

Making Policy

Bill Sponsorship, Cosponsorship, and Debates

One of the primary ways that descriptive representation affects substantive representation of women is through the policymaking process. In this chapter, I examine the role that female legislators in Latin America play in policymaking by analyzing how gender affects the bills that legislators sponsor and cosponsor, their participation in committee debates, and their participation in floor debates on a range of political issues. With this analysis, I answer two important questions about women's substantive representation in Latin America. First, does women's greater priority for female constituents and women's issues in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica translate into policymaking efforts on behalf of women and women's issues? Second, does the near equal priority that male and female legislators place on other political issues—specifically, social issues and men's issues—translate into gender equality in policymaking behavior?

Sponsoring Legislation

One way that representatives “act for” their constituents is sponsoring bills on issues that are important to them and their constituents. Bill sponsorship has been a common indicator of legislators' policy priorities in research on gender and representation, and I use it here as an indicator of whether women's policy preferences are translating into their legislative behavior. In chapter 1, I argued that

descriptive representation is likely to translate into substantive representation of women such that female representatives will be more likely to view women's issues as important and to act on those preferences by participating in legislative activities such as sponsoring women's issue bills. Existing research has found evidence in many different countries that female representatives sponsor more legislation on women's issues than men. In the United States, women in Congress and state legislatures have sponsored and cosponsored bills on a range of women's issues and do so more often than men (Thomas and Welch 1991; Thomas 1994; Bratton 2002; Swers 2002; Wolbrecht 2002; Bratton 2005; Swers 2005). Similar findings emerge in Western Europe (Wangnerud 2000a; Childs 2004; Childs and Withey 2004; Kittilson 2006; Childs 2008). In addition, research on women's representation in Latin America provides evidence that female legislators place higher priority than male legislators on sponsoring women's issue bills (Jones 1997; Zambrano 1998; Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003; Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). Studies have also found that the presence of women in legislatures around the world has led to the adoption of more women's issue policies, such as child support laws, domestic violence legislation, and family leave policies (Stevenson 1999; O'Regan 2000; Bratton and Ray 2002; Weldon 2002a, 2002b; Rodríguez 2003; Kittilson 2008).

At the same time that women are working to make a difference for women, female legislators also have a responsibility to represent other constituents in their district. The last chapter showed that women place high priority on many social issues and men's issues, just as men do. Because legislators' preferences influence their behavior, we might expect women to translate the high priority that they place on these issues into bill sponsorship. Yet, they may be unable to do so because of the gendered legislative environment in which they work. Marginalization of women may occur in bill sponsorship because of traditional gendered views about the types of issues men and women should work on in the political arena. Male representatives and male party leaders may want to preserve sponsorship on the issues that they perceive to be men's issues and that they may perceive to be more important for themselves. In turn, they may encourage female representatives to work more on women's domain issues, such as education, health, children, and family issues. They do this by coordinating who sponsors which bills in their party and directing certain representatives to work in areas that reflect long-standing gendered notions of which issue areas are more appropriate for women and men. Indeed, Senator Piedad Córdoba (2002, 5) wrote about the gendered view that male legislators have of women and women's issues in the Colombian Congress:

In general, the men in Congress, with very few exceptions, view women's issues with disdain and indifference. Although they do not oppose the discussion openly, when it comes to making a decision they ensure that their majority status prevails, refusing to allow the initiatives to go

forward. With a few exceptions, the notion continues to weigh in their minds that politics is a matter for men, and they see women members of Congress as immersed in a world that is not their own.

Marginalization also can occur through bill cosponsorship. Male representatives may seek out male cosponsors on economics, agriculture, or foreign affairs legislation, assuming that they are better qualified or would carry more weight in getting the bill sponsored. Female representatives may feel pressure to focus more on social issues and seek out female cosponsors on social issue legislation. Although marginalization of women may occur as outright discrimination (telling a woman not to work on an economics bill because she is a woman), it also may be more subtle (women not being in the networks from which men seek cosponsors). Either way, one means to detect marginalization of women is to examine whether women sponsor or cosponsor more legislation on social issues and less on issues traditionally considered to be men's domain and compare these findings to legislators' preferences for these issues.

Research on the way that gender affects bill sponsorship on social issues and men's issues produces mixed findings. Some studies have found few gender differences in bill sponsorship behavior. For example, Jones (1997) found no evidence in the U.S. Congress or Argentine Chamber of Deputies that women sponsor health-care, education, social welfare, or environmental bills more often than men, and Heath and Taylor (2003) found no gender differences in sponsorship of education and health bills in Honduras. Other scholars, however, have found gender differences in the social and men's issue bills that legislators sponsor (Thomas 1991, 1994; Jones 1997; Swers 1998; Wangnerud 2000a; Swers 2005). Thomas (1991), for example, found that women in U.S. state legislatures sponsor education bills more often than men do and business bills less often. These studies have a hard time determining why women and men differ in their bill sponsorship behavior, however, because they do not take into account representatives' preferences for social and men's issues. It is unclear whether women sponsor bills in these areas because of stronger preferences for social issues or because of marginalization. In this study, I can address this by comparing the bill sponsorship findings to the findings on legislators' preferences in the last chapter.

Women's Issue Bills and Laws in Latin America

Studying bill sponsorship in Latin America is important for many reasons, one of which is that it is a region that traditionally has lagged far behind others in gender equality policies. For example, most countries still have very traditional divorce laws that give women few rights in marriage (Htun 2003). The strong Catholic Church has obstructed efforts to legalize abortion in many countries and has limited other reproductive rights for women (Htun 2003). However, some progress has been made on

women's equality issues over the past 30 years. For example, by 1998, twelve countries had passed gender quota laws. All Latin American countries have ratified the U.N.'s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and many did so within a few years of signing the convention in 1978. And, some have implemented important protections against domestic violence.

In Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica, specifically, recent congresses have passed some notable women's equality laws (table 4.1). Argentina was the first country in the region (and the world) to pass a national quota law for women's election to the national legislature in 1991 (Law 24.012), and in 2001, it passed a

TABLE 4.1. Major Laws on Women, Children, and Families in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica

Country	Laws
Argentina	Quota Law (Law 24.012 of 1991) Law on Interfamily Violence (Law 24.417 of 1994) Newborn Rights to Identity Law (Law 24540 of 1995) Modification to Penal Code regarding crimes against sexual integrity (Law 25.087 of 1999) Law for adolescent mothers missing secondary school (Law 25.273 of 2000) Sexual and Reproductive Health Law (Law 25.673 of 2002) Law reforming previous law to protect pregnant and lactating women in schools (Law 25.808 of 2003) Law for Integral Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (Law 26.061 of 2005)
Colombia	Law 82 of 1993—Special protections for female heads of household Law 294 of 1996—Prevention, remedy, and sanctions for interfamily violence Law 361 of 1997—Mechanisms to integrate citizens with disabilities (especially children) Law 548 of 1999—Prohibits military drafting of youth under 18 years of age Law 581 of 2000—Quota Law Law 679 of 2001—Prevention of Child Pornography and Child Sex Tourism Law 721 of 2001—Reforms to the paternity law Law 731 of 2001—Sets standards to improve quality of life for rural women Law 750 of 2002—Law allowing house arrest or community service for female heads of households convicted of light crimes Law 823 of 2003—Equal Opportunity for Women Law Reform to Law 294—Increase penalties for crimes of violence against women
Costa Rica	Law of Promotion of Social Equality for Women (Law 7142 of 1990) Electoral Code Reform creating gender quotas (Law 7653 of 1996) Law against Domestic Violence (Law 7586 of 1996) Law against Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Education (Law 7476 of 1995) Law to create the National Institute for Women (Law 7801 of 1998) Law to Promote Breastfeeding (Law 7430 of 1994) Law against Sexual Exploitation of Youth (Law 7899) Law of Responsible Paternity (Law 8108 of 2001) Law of General Protection of the Adolescent Mother (Law 7735 of 1997) Law to toughen penalties for sex crimes against children (Law 8002 of 2000)

major piece of legislation on women's health—the Sexual and Reproductive Health Law (Law 25.673 of 2002). Costa Rica passed the Law for Real Equality for Women in 1988, which was a landmark piece of legislation promoting women's equality (Saint-Germain and Morgan 1991). Although the law has proven to be more symbolic than substantive, it still represents governmental attention to the plight of women in society and was one of the earliest such laws in Latin America. In July 2008, Colombia passed one of the toughest domestic violence laws in the region, increasing jail time from a maximum of 25 years to 40 years and making sexual harassment a crime punishable with a prison sentence. As Senator Gina Parody pointed out, this was an important accomplishment for Colombia: "Colombia, in contrast to the rest of the countries of Latin America, has a lot of catching up to do and this is the first big step for creating a women's policy agenda in the country" (Colombia: *Ley Contra Violencia a Mujeres* 2008).

In addition to passing these important laws, legislators in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica have actively been sponsoring women's issue bills in national legislatures. Between 1994 and 2002 in Colombia and Costa Rica and in 1995 and 1999 in Argentina, a total of 187 women's issue bills were sponsored, comprising 2.7% of all of the bills sponsored during those years. Twenty-three of these bills became law (12.3%). The passage rates for women's issue bills in these legislatures have been quite comparable to the rates at which other types of bills have been passed into law. In Argentina, for example, passage rates ranged from 1.5% for fiscal bills to 7.7% for health bills in 1995 and 1999. Women's issue bills fall right in the middle of that range—3.2% of all women's issue bills became law in Argentina during these two years. In Costa Rica and the Colombian Senate, women's issue bills fell closer to the high end of the range. Twenty-two percent of women's issue bills became law in Costa Rica and only education bills had a higher passage rate—of 30%. In the Colombian Senate, 8.8% of women's issue bills became law, the third largest passage rate behind foreign affairs bills and education bills. In the Colombian Chamber of Representatives, women's issue bills were closer to the bottom of the range, but still 15.6% became law. Clearly, legislative activity on women's issue bills has been strong in these three countries in recent years helping to change the overall image of Latin America into one in which women's rights policies are increasingly being promoted and passed into law.

Rules and Motivations for Bill Sponsorship

Legislators sponsor bills for a variety of reasons, and these motivations depend, in part, on rules about bill sponsorship that exist in each legislature. They also depend on whether representatives are *individually* sponsoring or *cosponsoring* legislation. To understand the sponsorship and cosponsorship patterns of legislators in Latin America, particularly the influence that a legislator's gender has on bill sponsorship,

it is necessary to clarify the rules within which legislators must operate and the reasons why they sponsor bills in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica.

In Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica legislators can sponsor bills on any issue in any chamber, with the exception that budget bills must be introduced in the Colombian Chamber of Representatives whereas international relations bills must start in the Senate. In Colombia and Costa Rica, no limits exist on the number of cosponsors a bill can have, and all signers are considered equal supporters of the bill (i.e., no designated primary sponsor).¹ In Argentina, a maximum of 15 legislators can sign any one bill, and each bill has a designated primary sponsor. Legislators in all three countries compete with the executive when sponsoring bills. The executive branch has the power to introduce bills (and does so), and in Colombia, the president has the power of exclusive bill introduction in several policy areas, most notably the national budget, some fiscal affairs issues, and treaties with foreign nations. Although executives in Argentina and Colombia are more powerful than the Costa Rican president (Shugart and Carey 1992), all three countries have legislatures that exert a check on the executive and are widely considered the primary locus of policymaking (Morgenstern and Nacif 2002).

Legislators initiate bills for many reasons. One is simply to create policy. Some legislators have a personal interest in a policy area and sponsor bills to get that issue on the legislative agenda. Others initiate bills that address policy concerns raised directly by their constituents (and usually match the legislators' priorities as well). Another motivation for sponsoring bills is position taking (Campbell 1982; Koger 2003) or electoral credit claiming (Crisp et al. 2004). Legislators sponsor bills for which they can take credit for bringing benefits to their district and/or votes to their political party to ensure electoral support and a continued political career. All of these things motivate both single-sponsored and cosponsored bills; however, cosponsorship does incorporate additional motivations. Recent research suggests that the key motivation behind cosponsorship is signaling one's policy preferences to other legislators and political parties and showing support for legislation in hopes of increasing the probability that the bill will become law (Krehbiel 1995; Kessler and Krehbiel 1996; Wilson and Young 1997). Legislators may cosponsor a bill with other legislators of similar ideology or party leaders may encourage members to cosponsor bills to show strong and unified support for a bill. Most important for this analysis, women may cross party lines to sponsor legislation with other women to show a unified front behind a women's issue bill. Colombia's recent reform to the violence against women bill was sponsored and pushed through to passage by 27 female legislators representing an array of political parties.

