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Abstract

Women have recently made dramatic gains in electoral politics, winning a number of high profile positions of national leadership and a record number of seats in parliaments around the world. This article surveys and analyzes these developments, seeking to understand why women's representation has increased in some countries but not in others, as well as what these patterns indicate about changes in the status of women in political life. It concludes with some reflections on the gendered nature of the public sphere and what these shifts might mean for women as a group.

Keywords

Representation, Public sphere, Women political leaders, Gender and politics

Introduction

In recent times, the status of women in politics has captured the imagination of spectators around the world. In early 2008, much of this attention was focused on two women in particular: Hillary Rodham Clinton, the former First Lady running to become the first female president of the United States, and Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister of Pakistan assassinated following a campaign rally in December 2007. This follows on from interest in the election of other female leaders around the globe, like Angela Merkel in Germany, Michelle Bachelet in Chile, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in Liberia, and Pratibha Patil in India, and coincides with the election of record numbers of women to national parliaments worldwide (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009b). Such developments have sparked widespread discussion as to the role of sex and gender in political life. For some, the rise of several prominent female leaders reflects the important gains that women as a group have made in the political sphere. For others, however, the experiences and portrayals of

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female politicians, as well as the continued under-representation of women in politics more generally, draw attention to the many ways in which access to political office is still very much stratified by gender. These debates raise several questions: What is the status of women in politics today? What explains the increased election of women in some countries but not in others? Finally, what do these developments mean for women as a group?

In this article, we address these questions by analyzing and comparing women in positions of executive and legislative leadership around the globe. Doing so requires that we first distinguish "sex" from "gender": while sex captures biological differences between women and men, gender refers to the social meanings given to these differences, which may vary both cross-culturally and over time. In most countries, norms of gender have traditionally prescribed distinct roles in society for the two sexes: men have been given primary responsibility for affairs in the public sphere, like politics and the economy, while women have been assigned a central position in the private sphere, namely the home and the family (Elshtain, 1981). Historically, the public–private divide served as an argument against women's right to vote, on the grounds that suffrage for women would disturb the balance between the public and private spheres (Pateman, 1994). While it has been muted over time, this divide continues to manifest itself to the present day, albeit in different ways across cultural contexts, through elite and media scrutiny of the husbands and children of female aspirants, as well as largely unsubstantiated concerns about the broader "qualifications" of female candidates. As such, it is perhaps not surprising that women constitute a relatively small proportion of elected officials worldwide, at the same time that increases in their numbers may portend significant shifts in the gendered nature of the public sphere.

To explore the degree to which the public–private divide has been reconfigured in recent years, we begin in the first section by providing an overview of the women who have served as presidents and prime ministers. Presenting some descriptive data, we outline several of the main explanations typically given to account for the rise of women in these contexts, especially in places where women do not otherwise enjoy a high social or economic status. In the second section, we turn to the state of women in national parliaments. After noting some general trends, we review a range of intuitions regarding the factors that shape women's access to legislative office. We evaluate these two sets of arguments in the third section, where we point to two other patterns that, we argue, shed greater light on why women have been able to achieve high political positions in some countries but not in others. Tying these to efforts to rethink the public–private divide, we conclude with some thoughts as to the status of women in world politics today and the broader meanings of these developments for women as a group.

Women as National Leaders

Historically, female national leaders have been rare (Jackson, 1990). The first woman to enter a position of national leadership who was not a monarch was Sirimavo Bandaranaike, who became prime minister of Sri Lanka in 1960. Later in the same decade, two other prominent women, Indira Gandhi of India and Golda Meir of Israel, also rose to power as prime ministers. However, it was not until 1974 that Isabel Perón of Argentina became the first female president. In general, the progress in the early decades was slow: three women became national leaders in the 1960s, followed by six in the 1970s, and seven in the 1980s. In contrast, dramatic change began to occur in more recent decades: 26 women first obtained positions of top executive leadership in the 1990s, followed by 29 additional women through August 2009. In other words, the number of new female leaders nearly quadrupled between the 1980s and 1990s and this pattern was repeated again in the

2000s. As such, more than three-quarters of all female presidents and prime ministers have come to office in the years since 1990. These findings indicate that the growing number of women in executive posts is no illusion or artifact of media coverage; rather, more women are entering these positions than ever before.

In total, 71 women from 52 countries have joined the elite ranks of female national leaders between 1960 and 2009 (see Table 1). This figure includes those women who have served on a temporary basis, for example as acting or interim leaders. However, it excludes those who have occupied positions that do not conform to presidential or prime ministerial office and in countries that are not politically autonomous.[1] This overview reveals that these women in positions of executive leadership hail from geographically diverse locations. While the largest proportion is from Europe, other world regions also have large numbers of female leaders. Presently, 16 of these women occupy political office: nine presidents and seven prime ministers (see Table 2).[2] Together, they head countries in five regions: Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and Oceania.

