

The Gendered Executive

*A Comparative Analysis of Presidents,
Prime Ministers, and Chief Executives*

Edited by

Janet M. Martin and MaryAnne Borrelli

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The Impact of *Presidentas* on Political Activity

CATHERINE REYES-HOUSHOLDER
AND LESLIE A. SCHWINDT-BAYER

In this comparative analysis, the impact of women presidents is shown to facilitate the representation of women by contributing to women's increased political participation. While Latin America continues to exhibit significant gender inequality in citizens' political participation, women were elected president eight times between 1999 and 2015 throughout the continent: twice in Chile, Brazil, and Argentina; and once in Costa Rica and Panama. Extant research predicts that the representation provided by women leaders will lead to increased political activity by women in the society. Using public-opinion data for seventeen countries, gathered from 2004 to 2012, analysis reveals that presidentas do augment three measures of women's political participation: vote intention, rates of campaigning, and attendance at local meetings. Furthermore, evidence is provided that presidentas challenge conventional notions of the appropriateness of political activity for women.

From 1999 to 2015, five women democratically won the presidency in Latin America, a region known for machismo. Mireya Moscoso was elected president of Panama in 1999, and between 2006 and 2010, Michelle Bachelet (2006–2010) in Chile, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007–2011) in Argentina, Laura Chinchilla (2010–2014) in Costa Rica, and Dilma Rousseff (2010–2014) in Brazil were elected president. Between 2011 and 2014, three of these women mounted reelection campaigns and won

office for a second time. Fernández de Kirchner and Rousseff won reelection in Argentina and Brazil, respectively, and Bachelet was reelected in 2013 in Chile (immediate reelection is prohibited in Chile).

The *presidenta* (female president) phenomenon suggests major advances in women's political representation in the region. There is little doubt that the presidency is the most visible political office in Latin America. Latin American presidents enjoy greater constitutional prerogatives than U.S. presidents (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997), and they tend to attract more media attention because of their political power.

Despite the novelty and importance of the rise of *presidentas* in Latin America, research on them has been limited. The most popular topics have been how these women have won office and what they have accomplished in office (Franceschet and Thomas 2010; Jalalzai 2013; Jensen 2008; Morales Quiroga 2008; Piscopo 2010; Ríos Tobar 2008; Staab and Waylen 2016; Thomas and Adams 2010; see also Chapter 12). Although most of these studies have been president or country specific, a few cross-national analyses do exist (see, for example, Barnes and Jones 2011; Thames and Williams 2013).

What has received no serious attention, however, are the societal consequences of women's election to the presidency in Latin America. Existing research from around the world suggests that increased visibility of historically marginalized groups in elected political offices will augment the political participation of those groups in society (Atkeson 2003; Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Barreto 2007; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007). Building from this literature, we analyze whether the presence of *presidentas* in Latin America increases the political activity of women in society and, if so, how much and why.

The election of women to the presidency in Latin America should have positive effects on political participation of women and work to close longstanding gender gaps (Desposato and Norrander 2009).¹ We suggest three causal pathways that could theoretically link the *presidentas* to increased political activity among women. First, *presidentas* may change cultural beliefs about the appropriateness of politics for women and, in turn, encourage women to become politically involved. Second, the election of *presidentas* could make women believe that the government will be more responsive to their concerns, thereby raising the potential payoffs of political activities. Third, *presidentas* could make women more interested in politics or more likely to follow it in the news. This augmented psychological engagement in politics could then increase their political participation.

We use the AmericasBarometer public-opinion data from Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) for seventeen

Latin American countries over an eight-year period as a tool to explore the relationship between *presidentas* and political activity.² We demonstrate that *presidentas* exert a positive impact on three forms of women's political activity—voting intentions, campaign participation, and attendance at local meetings—and have no statistically significant impact on men's behavior. The presence of *presidentas* almost entirely closes the gender gap in these three forms of political activity.

It is unclear which mechanism underlies the relationship between *presidentas* in office and women's political activity. Empirical analyses show that citizens living under *presidentas* do not sense greater government responsiveness; nor are they more psychologically engaged. However, the presence of *presidentas* is positively related to citizens' views of how appropriate it is to have women in politics. The fact that these effects are not statistically different for women and men suggests that this mechanism is not necessarily responsible for closing the gender gap in political activity. More research is needed to determine exactly how and why the election of *presidentas* increases women's political activity and whether the phenomenon occurs outside Latin America.

Should *Presidentas* Affect Women's Political Activity?

