 1 below. As was expected, the percentage of women in the legislature has a statistically significant and positive effect on health spending. According to the random effects model reported in Table 1, all else being equal, for each 1 percent increase in the percentage of women in the legislature in Latin American countries, there is a 2.2 percent increase in government health spending.

The control variables in the model also yield interesting results. Women’s effects on health spending still hold after controlling for ideology, which typically predicts policy orientations. Interestingly enough, the variables controlling for a left wing executive with a different party controlling the legislature (Left Executive) and a right wing executive with a different party controlling the legislature (Right Executive) do not yield statistical significance. The same is the case with the variable denoting that the right controls both the executive and the majority in the legislature (Right Executive & Legislature). However, the variable controlling for centrist control of the executive and the legislature (Center Executive & Legislature) does yield statistical significance. When the center controls both branches, health spending goes down 29

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45 I used several models to test the consistency of results. The model reported in Table 1 is a Random Effects model that also accounts for the AR(1) disturbances and addresses problems of serial correlation. I also tested the hypothesis using a Fixed Effects model accounting for the AR(1) disturbance. The results of the Fixed Effects model were very similar and also yielded statistically significant and substantive results for the main independent variable of interest. I also tested the hypothesis using a Random Effects model including country dummies and not including them as well as a Fixed Effects model not controlling for AR(1) disturbances. All models provided consistent results and can be reported interchangeably.
percent. This finding suggests that parties at the center of the political spectrum have a negative effect on social spending, something usually attributed to right wing parties. The variable controlling for whether the left has control of both the executive and the legislature (\textit{Left}

Table 1. Female Legislators’ Effect on Health Spending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Coefficient (Standard Errors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Female Legislators</td>
<td>.022*</td>
<td>(.009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Executive</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>(.120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Executive &amp; Legislature</td>
<td>-.296†</td>
<td>(.184)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Executive</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>(.113)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Executive &amp; Legislature</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>(.161)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Executive &amp; Legislature</td>
<td>-.291*</td>
<td>(.172)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exelec</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>(.063)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legelec</td>
<td>.115*</td>
<td>(.056)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>-3.21e-09</td>
<td>(5.47e-09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population over 64</td>
<td>.319**</td>
<td>(.081)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>1.58e-13</td>
<td>(3.08e-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>(.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Legislature</td>
<td>.550</td>
<td>(.508)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>.964</td>
<td>(.925)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.3009</td>
<td>(1.0719)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R square</td>
<td>.3045</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>296</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\textit{p value < .05}  **\textit{p value < .001}  †\textit{p value < .10}
Random Effects Model
Standard Errors reported in parenthesis
Executive & Legislature) yields statistically significant results at the 10 percent significance threshold. When the left controls both the executive and the legislature, health spending decreases by 29.6 percent. This is a strange finding considering that the literature usually predicts that left wing parties affect matters of social policy and spending positively. However, looking at the direction of the coefficient for when the right controls both the executive and the majority in the legislature, one notes that the variable affects health spending positively, which also challenges previous literature. Contrary to other findings, it would appear that the right, not the left has a positive effect on health spending. This may be the case because during the time studied, the right wing parties could compose of a larger percentage of women than the left wing parties, as was the case during multiple dictatorships in the 1980s in the region. If this is the case then women’s influence, superseding that of the party ideology allegiance, caused the party to vote according to women’s concerns and therefore increased health spending. This argument would explain why the variables controlling for the left and right ideologies show such conflicting results. Unfortunately data on how many women are in each different party are not readily available and further research must be conducted in order to determine whether this is the case or whether there are other factors involved in such strange findings.

As previously discussed, I control for whether the year studied is an executive election year or whether it is a legislative election year. The results suggest that whether the year studied is an executive election year, does not affect health spending. This is contrary to what I expected, however the results are logical. If it is an executive election year, the budget would have already been passed and therefore health may have not been allocated for heavily. It may be the case that the current president is serving his or her last term, therefore not feeling pressure to receive voter support by allocating money towards areas of voter concern. Lastly, and most likely, given the
legislative power in the budget process in Latin America, the executive may not have had it in his or her power to formulate and pass the budget with a large portion of money allocated towards health spending. This last explanation is most reasonable, particularly given that the variable depicting whether the year of study is a legislative election year yields a positive and statistically significant effect on health spending. The results suggest that in a year where there are legislative elections, health spending goes up by 11.5 percent. Therefore, it appears that pressure to receive voter support does influence legislature’s allocation of the budget. Being that health spending may be of concern to the majority of voters, legislators assure that the budget allocates more towards health spending in order to get majority voter support.

