WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN LATIN AMERICA[1]

REPRESENTAÇÃO FEMININA E A CONSOLIDAÇÃO DEMOCRÁTICA NA AMÉRICA LATINA

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Abstract: A consolidated representative democracy requires representation of all citizens, including women. Yet, most Latin American countries fall short of gender equality in legislative representation at the national level. In this paper, I analyze women's representation in Latin America asking three questions: What does women's representation in Latin America look like? Why does it look that way? And, what are the consequences of women's representation for legislative politics and democracy in Latin America? I answer these questions drawing on recent research conducted on women's representation and present original data from my research on women's representation in Latin America. I conclude that women's representation in national legislatures has increased over time in just about every country but to varying degrees. Women's representation today continues to vary widely across the region. The primary explanation for this is the nature of electoral institutions in Latin American countries specifically, the magnitude of electoral districts, gender quota laws, party control over their ballots. The benefits of including women in national legislatures are myriad but include most importantly greater attention to women's issues in the legislative arena. Yet, challenges still persist for women in political office, specifically, their continued lack of access to real political power. These obstacles must be addressed for women to attain full political representation in Latin American democracies, and thus, for Latin American democracies to be fully consolidated.

Keywords: Women; Gender; Legislatures; Latin America; Representation.

Resumo: Uma democracia representativa consolidada requer a representação de todos os cidadãos, incluindo as mulheres. Ainda assim, a maioria dos países latino americanos não tem uma representação legislativa equalitária, a nível de gênero, em âmbito nacional. Neste texto, eu

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analiso a representação feminina na América Latina através de três questões: Como está a representação feminina na América Latina? Porque esta representação é desta forma? Quais são as consequências da representação feminina na política legislativa e na democracia da América Latina? Eu respondo estas questões baseado em recente pesquisa conduzida sobre a representação política feminina na América Latina e apresento dados originais de uma pesquisa conduzida por mim. Concluo que a representação feminina na legislatura nacional tem crescido em quase todos os países, mas em níveis diferentes. Hoje a representação feminina continua variando fortemente sobre toda a região. A principal explicação para isto é a natureza das instituições eleitorais nos países da América Latina, especialmente, a magnitude dos distritos eleitorais, as leis sobre quotas femininas e o controle dos partidos inclusive sobre o formato das cédulas eleitorais. Os benefícios da participação de mulheres em legislaturas nacionais são muito importantes para incluir as questões femininas na arena legislativa. Portanto, desafios ainda persistem para mulheres em âmbitos políticos, especialmente, a contínua ausência de acesso à real força política. Estes obstáculos devem ser vencidos para que as mulheres tenham uma representação política real nas democracias latino americanas, para que assim, estas democracias sejam totalmente consolidadas.

Palavras-Chaves: Mulheres; Gênero; Legislatura; América Latina; Representação.

Introduction

Representation of a country's citizens and their ideas, needs, and concerns is a necessary component of democratic consolidation. Representative democracies are built on the idea that elected officials will "represent" those who elected them, and thus, the degree to which democracies are representative is critical to understanding democratic consolidation. Recent research on democratic consolidation and the quality of democracy in Latin America has highlighted representativeness as a core component of democracy, considering representation of both political parties and traditionally under-represented social groups as part of their evaluations of just how consolidated and strong democracy in the region is (LEVINE; MOLINA, 2011). Greater gender equality in representation is important for a high quality and consolidated democracy because it provides greater choice to voters in elections, it indicates the seriousness with which governments view gender equality, increases the range of interests and issues on the agenda, and thus, makes democracy more representative. In this paper, I analyze women's representation in Latin America asking three key questions: What does women's representation in Latin America look like? Why does it look that way? And, what are the consequences of women's representation for democracy in Latin America?

The answers to these questions draw upon the wealth of research conducted on

women's representation worldwide and original data from my research on women's representation in Latin America. I argue that women's representation in national legislatures has increased over time in just about every country but to varying degrees. Women's representation today continues to vary widely across the region. The primary explanations for this are gender quota laws, the size of electoral districts (i.e., district magnitude) and the size of the party's delegation within electoral districts (i.e., party magnitude), and the extent of party control over ballots. The benefits of including women in national legislatures have been myriad but challenges still persist for women in political office. While women's representation has helped to improve the quality of democracy in Latin America since the transitions to democracy, the remaining challenges must be addressed for women to attain full political representation in Latin American democracies, and thus, for Latin American democracies to be fully consolidated.

Overview of Women's Representation in Latin America

Since the democratic transitions of the 1980s, women have gained unprecedented access to governments in Latin America. Six women have been elected president of Latin American democracies—Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in Nicaragua (1990–1997), Mireya Moscoso de Arias in Panama (1999–2004), Michelle Bachelet in Chile (2006–2010), Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina (2007–2011), Laura Chinchilla in Costa Rica (2010–current), and Dilma Rousseff in Brazil (2011–current) — and many others have run for, and seriously contended, executive office. In 2006, the average percentage of presidential cabinet posts that were held by women was 17%, up from 9% in 1990 (HTUN, 2000; UNDP, 2008), and women have been appointed to ministries with high prestige, such as defense, foreign relations, economics, finance, and agriculture (ESCOBAR-LEMMON; TAYLOR-ROBINSON, 2005).

Women also have gained access to national legislatures in Latin America in growing numbers. In 1985, the regionwide average was 8% (IPU, 1995). In 1995, it was 13%, and by 2005, it had grown to 20% (IPU, 1995). In 2013, it stood at 22.6% (IPU, 2013). The current level of women's representation compares favorably with other regions of the world and the worldwide average (see Table 1). The Nordic states have the highest representation of women in their national legislatures with a regionwide average of 42%. Latin America comes second followed very closely by Europe where the combined average of both houses of national parliaments is 22.4% female. African and Asian legislatures are not far behind, with averages of 20.8% and 18.5%, respectively. The worldwide combined average for both houses is currently 20.8%.

