

WOMEN AND EXECUTIVE POLITICS

Diana Z. O'Brien and Catherine Reyes-Housholder

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Women have made significant inroads in national-level executive politics. These global gains were perhaps most visible in Latin America, which by 2014 was on the vanguard of women's executive power. For a few months that year, female presidents simultaneously led four Latin American countries governing approximately 40% of the region's population. Chile's *presidenta* appointed a gender parity cabinet at the beginning of her first term, naming an equal number of female and male ministers. Other presidents in the region followed suit with parity or near-parity cabinets.

Yet, Latin America also demonstrates the precariousness of these advances. Despite viable female candidacies in most recent elections, men regained their monopoly on presidential power in March 2018. Women's headway in cabinets has likewise shown signs of stagnation or even regression. Brazil, which was once governed by a woman who appointed record numbers of female ministers, now features an all-male cabinet. Policy outcomes for women have also been mixed, and it is unclear how citizens have reacted to women's variable gains in executive politics.

The Latin American experience illustrates how the notable advances in women's entry into the executive branch have also been accompanied by unexpected setbacks. To address these gains and reversals, this chapter poses three related questions. Why do we need women in executive politics? How do women access executive power? What are the consequences of their inclusion?

In answering these questions, we argue that this comparatively young subfield can advance its research agenda in four ways: first, by clarifying the normative imperatives for women's presence in executive politics in modern democracies; second, by borrowing less from women and legislative politics research and integrating more insights from executive politics;

third, by developing conditional hypotheses to explain women's mixed impact on policy and public opinion; and fourth, by exploring new arenas in which women presidents, prime ministers, and cabinet officials may shape politics.

Below we begin by identifying a central paradigm driving this literature---the executive branch is gendered masculine, perpetuating women's exclusion. We next explore normative arguments for women's greater participation that are tailored to executives' distinct positions and roles. We then outline the main methodological challenges to this normatively compelling research for both quantitative and qualitative scholars. Despite these challenges, we find that existing work has produced compelling studies of women's access to power. It shows that cultural variables and mass-level indicators of gender equality do not explain women's inclusion in executive politics as well as they predict women's presence in legislative politics. Instead, candidate supply and the existence of political opportunities are more important factors.

Beyond access, we also consider the consequences of women in the executive branch with respect to policy and audience effects. Initial findings on these fronts are decidedly mixed. Overall, female leaders and ministers appear less likely to prioritize women-friendly reforms than female legislators, possibly due to differences in their roles, constituencies and institutions. Finally, while some studies find that female executives exert different symbolic effects on citizens, others reveal null results. Building on these insights, we outline strategies for advancing research on women in executive politics.

MOTIVATING PARADIGM: THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AS A GENDERED INSTITUTION

Gender--often defined as the characteristics and roles associated with biological males and females-- creates power inequalities. A central assumption of the literature on women in the executive branch is that this political arena is gendered masculine. Executive branch institutions were designed (or have evolved) to privilege biological males, particularly those with masculinist traits. Qualities linked to the male sex--such as toughness and decisiveness--as well as

conventionally masculine leadership styles are highly valued within these institutions (Sjoberg 2014). Indeed, the executive branch is arguably more masculine than other political institutions, including legislatures, which place greater value on deliberation and collaboration (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995). This institutional masculinity is in turn linked to the undervaluing of feminalist leadership and the long-standing, systematic exclusion of women.

Building on this observation, a second underlying assumption is that we cannot wholly understand the executive branch without accounting for gender. Taking gender seriously not only allows us to explain why men are overrepresented, but also how ministries are allocated (with women more likely to serve in the education and health portfolios and men more likely to serve in finance and defense ministries). Considering gender can even illuminate research puzzles that may initially seem unrelated to women and politics. For example, acknowledging that policy remits are gendered (i.e., that they privilege masculine or feminine traits) helps to explain the differential prestige and desirability of cabinet portfolios. Gendered expectations explain why some chief executives can politically capitalize on crises and others fail to do so. Gender likewise shapes how citizens perceive and judge their (fe)male leaders. Any study that does not account for gender thus lacks at least some explanatory power.

A third premise embedded in this literature is that women have been unjustly excluded from executive politics, not only to their own detriment, but also to the detriment of the political system and society. Existing literature, however, has yet to fully justify this fundamental, and highly consequential, assumption. We help rectify this oversight by clarifying the rationale for more female chief executives and cabinet ministers (that is, a reduction in male dominance and bias in the executive branch). While far from exhaustive, these arguments can help further motivate scholarship on this topic.

Why Democracies Need Women in Executive Politics

Drawing heavily on theories of legislative representation, justifications for increasing women's presence in politics have focused on both the normative and policy implications of their inclusion in (and exclusion from) office. Though often applied to women in executive politics, the different roles and responsibilities of legislators and executives render these arguments more strained.

