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## Electing Women

### *Female Political Representation in Latin America*

Parties have no interest in having more women: to have more women would mean losing men.

—MARÍA ANTONIETA SAA, Chilean legislator (quoted in Nikki Craske, *Women and Politics in Latin America*)

In March 2006, Michelle Bachelet was sworn in as president of Chile. The following year neighboring Argentina also elected a woman to the presidency: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who took office in December 2007. These women seemed to have little in common. Bachelet had never held elected office prior to beginning her presidential term. When Fernández ran for the presidency, however, she was an experienced politician—first having been elected to the legislature of her home province of Santa Cruz—and then occupying a seat in the Chamber of Deputies from 1997 to 2001 before serving three terms in the Senate. Bachelet was a single mother of three and an avowed agnostic. Fernández was not simply a married woman with children, but was married to the president. She transitioned from being First Lady of Argentina to being president. Bachelet became president of what many refer to as the most conservative country in Latin America. Argentina, on the other hand, recently legalized gay marriage and may well be the most liberal country in the region. Since the passage of the world's first gender quota law in 1991, Argentina has welcomed ever-increasing numbers of women into politics.

The political biographies of Michelle Bachelet and Cristina Fernández may be quite different, but these women's paths to presidential power are fundamentally similar: the stories of these two women are stories of candidate selection.

Among Chileans, the victory of the candidate of the Concertación, the governing coalition, was a foregone conclusion. Polls conducted repeatedly

between 2003 and 2005 indicated as much. Survey data revealed that the candidates of the right (Joaquín Lavín and Sebastián Piñera) would be defeated by any of the favorites for the Concertación's nomination. The question was, *Who would be the candidate of the ruling coalition?* How did Bachelet become the candidate of a coalition that had governed Chile for two decades? What pushed the incumbent president to make his preference for Bachelet clear long before the election, even saying in 2004 that "the greatest indication of change would be to have the first female president in the country"? (quoted in Franceschet 2006: 16).

Bachelet's medical background as a pediatrician and her commitment to the Socialist Party earned her a seat on President Ricardo Lagos's cabinet as Minister of Health in 2000. Two years after accepting that post, she became Minister of Defense. President Lagos handpicked Bachelet as his preferred successor, a decision that the Socialist Party, and the other two parties of the coalition's left wing, ultimately adhered to. A scheduled primary between Bachelet and the candidate of the Christian Democratic Party for the Concertación's nomination was canceled by her opponent,<sup>1</sup> who recognized Bachelet's greater popularity.

In the first round of the election, Bachelet received 45.9 percent of the vote. The two candidates of the right together earned a majority of the vote—Piñera received 25.4 percent of the vote and Lavín won 23.2 percent. In the runoff election that followed, Bachelet received 53 percent of the vote. Her opponent received 46.5 percent of the vote. The vote totals had been accurately prognosticated for months: the candidate of the ruling coalition would win the 2005 elections.

The election of Fernández was indisputable from the moment that her candidacy was announced. Fernández was attempting to succeed her husband, Néstor Kirchner, in the presidential office and had been hand-chosen by him to run for the presidency. Because Argentine law bars presidents from immediately succeeding themselves in office more than once but allows them to serve an indefinite number of nonconsecutive terms, Argentines speculated that Fernández and her husband had plans to alternate power between themselves to avoid these term limits.

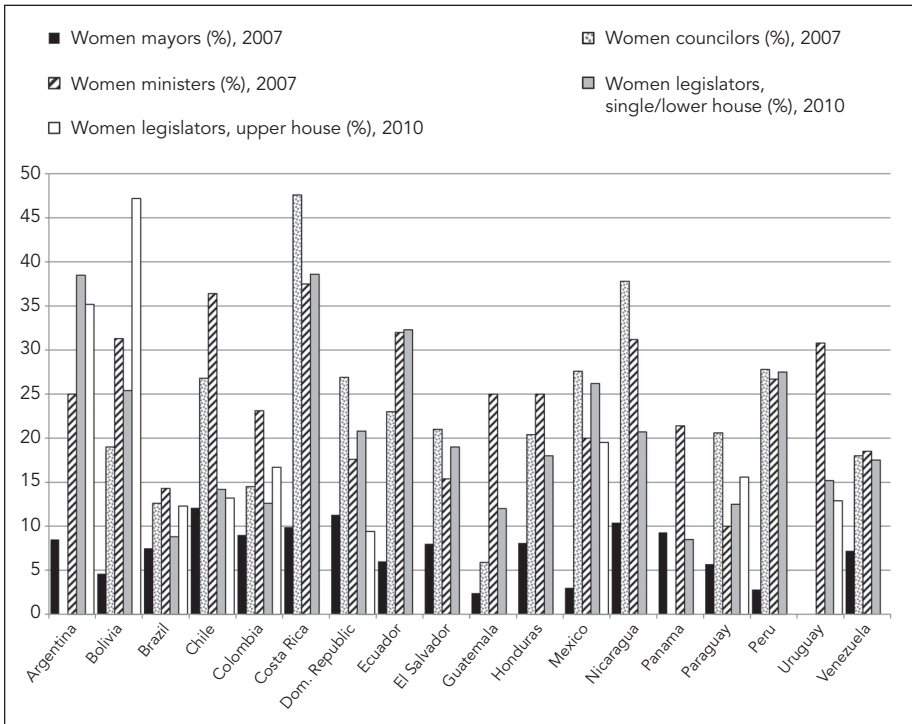
The lack of competition in the election was undeniable: "Fernández will switch places with Kirchner without having competed in a primary for the nomination, debated the other presidential candidates or even campaigned much for votes. That's Peronism for you: Kirchner designated his wife as successor and a clientelistic machinery turned the election into a coronation" (Pérez-Stable 2007). Ultimately, a divided opposition and the immense popularity of the sitting president resulted in an easy win for Fernández,

who won the election with 44.9 percent of the vote. Her nearest rival, Elisa Carrió, obtained 22.9 percent of the vote. The third-place finisher received 16.9 percent of the vote.

