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Learning What We Know

*The Complexity of Gender in U.S.
and Comparative Executive Studies*

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Change is coming. It may even be arriving.

Excluded from the ranks of elite executive decision makers for generations, women are now exercising power as chiefs of government and chiefs of state. As of April 1, 2016, 112 women have served as presidents or prime ministers, just 26 of whom have been interim or acting leaders.¹ These women have led seventy-three countries, but our knowledge of their politics is still limited and preliminary.

The United States is not one of the nations that has had a woman chief executive, but it is among those for whom gender and, much more generally, identity are assuming a no-longer-deniable importance in the executive branch. In 2008, a white woman (Hillary Clinton) and a biracial man (Barack Obama) contended for the Democratic presidential nomination for six months, precipitating national conversations about race, gender, and race-gender. When the biracial man, who self-identified as black, had the nomination in hand, he reverted to tradition and named an established white male (Joseph Biden) as his running mate. In the same election, the Republican Party nominated a Vietnam war veteran (John McCain), who was a white man, for the presidency and a white woman (Sarah Palin) for the vice presidency. These candidates challenged enduring preconceptions of who could—and even who should—be president. In 2012, identity continued to be a critical element of the campaign, with the religious affiliation of the Republican presidential nominee (Mitt Romney), the Church of Jesus Christ of

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Latter-day Saints, a source of concern for many in the party's base. His vice presidential running mate (Paul Ryan) was a conservative Roman Catholic, a religious affiliation that no longer excited comment. This white and male Republican ticket signaled change in the deeply rooted conceptions of who could and should be president. Yet the 2012 reelection of the Democratic, biracial president seemed to energize the backlash that had emerged four years earlier.

As this book goes to press, new identity conversations are beginning, and old conversations are continuing as the United States undertakes its presidential primaries and caucuses. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has sought to counter the "angry insurgent refrain" of the Republican Party by noting, "If we try to play our own version of identity politics and try to fuel ourselves based on darker emotions, that's not productive" (Steinhauer 2015, 20). As the field of presidential candidates narrows in spring 2016, the final five contenders include a white woman (Hillary Clinton), a Jewish man (Bernie Sanders), and a man of Cuban heritage (Ted Cruz). In other words, just two of the five candidates remaining in the race—John Kasich and Donald Trump—have the male, white, Protestant profile that has predominated among U.S. presidents. Once again, U.S. presidential candidates are, in varying ways and to varying degrees, part of a continuing assessment and reassessment, conducted by candidates and voters, of identity and the presidency.

For some, this inventorying by gender, race, sexuality, and religion—by any aspect of identity—edges toward objectification. Presidents, above all else, are expected to be extraordinary individuals; they are expected to withstand the pressures of society, making history rather than merely enduring or even withstanding its legacies. While acknowledging the popular appeal of this conception of a heroic chief executive, the authors and the editors of this book observe that the status and honor of being a hero have historically been reserved to men—moreover, to men whose identity conforms to a historically rooted, socially reinforced, politically endorsed set of requirements in each nation (see Duerst-Lahti 1997). However, as the numbers of women chiefs of state and chiefs of government indicate, and as this brief overview of recent U.S. presidential elections suggests, the identity of leaders is seemingly, slowly, becoming more diverse. Change is coming. It may even be arriving.

Recognizing the power and relevance of this development, the contributors to this book write from a conviction that how we study executive politics in the twenty-first century must undergo a decisive change. As scholars, we need to address new questions, use new methodologies, and seek out new intellectual resources if we are to understand just who are the top political leaders in the twenty-first century, their decision- and policy-making

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strategies and their impact on policy, actions, behavior, and attitudes. Accordingly, this book integrates research in U.S. politics, comparative politics, and gender-race studies; it draws on the insights of political scientists, historians, and gender scholars; and it presents diverse frameworks and research designs. In this chapter, we welcome the reader to an analytic conversation that is precise and creative, challenging and inclusive, examining institutions and individuals.

Studying Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Chief Executives

Over time, scholars have introduced new ways of looking at presidents, prime ministers, and executive leadership. Surveying scholarly works reveals the extent to which the study of these offices has undergone a series of innovations and advances since the mid-twentieth century. In the next two sections, scholarship on the U.S. presidency, and prime ministers and chief executives more broadly, provides a context for study of the gendered executive.

The U.S. presidency has received a good deal of attention. The rise of the United States as a superpower in the twentieth century encouraged such a focus, which was facilitated by campaign strategists (especially since the 1970s), citizens, the media, and, often, scholars. In fact, in the United States, political time is often described by reference to a particular presidential administration. In referring to the period surrounding the events of September 11, 2001, and the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the “Bush presidency” is a familiar marker in political time. The administration becomes a reference to U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and to discussions of unilateral powers of the president, the global role of the United States, and enhanced measures for national security. Similarly, a reference to the “Roosevelt years” brings the Great Depression and the Second World War to mind. In both instances, a president and a presidential administration are perceived as marking an era—an indication of the extent to which a president is popularly accepted as a powerful, even defining, historical actor.