Members of historically marginalized groups tend to participate less often in politics. Most scholars converge on the same general prediction: enhanced descriptive representation will augment the corresponding group's political participation. It is the increased visibility of in-group members that is believed to spur political activity (Atkeson 2003; Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Barreto 2007; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007). This research motivates our study's central hypothesis: *presidentas* will exert a positive impact on women's political activity. Three causal mechanisms may link the presence of a *presidenta* to increased female political activity—cultural appropriateness, government responsiveness, and psychological engagement.

Cultural Appropriateness

The cultural-appropriateness mechanism derives from an account of women and men behaving according to cultural norms. This is a version of what has become known as cue theory (Atkeson 2003), and it posits that citizens are socialized to believe that politics is a "man's world" because men dominate politics. According to this logic, the rising visibility of female leaders

should challenge traditional conceptions of the inappropriateness of female leadership in politics (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Hansen 1997). In Latin America, women profess stronger support for female leadership than men do, according to 2008 and 2012 LAPOP data, and it could be that both women's and men's views on the appropriateness of female political activity constrain women's actual activity. Indeed, Jana Morgan and Melissa Buice (2013) found that women are sensitive to gender-equality cues, such as increased female descriptive representation, but men are even *more* susceptible to these cues. If *presidentas* challenge those beliefs, then women may feel encouraged to participate. Therefore, we hypothesize that the presence of a *presidenta* should make citizens feel more positively inclined toward women in political leadership.

Government Responsiveness and External Efficacy

Another line of reasoning suggests that women may infer that male politicians know less and care less about their concerns than female politicians do; thus, government is less responsive to them. Because men dominate politics, women may calculate that political activity is not worth their time and effort. Still, rising visibility of female leaders sends the message to women that their in-group is gaining power. Since female leaders may share their policy concerns, increased visibility of female politicians may send women the message that the potential policy payoffs from participating are greater and that government will be more responsive to their needs and concerns. In other words, descriptive representation of women will lead to better substantive representation. We hypothesize that the presence of a *presidenta* should exert a positive impact on women's perceptions of government responsiveness.

Indeed, multiple studies show that greater descriptive representation augments historically marginalized groups' external efficacy—their perception of how much government leaders care about them and thus will respond to their concerns (Atkeson and Carrillo 2007; Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; High-Pippert and Comer 1998). Examining this in the context of contemporary Latin America is important because it offers a strict test of the effect of sex in producing changes in perceptions of government responsiveness. All of the *presidentas* under study here are ideological moderates whose administrations have been characterized more by policy continuity than change. Bachelet, Chinchilla, and Rousseff were cabinet ministers who succeeded popular male presidents from their same party. Fernández de Kirchner succeeded her husband. The *presidenta* administrations largely

promoted the continuation of economic policies.³ As a result, if sex of the president has an effect on perceptions of government responsiveness, we can be confident that it is largely independent of dramatic economic policy change.

Psychological Engagement

The third line of reasoning is that *presidentas* may affect political activity through increased psychological engagement with politics. Gender gaps in political engagement exist in Latin America, just as they do in many parts of the world (Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012). *Presidentas* could increase women's psychological engagement, which in turn could lead them to become more politically active.⁴ A psychological mechanism could link the *presidentas'* rise in power to increased female political activity. Studies conducted in the United States have shown that the presence of female legislators augments women's engagement, measured by interest in politics, political discussion, and political knowledge (Reingold and Harrell 2010). Christina Wolbrecht and David Campbell (2007) and Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) argue that discussion about politics is the causal mechanism linking increased female presence in parliaments to increased political activity. The emergence of *presidentas* attracts public attention and may produce greater interest in, discussion about, and attention to political news. Along these lines, we hypothesize that the election of female presidents could increase political engagement among women in Latin America.

Sex and Political Activity in Latin America

Although Latin American women tend to report voting in elections at similar rates as men (Carreras and Castañeda-Angarita 2014; see also Desposato and Norrander 2009), they are less active in other forms of political participation. Three forms of political activity where substantial gender gaps exist are the intention to vote, campaign participation, and local-meeting attendance.⁵ We use data from LAPOP's AmericasBarometer project from 2004 to 2012 to assess gender gaps in political activity and analyze the role of *presidentas* in explaining women's political activity.

The first way we operationalize political activity is with vote intention. Elections are a unique moment when citizens can directly manifest their preferences. Vote intention reflects whether citizens would go to the polls in the hypothetical case that an election were held this week.⁶ In Latin America, on average, 84 percent of men say that they would vote if a presidential

election were held this week, whereas only 80 percent of women say that they would do the same. Yet variation exists across countries. Guatemala features the largest gender gap: 82 percent of men say they would vote, but just 75 percent of women said the same. Nearly nonexistent gaps exist in Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, and Uruguay.