Table 1 – Worldwide and Regional Averages (Percentage Female, as of 2013)

Region	Lower/Only Chambers	Upper Chambers	Combined Chambers
Nordic	42.0	---	---
Latin America	22.4	24.0	22.6
Europe	22.4	22.4	22.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	21.2	18.0	20.8
Asia	19.0	14.1	18.5
Arab States	15.7	6.8	13.8
Pacific	12.7	36.0	15.3
Worldwide Average	21.2	18.6	20.8

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2013.

Within Latin American countries, however, the pattern of change has varied over time. Some countries have seen "big jumps" in women's legislative representation whereas others have exhibited only "small gains" (PAXTON; HUGHES, 2007). Argentina exemplifies a country that made a "big jump" in women's representation in a very short period of time (see Figure 1). The first election of the current democratic period in 1983 resulted in only 4% of the Chamber of Deputies being female. By 2007, women comprised 40% of the chamber and their representation has dropped slightly in elections since then. A very rapid increase occurred in the post-1991 period. Another country exhibiting this pattern of a sudden jump in women's representation is Costa Rica, one of Latin America's longest standing democracies (IPU various years). It had only 3 female deputies (5%) in the 1974-1978 Legislative Assembly, but after the 2010 election, 38.6% of the Assembly was female. Between 1998 and 2002 alone, the percentage of the legislature that was female jumped from 19.3% to 35.1%.

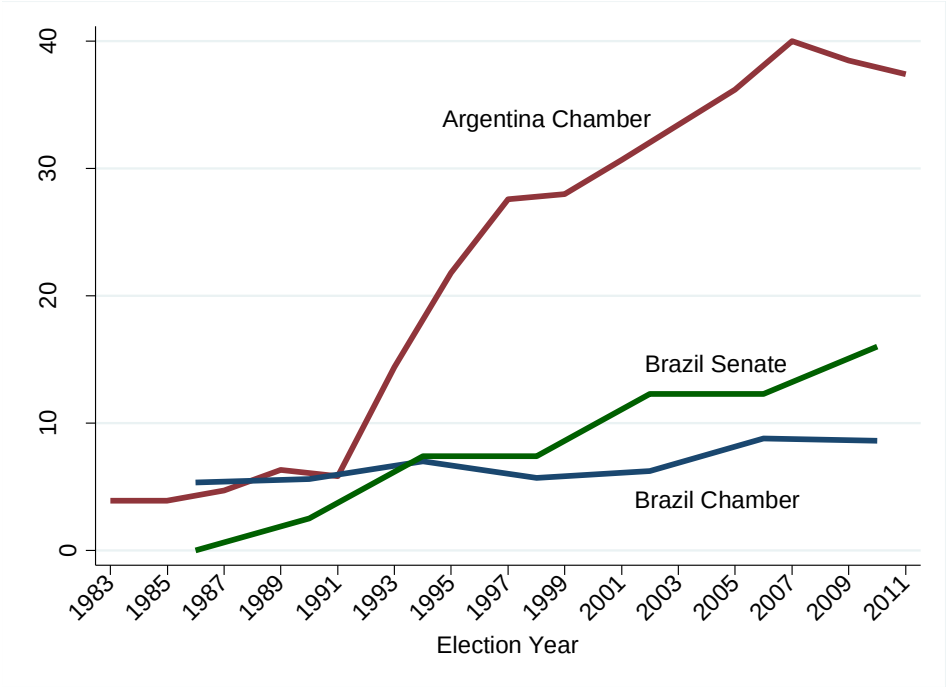

Figure 1- Patterns of Change in Women's Representation in Latin America over Time (Stata 12 graph)
Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) various years.

In other countries, women's progress in getting elected to national legislatures has been much slower. Women have only made "small gains" in Colombia and Brazil (PAXTON; HUGHES, 2007). The percentage of the legislature that is female in Colombia grew from 5% in the House of Representatives in 1974 to only 12.1% after the 2010 election (IPU various years). In the Senate, women's representation increased from 1% in the 1974-1978 Senate to 16% after the 2010 Senate election (IPU various years). In Brazil, women's representation in the lower house has barely changed at all since the first democratic legislative election in 1986 (see Figure 1). In that election, women won 5.3% of the 487 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. This has increased to only 8.6% in the 2010 elections. The Senate has exhibited a more linear increase growing gradually from no women elected to the first Senate of the new democracy in 1986 to 16% of the current chamber being female (see Figure 1).

Today, women's representation in Latin America continues to vary widely (see Table 2). Nicaragua boasts the highest level of women's legislative representation with 40% of its unicameral assembly being female. Costa Rica, Argentina, and Mexico fall close behind with 39%, 38%, and 36%, respectively, of their unicameral or lower and upper houses combined being female. At the bottom of the rankings are Brazil and Panama, where less than 10% of their national congresses are female.

Table 2: Women's Representation in Latin America (Percentage Female, as of 2013)

Worldwide Ranking	Country	Election	Lower Chamber	Election	Upper Chamber	Combined Chambers
9	Nicaragua	2011	40.2	---	---	**40.2**
15	Costa Rica	2010	38.6	---	---	**38.6**
18	Argentina	2011	37.4	2011	38.9	**37.7**
19	Mexico	2012	36.8	2012	32.8	**36.0**
26	Ecuador	2009	32.3			**32.3**
42	El Salvador	2012	26.2	---	---	**26.2**
43	Bolivia	2009	25.4	2009	47.2	**30.1**
63	Peru	2011	21.5	---	---	**21.5**
66	Dominican Republic	2010	20.8	2010	9.4	**19.1**
72	Honduras	2009	19.5	---	---	**19.5**
82	Venezuela	2010	17.0	---	---	**17.0**
94	Chile	2009	14.2	2009	13.2	**13.9**
99	Guatemala	2011	13.3	---	---	**13.3**
102	Paraguay	2008	12.5	2008	15.6	**13.6**
105	Colombia	2010	12.1	2010	16.0	**13.6**
105	Uruguay	2009	12.1	2009	12.9	**12.3**
121	Brazil	2010	8.6	2010	16.0	**9.6**
122	Panama	2009	8.5	---	---	**8.5**
Average			**22.35**		**23.98**	**22.60**

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2013)

These varying patterns of increases in women's representation and the continued wide disparity in women's representation across countries in Latin America yield important questions about women's representation and democracy. Why have some countries had such dramatic

increases in women's representation whereas other countries have had almost no change over time? Why have some countries today almost achieved gender parity whereas others have next to no women in office? What difference does it make to Latin American politics and democracy if women are or are not well-represented? The remaining sections of this paper offer some answers to these questions.

