

Bias in Perceptions of Political Gender Leadership in Latin America

By

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Political equality is fundamental for democracy. Yet, globally, women are not equally represented in political offices (Paxton, Hughes and Barnes, 2021). Gender bias against women politicians has been identified as one of the main sources of political exclusion (Eagly and Carli 2007b). Yet, there still much we do not know about how prejudices towards women in politics vary depending on the context or how biases might change over time. This dissertation is composed of three research papers that consider different expressions of gender bias, how women's presence in politics might transform sexist beliefs, and the consequences of a biased electorate for women looking to participate in formal politics.

Using different methodologies and data, the dissertation draws on Latin American cases to challenge conventional theoretical frameworks and explore nuances in gender biases. The Latin American region offers valuable opportunities for the study of gender biases and perceptions of women's ability to govern. There are several reasons why this is the case. The first concerns the role of *marianism* (Stevens 1973) and the prevalence and visibility of women in public life, and how these factors shape the stereotypes associated with women citizens. Latin Americans' perceptions of women's roles differ from stereotypes of women that are conventional in other regions around the world that have received comparatively more attention in previous research. Second, Latin America's comparatively higher and heterogenous numerical presence of women in political office, in addition to the electoral laws designed to increase women's descriptive representation, offers empirical opportunities to study gender bias consequences and

transformations. Finally, the bulk of research on biases towards women in politics has been focused mainly on developed democracies.<sup>1</sup> The study of individuals' perceptions in developing contexts is useful to evaluate the replicability of established studies and expand our understanding of nuances in political biases.

Applying a comparative perspective, Chapter 2 challenges the generalizability of conventional theories of individuals' gender biases. I show how, despite considering political leadership as masculine, individuals in Latin America evaluate women politicians as better political leaders than men. To generate the data for this chapter, I designed and implemented a survey experiment in Argentina, Colombia, Chile, and Mexico with the goal of identifying the relationship between perceptions of political leadership and evaluations of men and women candidates. I find that, counterintuitively, Latin American voters evaluate hypothetical women politicians as more likely than men to have desirable traits for political leadership: traits such as competence, integrity, and strength.

In Chapter 3, analyzing AmericasBarometer survey data combined with administrative data, I explore whether and how women's political presence might change citizens' perceptions towards women in politics. I find that countries where more women occupy political office show lower levels of hostile and benevolent sexism. In particular, the findings support the notion that women in the most visible and powerful seat—the Presidency—have a positive influence on gender bias.

Chapter 4 studies how the public's perceptions of women in politics present a challenge to actual women candidates running in real elections. To do this, I use data from pre-election

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<sup>1</sup> Some important exceptions are Aguilar, Cunow, and Desposato (2015) and Clayton et al.(2019)



interviews with women and men political candidates in Bolivian local and national elections. I find that women candidates identify that sometimes their gender brings them an advantage; they tend to be perceived as more transparent, better at redistributing goods, and better at public administration. Nevertheless, contrary to men, women candidates report that their leadership is constantly questioned, and that they are judged for the perceived misdeeds of other women politicians.

Together, the three empirical chapters tell a complex story regarding gender political bias in Latin America. Chapter 2 shows that citizens in Latin America evaluate women politicians as holding better qualities for political leadership than men. However, Chapter 3 suggests that this positive bias is the result of women's idealization. When individuals experience women in political power, the predicted probability of thinking that women are better at running the economy, for example, decreases. The public's impressions of women candidates, covered in Chapter 4, also reflect these relationships. Candidates are aware of voters' positive stereotypes. Yet, women candidates consider that these are undermined by doubts in their actual leadership efforts and also report being victims of sexist violence.

### 1.1. Paper abstracts

#### Chapter 2. Revising Role Congruity Theory: Understanding Bias toward Women Politicians in Latin America

Gender role congruity theory states that, because men dominate politics, politics and political leadership are associated with masculine traits, and that congruity gives an electoral advantage to men (vs. women) who run for office. While gender role congruity theory has been extensively studied in American politics, whether and how it operates in different contexts is less well understood. I argue that the nature of gender role congruity theory should be highly dependent

on the context. I present original data from four Latin-American countries demonstrating this point and challenging a key aspect of the conventional theory. Specifically, the results support its first premise: there is congruity between stereotypes of political leadership and politicians who are men, and incongruity between leadership and women candidates. However, contrary to the second premise, this incongruity *benefits* women politicians. Latin American publics assess women as better political leaders than men because women candidates are characterized as having both agentic and communal traits. I argue that this stems from the presence of women in the public space and the positive stereotypes associated with Latin American women. Further, I find suggestive evidence that this idealization can have negative downstream consequences for women in leadership: in some cases, citizens with more actual experience with women's political leadership express less favorable views of women candidates.

### Chapter 3. The Effect of Women Occupying Political Office on Bias Against Women in Politicians: Evidence from Latin America

There is a general expectation that women's descriptive representation can positively impact women's symbolic representation. Yet, less is known about the effect of women's presence in political office on individuals' gender biases. Moreover, the current small body of research on the topic has found mixed results. In this paper, I study how women occupying national and local executive and legislative offices (elected and appointed) can affect hostile and benevolent sexism against women. Using data from 16 Latin American countries, I find that there is a positive relationship between women's numerical representation and citizens' beliefs about women's abilities to govern. However, the connection highly depends on the office level women occupy, the individual's gender, and the type of sexism. I contribute to the existing literature by exploring gender bias nuances and contemplating how the kind of seat women occupy can affect the publics'

perceptions differently. I conclude that women's leadership must be visible and perceived as merited to fight against gender bias.

#### Chapter 4. How Gender Shapes the Experience of Running for Office: A Comparative Study of Women and Men Candidates from Bolivia's Local and National Elections (2020-2021)

How are experiences of running for office affected by candidates' gender in the presence and absence of gender quotas? Quota laws have been introduced as a solution for women's political underrepresentation. However, despite improving women's descriptive representation by increasing the number of women candidates, it is not clear if quotas have an effect on the selection and campaign experiences of women running for office. Drawing from 36 interviews with women and men candidates for national (with quotas) and local (without quotas) elections, this paper offers evidence of gender's prevalence in defining how women and men candidates approach and experience the electoral process differently. Regarding candidates' selection, the presence of quotas lowers the entry bar for women, increasing the value of their particular background. Yet, parties still retain a gate-keeping role over women's candidacies. When they are not forced to nominate women, they tend to select men and prefer women with trajectories similar to their male counterparts. Moreover, quota laws do not reduce voters' gender bias. Women still walk a thin line between the negative and positive consequences of their gender. On the one hand, because they are women, candidates are perceived as transparent and capable of redistributing goods and administering the economy. On the other, contrary to men, women's leadership is constantly questioned. And, as this chapter reveals, they even face backlash that stems from other women's wrongdoings.

## Chapter 2

### Revising Role Congruity Theory:

#### Understanding Bias toward Women Politicians in Latin America

##### 2.1. Introduction

In presidential campaigns in the early 2000s, Michele Bachelet (Chile) and Cristina Fernández (Argentina) argued that their gender made them uniquely qualified to understand and respond to the public (Christie 2015; Vitale and Maizels 2011), and Dilma Rousseff (Brazil) touted herself as “the mother of the people” (Pires 2011). The use of highly feminized language by successful high-profile women politicians to appeal to voters is striking. It challenges an existing assumption that women politicians must either masculinize their image to appear as viable leaders or else be marginalized from politics (Bauer 2017; Bauer and Carpinella 2018; Dolan 2010; Thomas and Wilcox 2005). Masculinization is one available antidote to a situation in which stereotypes associated with being a woman detract from a candidate’s presumed political efficacy (Beckwith 2005). Generally, there is agreement that women candidates face demand-side barriers to being elected due to a biased electorate (Beckwith 2005; Duerst-Lahti 2005; Eagly and Steffen 1984; Hawkesworth 2003; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004, 2015). Yet if feminine stereotypes are perceived negatively in politics, why do the campaigns of successful Latin American women leaders place emphasis on precisely these stereotypes?

This paper draws on Latin American cases to challenge conventional theoretical frameworks and offer new perspectives regarding bias against women. The bulk of research on biases towards women candidates is based on the analysis of one case study: the United States

(Diekman and Goodfriend 2006; Gervais and Hillard 2011; Hoyt and Burnette 2013; Ritter and Yoder 2004; Rosette and Tost 2010). Other world regions—including Latin America—have been comparatively overlooked (among the exceptions, see Aguilar, Cunow and Desposato (2015) and Clayton et al.(2019)). The experience and characteristics of many Latin American countries with respect to women’s leadership vary significantly from the U.S. case. This is particularly true with respect to the experience that the Latin American public has had vis-à-vis a higher prevalence and visibility of women in public life and the stereotypes associated with women citizens. Historically, women have been active parts of social movements, political organizations, and the labor force (Biles 2009; Deere 2005; Jaquette 2018; Paxton, Hughes, and Green 2006). More importantly, women in the region have been perceived—mainly due to their role as mothers—as strong, capable, and proactive (Castillo et al. 2010; Rocha-Sánchez and Díaz-Loving 2005; Stevens 1973). This raises the possibility that Latin Americans use these types of positive preconceptions about women as anchors in evaluating women’s political leadership (Bauer 2020; Biernat and Kobrynowicz 1997).

Conventional perspectives on women in politics are shaped by role congruity theory, which states that (1) because men dominate politics, politics and political leadership are associated with masculine traits, producing a perceived incongruity between women’s characteristics and the requirements of political leadership and (2) incongruity results in prejudice toward women politicians, giving an electoral advantage to men (vs. women) who run for office (Eagly and Karau 2002). In this paper, I demonstrate how the nature of the gender bias against women politicians in Latin America in some ways comports with role congruity theory’s expectations but, in other cases, is unique. Using original survey data from four Latin American countries, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, I identify stereotypes associated with women politicians, men politicians,

and political leaders with no reference to gender. To assess the underlying tenets of role congruity theory, I evaluate the congruity between political leadership and men politicians and the incongruity between political leadership and women politicians in Latin America. I ask: how closely related are perceptions of political leadership to how individuals perceive men candidates and women candidates?

In keeping with role congruity theory's expectations, I find support for the first component: there is a congruity between political leadership and men politicians, as well as an incongruity between individuals' perceptions of political leadership and the stereotypes associated with women running for political office. *However*, and contrary to the second component, I find that the direction of the incongruity benefits women in Latin America. When it comes to stereotypes related to traits such as leadership, empathy, integrity, competence, and personality, while the public rates men as equal to political leadership, women's ratings are superior in every dimension. This finding helps us to understand why some high-profile women politicians lean on feminine stereotypes in campaigning for office in Latin America.

But does this suggest that women in Latin America have an easier time succeeding within the political domain? I argue it does not. I show evidence that suggests the advantage stems from the idealization of abstract women politicians. When individuals use women in politics as referents to form their judgment, they evaluate women's leadership less positively. This idealization, more than conforming to gender roles (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018), can serve as a double-edged sword. On one hand, it can create a situation in which Latin American women candidates can successfully run and win on highly feminized campaigns. Yet politics remains viewed as a man's game: my findings show that Latin Americans associate politics with men. Therefore, on the other hand, the high expectations for women collide with expectations over performance in this

masculine arena in ways that create high and ill-fitting standards for women politicians to meet once they are in office (Bauer 2020).

## 2.2. Stereotypes, Gender Biases, and Role Congruity Theory

Individuals use stereotypes while forming judgments. Because stereotypes are particularly accessible and less cognitively demanding, they are likely to be used in politics when the electoral environment facing voters is complex (Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz 1999; Lau and Redlawsk 2001). Voters use candidate gender to form expectations about candidate traits and issue competencies that work as heuristic aids in electoral decision-making (Bauer 2020; Mo 2014). Although this simplifies decision-making tasks, there are downsides to stereotyping, which can manifest in false beliefs, errors, prejudice, and discrimination (Gilovich and Griffin 2002). As such, it is important to examine how stereotypes affect evaluations of political leaders to assess the extent to which the former constitute barriers to the success of the latter.

Social role theory argues that family and occupational roles foster gender stereotypes (Eagly and Steffen 1984). That is, stereotypes stem from the activities traditionally performed by different genders. Because women have higher probabilities of being caregivers and men of being part of the labor force, women are believed to have more communality, femininity, other-profitability, warmth, expressiveness, or collectivism; while men are associated with traits such as agency, rationality, masculinity, self-profitability, competence, or individualism (Cuddy et al. 2015; Deaux and Lewis 1984).

In politics, historically, there has been a dominant presence of men assuming political roles and an underrepresentation of women. As a consequence, politics is seen as a “man’s game,” as a fulfilling one of men’s social roles (Beckwith 2005; Hawkesworth 2003). Previous research finds that individuals hold male-stereotypical expectations for political leaders (Eagly and Carli 2007a;

Koenig et al. 2011). The stereotypes most used to describe politicians are male-typical agentic traits such as leader, powerful, aggressive, and good speaker; which are the same characteristics used to describe men politicians and different from the stereotypes associated with women politicians (Schneider and Bos 2014). The “role congruity” theory stems from that observation and states that prejudice toward women leaders is a result of the perceived incongruity between the characteristics of women and the (masculine) requirements of leadership roles (Eagly and Karau 2002).

Gender stereotypes can be particularly damaging in how they affect evaluations of women candidates.<sup>2</sup> When individuals know only the gender label of a candidate, they infer a variety of gender-related characteristics (Deaux and Lewis 1984). The incongruity between the communal-female stereotype and the agentic-leader stereotype leads to two forms of prejudice (Reid, Palomares, and Anderson 2009). First, men are perceived as more fit for political leadership than women because the male stereotype is closer to the leader stereotype. The association of politics with masculine traits, such as aggression and competition, means that men are automatically assumed to be qualified for public office (Beckwith 2005). Agentic traits define the leadership role. Meanwhile, women’s association with feminine traits, such as nurturing and softness, implies that women are seen as less politically viable (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004, 2015).

Second, women’s leadership is assessed less favorably than men’s leadership because women’s assertive behavior is perceived as undesirable or threatening, particularly to men (Eagly

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<sup>2</sup> Research that looks at real election results tends to conclude that gender stereotypes do not harm women (Brooks 2013; Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997). However, this work looks at the already more ambitious and more prepared women who decided to run for office. Therefore, in order to avoid bias, women need to be clearly better candidates than their counterparts. To the extent that dynamic occurs, it is evidence of bias against women in politics.



1987; Reid, Palomares, and Anderson 2009). Strategically, because men created the underlying rules in politics, a system emerged that “ensured that the qualifications of men are better valued and led more reliably to power and rewards” (Lovenduski 1998, 347). As a consequence, voters tend to believe that male-stereotyped characteristics in politics are more important than female-stereotyped characteristics (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004, 2015). When the office that women seek is high-powered and masculinized (R Murray 2010), stereotypical views of women’s roles and abilities can damage their political careers because voters may see women candidates as having mostly feminine qualities and lacking masculine qualities (Bauer 2015), not matching the expectations they have for political leaders, particularly when leaders are handling issues that are also perceived as masculine, such as terrorism (Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2011).

Furthermore, the under-representation of women in politics makes negative stereotypes about them salient (Batista Pereira 2016), which leads to perpetuating stereotypes that portray men as more fit for politics. Examples include the stereotype of men knowing more and caring more about politics (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997; Preece 2016) and the policy stereotypes that posit men are better at handling the economy and national security (Dolan 2010; Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2016; Lawless 2004). Then, when voters are concerned about the economy or security and when parties face many competitors, women’s nominations decrease given that a man candidate indicates stability (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017). Generally speaking, voters prefer men over women in masculine settings, where women are expected to be less competent because the issues are both leadership and gender congruent (Blackman and Jackson 2019).

Overcoming the perceived “lack of fit” with common leader stereotypes has been identified as one of the key challenges that face ambitious women (Bruckmüller et al. 2014). Women politicians often face a dilemma: to masculinize themselves or be marginalized from politics (Duerst-Lahti 2005).<sup>3</sup> Yet, role congruity theory points towards a double bind of stereotypes for women politicians: “trying to adopt a successful profile for a stereotyped social role, like political office, while facing gender stereotypes that push in the other direction” (Blackman and Jackson 2019). Women who adopt masculine traits to be perceived as viable leaders often are considered too tough and lacking of the required femininity (Schneider and Bos 2014). They do not qualify as leaders and they do not qualify as being appropriately feminine.

The gender role congruity theory described here has been extensively assessed in the context of the United States (Bauer 2015; Diekman and Goodfriend 2006; Ritter and Yoder 2004; Rosette and Tost 2010). However, it is still unclear how much the particular stereotypes associated with American women, particularly White women, influence role congruity theory’s core assumptions. The successful highly feminized campaigns of women politicians in Latin America defy the implications that stem from the theory, pointing towards the possibility of a different dynamic of gender stereotypes and political evaluation in the region. To the best of my knowledge, there is no previous work that addresses the issue of congruity in Latin America.<sup>4</sup> In this paper, I challenge the traveling capacity of the conventional theoretical framework in light of the experience of Latin American women. I argue that Latin American women’s presence in public

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<sup>3</sup> In the American context, counter-stereotypic campaigns increase women’s chances to be elected (Bauer 2020)

<sup>4</sup> D’Adamo et. al. (2008) and Fernández Poncela (2014) attempted to measure the gender biases in Argentina and Mexico, respectively. However, their survey instruments do not allow us to look for congruity or incongruity regarding political leadership. Taylor-Robinson et al. (2015) provide preliminary findings from Costa Rica, and Aguilar, Cunow, and Desposato (2015) present a study from Brazil, both of which indicate that the perception of candidate abilities in these countries favors women candidates.

life, including with respect to adopting agentic social roles, has engendered stereotypes closely related to leadership that alter the dynamics around issues of gender role incongruity.

### 2.3. Re-assessing role congruity theory in the Latin American context

Role congruity theory expects, on one hand, that because politics has been dominated by men, there is a congruency between male characteristics and political leadership. As a consequence, the stereotypical traits associated with leadership in the context of politics are similar to the traits associated with men, and the stereotypical traits of men are similar to the men politicians' traits.

Role congruity can be expressed as follows:

$$\textit{Male\_Politician\_Traits} \approx \textit{Political\_Leadership\_Traits}$$

Then,

$$\textit{Male\_Politician\_Traits} - \textit{Political\_Leadership\_Traits} \approx 0$$

In Latin America, women's gains in political representation are a relatively new phenomenon. Before 2000, all but two elected presidents in the region were men and, in 2004, around 84% of all elected congress representatives were men (IADB 2004). In addition, a large percentage of men have been economically active. Around 80% of men in this region are part of the labor force (IMF 2016). Due to the social and political roles traditionally assumed by Latin American men, I propose that this relationship is true in the region's context, leading to the first hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 1: Congruity between political leadership and men politicians* - The gap between the evaluations of stereotypical traits of men politicians and the evaluations of political leadership will be statistically indistinguishable from zero.

On the other hand, traditional role congruity theory expects that the underrepresentation of women in politics originated from a mismatch between the stereotypical traits of political leadership (agentic) and the traits associated with women—which are mainly communal and typically unrelated to leadership roles (Eagly and Carli 2007). As a consequence, men candidates, when compared with women candidates, are more likely to be categorized as political leaders because of the association between maleness, masculinity, and leadership skills (Eagly and Karau 2002).