To date, most research on female national leaders has focused on the details of individual women's political careers (Genovese, 1993; Liswood, 1995; Opfell, 1993). As such, comparative work on this topic is relatively sparse. Reviewing the literature, however, it is possible to make several observations with regard to these women's paths to power. What is perhaps most striking is that, contrary to many expectations, women have tended to become presidents and prime ministers in contexts where women's status lags far behind that of men in the educational and economic spheres, and in places where women face numerous constraints on their political and social participation. In fact, the only quantitative study on this topic finds a correlation between the presence of a female head of state or government and *lower* levels of parity of women to men in life expectancy, education, and income (Jalalzai, 2008).[3] Yet, at the same time, the women who accede to these positions are usually highly educated and considerably more privileged than women in the general population (Jalalzai, 2004). Consequently, it is simplistic to assert that the education and economic status of women are not relevant to their political advancement. It is crucial for those who eventually rise

Table 1. Women as National Leaders, 1960–2009

Region	Number	Countries
Western Europe	16	Finland (2), France, Germany (2), Iceland (2), Ireland (2), Malta, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, Switzerland (2), United Kingdom
Eastern Europe	12	Bulgaria, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania (3), Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Serbia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia
Latin America	9	Argentina (2), Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru
Sub-Saharan Africa	11	Burundi, Central African Republic, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principle (2), Senegal, South Africa
Central and South Asia	8	Bangladesh (2), Pakistan, India (2), Mongolia, Sri Lanka (2)
East Asia	5	Indonesia, South Korea (2), Philippines (2)
Caribbean	5	Dominica, Haiti (3), Jamaica
Oceania	2	New Zealand (2)
Middle East	2	Israel (2)
North America	1	Canada

Source: "Women World Leaders, 1945–2009," http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00women.htm (accessed August 15 2009).

Table 2. Current Female Presidents and Prime Ministers

Country	Name	Election	Office
Argentina	Cristina Fernández de Kirchner	2007	President
Bangladesh	Sheik Hasina Wajed*	2009	Prime Minister
Chile	Michelle Bachelet	2006	President
Finland	Tarja Halonen	2000	President
Gabon	Rose Francine Rogombé	2009	Interim President
Germany	Angela Merkel	2005	Chancellor
Haiti	Michèle Pierre-Louis	2008	Prime Minister
Iceland	Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir	2009	Prime Minister
India	Pratibha Patil	2007	President
Ireland	Mary McAleese	1997	President
Liberia	Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf	2006	President
Lithuania	Dalia Grybauskaitė	2009	President
Moldova	Zinaida Greceanîi	2008	Prime Minister
Mozambique	Luisa Dias Diogo	2004	Prime Minister
Philippines	Gloria Macapgal-Arroyo	2001	President
Ukraine	Yuliya Tymoshenko	2007	Prime Minister

*This is the second time Wajed has served in this office. She last served from 1996 to 2001.

Source: Guide 2 Women Leaders, http://www.guide2womenleaders.com (accessed July 1 2009); "Women World Leaders, 1945–2008," http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00women.htm (accessed August 15 2009).

to positions of national prominence, but this can be – and has been – achieved where women's overall status is low.

Attempts to reconcile the paradox of female leaders in contexts in which women generally lack power have pointed to the importance of kinship ties as a path to office (Hodson, 1997; Richter, 1991). Women's leadership in certain regions is largely limited to those with familial ties through marriage or blood connections to former executives or opposition leaders, many of whom were assassinated. In these cases, kinship ties are primary but gender continues to be salient to these women's election or appointment to office. There are compelling reasons why a woman may appear to be a more appropriate heir to political power. For example, a woman may not be seen as independently politically ambitious and therefore as easily pushed aside by male leaders after coming to office (Col, 1993). Alternatively, because women are often viewed as unifiers of the family, they may be charged with the daunting task of uniting their country following a period of political conflict (Saint-Germain, 1993).

Providing unity is especially important given that a contributing factor to women's rule in many of these contexts is high levels of political instability and a lack of political institutionalization, benefiting select women in their pursuit of power (Jalalzai, 2008). In some instances, independence causes various ethnic and religious factions suppressed during colonialism to become salient. This leads to frequent regime change, stemming from assassinations and repeated coups (Hodson, 1997). These circumstances create more opportunities to gain access to executive posts than would normally be the case. The lack of institutional development that is associated with such turbulence allows for kinship, ethnicity, or charismatic leadership to play a greater role in politics, opening the way for some women to occupy leadership posts. Exactly how these patterns interact with political institutions, however, is not yet well understood.