The results also show that the proportion of the population that is over 65 years of age has a statistically significant effect on health spending. The higher the proportion of the population that is age 65 years and over increases health spending by 3.1 percent. This result indicates that due to the fact that the eldest part of the population is most likely to need aid in areas of social welfare, such as healthcare, pressure is placed on the government to spend more on health related policies and therefore health spending increases.

Not as expected, GDP, proportional representation, and legislative dominance in the budget process show no statistically significant effect on health spending. However, the direction of the variables do seem to suggest that GDP, an electoral system that is proportional, and having a dominant legislature in the budgetary process has a positive effect on health spending. Also contrary to what was expected, the level of democracy has no statistically significant effect on health spending. However, the direction of the coefficient does indicate that as democracies consolidate they increase health spending, thus supporting previous findings.
Overall, the first model testing the relationship between women in the legislature and health spending supports the hypothesis. All else being equal, an increase in the amount of women in Latin American legislatures results in an increase in government health spending. Below I report the results of the second model determining whether this is also the case when examining trends in education spending.

The results for the second model, testing the relationship between the amount the government spends on education and the percentage of women in the legislature in Latin America, are reported in Table 2 below. As was expected, the higher the percentage of women in the legislature, the more the government spends on education. Women in the legislature have a statistically significant and positive effect on education spending, thus supporting the hypothesis. As the percent of women increases in the legislature by 1 percent, education increases by 4.5 percent.

As was the case in the model testing women’s effects on health spending, the variables accounting for a left wing executive with a different party controlling the majority in the legislature (Left Executive) and a right wing executive with a different party controlling the legislature (Right Executive) yield no statistical significance. The variables controlling for a predominantly right wing legislature and a right wing executive (Right Executive & Legislature) as well as the variable controlling for left wing control of both the executive and majority of the legislature (Left Executive & Legislature) also yield no statistical significance. However, the effects of the variable controlling for centrist control of both branches (Center Executive & Legislature) yields stronger statistically significant results than in the previous model. When the center controls both the executive and majority in the legislature, health spending decreases by 57 percent. This suggest, as it did before, that centrist parties are not very supportive of more
progressive policies such as welfare policies and therefore negatively affect health spending.

However, as stated previously, it could be the case that stronger positive influence on welfare spending comes from gender rather than party ideology, where parties that have a high

Table 2. Female Legislators’ Effect on Education Spending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Female Legislators</td>
<td>.045**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Executive</td>
<td>-.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.235)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Executive &amp; Legislature</td>
<td>-.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.293)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Executive</td>
<td>-.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.224)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Executive &amp; Legislature</td>
<td>-.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.265)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Executive &amp; Legislature</td>
<td>-.571*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.281)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exelec</td>
<td>-.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.092)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legelec</td>
<td>.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.078)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>2.15e-09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.09e-09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population under 16</td>
<td>-.077*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>1.38e-12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.74e-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>-.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.063)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Legislature</td>
<td>-.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.406)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.502)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>5.365**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.434)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R square</td>
<td>.5937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p value < .05  **p value < .001  † p value < .10
Random Effects Model
Standard Errors reported in parenthesis
percentage of women yield positive effects on health spending. It could also be the case that extremist parties, both on the left and right, tend to be populist and more likely to spend on welfare areas and centrist parties, less likely to be populist, do not want to spend on welfare areas, therefore causing the negative results. To assess these arguments further more research must be conducted with data that are not readily available and beyond the scope of this study.

Unlike the model testing women’s effects on social spending, whether the year is an executive election year or a legislative election year appears to have no effect on the amount of government spending on education. This may be the case because spending more on education is a factor that is not “felt” by society in the short term, rather than in the long term, thus making it less of a salient issue for politicians during elections.

In this particular model, I control for the proportion of the population ages 14 and under. This is as opposed to the first model where I control for the proportion of the population ages 65 and over. I control for the proportion of the population ages 15 and under because education is predominantly a policy area affecting the younger portion of the population. The results suggest, however, that the younger proportion of the population has a statistically significant and negative effect on education spending. This is a strange result considering the justification for having the variable as a control in the first place. The strange result could be due to the fact that the variable only encompasses the part of the population that has not even reached secondary school. There may be a threshold effect where pressure for higher spending on education comes from the “young adult” proportion of the population and the financial demands for primary school are not significant enough to result in an increase in education spending. Unfortunately the only data readily available for the countries of study are data on the proportion of the population ages 15 and under, 16 to 64 and the proportion of the population ages 65 and above, thus making it
difficult to test the above assumption. More data are necessary to determine the explanation for this particular finding.