First, advocates for women's numeric (descriptive) representation rightly argue that women's exclusion from politics is fundamentally unjust. Women makeup half the population and should thus hold half of all political posts. This is an especially compelling argument with respect to legislatures, which are explicitly tasked with representing the will of the people. Indeed, parliamentarians provide the only direct link between citizens and the state. It is less clear, however, that these arguments apply to executive branch posts, where the link to the public is often indirect. Citizens vote for members of parliament rather than for their prime minister, for example. Cabinet members in both presidential and parliamentary systems are appointed rather than popularly elected. The executive branch does not have the mandate to mirror the citizenry, but rather can be viewed as a team selected by the winning party or parties to govern the state. The representational burden is thus thought to be lower than in legislatures, which is in part why gender quota laws are much less likely to be applied to these offices.

Second, and again in contrast to legislators, executives are not necessarily expected to give voice to, and act on behalf of, subsets of constituents. To the contrary, chief executives and their cabinets must interpret and pursue the country's broader interests, which can be at odds with those of some legislators' constituencies (Kriner and Reeves 2015). It is thus unclear whether we can claim that women in the executive branch should act specifically on behalf of women. Even if we could normatively justify this demand, in practice the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation in the executive branch is equivocal (see more below).

Based on these arguments, one might conclude that as long as democracies elect enough female legislators, there is little need to increase women's presence in executive politics. This directly contradicts paradigmatic assumptions of the literature on gender and the executive

branch, and suggests the need for stronger arguments supporting women's (s)election to these posts. Thus, rather than emphasizing descriptive and substantive representation, scholars should consider other ways in which greater gender balance in executive politics could enhance modern democracies.

An alternative argument for women's inclusion concerns the quality of executive governance. Chief executives and their ministers wield unparalleled formal power (Alemán and Tsebelis 2005; Carey and Shugart 1998; Cox and Morgenstern 2001). The high concentration of authority raises the stakes for (s)electing the most competent executives. Political talent---or the ability to exercise executive power effectively---is randomly distributed between the sexes (Phillips 1995). Women's exclusion reduces countries' pools of potential presidents, prime ministers and cabinet officials by about half. This likely diminishes the quality of leadership. Put differently, the overwhelming and unwarranted pro-male bias constitutes a failure in meritocracy, or the ideal of governance by "the best of the best." The obvious solution is to allow women and men to compete on more even ground for executive offices, thereby broadening the talent pool and enhancing the quality of governance. Indeed, empirical evidence shows that greater competition between men and women at the sub-national level enhances competency among elected politicians by weeding out "mediocre" men (Besley et al. 2017).

Executives' unparalleled symbolic power likewise augments the importance of women's participation. Presidents, prime ministers and their cabinets are the state's most visible political figures. Many have argued that the exclusion of women in politics signals that governance is primarily a male affair, discourages women citizens' participation, and ultimately erodes the legitimacy of modern democracies (Burns and Scholzman 2001; Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo 2017; Mansbridge 1999). Executives' unique symbolic roles multiply the importance of women's presence in this arena. Demonstrating that all citizens--women and men--can participate in executive politics may enhance citizens' support for, and trust in, democracies.

Finally, women's inclusion may be a necessary (though likely not sufficient) condition for positively regendering executive branch politics and meeting citizens' evolving demands. Global trends, including the decline of war and citizens' increased reliance on the welfare state, suggest a feminization of executive branch politics. Chief executives and their ministers may, in turn, need to demonstrate more gender diverse traits and leadership styles. Although biological males can display stereotypically feminine characteristics (and vice versa), the entry of more women in executive politics may also help address demands for certain types of leaders. This could further enhance the quality and legitimacy of modern democracies, particularly in light of the executive branch's unique policymaking and symbolic powers.

CHALLENGES TO STUDYING WOMEN AND EXECUTIVE POLITICS

Increasing women's access to national executive posts could improve democracies worldwide. This observation, in turn, motivates research on how women gain and wield executive power. Yet, scholars face significant challenges in pursuing this research due to (1) limited observations and randomization, and (2) difficulty in data acquisition. The first challenge pertains mostly to quantitative scholarship, while the second affects both quantitative and qualitative research.

Limited Observations and Randomization

For many years, there seemed to be too few women in executive office to generate reliable statistical estimates of the causes and consequences of women's access to power. Women first gained executive power via ministerial positions over 100 years ago. Early examples of female cabinet members include Alexandra Kollontai (People's Commissar for Social Welfare in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, 1917-18), Constance Markievicz (Minister for Labour of the Irish Republic, 1919–22), and Margaret Bondfield (British Minister of Labour, 1929–31). The first female head of government, Sirimavo Bandaranaike became prime minister

of Sri Lanka in 1960, and the first female president, Argentina's Isabel Perón, came to power in 1974. Yet, despite these early inroads, men continue to dominate national executive politics. As of January 2018, women hold approximately 18% of ministerial posts and 7% of chief executive positions worldwide.