At the same time, institutional features of the political system appear to be critical to women's executive advancement. In general, women are more likely to serve in parliamentary systems and more often as prime ministers than as presidents: there have been 40 female prime ministers and 31 female presidents. Some studies attribute the greater success of women in obtaining prime ministerial posts to their ability to bypass a potentially biased general public and be chosen by the party as parliamentary rules dictate (Whicker and Isaacs, 1999). Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom and Angela Merkel of Germany are good examples of women rising to power through party promotion (Clemens, 2006; King, 2002). This is different from the processes involved in becoming president within a presidential system, which typically relies on some sort of popular vote for ascension. Presidential and prime ministerial posts also differ in their authority, autonomy, and traits deemed necessary for success, all of which are shaped by notions of gender. More specifically, the fusion of executive and legislative authority within parliamentary systems features a prime minister who shares power with cabinet and party members. In these systems, collaboration is fundamental: the qualities necessary for successfully formulating programs are negotiation, collaboration, and deliberation, all typically considered more feminine. In contrast, presidents in presidential systems act independently of the legislature and generally are expected to lead in a quick and decisive manner, traits which are more often associated with masculinity (Duerst-Lahti, 1997; Jalalzai, 2008).

Women in National Parliaments

Women form a small minority of all parliamentarians worldwide. However, the current world average, 18 percent, is the highest proportion ever recorded (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009b). Attention to aggregate numbers nonetheless masks substantial variations across countries: while Rwanda and Sweden have nearly equal numbers of women and men in their national legislatures, others, such as Belize and Saudi Arabia, have no women at all (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009a). Early research on these variations noted that the countries with the most women in elected positions tended to be countries where women enjoyed a relatively high social and economic status and cultural norms supported women's political participation (Norris, 1987). Today, these patterns are less clear: while the countries in the world with the most women in politics in the late 1980s came from two recognizable groups, the Nordic region and the Communist bloc (United Nations Office at Vienna, 1992: 12), those that top this list in the late 2000s include some of these same states but also a wide range of other countries in Africa, Europe, Latin America, and Oceania (see Table 3). In comparison, several countries with long democratic histories, as well as high scores on indicators of women's status, elect relatively few women, most notably the United Kingdom (19.5 percent), France (18.2 percent), and the United States (16.8 percent) (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009a).

Comparative literature on this topic stretches back more than twenty years. It identifies three sets of factors shaping women's access to national legislatures. The first relates to political institutions. Scholars have found that countries with proportional representation (PR) electoral systems tend to have a much higher share of women in parliament than countries with majoritarian electoral arrangements (McAllister and Studlar, 2002; Reynolds, 1999; Salmond, 2006). These disparities are explained by reference to the fact that PR systems often have higher district magnitudes, which open the way for women to be included as the total number of members per district increases, and closed party lists, which enable political parties to place women in electable positions on party slates (Caul, 1999). Combined, these factors appear to offer more opportunities for female candidates, because political parties may feel compelled to nominate at least a few women in order to balance their lists. These effects may be magnified by characteristics of political parties. The impact of district magnitude, for example, frequently depends upon party magnitude, or the number of seats that a party

Table 3. Women in National Parliaments

Country	Percentage of Women	Year of Election
Rwanda	56.3	2008
Sweden	47.0	2006
South Africa	44.5	2009
Cuba	43.2	2008
Iceland	42.9	2009
Finland	41.5	2007
Netherlands	41.3	2006
Argentina	40.0	2007
Denmark	38.0	2007
Angola	37.3	2008
Costa Rica	36.8	2006
Spain	36.3	2008
Norway	36.1	2005
Andorra	35.7	2009
Belgium	35.3	2007
Mozambique	34.8	2004
New Zealand	33.6	2008
Nepal	33.2	2008
Ecuador	32.3	2009
Germany	32.2	2005

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments: Situation as of 31 July 2009," http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm (accessed August 8 2009).

assumes that it will win in a particular district: parties expecting to win only a few seats are less likely to nominate women, while those that anticipate winning several seats are more likely to balance their tickets with some female candidates (Matland and Taylor, 1997). Ideology also matters: left-wing parties tend to nominate more women than right-wing parties,[4] stemming from differences in their support for traditional gender roles, as well as their willingness to take concrete steps to promote women to top positions on electoral lists (Caul, 1999; Reynolds, 1999).