Yet while political time is still marked by presidential administrations, in the latter half of the twentieth century the presidency itself became a more familiar way to understand an institution and branch of government that extended beyond the person taking the presidential oath of office. And the subfield of presidency research has evolved and adapted new lines of inquiry, paralleling the growth and establishment of the presidency and the executive branch, especially throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

Studies of the U.S. presidency have been identified and categorized in many different ways. For example, George C. Edwards III and Stephen

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J. Wayne (1983) gathered a collection of essays by well-known students of the presidency, including John Kessel, Norman C. Thomas, Martha Joynt Kumar, Cal Mackenzie, Louis Fisher, Joseph Pika, Larry Berman, and journalist Dom Bonafede, who each addressed a different aspect of methodology in studying the presidency, from approaches and concepts to availability of data, both qualitative and quantitative. Essays featured the materials available in presidential libraries, relevant government documents, use of interviews, role of case studies, and need for concepts to guide data definition and analysis and suggested quantitative approaches to bring study of the presidency in line with behavioral approaches in vogue across the discipline. All of the points raised became a routine part of the accepted and varied methodologies drawn on by scholars studying the presidency for decades to follow.

In the brief review that follows, our goal is to sample the literature that provides a strong foundation for the chapters in this book and to demonstrate how studying the complexity of the executive's identity is a critical next step in the evolution of presidency research.

The U.S. Presidency

Two books that dramatically affected scholarship on the presidency were Richard E. Neustadt's *Presidential Power* ([1960] 1990) and Thomas E. Cronin's *The State of the Presidency* (1975). These books stimulated interest in scholarship on presidents and the presidency, becoming familiar classics.

Presidential Power reflected Neustadt's own experiences in government. Neustadt's focus was on the individual in the office—he contextualized the president as acquiring and exercising power in an institutional setting and weighed the constitutional and statutory constraints that limited a president's authority. Neustadt made clear that his sole focus was the U.S. president—not the presidency (i.e., the institutions that had grown around the president) or heads of government in other countries. Subsequent editions benefited further from his own “observation, as a consultant to the Kennedy and Johnson White House and occasionally to Carter's Reorganization Project” (Neustadt 1990, xxvii). Stressing both the academic and the practical value of his White House service, Neustadt noted, “I have always tried to turn participant-observership to the account of scholarship that might assist participants” (xxvii).

Cronin's *State of the Presidency* introduced a generation of students to the presidency. Neustadt had presented an expansive view of presidential power. Cronin, whose book was published a year after President Richard M. Nixon's resignation from office, was more tempered in his assessments. Cronin had also been a participant-observer, having worked as a White House

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Fellow on domestic policy in the Johnson administration; in addition to his access to power and decision making at the highest levels, he conducted interviews that buttressed his analysis. He recommended more moderation in presidential actions and in popular expectations of what actions a president can (or should) take.

In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars addressed new questions and topics. Presidential rhetoric and communication (see Ceaser et al. 1981; Tulis 1987), in particular, fostered interdisciplinary studies (see Campbell and Jamieson 1990; Denton and Hahn 1986). This scholarship reflected and examined ongoing changes in how presidents were communicating with the public and creating a staff structure in the White House to support these new roles. As was seen earlier, in Neustadt's and Cronin's writings, political scientists were using and developing new methodologies, defining and responding to new questions about the workings of presidential power. Speeches, travel, and staged events were acknowledged and examined as leadership strategies (Kernell 1986; Stuckey 1991). Michael B. Grossman and Martha Joynt Kumar (1981) focused on the growth of the White House press operations. Jeffrey Cohen's *Going Local* (2010) followed in the path of this scholarship, noting how presidents began to use local media when traveling in order to cultivate favorable coverage.

Scholars were also attentive to changes in the White House Office staff. John Hart, in *The Presidential Branch* (1987), argued for including study of the formal advising structure surrounding presidents, in contrast to Neustadt's focus on a singular executive. Hart's study came out fifty years after the presidency as we know it today began to be established in incremental ways. Charles E. Walcott and Karen M. Hult's *Governing the White House: From Hoover through LBJ* (1995) and Karen M. Hult and Charles E. Walcott's *Empowering the White House: Governance under Nixon, Ford, and Carter* (2004) provided the nuanced analysis that gave us insight into the impact of legislative reforms that focused on providing the president with "help" in the White House. Walcott and Hult's studies demonstrated the theoretical and sophisticated analysis that can come from a rigorous use of qualitative materials, especially the documents and oral histories available in archives. Others writing in this area include Bradley Patterson (1988) and John Burke (2000). Sex-differences analyses, including that by Kathryn Dunn Tenpas (1997), began with a look at the White House Office and were complemented by gender analyses of the office of the first lady (see Borrelli 2011; Burrell 1997).