Though women remain underrepresented in the executive branch, particularly as heads of government, their numbers are now sufficiently large to support statistical analyses. Beginning in the 1990s, scholars began using quantitative methods to study female cabinet appointees (Davis 1997; Reynolds 1999). A number of more recent works examine female ministers globally (Krook and O'Brien 2012) and in virtually every region of the world, including Latin America (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005, 2016), sub-Saharan Africa (Arriola and Johnson 2014), and Western (Claveria 2014) and Eastern Europe (Bego 2014). While small numbers continue to challenge the study of female chief executives, scholars have found several workarounds. Some increase the number of observations by taking a global, rather than regional, perspective (Jalalzai 2013) or achieve this by studying male and female candidates for executive office, including party leaders (O'Brien 2015). Others use duration models to examine the time until women first enter office (O'Brien 2015, Barnes and O'Brien 2018), or model the election of a female chief executive as a rare event (Thames and Williams 2013).

A more intractable challenge concerns credibly inferring causality via the potential outcomes framework. Here the problem is identifying a random source of variation in the explanatory variables of interest. Countries with female heads of government, and governments that appoint many female cabinet ministers, differ from those that do not on a number of dimensions. Research on the causes and consequences of women's access to executive power thus often suffers from endogeneity issues. Some studies have ameliorated such concerns by leveraging natural (O'Brien and Rickne 2016) or survey (Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017) experiments, but this work remains rare.

Difficulty in Data Acquisition

Although relatively few women occupy executive-level positions, this political arena generates a wealth of other data, such as media coverage of executives' activities as well as their (auto)biographies. Executive decision-making nevertheless remains difficult to observe, as it often occurs in closed-door meetings and informal stages and settings. It is particularly challenging for gender scholars to gain insights by interviewing executive officials (an approach widely used in the women in legislative politics literature).

To begin with, executive institutions' masculinist characteristics mean that gender topics are often seen as "niche" issues, relevant only for small constituencies of women activists, and hence insufficiently important to merit discussion with a researcher. Men may also refuse interview requests because they fear accusations of (presumably unintentional) sexism, or fail to recognize their own privilege as men. Women operating in the executive branch may prefer to discuss topics other than gender because they are concerned that their sex will overshadow their other, more highly valued qualities. In short, gender is often seen as a relatively unimportant, but also highly sensitive issue.

Finally, even when scholars do secure interviews with (former) presidents, prime ministers, and cabinet officials, gender often operates in ways that can be difficult for them---and the researcher---to discern. Respondents may fail to see the ways in which "politics as usual" is gendered, and because the male-dominated culture is so deeply ingrained in executive institutions, female interviewees may not acknowledge sexism. Together these issues reduce the availability and reliability of data.

A final challenge concerns media reports on executive politics. Although press coverage of executive activities abounds, it is hardly "objective" data that researchers can unproblematically employ in historical or statistical analyses. Issues related to women and gender receive less attention than economic and security issues, and this coverage is often sexist. Researchers must thus account for the potential inaccuracies in these secondhand accounts, which

could require triangulating data sources. Gender scholars often critically interpret the coverage of female and male executives, sometimes by explicitly applying a gendered analytical lens (Murray 2010).

EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP ON WOMEN AND EXECUTIVE POLITICS

Despite these limitations, a growing literature explores the causes and consequences of women's inclusion in the executive branch. Scholars to date have paid the most attention to women's entry into office, particularly cabinet posts. A secondary, but rapidly accumulating group of studies considers the policy and audience effects of women's inclusion. Much of this scholarship borrows theories concerning women in legislatures and tests them on executive posts. Together, these studies suggest that the results from scholarship on female parliamentarians do not generalize to female cabinet ministers and heads of government.

Accessing Executive Power

Quantitative and qualitative research has examined many possible predictors of women's variable presence in office, which we categorize into three groups: culture and development, selection criteria, and political opportunities. This line of research suggests that the effects of societal levels of gender equality and economic advancement indirectly operate through increasing the number of female legislators. Formal rules and informal norms, on the other hand, create diverse obstacles to women's entry into the executive branch. Finally, crises can open opportunities for women seeking chief executive posts.

Culture and Development

Scholars have imported versions of modernization theories from the literature on women in legislatures to establish whether these factors also predict women's entry into executive politics (Norris and Inglehart 2003). However, the notion that more gender egalitarian and economically developed societies include more women in the executive branch does not

consistently hold. Indeed these cultural factors sometimes operate in ways that undermine such hypotheses.

Whereas some works find that economic development and women's education levels (Arriola and Johnson 2014; Bego 2014) and religious traditions (Reynolds 1999) are positively correlated with female ministers, others do not (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Krook and O'Brien 2012; Stockemer and Sundstrom 2017). Contradicting cultural theories, research also consistently finds that women's workforce participation is negatively associated with women's inclusion in cabinets (Arriola and Johnson 2014, Barnes and O'Brien 2018, Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005). Gender equality at the mass level also fails to explain women's (s)election as chief executives (Jalalzai 2008). Indeed, the first female heads of government emerged in highly gender-segregated developing states, such as the aforementioned Sri Lanka in the 1960s and Argentina in the 1970s.