Explaining Variation in Women's Representation in Latin America

Research on women's representation around the world has identified an array of factors that have led to larger numbers of women getting elected to legislatures. The main explanations can be grouped into three categories: cultural, socioeconomic, and electoral (INGLEHART; NORRIS, 2003; KENWORTHY; MALAMI, 1999; NORRIS, 1985; OAKES; ALMQUIST, 1993; PAXTON; HUGHES, 2007; REYNOLDS, 1999; RULE, 1987; SCHMIDT, 2008a).

A country's culture can hinder the ascension of women to national political office because, in some countries, traditional cultures continue to view women's place as "in the home" and either legally prevent women from running for office or more subtly discourage women from participating in the public sphere. Norris (1985) found that societies with favorable attitudes towards women in politics have more women in office. This was corroborated in Inglehart and Norris (2003), Paxton and Hughes (2007), and Tremblay (2007), although Tremblay (2007) finds it only matters in countries that have been democratic longer. Similarly, Yoon (2004) finds that patriarchal cultures in sub-Saharan Africa significantly hinder women's accession to legislatures. A country's dominant religion can also explain societal attitudes toward women in politics. Rule (1987), Reynolds (1999), Tripp and Kang (2008), and Kenworthy and Malami (1999) find that religion is correlated with the election of women whereby religious denominations, such as Catholicism, with more restrictive views of women's equality have fewer women in office than those, such as Protestantism, with more accepting views of gender equity. Rule (1987), Reynolds (1999), and Kenworthy and Malami (1999) also find that the number of years that women have had the right to vote or stand for office in a country influences the proportion of women in office.

The socioeconomic environment of countries affects the gender representativeness of legislatures by increasing or decreasing the likelihood that women will be part of the "candidate pool" and able to run for and win national office (KENWORTHY; MALAMI, 1999; NORRIS, 1985; OAKES; ALMQUIST, 1993; RANDALL; SMYTH, 1987; REYNOLDS, 1999; RULE, 1981). Most candidates for public office have similar educational and occupational backgrounds, such as university educations and advanced degrees, relevant private or public sector jobs (e.g. lawyer, business leader, or professional), or previous political experience.

These qualities are important because voters and political parties around the world tend to see them as unwritten qualifications for public office. As women gain qualifications for public office, they become viable contenders for election. Scholars have found that having more women in the paid labor force, higher women's literacy rates, women's participation in education, low women's unemployment rates, and lower fertility rates correlate with higher levels of women's political representation (KENWORTHY; MALAMI, 1999; NORRIS, 1985; OAKES; ALMQUIST, 1993; RANDALL; SMYTH, 1987; RULE, 1981, 1987; STUDLAR; McALLISTER, 1991). Additionally, economically developed countries (MATLAND, 1998; PAXTON; HUGHES, 2007; REYNOLDS, 1999; RULE, 1981; SCHMIDT, 2008a; TREMBLAY, 2007) and those with higher GDI scores (the U.N.'s Gender-related Development Index) have higher representation of women in national legislatures. This results from the benefits that economic development usually brings to the socioeconomic and cultural environments in countries (INGLEHART, 1990; INGLEHART; NORRIS, 2003).

Latin American countries have made great strides in the past thirty years normalizing gender equality culturally and socioeconomically. Throughout the region, Catholicism has strongly influenced cultural attitudes toward women in politics, but by 2004, only one-third of Latin Americans thought that men make better political leaders than women (LATINOBARÓMETRO, 2004). This ranges from as few as 14% of respondents in Mexico believing that to as many as 50% in the Dominican Republic, but the variation in these countries has not been found to affect the number of women elected to national legislatures in Latin America (JONES, 2009). Significant socioeconomic changes have occurred as well. As late as the 1970's, women's participation in the workforce was far below men's—only one-third of women participated in the paid labor force compared to nearly 85% of men (WORLD BANK, 2007). By 2005, over half of the women in Latin American countries participated in the paid labor force (WORLD BANK, 2007). Although women and men have not yet reached parity in formal workforce participation rates, women's involvement in the paid labor force has increased. Similar improvements can be seen in women's access to education as well.

Despite socioeconomic and cultural changes in recent years, women's representation continues to lag behind that of men's in many Latin American countries. I argue that the main reason for this is the nature of countries electoral institutions (SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). The countries that have witnessed the largest growth in women's representation are those with gender-friendly electoral systems—specifically, those that give parties room to balance their tickets with both women and men on the ballot and those that have adopted high quality gender quotas. The effect of institutions, such as the type of electoral system, district magnitude, party magnitude, and gender quotas, on the election of women has long been documented in countries around the world (CASTLES, 1981; DARCY et al., 1994; DUVERGER, 1955; ENGSTROM,

1987; KENWORTHY; MALAMI, 1999; MATLAND, 1993; MATLAND; TAYLOR, 1997; NORRIS, 1985; OAKES; ALMQUIST, 1993; PAXTON; HUGHES, 2007; RULE, 1987; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2005; TREMBLAY, 2008; YOON, 2004). Recent research finds that these factors play a large role in Latin America, as well (JONES, 1996, 2009; SCHMIDT; SAUNDERS, 2004; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010; STOCKEMER, 2008).