Our second measure of political activity is participating in a campaign. Arguably, those who campaign can influence an electoral outcome more than those who only vote. If women and men display different levels of campaign participation, this can translate into men's disproportionate power over electoral outcomes. In Latin America, the regionwide gender gaps in campaign participation are substantial—12.2 percent of men and 8.7 percent of women said they had campaigned.⁷ Figure 6.1 shows the variation in women's and men's campaign activity across countries. Chileans campaign the least—only 3 percent said they had helped out during the last presidential election—but the gender gap of one percentage point is statistically significant. Uruguayans are the most active campaigners—13 percent of citizens said they campaigned, but a 1.4 percent gender gap exists and is borderline significant (p -value of 0.10). Gender gaps in campaigning are statistically

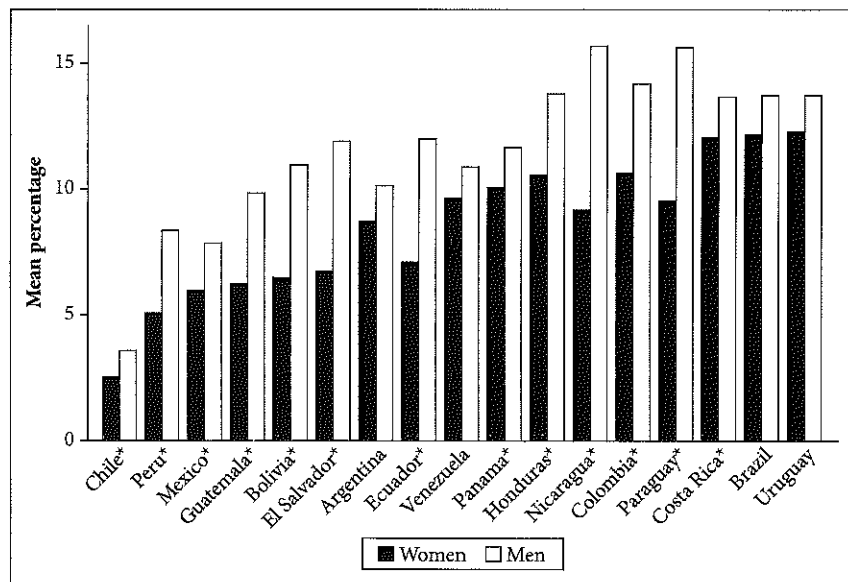


Figure 6.1 Variation in women's and men's responses about campaign participation, 2004–2012

Source: Data from Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys.

Note: Asterisks indicate countries where the gender gap is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

significant at the $p < 0.05$ level in every country except Brazil, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Argentina. As discussed later, *presidentas* have led the government in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, and Panama during the time frame studied. Paraguay had the largest gender gap. While 16 percent of Paraguayan men said they campaigned, only 9 percent of women said the same.

Attendance at political meetings at the local level assesses the extent to which citizens voice their opinion on issues that directly affect their lives. While 11.9 percent of Latin American men from 2004 to 2012 said they had attended local political meetings, only 9.9 percent of women said they had done so.⁸ Gender differences in local-meeting attendance vary across Latin American countries. All countries have statistically significant gender disparities in this measure of local political involvement except Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. This could be related to the fact that Chile had *presidentas* governing during the 2006 and 2008 LAPOP survey fieldwork, and Argentina had a *presidenta* governing during the 2008, 2010, and 2012 LAPOP fieldwork. Gender gaps favor men in all countries except Venezuela. Venezuelan women participated more in local political meetings than did men, with a gap of 2.8 percentage points. This is not surprising given that the 2004–2012 period was the heyday of former President Hugo Chávez's efforts to increase participatory democracy in Venezuela, and women were a key target of those efforts.

Gender gaps in these three forms of political activity are evident in most countries of Latin America. Fewer women than men express intentions to vote; women are less involved in political campaigns than men; and in all countries but Venezuela, fewer women than men attend local political meetings. Has the rise of the *presidentas* in some Latin American countries reduced these gaps by disproportionately increasing women's political activity relative to men's?

Presidentas and Political Activity:

Variables and Methods

The three measures of political activity just described are the first part of this study's main dependent variables. They capture fundamental but diverse types of political activity, and the correlations among them are low. The strongest correlation ($r = 0.16$) is between campaigning and attending local meetings. The correlation between vote intention and campaigning and vote intention and attending local meetings is 0.07 and 0.05, respectively. Because of these low correlations, we examine the impact of *presidentas* on each indicator separately.