Role incongruity can be expressed in the following way:

$$\textit{Female\_Politician\_Traits} \neq \textit{Political\_Leadership\_Traits}$$

According to previous research—and in agreement with role congruity theory—because politics is perceived as masculine, women are considered less fit for it:

$$\textit{Female\_Politician\_Traits} - \textit{Political\_Leadership\_Traits} < 0$$

Specifically,

*Hypothesis 2: Incongruity between political leadership and women politicians* - The gap between the evaluations of stereotypical traits of women politicians and the evaluations of political leadership will be different than zero.

Scholars have suggested this incongruity is negative—that women are less likely to be perceived as having typical politician traits—but, counter to established theory, there are factors that might foster a positive connection in Latin America. Role congruity theory should be highly dependent on the context (Schneider and Bos 2019). This is because stereotypes are highly contextual, and gender stereotypes stem from the activities women and men engage in (Eagly and Steffen 1984). In Latin America, women have been historically an important part of the labor force,

particularly in the informal sector (Biles 2009) and in agricultural work (Deere 2005). In addition, they have been an important part of social movements fighting for democracy and democratic rights during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Jaquette 2018; Paxton, Hughes, and Green 2006).

Most importantly, women's gender roles in Latin America are governed by norms that are captured in the notion of *marianismo*, a term first coined by Evelyn Stevens (1973, 62) in reference to the perceptions of women "as semi-divine, morally superior and spiritually stronger than men." Idealized women in the region are not only virtuous and humble, but they are also strong, capable, and they take a proactive role in their life. However, these agentic stereotypes are a result of their roles in the care and nurturance of their family (Castillo et al. 2007, Rocha-Sanchez and Diaz-Loving 2005). This familial focus also ascribes women to characteristics such as a collectivistic worldview and the propensity for self-sacrifice for the group. While women's political disadvantage in other contexts can be a result of conforming to gender roles (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018), in Latin America, gender roles assign agentic characteristics that are desired for politics.

Moreover, there is evidence that Latin American women politicians face less gender bias for individuals' particular evaluations of the political system in the region (Morgan and Buice 2013). Women, in general, are perceived as political outsiders, signaling that women candidates may represent political renewal (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017; R Murray 2010). In addition, the positive traits associated with femininity feed an image of women as more risk-averse and transparent, therefore, less corrupt than their men counterparts (Barnes and Beaulieu 2014; Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton 2018a; Swamy et al. 2001).

Given these contextual features, it is possible to theorize that women in Latin America are associated with the traditional agentic stereotypes required for political leadership and, contrary to

men, they are also associated with communal stereotypes positive for politics. Therefore, women might be rated differently than the traditional role of political leadership. As such, I hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 2a: Positive incongruity between political leadership and women politicians:*

The gap between evaluations of stereotypical traits of women politicians and evaluations of political leadership will be larger than zero.

It is important to note that a positive incongruity might signal an idealization of Latin American women and not necessarily of Latin American women politicians. Despite significant improvement in the last two decades, women are still underrepresented in the region and are often relegated from the decision-making process. They occupy less visible offices, as they are more present in the legislative than in the executive office (Htun and Piscopo 2010). Therefore, individuals might not have accessible information regarding women in politics and resort to their perception of women in general to evaluate hypothetical women candidates.

When women in power enjoy a high level of exposure and their leadership is visible to their constituents, they can have an influence on symbolic representation (Liu and Banaszak 2017). Previous research has shown that an increase in the presence of women in political office contributes to an increase in individuals' beliefs in women's ability to govern (Alexander 2012; Beaman et al. 2009; Smith, Paul, and Paul 2007). The presence of women politicians sends the message that they are as equally as good as any other political leader. However, Latin America is a region where the standard view of politicians is that they are malfeasant. According to data from the AmericasBarometer 2018/19, 87.6% of people in Latin America and the Caribbean believe that half or more of their country's politicians are involved in corruption. In this case, it could be possible that "equally good" might actually mean "equally bad." If positive evaluations of women politicians in Latin America are a result of an idealization of women, the presence of women in

politics should decrease evaluations of abstract women candidates. As a consequence, there would be less incongruity between political leadership and women politicians' evaluations.

*Hypothesis 3: The effect of women in politics* – Contexts where women in politics are more visible show, on average, more gender congruity between political leadership and women politicians than in contexts where women are less visible.

#### 2.4. Research design

In the study of gender stereotypes, social desirability bias is a concern for the design of research instruments. Expressing low opinions of women is not as socially acceptable as it once was (Sapiro 1981). Therefore, individuals might respond to questions about women in a way that is biased towards egalitarianism. To address this issue, I conducted an experiment where respondents were not aware that the purpose was to compare attitudes toward men and women. The design randomly assigned subjects to evaluate either political leadership (no specific gender), a woman candidate, or a man candidate.

The experiment analyzed here was conducted via an online survey between the summer and fall of 2019.<sup>5</sup> Participants were drawn from panels to which individuals opt-in in response to advertisements by the commercial survey firm, Netquest. In all, 5,120 individuals from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico were part of this study.<sup>6</sup> The sample was designed using a sample matching technique designed to secure as close to a nationally-representative sample as possible,

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<sup>5</sup> The experiment was included in an omnibus study (IRB #190384) implemented by LAPOP Lab at Vanderbilt University.

<sup>6</sup> Table A2.1. in the Appendix section provides summary statistics for all respondents by country

but with the understanding that online samples in this region are skewed toward those of higher socioeconomic status.<sup>7</sup>

The four countries vary in the conditions under which women rose to political leadership and offer cases with different levels of women's representation in politics. Women in Argentina started to gain political territory right after the return of democracy in 1983 (Barnes 2016). In fact, in 1991, Argentina was the first country in the world that adopted a legislative gender quota. Since then, much of women's descriptive representation has depended on the adoption and design of quotas (Barnes and Jones 2018). However, despite being an example of women's descriptive representation, women are not significantly surpassing the stipulated quotas, and they are not often elected to regional or local executive offices. Nonetheless, in 2007, Argentinians elected Cristina Fernández de Kirchner as their president, and, by the time of the survey, 40% of the national legislature was comprised of women. Far from being a political outsider, Fernández was a former elected member of Congress who was catapulted to the presidency by her party (Piscopo 2010). Fernández's party, the Front for Victory, was projected to win regardless of its candidate. Therefore, after she was selected by her husband (then-President Nestor Kirchner), her victory was secured (Barnes and Jones 2011). Chile, similarly to Argentina, elected a women president. Michelle Bachelet came to power in 2006. But in contrast to Fernández, her women-centered campaign played a key role in her success in getting into office. The country was going through a political crisis which created a demand for renewal. Additionally, voters' main concerns were issues on which women are expected to perform better: social welfare, education, and inequality (Franceschet 2018; Franceschet and Thomas 2010). However, women are severely

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<sup>7</sup> The selection of panelists to approximate the random target sample was based on fit with socio-demographic variables found in benchmark census data.



underrepresented at the national legislative level, mainly due to the electoral system and institutional factors: Chilean political parties do not select women as candidates (Franceschet 2018). As a result, in 2019, only 23% of members of Congress were women. Different from Chile and similar to Argentina, Mexico has seen an increasing presence of women at the legislative level mainly due to the presence of comprehensive gender quotas (Reynoso and D'angelo 2006). By the time of the survey, women represented almost half of the legislative body (43%). Despite gaining space in political parties, men in Mexico still control the most important offices at the executive level, including the presidency (Zetterberg 2018). Colombia is a country where women are less represented at the national level. Historically, women's political presence was linked to family clans and political dynasties that appointed wives and daughters of men politicians (Buitrago and Aroca 2017). A weak design of electoral quotas on top of Colombian politics' personalistic style and political parties' tight control of the selection and election process influences the underrepresentation of women (Pachón and Lacouture 2018). As a consequence, women represented just 22% of the national legislative body in 2019. Moreover, despite several women running for president, Colombia has not yet elected a woman to the highest visible office.

The survey experiment analyzed in this paper draws on work conducted in the U.S. by Schneider and Bos (2014) and includes the following traits:

Table 2.1. Trait scales

Scale		Traits
Politician traits	Leadership	Commands respect
		Inspiring
		Leader
		Gets things done
	Empathy	Compassionate
		Really cares
		In touch with the people
	Integrity	Moral
		Decent
		Honest
	Competence	Intelligent
		Hardworking
Knowledgeable		
Female Stereotypes	Positive personality	Affectionate
		Sympathetic
		Gentle
		Sensitive
Male stereotypes	Positive personality	Competitive
		Daring
		Adventurous
		Aggressive

In order to reduce social desirability bias, the survey experiment’s treatment is the gender respondents were asked to evaluate. Individuals were assigned to one of three groups: Political leaders (no explicit gender), women politicians, and men politicians. By only evaluating one of the groups, individuals do not have the incentive—or opportunity—to give similar evaluations to men and women.

Respondents were to evaluate whether the traits from Table 2.1. applied to the group that they were assigned.<sup>8</sup> The specific prompts they could receive are as follows:<sup>9</sup>

Please think about the traits that come to mind when thinking about people who show **political leadership**. How well does each of the following adjectives describe people who show **political leadership**? (Responses on a scale from 1 to 7. Where 1 means “Not well at all” and 7 means “Very well”)<sup>10</sup>

Please think about the traits that come to mind when thinking about **women running for political office**. How well does each of the following adjectives describe **women running for political office**? (Responses on a scale from 1 to 7. Where 1 means “Not well at all” and 7 means “Very well”)

Please think about the traits that come to mind when thinking about **men running for political office**. How well does each of the following adjectives describe **men running for political office**? (Responses on a scale from 1 to 7. Where 1 means “Not well at all” and 7 means “Very well”)

## 2.5. Results

To assess the first two hypotheses, I measure the level of congruity—that is, the gap (or lack of gap)—between the average evaluation of the adjectives for a gendered candidate and the average evaluation of the stereotypes for political leadership. For example, the level of congruity regarding competence for men politicians is measured as the average evaluation abstract men candidates receive on the adjectives associated with competence (intelligent, hardworking, knowledgeable), minus the average evaluation of people who show political leadership (no gender specified) on the same competence scale. If there is support for Hypothesis 1, which evaluates the congruity between political leadership and men politicians, the gap between the evaluation of

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<sup>8</sup> Due to time constraints, respondents were randomly assigned 5 traits from Table 2.1.

<sup>9</sup> For the wording of the questions in Spanish, please see Appendix 2.1.

<sup>10</sup> The question asks about the characteristics of political leadership and not about the traits of people running for political office to capture individuals’ perceptions about politics in general. This constitutes a suitable baseline of how citizens commonly think about politics. When compared to evaluations of candidates of a particular gender, it has the potential to identify possible barriers to getting elected.

adjectives associated with men candidates and the evaluation of political leadership should be close to zero. Support for Hypothesis 2—the incongruity between political leadership and women politicians—can be interpreted as a gap in the level of evaluations between women candidates and political leadership that is different than zero. Higher values signal higher levels of incongruity.

To facilitate interpretation, the evaluations are on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means “the adjectives describe not well at all,” and 100 means “the adjectives describe very well.” Each scale<sup>11</sup> (leadership, empathy, integrity, competence, female stereotypes – positive personality, and male stereotypes – positive personality) is the average of their corresponding traits (Table 2.1.).

Figure 2.1.<sup>12</sup> displays the combined results for the Argentina, Colombia, Chile, and Mexico samples. The results support Hypothesis 1. The gap between the average evaluations of men politicians and political leadership regarding every stereotype scale<sup>13</sup> is less than 4 points. In other words, there is a high level of congruity between the stereotypes attached to men candidates and the role of political leadership.

Figure 2.1. also presents support for Hypothesis 2. The stereotype content for women politicians is distinct from the content of stereotypes of political leadership. The gaps between the adjective evaluations of women politicians and political leadership are distinct from zero for every stereotypical scale. However—and contrary to previous literature expectations—this does not appear to be driven by prejudice *against* the notion of women in politics. Rather, women candidates rank considerably higher in every positive adjective associated with leadership,

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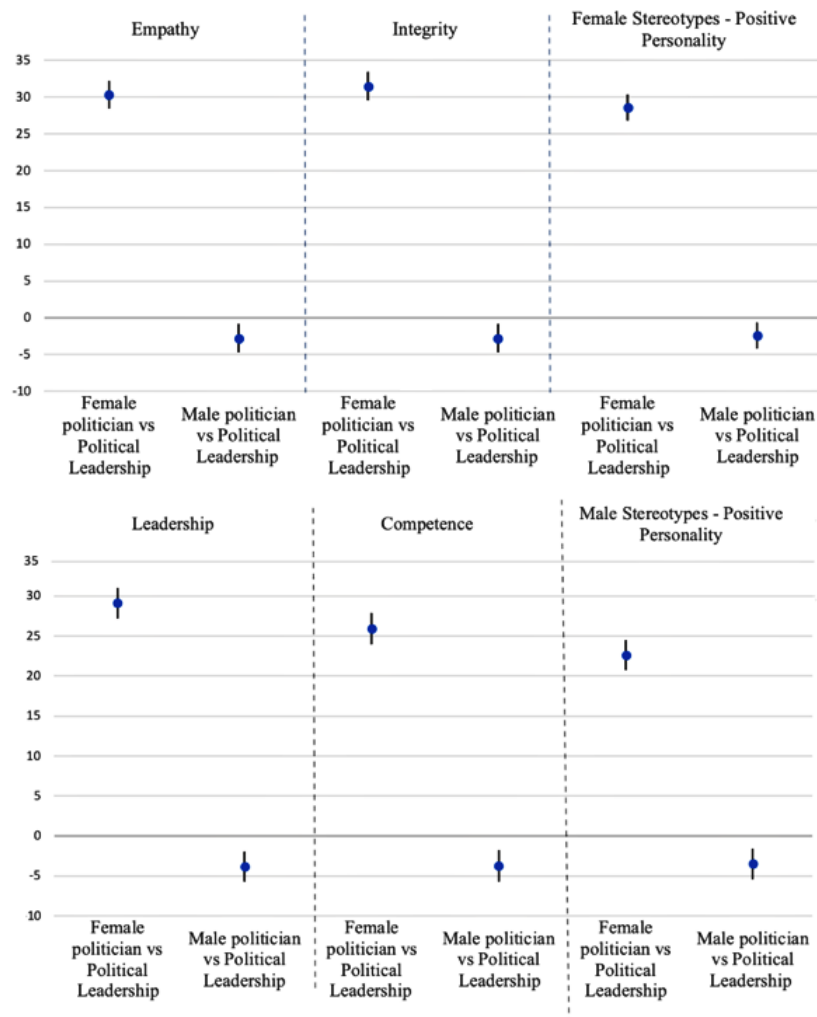
<sup>11</sup> The scales included in this paper have a high reliability level: all measured Cronbach's alphas are 0.80 and above. A full report can be found in Table A2.2. in the Appendix section.

<sup>12</sup> The colored points represent the average and the lines the 95% confidence interval.

<sup>13</sup> The stereotype scales are as follows: leadership, empathy, integrity, competence, female stereotypes – positive personality, and male stereotypes – positive personality.

empathy, integrity, competence, female stereotypes – positive personality, or male stereotypes – positive personality.

Figure 2.1. Evaluation gaps between political leadership and women and men politicians:  
Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico



This outcome is in striking contrast to research on the U.S. case: in their 2014 study, which focused on the American context, Schneider and Bos found the opposite. In the United States, women politicians are not seen to possess any traits, even feminine ones, more than their men politician counterparts (Schneider and Bos 2014). In the Latin American context, the incongruity

between political leadership and women candidates is found around traits that are considered typically masculine and feminine. Latin American women candidates are perceived to have more both agentic and communal traits than the average evaluations of political leadership.

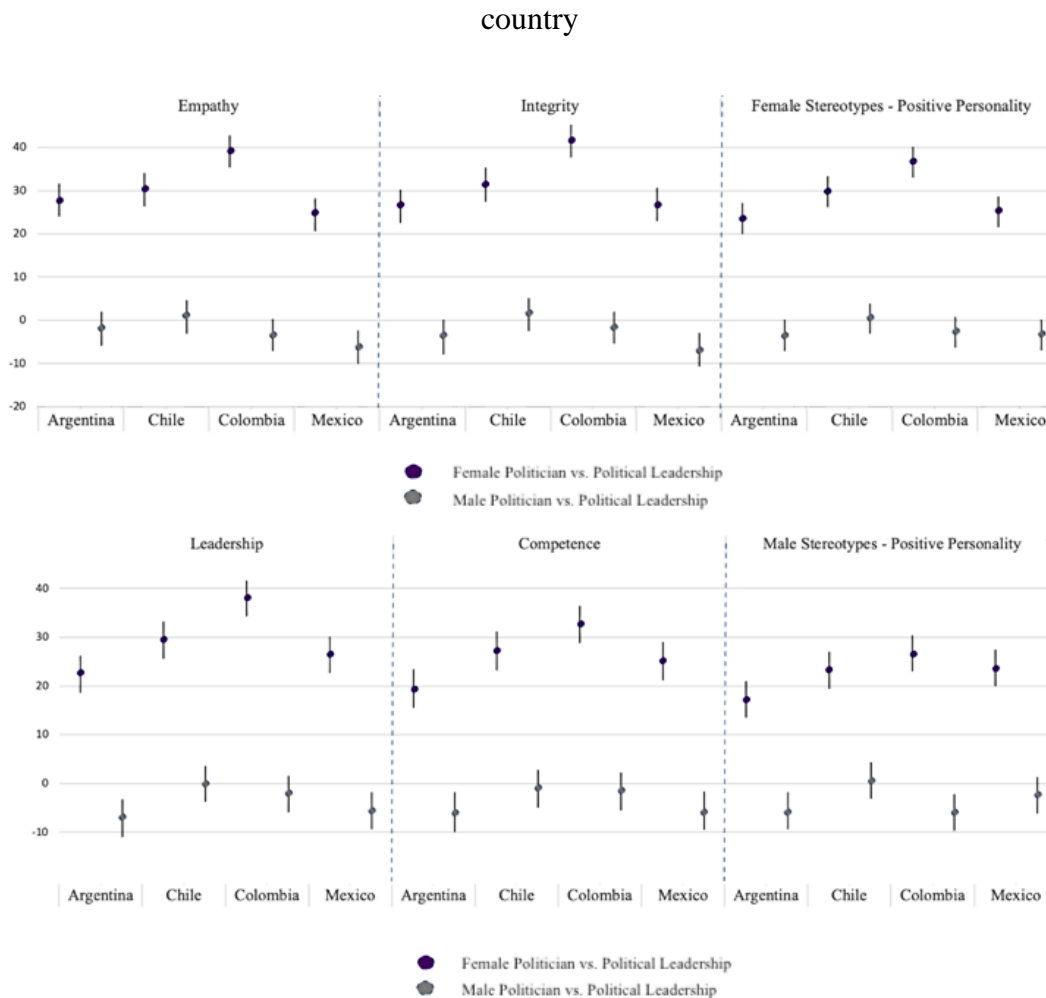
Because women are seen as lacking agentic traits, role congruity theory expects an incongruity between women politicians and the masculine stereotypes of political leadership. Yet, the direction and magnitude of the incongruity shown in Figure 2.1 might be counterintuitive. When looking at the average evaluations, women score at least five points higher on these masculine scales than on any other scale. Moreover, the lowest levels of incongruity for women candidates are found in the evaluations of leadership, competence, and masculine personality stereotypes. In Argentina and Chile, women politicians are perceived as almost as competitive as men politicians, while in Argentina and Mexico, women politicians are seen quite as aggressive as their men counterparts. In brief, the results reveal that women political candidates are perceived to possess more masculine than feminine political qualities.