Also receiving close attention were presidential appointments throughout the wider executive branch. The confirmation process itself was examined as revelatory of legislative-executive relations, especially when partisan polarization came to dominate the U.S. political system. Richard

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Fenno (1959) and Cronin (1975), focusing on the president's cabinet, studied an institution whose influence has been subjected to increasing debate across the modern presidency (see Cohen 1988; Warshaw 1996). As executives within their departments, however, cabinet secretaries continued to be recognized as elite decision makers. The appointment of women to these posts generated important research questions, initially through sex-differences studies (Martin 1989, 1991) and then through gender analysis (Borrelli 1997, 2002).

The Gendered Executive and Studies of Comparative Executives

It is no longer sufficient to say, "But a woman has never been elected president of the United States" in excusing the absence of women and gender from scholarship on the U.S. presidency. Women have become increasingly viable presidential candidates, and a corresponding literature has emerged to assess women running for president and the consequences of electing a woman as president (see, for example, Han and Heldman 2007; Lawrence and Rose 2010; Sheeler and Anderson 2013). Even absent a woman in the Oval Office, however, there is a need to study gender in the U.S. presidency. To state the obvious, men also are gendered, and the study of masculinity reveals a great deal about the U.S. presidency. Likewise, it is not appropriate to discuss race only through the study of Barack H. Obama's presidency. Deconstructing whiteness is a critically important task for scholars seeking to understand how power, privilege, and marginalization are expressed, reinforced, and changed through the presidency. The representation provided by the president as chief of state and chief of government demands close and careful study if we are to understand the U.S. polity.

In the past, methodological innovations have consistently resulted in a richer literature and a deeper understanding of the U.S. presidency and executive politics. We see every reason to expect a similar, even greater, outcome as the workings of identity in the U.S. presidency are subjected to thoughtful, close, continuing analysis.

As shown in the chapters in this book, as women have been elected president or elevated to the office of prime minister around the world, particularly in the past twenty years, women-and-politics scholars have assessed their politics in detail. This book demonstrates how the study of presidents, prime ministers, and executives is being transformed by the intellectual cross-fertilization occurring across studies of the U.S. presidency, gender and politics, and comparative politics. Quite simply, a new benchmark is being set for the research questions we ask, the concepts we develop and define, and the arguments we advance.

Identity in the Executive

In studying political change, political scientists typically focus less on individuals than on institutional forces. For U.S. presidency scholars, a more empirical and encompassing analysis has also been embraced as a corrective to the challenges of studying a singular (though not unique) decision maker. In part, in U.S. studies this reflects the shift away from leadership studies focusing on specific presidents and the move toward the study of institutions and political processes. Yet with a return of interest in studying leaders and leadership, identity can no longer escape analysis. Perhaps because the many facets of identity—including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and sexuality—are so constitutive of individuals, some presidency scholars have been hesitant to incorporate identity in their analyses or have not been consciously aware of their exclusion of identity. Still, scholars of identity politics have firmly demonstrated that identity is both a national and a transnational construct, its performance shaped within societies, reinforced through law, and regulated and policed by governments and its changes and continuities mediated through political systems (see, for example, Kerber 1998). Recognizing and nuancing these circumstances, contributors to this collection present identity as interwoven and closely fused with national executive leadership. Identity, they argue, is as constitutive of a political system and government as it is of individual persons.

To explore the workings of identity in an executive office, however, is daunting. It must be studied comparatively if we are to understand how different political systems interweave executive and identity politics (see Andeweg 2013). It requires an extraordinary and critical awareness to examine deeply ingrained norms. It demands the acceptance of complexity. And it calls for an encompassing expertise. Each facet of identity has a rich and contentious literature, stretching across multiple disciplines, to be consulted and considered for its political implications. This is a topic that welcomes, and even commands, the attention of engaged scholars in a multiplicity of disciplines and subfields.

Shared Questions

This book had its origins in a series of decisions made by scholars in two subfields within political science, those specializing in women and politics and those focusing on the U.S. presidency.