The role of these mass-level factors thus appears primarily indirect, operating through their effect on the overall supply of women with prior political experience (Blondel 1987, Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005, Krook and O'Brien 2012, Whitford et al. 2007). Gender equality and economic development can bolster the number of women in legislatures (Inglehart and Norris 2003), which is the most consistent predictor of women's inclusion in the executive branch. In parliamentary systems, this is because ministers are often drawn directly from the legislature. Female parliamentarians thus act as the "supply force for the presence of women in ministerial lines" (Whitford et al. 2007, 563). Even in presidential systems, where ministers do not have to come from the national assembly, Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2005) suggest that the presence of female legislators increases the number of women eligible for cabinet posts. Women's presence is likewise positively correlated with the (s)election of female presidents and prime ministers (Jalalzai 2013).

Selection Rules and Norms

In contrast to mass-level factors, women's inclusion is more influenced by the rules and norms governing (s)election to executive posts. One of the primary factors affecting selection procedures is the distinction between presidential and parliamentary regimes, though regime type operates differently for cabinets and heads of government. Women's presence in ministerial positions tends to be somewhat higher in presidential than parliamentary systems (Bego 2014; Stockemer and Sundstrom 2017), but women are more likely to become prime ministers than presidents (Jalalzai 2013; Thames and Williams 2013). The positive impact of presidential regimes on women's selection as ministers may result from presidents' greater discretion in assembling their cabinets (Blondel 1985). The negative impact on women's likelihood of governing could relate to the fact that direct presidential elections require candidates to finance and mount national campaigns.

Political parties' preferences also shape selection criteria. In Europe and Latin America, left-leaning governments are more likely to place women in cabinets (Claveria 2014; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Moon and Fountain 1997; Reynolds 1999; Reyes-Housholder 2016) and to nominate women to high prestige portfolios (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Studlar and Moncrief 1999). Looking across 53 established democracies, Stockemer and Sundstrom (2017) find that the positive effect of leftist and liberal governments is even more pronounced after 2000. The hypothesis that left parties are more conducive to women's rise to chief executive posts has received more mixed support. On the one hand, a global analysis from 1960 to 2010 suggests that women are more likely to come from left-wing parties than those on the right (Gray and Baturu forthcoming), and Latin America's recent female presidents mostly subscribed to a leftist ideology. On the other hand, Müller-Rommel and Vercesi

(2017) show that in Europe female prime ministers are more likely to come from center-right parties.

In addition to regime type and party preferences, women's entry is also shaped by informal ways of doing politics and often unstated selection rules. Women initially ascended to chief executive offices in countries governed by family dynasties (Genovese 2013; Jalalzai 2016). Marital and father-daughter relationships, especially in Asia, seemed to be an important selection factor (Richter 1990; Thompson 2002). Opportunities for women to uphold their family's grip on power tended to emerge when no male relative was available to lead (Richter 1990). Despite an early emphasis on family ties, these connections were never as salient in established parliamentary democracies, and scholars question their applicability to the post-2005 rise of Latin American *presidentas* (Reyes-Housholder and Thomas 2018).

Though family ties are becoming less important as women's participation in politics becomes more normalized (Gray and Baturo forthcoming), scholars have continued to examine the role of other informal selection norms. Unwritten selection criteria can relate to candidates' qualifications such as background characteristics, credentials, and connections. Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2016) find that male and female cabinet appointees in five presidential democracies bring similar political capital resources to their positions. Because female ministers have comparable backgrounds to men, and experience equal treatment in their posts, they can be viewed as integrated into male appointment norms. Examining women's ministerial careers in federal, provincial, and territorial cabinets, Tremblay and Stockemer (2013) find that Canadian women holding cabinet portfolios differ from female legislators with no ministerial responsibilities with respect to education, parliamentary experience, and age when first elected. A comparison of 23 advanced industrial democracies shows no statistically significant gender differences in subsequent career paths of most departing ministers (Claveria and Verge 2015). This literature therefore suggests that in order to gain executive power, women must (and indeed

do) obtain similar qualifications as men. At the same time, these studies help to explain women's relatively reduced ministerial presence, as men are more likely to meet these criteria than women.

Norms about selection criteria extend beyond individual-level characteristics. Franceschet, Annesley, and Beckwith (2017) note that ministers are often chosen in accordance with informal rules about which groups must be represented in cabinet. Although frequently contested, such norms concerning women's inclusion in executive office have diffused across countries and regions (Bauer and Okpotor 2013; Jacob et. al 2014), and today some baseline level of women's ministerial presence is expected in many states. At the same time, only a handful of countries have formally established gender quotas for cabinets. And, despite a handful of high-profile gendered-balanced cabinets in countries like Chile, Canada, France, Italy, Spain, and Sweden, male-dominated cabinets remain the informal norm (Franceschet and Thomas 2015). Arguably, no country has established a norm of gender parity, or a 50/50 distribution of ministerial posts between women and men.