We use logistic regression with country and year fixed effects to estimate the effect of *presidentas* on citizens' political activity.⁹ We include country weights, as provided by LAPOP, which in addition to appropriately balancing the different number of and representativeness of responses helps account for the problem of lack of independence across respondents within countries, a problem that typically requires clustered standard errors. In addition to the country and year fixed effects, we control for individual- and country-level factors that could confound or mediate the relationship between the presence of a *presidenta* and women's political activity (as described later and elaborated on in notes and Table 6A.1 in the chapter appendix).

The main independent variable is the presence of a *presidenta* in office at the time the fieldwork for the AmericasBarometer was conducted. A female president was in power during the fieldwork for the 2004 survey in Panama, the 2006–2008 surveys in Chile, 2008–2012 surveys in Argentina, and the 2012 surveys in Costa Rica and Brazil. Our statistical models, which include seventeen Latin American countries and all applicable LAPOP years, allow us to generate the expected change in the dependent variable's value while holding all other variables constant. Although the number of cases with female presidents is small, the analyses allow us to provide an initial test of the effect of women's presence on political activity. This study provides a start to theorizing about and empirically validating the relationship between female presidents in Latin America and women's political activity.

The models all include an interaction term between the sex of the respondent (the *female* variable) and the presence of a female president (the *presidenta* variable). This interaction—that is, the *presidenta* × *female* variable—tests whether *presidentas* have significantly different effects on men and women and whether the gender gap in political activity is significantly reduced under female presidents. We then can show what those different effects look like with calculations of marginal effects from the interaction models (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). All of the models also control for other factors that may mediate the relationship between female presidents and political activity. These control variables include individual-level factors such as respondent sex, education, wealth, age, party preference, and presidential approval and country-level factors such as gender-equality measures. We also include a variable for whether a presidential campaign was happening at the time of the survey fieldwork and whether a viable female candidate was running. (See Table 6A.1 in the chapter appendix for a full list of controls and descriptive statistics.)

Presidentas and Political Activity: Analysis

Table 6.1 presents the statistical results for the three dependent variables measuring political activity. The interaction terms in all three models are statistically significant. This means that the presence of female presidents has significantly different effects on men's and women's political participation.

TABLE 6.1: LOGIT MODELS EXPLAINING POLITICAL ACTIVITY

	<i>Would vote</i>	<i>Campaign</i>	<i>Local meeting</i>
Female	-0.13 (0.02)***	-0.35 (0.02)***	-0.30 (0.02)***
<i>Presidenta</i>	0.17 (0.11)	0.18 (0.12)	0.13 (0.10)
<i>Presidenta</i> × female	0.19 (0.06)***	0.18 (0.07)***	0.27 (0.08)***
Wealth	0.03 (0.01)***	-0.02 (0.01)**	-0.08 (0.01)***
Age	0.12 (0.01)***	0.10 (0.01)***	0.15 (0.01)***
Presidential party congruence	1.75 (0.10)***	—	—
Presidential approval	0.16 (0.01)***	0.15 (0.02)***	0.14 (0.01)***
Presidential election proximity	0.003 (0.001)***	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Election season	0.32 (0.18)*	0.07 (0.11)	0.11 (0.09)
Viable female candidate	0.09 (0.15)	-0.13 (0.11)	-0.11 (0.09)
Average female education	0.20 (0.04)***	0.10 (0.04)**	-0.05 (0.04)
Fertility rate	-0.87 (0.21)***	-0.16 (0.18)	-0.67 (0.18)***
GDP per capita (log)	0.94 (0.26)***	-0.18 (0.16)	-0.05 (0.18)
Compulsory voting	0.10 (0.14)	—	—
N	63,739	105,140	110,762
Years included in model	2008–2012	2004–2012	2004–2012

Note: Logit estimates with standard errors in parentheses. Year and country dummies not shown. * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

The top rows of Table 6.2 present the marginal-effects calculations from the model to show the estimated effect of *presidentas* on men and on women. For men, the presence of female *presidentas* has no significant effect on their likelihood of acting politically. For women, however, *presidentas* have significant positive effects. Converting the logit estimates in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 into more substantively intuitive average partial derivatives, we can estimate that women living under a *presidenta* have almost a 5 percent higher probability of saying how they would vote if the presidential election were this week than women living under a male president.¹⁰ The probability that women will participate in a campaign is 3 percent higher in a country with a *presidenta* than one with a *presidente* (male president). Women in countries with female presidents have a 3.4 percent higher probability of participating in local political meetings than women in countries run by male presidents.

Does the strong positive effect on women lead to smaller gender gaps in political activity? Yes. The bottom rows of Table 6.2 show the effect of the *female* variable (i.e., the gender gap) on political activity under male and female presidents. Under male presidents, significant gender gaps favor men over women for all three forms of political activity. Under female presidents, the gender gap is no longer significant for intention to vote or attending local meetings and is significantly reduced for campaigning.