Three electoral institutions are critical for explaining the varying numbers of women in Latin American legislatures today. The first is the size of the electoral district, or district magnitude. Larger electoral districts provide greater opportunity for women's representation because parties can nominate more than one candidate on their ballots. This means that winning a seat in the district is not "a zero-sum game" whereby one sex wins and the other loses. Parties have the opportunity to nominate both men and women to the ballot, if they choose to prioritize gender equality. Larger districts make more room for female newcomers without necessarily displacing male candidates. Research on Latin America and other regions of the world have shown that larger district magnitudes are associated with more women elected to national legislatures (ENGSTROM, 1987; MATLAND; BROWN, 1992; RULE, 1987; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2005, 2010; TREMBLAY, 2008).

Some studies, however, have found no relationship between district magnitude and the election of women (KITTILSON, 2006; MATLAND, 1993; MATLAND; TAYLOR, 1997; SCHMIDT, 2008a, 2008B; STUDLAR; WELCH, 1991; WELCH; STUDLAR, 1990). Matland (1993) and Matland and Taylor (1997) argue that, instead of district magnitude, party magnitude is a better determinant of the proportion of seats won by women because it measures the number of seats that each party is likely to win in a district rather than the overall number of seats in a district. Thus, party magnitude is the second institutional factor important for explaining women's representation in Latin America. Because it is rare for one party to win every seat in a district, parties make calculations about whether to include women and where to put them on the ballot based on the number of seats that they expect to win rather than the number of seats in the entire district. District magnitude could be large, but if many parties are running and party magnitude is small, then party leaders may be less likely to allocate the one or two seats that the party might win to women (JONES, 2009). Thus, where party magnitudes are larger in Latin America, more women get elected to legislative seats (JONES, 2009; SCHMIDT; SAUNDERS, 2004; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010).

Perhaps the most important institution, however, is gender quotas. In 1991, Argentina became the first country in the region (and the world) to adopt a national law requiring that 30% of all political party ballots for elections to the Chamber of Deputies be female (JONES, 1996). In 1996 and 1997, nine other countries followed suit. Today, thirteen of eighteen Latin American democracies have a gender quota for national legislative elections (Venezuela

adopted a quota in 1997 but rescinded it in 1999). The only countries without a national quota law are Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, and some political parties in these countries have adopted voluntary quotas instead. The adoption of gender quotas has increased the election of women worldwide (CAUL, 1999; DAHLERUP, 2006; KROOK, 2009; TRIPP; KANG, 2008). Yet, their success has not been universal. Argentina and Costa Rica, as noted earlier, witnessed dramatic increases in women's representation after the adoption of gender quotas in 1991 and 1996, respectively. Brazil and Panama, in contrast, both adopted quotas in 1997 and still have the lowest representation of women in the region. The explanation is in the characteristics of the quotas adopted in the different countries (ARAÚJO; GARCÍA, 2006; ARCHENTI; TULA, 2008B; DAHLERUP, 2006; HTUN; JONES, 2002; JONES, 2005, 2009; KROOK, 2007, 2009; MARX et al., 2007; RÍOS TOBAR, 2008; SCHMIDT, 2008a; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2009, 2010; TREMBLAY, 2008).

Scholars have identified three dimensions on which gender quota laws vary, and it is the strength of the quota on these dimensions that explains how effective it is at increasing women's representation (HTUN; JONES, 2002; JONES, 2005, 2009; KROOK, 2007; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2009, 2010; TREMBLAY, 2008). The first dimension is the size of the quota—i.e., the percentage of women that the quota requires political parties to nominate. In theory, this could range from 1% to 50% (gender parity), but in Latin American countries, it ranges from 20% in Paraguay and Ecuador (when it was first adopted in 1997) to 50% in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Panama (as of 2013) (see Table 3). As the size increases, the percentage of women elected to the legislature increases as well (JONES; NAVIA, 1999; SCHMIDT; SAUNDERS, 2004). However, it may not be a one-to-one relationship because of the nature of legal candidate quotas—they simply give women access to a minimum percentage of a party's ballot rather than guaranteeing a specific percentage of legislative seats. In other words, setting a quota of 30% does not guarantee that 30% of the legislature will be female. The percentage of seats that women win ultimately depends on other factors such as the proportionality of electoral rules, the size of the electoral district, the electoral formula employed, and electoral thresholds.

Table 3: Gender Quota Laws in Latin America, as of 2013

Country	Year Adopted	Chamber to which Quota Applies	Target Percentage	Placement Mandate	Enforcement Mechanism
Argentina	1991 1993	Lower and Upper	30	No Yes	Strong
Bolivia	1997 1997 2010	Lower Upper Both	33 25 50	Yes	Strong
Brazil	1997 2002 2009	Lower	25 30	No	Weak
Colombia	2011	Lower and Upper	30	No	None
Costa Rica	1996 1999 2009	Unicameral	40 40 50	No Yes Yes	None Strong Strong
Dominican Rep.	1997	Lower	25/33	No/Yes	Strong
Ecuador	1997 2008	Unicameral	20/30/45 50	Yes	Strong
Honduras	2000 2004	Unicameral	30	No	None Weak
Mexico	2002 2008	Lower and Upper	30 40	Yes/No	Strong
Panama	1997 2012	Unicameral	30 50	No	Weak
Paraguay	1996	Lower and Upper	20	Yes	Strong
Peru	1997 2000	Unicameral	25 30	No	Strong
Uruguay	2009	Lower and Upper	33	Yes	Strong
Venezuela	1997-99	Lower and Upper	30	No	Weak

Sources: Electoral codes, national laws, the Global Database of Quotas for Women (www.quotaproject.org), the Observatorio de Igualdad de Género (www.cepal.org/oig) and existing literature on quotas in Latin America. See also: Schwindt-Bayer (2009); Schwindt-Bayer (2010).