Finally, the power and remit of a particular post affects the number of women considered viable contenders. Institutional power shapes the desirability of executive positions, meaning that some posts are imbued with more authority and resources, and have more prestigious remits. While no formal rule excludes women from the most prestigious executive posts, these positions are both highly coveted and gendered masculine, and thus more likely to be held by men. Female cabinet ministers are more likely to occupy low-prestige portfolios with feminine remits (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2009, Reynolds 1999, Studlar and Moncrief 1999). Similarly, to the extent that women have acted as national leaders, they are more likely to serve in dual executives where power is shared between the president and prime minister. The female leader often acts as a ceremonial figurehead with real authority exercised by her male counterpart (Jalalzai 2013).

Political Opportunities

Finally, scholars have dedicated special attention to the role played by political opportunity structures. In particular, women are sometimes able to leverage political openings resulting from crises in order to access chief executive posts. Early research suggested that women became presidents and prime ministers in unstable or transitioning countries (Genovese 2013; Jalalzai 2008; Montecinos 2017). Indeed, twentieth century examples from Asia seem to substantiate this explanation (Richter 1990; Thompson 2002), though the rise of female presidents in Latin America appears less related to regime crisis (Reyes-Housholder and Thomas 2018).

Recent explanations for the rise of female prime ministers focus on the role of party-level crises (Beckwith 2015; O'Brien 2015; Williarly 2008). Beckwith argues that women are more likely to take over party leadership when scandals or electoral failures oust the male party leader. Such situations create uncertainty about the future success of the party, effectively dissuading some male party elites from competing and clearing the way for female leadership. O'Brien shows that women are more likely to head parties that are losing vote share, which further suggests that these women must reverse their parties' fortunes in order to become prime minister.

Political opportunities appear to operate differently according to regime type. Women in parliamentary regimes are more likely to come to power in weakened parties. In contrast, female presidents in Latin America have gained office by succeeding popular male incumbents from the same party. It is unclear whether these high-profile successes constitute an aberration---and women are in fact more likely to run presidential campaigns in minor parties and those losing vote share---or whether the different modes of leadership selection across regime types create divergent gendered outcomes.

Executive Gender and Policy Effects

Influenced by theories of the descriptive-substantive representation link in legislatures, scholarship on the policy impact of female executives has focused largely on women's issues. A second line of research addresses conventionally masculine policy domains, including conflict and defense. Both sets of studies yield mixed results.

Female-Friendly Policies

Because of women's unique life experiences, scholars expect female legislators to promote gender equality and female-friendly policies more than their male counterparts. A vast set of empirical studies supports this prediction. Yet, research on executive politics has yielded inconsistent findings. Women's greater presence in cabinets is positively associated with policies facilitating paid employment during motherhood (Atchison and Down 2009, Atchison 2015), as well as status gains in gender-equality issues, like reproduction and gender violence (Annesley, Engeli, and Gains 2015). Other studies yield null results (Annesley et al. 2010; Annesley, Engeli, and Gains 2015).

Compared to female legislators, female chief executives seem to pursue women-friendly and gender equality legislation far less, and their efforts seem to vary even more widely. Explanations for this variation among heads of government have focused on idiosyncratic differences related to leaders' feminism, individual psychologies and personalities, career trajectories, or country contexts (Bauer and Tremblay 2011; Davidson-Schmich 2011; Henderson 2013; Von Wahl 2011; Steinberg 2008; Genovese and Steckenrider 2013; Macaulay 2017). Feminist attitudes and actors interact with institutions to shape outcomes (Waylen 2016).

Beyond individual personalities and preferences, the behavior of women in the executive branch is explained by the incentives these female leaders face. Reyes-Housholder (forthcoming) argues

that female leaders in Latin America possess greater incentives (core constituencies of women) and capacities (access to pro-women policymaking expertise) to promote pro-women reforms. In contrast, Sykes (2009) argues that Anglo systems discourage women from acting on behalf of women, claiming that “female cabinet ministers have generally needed to put aside feminist priorities and preferences and embrace the masculinism that Anglo institutions require” (pg. 38). Together, these insights suggest that scholars should not simply ask whether women in the executive branch promote gynocentric policy, but why politicians of both sexes take up (or ignore) these issues. Recognizing the motivations and constraints facing executive branch politicians is also a further reminder that the descriptive-substantive link should not be a central argument for women’s inclusion in this branch of government.

Masculine Policies

Another body of scholarship addresses women’s effects on policy areas stereotypically associated with men: military conflict and defense. The fact that these are among the most conventionally masculine policy domains---and that they are central to the functioning of the state and responsibilities of the executive branch---doubly augments interest in this topic. However, as with female-friendly policy, initial work in this area yields mixed findings.

In some instances, women appear to make different, more stereotypically feminine policy decisions. Female foreign policy and defense leaders sometimes promote gender-focused aid and “pro-feminist [policy] rhetoric” (Bashevkin 2014; Duerst-Lahti 2016). Female defense ministers facilitate access to frontline combat positions for women in the military (Barnes and O’Brien 2018). In other cases women conform to--or even strengthen--the masculinist status quo. Female chief executives and defense ministers increase defense spending and conflict behavior in advanced industrialized democracies (Koch and Fulton 2011). Female foreign ministers likewise decrease foreign aid spending (Lu and Breuning 2014). Female chief executives appear slightly

more likely to initiate a military dispute (Horowitz, Stam and Ellis 2015). Female-led states are more likely to have their disputes reciprocated, and consequently escalate disputes more than male-led governments (Post and Sen 2015).