Hypothesis 3 states that in contexts where women politicians are more visible, there will be more congruity between political leadership and women candidates—that is, they will receive evaluations that are more on par with how political leadership is perceived. As a first approach to capturing the visibility of women in national politics, I consider both the presence of women in the legislative and executive branches. At the time of the survey, among the four countries, Argentina and Mexico come comparatively close to parity in representation in the legislature: Mexico has a 43% of women in Congress, Argentina 40%, Chile 23%, and Colombia 22%. With respect to the executive, Argentina and Chile have both recently had women presidents: Cristina Fernández was elected President of Argentina, governing from 2007 to 2015; while Michelle Bachelet served as the elected president twice, from 2006 to 2010 and from 2014 to 2018.

Therefore, I expect relatively more congruity in Argentina, followed by Chile and Mexico, and less in Colombia.

To start assessing Hypothesis 3, in Figure 2.2., I compare the levels of congruity of all the countries of the sample. The data shows that in Argentina, Mexico, and Chile, there is more congruity between the evaluations of women politicians and political leadership in comparison to Colombia—the country with both less of a presence of women in Congress and no former woman president.

Figure 2.2. Evaluation gaps between political leadership and women and men politicians, by country



The leadership scale (the average of the “Commands Respect,” “Inspiring,” “Leader,” and “Gets Things Done” traits) shows that the level of incongruity for women candidates has a magnitude of 22.4 average points (on a scale from 0 to 100) in Argentina, while the magnitude in Mexico is of 26.3 points. In Chile, the incongruity reaches 29.4 points, and in Colombia 38 points. Argentina, the country with the highest level of women’s visibility in politics, shows the lowest levels of incongruity. For example, in this country, the incongruity’s magnitude for the evaluation of the adjective “leader” is less than 12 points.

I also find support for Hypothesis 3 with respect to the empathy scale. The gap between women candidates and political leadership in Argentina reaches 25.2 points, in Mexico 21.9, and in Chile 27.8. However, in Colombia, the incongruity is almost 36 points. Something similar happens regarding the integrity scale. The incongruity in Colombia reaches 42.5 points and in Chile 32.5 points, while in Mexico the gap is one of 28.4 points and in Argentina 27.8 points. The incongruity is even smaller in Argentina compared to the other countries when the competence scale is observed. The gap between women candidates and political leadership in this country is 19.3 points, while in Chile and Mexico, the distance is about 25-27 points, and in Colombia, 32.6.

To further evaluate Hypothesis 3, Tables 2.2 and 2.3 present the results of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions<sup>1415</sup> that assess the relationship between experiencing the leadership of

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<sup>14</sup> The control variables are gender, age, education, external efficacy and trust in politics. Because stereotypes are dynamic and change over time (Bosak et al. 2018), it is possible that younger cohorts evaluate gender stereotypes differently than older generations. Regarding gender, social identity theory emphasizes preference for one’s in-group, suggesting that women might have greater estimation of women politicians (Cuddy et al. 2015). Changing roles due to the increased levels of education might also shape gender stereotypes. Another source of variation comes from the evaluation of the current political landscape. When voters distrust parties, women’s nominations increase because women candidates signal political renewal (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017).

<sup>15</sup> These analyses have considerable limitations. Mainly, they do not account for unobservable variables at the country level. It could be possible that individuals living in countries that elected women presidents may be part of more egalitarian societies. The low number of countries included in the sample prevents me from performing multilevel analyses. However, the results found with the OLS regressions are in line with the findings shown in Table 2.4.



a former woman president and the percentage of women in congress on the evaluation levels of all stereotype scales, how the presence of actual women politicians might shape how respondents evaluate hypothetical candidates. The results document that, in general, individuals who have experienced the leadership of visible women politicians, particularly women presidents, tend to give lower evaluations to the study's abstract women candidates.

Table 2.2. Determinants of the evaluation levels of the leadership, competence, and masculine personality scales.

	(1) Leadership <b>Women politicians</b>	(2) Leadership <b>Men politicians</b>	(3) Competence <b>Women politicians</b>	(4) Competence <b>Men politicians</b>	(5) Masculine personality <b>Women politicians</b>	(6) Masculine personality <b>Men politicians</b>
Past woman president	-8.226*** (1.26)	-1.988 (1.313)	-7.115*** (1.283)	-1.443 (1.425)	-5.631*** (1.192)	.187 (1.391)
% Congresswomen	-0.365*** (0.067)	-0.239*** (0.07)	-0.378*** (0.068)	-0.31*** (0.076)	-0.23*** (0.063)	-0.121 (0.075)
Women	1.234 (1.242)	0.522 (1.291)	-0.217 (1.262)	-1.365 (1.397)	1.789 (1.175)	1.392 (1.37)
Years of education	0.18 (0.203)	-0.059 (0.213)	-0.027 (0.21)	-0.191 (0.236)	.229 (0.194)	.579** (0.227)
Age	.015 (0.042)	-0.045 (0.044)	.026 (0.043)	-0.084* (0.047)	.022 (0.04)	-0.096** (0.046)
External efficacy	1.572*** (0.409)	3.045*** (0.451)	1.52*** (0.424)	2.033*** (0.481)	1.377*** (0.388)	2.426*** (0.476)
Trust in president	.404 (0.374)	1.752*** (0.398)	-0.066 (0.382)	1.954*** (0.429)	.158 (0.353)	1.332*** (0.425)
Constant	73.615*** (3.959)	31.99*** (4.105)	81.87*** (4.085)	47.641*** (4.47)	71.852*** (3.784)	34.06*** (4.377)
Observations	1602	1617	1506	1483	1633	1600
R-squared	0.052	0.079	0.044	0.056	0.03	0.051

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Table 2.3. Determinants of the evaluation levels of the empathy, integrity, and feminine personality scales.

	(1) Empathy <b>Women politicians</b>	(2) Empathy <b>Men politicians</b>	(3) Integrity <b>Women politicians</b>	(4) Integrity <b>Men politicians</b>	(5) Feminine personality <b>Women politicians</b>	(6) Feminine personality <b>Men politicians</b>
Past woman president	-7.61*** (1.377)	-1.191 (1.298)	-9.555*** (1.366)	-0.899 (1.311)	-8.234*** (1.292)	-2.744** (1.223)
% Congresswomen	-0.381*** (0.073)	-0.182*** (0.069)	-0.484*** (0.073)	-0.257*** (0.07)	-0.507*** (0.069)	-0.229*** (0.066)
Women	-2.28* (1.356)	1.225 (1.276)	-1.114 (1.347)	-0.045 (1.29)	-3.59*** (1.273)	-0.581 (1.205)
Years of education	-0.137 (0.225)	-0.099 (0.21)	0.109 (0.221)	-0.091 (0.213)	-0.216 (0.209)	0.126 (0.199)
Age	-0.029 (0.046)	-0.046 (0.043)	.083* (0.045)	-0.06 (0.043)	.037 (0.043)	0.051 (0.041)
External efficacy	2.273*** (0.447)	3.831*** (0.459)	2.916*** (0.448)	3.06*** (0.448)	2.671*** (0.428)	3.397*** (0.422)
Trust in president	0.098 (0.405)	1.523*** (0.4)	.134 (0.409)	1.441*** (0.397)	-0.019 (0.388)	0.97*** (0.372)
Constant	74.539*** (4.34)	22.06*** (4.048)	69.479*** (4.294)	27.975*** (4.103)	77.032*** (4.069)	22.702*** (3.842)
Observations	1514	1487	1495	1494	1625	1614
R-squared	0.055	0.107	0.084	0.076	0.081	0.084

Standard errors in parentheses.  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

The percentage of women in congress is significant for both the evaluation of men and women politicians. The more women are represented in congress, the lower the evaluations that abstract politicians receive. However, the effect of the most powerful and visible office in a country, the presidency, is more robust. Those who have experienced the leadership of a woman president assign lower evaluations to women candidates. However, this variable has no effect on the evaluations of men politicians. By the time of fieldwork, there were only men presidents in the studied countries.

To further explore the influence of the highest visible office, I take advantage of a question included in the survey. Respondents were asked how much they trust the current president. Those who trust more in the head of state in office report better evaluations of men political leaders. However, trust in the president has no effect on the levels of evaluation of women politicians. As a result, it is possible that who occupies the presidency has an effect on the formation of political stereotypes for their co-gender political colleagues.

Despite the low number of cases, the results from Tables 2.2. and 2.3. are consistent with the following analysis. One way to subject the hypothesis to an additional test is to identify the information used to evaluate the hypothetical candidates. Therefore, I included a question that, after evaluating the abstract woman or man candidate, asked individuals to name the person they had in mind while assessing the traits' commonality. Higher visibility of women politicians should increase the probability of naming a real women politician from the respondents' country. The results are indeed consistent with that expectation. Table 2.4. shows the percentages of responses. Individuals in countries where a woman occupied the highest visible and powerful office—the presidency—were more likely to name a woman politician.

In Argentina and Chile, the most named women politicians were former Presidents Michelle Bachelet and Cristina Fernández. Conversely, in Colombia and in Mexico, where there have been no women heads of state, most respondents (27%) answered single generic names without last names or gave responses like “my mother.” International figures were also relevant while evaluating hypothetical candidates in Mexico and Colombia. Some respondents actually mentioned past women presidents from the region or heads of State from other continents, such as Margaret Thatcher. In Mexico, where there is a higher percentage of women representatives in comparison to Colombia, a quarter of respondents mentioned the name of a congresswoman.

Table 2.4. Name of the person who respondents had in mind while evaluating the candidates.

Names	Percentage of responses							
	Women politicians				Men politicians			
	Argentina	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Argentina	Chile	Colombia	Mexico
President/Vice-president	0.00	0.00	14.49	0.00	43.65	33.09	17.22	23.79
Former president	<u>28.28</u>	<u>40.50</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	12.69	2.42	33.73	38.11
Congressman/woman	13.35	15.00	8.94	26.39	6.35	13.29	5.98	4.62
Local authority	20.81	3.25	18.84	15.08	2.79	2.17	11.00	6.93
Executive appointee	2.04	10.25	9.90	3.55	3.55	4.35	1.91	3.70
International politician	2.49	3.50	12.08	13.30	0.76	1.45	3.11	1.39
Public figure	13.35	5.00	3.86	13.97	0.76	1.69	1.44	0.69
Opposite sex	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.12	4.11	0.96	0.92
<u>Other</u>	<u>16.06</u>	<u>16.25</u>	<u>26.57</u>	<u>20.18</u>	<u>12.94</u>	<u>24.40</u>	<u>19.38</u>	<u>12.93</u>
Nobody in particular/Nobody	3.62	6.25	5.31	7.54	8.38	13.04	5.26	6.93
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2.5. explores how being willing and able to name a woman politician predicts the evaluation of traits associated with women candidates. It shows the results of OLS regression models by country that include a variable that indicates whether respondents named a woman politician from their own country as the person that they had in mind at the moment responding to the survey experiment. The dependent variable in this model is an average of all the evaluated scales. In other words, the variable captures the overall level of evaluation of political leadership.

Table 2.5. Determinants of the evaluation of political leadership of women candidates, by country

	(1) Argentina	(2) Chile	(3) Colombia	(4) Mexico
Names a woman politician	1.628 (2.217)	-0.891 (2.384)	-4.581** (2.119)	-10.163*** (2.068)
Women	-2.03 (2.128)	0.248 (2.227)	1.484 (2.082)	-0.593 (2.078)
Years of education	-0.116 (0.33)	-0.236 (0.48)	0.329 (0.336)	0.569* (0.325)
Age	-0.077 (0.067)	0.207** (0.082)	0.034 (0.078)	0.062 (0.067)
External efficacy	2.266*** (0.713)	1.841** (0.789)	1.174* (0.687)	2.369*** (0.65)
Trust in president	-1.67*** (0.632)	.873 (0.778)	1.697** (0.677)	0.748 (0.555)
Constant	65.993*** (6.28)	49.438*** (7.827)	63.783*** (5.913)	48.04*** (6.334)
Observations	441	398	413	451
R-squared	0.032	0.063	0.048	0.116

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

The effect of the capacity to identify a national woman leader is statistically insignificant in Chile and Argentina. However, in Colombia, the country with the lowest levels of women's leadership visibility, and in Mexico, where there were no past women presidents, the identification of a woman politician has a negative effect. Those who were not capable of naming a woman evaluated more favorably the abstract women. These results point towards a possible idealization of women's political leadership. In at least certain contexts, when individuals have no clear and visible real references of women in political office, they tend to evaluate women's political leadership more favorably.

## 2.6. Discussion and conclusion

My study of four Latin American countries challenges a core assumption within conventional gender role congruity theory. On one hand, the stereotypical profile of political leadership is congruent with the stereotypical profile of men politicians, affirming Hypothesis 1. On the other hand, and supporting Hypothesis 2, I find that the stereotypical evaluation of political leadership is incongruent with the evaluation of traits of women politicians. However—and contrary to the expectations of previous literature—even after equating political leadership with men, voters evaluate women candidates better than men candidates as political leaders.

The incongruity between political leadership and women politicians actually runs in favor of women candidates. Even for traits traditionally associated with men (leadership, competence, and positive male personality), women's average evaluations are higher. This finding could help explain why Fernández, Rousseff, and Bachelet all ran campaigns that emphasized their femininity, which contrasts with conventional strategies of similar women candidates in the United States. In the American case, emphasizing feminine qualities in campaign communication has an adverse effect on the evaluations of women candidates (Bauer 2015). However, campaigns that activate broader stereotypes about women might be beneficial for women candidates in Latin America.

A possible explanation may be found around the stereotype content of women's political leadership in Latin America. In order to evaluate individuals, people need a comparative anchor to ease the task of decision-making (Campbell, Lewis, and Hunt 1958). It is possible that given

the low exposure of Latin American individuals to highly visible women politicians, the anchor used to evaluate women candidates is their preconceptions about women.<sup>16</sup>

The stereotypical content of women in Latin America may be closely related to an ideal political leadership. Scholars have coined terms such as *supermadre* ('super-mother') or 'militant mothers' to explain how women throughout Latin America have drawn on their caring roles to create spaces for themselves in public life (Chaney 2014; Franceschet, Piscopo, and Thomas 2016; Schwindt-Bayer 2006). Invocations of maternalism might have allowed diverse groups of women to build alliances in civil society, even as their ability to both contest and conform to social expectations around motherhood often depended on their positions within societies divided by class, race, ethnicity, and location (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). Starting in the 1970s and 1980s, activist mothers formed the backbones of human rights movements as well as community organizations addressing the socioeconomic deprivations created by neoliberal policies.

It could be the case that women politicians initially were associated with the profile of powerful public mothers. Bauer (2020) proposes that women politicians may receive more positive ratings because voters compare them to a typical woman and not directly to a man candidate. And the typical Latin American woman resembles an ideal political leader: she is strong, capable, proactive, virtuous, humble, and spiritually superior to men (Rocha-Sanchez and Diaz-Loving 2005; Castillo and Cano 2007). She is a selfless mother capable of sacrificing herself to provide for her family. Their halo of purity helps reinforce the perception identified in previous literature

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<sup>16</sup> The literature regarding female stereotypes and leadership comes mainly from the American study case, specifically from the study of White women leaders. When looking at the stereotypes of diverse women, previous work has found that voters hold different expectations for women of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Latinas in the United States are considered more capable in comparison to the Latino man candidate, but less so when than women or men white candidates (Cargile 2016). Some research shows that Black women (similarly to White men) leaders are not conferred lower status when they express dominance rather than communality, however White women (and Black men) leaders are penalized (Livingston, Rosette, and Washington 2012).

of women as less corrupt and more transparent than men (Barnes and Beaulieu 2014; Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton 2018a; Swamy et al. 2001).

In addition, due to the underrepresentation of women in office, women's leadership is regarded as a breath of fresh air and political renewal. This helps to explain the comparative advantage of women candidates versus their male counterparts in a context like Latin America, where individuals are discontent with the function of their political system (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017; R Murray 2010). However, once women in the region became more visible in formal politics, the anchor used to assess women politicians may shift to be women in political office. I find that the percentage of women in the national legislature and, more importantly, experiencing the leadership of a woman president are related to how individuals evaluate women candidates. But, these relationships are negative. Those living in countries where women already occupied the highest office tend to give lower evaluations to abstract women candidates compared to those from countries that have not elected a women president. Moreover, individuals in these latter contexts, where there few are visible women in politics, the more citizens are able to identify a woman politician from their own country, the lower evaluations abstract women candidates receive.

These less favorable evaluations of women candidates lower the levels of incongruity between political leadership and women politicians. When individuals do not draw on real women politicians as anchors for stereotype formation, they may tend to idealize women candidates, enhancing the incongruity gap. I build on this notion in work that I am currently conducting (not included in the dissertation), which explores the possibility that the seemingly positive evaluations of women actually can have a punitive effect in electoral settings. Given the congruity of political leadership and men politicians and the positive bias towards women politicians, individuals have



higher expectations of women candidates compared to men candidates, for whom they have slim to no expectations. The characteristics of ideal women impose additional burdens on women running for office (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018). The testable implication is that if idealized women politicians do not perform as expected, if they fail in any way, voters will punish them to a greater extent than they will penalize men politicians. This could be particularly damaging for women in Latin America. Negative and violent campaigns against women's candidacies are common in the region (Krook and Restrepo 2015) and they shape how the public perceives women running for office (Hinojosa 2010). The activation of negative gender stereotypes during the campaigns (Bauer 2015; Bauer and Carpinella 2018) affects women to a more significant extent in comparison to their men counterparts (Brescoll et al. 2010; Cassese and Holman 2018).

In sum, this paper revises gender role congruity theory by challenging the generalizability of its premises. In doing so, it contributes to the study of gender stereotypes and gender bias. I argue that the role congruity theory should be highly contextual due to social and cultural variations that change the stereotypes associated particularly with women. Studying the Latin American case, I find that in contexts where women are perceived as agentic, the direction of the perceived congruity/incongruity differs from traditional literature. I show how —against previous research expectations— the incongruity between political leadership and the stereotypes associated with women is positive. Individuals in Latin America evaluate hypothetical women politicians as more likely than men to have desirable traits for political leadership. By these means, my research contributes to our understanding of the applicability of gender role congruity theory in the comparative context.

## Chapter 3

### The Effect of Women Occupying Political Office on Bias Against Women Politicians:

#### Evidence from Latin America

##### 3.1. Introduction

In most democratic settings, women are still far from reaching equal political representation with men (Paxton, Hughes, and Barnes 2021). One relevant factor that drives this inequality is the belief that politics is a man's game and women are less suited to govern and show political leadership (Beckwith 2005; Eagly and Karau 2002; Hawkesworth 2003; Schneider and Bos 2014). However, in recent years, women's numeric political representation has increased worldwide (Paxton, Hughes, and Barnes 2021). Women have started getting elected and appointed to all levels of office. Currently, women are part of national, regional, and local legislatures. They are taking protagonist roles as cabinet members. More women are being elected as mayors and governors. And, in many countries, they are even occupying the most important and visible political seat: the chief executive. Despite increasing women's descriptive representation, there remains much to be known about the effect of women's presence in politics on how individuals perceive women's political leadership.