A second set of variables are social and economic. Initially, research found that women's overall levels of education and labor force participation were closely correlated with levels of female parliamentary representation (McDonagh, 2002; Rosenbluth et al., 2006). As such, women rarely achieved the higher socioeconomic status that forms the "eligibility pool" for elective office, because practices of sex segregation in most countries channel women into female-dominated, low-paying occupations such as nursing and education and men into male-dominated, high-paying occupations like law and management. These patterns are anticipated to be less prevalent in countries at higher levels of socioeconomic development, where processes of modernization enable women to gain access to education and the paid labor force, thus moving them into higher-status social and economic roles, which in turn can lead to greater influence in politics (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). However, other work has cast doubt on these findings, uncovering weak and sometimes even negative correlations between women's education and labor force participation and the proportion of women in elected office (Matland, 1998; Moore and Shackman, 1996). Some account for this by suggesting that improvements in women's status may serve only as facilitating

conditions. Others note that these factors may operate differently in developed versus developing countries: women's participation in the labor force, for example, appears to have a positive effect on women's representation in the former but no effect in the latter (Matland, 1998). Indeed, several developing countries have witnessed dramatic changes in the absence of these assumed developmental "prerequisites" (Bruhn, 2003; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2005).

A third and final group of explanations focus on cultural factors. Studies of the Nordic countries attribute the relatively high proportion of women in parliament in this region to a political culture that places strong emphasis on social and economic equality (Bystydzienski, 1995). Other scholars explore the impact of religion and find that Christian countries tend to have more women than countries with other dominant religions (Reynolds, 1999). These effects stem from the ways in which religion may intersect with cultural prohibitions on women's political activity, forbidding women from speaking in front of men, seeking political office, or attending political meetings (Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Tripp, 2001). These norms, of course, are rooted in the public–private divide, which plays a major role in socializing women and men into prescribed gender roles, calling into question the legitimacy of women's political engagement and conferring private sphere responsibilities on women that prevent them from pursuing public office. These effects endure long after shifts in women's social and economic status by negatively influencing women's decisions to run (Lawless and Fox, 2005) as well as elites' evaluations of potential female candidates (Kittilson, 2006; Niven, 1998). These beliefs are compounded by the media, which frequently draw on gender stereotypes in ways that appear to negatively affect women's chances of getting elected (Kahn, 1996). Nonetheless, in some countries arguments making reference to women's roles in the private sphere have served as powerful arguments for political inclusion (Inhetveen, 1999). Furthermore, voter stereotypes may favor female candidates when feminine qualities are viewed as desirable at particular moments in time (Swers, 2002).

Gender and Routes to Political Office

Explanations of women's entry into positions of executive and legislative leadership thus focus on a combination of social, economic, cultural, and political reasons for women's inclusion and exclusion as political actors. While these trends are well established across many studies, recent developments afford a new view into the dynamics sustaining women's inequality in the political sphere. As mentioned earlier, the number of female national leaders has grown dramatically in the 1990s and 2000s. This increase in sample size makes it possible to explore in greater depth some of the broader patterns in women's access to higher political office, in terms of both the types of positions they tend to hold and their routes to power. Similarly, as intimated above, there have been dramatic shifts in patterns of female legislative representation in recent years. These coincide with the rapid diffusion of electoral gender quota policies across the globe in the 1990s and 2000s. Although many of these measures do not achieve their stated goals, variations in their impact shed further light on the factors explaining the low numbers of women in parliaments worldwide. Both sets of patterns, when viewed together, point to the extent to which gender norms continue to shape the conditions of women's access to political office.

New Trends in Women's National Leadership

Beginning with women's executive representation, recent rises in the number of female national leaders present an opportunity to explore in greater depth the relations between gender and

political institutions. The concept of gender is fundamentally concerned with questions of power, especially potential imbalances of power between women and men in various social, economic, and political contexts. In politics, power disparities across political offices can be understood as the degree to which political actors operate autonomously, are relatively secure from dismissal, and are able to control or exercise authority over various realms. If a position has lower levels of autonomy, security, and individual prerogatives, its institutional structure may pose fewer challenges to women coming to office. Prime ministers are typically more vulnerable than presidents in this regard: votes of no confidence, as well as elections, mean that prime ministers may in theory be ousted at any time. In contrast, presidents often serve fixed terms and generally possess greater protection from removal once in office. Female prime ministers may thus appear to pose less of a threat to existing gender dynamics than female presidents, explaining why women are less likely to be presidents than prime ministers.

All the same, the simple division between presidents and prime ministers made in a great deal of executive scholarship overlooks substantial variations in positions of national leadership. In particular, several countries integrate a president and prime minister in a dual executive arrangement, where both actors share power to some extent. These systems generally mix elements of presidential and parliamentary structures but, crucially, vary in the autonomy, security, and authorities conferred to each position (Siaroff, 2003). In most instances, one executive is dominant over the other. Understanding these power differences is one key for evaluating women's progress as national leaders (see Table 4). Restricting the analysis to women who have served on a non-temporary basis, it becomes clear that the majority – 34 of the 55 women overall, or 62 percent – have been prime ministers. Further, most female national leaders have secured their position through legislative or presidential appointment; only 13 came to power initially through popular election.[5] This number includes several presidents, who bypassed the public through succession or selection by legislatures.