While GDP did not achieve statistical significance in the first model, GDP does have a statistically significant effect on education spending. As GDP increases, as an indicator of the country’s development, government spending on education increases. The direction of the coefficient is as expected, thus suggesting that as countries become more developed, the greater the amount available to allocate towards social spending, in this case towards education spending.

Similarly to the results in the first model, the results of the second model show that the variables depicting proportional representation, level of democracy, and a dominant legislature in the budget process do not have a statistically significant effect on education spending. The direction of the coefficient for having proportional representation is in the positive direction as in the last model, suggesting that it may increase spending on education. However, the directions of the coefficients for the level of democracy and a dominant legislature in the budget process posit strange effects. The direction of the coefficient for democracy level is negative, thus suggesting that as democracies become consolidated they have a negative effect on education spending. This could be the case because as democracies consolidate, educational spending is already institutionalized and therefore a demand for increased education spending is not necessary. The direction of the coefficient for a dominant legislature in the budget formation process is also negative, thus suggesting that when the legislature is more dominant than the executive in forming and passing the budget, they have a negative effect on education spending. These results are difficult to interpret and might be attributed to the fact that there is a small N problem, where
it is harder to achieve statistical significance, and thus the results for these particular variables may not be very reliable.

Overall the second model testing the relationship between women in the legislature and education spending supports the hypothesis. All else being equal, as the presence of women in the legislature rises, there is an increase in education spending. The findings in this model are interesting because the results show that even after controlling for the political ideology of the legislature and the executive, women have a superseding effect on education spending, thus suggesting that women across parties favor spending on education beyond their parties’ agenda.

The outcomes in both of the models suggest that there is a relationship between women’s participation in the legislature and government social welfare spending. All else being equal, the higher the percentage of women in the lower house, the higher the amount the government spends on health and education in Latin American countries. Therefore, as hypothesized, women do have a positive and statistically significant effect on social welfare spending in Latin America.

Implications and Conclusions

The results of the study indicate that women do behave differently from men in the legislature, as shown by the change in social welfare spending on issues of concern to women, particularly health and education. As the presence of women in the legislature rises, there is an increase in government spending for both health and education in the 18 Latin American countries studied. Thus, the preliminary hypothesis is supported.

The results can be said to be the beginnings of closing the gap in the literature on women in government and their effect in new democracies, specifically in the Latin American region.
New democracies in the region, after the third wave of democratization, are certainly making advances in the inclusion of women, not only in the private sector, but also in the public sector. Not only are women becoming more aware of their opportunities in government, as seen in the increasing rates of women participating in the legislature and the various women achieving presidency in several Latin American countries, but society as a whole is embracing this awareness as well and for good reason; women are changing the nature of government by placing an emphasis on different policies than their previously male dominated governments. It appears that women do bring something different to the table and are, as Chaney (1979) described, supermadres. Maybe, and it seems as though this is the case, it is women’s identification as caregivers that motivates their actions once empowered and brings forth their modification of governments’ priorities in order to aid society to ensure a higher standard of living and quality of life.

The results of this chapter’s tests can also have implications for the overall institutionalization of democracy in the region. If women’s empowerment helps invigorate spending on policies that will improve the quality of life, it could have an effect on the consolidation of democracy in these countries. Studies show that a higher quality of life and smaller gender gaps in women’s attainments within countries correlate with higher levels of democracy (Barro 1999). Women’s empowerment, not only suggests a more inclusive and institutionalized democracy, but also greater gender equality, which is advocated around the world. Women’s empowerment can not only improve the opportunities for all citizens in the region, but could also can affect the shape that newly democratic countries will take.

This chapter has demonstrated, at least in part, that women have a definitive effect on policy when participating in government. Even after controlling for various factors that the
literature puts forth as having an effect on social welfare spending and accounting for the differences within and across countries, women in government increase spending on health and education. These results coincide with the great support and encouragement given by International Organizations for the empowerment of women in the developing countries (Hunt and Posa 2001). Finding that women in Latin America do have a positive effect on spending on social welfare matters is extraordinary. These findings show that women have made incredible strides considering their history within this very traditionally patriarchal region and are changing the way government behaves. These findings point towards the possibility that with more women’s empowerment, as defined in terms of their participation in government, society will have better access to healthcare and education as well as other matters deemed of concern to women. This, of course, is only if one assumes that higher spending on health and education signifies greater access to these services. If this is the case, then new democracies, whether developed or developing, should consider creating gender friendly laws that will motivate society to embrace women in government due to their positive effect on the overall wellbeing of society.