There is a general expectation that the symbolic effects of women's numerical representation will change the meaning of women in politics, causing individuals to update their beliefs about women's abilities to govern, and diminishing gender bias (Alexander 2012; Phillips 1998; Pitkin 1967). However, the extant literature on the topic shows mixed—and sometimes contradictory—findings. Results seem to be highly dependent on the context, the studied office

level, and individuals' gender. For example, there is evidence from Spain that an increase in women's presence in parliament improved beliefs regarding women's ability to govern equally among men and women (Alexander 2015). Yet, the same study finds that, in Iraq, the effect of women legislators has been particularly significant for women compared to men. Alexander (2012) finds a similar result in her study of 25 countries, women in parliament only reduce gender bias among women. However, Morgan and Buice (2013) find no significant effect of women's presence at the legislative level while looking at countries in Latin America. Nonetheless, exploring how the presence of women in cabinets affects the perceptions of women's ability to govern, they find that there is a gender bias decline among men, but not women. In contrast, in a study of 58 countries, Barnes and Taylor-Robinson (2017) do not find a significant effect while looking at the same level of office. Studies of the effect of women in local offices in India (Beaman et al. 2009) and Mexico (Kerevel and Atkeson 2015) find that having women in power improves men's beliefs regarding women's political leadership but does not affect women's perceptions of their ability to govern, while Clayton (2018) finds null results in Lesotho.

In this paper, I contribute to the study of the effect of women's political representation on gender bias by addressing two of the literature's shortcomings. First, current studies' mixed findings suggest that the influence of women in office on individuals' perception of women's political leadership depends on the level of office. However, with the exception of Morgan and Buice (2013), most focus has been placed on only the role of women's presence at a particular level of government. Here, I consider the effect of women's political presence on national and local offices at the executive and legislative levels and across elected and appointed executive positions. I expect that the level of exposure and the path to achieving office conditions how individuals assess women's political presence and their ability to govern. To affect citizens'

evaluations, women's political leadership needs to be visible (Liu and Banaszak 2017). Therefore, more visible offices ought to have more significant effects on how individuals perceive women's political fitness. Moreover, to change negative bias against women in politics, individuals need to perceive that their election or appointment was based on merit, not gender (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2014).

The second shortcoming of the literature is its focus on mainly one form of gender bias: the belief that men are better political leaders than women. This sidelines other forms of prejudice against women. Here, I consider the complexity of individuals' gender biases. I study the effects of women's political presence on negative prejudice (hostile sexism) and seemingly positive stereotypes of women's leadership (benevolent sexism).

The existing research on biases toward women politicians can be organized into two perspectives that are related but that yield opposing results. First, there is literature that focuses on the perception of politics as a "men's game," which results from the overrepresentation of men in political offices (Beckwith 2005; Eagly and Steffen 1984; Hawkesworth 2003). The association of masculine traits with politics, such as aggression and competition, means that men are more automatically assumed to be qualified for public office (Beckwith 2005; Eagly and Steffen 1984; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004, 2015). Consequently, women's association with feminine traits, such as nurturing, kindness, softness, and sympathy for others' needs, implies that women are seen as less politically viable (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004, 2015). As a result, there is a preconception that men are more fit for politics. This strand of the literature relates to hostile sexism as it shows the direct prejudice against women in politics (Glick and Fiske 1996). The second perspective argues that, in specific contexts, women might face positive bias relative to men politicians (Batista Pereira 2016; Teele, Kalla, and

Rosenbluth 2018). According to benevolent sexism theories, the same feminine traits that portray women as less fit political leaders also depict them as more pure and morally superior than men (Glick and Fiske 1996). Therefore, when the salient issues complement traits seen to conform to feminine stereotypes, women will receive an advantage from being stereotyped (Fridkin 1996).

In this paper, I evaluate the effect of women's political representation on both gender biases' perspectives. Regarding the first, politics as a "men's game," I explore the impact of women disrupting male political dominance on hostile sexism against women's political leadership. With respect to the second perspective, benevolent sexism, I assess how the presence of real women in office influences individuals' perceptions of women politicians as holders of positive feminine stereotypes that portray them as superior to men. To do so, I use data from the 2018/19 round of the AmericasBarometer and I assess gender political bias in 16 Latin American countries. Latin America is a region marked by contrasts regarding women in politics, making it a suitable case for exploring gender biases' nuances. On the one hand, Latin America has been associated with a *machismo* culture (Stevens 1973) that portrays men as superior. On the other hand, at a rate superior to other world regions—second to Scandinavia—seven countries have elected women presidents in this region. In addition, survey data finds that two apparently opposite realities co-exist in the region. From one side, a significant proportion of individuals in Latin America hold a negative bias toward women. According to the 2018/19 round of the AmericasBarometer, about 1 in every 5 (22.2%) individuals in Latin America considers men to be better political leaders than women. Conversely, another relevant percentage of the population perceives women to be better at handling important issues such as corruption (21.3%) and the economy (22.6%).

I find evidence that women's descriptive representation has significant effects on symbolic representation. The presence of women in political office is associated with lower levels of both hostile and benevolent sexism. However, this apparent effect depends on the occupied office level and individuals' gender. For the latter, the findings suggest that men and women update their hostile and benevolent beliefs differently. While numeric representation is associated with a decrease in hostile sexism among men, it is associated with a decrease in benevolent sexism, particularly among women. Regarding the office level's effect, only women politicians occupying highly visible and reputable offices—the presidency and the cabinet—are associated with decreased belief that men are better political leaders than women (hostile sexism). The influence of women politicians on benevolent sexism is more complex. When considering beliefs regarding corruption, women elected by quotas to a less visible office—the national legislative body—are associated with a decrease in support for the idea that women are less corrupt than men. But, only women presidents appear to reduce benevolent sexism when the measure refers to women's superiority in running the economy.

In the next section of the paper, I explore the different forms that gender biases regarding perceptions of women's leadership can take, distinguishing between hostile and benevolent sexism. Then, I review the literature on the effect of descriptive representation on symbolic representation, and I derive my theoretical expectations. The following section presents the data and methodology and explains why Latin America is an important case to assess the effect of gender bias. After presenting the results, the paper ends with a discussion on the role of women in the diverse levels of office and the differences between benevolent and hostile sexism.

### 3.2. Exploring perceptions of women in politics

The literature on the perceptions of women's political leadership explores gender biases in the electorate. It studies the stereotypes attached to women and how they affect evaluations of women politicians. In general, stereotypes are important because almost all individuals employ them while forming judgments and making decisions because they are remarkably accessible and less cognitively demanding (Kunda and Spencer 2003). Moreover, they are particularly likely to be used when the electoral environment facing voters is complex (Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz 1999; Lau and Redlawsk 2001). However, there are problems derived from the combination of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination (Gilovich and Griffin 2002). Gender stereotypes reproduce rules, norms, and values, leading to outcomes more favorable to men (Beckwith 2005).

The literature that explores the biases toward women in politics studies gender stereotypes from two different but related perspectives: The first refers to how politics is portrayed as masculine. Because politics is perceived as a man's game, the desired traits for political leadership are perceived as masculine and more closely related to men. Therefore, men are seen to be better prepared for politics. However, in particular contexts, traits associated with women might actually be desired. The second perspective explores potential scenarios where women might have an advantage over men in politics. These distinct yet complementary standpoints in the literature on gender bias against women in politics are outlined below.

#### 3.2.1. The perception of politics as a man's game

A dominant perspective regarding gender bias uncovers negative prejudice toward women. In their study of sexism, Glick and Fiske (1996) name this type of antipathy toward women "hostile sexism." In their account, "hostile sexist beliefs in women's incompetence at agentic tasks

characterize women as unfit to wield power over economic, legal, and political institutions” (Glick and Fiske 1996, 192).

The foundations for hostile sexism can be found in social role theory. This framework argues that family and occupational roles foster gender stereotypes (Eagly and Steffen 1984). That is, stereotype content stems from the gendered division of labor. Because men have historically acted as providers or breadwinners, they tend to be associated more with agentic traits, such as being ambitious, dominant, independent, confident, aggressive, competitive, and prone to act as a leader. In contrast, women, because of the domestic and child-rearing roles they have traditionally assumed, are ascribed communal traits like softness, kindness, being nurturing, affectionate, and sensitive. (Eagly 1987; Eagly and Karau 2002; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). Because men have been overwhelmingly occupying political roles, politics is seen as masculine (a “man’s game”) and agentic traits as the most valuable for politics. As a consequence, this framework concludes that men are more automatically assumed to be better qualified for public office, and women are perceived as less politically viable (Beckwith 2005; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004)

Related, some argue that the absence of women in politics makes negative stereotypes about them even more salient (Batista Pereira 2016), perpetuating stereotypes that portray men as more fit for politics. For example, it increases the likelihood of portraying men as knowing and caring more about politics than women (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997; Preece 2016); or that men are better at handling the economy and national security (Dolan 2010; Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2016; Lawless 2004). Consequently, when voters are concerned about the economy, women’s nominations decrease because men candidates indicate stability (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017).



### 3.2.2. Benevolent sexism

The above-discussed perspective focuses on negative bias toward women politicians. Because the presence of men has been overwhelmingly higher than that of women in the political sphere, politics is regarded as masculine. Therefore, the traits valued for political leadership are masculine, to the detriment of feminine characteristics. However, the effect of gender stereotypes is contextual and conditioned by external forces (Dolan 2004). Gender bias might not always be negative. The concept of benevolent sexism suggests a seemingly positive view of women due to complementary gender differentiation. While men are seen as aggressive and selfish, women are portrayed as caring, maternal, passionate, emotional, purer, and selfless. Therefore, they are perceived as morally superior to men (Batista Pereira 2016; Glick and Fiske 2011). In the right context, mainly when traditional masculine political institutions are in crisis, benevolent sexism can be activated to increase support for women leaders (Batista Pereira 2016; Morgan and Buice 2013; Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018). When the salient issues and traits of the campaign complement a woman candidate's stereotypical strengths, women will receive an advantage from sexist stereotypes (Fridkin 1996).

For example, because women are perceived as pure and altruistic, they are seen as less corrupt than men (Barnes and Beaulieu 2014; Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton 2018a; Swamy et al. 2001). Therefore, when corruption is a relevant issue during an election, women candidates experience a boost (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2021). Even further, corruption tends to become more salient in evaluating women incumbents for individuals who strongly endorse benevolent sexism (Batista Pereira 2016).

Another context in which women may experience an advantage is one characterized by general discontent with politics as usual. Because politics is regarded as a men's game, women are

considered political outsiders (Barnes and Beaulieu 2014; Brown, Diekman, and Schneider 2011; O'Brien 2015). Consequently, when voters distrust political parties, women's nominations increase because they signal political renewal and increase the system's political legitimacy (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017, 2021; Zetterberg 2012).

Even though benevolent sexism might suggest a subjectively positive view of women, it shares common assumptions with hostile sexist beliefs, particularly around the notion that women can only perform restricted roles (Glide and Fiske 1996). Individuals with benevolent sexist beliefs positively evaluate women when they conform to gender roles (Gervais and Hillard 2011). Then, as a result, the favorability toward women's communal characteristics may contribute to gender inequality when women deviate from their expected roles (Diekman and Goodfriend 2006).

### 3.3. The impact of women's descriptive representation

As mentioned in the first part of the paper, the literature on the effect of women's presence in political office on gender biases is scarce<sup>17</sup> and, moreover, its findings are mixed. On the one hand, there is research that finds a positive effect of women's presence in politics on the perceptions of women's ability to govern (Alexander 2012, 2015; Alexander and Jalalzai 2016; Beaman et al. 2009; Kerevel and Atkeson 2015; Morgan and Buice 2013). On the other hand, some studies suggest that this effect is null or significant for only a portion of the population (Alexander 2012, 2015; Alexander and Jalalzai 2016; Barnes and Taylor-Robinson 2017; Kerevel and Atkeson 2015; Morgan and Buice 2013). The mixed findings might be a consequence of the seemingly high

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<sup>17</sup> The literature on the effect of other underrepresented communities and biases toward them is also limited. The election of the first African American president in the United States inspired a series of work evaluating the influence of Barack Obama on racial prejudice. Studies find that having a Black president as a role model decreases biases against African Americans (Columb and Plant 2011; Goldman 2012; Marx, Ko, and Friedman 2009; Plant et al. 2009). Yet, other scholars find null (Schmidt and Axt 2016) or even a negative effects of Obama on implicit bias, particularly among White individuals (Skinner and Cheadle 2016).

dependency of the results on the studied level of office, the political context, and individuals' gender. Alexander (2012, 2015) shows how, at the legislative level, women's presence decreases gender bias, particularly among women. However, others find that women in the cabinet (Morgan and Buice 2013) and local mayors (Kerevel and Atkeson 2015) mainly affect men's perceptions about women in politics. Alexander and Jalalzai (2016) present evidence that the positive effect of having a women head of government depends on the country's democratic health. Support for women's leadership is significantly higher when a country led by a woman shows low levels of democratic stability.

Despite the small and mixed body of research on the effect of women's numerical presence on gender bias, several studies address the influence of women's descriptive representation on other political aspects of symbolic representation. These are useful to develop expectations about how the presence of women in politics could influence individuals' perceptions of women's ability to govern.

Among the positive influence of women's descriptive representation, studies suggest that the presence of women in political offices increases trust in political institutions, satisfaction with the political system (Barnes and Taylor-Robinson 2017), the belief that the government is democratic (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005), and the legitimacy of the decision-making procedures (Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo 2019). Moreover, a great extent of research focuses on how elected women inspire other women to run for political office (Gilardi 2015) and increases their probability of being elected (Beaman et al. 2009; Bhavnani 2009). For example, the election of women mayors increases the share of votes received by women council candidates (Baskaran and Hessami 2018).

Women in positions of power serve as role models, particularly for women. The presence of women governors or senators can positively affect the number of women running for office (Ladam, Harden, and Windett 2018). The election of women can—at least in some cases—increase aspirations and improves educational outcomes for girls (Beaman et al. 2012). Women in the legislative office boost women’s political participation and knowledge. For example, some have found that women engage more in political discussion (Alexander and Jalalzai 2016; Barnes and Burchard 2013; Desposato and Norrander 2009), show increased interest in politics (Zetterberg 2012), vote in larger numbers, and donate more money to candidates (Alexander and Jalalzai 2016; Reingold and Harrell 2010).

The literature’s favorable findings suggest a positive effect of women’s descriptive representation on gender bias. The presence of women in political office should improve perceptions of women’s ability to govern and, as a consequence, reduce gender bias. Because of women’s increased political involvement and the successful role model effect played by women in power, one could theorize that descriptive representation’s positive effect should be more significant for women. However, other studies suggest that men are more prone to update their beliefs about women once they experience women’s political leadership (Kerevel and Atkeson 2015; Morgan and Buice 2013). The reasoning behind these results is that men are more vulnerable to elite cues than women when it comes to gender issues, and, most importantly, it may be that women’s prior beliefs on such topics are comparatively less biased (and in need of “correction”) than men’s. Both Kerevel and Atkeson (2015) and Morgan and Buice (2013) show empirical data on the gender gap regarding perceptions of women’s ability to govern. Their study uses a measurement of hostile sexism: the belief that men are better political leaders. While survey data

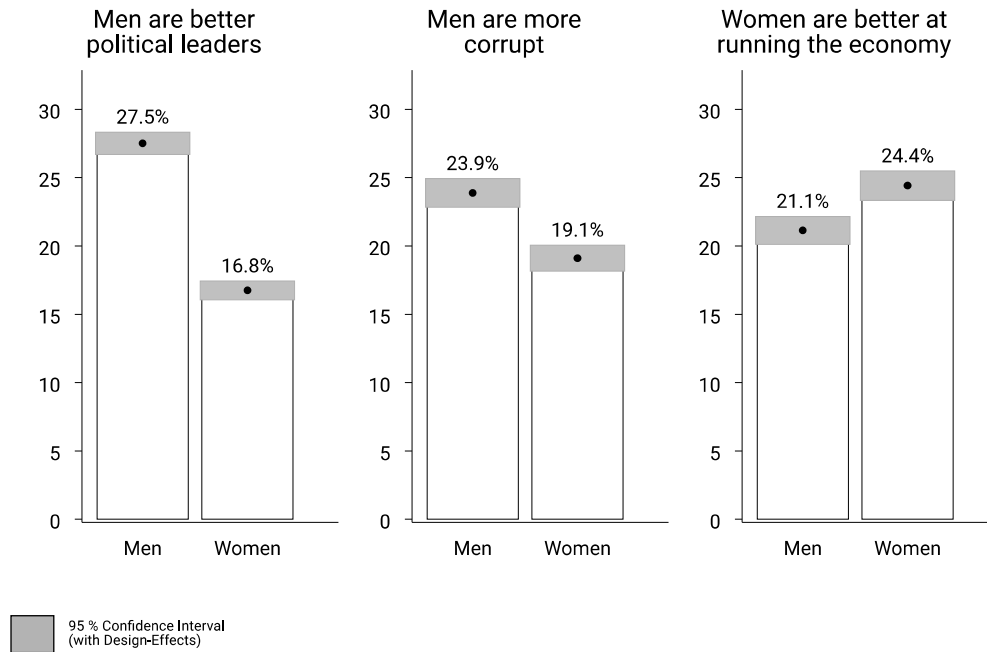
from the 2018/19 round of the AmericasBarometer<sup>18</sup> confirms this type of gender gap, it also opens the possibility of a different effect on other forms of biases, mainly benevolent sexism.

Figure 3.1. shows that the differences between men and women on measures of benevolent sexism —although statistically significant— are considerably lower than that found for the hostile sexism measure. The gender gap in the belief that men are better political leaders than women is 10.7 percentage points. In contrast, the gap in the idea that women are less corrupt has a magnitude of 4.8 and 3.3 percentage points regarding the belief that they are better at handling the economy. Most importantly, while men are the ones who in a more significant proportion show hostile sexism (27.5% compared to 16.8% of women) and agree with the idea that men are more corrupt (23.9% to 19.1%), a larger percentage of women compared to men believe that they are better suited to run the economy (24.4% of women against 21.1% of men). Therefore, it is possible that the expected gendered differences in the effect of women's representation on hostile sexism might take a different form when benevolent sexism is examined. In this paper, I consider the influence of descriptive representation on both types of gender biases.

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<sup>18</sup> The measurements of hostile and benevolent sexism are explored more in-depth in the paper's next section.

Figure 3.1. Hostile and benevolent sexism in Latin America by gender



Source: AmericasBarometer 2018/19

While conventional wisdom in extant literature anticipates positive results for the effect of women’s presence in politics on symbolic representation, other studies find a different set of outcomes. Some studies suggest null results from the role model effect. According to this strand of the literature, women would not be more likely to be interested in politics (Zetterberg 2012) or voting turnout (Broockman 2014). Women in political office might not inspire other women to run for political office (Bhalotra, Clots-Figueras, and Iyer 2018; Broockman 2014). Moreover, they might decrease the political ambition of women of opposite parties (Bonneau and Kanthak 2020). In general, elected women do not increase the probability of women winning subsequent elections (Bhalotra, Clots-Figueras, and Iyer 2018) nor increase the political system’s legitimacy (Zetterberg 2012).