What explains these mixed findings on women's decision-making on these traditionally masculine issues? Existing literature suggests that women may be responding to their diverse political environments. In some cases, the regimes that are most willing to select women for conventionally male-dominated posts (such as defense ministers) are also more conflict averse (Barnes and O'Brien 2018). It is unsurprising that women's presence is associated with dovish policies in these circumstances. In other cases, female politicians find themselves combating gender stereotypes. Female chief executives are thought to escalate disputes because male leaders perceive them to be weaker. Female leaders thus adopt more aggressive foreign policies in order to gain credibility in masculinized leadership positions (Dube and Harish 2017; Koch and Fulton 2011).

Although these initial mixed findings are far from conclusive, they do seem to contradict the expectation that women's entry into executive politics and the spread of democratic peace go hand in hand (see above). The results also may suggest that it is unrealistic to expect the few women who have entered the executive branch to immediately upend centuries-long traditions of masculinist bias and preferences. As we explain below, future work in this area will require scholars to account for the different political contexts that shape incentives and constraints for women and men to challenge the status quo. Significant regendering of executive politics, particularly in highly masculine policy areas, is more likely to occur over the long rather than the short term.

Executive Gender and Audience Effects

Does the sex of executive office holders influence citizens' behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs?

Symbolic representation theories posit that the mere presence of women in office sends cues that shape political participation, attitudes toward government, and views on gender equality. Yet, the handful of initial studies conducted so far have yielded both positive and null results concerning the impact of women in this arena.

Several projects examine citizens' attitudes and behavior in cross-national perspective. Focusing on 20 advanced industrial democracies, Beauregard (2016) shows that women's numeric representation in cabinets is linked to protest participation, but has no effect on (or even decreases) other forms of political activity. Using World Values Survey (WVS) data, Liu and Banaszak (2016) show that female ministers are associated with higher levels of political participation in established democracies. Alexander and Jalalzai (2016) use a broader set of WVS data to suggest that female executives are associated with higher voting rates and greater political interest for both men and women. Female chief executives are also linked to support for female leaders, though only in low democracy states. Finally, Barnes and Taylor-Robinson (2018) find women's presence in high-profile, typically masculinized cabinet portfolios to be positively associated with both women's and men's satisfaction with, and confidence in, government, but uncorrelated with more positive evaluations of women's ability to lead.

A subset of work focuses special attention on Latin America, a site of notable female gains. Morgan and Buice (2013) find that women's presence in Latin American cabinets bolsters men's support for women as political leaders. Barnes and Jones (2016) likewise show that women's appointments to provincial cabinets in Argentina are associated with female (but not male) constituents willingness to contact local-level officials. Concerning chief executives, Reyes-Housholder and Schwindt-Bayer (2016) show that the presence of a female president is correlated with higher levels of women's political activity. Yet, Carreras (2017) finds no immediate impact of viable female presidential candidates on women's political engagement in the region.

In addition to generating mixed results, these observational studies are limited in their ability to infer causality. Because female leaders are not randomly assigned, politics that (s)elect them may also express different attitudes and behaviors, evoking the classic endogeneity problem: these women may not cause, but instead are a consequence of, these other factors. The following section elaborates on ways to overcome these issues with experimental approaches.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Existing research offers an important set of results on how women access power. We know, for example, that women's presence in legislatures opens doors for women seeking executive posts. Informal norms establish baseline expectations about women's inclusion, and variation in selection criteria affects women's numeric representation. Likewise, moments of crisis can create opportunities to deviate from the male-dominated status quo. At the same time, preliminary studies also generate mixed findings, particularly with respect to women's impact. Women's presence does not generate uniform policy changes and citizens do not respond to female chief executives and ministers in predictable ways.

These findings likely reflect both the nuances of political life and the relative youth of this subfield. They also suggest conditional relationships that have yet to be fully theorized. Research on women in executive politics can further develop by more fully integrating both the executive politics and gender and politics literatures, thereby explicating the gendered consequences of the institutional rules and norms regulating executive branch politics. Doing so reveals that women face specific challenges and opportunities in terms of access, governing, and public perceptions.

Rethinking and Broadening Pathways to Power Research

Despite the blossoming scholarship on women's access to executive office, scholars have yet to adequately theorize how pathways to power may be gendered. Existing research generally ignores the fact that entry into the executive branch is a multi-stage process. Work on female chief executives, for example, contrasts states that have been female led to those that have not, and therefore only considers the final step in this process. Consequently, we know little about where and why women are exiting the pipeline to power. More studies should compare cases where women ran in elections and won to those in which they ran and lost, and those in which they failed to emerge as viable candidates.

Questions about the mechanisms driving the negative correlation between presidentialism and female leadership are related to this problem of under theorized pathways to power. Voter or elite biases against women may account for this relationship, but the extent to which such biases harm female candidates are likely influenced by the size of the selectorate, campaign regulations, and the formalization and personalization of the overall selection procedures. Work establishing when, where, and why women are losing out in leadership selection processes can help solve outstanding puzzles in the literature on women in executive politics.