The results in this chapter are supportive of the studies conducted in the Western well-developed world. Studies such as the ones conducted in Switzerland, where Abrams and Settle (1999) find that women’s suffrage redirected resources towards social welfare spending. In studies conducted in Western European countries it was found that women’s suffrage increased social spending (Aidt and Dallal 2008). Women’s participation in the public sphere shifted government concerns towards social policies. This chapter also confirms studies conducted in the United States that suggest that women’s participation in government adds to the agenda policies of concern to women, children, family, and feminist issues (Carrol 2001). The results of this
chapter also support findings in studies conducted in India regarding gender differences in leadership positions (Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004). Thus, the findings do not only have implications for the Latin American region, but they also have implications for women as a gender all over the world. Women seem to have the same effect no matter what democracies are being examined. It appears, and the results provide evidence, that women in democracies have an effect on social welfare spending. More importantly, these findings contribute to the idea that it is gender that is driving women’s policy concerns. Observing that women have this increasing effect on social policy in most studies in various regions, it must be noted that gender does seem to have a superseding effect on ideology at least with regards to social policy.
Chapter 5. Conclusion

Since the democratic transitions in Latin America, women have increasingly entered into the political sphere, both in the legislative and executive branches of government. As these democracies become more inclusive, via modernization and gender friendly laws such as the gender quota systems, several questions regarding women’s empowerment remain unanswered.

Throughout this dissertation, I have attempted to bridge the gap in the literature in this subject area by analyzing what scholars have been able to observe in other areas around the world; an overall gender effect in government behavior and policy priorities. I frame my analysis by positing that women are behaviorally different from men. As noted by previous literature, women are considered more care-oriented and selfless than men (Ford and Lowerly 1986, Eckel and Grossman 1998). These types of differences between men and women result in different political concerns. I argue that women’s concerns will coincide with support for social welfare issues because of women’s overall identification as mothers and wives, their more care-oriented nature, and their experiences in past authoritarian regimes. Women’s different life experiences—biologically, socially, and resulting from their situation in Latin American society, specifically—lead them to adopt concerns regarding quality of life and social wellbeing for the betterment of society as a whole. This is something that seems engrained in women as a gender and it affects women’s political behavior and eventually leads to different government policy priorities once women are empowered. Throughout the analyses, I find evidence that this is the case. I find that a gender gap in public opinion exists in the 18 Latin American countries studied. I find that the gender gap observed brings to the forefront the differences between men and women’s concerns when examining social welfare issues and that women’s concerns are carried into their behavior in government. Women’s social welfare concerns do not only affect female behavior in the
legislature, but it ultimately affects government’s policy priorities and budget allocations. Women’s concern and support for social welfare heightens policy and spending on this area. Thus, women in government in Latin America have a positive and increasing effect on matters regarding social welfare. The results found in the analyses paint a more complete picture about how women in Latin America have fared in the political sphere as well as how the differences between women and men affect political matters in the region.

The Gender Gap in Latin America

In Chapter 2, I argued that women are different from men and these differences should be observable in public opinion data. I find that, in the 18 Latin American countries studied, women are different from men, particularly with regards to their opinions on social welfare. The results show that women are more likely than men to be concerned with social welfare matters such as health and education. The results also show that women are more critical than men when judging the government’s efficacy when combating social issues such as poverty and unemployment as well as the extent to which the government supports human rights. Therefore, women seem to be concerned with the state of social welfare matters and therefore are much more critical of what the government does in its effort to remedy the situation. Furthermore, the results suggest that women are more likely than men to support female political leadership in Latin America. It could be the case that women are more supportive of female representation because women want representatives with similar concerns as theirs.

As I have noted, scholarship has found that women are different from men regarding public opinion and generally are more supportive of progressive policies such as social welfare than men in well-developed Western countries (Jaquette 1997, Norrander 1999, Kaufman and
Though literature on the gender gap is abundant in Western countries, studies examining whether the gender gap exists in less developed regions of the world such as the Latin American region are lacking. To bridge this gap, I explore whether this is a similar event in Latin American countries and find that it is; women in Latin America are more concerned than men with progressive issues such as social welfare. This finding suggests that women in the Latin American region prioritize similar political issues than women outside of the Latin American region, giving more evidence to the claim that women are in fact different from men and thus have differing concerns regarding political issues. Inglehart and Norris (2000) recognize that modernization has an effect on the gender gap in ideology in several postindustrial societies and find that the modern gender gap does not exist in some of the Latin American countries they analyze. Though I explore the gender gap regarding social welfare issues rather than purely ideology, I find that the gender gap does in fact exist in Latin America and women are more likely to support social welfare. Just as elsewhere, the break up of the traditional patriarchal family has changed gender roles and this coupled with women’s identifications with motherhood has given women a differing stance on welfare issues, issues that potentially affect women in their everyday lives. Therefore, women in Latin America behave similarly to women in other postindustrial countries, which indicates a generalizable gender effect in government and policy orientations.