One of the reasons behind the mixed —and sometimes conflicting— results might be the difference in the observed levels of office. For example, studies that find an increase of women running for political office as a consequence of the previous election of women look at local and regional executive governments (Gilardi 2015; Ladam, Harden, and Windett 2018), while Bhalotra, Clots-Figueras, and Iyer (2018) and Broockman (2014) find null results exploring state and national legislative offices, respectively. I argue that two factors could influence the role of the presence of women in political office on gender bias: first, the degree of the office’s visibility and perceptions of merit related to achieving the seat.

Liu and Banaszak (2017, 135) argue that “women in political office are only likely to serve as role models or create a substantive effect that inspires action by others to the extent that they are visible enough to be noticed by ordinary citizens in the first place” (also see Barnes and Taylor-Robinson 2017, Morgan and Buice 2013, and Zetterberg 2018). The visibility of a political post refers to the likelihood that individuals would be able to identify the person holding the office. By this standard, the highest visible political position a woman can occupy is the presidency (Jalalzai 2015). According to Jalalzai and Santos (2015, 138), a woman elected to the presidency affects symbolic representation, influencing discourse and policy making, due to her sheer visibility. The head of an executive office enjoys high levels of notoriety, even at the local level. For example, aspiring national politicians in Latin America use the mayoral office as an important stepping-stone in their careers (Falleti 2010).

Despite of not being elected, given their placement in leadership positions in the executive branch, cabinet ministers hold significant influence and visibility. They enjoy a national platform and a broader influence (Morgan and Buice 2013). Moreover, in most cases, women require an initial level of visibility to become cabinet members. They are usually highly visible within their

party organization (Krook and O'Brien 2012) or in their countries (Annesley and Gains 2010). Even when women are not well known prior to their appointment, because of the relatively small size of most cabinets and the power they hold in enacting policy, they have a platform that increases their political visibility (Liu and Banaszak 2017).

Even at the national level, legislative offices enjoy less political visibility than executive offices (Morgan and Buice 2013). Because individual congress members do not have the power to unilaterally pass legislation, they typically have limited visible influence within the legislative decision-making process. Even if elected, voters might not be aware of the name or gender of their own representatives (Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997). Those elected as part of a closed-list proportional system are least likely to undergo personalistic campaigns (Bawn and Thies 2003), making them less visible to their constituents.

There is an open discussion about the role of meritocracy and the instruments women have for cracking the glass ceiling. Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2014) suggest that the presence of women in the legislative bodies might not be sufficient to have an effect on the public. Despite incrementing descriptive representation, women elected through gender quotas do not change the masculine nature of politics. There is a false belief that the current political system is meritocratic, and the nomination and election of a candidate is the result of their worthiness (Rainbow Murray 2014). Consequently, gender quotas are, effectively, comparatively unmeritocratic because they recruit based on gender and not merit, giving preferential treatment to women at the expense of men (Clayton 2015). As such, they can reinforce negative stereotypes regarding women's capacities as politicians. That outcome ensues when the process sends the message that women need special legislation to be protected and that the quality of women representatives might be lower than their more competitive counterparts (Mansbridge 2005),



strengthening taste-based discrimination (Goldin 2014) and decreasing the role model effect of women legislators (McIntyre et al. 2011).

### 3.4. Data and methodology

To explore how descriptive representation predicts gender bias among citizens, using the 2018/19 round of the AmericasBarometer, I explore data from sixteen countries in the Latin American region.<sup>19</sup> Latin America presents empirical and theoretical opportunities for the study of the effect of women in politics on the perceptions of women's abilities to govern. This is because, first, there is an important country variation in the degrees of representation. Second, the complex gender dynamics in the region allow for the identification of gender biases nuances. On one side, women are being elected and appointed to high political offices. Additionally, as shown in the previous Chapter, women in Latin America are evaluated better than men on political leadership stereotypes. On the other, the region continues to be linked to a machismo culture (Sara-Lafosse 2014; Stevens 1973) and women are still critically underrepresented in executive offices at the national, regional, and local levels.

Regarding the first point —the different levels of women's descriptive representation— the number of women occupying office has increased exponentially throughout Latin America in the last couple of decades. At the national level, seven countries elected women as their presidents.<sup>20</sup> In addition, more and more women are appointed to leadership positions. While 7%

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<sup>19</sup> Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay. Nicaragua and Venezuela were not included in the 2018/19 round of the AmericasBarometer. With the exception of Brazil and Colombia, in the 2018/19 AmericasBarometer samples are self-weighted.

<sup>20</sup> Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in Nicaragua (1990), Mireya Elisa Moscoso Rodríguez in Panamá (1999), Michelle Bachelet in Chile (2006), Cristina Fernández in Argentina (2007) a 2015, Laura Chinchilla Miranda in Costa Rica

of cabinet members were women in 1990 (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005), in 2021 this proportion increased to 28.5%. Despite being severely underrepresented at the local executive level, women-elected mayors rose 10.3 percentage points in twenty years. In 1998, only 5.2% of elected mayors were women, while in 2018, the proportion reached 15.5% (ECLAC 2021).

Latin American national legislative bodies reached the more significant improvements in women's representation. In 1997, 12% of elected representatives in the region were women. Twenty-four years later, this proportion increased to a third of all members of congress in Latin America (ECLAC 2021). This is the result of the enactment of electoral rules designed to secure the presence of women in the election process. All countries in the region —except for Guatemala— have adopted some form of gender quota as a way to overcome the supply barriers to women's representation. Quota laws in Latin America typically require political parties to nominate a specified percentage of women, with that threshold varying between 20% and 50% (Htun 2004). Quotas significantly increase the election of women legislators, but their effectiveness is highly dependent on quotas' design and enforcement (Sacchet 2018; Schwindt-Bayer 2009). For example, in countries with 50% and 30% gender quotas, on average, women comprise only 39% and 22% of their national legislative bodies, respectively.

In sum, despite the improvements in women's descriptive representation in the region, the number of women in public office is far from being homogenous. Table 3.1. shows the country variation in the levels of representation in the sample I use in this paper. Of the sixteen countries included in this study, five elected women presidents. In 2019, the percentage of women elected mayors ranged from 3% (Peru and Guatemala) to 22% (Mexico). In the same year, 53% of the

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(2010), Dilma Rousseff in Brasil (2011), and Xiomara Castro in Honduras (2022). In addition, Argentina (1974), Bolivia (1979 and 2019) and Ecuador (1997) had non-elected women interim presidents.

Bolivian Legislative Assembly were women, while 15% of the Brazilian and Paraguayan Congress were women. The country with the highest proportion of appointed women to the cabinet, Colombia, had 53% of women ministers, while Guatemala had only 6.7%.

Table 3.1. Descriptive representation by level of office in Latin America, 2019

	Former elected woman president <sup>21</sup>	% of women mayors <sup>22</sup>	% of women in congress <sup>23</sup>	% of women in the cabinet <sup>24</sup>
Argentina	Yes	10.2%	40.2%	25.0%
Bolivia	No	8.2%	53.1%	14.3%
Brazil	Yes	11.6%	15.0%	9.1%
Chile	Yes	11.9%	22.6%	34.8%
Colombia	No	12.1%	18.7%	52.9%
Costa Rica	Yes	14.8%	45.6%	51.9%
Ecuador	No	7.2%	38.0%	22.2%
El Salvador	No	11.1%	31.0%	33.3%
Guatemala	No	3.0%	19.4%	6.7%
Honduras	No	7.4%	21.1%	32%
Mexico	No	21.6%	48.2%	42.1%
Panama	Yes	14.3%	21.1%	26.7%
Paraguay	No	10.4%	15.0%	21.4%
Peru	No	2.9%	30.0%	27.8%
Dominican Republic	No	13.3%	26.8%	16.7%
Uruguay	No	21.4%	19.2%	42.9%

As mentioned in the previous section, I expect that the effect of women’s political presence varies on the visibility and meritocracy behind the different levels of office. Therefore, I explore the potential effect of living in a country that previously elected a women President, the percentage

<sup>21</sup> Source: Jalalzai (2015)

<sup>22</sup> Source: Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. ECLAC. United Nations. <https://oig.cepal.org/en/indicators/elected-mayors-who-are-female>

<sup>23</sup> Source: Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. ECLAC. United Nations. <https://oig.cepal.org/en/indicators/legislative-power-percentage-women-national-legislative-body-0>

<sup>24</sup> Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2019-03/one-in-five-ministers-woman-according-new-ipuun-women-map>

of women in the national legislative body, the percentage of women in the national cabinet, and living in a municipality currently governed by a women mayor. By the time of the survey, five countries in the sample had elected a woman president in the past: Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Costa Rica, and Panama. Except for Panama, these countries had a women head of government in the previous five years to the survey. The percentages of women occupying national legislative office and cabinet posts during the time of the survey can be found in Table 3.1. In the countries included in this study, the average proportion of municipalities led by a woman was 10.7%. 11.7% of municipalities in my sample reflect this tendency, with a country average of 10.51%.<sup>25,26</sup> Table 3.2, based on the literature explored in the previous section, classifies each level of office on its degree of visibility and perceived level of meritocracy.

Table 3.2. Degrees of visibility and meritocracy by office level

		Visibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Meritocracy	High	Presidency		
	Medium	Cabinet	Municipal mayor	
	Low			National legislative body

The second reason why Latin America is a suitable region to identify gender bias nuances is the contrast between the comparatively high presence of women in political office (Schwindt-

<sup>25</sup> With the research assistance of Chase Mandell and Annabelle Mirhashemi, mayors' gender was coded using official data from countries' electoral institutions, municipalities' official webpages or news reports from reputable newspapers.

<sup>26</sup> Appendix 1 shows a comparison between the percent of women mayors from the entire country by the time of the survey and the percentage of women mayors in my sample. With the exception of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Ecuador, most of the differences between the country and the sample did not exceed 3%.

Bayer and Senk 2020) and a *machista* culture (Sara-Lafosse 2014). Batista Pereira (2016) explored how questions from the AmericasBarometer address hostile and benevolent sexism. In his study, the survey item about men being better political leaders than women<sup>27</sup> relates to the negative prejudice towards women's leadership (hostile sexism), while questions about issue competency and traits that portray women as good political leaders measure expressions of benevolent sexism.<sup>28</sup> I consider these survey items appropriate to measure the concepts of hostile and benevolent sexism because they reflect their main differences and nuances. As for hostile sexism, the survey question demands respondents to discriminate against women as political leaders overtly. In comparison, the measurement of benevolent sexism captures the belief that women possess better qualities because they are women. In the case of Latin America, respondents may resort to the stereotypes of mothers as good household administrators or women as pure and more transparent.

Data from the AmericasBarometer 2018/19 points toward a region where opposite realities co-exist. On the one hand, a significant proportion of voters still hold a bias against women politicians. A fifth of Latin Americans believes men are better political leaders than women—which might be evidence of hostile sexism persistence. On the other hand, as a sign of benevolent sexism, one-fifth of individuals think women are better at handling critical political issues such as the national economy and corruption. Previous studies find strong correlations between benevolent

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<sup>27</sup> The exact wording of the question is: "Some say that in general, men are better political leaders than women. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? (1) Strongly agree (2) Agree (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree." Responses "strongly agree" and "agree" were recoded 1, while "disagree" and "strongly disagree" 0, in order to capture the adherence to the belief that men are better political leaders than women.

<sup>28</sup> The questions included in the AmericasBarometer questionnaire are: a) "Who do you think would be more corrupt as a politician, a man or a woman, or are both the same? (1) A man (2) A woman (3) Both the same." To express women's superiority, the variable was recoded 1 if the answer was "A Man," else 0. b) If a politician is responsible for running the national economy, who would do a better job, a man, or a woman or does it not matter? (1) A man (2) A woman (3) It does not matter. Variable was recoded as 1 if the answer was "A Woman," else 0.

and hostile sexism (Glick and Fiske 1996). However, as shown in Table 3.3., this correlation is comparatively low in Latin America. A further Chi-square test (Table A3.1.) confirms that there is no significant relationship between support for the idea that men are better political leaders and believing that men are more corrupt. Although there is a statistically significant relationship at the  $P < 0.05$  level between hostile sexism and the belief that women are better suited for running the economy, this association is weak and negative.<sup>29</sup>

Table 3.3. Correlations between measurements of hostile and benevolent sexism

		Hostile sexism	Benevolent sexism	
		Men are better political leaders	Men are more corrupt	Women are better at running the economy
Hostile sexism	Men are better political leaders	1.00		
Benevolent sexism	Men are more corrupt	0.01	1.00	
	Women are better at running the economy	-0.02	0.36	1.0000

Source: AmericasBarometer 2018/19

Empirically, Latin America is a useful case to explore the different expressions of gender bias because, as Figure 3.3 shows, there is an interesting country variation regarding hostile and benevolent sexism. Underneath the mean regional values of the proportion of individuals who say men are better political leaders (22.2%), men are more corrupt (21.3%<sup>30</sup>), and women are better at running the economy (22.6%<sup>31</sup>), countries rank differently on these measurements. For example, the Dominican Republic scores the highest on hostile and benevolent sexism. However, while

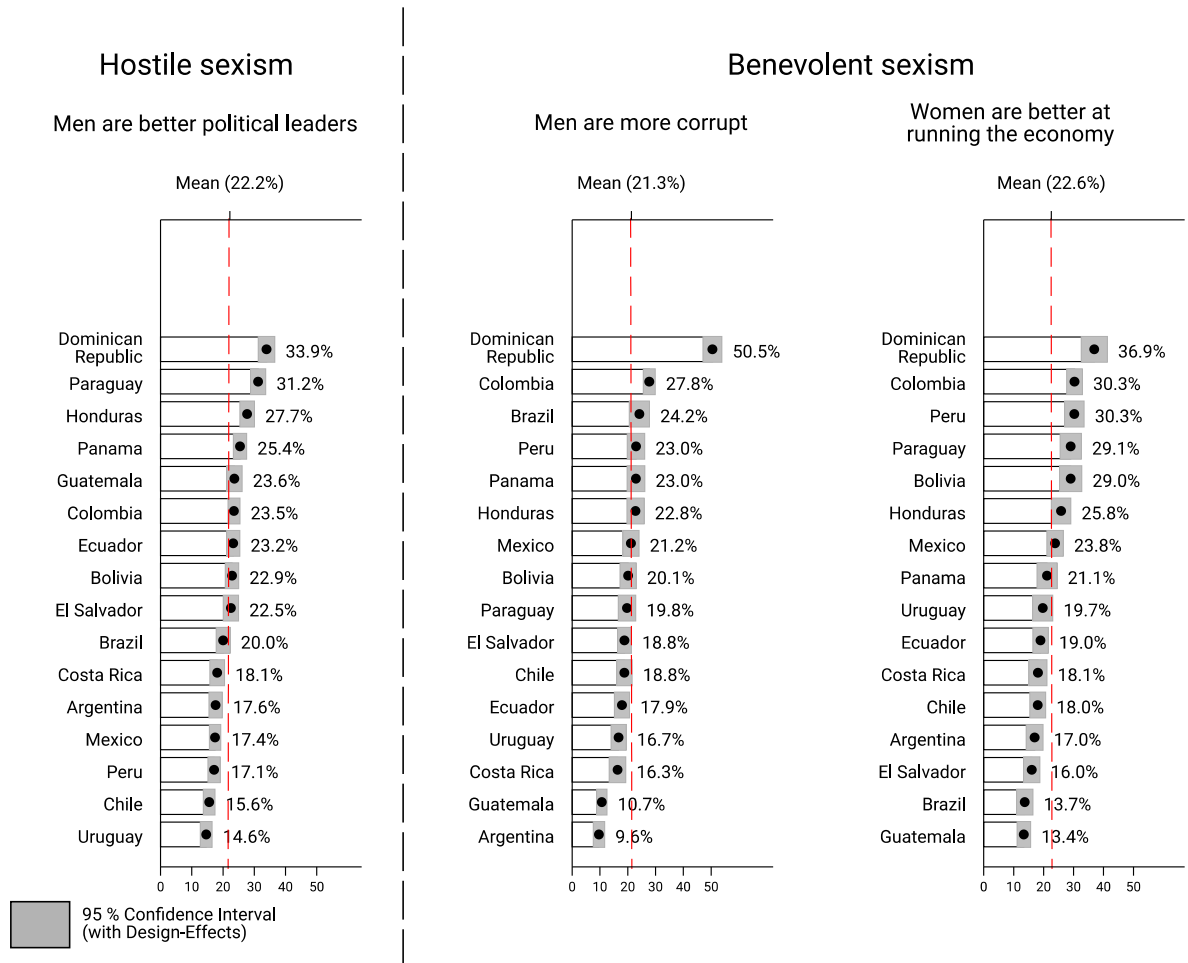
<sup>29</sup> Cramer's V of -0.0224

<sup>30</sup> 1.8% of Latin Americans believe that women are more corrupt than men.

<sup>31</sup> 6.2% of respondents express the belief that men are better managers of the national economy than women.

individuals in Colombia and Guatemala show average levels of negative prejudice, Colombia ranks second and Guatemala 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> on measures of benevolent sexism. Further, 24.2% of Brazilians (above regional average) believe men are more corrupt than women, but only 13.7% (9 percentage points below regional average) believe women are better at managing the economy.

Figure 3.2. Hostile and benevolent sexism by country



Source: AmericasBarometer 2018/19

In analyzing the potential effect of women’s presence in different levels of political office on gender bias, I present the results of mixed effects logistic regression models. I use multilevel

analysis to account for municipal level factors.<sup>32</sup> The dependent variables are dichotomous and reflect whether respondents hold sexist beliefs or not. To address hostile sexism, the studied variable is agreeing with the idea that men are better political leaders than women. For benevolent sexism, two variables are explored: considering that men are more corrupt than women and women are better at running the economy than men.

As previous studies find, other variables are also potentially significant predictors of gender bias against women political leaders, which I control for in the empirical models. The Latin American context of low trust in the political institutions, after controlling for women's presence in public life, dissatisfaction with democracy, and high perceptions of corruption lead to positive evaluations of women in politics (Morgan and Buice 2013). In 2018/19, 71% of individuals in the region expressed distrust in political parties. In addition, 89% of Latin Americans believe that half or more of their country's politicians are involved in corruption. Women are perceived as political outsiders and risk-averse, which drives the preconception that women candidates signal political renewal (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017) and are less corrupt than men (Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton 2018a; Swamy et al. 2001). Therefore, women have an advantage in the face of political distrust and corruption (Morgan and Buice 2013). In the models, I include variables measuring satisfaction with democracy and trust in political parties to account for individuals' perceptions of

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<sup>32</sup> Similarly to Kerevel and Atkeson (2015), I cluster results by municipality instead of country. There are 1,084 distinct municipalities in my sample, though only 16 countries. According to Bell et al. (2010), small cluster samples lead to a reduction in the accuracy of the confidence intervals. Yet, in my analyses (Tables 3.4. and 3.5.), the standard errors and the confidence intervals for the country-level variables are particularly small and narrow. Due to the limited number of countries in my sample, the assessments of the statistical significance of the effect could be unreliable. However, estimates of the effect of a country-level predictor may be unbiased (Bryan and Jenkins 2016). Moreover, a one-way ANOVA test revealed that differences in hostile and benevolent sexism across the sixteen countries are statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), which suggests that country-level characteristics explain variation in the dependent variables' levels after individual-level factors are considered.



the political system.<sup>33</sup> Evaluation of the national economy,<sup>34</sup> corruption perceptions,<sup>35</sup> trust in the national legislature,<sup>36</sup> and trust in the local government<sup>37</sup> are variables that assess government performance. Perceptions about women leaders could be moderated by individuals' evaluations of women's work. Therefore, models include the interactions between having a woman as mayor and trust in the local government and between the percentage of women legislators and trust in the national legislature.