Women-and-politics scholars have developed a strong literature centered on women legislators, which has contributed to work in U.S. politics, comparative politics, and international relations (see, for example, Krook 2010;

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Krook and Zetterberg 2015; Thomas and Wilcox 2014). More gradually, women-and-politics scholars have begun to investigate the ways in which women were recognized as decision makers in and constituents of the executive branch. The descriptive, symbolic, and substantive representation of women by those with the primary responsibility for implementing public policy—and sometimes, depending on the political system, for presenting policy proposals to the legislature or even for acting unilaterally—has received increasing attention. As information, analysis, and theory building have been acquired, developed, and formulated, there has been a corresponding expansion of knowledge about women as political executives and, more generally, about gender and executive politics. That, in turn, has led many women-and-politics scholars to recognize that gender is one among many facets of identity. Intersectionality, initially formulated to examine the legal marginalization of African American women in the United States, has gradually been applied to many more persons and political contexts (Hancock 2016).

Meanwhile, scholars of the U.S. presidency have become more aware of the value and need to engage in comparative study of national executives. Organizationally, the Presidency Research Group, a formal section of the American Political Science Association (APSA), voted to rename itself the Presidents and Executive Politics Section. Subsequently, the section has sought out and welcomed contributions from comparativists, including a number of women-and-politics scholars. In 2014, a cosponsored panel at the annual APSA meeting, titled “The Gendered Dimensions of Executive Power,” offered a comparative analysis of women as national political executives. The intellectual engagement of the presenters and the audience sparked a continuing, creative, collaborative process, which has culminated in this book. As Janet M. Martin wrote in one e-mail after another, to one author after another, the time has come to recognize and assess the work being done across our fields and disciplines. Our authors’ strong endorsement of her worldview is evident in their intellectual investment, with chapters that offer new and often controversial conclusions about identity and executive politics.

To give structure and coherence to this analysis, we formulated a series of questions to guide the research and writing. Some of these inquiries had previously been tested and refined by the authors in earlier studies and publications. Others were new to this book. All of them stimulated our imagination and intellect. The most enduring and difficult of them were the following:

- What new research questions, designs, or methodologies can we suggest to executive-politics scholars? Why is it important to

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recognize and integrate the study of identity into the study of executive politics?

- What theories and frameworks are important to the research and analysis of identity and executive politics? How and why should those theories and frameworks be applied in other subfields and disciplines?
- What are the priorities in studying national executives? As we share knowledge across subfields, what are we seeking to analyze about identity, executives, and power? Why is this important?

As these questions indicate, we were at once respectful of the learning fostered within our subfields and disciplines and eager to reach across those intellectual boundaries.

Exploratory studies are meant to engage others with their questions and arguments so that the initial investigations are expanded and tested. That is exactly the hope of the editors and authors of this collection. In presenting our findings about executive decision making, leadership, representation, and power, we look forward to continuing conversations and debates about the relationships among identity, political executives, and executive politics.

Common Challenges

Just as there were shared questions, so also were there common challenges. In addition to writing for readers from widely ranging fields, the authors had to give careful consideration to the integration of diverse theories and frameworks. Of all the intellectual challenges encountered in compiling this collection, perhaps the most compelling related to the relationship between sex-differences and gender analyses. We also were concerned with incorporating the complexity of gender and, more broadly, of identity, into our studies of chief executives.

Sex-Differences and Gender Analysis

The distinction between and the respective contributions of sex-differences and gender analyses are familiar to many scholars. Sex-differences analyses routinely accept the male-female binary; subjects self-identify as male or as female, and their responses to surveys or their actions as public officials are then compared and contrasted. Sex-differences analyses might reveal the attitudes or behavior of men and women to be similar or different. In studies of the U.S. presidency, a “gender gap” has been used in describing the differing support that Republican and Democratic candidates receive from men and women in the November general election. This is a well-established area of research, and although support among women for Democratic and

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Republican presidential candidates has fluctuated since 1960, Democratic presidential candidates have benefited from the votes of women since 1980 (see Carroll 2014; Martin 2003; Whitaker 2008).

Gender analyses instead examine the ideas and roles that are assigned to persons, considering the ways in which biological sexes (not limited to binaries, also including intersexual persons, for example) are defined personally, socially, and politically. Gender, then, is both idea and action—a person both *is* gendered and *does* gender. Sex-differences and gender analyses each have benefited from the other's insights, but they contrast in fundamental ways. Many gender analysts, for example, reject the strict gender binaries in sex-differences studies. The fluidity of gender definitions in gender analyses, conversely, are problematic for many sex-differences scholars. In this book, however, the argument is made that the comparisons delineated by sex-differences scholars set a foundation for the analyses offered by gender scholars, and the findings of gender scholars raise important questions for sex-differences scholars. This interchange, we maintain, facilitates a thoughtful engagement of sex and of gender as distinct yet potentially related identities.

For scholars of politics, whatever their discipline or subfield, the connection between sex and gender is among the most fascinating subjects for study. Especially in an era that has given such primacy to visuals, an elected official's person has become an extremely influential element of her or his career.