TABLE 6.2: MARGINAL EFFECTS OF *PRESIDENTAS* ON MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS

<i>Effect of presidentas</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Vote intention	0.17 (0.11)	0.36** (0.11)
Campaign participation	0.18 (0.12)	0.37** (0.12)
Local meeting attendance	0.13 (0.10)	0.40** (0.10)
<i>Gender gap (female effect)</i>		
	<i>Presidente</i>	<i>Presidenta</i>
Vote intention	-0.13** (0.02)	0.06 (0.05)
Campaign participation	-0.35** (0.02)	-0.17* (0.07)
Local meeting attendance	-0.30** (0.02)	-0.03 (0.08)

Note: Logit estimates with standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

In sum, the results of all three models support the conclusion that women living under *presidentas* tend to profess higher levels of political activity, controlling for a series of potential confounders. Women under *presidentas* intend to vote more frequently. They also help out more on political campaigns and are more active in local politics. Their increased probability of being politically active under female presidents is substantial enough to close the gender gap in “intention to vote” and “local-meeting attendance” and reduce it significantly for “campaign participation.” This provides initial evidence that the presence of *presidentas* is related to increased political activity among women.

Why Are Women in Countries with *Presidentas* More Politically Active?

We have now established that, holding constant a host of potential confounders, female presidents are correlated with women’s political activity. The next question is, why? Earlier, we outlined three causal pathways that could link *presidentas* to increased female political activity. Here we empirically evaluate whether the sex of the president has different effects on men’s and women’s perceptions of the appropriateness of women in politics, feelings of government responsiveness, and political engagement. If having a female president is positively associated with women’s positive views of women in government, government responsiveness, and/or political engagement but not men’s, then we have initial evidence that those mechanisms could be the path through which sex of the president affects political activity among women and the gender gaps in political activity.

The next set of statistical models tests these posited causal mechanisms by using different dependent variables—again measured by the LAPOP AmericasBarometer. Table 6A.1 in the chapter appendix shows the years that each question was asked (and descriptive statistics for the dependent variables). Cultural appropriateness is captured by respondents’ level of agreement/disagreement with the statement “Men are better political leaders than women.” Responses are coded from 1 to 4 so that positive effects in the statistical models indicate greater acceptance of women in politics. Government responsiveness (or external efficacy) is captured by respondents’ agreement/disagreement with the assertion “Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think.” Responses are coded 1 through 7 so that positive effects reflect a greater perception that government is responsive to citizens. Finally, two indicators capture political engagement. First, interest in politics is coded 1 through 4 with higher values indicating greater interest. The second indicator is about

news consumption—coded from 1 through 5 with higher values indicating greater news consumption.

Our statistical methodology is similar to that in the previous section; however, we run ordered logit regressions for all of these models because the dependent variables are ordinal rather than dichotomous. Again, the key variables here are the dichotomous *female* and *presidenta* variables and an interaction between the two. We again include control variables to isolate the effect of *presidentas* (see Table 6A.1 in the chapter appendix).

Table 6.3 presents the results for the tests to see if the mechanisms that we hypothesized were actually at work. In only one of the models is the interaction term between female and sex of the president significant: interest in politics. Except for this relatively weak relationship, sex of the president has no statistically significant different effect on men's and women's views of the cultural appropriateness of women in politics, their expectations of government responsiveness, or their political engagement as measured by news consumption. This suggests that these three mechanisms do not explain why sex of the president closes gender gaps in political activity. We tested this further by rerunning the models from the previous section with the four possible causal mechanisms included. None of the four possible causal mechanism variables eliminated the effect of sex of the president on women's political activity. Thus, the explanation for why sex of the president is related to women's political activity must derive from something else. We are unsure about what this is.

Even though a president's sex does not have different effects on women than men, it importantly does have effects on both women and men, as shown in Table 6.4. This table simply removes the interaction term between

TABLE 6.3: TESTS OF APPROPRIATENESS, RESPONSIVENESS, AND ENGAGEMENT

	Support of female leadership	Sense of government responsiveness	Interest in politics	News consumption
Female	0.70 (0.02)***	-0.03 (0.01)**	-0.36 (0.01)***	-0.21 (0.02)***
<i>Presidenta</i>	0.52 (0.12)***	-0.06 (0.07)	-0.10 (0.06)	0.08 (0.18)
<i>Presidenta</i> × female	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)*	-0.01 (0.06)
N	45,638	76,582	94,715	52,904
Year included	2008, 2012	2008–2012	2006–2012	2010–2012