I should note that there is an interesting pattern for women observed throughout Latin American history. Studies note that women in Latin America were typically excluded from the political sphere, but once involved in the public sphere, women organized and mobilized as a result of problems hindering their ability to continue their roles as mothers and wives (Safa 1990, Bennet 1995). After democratization, women were given a voice in politics, and their prior
experiences and identifications appear to be affecting their policy preferences once in governmental decision-making, resulting in heightened support for social welfare. This indicates the possibility that women are the gender more likely to fight for the wellbeing of society.

*Women in Politics in Latin America*

In Chapter 3, I argue that if women are more concerned than men with social welfare issues as constituents, they are more likely to be concerned with the same issues once they are in positions of (political) power. I argue that women’s concerns are carried into women’s political behavior after empowerment and find that it is the case, at least in Mexico. Not only do female legislators vote for social welfare policies at a higher rate than their male counterparts, but this relationship still holds when looking at individual social welfare policies such as policies regarding education. Women in legislatures seem to carry with them their concerns for wellbeing and represent female concerns accordingly.

Previous literature denotes that once women enter into politics, they usually take part in portfolios or cabinet positions relating to Children and the Family, Women’s Affairs, Education, Environment, or Social Services (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005, Htun and Piscopo 2010). Scholarship also finds that women in legislatures tend to sponsor legislation indicative of women’s issues, such as health and education, family policies, elderly care, etc. (Bratton and Haynie 1999, Wagnerud 2006, Schwindt-Bayer 2012). However, though studies examine the types of positions that women attain in government and the types of bills that women legislate, few studies evaluate female legislators’ effects on policies of concern to women in Latin America. Most of the literature on the subject of female legislative behavior finds female legislators affect the amount of social welfare policies introduced or support for
social welfare policies in general in places like the United States and Canada; countries that have had a long legacy with democracy rather than in places that have a relatively new relationship with democracy and development and an even newer relationship with the idea of gender inclusiveness in government. The analyses in the chapter help bridge this gap.

Using legislator’s roll call votes in Mexico’s 60th legislative session, I find that women in legislatures in Latin America are also concerned with social welfare issues. Female legislators increase votes for social welfare policies. This indicates that female legislators are more likely to support social welfare policies than male legislators. Gender has an effect even after controlling for what are generally perceived as the more important determinants of legislative behavior, such as party affiliation, party discipline, and constituency policy preferences. Finding a gender effect on legislative voting behavior indicates that female legislators are representative of female concerns in Latin America. Thus, representation in Latin America goes further than descriptive representation. By heightening social welfare votes, women are representing women’s concerns and making a difference with regards to the legislative agenda, and thus female legislators are representing women substantively in the region. These findings imply that Latin American democracies, such as in the case of Mexico, are doing a considerably good job representing portions of the minority. If this is the case in the rest of Latin America, it can be said that patterns found in the United States denoting female representation of women’s issues by women in government is also occurring in other parts of the world. This would demonstrate the possibility that women in general are better representatives of female concerns in government by acting in accordance to female concerns when in the legislature in Latin America as well as elsewhere.
In Chapter 4, I argue that if women are more supportive of social welfare issues than men in general and are more likely to vote in favor of social welfare policies in the legislature that they will also have an effect on government’s behavior towards social welfare spending. The results show that an increased presence of women in legislatures in 18 Latin American countries increases government spending on social welfare areas such as in health and education. Therefore, women in government do affect government behavior by changing government spending priorities towards social welfare.

Previous literature does posit some evidence that women change government behavior. Studies show that as women’s participation in the legislature increases, the chance of governments acting with force internationally and domestically decreases (Caprioli 2000). Studies also demonstrate that an increased presence of women in the legislature decreases militarized interstate disputes (Ragen and Paskeviciute 2003). Thus, evidence in academia exists demonstrating a gender effect on government behavior. Specifically looking at welfare spending, studies also show that giving women the right to vote does change the allocation of the budget towards social welfare (Abrams and Settle 1999, Aidt and Dallal 2008). However, these studies examine the gender effect in voting participation, rather than the gender effect in governmental positions. These studies also explore the relationship between women and social welfare in Western European countries, thus making them less generalizable to the less developed regions of the world. Evidence of female effects on government behavior regarding the annual budget is lacking in scholarship focusing on the Latin American region.