Empirical Study of Bill Sponsorship

In this chapter, I examine bills initiated during two congresses in Costa Rica and Colombia, 1994–1998 and 1998–2002, and 2 years in Argentina, 1995 and 1999, to

determine how gender affects bills sponsorship patterns.² I classify the bills that were sponsored into eight thematic areas—women's issues, children and family issues, education, health, economics, agriculture, fiscal affairs, and foreign affairs. These categories distinguish between women's equality issues, on which women should be more likely to sponsor bills, and issues traditionally considered to be women's domain issues (children and family, education, and health) and men's domain issues (economics, agriculture, fiscal affairs, and foreign affairs), on which gender differences in bill sponsorship may occur. They also mirror categories of issues in other chapters facilitating comparisons across the different types of substantive representation. Of course, these eight issue areas comprise only about half of all of the bills introduced in a given legislature. The remaining bills fall into other issue areas such as communication, transportation, general social welfare, the environment, and administration, for example. The thematic areas under study here include those that are most relevant to a study of gender and substantive representation.³

In all, 6981 bills were initiated by legislators during these congresses—4804 bills were sponsored by only one legislator (i.e., individually sponsored) and 2177 were cosponsored (table 4.2). The overall number of bills sponsored in each country varies but is between 2100 and 2500 bills, yielding a comparable number of bills under study in each country. Some differences do exist, however, in the number of

TABLE 4.2. Number of Bills Sponsored in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica

	Argentina: 1995 and 1999	Colombian Chamber: 1994–1998 1998–2002	Colombian Senate: 1994–1998 1998–2002	Costa Rica: 1994–1998 1998–2002	All Legislatures
Total bills sponsored	2483	1252	1134	2112	6981
Number of bills individually sponsored	1238	1031	956	1579	4804
Number of bills cosponsored	1245	221	178	533	2177
Issues:					
Women's issues	63	32	34	58	187
Children/family	68	20	31	52	171
Education	110	139	71	131	451
Health	78	27	18	49	172
Social and public welfare	228	91	64	233	616
Economics	513	154	178	280	1125
Agriculture	77	41	41	72	231
Fiscal affairs	106	28	34	78	246
Foreign affairs	24	5	5	24	58
Other issue areas	1216	715	658	1135	3724

bills that are cosponsored versus individually sponsored. In Argentina, near-equal numbers of bills were individually sponsored and cosponsored. In Colombia and Costa Rica, cosponsorship of bills was far less common—less than one-fifth of the bills initiated by legislators in the Colombian Chamber of Representatives and Colombian Senate were cosponsored, and only one-quarter of bills sponsored in the Costa Rican Assembly had more than one signature (table 4.2).

The key question that this section asks is what effect a legislator's gender has on the bills that he or she initiates.⁴ Here, I use the legislator, rather than the bill, as the unit of analysis. The outcome to be explained in the analyses below is the number of bills that a legislator sponsors or cosponsors overall and in the eight issue areas.⁵ Across the four legislatures, 1102 legislators initiated bills during the congresses under study—503 in Argentina, 304 in the Colombian Chamber of Representatives, 181 in the Colombian Senate, and 114 in Costa Rica.⁶ The total number of bills initiated by these individuals varied widely.⁷ Some legislators sponsored only 1 bill (8% sponsored 1 bill only) whereas three sponsored over 100 bills each during their terms (102, 124, and 148 bills).⁸ In Argentina, legislators sponsored anywhere from 1 to 124 bills (median = 22). In Colombia, members of the Chamber of Representatives sponsored between 1 and 50 bills (median = 11) and members of the Senate sponsored between 1 and 57 bills (median = 15).⁹ Legislators in Costa Rica make up for the small size of their Assembly (57 deputies) by sponsoring large numbers of bills—between 14 and 148 for each deputy (median = 49), though the second largest number of bills sponsored by any one deputy was only 95. Variation in the number of bills that legislators sponsor carries over into the different subject areas as well. Some legislators initiated no bills in an issue area, whereas others initiated many. For example, the range in the number of women's issue bills sponsored by legislators across all four legislatures is from 0 bills to 8 bills. Nearly 22% of legislators signed at least one women's issue bill. For economic issues, 37% of legislators did not sponsor any economic bills and one sponsored 35 economic bills.

As in the attitudinal analyses from the previous chapter, I include a number of control variables in the statistical models to isolate the effect of gender. Two are similar to those used in the issue preference models—ideology and urban district.¹⁰ Ideology is important because representatives from the left may be more likely to sponsor women's issue or social issue bills than those from the right side of the ideological spectrum. I measure legislators' ideology based on the political party to which they belong and where that party falls on a 5-point ordinal scale from left to right (Coppedge 1997; Rosas 2005; Alcántara 2006). One's electoral district also may affect bill sponsorship behavior. I include a dichotomous measure of whether the legislator's district is urban (higher population density than the country average and coded "1") or rural (lower population density than the country average and coded "0"). This correlates highly with other measures of district demographics such as literacy rates and unemployment rates.

Additionally, I include four variables assessing a legislator's position in the legislative chamber that could influence bill sponsorship patterns. First, I control for whether the legislator is a member of the largest party in the chamber (coded "1").¹¹ The largest party can set and control the legislative agenda and is better positioned to move legislation through the policy process. Thus, legislators from the largest party might be more likely to sponsor bills, in general, and in specific thematic areas that the party sees as important. Second, senior legislators have greater experience and knowledge of the workings of the chamber and may initiate more bills than junior legislators. I measure legislative experience as the total number of terms a legislator has served including the current term.¹² Third, I account for committee membership to ensure that gender is not picking up the fact that women might be disproportionately situated on women's issue committees, for example, or the fact that legislators may be more likely to sponsor bills on issues dealt with by the committees on which they sit. Committee membership is a dichotomous variable for whether the legislator sits on a committee dealing with bills in the thematic area under analysis (coded "1") or not (coded "0").¹³ Finally, I control for whether the legislator served as president of the legislative chamber at any point during the congress (coded "1"). Chamber presidents have numerous responsibilities that detract from the time they can spend sponsoring legislation. Consequently, they should sponsor fewer bills than other legislators.

Finally, I include a variable that controls for the overall number of bills a legislator initiates during the congress and a variable assessing differences in bill sponsorship patterns across congresses. Some legislators initiate many bills, whereas others just a few, in part because legislators vary in their political clout, the size of their staff, and the resources available to them. Otto Guevara Guth, an opposition party leader in the Costa Rican Assembly, sponsored 148 bills in the 1998–2002 congress when the median was only 27. In addition, some congressional terms have more bills sponsored on certain issues due to the issue's relevance to the political agenda. I include a dummy variable for congressional term to ensure that there is no bias from one term or the other within any given country.