As mentioned in the previous section, individuals' gender can influence how they evaluate women's ability to govern. In addition to the logistic models that account for the entire sample population,<sup>38</sup> I present separate analyses for women and men following Morgan and Buice's (2013) study of Latin America and gender bias. This allows me to account for how men and women might have different causal patterns regarding several variables included in the models. Other individual-level sociodemographic characteristics might change how people perceive women's political leadership. The presented models include education, age, religion, political ideological self-placement, wealth, and place of residency as controls.

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<sup>33</sup> The question included in the AmericasBarometer instrument to measure satisfaction with democracy was: "In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in (country)?" Responses were coded on a scale from 0 to 1, where 0 represents "very dissatisfied" and 1 "very satisfied." The question regarding trust in political parties reads as follows: "To what extent do you trust the political parties?" Respondents were asked to pick a number between 1 and 7, where 1 indicated "not at all" and 7 "a lot." Responses were rescaled to range from 0 to 1.

<sup>34</sup> The question asked in the survey was: "Do you think that the country's current economic situation is better than, the same as or worse than it was 12 months ago?" I coded "better" answers as 1 and "same" and "worse" as 0.

<sup>35</sup> The survey item used to measure corruption perception was: "Thinking of the politicians of [country]... how many of them do you believe are involved in corruption? (1) None (2) Less than half of them (3) Half of them (4) More than half of them (5) All." Responses were rescaled to range from 0 ("none") to 1 ("all").

<sup>36</sup> Asked using the following question: "To what extent do you trust the National Congress?" Respondents were asked to pick a number between 1 and 7, where 1 indicated "not at all" and 7 "a lot." Responses were rescaled to range from 0 to 1.

<sup>37</sup> "To what extent do you trust the local or municipal government?" Respondents were asked to pick a number between 1 and 7, where 1 indicated "not at all" and 7 "a lot." Responses were rescaled to range from 0 to 1.

<sup>38</sup> The models include gender as a control variable.

### 3.5. Results

I begin by examining the relation between women’s presence in political office and the probability of expressing negative prejudice towards women in politics. Table 3.4. shows the results of mixed effects logistic regression analysis where the dependent variable is agreement with the idea that men are better political leaders than women. The first column analyzes the entire sample population, while the second only looks at women, and the third at men. I find that women’s descriptive representation is associated with a decrease in the probability of expressing hostile sexism. However, its predicted effect depends on the office level and individuals’ gender. Only the offices with higher levels of visibility and meritocracy—the presidency and the cabinet—have a significant predicted effect on hostile sexism. The less visible mayoral office and the perceived less meritocratic legislative office do not significantly predict how citizens evaluate women’s ability to govern. Moreover, the analysis suggests that it is men who are more sensitive to women’s political leadership than women. A significant negative relationship exists between experiencing a woman’s presidency and hostile sexism among men, but not among women.

Table 3.4. Hostile sexism: mixed effects logistic regression odds ratio

	Men are better political leaders		
	Full sample	Women	Men
Experienced a Woman's Presidency	0.776*** (0.051)	0.998 (0.094)	0.665*** (0.054)
Woman Mayor	1.015 (0.167)	1.144 (0.291)	0.977 (0.204)
% of women in Congress	0.9996 (0.004)	1.006 (0.007)	0.994 (0.006)
% of women in the cabinet	0.993*** (0.002)	0.995 (0.003)	0.992*** (0.003)
Satisfaction with Democracy	1.267** (0.131)	1.203 (0.195)	1.312** (0.176)
Trust in Political Parties	1.395*** (0.153)	1.557*** (0.259)	1.319* (0.192)
Trust in Local Government	1.129 (0.109)	1.194 (0.18)	1.102 (0.138)

Trust in the National Legislature	0.971 (0.22)	1.515 (0.54)	0.703 (0.206)
Woman mayor * Trust in local government	0.96 (0.261)	1.17 (0.48)	0.746 (0.267)
% of women in congress * Trust in the national legislature	1.001 (0.007)	0.986 (0.012)	1.012 (0.01)
Economy is better	1.258*** (0.101)	1.322** (0.185)	1.208* (0.117)
Amount of Corruption among Politicians	0.937 (0.103)	0.975 (0.166)	0.91 (0.13)
Woman	0.464*** (0.025)		
Education	0.342*** (0.042)	0.244*** (0.047)	0.444*** (0.069)
Age	1.514*** (0.129)	1.691*** (0.242)	1.401*** (0.149)
Catholic	1.011 (0.055)	0.93 (0.082)	1.093 (0.075)
Ideology (Left / Right)	1.32*** (0.113)	1.415** (0.193)	1.264** (0.139)
Wealth Quintile	0.791*** (0.063)	0.902 (0.118)	0.704*** (0.071)
Urban	0.844*** (0.052)	0.853* (0.082)	0.835** (0.065)
Constant	0.722 (0.145)	0.256*** (0.08)	0.878 (0.223)
Observations	9615	4649	4966

Standard errors in parentheses.

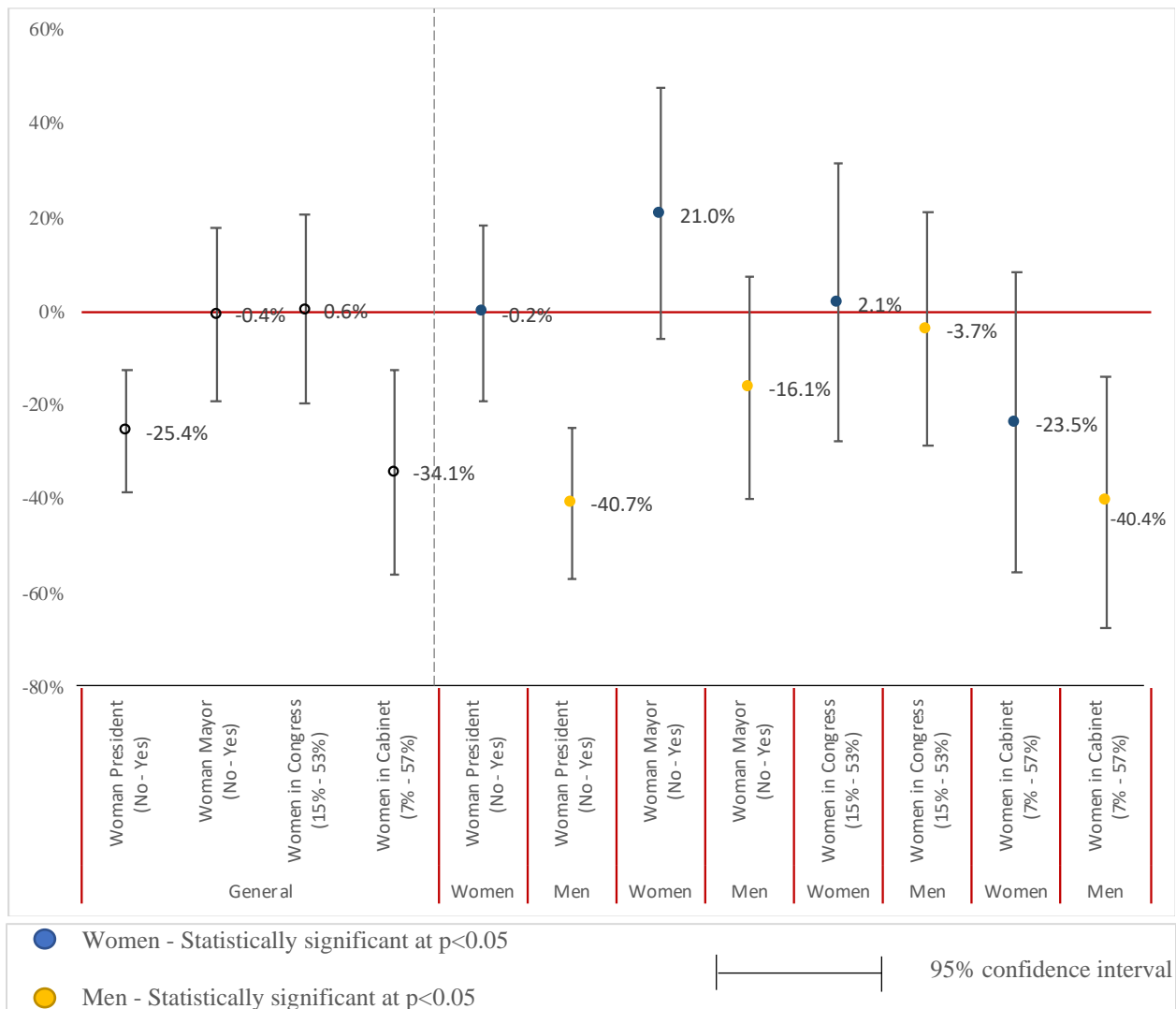
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Source: AmericasBarometer 2018/19

If we assume the data show a causal relationship, women occupying the presidency—the highest, most visible, and respected level of office—have a more significant influence on citizens’ perceptions of women’s ability to govern. Individuals who live in countries that previously elected women presidents are less likely to believe men are better political leaders than women. They are 22 percentage points less likely to adopt hostile beliefs compared to those who never experienced the leadership of a woman president. The results are consistent with the notion that women in the cabinet can also reduce hostile sexism. Appointing one more woman in a cabinet of 20 ministers—

increasing 5 percentage points of women’s presence in the cabinet—is predicted to decrease by 4 percentage points the odds of thinking men are superior as political leaders. As Figure 3.3. shows, there is a difference of 34.1 percentage points in the probability of hostile sexism between a country with 7% of women cabinet members—like Guatemala—and a country with a high presence of women ministers (53%)—similarly to Costa Rica.

Figure 3.3. Hostile sexism: contrast of predictive margins with 95% CIs



These results are driven by men's perceptions of women's leadership. Table 3.4. shows that women elected or appointed to political office do not predict women's levels of hostile sexism. In contrast, men appear to react to the presence of women in the cabinet and the election of a woman president by reducing the negative prejudice against women politicians. Individuals living in a country with a former chief executive have lower probabilities of believing that men are better political leaders than women (23 percentage points difference). The appointment of 1 more woman to a cabinet of 10 members (10%) reduces the odds of hostile sexism by 8 percentage points. Figure 3.3 shows the striking contrast between men and women regarding the effect of a woman president. The difference between women living in countries with and without former women chief executive is insignificant. However, the difference in the average report of hostile sexism among men experiencing and not experiencing a woman president is 41 percentage points.

Although there is a clear relationship between the reduction of hostile sexism and the presence of visible and respected women in political office, both measurements of benevolent sexism portray a more complex relationship between descriptive representation and beliefs regarding women's ability of government. As shown in Table 3.5., women presidents are associated with lower benevolent sexism when the dependent variable measures agreement with the idea that women are better managers of the economy. However, it has no significant predicted effect when the studied variable is believing that men are more corrupt than women. Nonetheless, women in congress—the level of office with lower levels of visibility and meritocracy—is associated with lower benevolent sexism regarding corruption but not the economy. In a congress of 100 representatives, one more woman elected appears to decrease by 1.5 percentage points the odds of expressing that men are more corrupt than women. But, this predicted effect is only significant for men.

Table 3.5. Benevolent sexism: mixed effects logistic regression odds ratio

	Men are more corrupt			Women are better at running the economy		
	Full sample	Women	Men	Full sample	Women	Men
Experienced a woman's presidency	0.852* (0.077)	0.674*** (0.091)	1.018 (0.116)	0.708*** (0.061)	0.708*** (0.078)	0.715*** (0.083)
Woman mayor	0.955 (0.221)	0.783 (0.284)	1.079 (0.32)	0.85 (0.192)	0.973 (0.295)	0.764 (0.24)
% of women in congress	0.985** (0.006)	0.991 (0.009)	0.98** (0.008)	1.00002 (0.006)	0.993 (0.008)	1.005 (0.008)
% of women in the cabinet	1.002 (0.003)	1.003 (0.004)	1.001 (0.004)	1.004 (0.003)	1.002 (0.003)	1.006* (0.004)
Satisfaction with democracy	0.767* (0.11)	0.711 (0.155)	0.772 (0.15)	0.661*** (0.092)	0.705* (0.135)	0.61** (0.12)
Trust in political parties	0.913 (0.141)	0.908 (0.208)	0.878 (0.187)	1.018 (0.151)	1.066 (0.214)	0.971 (0.207)
Trust in local government	1.016 (0.133)	0.883 (0.17)	1.144 (0.205)	1.227 (0.155)	1.41** (0.242)	1.052 (0.189)
Trust in the national legislature	0.739 (0.234)	0.683 (0.326)	0.801 (0.344)	0.931 (0.282)	0.432** (0.181)	1.857 (0.798)
Woman mayor *	0.771 (0.307)	0.793 (0.508)	0.759 (0.389)	0.989 (0.376)	0.942 (0.488)	0.929 (0.504)
Trust in local government						
% of women in congress * Trust in the national legislature	1.007 (0.011)	1.002 (0.016)	1.013 (0.015)	1.002 (0.01)	1.017 (0.014)	0.989 (0.014)
Economy is better	1.389*** (0.155)	1.43* (0.271)	1.365** (0.189)	1.098 (0.124)	1.103 (0.193)	1.101 (0.159)
Amount of corruption among politicians	0.805 (0.124)	0.837 (0.192)	0.805 (0.169)	1.607*** (0.242)	1.767*** (0.365)	1.458* (0.312)
Woman	0.728*** (0.052)			1.155** (0.08)		
Education	0.565*** (0.094)	0.78 (0.193)	0.411*** (0.093)	0.68** (0.108)	0.778 (0.169)	0.597** (0.136)
Age	2.272*** (0.266)	1.999*** (0.375)	2.534*** (0.388)	2.687*** (0.307)	2.61*** (0.432)	2.711*** (0.42)
Catholic	1.113 (0.083)	1.269** (0.148)	0.973 (0.096)	1.035 (0.075)	1.071 (0.108)	1.007 (0.1)
Ideology (Left / Right)	1.102 (0.129)	1.236 (0.219)	1.016 (0.162)	1.138 (0.129)	1.022 (0.162)	1.25 (0.201)
Wealth Quintile	1.169 (0.129)	0.951 (0.16)	1.397** (0.207)	0.782** (0.083)	0.894 (0.132)	0.688** (0.103)
Urban	1.131 (0.1)	1.025 (0.136)	1.237* (0.142)	0.91 (0.075)	0.909 (0.102)	0.945 (0.106)
Constant	0.485***	0.328***	0.524*	0.203***	0.273***	0.199***

	(0.134)	(0.132)	(0.194)	(0.055)	(0.098)	(0.075)
Observations	5142	2498	2644	5140	2495	2645

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Source: AmericasBarometer 2018/19

A closer look at how men and women react differently to the presence of women in office for updating their beliefs reveals significant differences between benevolent and hostile sexism. Whereas experiencing a woman’s presidency is predicted to decrease hostile sexism among men, it does not influence their levels of benevolent sexism regarding corruption. Conversely, women presidents do not influence women’s levels of hostile sexism. Yet, women who experienced the leadership of a women’s head of state are less likely to think that politicians of their same gender are less corrupt than men by 33 percentage points. However, when benevolent sexism refers to women’s ability for running the economy, there are no apparent gender differences in the reduction of benevolent sexism regarding the economy by experiencing a woman president. Women chief executives’ predicted effect lowers men’s and women’s odds of agreeing with the idea that women are better managers of the economy by 30 percentage points.

### 3.6. Discussion and conclusion

The analysis presented in this paper shows that women’s numerical presence in political office is associated with a significant predicted effect on citizens’ levels of gender bias. However, that result mainly depends on the type of office women occupy and individuals’ gender. Those who live in a country that experienced women’s leadership in highly visible and powerful national offices—the presidency and the cabinet—are less likely to express hostile sexism. In contrast, women mayors and legislative representatives, who enjoy less exposure and, in the case of legislators, are associated with a less meritocratic office, might not affect the negative perceptions

around women's political leadership. Yet, the predictive effect of women's descriptive representation on hostile sexism is only significant among men.

The two measurements of benevolent sexism yield two different patterns of results. On the one hand, the presence of more women in congress is associated with less support for the belief that men are more corrupt than women. Other levels of office show no significant association. However, past women chief executives are associated with lower probabilities of considering women are better at running the economy. Both offices are on the opposite extremes of the levels of visibility and meritocracy. It could be that individuals resort to a different set of stereotypes to respond to each question. Women are perceived to be less corrupt because they are seen as more honest—particularly by men—and political outsiders—mainly by women (Barnes and Beaulieu 2019). It is possible that when men see women occupying a seat in congress because of their gender and not their merit, they will perceive them as less pure. Inversely, when women see a woman in the most prized political seat, they might no longer see women as marginalized in politics. Perceiving women as more dishonest and no longer as political outsiders could drive men and women respectively to consider women equally corrupt than men, a notion that is consistent with results included in Table A3.4a. in the Appendix.

The results of women's political presence on perceptions of women's ability to run the economy align with the theoretical expectations of this paper. Individuals living in a country where a woman occupied the most visible and important political office are less likely to hold benevolent sexist views. One possible concern regarding this measurement is that given the limited number of women in political office, the variable could be capturing an evaluation of women in power. This is, individuals would no longer think about their mothers and their abilities to manage the household economy, but think about a particular woman while evaluating women's capacities for



running the national economy. Although in 2018/19, the year of the survey used in this paper analysis, there were no women presidents in the region, I explored AmericasBarometer data for Argentina and Brazil 2012, a time when Cristina Fernandez and Dilma Rousseff were in power. I find no statically significant difference between support for Fernandez and Rousseff on the perception that women are better at running the economy. Moreover, in support of the validity of this measure, the presence of a woman president (Table A3.4b. in the Appendix section) is associated with a lower likelihood of thinking of men as better managers among women. In line with the role-model theory, this finding suggests that women update their perceptions of their own ability to govern.

The consequences of the reduction of benevolent sexism for women's electability should be addressed by future research. As mentioned in Chapter 2, positive evaluations of women's political leadership could lead to opportunities for the election of women candidates. However, this paper's results show that the probability of showing benevolent sexism is lower when women are already elected to political office. I suggest that overly positive evaluations of hypothetical women candidates harm the electability of actual women candidates because the idealization of women in political leadership leads voters to hold real women candidates to a higher standard. Therefore, a reduction of benevolent sexism could lead individuals to hold women and men equally accountable of their acts.