The stories of Michelle Bachelet and Cristina Fernández illustrate the importance of candidate selection. The elections that these two women faced had been decided months before voters headed to the polls. The candidate of Chile's ruling coalition would triumph in 2005. President Kirchner's enormous popularity would assure his party's candidate an easy win. The real stories here are about the candidate-selection and candidate-nomination procedures that allowed these women's names to get on the ballot. In this book, I present the argument that candidate selection is instrumental to understanding women's representation in politics and the variation that we see in women's candidacies across political parties in the region. I categorize candidate-selection procedures on two dimensions (exclusivity and centralization), propose a theoretical framework that allows us to understand the effects of exclusivity and centralization on women's representation, and demonstrate that candidate-selection processes that are more exclusive and centralized prove beneficial to women, while those that are more open impede women's access to candidacies. Why do the most "democratic" selection procedures not produce the most representative results? Why is it that exclusive-centralized selection, which is characterized by one or two party elites at the national level making decisions, can lead to increases in female candidacies? This book demonstrates that exclusive and centralized procedures can prove beneficial to female candidacies because they allow women to circumvent both self-nomination and power networks. Those processes that are less centralized and less exclusive magnify the obstacles to women's candidacies. Although candidate-selection processes that are inclusive and decentralized are considered more "democratic," these procedures have the unanticipated and unintended effect of suppressing female candidacies.

I study the effects of these processes on women's municipal-level representation. Graph 1.1 demonstrates that women are poorly represented in local-level politics but that there are significant differences across countries. Analyzing women's representation in municipal politics is important because local office can serve as a stepping-stone to more important political positions. Because these seats are "often less competitive, require less costly campaigns, and are less likely to require relocation away from familial demands," they should be more accessible to women (Vengroff, Nyiri, and Fugiero 2003: 163).<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, traditional ideas of women's proper roles, which allow women to enter politics as "as an extension of their family role to the arena



**Graph 1.1 Women's Political Representation in Latin America**

Source: Data on suffrage: Beatriz Llanos and Kristen Sample, *30 años de democracia ¿En la cresta de la ola? Participación política de la mujer en América Latina* (Miraflores, Peru: International IDEA, 2009), 25. Data on women ministers: *ibid.*, 19. Data on women's representation in legislatures: compiled from <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> (accessed June 28, 2010). Data on the Dominican Republic: compiled from <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> (accessed October 15, 2010). Data on Colombia: compiled from <http://www.congresovisible.org/congresistas/> (accessed October 15, 2010; data for Colombia were unavailable from the Inter-Parliamentary Union between June and October 2010).

of public affairs,” may place local office within women’s reach (Chaney 1979: 20). It is also important to study women’s representation at the local level because a lack of female officeholders at this level could decrease women’s political interest, activism, and sense of political efficacy (see, for example, Atkeson 2003; Brill 1995; High-Pippert and Comer 1998).

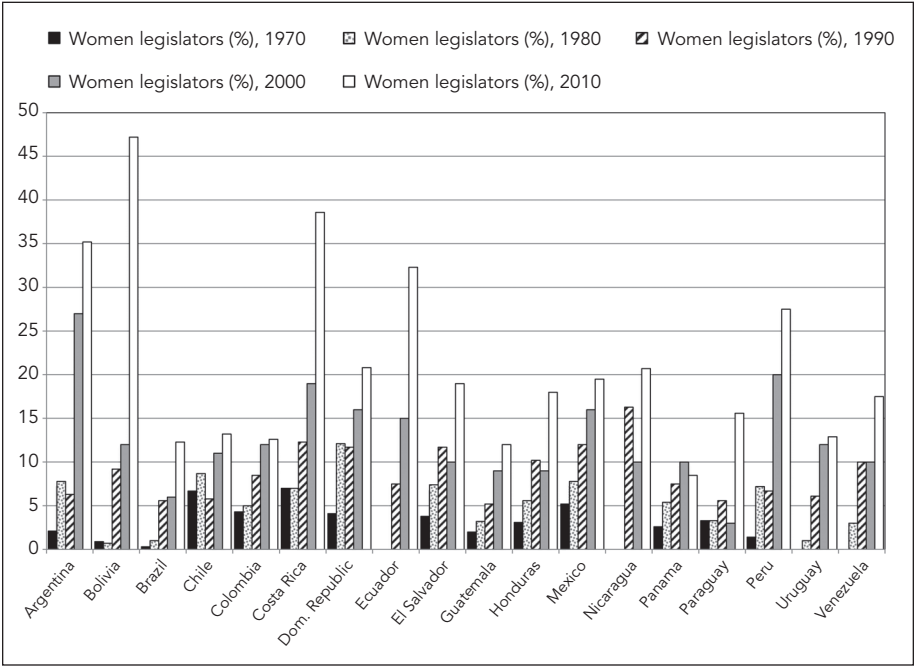
Although this chapter begins with two success stories, women in the region remain inadequately represented at all levels of politics. The fact that Bachelet and Fernández—along with Violeta Chamorro (Nicaragua, 1990–1997), Mireya Moscoso (Panama, 1999–2004), Laura Chinchilla (Costa