Whether campaigning or holding office, officials are intensely aware of the power of visual depiction and craft their image with corresponding care (e.g., see Kernell 1986; Lawrence and Rose 2010; Wayne 2016). Elected officials, in important ways, *embody* their politics. As Sheetal Chhabria notes in Chapter 4, Indian prime minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly relied on carefully constructed visuals to advance his political career and policy agenda. Modi's presentation—like those of many other political actors—delivers an immediate sex-and-gender message. In a world that still expects to see men as national leaders and that routinely holds masculinity as a prerequisite for leadership, sex and gender are readily conflated. As a result, the complexity of the relationship between sex and gender is ignored, overlooked, and dismissed. Working together, scholars of sex differences and of gender can highlight, investigate, and reveal the ways in which each of these facets of identity shapes a political system and its decision making.

This shared contribution is so much a part of this book that it informs the sequencing of its chapters. In each of its three parts, the first chapter is an overarching sex-differences investigation, identifying similarities and differences among women and men. Sex differences studies relating to international, comparative, and U.S. politics are presented in chapters by Amy C. Alexander and Farida Jalalzai, Catherine Reyes-Housholder and

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Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer, and Janet M. Martin, respectively. Drawing on surveys and documents, using quantitative and qualitative methodologies, these authors present findings that set an imposing agenda for future research. Using survey data from fifty-six countries, Alexander and Jalalzai, in Chapter 2, test a series of hypotheses and determine that female heads of state and government serve as symbolic representatives, sending “positive signals that improve political engagement” by women. Reyes-Housholder and Schwindt-Bayer, in Chapter 6, compare the social and political consequences of *presidentas* and *presidentes* in seventeen Latin American countries. They find that “women living under *presidentas* tend to profess higher levels of political activity, controlling for a series of potential confounders.” The authors suggest that in a part of the world that has elected five women *presidentas* in just the past sixteen years yet has been “characterized as a region with low civic activity and political marginalization of women,” women leaders may be important forces for mobilization.

Martin, in Chapter 10, drawing on the archival resources of presidential libraries and women’s organizations, examines why women’s rights were not a priority for U.S. presidents until the latter part of the twentieth century, and then only sporadically. She notes that while human rights have moved firmly onto the presidential foreign-policy agenda, women’s rights in the United States have been set apart from and often set aside from these broader discussions. In these three sex-differences studies, the authors delineate political developments that have the potential to directly affect women’s political engagement, mobilization, status, and power as leaders.

The consequences of these findings are explored in each of three thematic parts through gender analyses. For example, MaryAnne Borrelli and Lilly J. Goren, in Chapter 5, provide a rhetorical analysis that reveals and compares the gender ideologies of recent Republican vice presidential candidates, demonstrating that gender as an idea and as a performance is a crucial element of recent U.S. presidential campaigns. Daniela F. Melo, in Chapter 9, delineates the transnational and domestic pressures on the Portuguese government to change its women-centered policies and sets out the consequences of these policy confrontations for Portugal’s political system and women. Georgia Duerst-Lahti, in Chapter 11, assesses the women-centered policies advanced by the U.S. State Department during Hillary Clinton’s tenure as secretary of state, many of which were continued by her male successor, John Kerry, and finds that policy implementation is highly contingent on the department secretary’s willingness to invest significant political capital in effecting change. Who is included in political processes and decision making, and how they are included, has direct consequences; decisions made by a secretary of state can affect who is, for example, an aid recipient in programs administered throughout the African continent. In these chapters,

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and others, authors show that gender and power are tightly interwoven. The authors also connect gender to changes in political systems, with immediate consequences for wider populations.

These connections between sex-differences and gender analyses eliminate conceptions of gender as purely personal or social. The place of gender in political calculations, as in the crafting of a party nomination speech or the implementation of a foreign-aid policy, and the consequences of gender for the public sphere are incontestable. And the ways in which gender is incorporated in decision and policy making, and the immediate and measurable consequences for individuals worldwide, are revealed. This is what is accomplished when sex-differences and gender analyses are recognized as complementary rather than competing frameworks.

The Complexity of Identity

To state the obvious, examining the contributions of sex-differences and gender analyses focuses attention on two facets of identity, sex and gender. Identity, however, has many facets. The relationships among these facets—race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, and religion, among others—must be considered if we are to understand a decision maker in her or his full complexity. Furthermore, because these facets, singly and in relationship with one another, will affect the power and positionality of an individual, we must consider how each facet is expressed by that decision maker.