The second dimension is whether the quota includes a placement mandate. A placement mandate stipulates that female candidates must be placed in winnable positions on party ballots. Most, but not all, Latin American countries today have quotas with placement mandates (Table 3). A number of studies have stressed the importance of placement mandates as part of gender quotas (ARCHENTI; TULA, 2008a; BALDEZ, 2004; GRAY, 2003; HTUN; JONES, 2002; JONES, 1996, 2004, 2009; MATLAND, 2006; SCHMIDT, 2008a; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2009, 2010). They argue that without a placement mandate, fewer women will be elected because parties will be unlikely to put women in positions where they can actually win office. This does not mean that quotas without placement mandates have no effect; they can still have a symbolic effect by encouraging more women to run for office or encouraging parties supportive of the quota to put women in winnable ballot positions, as Jones (2004) found in municipal elections in Costa Rica. But, in general, placement mandates make quotas more effective and increase women's representation more than when mandates are absent.

The third dimension is the strength of the quota law's enforcement mechanisms. Enforcement mechanisms are stipulations in the electoral law or constitutional provisions that

prescribe consequences for political parties that do not abide by the quota. They make it easier for electoral authorities to punish parties that overlook or choose not to employ the quota, and consequently, should lead to more parties abiding by the quota and more women getting elected to office (BALDEZ, 2004; HTUN; JONES, 2002; JONES, 1996, 2009; MATLAND, 2006; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2009, 2010). Some countries specify no means by which the quota can be enforced (e.g., Colombia) while others include hefty consequences for parties that submit lists of candidates that do not meet the quota (e.g., Argentina) (Table 3).

Enforcement mechanisms are more diverse than simply having them or not (SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). There are varying degrees of strength of enforcement (Table 3). Some quota laws have weak penalties for parties that violate the quota. Brazil, for example, has a stipulation whereby parties that do not meet the required percentage of women can leave positions vacant (ARAÚJO, 2008). While this balances out the number of men and women on the ballot and encourages parties to comply, it does not require parties to seek out more women for the quota. In an open list PR system, this does very little to increase the likelihood that women will get elected. Panama's enforcement mechanisms also are weak. The law allows parties that are unable to meet the quota to nominate any candidate wishing to run (male or female). This essentially makes the quota a mere recommendation—if a party makes a good faith effort but claims to find few qualified women they can resort to additional male candidates. Honduras' law fines parties an amount equal to 5% of their public financing. These relatively weak enforcement mechanisms contrast with stronger ones employed in other countries. In these countries, enforcement consists of independent electoral authorities reviewing lists and rejecting those of political parties that do not comply with the quota. Parties must meet the quota or they cannot run any candidates in the districts that violate the quota. Strong enforcement mechanisms are critical to electing more women to office.

Although each of these dimensions is critical to having a high quality gender quota, it is certain combinations of these quota characteristics that determine just how effective the quota will be (HTUN; JONES, 2002; JONES, 2009; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2009, 2010). I argue that the most critical factor for a high quality quota law is a clear statement of the repercussions for disobeying the law. Without an enforcement mechanism, it makes no difference whether the quota size is large or there are placement requirements. Without enforcement, the countries leave compliance entirely up to political parties making the law effectively a recommendation rather than a requirement. The second most important dimension is requiring that women be placed in winnable positions on the party ballot. Again, without this parties have the option to put women in positions or districts where they have no chance of winning and effectively negate the entire quota law. Quotas that have higher minimum requirements for the percentage of party ballots that are female are certainly more likely to yield higher representation of women in the legislature than those with lower minimums, but their effects will be significantly strengthened

when combined with strong enforcement and placement mandates.

Thus, quotas that combine a high minimum percentage for women's representation, placement mandates, and strong enforcement mechanisms have the greatest chance of increasing women's representation in the legislature, and thus are the "highest quality" gender quota. "Moderate quality" quotas have strong enforcement mechanisms but may fail to require placement mandates and/or have small quota sizes (less than 30%). "Low quality" quotas are those with weak or no enforcement mechanism, regardless of their placement mandates or quota sizes. If the government does not have a way to require parties to comply with the quota, it becomes a mere recommendation.

Table 4 classifies the gender quota laws in place today in Latin America according to the quality of the quota law. The highest quality quota laws are found in quite a few countries. Costa Rica and Ecuador, for example, require gender parity and alternation of women and men on party ballots and require their electoral authorities to reject party ballots that do not comply with the law. Peru and Paraguay have moderate quality quotas because, although they specify enforcement mechanisms, they either have no placement requirement (Peru) or have an exceptionally small minimum number of women required on the ballot (Paraguay). Brazil, Panama, Colombia, and Honduras have low quality quotas largely because of their failure to specify a way for the government to enforce the quota.

Table 4: The Quality of Latin American Quota Laws, as of 2013

Quality	Countries	Description
High	Costa Rica, Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico	Strong enforcement, placement mandates, and a quota minimum of at least 40%
	Argentina, Uruguay, Dominican Rep.	Strong enforcement, placement mandates, and a quota minimum of at least 30%
Moderate	Paraguay	Strong enforcement, placement mandate and a quota minimum of at least 20%
	Peru	Strong enforcement, no placement mandate, but a quota minimum of at least 30%
Low	Panama, Brazil, Honduras, Colombia	Weak or no enforcement, no placement mandate, and a quota minimum of at least 30%

Figure 2 shows that there is a connection between the quality of a country's gender quota and the percentage of legislative seats won by women (data as of 2013). Five of the six countries with high quality quotas have more than 30% of their legislative seats held by women today. The Dominican Republic is the only "high quality" quota country with only moderate representation of women in office. In contrast, countries with moderate and low quality quotas have lower representation of women in their national congresses. All of them, except Peru, are less than 20% female, and three of the five have representation of women less than 10%. Honduras is a "low quality" quota country that has actually done better at getting women into office than its quota would suggest, but the other countries in this grouping are the same countries with some of the lowest representation of women in the legislature in Latin America (see Table 2).