Taking a closer look at the types of offices that women have held, it is striking to note that most female leaders – 37, or 67 percent – are from dual executive systems, therefore sharing power with another executive. Women thus serve more often in systems where executive authority is more dispersed, as opposed to in those with more unified executive structures. Furthermore, in most of these cases, women tend to be placed in positions of weaker authority.[6] Several of the female presidents elected by the public, for example, hold relatively nominal positions, serving mainly as figureheads. As such, Mary McAleese of Ireland has very little substantive power as compared to the prime minister. In other instances, female presidents bypass the public because they are elected by legislatures or replace male presidents from the position of vice-president. In addition to this, there are numerous examples of weak female prime ministers operating under much stronger presidents. This is typically the case for women in Africa, who are often unilaterally appointed by the president and frequently subject to dismissal at his will. The same is true of several female leaders in Eastern Europe. Consequently, not all national leadership posts are created equal. The fact that women have increased their numbers as executives is important. However, the specific powers and level of autonomy at their disposal are crucial in assessing how far they have come (Jalalzai, 2008).

Nevertheless, a substantial number of women have recently risen to important positions where their power is unchallenged by another executive. This is the case for several prime ministers in unified parliamentary systems, as well as for the few female presidents elected directly by the public in presidential systems. Interestingly, most of these women serve as presidents in Latin America and South and Southeast Asia, where women's education, economic, and political status lags behind that of men. In contrast to other regions, working their way up the party ranks is not

the dominant path to power for women in these countries. These patterns can instead be explained in terms of familial ties. As previously noted, the reliance on marital or blood connections of women in politics in these parts of the world is not new. However, it has clearly not ceased. In fact, no woman holding dominant executive power in Latin America or Asia has ever come to power without familial connections.[7] Moreover, popular election appears to be limited to women from political families.

However, recent examples suggest more variation than previously thought. Most notably, even women with family ties tend to have more political experience than they are generally credited with by the public. Michelle Bachelet of Chile and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines held cabinet positions, for example, while Indira Gandhi and Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia were legislators. Furthermore, not all wives followed their husbands into politics; some were politically active figures in their own right. Janet Jagan had been a party founder and a member of parliament since 1953, before becoming president of Guyana in 1997 after her husband President Cheddi Bharat Jagan's death. Similarly, Argentina's Cristina Fernández de Kirchner held a national governmental office, while her husband Néstor Carlos Kirchner never did before he became president. She is also the only woman with familial ties to come to power while her male connection was still alive. All of this suggests that women with family connections are *not* a monolith. Indeed, their victories are seldom a foregone conclusion: they often face significant opposition from various male elites, as well as competition from other family members.[8]

It is important to recognize that women are not the only ones benefiting from family connections. First, many political dynasties do not even include women. Second, in countries where women have ruled, including Nicaragua, Panama, and Sri Lanka, male family members may later come to power. Thus while political dynasties originate with male family members, female leaders may in turn help propel members of their own immediate families into power, either directly or indirectly through the family name. This was the case for Indira Gandhi's son Rajiv Gandhi, who served as prime minister of India from 1984 to 1989; her daughter-in-law Sonia Gandhi, who has led the Congress Party since 1998; and her grandson Rahul Gandhi, who has been a member of parliament since 2004. Sri Lanka's former president Chandrika Kumaratunga was aided not just by her ties to her father, former prime minister Solomon Bandaranaike, but also by those to her mother, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, who served as prime minister. Later down the road, blood ties to Kumaratunga were pivotal in turn to her mother becoming prime minister for a third term in 1994. Most recently, Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Zardari, assumed command of the Pakistani People's Party after her assassination. Zardari is now president and holds a more powerful and secure position than Bhutto was able to achieve as prime minister.

Political instability and lack of political institutionalization also continue to be relevant for women's ascension to national leadership posts. While these dynamics often work in tandem with familial ties in Asia and Latin America, the latter do not appear to be prevalent in other regions of the world. However, with the exception of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia, female executives in Africa tend to be relegated to less powerful positions in systems dominated by male presidents. In addition, political change may also work in another way. Of the 71 women who have been national leaders, 16 have served on an interim or transitional basis: 10 as presidents and 6 as prime ministers. The majority of these were appointed by temporary ruling coalitions, legislatures, or presidents during moments of political transition. Sabine Bergmann-Pohl, as president of the first and only popularly elected East German parliament, aided the reunification of Germany. Others are charged with overseeing new elections: Lidia Gueiler Tejada of Bolivia and Ertha Pascal-Trouillot of Haiti after military coups and Nino Burdzhanadze of Georgia following rigged elections.