Focusing on pathways to power also raises question about which kinds of women reach executive posts. Future studies can further test Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson's (2016) argument concerning the similarities between female and male ministers by examining cabinet appointees in regions outside of Latin America, as well as female presidents and prime ministers. This is crucial not only for identifying the supply pool for executive positions, but also for understanding the consequences of women's access to power. If the women (s)ected have identical backgrounds to their male counterparts, women's inclusion--although still normatively justified by other arguments--may not radically alter executive politics. Indeed, this may explain some of the null findings vis-à-vis policy and audience effects.

Rethinking and Broadening Policy Impact Research

To enrich the study of women's impact on executive politics, researchers should look beyond gendered policy arenas to examine alternative dimensions of policy and also gendered differences in governing styles. At the same time, we counsel caution when asking whether women are transformational leaders. Women in executive politics are sometimes incentivized to innovate in terms of legislative content and leadership style, but also face constraints in doing so. Research should therefore explore the conditions under which women and men legislate and lead both differently and similarly.

Turning to policy impacts, we showed above that scholarship on chief executives' promotion of pro-women legislation has often posited idiosyncratic explanations, such as female leaders' career trajectories and personalities. Yet, individual life experiences may be less determinant for chief executives than for legislators. In part because of the complexity of their role and the daily crises they must manage, executives rely more heavily on bureaucrats and experts to help them prioritize issues and craft long-term policy solutions.

Moving forward, we recommend a more systematic theorization of female and male leaders' motivations and constraints for innovating policy content. Reyes-Housholder (forthcoming), for example, argues that female presidents are more likely to mobilize women voters, and therefore often face greater incentives to pursue pro-women reforms. Female presidents are also more likely to network with elite feminists who then provide them with greater policymaking expertise, thus enhancing their capacity to legislate on behalf of women. Not all women, however, are incentivized to pursue female-friendly policy. Indeed, Reyes-Housholder concludes that female presidents who do not mobilize women and network with feminists are unlikely to do so. Likewise, female prime ministers dependent on maintaining the confidence of overwhelmingly male legislatures---or female ministers selected by male chief executives---may be less likely to innovate. To the contrary, we would expect these women to behave similarly to their male counterparts.

Beyond feminine and masculine issue areas, researchers should also pursue broader questions surrounding the construction of the policy agenda. For example, Greene and O'Brien (2016) assess whether the presence of a female leader is associated with issue entrepreneurship and greater issue diversity on parties' policy platforms. Future work could likewise examine whether women are more likely to hue to party platforms and honor their campaign promises, particularly if women are especially likely to come to power via institutionalized parties.

New work should also move beyond policy outcomes to examine the ways in which women deploy executive power and fulfill its unique roles. As in policy research, scholarship on governing styles will likely generate competing hypotheses and reveal conditional relationships. On the one hand, we may expect few across-the-board differences. Many sociological and psychological studies show that specific positions or roles determine leadership styles more than gender (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt 2001). Men and women, in turn, will fulfill their duties according to their identities as executives, not their gender-role identities. The masculine nature of executive office may also pressure women to act like their male predecessors and/or adopt a conventionally masculine style and discourse (as was famously the case for Britain's first female prime minister, Margaret Thatcher).

On the other hand, we may anticipate at least some differences in the ways women and men govern. Women's traditional exclusion from executive politics clearly affects their access to power, which may in turn encourage different, and perhaps more democratic, ways of governing. If citizens are more likely to select female leaders during crises and scandals, for example, they may also expect women to behave differently from their male counterparts. This could motivate women to prioritize anti-corruption issues, unilaterally oust officials accused of corruption, and/or more carefully monitor their own behavior in office. Likewise, if women campaign in ways that positively highlight their gender identity (Reyes-Housholder 2017), then the public may be more likely to reward them for cultivating a stereotypically feminine leadership style while in office.

These competing theoretical expectations suggest a series of questions that extend far beyond whether women in the executive promote female-friendly or masculine policies. Under what conditions, for example, do women display more democratic and horizontal governance styles? Shair-Rosenfield and Stoyan (2018), for example, detect differences in the use of unilateral executive power contingent on presidential popularity. When their approval ratings are high, female presidents issue fewer decrees than men in Latin America. Yet, when their ratings are low, female and male presidents behave similarly. Future work in this vein could examine whether women are less likely to act in personalistic ways and if this is a function of the types of parties that select female leaders. Likewise, work should ask whether and when female leaders cooperate more with the legislature and their coalition partners.

Gender likely not only affects governing styles, but is also conditionally salient depending on the broader institutional context. Consider, for example, the delegation of power. O'Brien et al. (2015) and Reyes-Housholder (2016) both show that the sex of the chief executive influences the appointment of female cabinet ministers. Their findings suggest that these differing governing styles are contingent on the incentives facing women in power. Female prime ministers are less likely to appoint female ministers than their left-leaning male counterparts (O'Brien et al. 2015), while female presidents are more likely to do so (Reyes-Housholder 2016). Among other questions, future research can explore the conditional relationships between leaders' sex and cabinet instability, examining whether and when female leaders are more or less likely to replace ministers for example in times of crisis.