Rica, elected 2010), and Dilma Rousseff (Brazil, elected 2010)—have been elected to their nations' highest and most visible office should not obscure the unequal gender balance in politics. Slightly more than half of all Latin American citizens are female, but women occupy only one of every seven seats in legislatures and only about 1 of every 20 mayoral posts in the region. Graph 1.1 details the inequalities that continue to exist for a variety of elected and appointed positions by presenting the most recent data available on women's representation in local- and national-level politics. The data here make clear that tremendous variation can exist not only across countries (for example, Argentine and Brazilian women's representation in the lower house) but also across political offices within countries (for example, women's representation as mayors versus as ministers in Peru). The data in Graph 1.2 put women's current representation in national legislatures in historical context by providing figures on women's legislative representation for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, as well as data for 2010. Here we can see striking changes in women's legislative representation in many countries, especially since 2000.

### Explaining Women's Underrepresentation in Politics

Much empirical work in the field of women and politics is aimed at studying differences across countries (like those shown in Graphs 1.1 and 1.2), or even across politico-geographic regions, at the expense of research that might explain variations that exist across political parties.<sup>3</sup> However, differences across political parties within countries are more significant than the differences that exist across countries; for data on in-country differences across all major political parties in Latin America, see Appendix A.<sup>4</sup> For example, in Nicaragua, the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) holds 38 seats in the National Assembly; 14 of these are occupied by women. The next-largest political party has 25 deputies, but only 2 of these deputies are women. While 37 percent of the legislators in the FSLN are women, only 8 percent of representatives from the Partido Liberal Constitucionalista are female. In Peru, which uses a national gender quota, differences across political parties are still substantial. The Fujimorista Party has more female representation than other parties (42 percent); only one of the seven deputies from the much smaller Unión por el Perú party is a woman. Understanding women's political representation requires examination of the party level, since it is here that significant variation exists.<sup>5</sup>

The primary reasons for women's underrepresentation that have been offered examine socioeconomic variables, cultural factors, and institutional



**Graph 1.2 Women’s Representation in Latin American Legislatures, 1970–2010**

*Source:* Data on women’s representation in legislatures for 2010: compiled from <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> (accessed June 28, 2010; later accessed to include data missing for Colombia and the Dominican Republic). Data for 2000: also available from the Inter-Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif151200.htm>. Data for 1970, 1980, and 1990: compiled from the Inter-Parliamentary Union publication *Women in Parliaments, 1945–1990*, [http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/women45-95\\_en.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/women45-95_en.pdf).

*Note:* Because many of the countries were not continuously democratic between 1970 and 2010, a country’s legislature may have been suspended during the year for which data are provided; therefore, data in each of these columns represent the election of that year or the closest previous election. The 1980 data for Nicaragua reflect the composition of the Council of State, whose members were appointed.

variables. I first turn to these reasons and describe their limitations in accounting for the cross-national variation in women’s representation. Then I point out how these explanations are wholly unsatisfactory for a party-level analysis. Finally, I discuss potential explanations that can be used to specifically examine differences in women’s representation across political parties.

The first set of reasons focuses on socioeconomic factors, using variables such as literacy rates, educational levels, and economic development to explain cross-national variation in women’s representation. Norris and Ingle-

hart present a compelling narrative that details how modernization leads to increases in women's representation:

Modernization creates systematic, predictable changes in gender roles, observable in two phases. First, industrialization brings women into the paid workforce and dramatically reduces fertility rates. During this stage, women make substantial gains in educational opportunities and literacy. Women are enfranchised and begin to participate in representative government, but they still have far less power than men. The second, postindustrial phase brings a shift toward greater gender equality, as women move into higher-status economic roles and gain greater political influence within elected and appointed bodies. Over half the world has not yet begun this process, however, and even the most advanced industrial societies are still undergoing it. (2001: 129)

The chain of events that they describe, however, assumes that women's educational and professional gains, and the corresponding changes in their roles within the family unit, will automatically result in greater representation in politics. This has simply not been the case, as Norris and Inglehart acknowledge (but see Reynolds 1999).<sup>6</sup> If this were the case, then we would expect to see that those Latin American countries with higher scores on modernization variables would also have greater participation by women in politics. We would not anticipate the substantial differences that exist between Argentina and Uruguay, since these two countries have some of the highest gross domestic products (GDPs) per capita in the region (World Bank 2011). We would expect Guatemala and Bolivia to be doing much worse than Brazil and Chile, but this is not true either. A simple correlation coefficient demonstrates that there is almost no relationship between GDP per capita and women's representation in national legislatures (-0.106). There is even less of a correlation between scores on the human development index and women's representation in national legislatures (correlation coefficient of -0.045). These types of socioeconomic explanations have insufficient explanatory power.

The second set of reasons uses cultural variables to explain women's presence in politics by looking at societal attitudes about women's proper roles. Given the difficulties of systematically measuring a concept as nebulous as culture, religion is often used as a proxy for culture, and religion has been found to correlate with women's representation in politics (Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Reynolds 1999; Tripp and Kang 2008). The traditional dominance of

the Catholic Church in Latin America, however, makes this an unsatisfying explanation for the variation that we have seen in the region. Nonetheless, the rise of Protestantism and the growth of evangelical Christian movements in Latin America during the last three decades now provides some cross-national variation in the percentage of adherents to Catholicism. This does little to further our understanding of women's disproportional access to politics: there is little relationship between the percentage of Catholics in a country and the percentage of women in national legislatures (correlation coefficient of 0.18).