Table 4. Female National Leaders by System, Position, and Path

	Europe[a]	Asia[b]	Africa	L. America	Other	Total
Systems						
Unified presidential	2	3	1	5	0	11
Unified parliamentary	3	0	0	0	4	7
Dual executive	16	8	7	2	4	37
Presidential dominance	4	3	7	2	2	18
Presidential corrective	2	1	0	0	1	4
Symbolic president	9	4	0	0	1	14
Positions						
President – full powers	2	3	1	5	0	11
PM – full powers	3	0	0	0	4	7
President – weaker than PM	7	1	0	0	0	8
President – stronger than PM	0	1	0	1	0	2
PM – weaker than president	4	2	7	1	2	16
PM – stronger than president	4	4	0	0	2	10
Paths						
Popular vote	5	2	1	5	0	13
Legislative appointment	13	5	0	0	7	25
Presidential appointment	3	2	7	1	1	14
Constitutional succession	0	2	0	1	0	3
Familialities	0	9	0	6	0	15
Temporary appointments	7	2	3	2	2	16

[a] The tally for Europe includes presidents of the Swiss confederation. Kazimiera Prunskiene (Lithuania) is not reflected in the position classification since the specifics of the office are unclear; as such, the European total in that category is 20 instead of 21, dropping the overall total to 54. Yuliya Tymoshenko of Ukraine was appointed by the president for her first term, but by parliament for her second; for the purposes of the count, she is included in the presidential appointment category.

[b] Because the governmental structure changed three times during her three terms as prime minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka is hard to classify according to position and system. Although she was the sole executive during her first term (and thus led a unified parliamentary system), a weak presidency was created two years into her second term. Finally, a presidential dominance system was created in 1978, the structure in which she served for her entire last term. We classified her in a dual executive system overall since this covers 11 of her 18 years in office. However, we ultimately place her as the weaker executive in a presidential dominance system which was the most consistent type of position occupied throughout her tenure.

Sources: Farida Jalalzai, "Women Rule: Shattering the Executive Glass Ceiling," *Politics & Gender* 4(2) (2008): 1–27; "Constitution Finder," http://confinder.richmond.edu/ (accessed May 12 2008); "Worldfactbook," https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html (accessed August 15 2009).

Cases like Burdzhanadze's also illustrate the importance of moving up through constitutional provisions. As Georgia's speaker of parliament, she was constitutionally certified acting president when Eduard Shevardnadze resigned. However, such openings do not always guarantee succession. Rosalía Arteaga, as vice-president of Ecuador, seemed to be the appropriate successor to President Abdalá Bucaram, who was deemed unfit to stay in office. However, the line of succession was not clearly constitutionally established and Arteaga had to battle with the leader of Congress,

Fabián Alarcón, for the position. Though she was successfully sworn in as president, she resigned within three days, succumbing to army and congressional pressure. Several other women in dual executive systems were appointed by presidents upon the dismissal or resignation of the current prime minister and stayed on temporarily until new selections were made. Temporary appointments are therefore an important route to office for women since they are able to bypass traditional mechanisms. The transitory nature of their leadership appears to be less threatening, and thus less of a challenge to the masculine norms of leadership. In fact, women aiding in times of electoral transformation may be viewed positively precisely because they are women and, as such, not seen as tainted with their own political ambitions; they are expected to return to their previous positions once elections are held.

Recent Trends in Women's Access to National Parliaments

Turning to women's legislative representation, it has already been observed that the top countries in the world in this regard have become an incredibly diverse group over the last several years. These shifts suggest that barriers to women's access may have become de-gendered to some extent, at least in some countries. A key factor driving this change has been the adoption of gender quotas aimed at increasing the numbers of women selected and elected as candidates to political office. Among the 20 countries listed in Table 3, 15 use formal quota policies, 4 employ informal policies,[9] and 1 previously had a quota policy. For example, the constitution approved in Rwanda in 2003 reserves one-third of all seats in the lower house for women; a 30 percent quota applies to the upper house. In Sweden since the 1990s nearly all political parties have had formal or informal policies of alternation, meaning that they include women in every other position on their party lists. In Argentina the electoral law states that all parties must nominate 30 percent women in positions which make their election possible. In contrast, New Zealand does not have a formal quota, but the New Zealand Labour Party has a policy of "pausing for thought" to take gender balance into account when composing its lists of candidates. Finally, three parties in Denmark – two of which still exist – used to have gender quotas but repealed these in the early 1990s (Dahlerup, 2006; Krook, 2009; Krook et al., 2009).[10]