Findings on Bill Sponsorship

In the following subsections, I offer three statistical analyses of bill sponsorship.¹⁴ First, I examine whether male legislators individually sponsor or cosponsor more bills than female legislators, regardless of the issues on which the bills focus. The last chapter showed that female legislators in Argentina place a higher priority on sponsoring bills than men whereas women in Costa Rica saw it as less important. Male and female representatives placed similar priority on bill sponsorship in Colombia. This analysis tests whether women are effectively translating the importance they place on bill sponsorship into action. Second, I look specifically at individually

sponsored bills to determine gender differences in the percentage of women's issue, social, and men's issue bills that legislators sponsor. Finally, I perform the same analysis on cosponsored bills.

Gender Differences in the Overall Number of Bills Legislators Sponsor

Table 4.3 shows the results of statistical models estimating the effect that gender and other factors have on the overall number of bills that legislators sponsor in the four legislatures. The models predict that women in Argentina and the Colombian Chamber of Representatives sponsor more bills than comparable men do whereas no gender differences emerge in the Colombian Senate or Costa Rica. Women sponsor bills more often than men in Argentina and the Colombian Chamber even after controlling for other factors such as ideology, being in the largest party, legislative experience, being chamber president, and the fact that legislators may sponsor more bills in one congress than another. Calculating predicted values from the statistical models reveals that the average number of bills that men in Argentina sponsor (all else being equal) is 21 compared to 28 for women.¹⁵ In Colombia, the disparity is even wider. The model estimates that men sponsor 8 bills, on average, compared to 17 bills for women.

TABLE 4.3. Explaining Individual Bill Sponsorship (dependent variable = number of bills a legislator sponsors)

	Argentina	Colombian Chamber	Colombian Senate	Costa Rica
Gender	.25* (.11)	.54** (.16)	-.27 (.21)	-.12 (.08)
Ideology	-.97** (.19)	-.38 (.27)	-.79** (.27)	-.28** (.06)
Legislative experience	.03 (.03)	.02 (.06)	-.08* (.04)	-.10 (.10)
Urban district	.06 (.08)	.21 (.15)	—	.17* (.08)
Member of plurality party	-.75** (.12)	-.22 (.14)	-.16 (.16)	-.10 (.08)
Chamber president	-.99** (.12)	-.20 (.20)	.35 (.23)	.23* (.11)
Congress dummy	.26** (.07)	.59** (.10)	.34** (.12)	.20** (.07)
Constant	2.44** (.09)	1.49** (.22)	2.48** (.16)	3.72** (.12)
N	503	304	181	114
X ²	83.81**	53.89**	33.98**	63.37**
Alpha	.55	.54	.50	.11

Negative binomial estimates with robust standard errors clustered around the legislator in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

In the Colombian Senate and Costa Rican Assembly, significant gender differences do not emerge in overall bill sponsorship patterns, although the estimates are negative and near-significant ($p = .20$ and $p = .14$, respectively). Stronger differences do emerge in Costa Rica, however, if individually sponsored bills are separated from cosponsored bills (models not shown). Women differ significantly from men in the number of bills that they sponsor with other legislators—women cosponsor fewer bills than men do in the Legislative Assembly.¹⁶ The model estimates that women cosponsor an average of 15 bills compared to 20 for men (all other variables held at their means or modes). Examining the other countries, disaggregated by type of sponsorship, also shows that the significant differences in table 4.3 tend to emerge from one type of sponsorship only. In Argentina, women and men individually sponsor similar numbers of bills, but women cosponsor more bills than men do. In the Colombian lower house, female representatives sponsor significantly more bills than men on their own but do not differ from men in the number of bills they cosponsor. No significant differences exist in the Colombian Senate for either individual sponsorship or cosponsorship.¹⁷

Comparing these findings with the findings from the last chapter on the priority that male and female legislators place on bill sponsorship reveals no evidence that women are being marginalized in the overall number of bills they sponsor. Where women place higher priority than men on bill sponsorship (Argentina), they sponsor more bills. Where they place lower priority on it than men (Costa Rica), they cosponsor fewer bills than men. Where women and men are similar in the priority that they place on bill sponsorship (Colombian Senate), no gender differences emerge in bill sponsorship behavior. Differences in attitudes and behavior do appear in the Colombian lower house, but it is with women sponsoring more bills than the priority they place on bill sponsorship would suggest. This may reflect female representatives having to work harder than men to generate the necessary electoral support to get reelected in a personalistic system with relatively small electoral districts.

Gender Differences in Individually Sponsored Bills on Various Issues

On individually sponsored bills, gender differences do exist in the types of bills that legislators sponsor. Table 4.4 presents the results of models estimating the effect of a legislator's gender on sponsorship of women's issue bills. In Colombia and Costa Rica, women are significantly more likely to sponsor women's issue bills than men. In the Colombian lower house, women sponsor 3.7 times as many women's issue bills as men do, and in Costa Rica, they sponsor 3.3 times as many.¹⁸ Costa Rican deputy Rina Contreras López (1998–2002) was particularly effective at sponsoring women's issue bills and getting them passed into law. During her

TABLE 4.4. Explaining Women's Issue Bill Sponsorship (individually sponsored bills)

	Argentina	Colombian Chamber	Colombian Senate	Costa Rica
Gender	.52 (.50)	1.30* (.64)	2.69** (.61)	1.20** (.37)
Ideology	.39 (1.02)	-1.23 (.67)	-1.66 (1.08)	.59 (.35)
Related committee	1.02* (.49)	-.79 (.71)	1.15 (.79)	.80* (.38)
Legislative experience	.27* (.13)	-.36 (.26)	.15 (.23)	.34 (.21)
Urban district	-.36 (.45)	16.15** (.80)	—	.64 (.56)
Plurality party	1.38* (.67)	-.29 (.77)	-.18 (.52)	-.57 (.38)
Chamber president	-15.39** (1.11)	-18.48** (.77)	1.12 (.94)	-.06 (.66)
Total bills sponsored	.03* (.02)	.14* (.07)	.11** (.03)	.03* (.01)
Congress dummy	-.66 (.47)	-1.34* (.61)	-1.00* (.47)	-.09 (.38)
Constant	-4.67** (.59)	-18.74** (1.01)	-3.80** (.80)	-3.72** (.72)
N	503	304	181	114
X ²	240.53**	2102.82**	34.26**	40.37**
Alpha	2.08	4.10	3.17	.20