Others have used survey data to measure traditional attitudes in order to gauge culture's effects on women's political representation (see, for example, Norris and Inglehart 2001; Inglehart and Norris 2003). Such surveys tend to ask individuals whether women should participate in politics, whether they would vote for a woman for office, or whether men are better suited for politics. Cultural explanations cannot account for the variation in women's representation in Latin America, as demonstrated by polls conducted by Latinobarómetro. For example, Latinobarómetro asked respondents whether they agreed with the following statement: "Men are better political leaders than women." Only 14 percent of Mexicans agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, as did 17 percent of Uruguayans; 50 percent of Dominicans agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, and 35 percent of Nicaraguans and 32 percent of Colombians agreed. However, the differences in representation rates as shown in Graph 1.1 fail to correspond to these percentages (Llanos and Sample 2009).

Surveys like this are problematic in no small part because respondents may wish to appear more egalitarian than they really are; cognizance of a "politically correct" or socially desirable answer may vary across and within countries. One survey, conducted by Gallup in 2000, avoided this potential pitfall by instead asking whether the respondents thought their country was likely to elect a woman president in the near future. The poll was commissioned by the Inter-American Development Bank and carried out in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and El Salvador. About three-quarters of those interviewed thought that their country would elect a woman president in the next 20 years. Argentines were much less optimistic: only 47 percent believed that they would elect a woman president over the next two decades (Inter-American Development Bank 2000). Argentines, of course, elected a woman president in 2007, indicating that citizens may have a skewed assessment of their country's culture and an inadequate grasp of their co-nationals' willingness to support female politicians. Culture, regardless of how it is measured, fails to account for the substantial variation that we see in women's abilities to enter politics in Latin America.



A third group of reasons analyzes political institutions to understand women's representation in politics: proportional representation systems are more advantageous to women than first past the post systems; greater district magnitude leads to a greater proportion of women in office; women are more successful in multimember rather than single-member districts; incumbency prevents women from getting into office, because incumbents usually win and incumbents are usually male;<sup>7</sup> and gender quotas increase women's representation (Duverger 1955; Rule 1981; Andersen and Thorson 1984; Norris 1985; Norris 1987; Rule 1987; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Matland and Taylor 1997; Duerst-Lahti 1998; Matland 1998; Htun and Jones 1999; Norris and Inglehart 2000; Caul 2001; Saint-Germain and Chavez Metoyer 2008). These institutional explanations have proven useful in understanding women's political underrepresentation but cannot account fully for the variation that exists. For example, women are more poorly represented in the Brazilian lower house of congress than in the equivalent Mexican institution despite the fact that the Brazilian legislature is elected via proportional representation and the Mexican chamber uses a mixed system that incorporates single-member district plurality to elect two-fifths of representatives. Furthermore, these institutional approaches are often incapable of explaining change across time. To illustrate, the percentage of women in the Nicaraguan National Assembly has doubled in the past 10 years despite consistency in electoral rules and a failure to adopt a national gender quota law.

Socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional approaches have limited explanatory power. They cannot explain the type of variation that we see across countries within Latin America. Furthermore, these explanations are less useful for an analysis of party-level variation. While significant variation in socioeconomic indicators exists within countries, especially as we compare urban and rural areas, this difference is unlikely to affect a party-level analysis. Unless most political parties are regional parties, socioeconomic variables will not prove useful in explaining women's levels of political representation. Similarly, culture varies within countries, but political parties are not apt to reflect this unless they are predominantly oriented as regional parties. Institutional explanations are often inapplicable to party-level analyses, because electoral systems and rules are held constant—for example, open-list proportional representation is used regardless of which Brazilian political party is under examination. The same is true of district magnitude and the use of term limits.

Two approaches to studying women's representation are potentially fruitful for a party-level analysis: gender quotas and ideology. One institutional explanation that has recently gained scholarly interest is the use of gender

quotas. These quotas can be applied nationally or by individual political parties. In the former case, when gender quotas are a matter of law, they are less likely to explain party-level differences in women's representation (though this is a matter of enforcement mechanisms and party incentives).<sup>8</sup> Gender quotas are a means of altering candidate-selection procedures by compelling parties to select a certain number or percentage of women candidates and at times dictating the spots that women must occupy on candidate lists. Political parties, even prior to the initial use of national gender quotas, had regularly used gender quotas. Gender quotas, which are an important element of candidate selection, are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.<sup>9</sup>