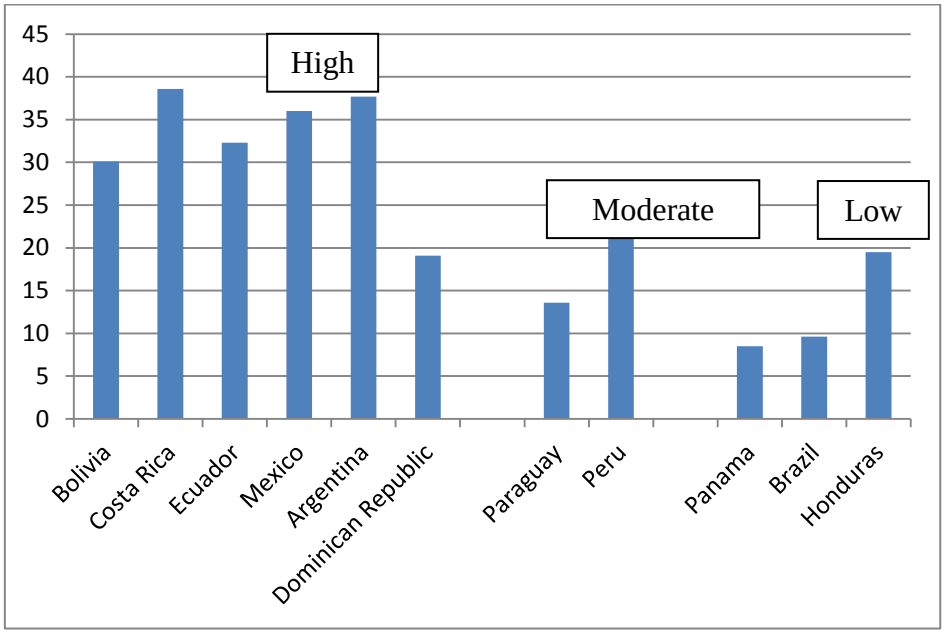

Figure 2 - Quota Quality and Women's Representation in Latin American Legislatures (Percentage of legislature female, as at most recent election) (Microsoft Excel)
Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as of 2013.

The immediate effects of quota laws also can be seen in Table 5, which shows the change in women's legislative representation before and after the adoption of the gender quota for each legislative chamber. The countries that adopted high quality gender quota laws with strong enforcement mechanisms and placement mandates saw the largest immediate effects of the quota. Argentina's Senate increased its representation of women by thirty percentage points. This was a particularly large increase compared to other Latin American countries, and its impact was likely exacerbated by the fact that the quota had been in place for ten years in the Chamber of Deputies by the time it applied to the Senate. Ecuador had a 14 percentage point increase between 1996 and 1998 when the quota was first applied, and the Argentine Chamber of Deputies had a 9 percentage point increase. The countries that adopted low quality quota laws — Panama, Brazil, and Honduras — had almost no increase or a slight decrease. Gender quotas, and more specifically, gender quotas with strict provisions for enforcement and placement, have clearly been successful at improving the numerical representation of women in Latin American legislatures.

It is important, however, not to ignore the larger electoral context in countries when considering the effectiveness of gender quotas—specifically, the constraints for quotas created by variation in how much control parties have over their ballots. Much of the research on gender quotas suggests that the electoral context in which quotas are implemented has an important mediating effect on the impact of quotas (ARAÚJO; GARCÍA, 2006; FRECHETTE et al., 2008; GRAY, 2003; HTUN; JONES, 2002; JONES, 2005, 2009; JONES; NAVIA, 1999; KROOK, 2007, 2009; MANSBRIDGE, 2005; RÍOS TOBAR, 2008; SCHMIDT; SAUNDERS, 2004; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2009, 2010). Additionally, party rules and norms about how they select their candidates are important (CAUL, 1999; HINOJOSA, 2012; KITTILSON, 2006;

KROOK, 2009). Hinojosa (2012) points out in her recent book that women's opportunities for getting selected to party ballots in Latin America are strongest where parties use centralized procedures to select their candidates.

The Latin American countries that have implemented the lowest quality gender quotas are those with electoral systems that give political parties limited control over their own ballots. This makes a "high quality" gender quota—specifically one that requires a placement mandate—inapplicable. For example, Brazil's open-list proportional representation electoral system allows voters to express preferences for candidates on the ballot, making a placement mandate a useless tool for its gender quota. Miguel (2008) argues that the open-list PR system in Brazil is the primary reason that women's legislative representation remains so low. Similarly, Panama's use of party primaries for national elections limits the ability of the political party to rank order candidates on the ballot because voters get to choose the candidate or two that they prefer to stand on the party ballot in the general election. Thus, in many ways, the effectiveness of the gender quotas that are most common in Latin America is highly contingent upon the type of electoral system a country uses. Quotas with placement mandates will only be effective in electoral systems where parties control the placement of candidates on their ballots.

Table 5: Change in Women's Representation with the Adoption of Gender Quotas

Country	Chamber	Pre-Quota	Post-Quota	% Change
Argentina	Upper	2.8 (1998)	33.3 (2001)	**+ 30.5**
Ecuador	Unicameral	3.7 (1996)	17.4 (1998)	**+ 13.7**
Argentina	Lower	5.0 (1991)	14.4 (1993)	**+ 9.4**
Peru	Unicameral	10.8 (1995)	20.0 (2000)	**+ 9.2**
Paraguay	Upper	11.1 (1993)	17.8 (1998)	**+ 6.7**
Mexico	Lower	16.0 (2000)	22.6 (2003)	**+ 6.6**
Venezuela	Lower	5.9 (1993)	12.1 (1998)	**+ 6.2**
Bolivia	Lower	6.9 (1993)	11.5 (1997)	**+ 4.6**
Dominican Republic	Lower	11.7 (1994)	16.1 (1998)	**+ 4.4**
Costa Rica	Unicameral	15.8 (1994)	19.3 (1998)	**+ 3.5**
Mexico	Upper	15.6 (2000)	17.2 (2006)	**+ 1.6**
Venezuela	Upper	8.0 (1993)	8.8 (1998)	**+ 0.8**
Panama	Unicameral	9.7 (1994)	9.9 (1999)	**+ 0.2**
Bolivia	Upper	3.7 (1993)	3.7 (1997)	**0**
Paraguay	Lower	2.5 (1993)	2.5 (1998)	**0**
Brazil	Lower	6.6 (1994)	5.7 (1998)	**- 0.9**
Honduras	Unicameral	9.4 (1997)	5.5 (2001)	**- 3.9**

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) various years.