This insistence that identity is complex and that its complexity will have profound consequences for a person's power and politics, owes a great deal to the scholarship of intersectionality. The origins of intersectionality can be traced to a law review article by Kimberlé W. Crenshaw (1989), which argued against the dissection of identity in U.S. law. Crenshaw rejected conceptions of persons as having race *or* gender, which had resulted in legal rulings that required African American women to choose either their race or their gender in filing antidiscrimination lawsuits; African American women could claim to have been discriminated against as African Americans or as women but not to have been discriminated against as African American women. African American women, Crenshaw argued, did not have the luxury of being African Americans or being women—they were always both. And because they were always both, always performing their gender and their race, they were affected by a constellation of forces. The ideologies and policies that marginalized women and African Americans were mutually reinforcing. Both bore down on African American women. Identity, Crenshaw wrote, was not merely intersecting—as if one facet were sufficiently distinct that it could simply interact with another—it was *intersectional*; that is, identity was a complex and deeply interwoven set of social and political roles. And the forces that created, informed, and defined those roles

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were mutually reinforcing. African American women were marginalized as African American women. They were not excluded as African Americans *or* as women (a legal dissection), not even as African Americans *and* as women (a conception that gender and race were distinct, if intersecting); they were marginalized as African American women (their race and gender inextricably interwoven). By ignoring the inseparability of race and gender, Crenshaw argued, the judicial system refused to remedy discrimination, so the law supported and reinforced the continuing inequality and marginalization of African American women.

Almost immediately, women-and-politics scholars began to apply intersectional frameworks to additional identities and incorporated their arguments into comparative-politics analyses. In doing so, these scholars continued and expanded understandings of identity as intersectional, as multifaceted, with a complexity that was experienced altogether and in the same moment, not separated and sequential. What was sometimes lost in these studies, however, was the importance of understanding the marginalization experienced by the persons who were living their complex identities and refusing to conform to prevailing standards. Notwithstanding the commitments to diversity and enfranchisement voiced in many countries, governments and political systems have often excluded and disempowered their people. As Janet M. Martin reminds us in Chapter 10, a powerful and too-often-overlooked example is the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which promises that “the right of all citizens of the United States to vote shall not be abridged or denied by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” A close reading of the Fourteenth Amendment finds that citizens are defined as “male.”

It is important to emphasize, therefore, that scholars must connect the complexity of identity to practices of marginalization, assessing the complicity of the political system in furthering inequality. This understanding has informed every chapter in this book, as each author has carefully assessed the inextricability of identity and power in executive politics. Though many of the authors have presented their own interpretations of identity, their consistency in analyzing its complexity, and (more narrowly) the complexity of gender, yields three important insights.

First, authors embraced the conception of identity as multifaceted, with those facets experienced all at once rather than sequentially. In so doing, we were intellectually indebted to intersectionality. Studying decision making and decision makers in the Obama administration, for example, required a careful consideration of gender-race. Karen M. Hult’s analysis, in Chapter 8, of Valerie Jarrett’s office within the White House Office assesses the ways in which Jarrett’s identity as an African American woman and her long-standing relationship with the president and the first lady were integral to

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her selection as a senior adviser and to her decisions as a presidential adviser. If Jarrett's contribution to the substantive representation of women and girls was sometimes ambiguous, so also was her status within the White House Office sometimes uncertain. The force and nuances of marginalization are a central feature of Hult's chapter, as they are in many others.

Second, and relatedly, there was a strong and continuing effort to avoid essentialist conceptions of gender. To insist that gender is one aspect of identity among many is a powerful corrective to the presumption that the "essence" of femininity or masculinity can be distilled into a finite listing of traits and actions. In this book, the awareness that women and men are diverse, though there are patterns in their inclusion or exclusion from positions of power, is showcased in Chapter 13, the comparative analysis of cabinet officers conducted by Maria C. Escobar-Lemmon and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson. Investigating the credentials and qualifications of self-identified women and men cabinet ministers in four Latin American countries and the United States, Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson provide inter- and intragender comparisons, controlling for ministerial post. Carefully coding the many elements of the ministers' careers, these authors mitigate the binaries of a sex-differences analysis. Then the authors weigh the response of prime ministers and presidents to the ministers' qualifications and credentials, assessing the extent to which women are at the center or the margins of the cabinets in which they serve.

Third, the authors and editors have revealed the ways in which identity is integral to decision making by national executives. Cory Charles Gooding's analysis of President Barack Obama's rhetoric, in Chapter 3, exemplifies this commitment. Examining Obama's 2013 commencement address at Morehouse College, Gooding argues that "Obama addresses the tension between the color-blind and individualistic ideals of liberalism *and* the more collective racial orientations existing in the black community through language that speaks to his racial and national communities simultaneously: the language of respectability." Analyzing the rhetoric and policies being articulated at the center, we see that the association of identity with power is intensely dynamic, rarely static, and correspondingly resistant to change.