Ideological explanations assume that parties of the left, because of their emphasis on egalitarianism, are more likely to place women into office than parties of the right, which have more conservative ideas about women's public and private roles (Duverger 1955; Rule 1987; Matland and Studlar 1996; Caul 1999; Craske 1999). Furthermore, historic links between women's movements and parties of the left would also lead us to believe that these parties are more likely to have female representation (Kittilson 2006: 45). Kittilson argues that having a leftist party facilitates the adoption of mechanisms that can lead to increases in women's representation. In the Latin American cases, we see that placement on the left-right spectrum does not go as far toward explaining variation across political parties as we might expect. For example, women in Chile's conservative Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI) party are much better represented in local-level politics than women from the parties of the left and center, including those parties that have gender quotas in place (Hinojosa 2009). Alicia Barrera, Secretary General for the leftist Partido por la Democracia of Chile, has stated, "Progressive parties have marginal female representation, because the men have a monopoly on the power" (Praamsma 2005). Saint-Germain and Chavez Metoyer's analysis of the Central American countries found that only the Sandinista Party (FSLN) in Nicaragua was a clear-cut case of a leftist party increasing women's representation (Saint-Germain and Chavez Metoyer 2008: 89–90). In Ecuador, while over 40 percent of female council members were members of right-wing parties, just over 10 percent represented parties of the left; similarly, in Brazil, nearly one-third of mayors were members of parties of the right, while less than 10 percent belonged to left-wing parties (Del Campo 2005). The data in Appendix A confirm that parties of the left do not consistently have higher levels of women's representation than parties of the right. Htun (2005) pointed out that while it appeared that leftist parties did place women into office in the 1990s, this was no longer true by 2005. A rigorous statistical analysis of parties from 18 Latin American countries confirmed this, re-

vealing that ideology did not have a significant effect on women elected or on women nominated to legislative positions (Roza 2010a: 169). Moreover, this type of ideological analysis may be best suited to strong party systems and less useful when applied to a number of the Latin American countries.

This section of the chapter has demonstrated the limited ability of the most commonly used explanations of variations in women's representation in politics. Many of these justifications are simply ill suited to explain the more significant variation that we see: the variation that exists across political parties. The institutional explanation (gender quotas) that is useful to understanding party-level variation, one that alters the candidate-selection procedures that political parties use, is discussed in greater detail in later chapters. Ideological explanations, the most commonly used to describe the type of variation that we are concerned with here, are shown to be less useful in understanding women's representation than the study of candidate selection. The following section presents an argument for the importance of focusing party-level analyses on candidate recruitment, selection, and nomination procedures.

## Why Study Candidate Selection?

It's in the selection procedures for candidacies that women are getting left behind.

—High-ranking PRI official (Interview, February 13, 2003)

The parties are the main filter [and reason] for why women do not assume greater responsibilities in public decisions.

—ADRIANA DELPIANO, Chilean politician (quoted in Susan Franceschet, *Women and Politics in Chile*)

We have long recognized that the process used to select candidates “determines the quality of the deputies elected, of the resultant parliament, often of the members of the government and, to some extent, of a country's politics” (Gallagher 1988: 1). Only recently have we begun to uncover the consequences of candidate-selection procedures for women's political representation. Recruitment and selection processes are malleable, as the overwhelming adoption of primaries in countries across the Latin American region (Poiré 2002; Carey and Polga-Hecimovich 2004) has demonstrated, making the study of these processes an especially promising area for research. Candidate selection is especially important in Latin America given that parties have a monopoly over candidacies in a significant number of countries.<sup>10</sup>

Because of the pivotal role that political parties can play in correcting the current gender imbalance—they not only present candidates for office but also, once in government, guide the political agenda and propose nominees for political appointments—they have been called the “missing variable” in research on women in politics (Baer 1993). The candidate recruitment and nomination procedures that parties use are particularly important since researchers have found that the lack of female officeholders is a consequence of a lack of female candidates (Burrell 1992; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997; Hinojosa 2005; Sanbonmatsu 2006a). As the two quotes that introduce this section indicate, female politicians recognize that candidate recruitment and selection serve as a notable impediment to women’s political representation.

Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski’s study of political recruitment in Great Britain forged a new path for scholars of women and politics (1995); academic attention turned to using candidate recruitment and selection to explain the scarcity of female candidates in different national contexts (Niven 1998; Caul 2001; Tremblay and Pelletier 2001; Fox and Oxley 2003; Lawless 2003; Fox and Lawless 2004; Kittilson 2006; Niven 2006). Research on the effects of candidate selection on women’s representation has largely focused on national-level office, with the exceptions of Sanbonmatsu’s (2006a, 2006b) and Niven’s (2006) work on the United States and Hinojosa’s (2009) study of Chile.

While important work has recently analyzed candidate selection in Latin America (Smith 1979; Camp 1995; Martz 2000; Crisp 2001; De Luca, Jones, and Tula 2001; Taylor-Robinson 2001; Navia 2004; Wuhs 2008; as well as Siavelis and Morgenstern’s 2008 edited volume and various works by Joy Langston and Kathleen Bruhn), only a handful of academics have examined the effects of candidate recruitment and selection procedures on women’s political representation in the region (Baldez 2004a, 2004b; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2004; Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Hinojosa 2005; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2008; Roza 2010a, 2010b).