In this chapter I bridge the gap in the literature and show that women do change government policy priorities and increase government spending on social welfare once in office
in Latin America. Therefore, the gender effect at different levels of political participation found in other countries does apply to Latin American countries. Not only does women’s political voice translate into higher spending on social welfare via the right to vote, but also via their entrance into governmental positions. Women in government change government’s policy priorities and enable a shift in budget allocations redirecting resources to areas of social welfare.

The shifts observed in governments’ policy and spending priorities suggests that women could be correlated with better social conditions. Huber et al. (2006) find that government spending on welfare policies has a decreasing effect on inequality in countries that have a strong democracy versus a weak less institutionalized one. The results in Chapter 4 indicate that women have an increasing effect on government social welfare spending, therefore providing part of the puzzle necessary for decreased inequality. It might be the case that having a more representative government strengthens democracy, therefore not only would having women present in branches of government help create a stronger democracy, but it also heightens spending on social welfare, thus possibly being a panacea for the widespread inequality problem in the region.

**Overall Implications of the Gender Effect**

I began my dissertation by stating that the deteriorating social conditions in the Latin American region have affected the region’s progress. Poverty remains high and inequality remains higher, thus posing constraints on the quality of life and wellbeing of Latin Americans. I also posited that members of the international community must find a solution to better the social conditions in Latin American countries and that one such solution is that of empowering women. I find evidence throughout the analyses conducted in this dissertation that women’s empowerment may be a viable solution to the social conditions in the region.
I find that women are more concerned than men about the very things that affect the quality of life and wellbeing of Latin Americans. Women outside of government support social welfare issues more so than men and women in government do so as well. Finding that women heighten votes for social welfare policies in legislative roll calls and redirect resources towards social welfare areas via government’s allocation of the budget suggests that women are more in tune with the policies necessary to better social conditions. These findings make it plausible to think that women’s empowerment may be an avenue worth taking if social conditions must improve. Advocating for women’s empowerment, particularly in government, could help citizens attain greater access to social services, such as health and education that eventually lead to better social conditions in the region.

Aside from the above implications, the findings also tell a story about democracy in this region. It is apparent that a gender inclusive legislature is necessary for the representation of various demographics within a country and therefore, finding that democracies in Latin America are growing more gender conscience bodes well for their democratic future. Latin American countries are relatively new democracies and in their short existence so far, they have advocated successfully for the inclusion of women into politics. Higher standards of living and quality of life are usually attributed to democratic forms of government. Since it appears that women have an effect on these aspects as well, it could be the case that democratic forms of government are correlated with better quality of life and standards of living because they are inclusive of different representational parts of the population. This includes women, which throughout this study, are found to shift government priorities towards social welfare, which affects social wellbeing. Therefore, now that the Latin American region has transitioned to democratic regimes, further development may be aided by further inclusion of women into politics. More
importantly, the analyses have implications for newer democracies in any region. If wellbeing is the concern, according to the results in these analyses, having a democratic government with female participation in all levels of government should make a difference.

This analysis also brings forth the possibility that good can come of other minority group’s representations. If empowering women makes such a big difference in government regarding policy priorities and agenda setting, what about empowering other types of minorities, such as the indigenous population in Latin American countries? It could be the case that there is an underrepresentation of these types of minorities, therefore a different set of priorities that have not yet been voiced in the political arena. It seems plausible that if the representation of one type of minority makes a difference regarding government’s behavior and the extent to which government represents constituency interests, that empowering other minorities could have a similar effect.

Of greatest importance is the fact that the findings in this dissertation not only have implications for the Latin American region, but they have implications for women as a gender all over the world. Women seem to behave similarly once empowered and have the same policy effects no matter what country or region is examined. Women are favoring progressive policies in developed and less developed countries. Not only are they concerned with social welfare in their countries of residence, but they are also making a difference with regards to this policy area when participating in government. It is clear that women make a difference with this regard, therefore, this provides evidence that academia must take into account gender effects when studying any academic question focusing on government policies, spending, or behavior. More importantly, outside of academia, decision-makers must take into account this gender effect and note that women are more likely to be concerned with social policy, thus to be representative,
social welfare should be a constituency concern that cannot be ignored and having women in positions of government will provide a mode by which this concern is represented. This also implies that in terms of underdevelopment, women may be the force that leads to development. As women become empowered, government focus shifts to policies that affect citizens quality of life, therefore affecting human development positively. As we see further democratic transitions in authoritarian countries, advocacy for an increase in female participation in government should aid in the country’s success.