Overturing Expectations

Scholars take pride in their questioning, even skeptical, mind-set. Political scientists, especially, seek to reveal, and challenge, the status quo. Research that tests our presumptions and expectations, that shifts perceptions and institutes new paradigms, is valued. It may also be disconcerting and uncomfortable, as learning often is.

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Several chapters disrupt the status quo of executive politics and gender studies through their methodological innovations. Catherine Reyes-Housholder, in Chapter 12, for example, offers a new standard for coding policies that advance “pro-women change,” which promises to advance comparative-policy research. Her coding is informed by a nation’s obligations under international law, by the policy priorities of the governmental agency charged with advancing women’s interests, and by women’s organizations affiliated or in partnership with the government. Reyes-Housholder demonstrates the strength of this schema by comparing the policy agendas of, and the exercise of presidential power by, Chilean presidents Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet.

Other chapters introduce questions and topics that have been neglected by executive-politics scholars. More than filling a gap in the existent literature, these chapters open new possibilities for research. Ariella R. Rotramel, in Chapter 7, analyzes the outreach and lack of outreach by U.S. presidents to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. From the Carter through the Obama administrations, LGBT policies have privileged some members of the community at the expense of others—lesbian and gay persons the focus of more policies, bisexual and transgender persons the focus of far fewer. She also delineates the partisan elements of presidential outreach, assessing which administrations have advanced LGBT civil rights and which have empowered a backlash. Rotramel’s analysis is highly integrative, spanning more than one subfield in U.S. politics and gender studies.

Finally, some chapters require readers to confront their preconceptions about identity and executive politics. Sheetal Chhabria’s study of Indian prime minister Narendra Modi’s gender performance, in Chapter 4, details how the prime minister’s performance of traditional masculine *and* feminine gender roles has advanced his career and policy priorities. Her investigation of gender and power in Indian leadership suggests new avenues for research in governments, political systems, and nations.

In their theories and frameworks, research designs and methodologies, questions and findings, the contributors to this collection have acknowledged and then modified, reworked, and even rejected past conceptions of executive politics. The result is a collection that encourages readers to think, research, and write in new ways—an invitation that we hope is widely accepted.

Overview of the Book

The chapters in this book are ordered in ways that allow readers to appreciate the complementarity of their frameworks, as already noted. Also important, the chapters are brought together in ways that showcase their findings on

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issues and controversies of critical importance to the study of national executives. We include an editorial preface (in italics) at the beginning of each chapter to introduce its general concepts and context. Here, we set out the pivotal questions and declarations for the chapters.

Notably, each part has two chapters focusing on the U.S. presidency and two chapters focusing on comparative study of political executives. Alexander and Jalalzai (Chapter 2) and Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (Chapter 13) include the United States in their comparative data sets.

Identity and Ambition

In the first part of the book, the authors look at political executives and the effects of their identities and identity performances. In each instance, the authors draw a connection between the executive and the people, arguing that the identity of the executive profoundly influences the people's political engagement, political ambitions, and political attitudes.

In Chapter 2, Amy C. Alexander and Farida Jalalzai ask whether a woman head of state or government serves as a symbolic and therefore empowering representative for women, stimulating greater interest in and support for women leaders throughout the nation. Alexander and Jalalzai examine public-opinion polls in a cross-national analysis of fifty-six countries that assesses the influence of women chiefs of government and chiefs of state on political activity in the country that each leads.

In Chapter 3, Cory Charles Gooding confronts the intersections and the intersectionality of race and gender in a detailed rhetorical analysis of Obama's 2013 commencement address at Morehouse College. "Those who subscribe to respectability politics view the individual performance of standards and values imposed by white people as the most effective collective strategy for the racial group to gain equitable inclusion into the polity," he writes. "This relationship between individual and group identity is important for discussions of presidential power, whereby the president is a singular actor, using rhetoric and performance to move government."² This negotiation, performed by a biracial president self-identified as black, working to sustain support from a majority white electorate, has contributed to shaping the chief executive's political ambitions, policy agenda, and actions.

In Chapter 4, Sheetal Chhabria's study of India's prime minister Narendra Modi illustrates how a political leader's gender performance can win the support of the international business community while at the same time sustaining support from the Hindu Right, which seeks to protect traditional values. She also argues that the prime minister's gender performance has empowered the Hindu Right, with serious domestic and international policy consequences for India.

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In Chapter 5, MaryAnne Borrelli and Lilly J. Goren provide a comparative rhetorical analysis of Sarah Palin's 2008 and Paul Ryan's 2012 acceptance speeches. In the stories that Palin and Ryan told about their lives and the partisan attacks that they directed against their Democratic opponents in their respective speeches, these two Republican vice presidential nominees revealed a great deal about workings of gender specifically, and identity more generally, in the vice presidency and the presidency.