In sum, cultural and socioeconomic improvements in gender equality have boosted women's access to electoral politics throughout Latin America. More and more women have the background and experience needed for national elected office. Yet, the number of women in national legislatures continues to vary widely across countries. The reason, I argue, is the different electoral institutions used in different countries of the region. Countries with large magnitude electoral districts with fewer parties winning seats in them make more room for

women to compete with men. Countries with high quality gender quotas have effected larger increases in women's representation over time, and thus increased the disparity between quota and non-quota countries today. And, countries with electoral systems that give parties control over their ballots help gender quotas be successful. Female-friendly electoral contexts, such as these, create opportunities for high quality female candidates to compete successfully with men and achieve access to national legislatures. Cultural and socioeconomic changes in public attitudes toward gender equality have been critical for getting women into the political candidate pool. Yet, electoral institutions have been the gatekeepers for actually getting women elected to national legislative office in Latin America.

Consequences of Women's Representation for Latin American Democracies

The consequences of women's representation for Latin American democracies are myriad. A significant amount of research has been conducted just in the past ten years on what women elected to national legislatures do in office, how their representation differs from or is similar to that of male legislators, and what it means for public perceptions of representative democracy. Some of the consequences indicate significant improvements and changes for women and democracy, more generally. Other consequences, however, show that women's equality in Latin American politics still has a way to go. In this section of the paper, I review some of the major findings of this research.

The Contributions of Women's Representation to Legislative Politics

Inside Latin American legislatures, one of the most important contributions women have made to legislative politics is to bring women's issues to the political agenda. They have done this in a variety of ways. First, research finds that women place higher priority on female constituents and women's issues and promote these priorities in their legislative work more often than men do. Saint-Germain and Chavez Metoyer (2008) found that female representatives in Central America have strong predispositions to representing women. Similarly, I found that female legislators in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica view women's equality and children and family issues as more important issues than men do (SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2006, 2010).

This translates into a second area of legislative work where women promote women's issues—sponsoring bills. Research on women's representation in Latin America reveals strong evidence of female legislators placing higher priority than male legislators on sponsoring women's issue bills (BARNES, 2012; FRANCESCHET; PISCOPO, 2008; JONES, 1997; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2006, 2010; TAYLOR-ROBINSON; HEATH, 2003; ZAMBRANO, 1998). In the late 1990's and early 2000's, I analyzed patterns of women's issue bill sponsorship by male and female legislators in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica (SCHWINDT-BAYER,

2010). I found that in all three countries, women were more likely than men to sponsor or co-sponsor women's issue bills. In a recent study of Argentina provinces, Barnes (2012) found that women are more likely to cosponsor bills with other female legislators in multi-member districts where they are better able to represent issues of personal interest, such as women's issues.

Third, women in Latin America have promoted women's issues in legislative debates more often than men. Results of a survey that I conducted in Argentina and Colombia in 2001-2 revealed that women participated in floor plenary debates when the topic of the debates was women's issue legislations more than did men (SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). Taylor-Robinson and Heath (2003) examined congressional debates on women's issue bills in Honduras and found that women were more likely to participate in debates that focus on women's rights and children and family issues there too.

Fourth, female legislators sit on women's issue committees more than do male legislators (HEATH et al., 2005; MARX et al., 2007; RIVERA-CIRA, 1993; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). In Argentina, women have been disproportionately situated on the Family, Women, Children, and Adolescents committee, holding the vast majority of seats in almost every year since 1983. In Costa Rica, the special committee for women's issues which has five seats on it was at least 80% female from its creation in 1999 through 2006. Women have also been more likely than men to be in the leadership of women's issue committees in these countries (SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). In Argentina, 82% of the vice presidential and secretarial posts for the Family, Women, Children, and Adolescents committee have been held by women and the president of the committee has been a woman in every congress since 1985.

A final area where women's election to office has improved the nature of political representation is in their work in the district. Specifically, female representatives have been more likely to do casework on behalf of female constituents and women's issues and to interact more often with women's groups in society. In my recent book, I found that female representatives in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica reported spending more time with female constituents than did male constituents (SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). Some women in Argentina reported doing as much as 90% of their casework for female constituents. In Colombia, one woman reported doing all of her casework on behalf of women. On average, the difference in the percentage of time that male and female representatives spent with female constituents in the three countries was approximately 8 percentage points. In a different study, Saint-Germain and Metoyer (2008) interviewed female representatives in Central America asking a range of questions about their political representation. They quote a female representative in Honduras saying that "women deputies were more often sought out than male deputies for solving the personal problems of constituents" (SAINT-GERMAIN; METOYER, 2008, p. 164). They also found that female representatives often used their time in the district to interact with women and women's groups and learn about the issues women face (SAINT-

GERMAIN; METOYER, 2008, p. 165).

Challenges for Women in Legislatures

Perhaps the most significant challenge that women elected to legislatures in Latin America face is a gendered legislative environment that obstructs women's access to real political power (FRANCESCHET, 2011; FRANCESCHET; PISCOPO, 2008; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). This is evidenced in several ways. First, very few women have been congressional or parliamentary leaders (LUCIAK, 2005; MARX et al., 2007; RIVERA-CIRA, 1993; SAINT-GERMAIN; METOYER, 2008; SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). In Latin America, women have been elected to legislatures in growing numbers over the past thirty years, but it is only in the past few years and only in some countries that they have started to gain access to chamber leadership posts. Even where this has occurred, the leadership positions that women have held are the less powerful positions of vice presidents or secretaries. Women's access to chamber leadership has not mirrored their representation in the legislative chamber in many countries.