This book makes an important contribution to this emerging literature. The informal nature of political recruitment in the region may explain the dearth of scholarship on candidate-selection procedures up until recently; studies of candidate selection tend to focus on rules as they are set forth in official party documents, but the “weakness of this approach is that formal rules may have little bearing on informal practices” (Norris and Lovenduski 1995: 9). Because of this disconnect between “what really happens in parties and what the rules indicate should be happening in parties,” the constant rule

changes that take place in the region, and the difficulty in obtaining reliable data from political parties (Freidenberg 2003: 11), understanding candidate-selection processes “requires a substantial amount of research as well as country-specific and party-specific expertise” (Field and Siavelis 2008: 623).<sup>11</sup>

Studies in advanced industrialized countries indicate that discrimination by political party elites (in the form of failing to recruit women candidates, having them run in unwinnable seats, and refusing to support their candidacies) has been substantially reduced (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Burrell 1998; Carroll 2001). In searching for a candidate, however, elites may inadvertently seek qualities or professional backgrounds that are more likely to belong to men than to women (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Peterson and Runyan 1999; Tremblay and Pelletier 2001) and may place women candidates in more difficult districts or steer them away from running in districts where their party is strong (Studlar and McAllister 1991; Niven 2006) or from seeking better political positions (Lublin and Brewer 2003). Some have argued that elites may be reluctant to nominate women because they believe that women candidates will cost their party votes (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Sanbonmatsu 2006a). Academics have analyzed characteristics of candidate-selection procedures to determine which types of processes are advantageous to women.<sup>12</sup>

## Methodology

This book seeks to understand women’s disproportional representation in politics within the Latin American region by examining the candidate-selection processes that political parties use. As I have shown previously, more attention needs to focus on variations in women’s political representation across parties within countries rather than on cross-national analysis. In my examination of candidate-selection procedures, my unit of analysis is at the party level; the unit of analysis, though, is not each political party (for example, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional [PRI] in Mexico), but rather the party in each of the municipalities that I studied because a single political party may employ a variety of recruitment and nomination procedures. In other words the PRI is not one case, but four (i.e., the PRI in Amanalco, Pueblo Viejo, Tianguistenco, and Mérida); my number of cases, then, is a function of studying four municipalities in two countries and studying three to six parties in each of those eight municipalities. The total number of cases under study, then, is 36.<sup>13</sup>

Analyzing two national settings provides a way to dispel concerns that my findings can be applied to only a single country. Thus, my analysis provides

both cross-country and within-country (both cross-party and within-party) comparisons. The research for the main empirical chapters draws heavily from eight months of fieldwork in Chile and seven months of fieldwork in Mexico performed over the course of 2001 to 2004. The majority of interviews, which are listed in Appendix B, were conducted between July 2002 and July 2003. I chose Chile and Mexico for in-depth analysis because they maximize variation in terms of the party system (Chile has a multiparty system often channeled through two coalitions while Mexico now effectively has a three-party system), party stability (at the time of my research Chile had a stable system, whereas Mexico had recently undergone a historic transition away from authoritarianism), and state structure. The use of a federal case (Mexico) and a unitary one (Chile) added substantially to my analysis.<sup>14</sup> Variation in state structure was significant because federalism allowed increased administrative autonomy within parties, whereas in a unitary system like Chile, candidate selection tended to be governed at the national level. Although sub-national party offices exist in both cases—municipal offices in both countries, state-level organizations in Mexico, and provincial and regional offices in Chile—the administrative autonomy seen in the federal government was replicated within political parties. Substantial differences existed among the party organizations in the municipalities studied in Mexico.<sup>15</sup>

Because my intent was to study the effects of selection processes on female candidacies, it was important to choose cases in which women had actually been selected as candidates. To ensure that I chose municipalities where women had been candidates, I selected cases in which women were mayors.<sup>16</sup> Because women who run for office win in numbers comparable to those of men, it was reasonable to choose cases on the basis of the presence of female mayors. At first glance, such a methodological strategy may appear to be an instance of choosing cases on the dependent variable; however, my approach avoided that misstep. Because each party in each municipality was a separate case, I also obtained cases in which women were not mayoral candidates or elected mayors. For instance, in Amanalco, I studied the PRI (which chose a female mayoral candidate) and two cases in which the candidate that emerged was not a woman (the Partido Acción Nacional [PAN] and the Partido de la Revolución Democrática [PRD]). Another advantage of this research strategy is that I control for variation within each municipality on a number of variables that could potentially have explanatory power (for example, education levels or culture).

In each of the two countries, I chose three municipalities that had sitting female mayors. The very limited number of female mayors in both countries

TABLE 1.1. GENDER AND PARTY COMPOSITION OF CASES

Municipality	Gender of Mayor	Party of Mayor	Council Members	Female Council Members	Political Parties in Council
La Serena, Chile	F	RN	17	3	2 RN, 2 PDC, 1 PPD, 1 PRSD, 1 PS
Maule, Chile	F	PDC	5	0	1 RN, 1 PDC, 1 PS, 1 PRSD, 1 PPD
Peñaflor, Chile	M	PDC	5	0	2 PDC, 1 UDI, 1 RN, 1 PS
Talagante, Chile	F	UDI	5	2	2 UDI, 1 PPD, 1 PDC, 1 RN
Amanalco, Mexico	F	PRI	10	1	6 PRI, 2 PAN, 1 PRD, 1 PCD
Mérida, Mexico	F	PAN	17	6	9 PAN, 8 PRI
Pueblo Viejo, Mexico	F	PRD	5	1	3 PRD, 1 PRI, 1 PAN
Tianguistenco, Mexico	M	PRI	10	1	6 PRI, 2 PAN, 2 PRD

PAN, Partido Acción Nacional; PCD, Partido de Centro Democrático; PDC, Partido Demócrata Cristiano; PPD, Partido por la Democracia; PRI, Partido Revolucionario Institucional; PRSD, Partido Radical Social Demócrata; PS, Partido Socialista; RN, Renovación Nacional; UDI, Unión Demócrata Independiente.

dramatically decreased case study options. Of 341 Chilean municipalities, only 40 had female mayors; of 2,443 Mexican municipalities, only 81 were being governed by women. From within this set of possible cases, I selected six cases, chosen to maximize variation in municipal size and political party dominance. I also then chose a fourth municipality in each of the two countries that featured the much more common situation: a male mayor. Case study details are provided in Table 1.1.