Policy and Representation

Perhaps because scholarship on the identity of national executives has been so limited, there has been little recognition that these leaders are representatives, as are their cabinet ministers and department secretaries. This book, accordingly, investigates the contributions of the presidents and the presidents' administrations to fulfilling the obligation to represent the people in symbolic, descriptive, and substantive ways. Each of the chapters in the second part of the book offers a longitudinal analysis that delineates the complexity of change across the decades. The richness of symbolic representation in empowering citizens is an aspect of leadership not often addressed by scholars of the presidency and prime ministers.

In Chapter 6, Catherine Reyes-Housholder and Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer's study of seventeen Latin American countries traces the impact of *presidentas* and *presidentes* on the wider population's political activity, as measured by participation in campaigning, attendance at local political meetings, and intention to vote. These authors demonstrate that a national executive's sex does influence political activity throughout the nation that she or he leads. Descriptive and symbolic representation are intertwined.

Ariella R. Rotramel's longitudinal study, in Chapter 7, reveals and evaluates the shifting engagement of the U.S. presidency with the LGBT community. Her study unites rhetorical and policy analysis, exploring the frames that presidents have used in advancing civil rights policy or in empowering the conservative backlash against this diverse community.

In Chapter 8, Karen M. Hult sets out the origins and history of President Obama's White House Office of Public Engagement, which can trace its beginnings to the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. This office, headed by the president's senior adviser and longtime friend, Valerie Jarrett, is pivotal to the administration's initiatives for women and girls, straddling the line between representation and policy.

In Chapter 9, Daniela F. Melo looks at how Portuguese prime ministers have managed pressures to reform their country's women-centered policies. In this chapter, policy outcomes move to the forefront in discussing representation, asking whether policy outcomes generate representation. In a

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formidable combination of top-down and bottom-up forces, both the European Union and domestic women's organizations have sought change. Yet she finds that these prime ministers have, more often than not, retained control of the policy process and their power as national leaders.

Politics and Power

Authors in the third part of the book focus on central features of the national executive most familiar to scholars and perhaps most in need of new methods and new questions. Outcomes matter. Outcomes depend on access to power, the exercise of power, and political processes. Accordingly, the authors in this part of the book investigate executive decision making and leadership worldwide. The processes, timing, and implementation of those decisions; the impact of changes in leadership and in staff; and the consequences of executive politics for constituents are among the critical issues addressed.

In Chapter 10, Janet M. Martin focuses on executive power. She asks why U.S. presidents have not addressed women's rights as human rights. In response, she uses a model of "nondecision-making" to reveal why the absence of a decision is important. Looking at decisions and actions that could have been made, Martin demonstrates that absence of action can indicate either the use of power or the lack of access to power.

In Chapter 11, Georgia Duerst-Lahti, drawing on data from interviews, fieldwork, and focus groups, assesses the effectiveness of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in moving U.S. foreign-policy and development bureaucracies to make gender and women's policy central in diplomatic and development strategies.

In Chapter 12, Catherine Reyes-Housholder compares two successive socialist presidents of Chile, Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet. She assesses how these leaders advanced contrasting legislative agendas, using the powers of their presidency in very different ways to promote their contrasting conceptions of a pro-women policy agenda.

There is more to understanding power and leadership than listing who is in office, as Maria C. Escobar-Lemmon and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson note in their comparative study of cabinet members in five presidential democracies in Chapter 13. The presence of women in a room of policy makers may lead to a change in policy or consideration of viewpoints not previously taken, but a seat at the table is not sufficient for bringing about change. Even after women are included in cabinets, issues of influence, power, and resources remain. Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson draw on social-control theory to compare and contrast the appointment of women and men cabinet officers in sixteen different presidential administrations in five

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countries. They investigate posts where a first woman was appointed and posts where appointing women has become the norm.

This collection is as optimistic as it is critical. Political systems are always changing, and as scholars of politics, we are committed to understanding that change. It is both historical fact and present reality that the identity of national executives influences policy, politics, and power domestically, nationally, and transnationally. We are long overdue in more comprehensively investigating the who and when, the what and where, and above all the how and why of this influence. Earlier studies in our separate disciplines and subfields have suggested answers. Now, in this book, we take the next step of pooling our accumulated wisdom, inviting the reader to join in a collaborative effort to learn what we know about the power of identity in executive politics.

NOTES

1. Officially, the leader of Taiwan is president-elect until May 2016. We thank Farida Jalalzai for the data on women presidents and prime ministers.

2. Respectability politics has, more recently, also been studied in association with other marginalized groups in U.S. society and the U.S. political system, including the LGBT community.

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