The paper has two major limitations that further studies should address. The identification strategy does not allow to make any causal claim regarding the effect of women's political presence. First, I only consider the effect of the different levels of women's descriptive representation in 2018/19. Because I do not analyze time panel data, I do not compare the effect of electing more women into office. My results show the likelihood of holding hostile and

benevolent sexist views at different degrees of women's political representation. Although it could be possible that to have more women in power, citizens must be less biased against women, as shown in my literature review, previous research points to the significant effects of electing women on symbolic representation. Unfortunately, the measurements of sexism in the AmericasBarometer were not included before the election of women presidents in the region, with the exception of Costa Rica and Brazil. Figure A3.1. in the Appendix shows that the percentage of individuals agreeing with the notion that men are better political leaders than women reduces significantly between 2008 and 2012, before and after women were elected presidents. In the case of Costa Rica, the proportion remains stable in the following six years, while in Brazil, despite an increment in 2014, hostile sexism does not reach the recorded levels before Rousseff's presidency. Further research should analyze the effect of women's representation before the election, during, and after their term, which implies broadening this research to other world regions to increase the number of cases. The second limitation refers to the number of cases and the structure of the data analyzed in this chapter. I am interested in exploring how gender bias is shaped by women's political presence in the cabinets, congresses, and as presidents. The levels of these type of political representation vary at the country level. However, my sample includes only sixteen countries. Future research should include other regions in the world or include more country/year observations.

Nonetheless, the paper makes two valuable contributions to the study of the relationship between descriptive and symbolic representation. First, by comparing the predictive effect of different political posts, it provides evidence regarding the importance of the office level for updating beliefs on women's ability to govern. To reduce gender bias, women's leadership needs to be visible and regarded as merited. Second, the paper highlights gender bias nuances. It shows

that women's numerical presence is likely to have a different influence on hostile and benevolent sexism, depending on the stereotypes challenged by women in political office.

## Chapter 4

### How gender shapes the experience of running for office: A comparative study of women and men candidates from Bolivia's local and national elections (2020-2021)

#### 4.1. Introduction

Women's road to being elected into political office is often paved with obstacles. As a result, women are still underrepresented in politics worldwide (Paxton, Hughes, and Barnes 2021). By the end of 2021, only ten countries had a woman Head of State, 13 had a woman Head of Government, just 25% of all national parliamentarians were women, and they occupied only 36% of the seats in local deliberative bodies (UN Women 2021). Notwithstanding, one region in the world has experienced significant progress in women's political presence: Latin America. Since the 1990s, countries in the region started to enact a diverse set of laws to boost women's descriptive representation. Currently, almost all countries in the region adopted a form of electoral gender quota system "aimed at creating a balance in view of the inequalities women face in acceding to political posts, on forcing their entry to positions of public authority and not leaving it completely to the good faith of the political parties, nor to their traditional procedures for candidate selection" (Peschard 2002, 173). Quotas effectively increased the numeric representation of women, but after more than two decades of implementing electoral reforms, do these inequalities remain? Are women still facing barriers to being elected because of their gender?

Evaluating the pervasiveness of inequalities under quota systems is important because they have been presented as effective for solving women's underrepresentation (Tripp and Kang 2007). However, quotas are, at best, a partial solution (Archenti and Tula 2017; Franceschet and Piscopo

2008; Freidenberg et al. 2018; Mansbridge 1999). In Latin America, they are highly dependent on their design and enforcement (Schwindt-Bayer 2009). In most countries in the region, the number of women elected to office is similar (if not less) to that legislated by the quotas, making them “a ceiling rather than a floor” (Paxton, Hughes, and Barnes 2021, 301). On average, in Latin America, 33.6% of national legislative bodies are composed of women (ECLAC 2022). Moreover, when quotas are not present, the underrepresentation of women is even more prevalent. At the local executive level, only 15.5% of elected mayors are women (ECLAC 2022). What accounts for this persistent gender gap? One possibility lies in the experiences of women candidates shaped by bias against women in politics. In this paper, I study the opportunities and obstacles women candidates perceive that they encounter during the electoral process and I evaluate how much their experience differs from the experience of their men counterparts. In addition, I consider the relevance of the presence of electoral quotas designed to level the play field.

The emphasis of previous research on the barriers to representation in Latin America was placed on the design of electoral laws and the legislative consequences of adopting quotas (Barnes and Córdova 2016; Hinojosa 2012; Htun 2016; Htun and Piscopo 2010; Piscopo 2015). Yet, another body of work suggests that political parties and elites are the main gatekeepers preventing women’s participation and identifies the financial barriers and the negative role of media in the region (Došek et al. 2017; Freidenberg et al. 2018; Johnson 2016). However, the two strands of the literature hardly combine, and little we know about the effects of quotas on other aspects besides women’s placement in the ballot. Moreover, current research does not consider candidates’ perspectives and the comparative differences between men and women running for a seat. Recovering and analyzing political actors’ experiences is crucial for unveiling gender dynamics (DeVault and Gross 2012). To address the scarce account of actors’ perspectives in the literature,

in this paper, I use 36 interviews with men and women candidates for legislative and executive offices, in presence and absence of gender quotas, to study candidates' gendered experiences and the contexts that organize them during the electoral process. I seek to contribute to the existing literature by addressing two main research questions: In the context of quotas, are there gender differences in the process of becoming a candidate? What is the role of gender stereotypes on candidates' campaign experiences?

To do so, I focus on Bolivia's 2020 national legislative and 2021 local executive elections. Bolivia provides a critical case because of the contrast between rigorous electoral quota laws and the persistent underrepresentation of women. Bolivia's legislation guarantees women candidates' participation and protects them from political violence (Zabala Canedo 2014). Its strict quota laws allowed women to reach parity at the national legislative level. However, despite the significant improvements in women's representation and tight regulations to ensure their numerical representation in legislative bodies, women are still not being elected in sizeable numbers to executive offices where quotas are not in place. By 2018, there was a striking contrast between women encompassing 8.2% of all elected mayors and 50% of all members of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly (ECLAC 2022). To reveal candidates' gendered inequalities in the selection and election processes, I compare the experiences of men and women running for office at the national legislative level in single-member districts—where quotas designed to reach parity are enacted—to those of men and women candidates for local mayor—where there is no type of electoral regulations in favor of women's representation.

Regarding the selection process, I find that despite having more than 20 years of experience selecting women as candidates due to the presence of quotas, political parties are still key gatekeepers to women's representation. Quotas have lowered the bar for women to be candidates,

as their particular background working in women's and children's organizations is valued by political parties. However, when quotas are not in place, women's profiles need to resemble those of their men colleagues. On the gendered differences in the political campaigns, even after a strong presence of women in elected office, bias towards women's leadership is prevalent. Citizens still hold women candidates to a different standard than their male counterparts, relying on gender stereotypes that have both negative and positive effects on the demand for women candidates.

This paper offers valuable insights into the connections between gender, campaigns, and representation to evaluate the persistence of gender inequalities in the election process in the presence of gender quotas. Because the particular barriers faced by women to achieve political office might be—from the outside looking—obscured when parties are obligated to nominate women, the methodology is centered on interviews with a diverse set of candidates, posing a particular contribution to existing literature.

The paper starts with a brief overview of the general literature on the barriers to representation, followed by an exploration of the studies focusing on Latin America. After, it discusses the importance of studying the Bolivian case and presents context information on the country, to then explain the data collection process and the methodology applied. Next, I show the evidence found and discuss it in light of previous literature. Finally, the paper concludes with an evaluation of how gender still shapes the experiences of men and women running for political office.

#### 4.2. Barriers to women's representation

The literature on barriers to representation can be organized along two dimensions: the supply and demand for women candidates. The supply dimension addresses questions such as: why do women run or not run for office? Once they decide to run, what obstacles do they face to

be selected as candidates? The question behind the demand dimension is: Are individuals biased against women's candidacies? What are the reasons that might prevent voters from supporting women candidates?

Previous research on the supply dimension explores the characteristics that women share that lead them to pursue a candidacy or not. In general, there is evidence that women are not as ambitious as men (Lawless and Fox 2001). However, once women are in office, they have equal ambition as their male counterparts (Geissel and Hust 2005). The gender ambition gap is part of a gendered socialization of what is possible for women. For example, they tend to think they are unprepared to run for office (Crowder-Meyer and Lauderdale 2014; Preece 2016). Gendered roles also affect women's decision to become candidates. For example, the weight of family obligations is heavier for women than for men (Fulton et al. 2006; Silbermann 2015; Teele and Thelen 2017). Furthermore, women anticipate voters' biases against them. Consequently, only the most qualified, politically ambitious women will continue in the race to become candidates (Anzia and Berry 2011).

In addition, there are institutional obstacles to women's representation. Political party leaders believe there is generally more uncertainty about a woman's electability than a man's. Therefore, they are less likely to recruit women to run for office (Sanbonmatsu 2006). Furthermore, despite evaluating women better fitted to run for office, political parties' elites rely on gender stereotypes to evaluate potential candidate's abilities and character criteria (Krook 2010a; Norris and Lovenduski 1995). Even if they recruit women, parties will choose women to run in competitive districts or districts where the party is in the opposition, and it is harder to get a seat (O'Brien 2015). In conclusion, political parties' predispositions are crucial for selecting



women as candidates. When they express their support, more women will run for office (Karpowitz, Monson, and Preece 2017).

Regarding the demand for women candidates, previous research identifies gender as an obstacle to representation due to biases in the electorate. When the office women seek is high-powered and masculinized, stereotypical views of women's roles and abilities can damage their political ambitions (R Murray 2010). Because men have been overrepresented in politics, individuals tend to believe that male-stereotyped characteristics are more important than female-stereotyped characteristics in politics (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004, 2015). Associating masculine traits, such as aggression and competition, with politics means that men are automatically assumed to be qualified for public office (Beckwith 2005). Similarly, women's association with feminine traits, such as nurturing and softness, implies that women are seen as less politically viable (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Lawless 2004, 2015). As a consequence, men are perceived as more fit for political leadership than women because the male stereotype is closer to the leader stereotype, and women's leadership is assessed less favorably than men's because women's assertive behavior is perceived as undesirable or threatening (Eagly 1987; Reid, Palomares, and Anderson 2009).

Furthermore, the under-representation of women in politics makes negative stereotypes about them salient (Batista Pereira 2016), perpetuating stereotypes of men's calling for politics. This includes, for example, the stereotype of men knowing more and caring more about politics (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997; Preece 2016); or the policy stereotypes that posit men are better at handling the economy and national security (Dolan 2010; Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2016; Lawless 2004). Consequently, when voters are

concerned about the economy and parties face many competitors, women's nominations decrease given that a men candidate indicates stability (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017).

#### 4.3. Running for political office in Latin America

Unlike other regions in the world explored in previous literature (mainly the United States), the number of women elected to office has increased exponentially in the last couple of decades throughout Latin America. This is primarily due to all countries in the region—except for Guatemala—adopting some form of gender quota as a way to overcome the supply barriers to women's representation. The quota laws in Latin America typically require political parties to nominate a specified percentage of women, varying between 20% and 50% (Htun 2016).

However, the number of elected women in public office is far from homogenous. Schwindt-Bayer's (2010) index of quota strength based on quota's threshold, whether there is a placement mandate and whether there is an enforcement mechanism, shows that the countries that adopted broader and stricter gender quotas, in general, are the ones experiencing a higher representation of women at the national level. Electoral systems that combine closed-list proportional representation, a high quota percentage, a placement mandate, and strong enforcement mechanisms are expected to be more favorable to women.

Even when quotas are in place, because they highly depend on their design and levels of enforcement, countries fail to reach the expected levels of women in office. In countries with a 50% gender quota, on average, women make up only 39% of the legislative branch. For countries with a quota of 30%, on average, only 22% of their national assemblies are women representatives. In countries like Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Panama, and Venezuela, women representatives do not constitute even a quarter of their congress, nor do they match the proportion of the assigned quota (Sacchet 2018).

Moreover, quotas may not have the desired ripple effect. Other forms of representation have not changed significantly with the presence of more women in office (Schwindt-Bayer 2018). Despite increasing women's descriptive representation, there seems to be no increase in citizens' and political parties' demand for women to occupy public office. For example, when gender quotas are not in place, women are not particularly successful in achieving local office. No country in the Latin American region—except for Nicaragua, which has gender quotas at the local level—had more than 25% of women elected mayors in 2018 (ECLAC 2021). On average, only 14.6% of mayors in Latin America are women.

Because gender quotas represent a valuable mechanism to increase the presence of women in office (Kerevel 2019), most of the literature has been focused on the quota designs, their effect on the number of candidacies, and women's substantive representation once in office (Barnes and Córdova 2016; Došek et al. 2017; Hinojosa 2012; Htun 2016; Htun and Piscopo 2010; Piscopo 2015). The gendered experiences in the electoral process have received less attention from previous research. As a result, scholars know fairly little about the state of factors that prevent women's representation not only in the absence of quotas, but behind the mandatory placement of women candidates.

The scarce existing literature in Latin America, according to the stage in the electoral process, can be organized into three main subjects: 1) the path to achieving the candidacy, where the main factor explored is the role of political parties and elites as the main gatekeepers preventing women from gaining political office; 2) the conditions of women's campaigns, with focus on the financial barriers women candidates face; and, 3) the role of gender stereotypes and how negative perceptions of women's leadership, echoed by the media, create a biased electorate. The first two

strands of the literature refer to supply-side barriers to representation, while the third studies demand-side obstacles.

Regarding the first subject, internal rules in favor of women, complying with quota laws, and an exclusive and centralized selectorate, are political party characteristics that improve women's representation (Hinojosa 2012). 80% of the major parties in Latin America offer training programs for men and women, and 65% organize political training exclusively for women (Roza 2010), increasing women's presence in the candidates' lists. Yet, it is unclear what the influence of gender quotas is on political parties. The presence of more women running and achieving office should decrease uncertainties about women's electability. But, parties in the region are strategic when placing women as candidates. For example, parties tend to nominate more women in contexts where individuals distrust political parties<sup>39</sup> (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017). This might lead them to believe that it is not women that win elections, but party strategies.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, despite a numerical increase of women's presence in political parties, they are still disproportionately excluded from decision-making and power positions (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017; Morgan and Hinojosa 2018). Party structures continue to be masculine and dominated by men in Latin America. As a consequence, according to Hinojosa and Vázquez Correa (2018), the low rates of women representation are still a result of the recruitment and selection processes that put women at a disadvantage compared to men. Women need the support of established political parties to be elected, particularly to the executive office (Reyes-Housholder

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<sup>39</sup> However, when individuals evaluate the economy poorly and parties face many challengers, they tend to select more men.

<sup>40</sup> Quotas can also generate negative spillovers in candidacy. Evidence from India suggests that parties tend to select fewer women in non-quota elections (Sekhon and Titiunik 2012).

and Thomas 2021). Therefore, it is important to understand how parties create opportunities for women to address the experience of women candidates during their campaigns.

Candidates need resources to be elected to office. Previous studies find that there are gender imbalances in how resources are allocated (Llanos and Roza 2018). Only Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama laws require parties to assign part of the public resources they receive to train women party members. A percentage of their funding is destined to promote women's political participation of women. In Latin America, around 25% of the largest parties allocate specific funding to offer training to women (Roza 2010), which improves women's chances of being selected as candidates. Moreover, to conduct their campaigns, many women encounter a "cash ceiling" (Muñoz-Pogossian and Freidenberg 2018). On average, women have fewer available resources and they tend to raise fewer funds for their campaigns (Ferreira Rubio 2009). According to Muñoz-Pogossian and Freidenberg (2018), this lack of access to funding dissuades women from participating in politics.

The third issue women in Latin America face during their campaigns relates to the role of stereotypes and the evaluation of women's political leadership. Women politicians have been at the center of negative campaigns and experienced gendered political violence in the region (Krook and Restrepo 2015). The activation of negative stereotypes during the campaigns affects women to a more significant extent than their men counterparts. In Mexico, for example, during the national 2018 elections, 62 women candidates publicly denounced being victims of misogynistic violence through social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (Barrera et al. 2018). Women often encountered discriminatory expressions (41% of the candidates), harassment (20%), and discredit (16%).

As shown in the previous Chapter, the presence of women in politics has the potential to reduce gender biases. However, quotas could have a negative effect on voters' perceptions of women candidates by reinforce negative stereotypes of women's ability to govern (Bardhan, Mookherjee, and Torrado 2010; Besley et al. 2017). Individuals may perceive that gender quotas viole social norms of meritocracy and restrict their electoral choices (Goldin 2002). Quota adoption needs to have popular support to prevent costly consequences on political legitimacy. With low approval, increases in women's numeric representation in parliament may ultimately come at the cost of political legitimacy (Clayton 2015; Meier 2008). In some countries in Latin America, the relative poor governance quality could decrease citizens' approval of quotas (Barnes and Córdova 2016).

In sum, there is a vast knowledge of the institutional and legal factors that prevent women from being elected and scarce work on the cultural barriers they face in the electoral process. The previously cited literature explores the effects of legislation, parties' norms and budgets, the occurrence of gender discrimination, not including the potential effect of quotas. Moreover, the literature rarely includes the perception and strategies of women and men candidates and how the possible differences might affect their experiences in the electoral process. Candidates' insights are crucial to evaluating the selection process and the campaigns, as they will shape their actions accordingly. That is why this paper contributes to the literature by focusing on the first and the third stages of the electoral process—achieving a candidacy and voters' perceptions and the role of gender stereotypes in getting elected—from the candidates' perceptions and experiences. It theorizes that, despite legislation designed to level the electoral field for women, gender still defines many obstacles and opportunities women and men face while running for office. Gender roles, gender stereotypes, and women's unequal objective conditions still shape how women

candidates are perceived by political parties and voters—despite the presence of quotas—which negatively affects their probabilities of being selected as candidates and elected as authorities. The paper explores Bolivian national and local elections to assess these theoretical expectations.

#### 4.4. Women in the Bolivian electoral context

Bolivia has experienced a significant increase in women's representation in political office in the last two decades. In 1997, Bolivia was one of the first countries in Latin America to stipulate gender quotas at the national legislative level and, since then, has experienced a constant increase in women's descriptive representation. The country occupied the 10th position in the 2021 Inter-Parliamentary Union world ranking of women in parliaments. In 2014, Bolivia reached gender parity at the national legislative level and maintains it to this date. This central landmark was achieved due to one of the most comprehensive gender quota laws in the Latin American region. The Law on the Electoral Regime stipulates the mandatory principles of gender parity and alternation in all electoral processes at all levels of government to secure gender equity and equal opportunities between men and women.

At the national legislative level, Bolivia has a mixed-member electoral system. 70 members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected in single-member constituencies and 7 in special indigenous districts using the first-past-the-post rule, while 53 representatives of the Chamber of Deputies and all the representatives from the Senate are elected in multimember districts through a proportional election rule. 50% of all party candidates must be women for both single and multimember districts. In the latter, the parties' list must comply with gender alternation of candidates—if the first candidate in the list is a woman, the next should be a man, the third a woman, the fourth a man, and so on. As a result, during this paper's fieldwork and after the 2020 national election, half of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly was composed of women.

Despite the significant improvements in women's representation at the legislative level, there is no gender quota legislation or normative at the executive level, either nationally or locally. As a consequence, women are critically underrepresented in elected executive roles. In contrast to its neighboring countries (Argentina, Chile, and Brazil), Bolivia has not elected a woman president yet. More importantly, by the time of fieldwork, only 8% of elected mayors were women. This proportion actually decreased after the 2021 municipal election: in that year, Bolivia elected only 22 women mayors (6.5%) across the 336 municipalities.