Selecting cases that varied in municipal population<sup>17</sup> was important to gauge any possible effects that size might have on the candidate-selection procedures, since I had hypothesized that smaller settings might allow gatekeepers to personally know qualified female candidates.<sup>18</sup> I therefore chose to study small, medium, and large municipalities in each of the two countries (the fourth shadow case, with a male mayor, was a medium-sized municipality).<sup>19</sup> Because I wanted to study a variety of candidate-selection procedures, I tried to maximize variation in the political parties included in my study.<sup>20</sup> Random selection of municipalities with female mayors would have resulted in the overrepresentation of municipalities with PRI mayors in Mexico and

TABLE 1.2. MUNICIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CASE STUDIES

Municipality	Location	Capital City (Provincial/State)	Population
La Serena, Chile	Fourth region	La Serena	144,767
Maule, Chile	Seventh region	Talca	15,840
Peñaflor, Chile	Metropolitan region	Talagante	58,772
Talagante, Chile	Metropolitan region	Talagante	58,909
Amanalco, Mexico	Mexico state	Toluca	21,095
Mérida, Mexico	Yucatán state	Mérida	705,055
Pueblo Viejo, Mexico	Veracruz state	Xalapa	50,329
Tianguistenco, Mexico	Mexico state	Toluca	58,831

UDI mayors in Chile.<sup>21</sup> I chose female mayors representing the UDI, Renovación Nacional (RN), and Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC) in Chile, and in Mexico I chose female mayors representing each of the three major political parties. Because I was interested in the process of becoming a candidate and it might be more difficult for people to recall how they became candidates when more time had elapsed since their initial candidacies, I would have liked to limit my analysis to municipalities where the mayor was in his or her first term. However, I found this impossible in Chile<sup>22</sup> because the vast majority of female mayors who fit this criterion were UDI members from small municipalities, which precluded variation in either party or municipal size. I had hypothesized that there might be some cultural differences across regions that could affect women's experience with the candidate-selection process, and this led me to consider selecting municipalities from diverse regions.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, the very small number of female mayors in the two countries, coupled with my need for variation in terms of parties represented and municipal size, made it impossible to obtain as much geographical variation as I desired, as can be seen in Table 1.2.<sup>24</sup>

I gathered information on candidate-selection procedures from all major parties<sup>25</sup> in these two countries through party documents such as party constitutions and from available secondary sources. In addition to archival work designed to unearth further information on official candidate-selection processes, I conducted over 130 interviews with local-, regional-, and national-level party officials, local-level politicians (predominantly mayors and council members), and academics and political consultants. Within the eight municipalities, I interviewed representatives of all parties that were represented in either the current municipal council or the council of the previous administration. These interviews were semistructured and were intended



to (1) assess the backgrounds of local officeholders, including information on initiation into their political parties, party offices held, previous candidacies, and family, educational, and career profiles; (2) reveal the processes that were used for recruiting and nominating candidates; (3) determine whether elites desired particular characteristics of candidates; and (4) assess the existence of discrimination toward female candidates and imputed discrimination on the part of decision makers.

Interviewing approximately 15 to 30 individuals representing the relevant political parties in each municipality allowed me to triangulate interview responses. Data triangulation, in which data are collected from several different sources, was integral to my research as it allowed me to validate the veracity of the data that I obtained from my respondents. Trotter and Schensul have noted that the “most effective way to ensure reliability and validity of ethnographic data is to obtain comparable, confirmatory data from multiple sources” (1998: 719). Though my research design was positional-approach oriented (interviews with individuals who held formal positions, such as mayor or local party president), interviewees provided me with reputational data (in response to queries about other politically important individuals who might affect candidate selection), which led to further interviews. As Putnam has stated, “Positional analysis tends to overemphasize spurious influence and to underemphasize indirect influence” (1976). By obtaining reputational data from respondents, I extended my research beyond those who held formal power in the municipalities under study.

The case study research that I detail in greater length in the chapters that cover each of the four types of candidate selection is supplemented with a larger *N* analysis of all Chilean municipal candidacies in the 2000 elections.<sup>26</sup> The results of that analysis are provided in Chapter 6. In addition, anecdotal evidence is introduced throughout the empirical chapters to illustrate (rather than test) my argument. This evidence has been gathered from countries across Latin America and includes candidate selection for municipal-level office, as well as positions at regional and national levels. For example, the discussion of exclusive-centralized selection in Chapter 6 is supplemented with a brief description of the candidate-selection practices used by Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori.

The need for scholars of women and politics to study the party level is undeniable. It is here that we see significant variation that simply cannot be explained without examining candidate-selection procedures. In this book, I present an argument concerning the effects of different mechanisms of selection on women’s abilities to become candidates and then use data primarily from Chile and Mexico to demonstrate these effects.

## Overview of the Book

This introductory chapter sets the stage for an analysis of women's representation in Latin America by presenting data on the disproportional presence of women in elected office. It also addresses the problems with the most widely used variables to explain this underrepresentation and argues for studying the role that candidate selection plays in determining how women fare politically.