Throughout these analyses conducted in this dissertation I find that women have an effect on the policy agenda, placing emphasis on social welfare policies at the constituency level, legislative level, and budgetary level. However, regarding the subject of women in government and their effect on government and social welfare policy much remains unanswered and is left to future research.

For Future Research

I have answered some relevant questions here about women in politics in the hopes of bridging several gaps in the literature. I have determined whether women have differing concerns from men regarding public opinion in Latin America, whether women in government have different concerns from men in government, whether female representatives represent female concerns in government, and whether women’s presence in legislatures changes government behavior. The answer to these questions is that women make a difference. Women do have different concerns than men particularly regarding social welfare, women do have these same concerns in government, women do represent female concerns in government and women do
affect government behavior with regard to these concerns. Though these questions are now answered, several remain unanswered.

Part of the findings in this analysis focused on the ways that women affect social welfare at the governmental level. Further research should focus on determining whether women’s presence in government is directly affecting social conditions and citizen’s wellbeing in countries by examining whether heightened support for social welfare policies and social welfare spending results in more availability of social welfare services for those who need them. It could be the case that though women positively affect social welfare policies and spending, their support does little in terms of government’s provisions of social welfare or the availability of these services to citizens. In this case, women’s differing concerns that result in a shift in the policy agenda does not translate to the betterment of citizens quality of life. The connection between women’s effect on social welfare in government and the availability of these services to citizens that heighten quality of life must be made in academia.

Future research should also look at gender effects on policy priorities over longer periods of time. Adding more years to the analyses would provide an opportunity to really test whether women’s increasing and positive effects on social welfare continue to increase or whether they become marginalized after the developing years after democratization. Focusing on the effect that women’s representation has over time is useful to determine whether women’s effect stems from socialization or nature. If women’s effects do not diminish over a long period of time in more progressive states, as gender equality becomes the norm, compared to more traditional states, then women’s effects could be due to a matter of instinct rather than socialization. Furthermore, adding more years to the analysis would also provide an opportunity to determine whether there is a threshold effect at which point women no longer have an effect on
government’s policy priorities. The analyses so far have been conducted while women increasingly become part of government as a new norm instituted in Latin American democracies. However, it could be the case that at a certain point, the number of women participating in the legislature no longer makes a difference regarding policy priorities. Rather, women’s effect would only make a difference up until a certain percentage of women are in government. This would indicate that those advocating for the inclusion of women into government would only have to pool their resources to do so until the threshold is reached.

Future analyses should also ask whether an increase in female presence in government changes the policy priorities that men have in government. Is there a point where men begin to campaign on matters of social welfare in order to get the female vote? Is there a point where it is men that must overcompensate for their association with harsher, less compassionate issues? If this is the case, then maybe women’s effect eventually becomes less of an impact because male representatives commence representing female concerns. And if this is the case, does it eventually have a negative impact on female representation where we observe a decrease in the percentage of female participation in governmental positions?

Future research should also focus on researching the gender effect, not only over a longer period of time, but also on a more global scale. Data is becoming more readily available in democracies across the globe, thus making it easier to conduct large-N studies. Conducting a study on this scale would provide further evidence that the gender effect is present in all parts of the world, rather than the piecemeal compilation of literature explicating that the gender effect is present in certain regions or certain countries. Since the findings here depict a situation similar to other parts of the world, I suspect that there is a pattern where women make a difference.
regarding progressive policies in all democratic countries that instill gender inclusive
government branches.