Note: Logit estimates with standard errors in parentheses. Control variables and year and country dummies were included in the model but are not shown here. * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE 6.4: TESTS OF APPROPRIATENESS, RESPONSIVENESS, AND ENGAGEMENT
(NO INTERACTION)

	Support of female leadership	Sense of government responsiveness	Interest in politics	News consumption
Female	0.70 (0.02)***	-0.03 (0.01)***	-0.35 (0.01)***	-0.21 (0.02)***
<i>Presidenta</i>	0.48 (0.12)***	-0.09 (0.07)	-0.07 (0.06)	0.07 (0.18)
Education	0.23 (0.02)***	-0.07 (0.01)***	0.50 (0.01)***	0.45 (0.02)***
Wealth	0.04 (0.01)***	0.01 (0.01)	0.05 (0.01)***	0.14 (0.01)***
Age	-0.05 (0.01)***	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)***	0.21 (0.01)***
Presidential party congruence	0.01 (0.03)	0.36 (0.02)***	1.09 (0.02)***	0.21 (0.03)***
Presidential approval	-0.08 (0.01)***	0.59 (0.01)***	0.11 (0.01)***	0.05 (0.01)***
Presidential election proximity	-0.02 (0.003)***	-0.002 (0.001)**	0.001 (0.001)	-0.01 (0.002)***
Election season	-0.52 (0.23)**	-0.12 (0.13)	0.46 (0.06)***	-0.08 (0.18)
Viable female candidate	0.84 (0.21)***	-0.003 (0.11)	-0.04 (0.06)***	-0.02 (0.11)
Average female education	0.09 (0.05)*	0.11 (0.03)***	0.10 (0.03)***	0.09 (0.05)*
Fertility rate	0.29 (0.18)	-0.44 (0.14)***	-0.24 (0.10)**	1.21 (0.62)*
GDP per capita (log)	-0.34 (0.23)	0.03 (0.15)	-0.08 (0.12)	0.38 (0.42)
N	45,638	76,582	94,715	52,904
Year included	2008, 2012	2008–2012	2006–2012	2010–2012

Note: Logit estimates with standard errors in parentheses. Year and country dummies not shown. * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

female and *presidenta* from the statistical model and shows the estimated effect of respondent sex and having a female president on citizens (both men and women). The first notable findings are the gender gaps in all the dependent variables, revealed by the statistical significance of the *female* variable, but the direction of that gender gap varies across models. Under a *presidenta*, women have a higher likelihood of professing much stronger support for

women's leadership than men do. Men demonstrate a higher likelihood of efficacy, interest in politics, and rates of following political news. The effect of *presidentas* on these dependent variables, however, is limited to the support for female leaders among women and men. Having female presidents leads to greater levels of support for female political leaders, but it has no effect on women's or men's efficacy, interest in politics, or following politics in the news.

Results from the model of beliefs about female leadership support the hypothesized appropriateness mechanism. *Presidentas* exert a positive and highly significant impact on citizens' support for female leaders, and there is no differential impact between male and female respondents. Table 6.5 shows the changes in predicted probabilities for support of female leaders when citizens are governed by a *presidenta*. The highest level of support for female leadership is measured by a "strongly disagree" response to the statement "In general, men are better political leaders than women." Most of the movement in public opinion occurs between the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" answers. Living under a *presidenta* means that citizens are 2 percent less likely to "strongly agree" with the statement, 5 percent less likely to "agree," 3 percent less likely to "disagree," and 10 percent more likely to "strongly disagree." The beliefs data capture only the effects of the Fernández de Kirchner, Rousseff, and Chinchilla presidencies because the question was asked only in 2008 and 2012 and did not include Chile in 2008. Nevertheless, the observation that under *presidentas* the predicted probability for disagreeing strongly with the statement "Men are better political leaders than women" changes by 10 percent is remarkable.

The findings concerning the effect of the campaign of a viable female candidate are also consistent with the general prediction that increased visibility of female political leaders can change citizens' views about the capacity of female leaders. In this model, the *viable female candidate* variable

TABLE 6.5: CHANGES IN PREDICTED PROBABILITIES FOR SUPPORT OF FEMALE LEADERS

"Men are better political leaders than women"	Impact under a <i>presidenta</i>
Disagree strongly	0.10
Disagree	-0.03
Agree	-0.05
Strongly agree	-0.02

Note: All changes are significant at the $p \leq 0.01$ level; calculated with the margins command in Stata, holding all other variables at their means. Average interest levels for women in seventeen Latin American countries from 2004 to 2012 is 1.94.

captures the highly competitive but ultimately unsuccessful presidential runs of Paraguayan Blanca Ovelar in 2008 and Mexican Josefina Vázquez Mota in 2012. Ovelar ran for the Colorado Party and did not win, since she received only 31 percent of the vote. Backed by the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), Vázquez Mota captured 26 percent of the vote. The dummy for the election season is also significant, but it is negative. The combined impact of both variables is positive and significant at the 0.01 level. Results, therefore, show that if a viable female candidate is campaigning during the LAPOP survey fieldwork dates, then the men and women profess stronger support for female leaders. The findings of the appropriateness model are strengthened by the observation that other key variables are significant, and their coefficients accord with our expectations.