Second, they do not serve as chairs of powerful legislative committees. Data I collected for my study of Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica revealed that the biggest problem for women in committee leadership was not that they do not serve at all but that they do not serve as presidents of committees (SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). Women have been vice presidents and secretaries of economics, budget, and foreign affairs committees in all three countries, but they have only rarely won election to the presidency of any of these committees. No women have been presidents of the economics or foreign affairs committees in Argentina or Colombia, and not a single woman held the presidency of a budget committee in any of the four chambers through 2006.

A similar pattern was found by Heath et al. (2005) who discovered that women in six Latin American legislatures were more likely to be steered toward women's issue and social issue committee memberships and kept off of committees dealing with economics and foreign affairs or other powerful legislative committees. This was particularly the case as women's numerical representation in office increased. They argue that women in Latin America face marginalization in the legislative environment, which is evident through their committee memberships. Thus, this elucidates a third challenge for women in Latin American legislatures — getting onto powerful legislative committees in the first place.

A fourth challenge that women face is balancing their representation of women's issues with the vast array of other issues for which elected officials are responsible. In some legislatures, women have been challenged to be able to sponsor bills on a wide array of issues, despite placing high priority on many diverse issues. My study of Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica revealed that women were less likely to sponsor and cosponsor bills on the economy

and fiscal affairs issues in Argentina and were less likely to sponsor bills on agriculture and foreign affairs in the Colombian Senate (SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). These findings emerged despite female legislators in these countries claiming to place high priority on these issues, just like men.

What these studies of the consequences of women's election to national legislatures in Latin America show is that women's inclusion in legislative politics is important for bringing women's issues to the political arena. Yet, they also reveal that women in legislatures are struggling to integrate themselves in the political arena and act as full representatives of the electorates in their countries. Women have made significant progress as a result of increased access to legislatures but continue to face challenges to political representation.

Citizen Views of Democracy

The growing numbers of women elected to legislatures in Latin America has also had important consequences for how citizens feel about democracy in the region. Specifically, greater representation of women has made citizens, particularly women, feel more represented by their government and view democracy and democratic institutions more positively. Using data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project's (LAPOP) 2006 Americas Barometer, I analyzed how the percentage of the legislature that is female affects citizen attitudes toward their government in fourteen Latin American democracies (SCHWINDT-BAYER, 2010). Although the citizenry's overall satisfaction with democracy and trust in the legislature and government have declined over time in Latin America to near-record lows, I found that women's representation, among other things, explains some of the variation in citizens' views of democracy across countries. Specifically, citizens in Latin American countries that have more women in the legislature are more trusting of the legislature and government than citizens in countries with lower levels of women's representation. These findings are similar for both women and men, suggesting that both male and female citizens respond to incorporating women into politics and making government more generally diverse, representative, and inclusive.

These findings mirror those in other parts of the world that find that women's representation in legislatures can have positive effects on citizens—both their attitudes toward their governments and their participation in it (ALEXANDER, 2012; ATKESON; CARRILLO, 2007; KARP; BANDUCCI, 2008; LAWLESS, 2004; SCHWINDT-BAYER; MISHLER, 2005; WOLBRECHT; CAMPBELL, 2007). More generally, these finding are important because it show how important the inclusion of women in legislative politics is for improving the quality of representative democracy. Given that democracy is "rule by the people" and women are half of the population throughout the world, representation of women is a fundamental aspect of democracy (PHILLIPS, 1995; WILLIAMS, 1998; YOUNG, 2000). Citizens clearly perceive it this way and their opinions of their democracies are improved by the inclusion of women into

politics.

Conclusion

In many Latin American countries, women's representation in national legislatures has increased significantly in the past thirty years. In others, it has changed very little. This yields a great disparity in the levels of women's representation in the region today. The primary explanation for this disparity is the different electoral institutions that Latin American countries use to elect representatives to office. Those where national gender quota laws have been passed, where party control of their ballots facilitates implementation of those quotas, and where legislators are elected in large magnitude districts with fewer parties running ballots have been best able to translate the growing number of women in the "candidate pool" into elected legislators. And, even more important than simply having a quota is having a "high quality" quota. In Latin America, high quality gender quotas—those that mandate larger proportions of party ballots to be female, mandate specific placement of women on the ballot, and include enforcement mechanisms—have been much more successful helping women get elected to office than lower quality quotas.

The progress women have made numerically is important for two reasons. One, women in legislatures are more likely to bring the interests, concerns, and needs of women in society into the legislature. Male representatives continue to be less likely to promote the concerns of women and women's groups in the political arena and female representatives have done this above and beyond their regular legislative responsibilities. Two, having women in legislatures has positive effects on citizen attitudes toward and participation in democracy. Increasing women's legislative representation has not only had positive effects for women but for the quality of representative democracy, more generally.

At the same time, the influx of women into national legislatures in Latin America has not been without its challenges. Women have not gained access to political power inside legislatures to the same extent as men in some countries. They have been less likely to serve in leadership positions and have not gotten access to committees or policy areas that afford them the ability to fully represent not just women but all citizens. Currently, research on women's participation inside national legislatures is limited to a few countries and a few studies in those countries, and additional research on the challenges women face in doing their work inside the legislative arena is needed in all Latin American countries to determine just how to flesh out women's representation to the fullest. However, it is clear that women's representation is important for further improving the quality of democracy in the region and facilitating democratic consolidation. We can relish the progress that women have made in representative democracies in the region but must continue to work to understand the challenges they face and the best means to overcome those challenges. Democracy in the region will not be fully

consolidated until we do.

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