Chapter 2 focuses on the question, *What is keeping women out of politics?* I argue that the percentage of female representatives cannot be explained by examining either the supply of potential female candidates or the demand by the population for women candidates. I demonstrate that women's underrepresentation in politics is not a result of a lack of qualified women to run for office (supply problem). If women who do run for office are unable to win seats because voters are unwilling to cast their ballots for them, then the problem is one of demand, but that is not the case either. Using data from across Latin America on women's educational levels, labor force participation rates, and professional paths, as well as cross-national data on marriage and childbirth, I prove that a large supply of potential female candidates exists. By analyzing survey data on women's interest in politics and their historical record of political participation, I determine that there is also a supply of women who are interested in entering politics. Polling and electoral data from select Latin American countries indicate that no demand problem exists: men and women are overwhelmingly willing to vote for female candidates. The bottleneck to women's political representation results from neither a lack of female candidates nor discrimination in the voting booth.

Chapter 3 provides a theoretical framework for understanding where the bottleneck really is. The chapter examines the role of candidate-selection processes in limiting the participation of women; the theoretical framework focuses on two dimensions—exclusivity and centralization—to develop a typology of selection processes and explain their gendered effects. I present the central argument of this book: candidate-selection processes that are more centralized and exclusive (i.e., those processes that take place at the national level and in which decisions are made by a very small group) can lead to increases in female candidacies because they allow women to circumvent both self-nomination and power networks, while those processes that are less centralized and less exclusive will increase obstacles to women's candidacies. While either centralization or exclusivity will have positive effects on female candidacies, the combination of decentralized decision

making and more inclusive procedures is argued to have especially negative results.

Chapter 4 analyzes the paradox of primaries. The global consensus that primaries are the most “democratic” process for choosing party nominees has led to their wholesale adoption, from Argentina to Uruguay. The effects of these primaries on women’s representation have been largely understudied, despite the fact that the causes and consequences of the switch to primaries have received substantial scholarly attention. Women do win primaries, but Chapter 4 presents qualitative and quantitative data to support the claim that inclusive-decentralized selection results in fewer female candidacies and provides a detailed accounting of the reasons why primaries in particular are problematic for women. The chapter uses case studies from the Chilean parties of the center-left coalition and Mexico’s PRI and PRD to demonstrate that inclusive-decentralized selection processes are disadvantageous to women’s representation.

Chapter 5 establishes that inclusive-centralized and exclusive-decentralized candidate-selection procedures have both advantages and disadvantages for female candidacies. While the inclusivity of the process keeps women out, the centralized selection is beneficial to female candidacies. Drawing extensively from data collected on Mexico’s PAN and supplemented by data from other Latin American parties, I show that inclusive processes negatively affect female candidates. The lack of recruitment by party personnel in an inclusive-decentralized system forces candidates to self-nominate. Using case studies, I show that when women nominees do emerge from these exclusive-decentralized systems, they are likely to be part of traditional monopolies of power. By avoiding one obstacle to women’s representation, each of these two candidate-selection procedures yields mixed results.

Chapter 6 demonstrates that selection processes that are exclusive and centralized can prove advantageous to female candidates. I draw from municipal case studies from Chile’s UDI and Mexico’s PRI, as well as other cases from across Latin America, to illustrate that exclusive-centralized candidate selection processes can prove beneficial to women’s candidacies. However, these practices, which we can group under the name of *dedazos*—the term regularly applied to the practice of handpicking candidates in Mexico—are falling out of favor. Using the cases of Juan Perón during his second and third administrations, Peru during the authoritarian period of the 1990s, and others, I argue that candidate selection in authoritarian periods and in situations of party-system collapse can produce an increase in women politicians because of reliance on exclusive-centralized selection processes. Chapter 6 also notes that the process of appointment has unexplored

parallels to exclusive-centralized selection. By analyzing women's inclusion in appointed positions, I establish that, like exclusive-centralized selection, appointment systems lead to greater female representation.

Chapter 7 explores a form of candidate selection that hits closer to home. Hereditary rule is most likely the oldest means of candidate selection, but its importance in producing both male and female politicians has been largely undertheorized in the modern study of candidate selection. Women in Latin America have often risen to power in their roles as—and perhaps because they are—family members of political men. These women are a varied bunch: from the mayor of the small town of Pueblo Viejo in Mexico (who while campaigning for the seat that her husband had previously occupied often heard, “Just don’t be like that husband of yours”) to Susana Higuchi of Peru (who attempted to challenge her own husband for the presidency). The chapter uses the framework developed in Chapter 3 to explain the candidacies of widows, daughters, and wives and analyzes recent legislative efforts from across Latin America to prevent family members of incumbents from running for office.

Chapter 8 studies the use of gender quotas. Quotas have altered candidate-selection procedures across Latin America. Not all countries in the region have legislated quotas, but even in those countries without national quotas, many parties have adopted quotas. The chapter analyzes the complex interaction between quota rules and candidate selection and explores the effects of the former on the latter. Quotas have the potential to dramatically increase women's representation, but in order for quotas to have this effect we must understand how quotas and candidate-selection processes interact.

Chapter 9 concludes the book by summarizing the counterintuitive findings of this text—that it is not the candidate-selection procedures that are normally considered more “democratic” that increase women's representation but rather those that are closed off to most and are being made at the national level—and details the substantial empirical implications of these findings. I then address ways in which parties, civil society, and states can mitigate the effects of gendered candidate-selection procedures. These recommendations are meant to be compatible with a broad range of selection procedures, thus allowing parties to retain favored practices while still counteracting obstacles to female representation.