The presence of quotas extends beyond this group of countries, however. Indeed, parties and national legislatures in more than 100 countries have now adopted some type of quota, most within the last 15 years. These measures take three broad forms: reserved seats, which set aside seats for women that men are not eligible to contest; party quotas, which involve voluntary commitments by parties to include a proportion of women among their candidates; and legislative quotas, which require all parties to nominate a certain percentage of women. These measures are distinct from other types of public policies, in the sense that they seek to influence who participates in policy-making itself. In seeking to explain the rapid diffusion of these measures, given the radical nature of the reforms, scholars have offered various accounts as to how and why they have been adopted. Most relate to political dynamics at the domestic level: the mobilization of women's groups (Bruhn, 2003; Kittilson, 2006), the strategic incentives of political elites (Davidson-Schmich, 2006), and the "fit" between quotas and norms of equality and representation (Opello, 2006). More recently, scholars have also explored international and transnational influences on quota adoption (Krook, 2006).

Interest in the spread of quotas, however, often masks the fact that many of these policies do not achieve their intended effects. Some policies, to be sure, produce dramatic increases in the numbers of women elected to political office. In Costa Rica, for example, a 40 percent quota law was adopted in 1996. Initially, the percentage of women in parliament increased from 14 percent in

1994 to only 19 percent in 1998. However, after the highest electoral court clarified that parties must include 40 percent women in "electable positions," this proportion jumped to 35 percent in 2002 and 39 percent in 2006, dropping to 37 percent in 2008 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009a; Jones, 2004). In contrast, quotas in other countries led to stagnation and even decreases in the proportion of female parliamentarians. In France, legislators amended the constitution in 1999 and the electoral law in 2000 to mandate that parties nominate 50 percent male and female candidates. Despite these reforms, women's representation in parliament barely rose from 11 percent in 1997 to 12 percent in 2002 and 18 percent in 2007 (Krook, 2009). This is because the law does not specify the districts in which female candidates must be placed and imposes a financial penalty for non-compliance that creates distinct incentives for compliance from small parties who are under greater pressures than large parties to maximize the amount of state subsidy they receive. (Murray, 2004). In Brazil, a 20 percent quota was established in 1996 and raised to 25 percent in 1998 and 30 percent in 2000. At the same time, however, another regulation was passed allowing parties to present 50 percent more candidates than the seats available. This provision introduced a crucial "escape clause" for quota implementation. As a result, the number of women in parliament decreased, dropping from 6 percent in 1994 to 5 percent in 1998, although this figure later increased to 8 percent in 2002 and 9 percent in 2006 (Araújo, 2003; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009a).

One reason for these variations stems from the details of the quota policies themselves, in terms of their form, wording, requirements, sanctions, and perceived legitimacy (Schmidt and Saunders, 2004). A second relates to the "fit" between quotas and other political institutions. For example, many studies find that quotas have the greatest impact in PR electoral systems with closed lists and high district magnitudes (Htun and Jones, 2002), as well as in parties with left-wing ideologies where the party leadership is better able to enforce party or national regulations (Caul, 1999; Davidson-Schmich, 2006). A third and final explanation is that the effects of these measures depend on the balance of actors who support and oppose quota policies. Most accounts expose the ways in which elites seek to mitigate their impact, from passive refusal to enforce quotas to more active measures to subvert their intended effects. However, many also mention other actors, including women's organizations, national and international courts, and ordinary citizens, who may monitor party compliance in ways that lead elites to ignore or honor quota requirements (Araújo, 2003; Jones, 2004).

Patterns in quota adoption and implementation both challenge and reinforce some of the elements of the conventional wisdom on gender and political recruitment. One way to understand these dynamics is in terms of a sequential model of political recruitment, progressing from (1) the large number of citizens who are *eligible* to run for political office to (2) the smaller pool of citizens who *aspire* to run for political office to (3) the small group of citizens who are *nominated* to run for political office to (4) the smallest band of citizens who are *elected* to political office. In the absence of any mechanisms of distortion, the characteristics of the individuals present at each of these four stages should be roughly the same (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). To explain the relative absence of women, scholars have asked whether it stems from gender differences in political ambition, biases in the recruitment practices of political elites, or prejudices on the part of voters. The third possibility has been firmly debunked: most studies find that voters vote for women at equal or greater rates than men (Black and Erickson, 2003). Most subsequent work has thus focused on the relative role of supply- and demand-side factors in explaining why women are under-represented in electoral politics and how their representation might be increased.