Although our empirical results do not support the conclusion that cultural appropriateness of women in politics, government responsiveness, and psychological engagement in politics are the *causal* mechanisms by which the sex of the president is linked to women's political activity, our results do show that the sex of the president is *related* to views of cultural appropriateness for both men and women. Whereas previous research has found this when focusing on women's representation in legislatures in Latin America (Morgan and Buice 2013), we show support for it through women's representation in top executive-office positions. Whether a president is a woman, however, does not affect citizen perceptions of government responsiveness or their political engagement. This is important as well for showing the limits of the effects that female presidents can have on society. While they do seem to have an impact on our indicators of women's political activity, *presidentas* are not panaceas for all political inequalities between women and men.

Conclusion

The number of women elected to presidencies in Latin America is still quite low, but the election of five women eight times in just the last sixteen years is remarkable. This chapter offers one of the first studies of the societal consequences of the presence of *presidentas*. Latin America has often been characterized as a region with low civic activity and political marginalization of women (Craske 1999; Klesner 2007), but we show that the rise of *presidentas* could have a positive impact on these democratic deficiencies. Statistical evidence is largely consistent with the proposition that the presence of *presidentas* in Latin America relates to women's political activity, as measured by intention to vote, campaign participation, and attendance at local political meetings.

Our empirical analyses do not allow us to identify which causal mechanisms could link *presidentas* to increased political activity among women. But we do show evidence that the presence of female presidents is associated with more positive cultural attitudes about politics being an appropriate arena for women's participation. Scholars have empirically demonstrated that the rise of women in legislatures contributes to greater acceptance of women in politics. We find evidence that *presidentas* also help positively change these attitudes.

Contrary to many studies of the effect of descriptive representation on historically marginalized groups in the developed world (Atkeson and Carrillo 2007; Bobo and Gilliam 1990), *presidentas* do not produce greater feelings of government responsiveness or more psychological engagement with politics for women (or men). Furthermore, there is little evidence to support the idea that *presidentas* generally augment women's interest in politics.

Because of the unavailability of data, we were unable to test another plausible mechanism: political discussion. Campbell and Wolbrecht's (2006) and Wolbrecht and Campbell's (2007) studies of adolescents in the United States and Europe revealed that girls—on observing larger numbers of women in office—begin to discuss politics more with their friends and family. This increased discussion leads to greater anticipated political involvement. LAPOP's question on political discussion was asked in 2006 and 2008, when only Chile and Argentina (2008 only) had a female president, and this provides too little variation on sex of the president to test any political-discussion hypotheses. A related factor—general interest in politics—was found to be unaffected by *presidentas*. Future research on the impact of a president's sex on political activity should try to study the political discussion-mechanism more directly.

Much scholarship has examined the impact of female legislators on women's symbolic representation (see, for example, Atkeson 2003; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Lawless 2004; Schwindt-Bayer 2010). To our knowledge, however, this is the first empirical exploration of the impact of *presidentas* in Latin America. Extant research has been conducted on Latin American voting behavior and civic activities (Desposato and Norrander 2009; Klesner 2007), but no study so far has examined political activity as measured by rates of intention to vote, campaign participation, and attendance at local political meetings. This study, therefore, contributes to the literature on contextual effects and political behavior in Latin America as well as the possible impact of female presidents. We expect the rise of the *presidentas* to continue, and much research remains to be conducted on how *presidentas* affect citizens' political attitudes and behavior.