Negative binomial estimates with robust standard errors clustered around the legislator in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

4-year term in office, she sponsored eight women's rights bill, three of which (38%) became law before the end of the 4-year term—a higher success rate than any other woman achieved for women's issue bills in either the 1994–1998 or 1998–2002 congresses. In the Colombian Senate, the effect of gender is much larger—women sponsor 14.7 times as many women's issue bills. The statistical model estimates that, on average, 32% of female senators in Colombia will sponsor one or more women's issue bills compared to only 5% of men. In Argentina, no significant gender differences emerge, suggesting that both men and women individually sponsor women's issue bills in similar numbers. This is somewhat surprising given the strong findings in other countries, but indeed several men were responsible for sponsoring some notable women's issue bills in 1995 and 1999. These bills included an effort to create a fund to help low-income pregnant mothers, a bill to provide a monthly allowance to women with five or more children, and several bills aimed at better defining and regulating assisted human reproduction (fertility treatments, artificial insemination, etc.).

These results show that women do substantively represent women through individual bill sponsorship. The second question is whether women are as likely as men to individually sponsor social and men's issue bills. Table 4.5 shows the

TABLE 4.5. Explaining Bill Sponsorship on Women's Domain and Men's Domain Issues (individually sponsored bills)

	Argentina		Colombian Senate		
	Economy	Fiscal Affairs	Health	Agriculture	Foreign Affairs
Gender	-.66** (.26)	-2.83** (1.05)	1.74** (.69)	-14.60** (.55)	-15.51** (.87)
Ideology	.94** (.34)	1.68 (1.04)	-1.45 (1.12)	.39 (1.06)	-2.09 (1.24)
Related committee	-.01 (.19)	.89** (.35)	.81 (.82)	1.26* (.53)	2.26* (.99)
Legislative experience	.24** (.05)	.19* (.09)	.12 (.24)	-.05 (.21)	-1.40 (1.31)
Urban district	-.26 (.19)	-1.18** (.37)	—	—	—
Plurality party	.62* (.25)	1.08 (.65)	-.34 (.54)	-1.10 (.63)	.94 (.95)
Chamber president	-20.13** (1.02)	-25.77** (1.16)	-17.62** (.53)	.79 (1.22)	-15.08** (.92)
Total bills sponsored	.04** (.01)	.05** (.01)	.08** (.02)	.10** (.02)	.06* (.03)
Congress dummy	— (.17)	-.01 (.36)	-.30 (.55)	-1.45* (.61)	1.92** (.91)
Constant	-1.81** (.25)	-3.53** (.41)	-3.64** (.90)	-2.32** (.85)	-4.93** (1.55)
N	503	503	181	181	181
X ²	505.43**	927.38**	1335.64**	939.25	714.06**
Alpha	1.04	.01	3.27	4.68	.01

Negative binomial estimates with robust standard errors clustered around the legislator in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

results of statistical models for individual bill sponsorship on the issues in which gender is statistically significant. The results show that female legislators in Argentina and the Colombian Senate are more likely to sponsor bills on some social issues and are less likely to sponsor some types of men's domain bills. In the Colombian Chamber of Representatives and Costa Rica, however, women are no more likely to sponsor women's domain issues—children and family issues, education, health—and are no less likely to focus on economic, agriculture, fiscal affairs, or foreign affairs bills.

In Argentina, no significant gender differences emerge for children and family issues, education, or health, but male legislators do sponsor significantly more economic and fiscal affairs bills than women. Female legislators sponsor half as many economic bills as men and one-sixteenth as many fiscal affairs bills. In 1995 and 1999, only 2 of the 39 individually sponsored fiscal affairs bills that were initiated into the Argentine Chamber of Deputies were sponsored by women. In the Colombian Senate, women sponsor 6 times as many bills on health issues as men

do, and no women were behind any of the 34 individually sponsored agriculture bills in the 1994–1998 or 1998–2002 terms. Similarly, no women sponsored any of the 5 foreign affairs bills initiated by individual sponsors in these two congresses. The only area for which gender differences emerged in the Colombian lower house and Costa Rican Assembly was children and family issues. In the Colombian Chamber, this was an area on which women placed greater priority to begin with, making it unlikely that women were marginalized into working on these types of bills. In Costa Rica, the absence of gender differences exists both prior to and after the adoption of quotas.

In sum, female legislators in all of the legislatures except Argentina do translate their greater priority for women's issues into legislative behavior by individually sponsoring more bills on women's issues than do men. Thus, female representatives are substantively representing women and women's issues through their legislative behavior. However, women do appear to suffer from some marginalization in the types of bills they sponsor. Despite having similar preferences to men on a range of women's domain and men's domain issues, women in Argentina individually sponsor fewer bills on some men's domain issues, and women in the Colombian Senate individually sponsor more health issues and fewer men's domain issues. As articulated in chapter 1, one reason this may occur is marginalization by the gendered legislative environment.

Gender Differences in Cosponsored Bills on Various Issues

Few studies have disaggregated individually sponsored bills from cosponsored bills in analyses of gender and bill sponsorship (see, however, Swers 2002; Wolbrecht 2002; Swers 2005). Yet, the motivations for cosponsoring the two types of bills can be distinct (as described previously), so gender may have different effects on cosponsored and individually sponsored bills. The analyses presented in table 4.6 show that female legislators in all four chambers are significantly more likely to cosponsor women's issue bills than are men. In Argentina, female representatives cosponsor almost 4 times as many women's issue bills as men do. The statistical model predicts that 40% of women will sign at least one women's issue bill compared to only 15% of men, holding other variables at their means and modes. In Costa Rica, a surprising number of men cosponsor these bills, but women still do so 3 times more often. The model predicts that almost 45% of men will cosponsor at least one women's issue bill, but 85% of women will sign at least one women's issue bill, all else held constant. In the Colombian Chamber of Representatives, women are 8 times more likely than men to sponsor women's issue bills, and in the Senate, they are over 100 times more likely to do so, all else being equal.