Emphasizing the strategic calculations of potential candidates suggests that women's representation will not increase without significant shifts in the resources and motivations of women to

wage effective political campaigns (Lawless and Fox, 2005). Once applicants come forward, however, their selection as candidates largely hinges on elite perceptions of their abilities, qualifications, and experience. While these evaluations are justified in terms of merit, substantial evidence indicates that elites discriminate against women and other non-dominant groups (Niven, 1998; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). Pointing to the importance of demand-side factors leads to quite different prescriptions for increasing the number of women in elected office. A key stimulus appears to be mobilization in favor of gender quotas, whether party or legally based. The varied effects of quotas, however, reveal that while these policies may compel elites to recruit more female aspirants, their presence may not be enough to alter the dynamics of demand. All the same, the dramatic changes that have resulted in many countries following the introduction of quotas clearly point to demand rather than supply as the main reason for the lack of higher numbers of women in political office around the world. Taken together, these patterns indicate a fundamental rethinking of the public–private divide in recent years, but suggest that the transformation – as yet – is far from complete.

Conclusions on Women in World Politics

Women have made dramatic gains in world politics in recent years. Although women still do not occupy half of all positions of executive and legislative leadership, a survey of global trends is encouraging: women appear to have shattered the political "glass ceiling" in countries with a diverse array of social, economic, cultural, and political characteristics. Further, these developments appear to have spilled over into other realms of political leadership. Most notably, there are now record numbers of women in cabinets, 16 percent overall. Two countries have surpassed the 50 percent mark, Finland and Norway, and 22 countries have more than 30 percent female ministers. In addition, 28 women now serve as speakers of parliament, about half of these in Latin America and the Caribbean (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009b). At the same time, there appear to be important role model effects when it comes to female presidents and prime ministers: 15 countries have had not just one female leader, but two different female leaders. This suggests that the presence of one woman in high political office may serve to break the strong association between masculinity and leadership. Obviously, this has not been the case in every country: for example, it has been nearly 20 years since Margaret Thatcher left office in the UK. However, combined with trends in many countries suggesting that patterns of recruitment to national parliaments are beginning to be re-gendered, these developments point to intriguing new possibilities with regard to women, gender, and politics.

The question remains, nonetheless, as to the broader meanings of these developments for women as a group. The lack of progress on several fronts, including the gendered conditions of women's access, the experiences and portrayals of female politicians, and the far from equal levels of executive and legislative representation, reveals that politics is still largely viewed as a "man's world." Further, the women who reach top political positions do not always seek to promote women as a group. Leaders like Gandhi, Meir, and Thatcher invoked masculine styles of leadership and did not take steps to improve women's status during their tenures in office.[11] In contrast, others like Bachelet, Johnson-Sirleaf, and Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway actively recruited women to cabinet positions and have advocated women-friendly public policies. Similarly, the women who achieve seats in parliament through gender quotas express varying degrees of commitment to women's issues. While some introduce a broad range of proposals aimed at helping women (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008), others are constrained actively by the male leaders who appoint

them (Goetz and Hassim, 2003) or more indirectly by self-imposed concerns to avoid being marginalized in parliament by focusing only on a "narrow" set of issues related to women (Childs, 2004). These patterns indicate that gendered power dynamics are still very much at work in the political sphere, offering an important corrective to naïve optimism regarding the gains that women have made. Indeed, several months after their victories seemed assured, Benazir Bhutto had been assassinated and Hillary Clinton had dropped out of the presidential race. Women's progress in the political sphere is thus in flux, with few guarantees regarding their future success.

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Notes

1. These include offices like the Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, Premier of the Åland islands in Finland, and Captain Regent of San Marino. For more details on the women who occupy these types of offices, see http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Current-Women-Leaders.htm (accessed May 20 2008).
2. Because of the Federation of Bosnia's non-traditional and complex governmental structure, its president, Borjana Kristo, is excluded from this list. Bosnia has multiple executive entities including a three-person presidency, with rotating chief executives. Kristo is not part of this collective but is president of another executive system within Bosnia. This makes it difficult to compare to other systems.
3. This is based on analysis of the United Nations Development Program's Gender-Related Development Index.
4. A growing number of right-wing parties, especially in Western Europe, have begun to close this gap through the increased recruitment of female candidates (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993).
5. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines won a subsequent term through popular vote.
6. Several powers are examined, including veto, discretionary appointments, ability to dissolve the legislature, having a central role in government formation, foreign policy influence (including defense), long-term emergency powers, and chairing cabinet meetings. These are determined by both constitutional provisions and powers exercised in practice (Jalalzai, 2008).
7. This excludes those holding power only on an interim basis. Michelle Bachelet's father, though never elected president of Chile, was a major opposition force and former air force general. She is thus counted here as having familial ties to political office.
8. See Hodson (1997) regarding competition within South Asian political families.
9. Krook et al. (2009) label these measures "soft quotas."
10. For more details on individual policies, see http://www.quotaproject.org.
11. For case studies, see Genovese (1993).

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