It also falls on the responsibility of other scholars to determine whether the gender effect
on social welfare changes in size from one democracy to the next. The countries examined here
all have presidential systems. Would the extent of women’s effect be different in a country with
a parliamentary system? Also, as explained in the analysis, women in Latin America have had a
long-standing relationship with authoritarian regimes that hindered the home life and affected
their perceptions of the political sphere. Having these experiences has made Latin American
women identify greatly with being mothers and wives, thus enabling a strong relationship
between these identifications and their behavior. What remains to be delved into further is
whether women behave in the same ways in areas where this long-standing experience with
authoritarianism has not been the same. More research must be conducted on the different
mechanisms that may be causing women to show concern for social welfare. Is it past negative
experiences with dictatorship, the ability to give birth, their own socio-economic backgrounds, or
their role in the home? If more analyses are conducted at a global level, then this may also help
bridge a gap in the literature explaining that women are different from men as a result of
biological reasons or social ones. In countries where women did not have to fight on behalf of
their family for the government’s wrong doing in the realm of the household, do women still
identify with motherhood and being wives to the extent that they do in Latin American countries
and behave accordingly in government? Most of the literature already mentioned does find a
gender effect with regards to policy preferences in countries where this has not been the case, but
further research is necessary to determine the extent to which this type of background facilitates
or hinders women’s concerns in politics.
Future analyses should also take into account the possibility that how women enter into politics may affect the way they behave once empowered. Women might have a different effect on social welfare depending on different norms and rules found in the electoral system. In other words, women elected into government via gender quota systems might be more likely to be representative of female concerns than women who are elected to government via other mechanisms. Being elected via gender quotas might make female candidates less likely to have to overcompensate for their association with compassionate issues because they have a higher chance to become viable candidates. This would be in contrast to being elected without the aid of gender quotas, which may make a female candidate feel pressured to overcompensate for this association in order to rally support from other voting demographics in order to become a viable candidate.

In the analyses provided here, I did not delve into how women affect social welfare at the executive level. Now more than ever this analysis can be conducted, at least through case studies or qualitative analysis, considering the increasing female presence in executives around the world. It would be interesting to determine whether women at the executive level shift the political agenda towards social welfare as compared to men in the executive level. This finding would truly provide support to the claim that women positively affect social welfare matters because of the plausibility that women entering into the executive branch may have to overcompensate for the association women have with compassion issues in order to rally support for their election. In other words, these female candidates may have to advocate for other types of policies, aside from social welfare policies, in order to represent larger portions of the population.
Not only should future analyses delve into women’s effects at the executive level, but also at lower levels of government within provinces or states. Maybe women’s effects on social welfare are grander at the lower levels of government than at the higher levels of government. Adding lower levels of government, as well as the executive to the analysis on the gender effect in government, would paint a more comprehensive picture of how women behave and affect policy at different levels of decision-making.

Future analyses should focus further on the effect that women have on particular types of policies concerning health and education to reflect in depth the true effect that women have on these policies. It could be the case that women are not only supporting these policies, but also changing them in an effort to make them more efficient. Similarly, research should also be conducted on finding the effect that women have on other different types of social welfare policies. My focus here was mainly on social welfare in general and education and health policies and spending specifically. I did not explore women’s effects on other progressive policies such as environmental policy. Women seem to be more concerned with the future quality of life of society. Therefore, women may be more likely to positively affect environmental policies. Women may provide support for the types of policies that help aid the future quality of life of people all over the world. If this is the case, the international community may find it useful to allocate aid towards policies that enable women’s empowerment in order to reap the future rewards that empowerment may bring. This finding brings further support to the support coming from the International Organizations for the empowerment of women in developing countries (Hutm and Posa 2001). Not only would it suggest that women’s empowerment can help with development and growth within the country, but also worldwide.
Conclusion

The findings in this dissertation could be said to be the start of closing the gap in the literature on women’s effects on policy priorities and government behavior once they are participating in government. However, as mentioned above, further research is still necessary to come to a more comprehensive understanding of the extent to which gender influences policy priorities in government. For now, the results suggest that women do have different concerns from men in general. Women’s concerns seem to coincide with social welfare issues, which indicates that women are preoccupied with social conditions and the wellbeing of society. Like women’s prior experience with mobilization during the dictatorships, they are more attune with the everyday needs of individuals and are willing to fight for a better quality of life. In government, women are representing women well. Female legislators are more likely to support policies having to do with social welfare, the type of policies found to be of concern to women in public opinion data. And women’s presence in government changes the allocation of the budget, redirecting money towards the very areas that women are concerned with.

These findings provide evidence that Latin American countries are moving in the right direction when it comes to having a representative democracy. Throughout democratization, women have made incredible strides into the political sphere. Considering Latin America’s history with traditional patriarchal norms, it is extraordinary that these countries have advocated for the empowerment of women successfully and that it has proven to cause change that appears to be beneficial for those in need.

I began this study arguing that something had to be done to improve the social conditions in the Latin American region due to its constraints on progress. I posited that women’s empowerment may be that “something.” Now I end this study by stating that women’s
empowerment is a plausible panacea to the depleting social conditions in the region and as Latin American countries continue to grow and continue to expand women’s presence in government, I believe that the social conditions in the region will improve. Women’s overall effect indicates a shift in priorities to those that enable a higher quality of life for citizens by increasing governmental focus on social welfare.
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