In Colombia, this partly reflects the fact that women's issue bills were more often individually sponsored than cosponsored. Eight percent of women in the Chamber of Representatives (three women) cosponsored women's issue bills

TABLE 4.6. Explaining Bill Cosponsorship Patterns on Women's Issues (cosponsored bills)

	Argentina	Colombian Chamber	Colombian Senate	Costa Rica
Gender	1.37** (.24)	2.09** (.72)	4.80** (1.85)	1.10** (.21)
Ideology	.57 (.31)	-6.56 (3.76)	11.21 (9.12)	-.27 (.22)
Related committee	.52* (.25)	3.07** (1.15)	-24.85** (3.79)	.01 (.20)
Legislative experience	.03 (.09)	-.10 (.32)	-1.01 (.85)	.08 (.20)
Urban district	.51* (.20)	14.07** (.87)	—	.20 (.19)
Plurality party	-.48 (.29)	2.91* (1.43)	26.56** (5.60)	-.22 (.22)
Chamber president	-14.68** (1.06)	-16.67** (1.08)	1.81 (1.54)	.54 (.30)
Total bills sponsored	.03** (.01)	.17** (.06)	.29** (.12)	.01** (.004)
Congress dummy	-.68** (.20)	-2.62 (1.46)	-4.88** (2.84)	.57** (.19)
Constant	-2.06** (.31)	-22.66** (1.83)	-32.24** (6.31)	-1.53** (.44)
N	503	304	181	114
X ²	446.03**	1196.22**	14.52	112.94**
Alpha	.47	5.74	5.54	.01

Negative binomial estimates with robust standard errors clustered around the legislator in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

compared to less than 1% of men sponsoring these bills. Five percent of women in the Senate cosponsored women's issue bills compared to 1.2% of men. Viviane Morales (Partido Nacional Cristiano) and Yolima Espinosa (Partido Liberal) sponsored two different bills together in the 1994–1998 congress—one to increase penalties for sexual harassment and another to create a quota law. In the 1998–2002 congress, Liberal Party representative Leonor Gonzales Mina sponsored two women's issue bills with Senator Piedad Córdoba.

One reason that women are more likely to cosponsor women's issue legislation is that they often seek out other women as cosponsors. One Argentine deputy mentioned in an interview with me that she intentionally courted other women to support a gender equality bill that she sponsored. She said she did not just want signatures but wanted cosponsors who would be committed to the bill. As a result, she sought women only. "I chose from a list of female deputies who I knew were going to defend it; not just sign it and do nothing more" (Augsburger 2006). In Argentina, three of the most active initiators of women's rights legislation during 1999 were Elisa Carrió, who sponsored 6 bills on women, Miriam Curletti,

with 5 bills on women, and Margarita Stolbizer, who sponsored 5 on women. The only one of these bills that became law was a major piece of legislation on women's health—the Sexual and Reproductive Health Law (Law 25.673 of 2002). It was cosponsored by Deputies Carrió and Curletti, who overcame significant objections from the Catholic Church and successfully defended the bill on the floor of the Chamber of Deputies.¹⁹

In terms of cosponsorship of bills that fall into traditional women's and men's domain thematic areas, the only country that exhibits marginalization of women is Argentina (table 4.7). Female deputies are significantly more likely to cosponsor bills on education and health (borderline significant at $p = .07$) and are less likely to cosponsor economic bills, fiscal affairs bills, and agriculture bills (borderline significant at $p = .09$). Substantively, the effects are not huge but still notable. For example, women sponsor 1.3 times as many education bills as men and two-thirds as many economic bills. The effects for health, fiscal affairs, and agriculture are similar. In Costa Rica, the only thematic area in which women cosponsor significantly fewer bills than men is agriculture, an issue on which they also place lower priority

TABLE 4.7. Explaining Bill Cosponsorship on Women's Domain and Men's Domain Issues in Argentina

	Children	Education	Health	Economy	Agriculture	Fiscal Affairs
Gender	.59 (.31)	.36* (.15)	.29 (.16)	-.37** (.10)	-.37 (.22)	-.45* (.19)
Ideology	.61 (.51)	.10 (.27)	-.85* (.35)	-.26 (.20)	.79* (.38)	-.09 (.32)
Related committee	.67* (.31)	1.53** (.15)	1.23** (.23)	-.01 (.09)	1.18** (.17)	.50** (.15)
Legislative experience	-.02 (.10)	.12* (.06)	-.02 (.06)	-.02 (.03)	-.19** (.06)	.03 (.05)
Urban district	.11 (.27)	.10 (.15)	-.32 (.17)	-.15 (.09)	-.98** (.16)	.30* (.15)
Plurality party	.29 (.38)	.20 (.20)	-1.15** (.24)	-.15 (.14)	-.02 (.25)	-.66** (.23)
Chamber president	-14.40** (1.10)	1.54** (.25)	-12.53** (1.04)	-17.85** (1.01)	-13.41** (1.05)	-17.62** (1.03)
Total bills sponsored	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.05** (.01)	.04** (.01)	.04** (.01)
Congress dummy	.64* (.28)	-.05 (.14)	.68** (.21)	-.08 (.08)	.77** (.17)	-.01 (.14)
Constant	-3.07** (.39)	-1.82** (.24)	-2.06** (.26)	.14 (.14)	-.97** (.21)	-1.31** (.20)
N	503	503	503	503	503	503
X ²	295.62**	215.23**	467.28**	527.51**	426.66**	508.34**
Alpha	1.12	.36	.23	.38	.82	.40

Negative binomial estimates with robust standard errors clustered around the legislator in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

than men. These patterns existed prior to the adoption of gender quotas and still persist. The only significant difference in the cosponsorship patterns of Colombian senators and representatives is among senators' cosponsorship of agriculture bills. No female senators cosigned any agriculture bills, whereas 15 male senators did.

The cosponsorship findings reinforce the conclusion drawn in the previous section that women do represent women through bill initiation behavior. Women are more likely to represent women's issues than men in almost all chambers by cosponsoring women's issue bills. The cosponsorship findings also provide evidence of women's marginalization in Argentina. Not only do women not cosponsor bills on men's domain issues to the same extent as men, they are more likely to cosponsor social issue bills. When it comes to cosponsoring legislation, male party leaders and male representatives may be corraling women into bill sponsorship behavior that reflects traditional gendered divisions of labor. In contrast, little marginalization of women in cosponsorship is evident in Colombia or Costa Rica. This may be due to the fact that cosponsorship is less common in those countries, and it may occur because it is far easier for legislators to marginalize women by not asking them to cosign legislation than it is to keep them from initiating bills on their own.

Debating Bills in the Legislature

Sponsoring bills is an important part of the policymaking process. But once bills are on the legislative agenda, they need legislators to support and defend them as they work their way through the policymaking process. One way that representatives do this is through legislative debates. These generally occur in committees and on the floor of the legislature. In this section, I examine the extent to which female and male representatives differ in the frequency of debating in both of these forums.