Rethinking and Broadening Audience Effects Research

The empirical evidence on citizens' perceptions of, and reactions to, female leaders is also preliminary and inconclusive, with some (but not all) studies yielding null results. Just as women govern differently than men under some conditions but not others, male and female

leaders sometimes send different signals to---and are evaluated differently by---the electorate. We reiterate our call for more nuanced research on this front, particularly scholarship theorizing and testing the conditional relationship between executive sex and citizens' behaviors, attitudes and opinions.

With respect to audience effects, a foundational and yet understudied question concerns perceptions of the "success" of women in executive politics, particularly citizens' approval ratings. Higher levels of public approval enable executives to lead more effectively, pursue their legislative agendas, and protect their legacies. Female presidents have lower ratings than their male counterparts, controlling for potential confounders such as the state of the economy (Carreras et al. 2017; Reyes-Housholder 2018), suggesting that differential citizen evaluations may impede women's successful governance.

Assessments of women's "successful" performance in executive politics will likely affect both their longevity in office and the subsequent (s)election of women for these posts. Approval ratings are closely related to likelihoods of impeachment or coups in presidential systems (Pérez-Liñán 2007), prime ministers' tenures (Müller-Rommel and Vercesi 2017), as well as reelection rates in virtually all modern democracies. Ministers' popularity likewise helps determine their longevity in their posts. Müller-Rommel and Vercesi (2017) show that female prime ministers have a shorter duration in office, another sign that female leaders possibly face greater challenges in governing. Yet, the exact nature and scope of these gendered challenges to female leadership remain unknown.

One gendered obstacle to achieving high public approval ratings may relate to the oft-cited double binds and different--indeed higher--expectations for women in office (Murray 2010, O'Brien 2015). A number of factors may drive gendered divergences in expectations, including media coverage and electoral campaigns. If by virtue of their novelty, for example, female presidents raise expectations for change, then they may be more susceptible to disappointing the public. Similarly, Reyes-Housholder (2018) shows that Latin American citizens punish female

presidents more for corruption scandals. She argues that the public expects these women to be more honest and less corrupt than men, and thus holds them to higher moral standards.

Approval ratings, in turn, likely condition the symbolic consequences of women's presence in office. Most obviously, they can affect perceptions about women's ability to govern and the likelihood of other women accessing executive power in the near future. The mixed results concerning female leaders' effects on citizens' attitudes and behavior may thus be explained by variation in the popularity and perceived effectiveness of female leaders. The burden on women is particularly great for first female presidents and prime ministers. Highly successful female leaders will likely erode traditional gender stereotypes about women in politics, while failed female leaders will likely reinforce these ideas.

Finally, complementing observational studies, natural and survey experiments can increase the validity of findings concerning audience effects. In addition to minimizing endogeneity problems, experimental research could also help isolate mechanisms that amplify and/or inhibit these outcomes. Evidence from a survey experiment conducted in Brazil, for example, suggests that citizens respond differently to male and female executives at the sub-national level. A hypothetical female governor positively affected women's political attitudes, engagement, and anticipated political activity, but had a lesser effect on men's attitudes (Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017). This study focused on novelty, but other survey experiments can test whether governing style and approval ratings may also condition the relationship between executives' sex and citizen behaviors and attitudes.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter surveys the rapidly developing literature on women's variable inclusion in multiple types of national executive offices worldwide. This line of research clearly shares a set of underlying assumptions: the executive branch is a highly masculine institution that has systematically excluded women and cannot be understood without considering gender (i.e., the

norms, stereotypes, expectations, and power relations applied to men and women). Empirical work, in turn, has made impressive inroads in explaining women's access to power, but to date has yielded mixed results concerning the consequences of women's inclusion. These mixed findings in turn suggest that a myriad of exciting research avenues lay ahead.

The career of Angela Merkel, Germany's current Chancellor and the de facto leader of Europe exemplifies the importance of this area of study. Gender influenced not only her rise to power in a party weakened by a corruption scandal (Williarty 2008, Beckwith 2015), but also her strategies to maintain and enhance that power. Her cabinet appointments, policy goals, and public image have each been shaped by gender, in ways that can be both subtle and more overt. Failing to take gender seriously thus results in an incomplete portrait of executive politics.

The Merkel case illustrates that executive branch scholars must pay greater attention to gendered dynamics, particularly as women's presence grows. Women and politics researchers, in turn, should also incorporate insights from the broader executive politics literature. Doing so will facilitate the development of rigorous, context-dependent theories that account for the unique opportunities and constraints facing female heads of government and ministers. The ascension of women like Merkel, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Jacinda Ardern—coupled with the persistence and reemergence of male dominance in other countries and posts—suggest that the study of women's uneven gains in this arena, and their contingent impact on policy and governance, are among the most innovative and exciting areas of research in executive politics.

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