Appendix

TABLE 6A.1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ALL VARIABLES

Variable	Survey years	N	Mean (standard deviation)	Range
<i>Presidenta</i>	All	137,550	0.11 (0.004)	0–1
Would vote	2008–2012	72,062	0.81 (0.003)	0–1
Campaign	All	129,554	0.10 (0.31)	0–1
Attend local meeting	All	134,229	0.11 (0.31)	0–1
Support for female leadership	2008, 2012	51,627	2.89 (0.01)	1–4
Sense of government responsiveness	2008–2012	87,102	3.34 (0.01)	1–7
Interest in politics	2006–2012	118,039	2.04 (0.96)	1–4
Follow political news	2010–2012	60,513	4.39 (0.01)	1–5
Female	All	137,550	0.52 (0.50)	0–1
Education	All	135,771	1.97 (0.004)	1–3
Wealth	All	124,981	3.87 (1.75)	0–7
Age cohort	All	135,123	2.57 (1.25)	1–5
Presidential party congruence	2006–2012	105,669	0.17 (0.37)	0–1
Presidential approval	All	134,124	0.21 (0.95)	–2–2
Presidential election proximity	All	137,550	14.22 (9.83)	0–40
Election season	All	137,550	0.08 (0.27)	0–1
Viable female candidate	All	137,550	0.05 (0.003)	0–1
Fertility rate	All	137,550	2.70 (0.60)	1.7–4.5
Average female education	All	137,550	7.31 (1.57)	3.2–10
GDP per capita (log)	All	137,550	8.43 (0.01)	6.8–9.6
Compulsory voting	All	137,550	0.70 (0.01)	0–1

NOTES

1. By “gender gap,” we mean the difference between men's and women's rates of participation in a political activity, whether by voting, campaigning, protesting, or some other means.

2. The survey data are available at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>. We thank LAPOP and its major supporters (the United States Agency for International Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, and Vanderbilt University) for making the data available. Political science research on Spanish and Portuguese Latin America usually includes eighteen countries: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Chile,

Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the Dominican Republic. Haiti is not included because it is French speaking, and Cuba is excluded because it is not democratic. In this study, we exclude the Dominican Republic because it has unusually high levels of political activity by women and men, making it an outlier.

3. However, some *presidentas* made important shifts in pro-women policies. See Chapter 12.

4. We found the mean for interest in politics (measured on a 1–4 scale) for women in Latin America from 2006 to 2012 is 1.9, while the mean for men is 2.1. The mean for following news (measured on a 1–5 scale) for women from 2010 to 2012 is 4.3, and for men, 4.4.

5. Questions about working on campaigns and participating in local meetings were included in every survey beginning in 2004, but questions on vote intention were asked only in 2008–2012. Only about 10 percent of all respondents claim to have participated politically by campaigning and attending meetings, whereas, on average, over 80 percent of all respondents claim they would vote in a hypothetical upcoming election.

6. The exact wording of the survey question is “If the next presidential elections were held this week, what would you do?” Respondents are given four options: not vote, vote for the incumbent candidate or party, vote for a candidate or party different from the incumbent’s, and vote blank/null. We recode this variable as 0 if respondents said they would not go to vote and 1 if the respondents said they would vote for the incumbent, vote for the challenger, or vote blank. Our variable is binary and captures whether the respondents would vote at all.

7. We assess campaign participation according to the question “Did you work for any candidate or party in the last presidential election?” We coded “yes” responses as 1 and “no” responses as 0.

8. The exact wording of the question is “Have you attended a town meeting, city council meeting, or other meeting in the past twelve months?” We coded “yes” responses as 1 and “no” responses as 0.

9. Hierarchical modeling is not appropriate for these data, since only seventeen countries are included in the study. This is not enough to justify the hierarchical modeling’s assumption that the countries are a random sample.

10. We generated the change in probabilities reported here by using Stata’s margins option with partial derivatives after the logit models and then calculating the marginal effects of those estimated probabilities for women and men (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006).

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7

U.S. Presidents and LGBT Policy

Leadership, Civil Rights, and Morality Claims, 1977–2015

ARIELLA R. ROTRAMEL

This chapter focuses on the substantive representation provided by U.S. presidents. As the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) movement has gained traction in the United States, it has called on presidents to advocate for the protections necessary for LGBT people to become fully incorporated into society. Yet multiple and layered tensions within the LGBT community have complicated this policy making. Presidents have, moreover, encountered a strong conservative backlash to LGBT rights since 1977. In response to these cross-cutting pressures, Democrats have largely embraced a civil rights/equality frame, while Republicans have either embraced or mediated a morality frame. The result has been wide swings in presidential responsiveness to the LGBT community, arguably undermining the well-being of LGBT people throughout the United States.

It was not until 2000 that a president mentioned "gay" people in a State of the Union address (Clinton 2000). And it was not until 2015 that the full phrase "lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender" was included in a State of the Union address (Obama 2015a). The status of this speech—constitutionally mandated, delivered before both houses of Congress, televised nationally—gave these references great significance. However, both President Bill Clinton and President Barack Obama had waited until late in their second terms to make this reference, speaking only after there was no possibility of an electoral backlash. And rather than use the State of the