Building from the theoretical framework in chapter 1, I test three specific hypotheses. First, women's shared historical experiences of subordination and the priority that they place on representing women should make it more likely that female legislators will participate in debates on women's rights issues than will male legislators. The gendered legislative environment in which women operate, however, may make it more difficult for women to participate in debates on a wide range of political issues and may limit their debate participation overall. Male voices may overwhelm female voices during these debates, such that only the most confident and vocal women speak out, or male chamber presidents may overlook women's desire to speak in debates. Thus, the second hypothesis is that female legislators should be less likely to participate in debates (regardless of issue) than male legislators. Also following from this logic of marginalization, the third hypothesis is that female legislators should be more likely to debate on traditional women's domain issues and less likely to debate on traditional men's domain issues.

Existing research has found that women are much more likely than men to participate in parliamentary debates on women's issues (Broughton and Palmieri 1999; Walsh 2002; Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003; Chaney 2006; Catalano 2008; Childs 2008). Taylor-Robinson and Heath (2003) examined congressional debates on women's issue bills in Honduras and found that women are more likely to participate in debates that focus on women's rights and children and family issues. Similarly, Chaney (2006) examined plenary debates in the National Assembly of Wales and found that female representatives initiate, intervene in, and participate in debates on women's issue topics, specifically domestic violence, child care, and equal pay issues, more than male representatives.

Research on women's participation in legislative debates on issues that are not related to gender equality, however, reports mixed findings. Some work has found that women's voices are often obscured in both committee and floor debates (Skard and Haavio-Mannila 1985; Kathlene 1994; 1998). In an oft-cited article on the U.S. Congress, Lyn Kathlene (1994) wrote about significant gender differences in the committee participation of female members of Congress. Women hold the floor for less time than men, initiate and engage discussion less often than men, and interrupt less often than men. She attributed this phenomenon to marginalization of women's voices in the legislative arena. Other studies have found few differences in men's and women's debating styles or patterns. Chaney (2006) found that women and men participate with similar frequency in plenary debates on the full array of topics discussed in the Welch assembly. Broughton and Palmieri (1999) examined gender differences in parliamentary debates over euthanasia in Australia and found that women and men were equally likely to participate in the debates, but they do report that the content of women's speeches was different from men's.

Debating in Committees

One question on the survey of legislators asks about the frequency with which representatives participate in committee debates.²⁰ Committee debates are an opportunity for legislators to signal their support for or against legislation. Analyzing survey responses reveals that gender differences in legislators' self-perceived committee debate participation are few. The only country where significant gender differences emerged is Costa Rica, where women are much more likely to speak in committee debates than men, after accounting for the ideology of the legislator, age, marital status, education level, prior occupation, legislative experience, prior office-holding experience, ambition, and district urbanness (see appendix C for variable coding details).²¹ Figure 4.1 shows that the statistical model predicts almost one-quarter of female deputies in Costa Rica speak in committee debates "very often" compared to 6% of men. Almost 90% of women are predicted to

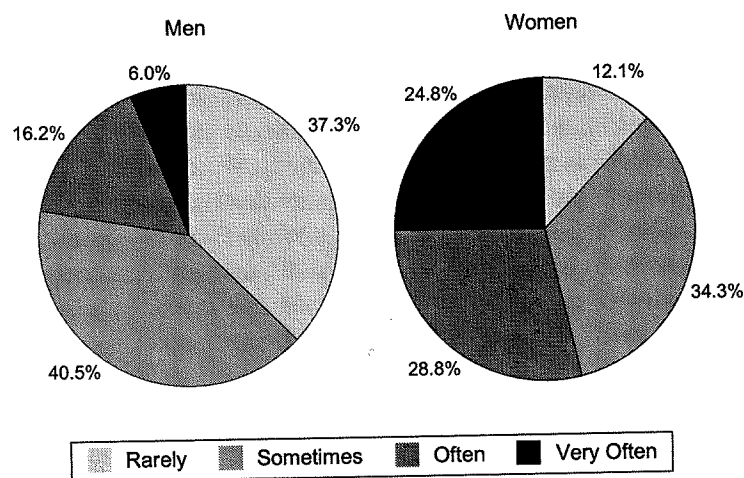


FIGURE 4.1. Frequency of Speaking in Committee Debates in Costa Rica

participate at least “sometimes,” whereas only around 60% of men are estimated to participate at least that often. Clearly, women in the Costa Rican Assembly express their support for or against legislation in the policymaking process. This is not mirrored in Argentina or Colombia, however. In neither of these countries are women significantly different from men in the frequency with which they report participating in committee debates.

Debating on the Floor

I also asked legislators about the frequency with which they participate in floor debates. Similar to the findings for committee debates, only a few significant gender differences exist after accounting for relevant control variables (see appendix C). Those differences occur only in Argentina, where women report more frequent participation in floor debates than men do. Figure 4.2 shows that whereas only one-fifth of men are predicted to speak “very often” during floor debates, over half of women are. Over 90% of women are predicted to speak “very often” or “often” compared to only about 65% of men. This finding emerges after accounting for the fact that more ambitious and experienced legislators speak in floor debates more often.

One downside of using self-reported debate behavior is that it assumes representatives can accurately gauge their participation. This may be a difficult assumption to maintain. However, analyses of self-perceived participation are important and revealing on their own. That women perceive such high levels of debate participation

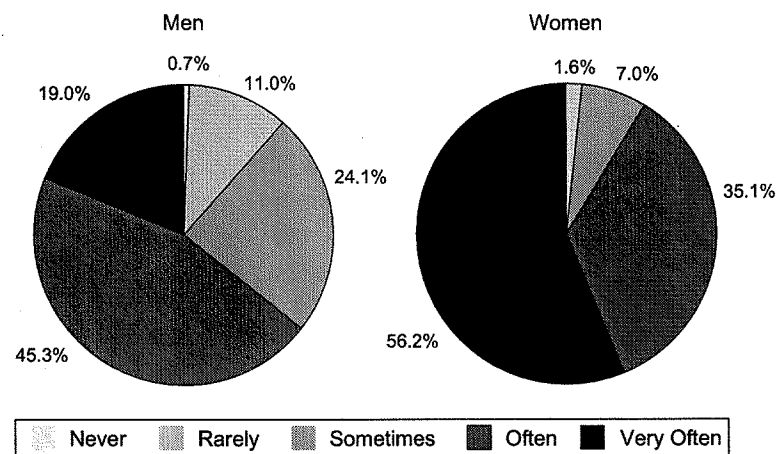


FIGURE 4.2. Frequency of Speaking in Floor Debates in Argentina

for themselves signals a confidence that other studies have overlooked or concluded does not exist because women have not been found to participate as much. Women may still get marginalized in debates and not perceive it, but they do have a confidence about their legislative work that can undermine efforts by male legislators or party leaders to marginalize them in legislative debates.

Finally, I asked legislators about the frequency with which they participate in debates on legislation dealing with specific types of issues. In general, women and men do not perceive different degrees of participation across issues. Statistical models (not shown) predict that women and men speak on behalf of health, education, worker's rights, and economic legislation with similar frequencies. Results are borderline statistically significant for agriculture issues in Argentina and Costa Rica, where women participate in debates slightly less often than men on agriculture bills. However, in the last chapter, we saw that this was an issue that women felt was less important.

Women do participate more often than men in Argentina and the Colombian lower house when debates focus on women's issue legislation. Figure 4.3 shows that the statistical models predict that 75% of women participate “very often” or “often” in Argentina compared to slightly less than 50% of men. In the Colombian Chamber, 80% of women claim to participate “very often” compared to only 24% of men. In the other two legislatures, the effects of gender do not attain statistical significance. This further underscores the findings on bill sponsorship that women represent women's issues through their policymaking efforts. Women not only sponsor legislation in this area more often than men, but they defend this legislation in debates more than men do.

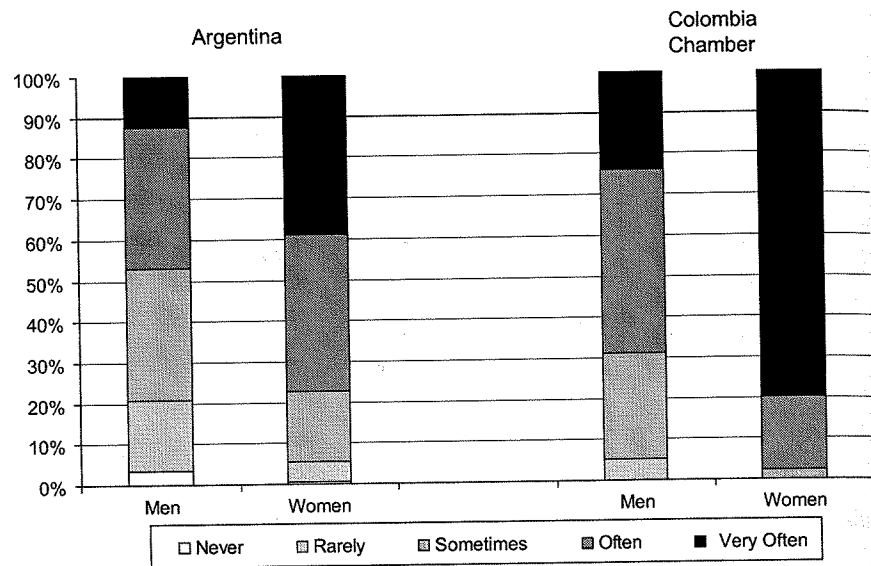


FIGURE 4.3. Frequency of Speaking in Floor Debates on Behalf of Women's Issues

Conclusion

Descriptive representation of women in national legislatures in Latin America does have an impact on policymaking. Women are more likely than men to individually sponsor and cosponsor women's issue bills in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica and defend these bills in floor debates in Argentina and the Colombian lower house. Women are not only placing higher priority on women's issues in their political preferences, but they are bringing forth important women's rights policies, such as gender quotas for legislative elections or domestic violence protections for women, which may not have been introduced or passed had female legislators not been part of the policymaking process. As former Argentine deputy Maria José Lubertino (2003, 10) writes, "Many laws—such as those on violence and reproductive health in the provinces—would not have been passed had there not been women parliamentarians committed to these issues." Women are getting issues onto the legislative agenda that otherwise would not receive the same amount of attention from male legislators.

Evidence of marginalization of women does appear in some cases, however. Despite Argentine legislators having similar issue preferences on education, health, economics, and fiscal affairs issues, women are more likely to cosponsor legislation on education and health bills (borderline significant) and less likely to individually sponsor and cosponsor bills on economics and fiscal affairs. Women are working with other legislators, often women, to introduce policy on issues traditionally

considered women's domain issues and are not sought out as cosponsors for legislation traditionally considered in the "men's domain." In the Colombian Senate, women are more likely to sponsor health bills and are less likely to sponsor agriculture and foreign affairs bills. This does not occur in floor debates on issues in these areas, however. As I argued in chapter 1, a likely reason for this disparity in issue preferences and behavior may be a gendered legislative environment that continues to divide issues into the women's domain and the men's domain.

In contrast to what I theorized in chapter 1, these findings do not fully support the theory that formal representation mediates substantive representation of women. That hypothesis suggests that party-centered systems, such as in Argentina and Costa Rica, will have greater marginalization of women than personalistic systems, such as in Colombia. It also argues that gender quotas could exacerbate women's marginalization. The findings from this chapter, however, show that marginalization of women occurs only in bill sponsorship in Argentina and not in Costa Rica. Because both countries have party-centered systems and quotas, we would expect marginalization in both cases if these institutions mattered. Instead, the divergent findings may reflect the limited control that party leaders in Costa Rica actually have over deputies' bill sponsorship behavior. Deputies in Costa Rica sponsor a large number of bills, many of which focus on pork in the district, and they sponsor many more bills on their own than they cosponsor with other deputies. These factors make it difficult for leaders to have much influence over deputies' bill initiation patterns. This does not mean that marginalization of women does not occur, just that it is not reflected very strongly though bill sponsorship in Costa Rica. It also is not evident in legislators' perceptions of their participation in legislative debates. If anything, women perceive greater roles for themselves in debates than men do, particularly when the topic is women's issue bills.

Women's policymaking is an important measure of substantive representation. Female representatives in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica do represent women's issues through policymaking, and their presence is clearly important for that. As Argentine deputy Elisa Carrió (2002, 5–6) noted, "The representation of women's voices, interests, perspectives and values in decision-making is a necessary condition for the effective observance of women's human rights." Marginalization of women does appear in Argentina, and the Colombian Senate to a lesser degree, but not in all legislatures or in the pattern that formal representation would suggest. This does not mean, however, that women have attained full representation in the legislative chamber. The area of substantive representation in which party leaders and male representatives have the most influence on their female colleagues—committee assignments and leadership posts—has not yet been assessed. The following chapter tackles women's representation in committees and leadership.