This complex scenario makes Bolivia a particularly useful case study. In times when gender quotas are introduced as a remedy for women's underrepresentation, a country that apparently fixed the gender gap at the national level is still experiencing significant gender imbalances at the national level where quotas are not in place. The variation in the proportion of women elected to national legislative and local executive offices allows important comparison to unveil the role of political parties on women's electability when they are obligated to nominate them and where they are not. The election of national deputies and local mayors enjoy similar electoral rules. However, the differences in expectations, prestige, and visibility between legislative and executive posts offer a valuable opportunity to study the effect of gender roles on candidates' perceived electability.

#### 4.5. Data collection and methodology

To study the experiences of women and men candidates, this paper relies on interviews conducted during the Bolivian national election of 2020 and the local Bolivian elections of 2021.<sup>41</sup> In-depth interviews “deliver the most direct measure of the thoughts and intentions of politicians,

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<sup>41</sup> The project was approved by the Vanderbilt Institutional Review Board (IRB #191367).



making them one of the most valuable sources of data for the study of political behavior” (Bailer 2014, 167). These instruments allow the collection of information about the subjective analysis of an event by an actor involved in a political process such as an election (Bailer 2014; Richards 1996). In particular, by recovering the experiences of women traditionally excluded in politics, interviews are a powerful instrument in feminist methodologies to uncover gender inequalities in politics (DeVault and Gross 2012).<sup>42</sup>

In total, I interviewed 36 candidates (20 women and 16 men).<sup>43</sup> Of these individuals, 22 interviewees (14 women and 8 men) were candidates for deputies in single-member districts (*diputados y diputadas uninominales*) in the 2020 national election.<sup>44</sup> These type of candidates were selected because citizens voted directly for them, differently from candidates on the parties’ list. Therefore, single-member districts’ candidates have further incentives to deploy individualized campaigns, seeking a personal vote based on an organization, agenda, and means of campaigning centered on the candidate rather than the party or the presidential candidate (Zittel and Gschwend 2008). As campaigns get more individualized, candidates’ individual characteristics, such as gender, become more relevant (Bauerlin 2020; Mo 2014). The interviews were conducted between June 10 and August 4 of 2020, about two months before the general

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<sup>42</sup> Despite the advantages of interviews as methodological tools, they have considering limitations. Among the most important are the involvement of the interviewer in the recollection of the narrative (Alsaawi 2014; Cassell 2005) and the issue of power between interviewer and interviewee (Nunokoosing 2005). I relied on my extensive experience conducting interviews with politicians to address these concerns. I limited my role as facilitator of the conversation. I acknowledged my own subjectivities and refrain from making comments about candidates’ responses. To address possible power imbalances, I presented myself as a Ph.D. candidate from Vanderbilt University to prevent condescending responses from a dynamic of student-politician.

<sup>43</sup> Section A4.1 in the Appendix expands the protocol and procedures behind the interviews. Table A4.1. shows information about the dates and duration of the interviews, as well as the sex, political party, department, and if they were elected to office.

<sup>44</sup> The election came after the disputed October 2019 general elections. The results of the election were annulled after allegations of fraud and the resignation of then president and winner candidate, Evo Morales. The political crisis resulting from the 21 days of civil protest and the contested interim term of Jeanine Añez foster a polarized climate during the 2020 general election process.

election. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the elections were postponed from May 3 to September 6 and later to October 18, 2020. Candidates came from three parties with the largest vote intentions proportions, according to public surveys by the time of the interviews:<sup>45</sup> *Movimiento al Socialismo*<sup>46</sup> (MAS: 2 men and 4 women interviewed), *Comunidad Ciudadana*<sup>47</sup> (CC: 4 men and 7 women interviewed), and *Alianza JUNTOS*<sup>48</sup> (2 men and 3 women interviewed).

14 interviews were conducted with candidates (6 women and 8 men) for mayor from the metropolitan municipalities of the three most important Bolivian departments (La Paz, Santa Cruz, and Cochabamba). This level of office was selected because of the lack of gender quotas for the executive office, allowing me to compare mayoral candidates' experiences to those running for legislative office. Most importantly, in a country where women's representation has reached parity at the national legislative level, women are severely underrepresented at the local executive level. It is critical to investigate the characteristics of mayoral races to elucidate why women are not being elected when quota laws are not in place, despite the progress in women's political presence. Unlike the proportion of women candidates in the national legislative election (51.5%), only 14% of mayoral candidates were women. The interviews were conducted between February 3 and February 13, 2021. The election took place in all Bolivian municipalities on March 7, 2021. In contrast to the national election, local alliances and citizen groups presented candidacies, not only

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/20200316-morales-pick-leads-in-bolivia-opinion-polls>

<https://www.paginasiete.bo/nacional/2020/3/17/una-precision-de-la-encuesta-de-mercados-muestras-249882.html>

<sup>46</sup> With 55.1% of the votes, Luis Arce Catacora won the election as MAS' presidential candidate. The party won 57.7% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

<sup>47</sup> Its candidate, Carlos Mesa, came second on the election. CC won 30% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

<sup>48</sup> The party's presidential candidate was Bolivia's interim president by the time of the election, Jeanine Añez. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, Añez announced the end of her candidacy to, according to her statement, prevent the vote to split between the opposition candidates.

national parties. 4 interviews were conducted with candidates from one of the major parties (CC<sup>49</sup>) and 10 (6 women and 4 men) with local alliances and local parties.

The sampling frame was constructed based on the official candidate's list published by the Plurinational Electoral Organ, the institution in charge of carrying out elections in Bolivia. Using a reputational approach (Maestas, Neeley, and Richardson 2003), I relied on experts and party representatives to contact candidates.<sup>50</sup> I conducted the interviews. Due to COVID pandemic-related restrictions, all interviews were performed using the Zoom videoconferencing platform. This platform was chosen because it is a valuable tool for collecting qualitative data due to its availability, cost-effectiveness, and because it is relatively easy to use (Archibald et al. 2019). The instrument used to conduct the interview was a semi-structured questionnaire. This type of questionnaire, frequently used in elite interviews, can recover a detailed recount of the interviewee's perspective while at the same time "allowing hypothesis testing and the quantitative analysis of interview responses" (Leech 2002, 665).

After the candidates' informed consent, interviews were recorded. I deleted any identifier from the recordings, and then the audio was transcribed verbatim by a research assistant. I used the software MAXQDA to analyze the data. Each interview transcript was imported to a MAXQDA project as a single document. The variables included in the documents were the candidate's gender, level of office running for, and the candidate's political party. Following Saldaña's (2021) recommendations to analyze qualitative data, first, I identified eight structural

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<sup>49</sup> Despite efforts to contact candidates from the major political party, MAS, candidates did not agree to participate of the interviews.

<sup>50</sup> I previously interviewed several elected officials (the past President of the Senate and the President of the Deputies from the opposition party, to name a few) and members of social movements. In addition, the Coordinadora de la Mujer, institution that runs a program called *Protagonistas*, granted me a list of candidates to national legislative office.

codes to label and index the content of the documents: candidate's background, motivation, the path to candidacy, support from the candidate's political party, most important challenge, platform, violence on the campaign trail, and perceptions about women's leadership. The structural codes were constructed based on the questions asked in all interviews and a preliminary descriptive coding of the responses. Second, I performed a content analysis of the data. Each structural code was classified into descriptive codes that reflect the candidates' experiences. For example, the structural code "motivations" was organized into three codes: gender issue, political issue, and social issue. The interviewees' responses were coded according to these categories. To identify the gender differences regarding the campaign experience, crosstabs were generated to compare the frequency of coded responses of men and women, which allows for an analysis further developed in the next section of this paper.

#### 4.6. Evidence from Bolivia

Are the experiences of running for political office affected by the candidate's gender? In particular, are there gender differences in the process of becoming a candidate? What is the role of gender stereotypes on candidates' campaign experiences? To answer these questions from the perspective of candidates themselves, Table 4.1. shows the percentage of respondents by gender that mentioned each of the sub-codes included in the analytical structural codes.<sup>51</sup> The first four structural codes (candidate's background, motivation, platform, and path to candidacy) capture the selection process and help answer this paper's first specific research question. The candidates' profiles explored here, and their political approach, are useful to understand how men and women present themselves as viable political leaders and how they establish a relationship with political

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<sup>51</sup> Because the sample of respondents is not representative of all candidates, the numbers reported here are used only for comparison purposes.

parties. The next structural codes (the support of their political parties, the most critical challenges they face during the elections, their experience with political violence, and how voters perceived women’s political leadership) reveal the role of gender stereotypes during the campaign process.

Table 4.1. Coded responses by candidate gender

	Men	Women	Total
Candidate’s Background			
Children issues	0	35.0%	19.4%
Grassroots Territorial Organizations	37.5%	20.0%	27.8%
Other	12.5%	0	5.6%
Political	31.3%	15.0%	22.2%
Public management	25.0%	15.0%	19.4%
Social movement/Union	6.3%	10.0%	8.3%
University/Student	12.5%	25.0%	19.4%
Working on women's issues	0	30.0%	16.7%
Motivation			
Gender issue	0	35.0%	19.4%
Political issue	68.8%	40.0%	52.8%
Social issue	37.5%	30.0%	33.3%
Platform			
Economy	25.0%	20.0%	22.2%
Education	0	10.0%	5.6%
Family	6.3%	5.0%	5.6%
Health	18.8%	10.0%	13.9%
Other	12.5%	10.0%	11.1%
Political	12.5%	0	5.6%
Women issues	0	15.0%	8.3%
Path to candidacy			
Invitation	18.8%	35.0%	27.8%
Look actively to be a candidate	6.3%	30.0%	19.4%
Party nomination	25.0%	15.0%	19.4%
Social movement	25.0%	10.0%	16.7%

The candidate has the support of her/his political party			
No	31.3%	20.0%	25.0%
Yes	37.5%	50.0%	44.4%
Most important challenge			
COVID related	12.5%	20.0%	16.7%
Discrimination for being a woman	0	10.0%	5.6%
Economic problems	25.0%	20.0%	22.2%
Family	6.3%	25.0%	16.7%
Inexperience	12.5%	5.0%	8.3%
Other	12.5%	5.0%	8.3%
Political	12.5%	15.0%	13.9%
Violence on the campaign trail			
Attacks on social media	12.5%	20.0%	16.7%
Experienced violence	12.5%	60.0%	38.9%
Violence against women candidates	0	10.0%	5.6%
Perceptions about women's leadership			
Influence of woman interim President	12.5%	30.0%	22.2%
Machismo is no longer a problem	6.3%	5.0%	5.6%
More difficult for women to participate in politics than for men	18.8%	60.0%	41.7%
Women are good politicians	25.0%	50.0%	38.9%
Women are underrepresented	0	25.0%	13.9%
Women signal renewal	0	5.0%	2.8%
Women's leadership questioned	12.5%	45.0%	30.6%

#### 4.6.1. The selection process: From political actors to becoming a candidate

Participation in the public sphere is vital to gain knowledge of the political system, develop political experience and achieve visibility among other political actors. However, women and men tend to participate in organizations that differ in scope, relevance, and overall presence (O'Neill and Gidengil 2013). From the sample of the interviewed candidates, 60% of women have previously worked on women's and children's issues. For example, women candidates had been

active in women's organizations or institutions that work towards children's wellbeing. In contrast, most men candidates already occupied political office (31%) or were part of their local grassroots territorial organizations (known to Bolivians as OTB from its Spanish initials). This gives men an electoral advantage over women, as they have better access to material and social resources, as well as political experience and knowledge (Gidengil, Goodyear-Grant, and Nevitte 2013).

Do the level of office and the presence or absence of quotas influence a candidate's profile? There are no significant differences between men running for mayor or deputy. However, women candidates for local executive office, where quotas are nonexistent, are more similar to their male counterparts than to women running for national legislative office. A third of women mayoral candidates occupied previous political office (comparable to the 37.5% of men with the same profile), while only 7% of women legislative candidates had been elected as political representatives. Shair-Rosenfield and Hinojosa (2014) show that, in Chile, having previously held positions can counteract gender bias in the nomination stage since women would have demonstrated their electoral effectiveness. The profile of executive candidates mirrors Schwindt-Bayer's (2011) findings. Women's paths to power and political ambition are similar to their men counterparts. However, it is contrary to women's profiles running for national legislative office. This office level appears to be a political entry point for women whose path was focused on women's and family issues and with no previous political experience. The gender quota may increase political parties' demand for women candidates, lowering the entry bar. However, as shown by the profile of Bolivian congresswomen in 2016, political experience is still an important factor in winning political office (Batlle, Leibe, and Suárez-Cao 2021).

As an indication of women's organizations' relevance to women candidates' political involvement, 35% of women interviewed cited a topic such as gender equality or the fight against

violence against women as their main motivations to participate in politics. This differs from men who more frequently report political reasons, such as strengthening democracy or tackling corruption, to run for political office (68.8% of men compared to 40% of women). Men candidates tend to react to Bolivia's polarized political context, and women to conform to gendered expectations of representing women's interests.

More than anything, I am doing this for women, for our people, because I want women to thrive (Women mayoral candidate, translation by the author).

My greater motivation is to help women (Women deputy candidate, translation by the author).

I am running for office because women are not represented at the executive level. We worked on developing women's leadership. However, those sisters were relegated to legislative offices where they have no decision power (Women mayoral candidate, translation by the author).

Despite the gender differences in candidates' profiles, their proposals facing voters do not differ significantly. Both men and women candidates' platforms are similar, particularly among candidates running for local executive office. Candidates cite economic development as their main concern as future representatives. This emphasis on the economy might not be beneficial for women candidates. Previous research finds that the economy is perceived as masculine, and individuals concerned about this topic tend to support male candidates (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017). However, data from the AmericasBarometer 2018/19 shows that 23.1% of individuals in Latin America believe that women are actually better managers of the national economy (compared to 6.2% of people who believe men are better). Even with similar political platforms and proposals, voters will evaluate candidates differently due to the prevalence of gender stereotypes.

There are significant differences between women and men running for deputy platforms. A quarter of interviewed men run on political platforms (e.g., prevent future presidential re-



election bids), while 21% of women cited that their platform was focused on education or women’s issues (e.g., prevention and sanction of gender violence, care policies). In Latin America, women legislators are more likely to introduce and co-sponsor legislation regarding women’s rights and children and families (Schwindt-Bayer 2006). When quotas are in place, women have more freedom to run on a platform that focuses on women’s issues. However, at the executive level, where the entry bar is higher, women present platforms similar to their male counterparts. 33.3% of women mayoral candidates' campaigns were centered on solving economic issues, a comparable percentage to the proportion of men candidates that deployed the same strategy.

Political parties are supposed to be the institutions that enable political linkages and recruitment into public decision-making, in charge of the socialization of political leaders and representatives. However, in the Bolivian context, they seem to be mere instruments to participate in elections, particularly for women. Most women are not active in the political parties that support their candidacies.

Table 4.2. Path to candidacy by candidate’s gender and level of office

	Men running for mayor	Men running for deputy	Women running for mayor	Women running for deputy
Invitation	12.5%	25.0%	33.3%	35.7%
Look actively to be a candidate	12.5%	0	50.0%	21.4%
Party nomination	25.0%	25.0%	0	21.4%
Social movement	25.0%	25.0%	16.7%	7.1%

Due to gender quotas, political parties are forced to present 50% of women candidates on their list at the legislative level. 36% percent of the women interviewed (11 percentage points more than men) reported that a representative from the political party invited them to be a candidate for

Bolivia's National Assembly. 21.4% of women with the political ambition to be candidates approached the parties to be their candidates, while no men resorted to this action. One of the women interviewed reported:

I am a woman and I have the possibility to create change. That is how I have motivated myself. Once with this new mentality, I had to decide in which party I was going to make a change (Women deputy candidate, translation by the author).

In contrast, most men candidates have behind them a political organization that supports them, either the same political party (25%) or a social movement that puts forward their candidacies (25%).

Due to the strict mandatory quotas at the legislative level, political parties appear to be open to women's candidacies. However, in line with the findings of research outside Latin America (Krook 2010b; R Murray 2010; O'Brien 2015; Sanbonmatsu 2006), when quotas are not in place, political parties become the main gatekeepers preventing women from running for executive office. Half of the women mayoral candidates interviewed expressed that they actively sought their candidacy. In most cases, women "borrowed" a political party and were left without any support from the political organization.

They gave us the acronym to participate, but then nothing else. You have to do everything, the subject of your campaign materials, the matter of logistics, make your own designs for your propaganda, we have to do everything. Well, they lent us the acronym, and I'm grateful for that. If we didn't have an acronym, we wouldn't be able to run either. (Women mayoral candidate, translation by the author).

Previous research finds that women are reluctant to put forward their own candidacies and to be recruited to run for public office, which is an obstacle to women's representation (Hinojosa 2012). However, this is precisely the most recurrent path women need to follow to become candidates for executive offices. They either need to ask permission to use the name of a political party to participate in elections, or they have to be invited as the parties' nominees. This might

explain why only 14% of all mayoral candidates in the 2021 Bolivian election were women. The ambition gap identified in the literature (Lawless and Fox 2001) acquires relevance in the Bolivian context as only the more ambitious women go through the demanding process of becoming candidates.

For some women candidates, looking for a political party to support their candidacy came after the rejection of their own political party. Two cases in Bolivia draw particular attention. The first is Eva Copa, the now mayor of one of Bolivia's four most important cities, El Alto. She is a former senator from the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) and, by the time of the election, she was the president of the Senate. She publicly manifested her desire to run for mayor and stated she had support from her party at the municipal level. However, the party elite decided to advance the candidacy of a man.<sup>52</sup> Copa ran under the brand of a local political party and won the election with 69% of the vote share. The second case was Ana Lucía Reis, the former mayor of Cobija from the MAS. She manifested that the former President, Evo Morales, rejected her candidacy.<sup>53</sup> However, she decided to still run for mayor using the acronym of a relatively small political party. She won her race with 45% of the votes, 13 percentage points more than the male candidate from her old political party.

In Bolivia, prepared and ambitious women, who have widespread support, are forced to actively look for surrogate political parties to run for executive office. The electoral law allows local parties and alliances to participate and creates an opportunity for women's mayoral candidacies. As a result of the direct involvement of women in achieving the candidacy, 67% of

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.france24.com/es/américa-latina/20210316-eva-copa-bolivia-aymara-evo-morales-alcaldesa-el-alto>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.la-razon.com/nacional/2021/03/11/la-alcaldesa-electa-reis-revela-que-el-propio-morales-descarto-su-candidatura-por-el-mas/>

mayoral candidates interviewed (compared to only 43% of candidates for deputy) manifested the support of the political party. However, this often means that women feel supported by the party structures they themselves need to construct. In Bolivia's weak party system, a significant proportion of interviewed candidates, both men (31%) and women (20%), cited that the party does not assign meaningful resources to their campaigns.

Traditional political parties represent a significant obstacle to women's representation when quotas are not in place because they prevent women from running for executive office. But, in a context where most political parties are weak, there are no gender differences in the material support and encouragement they provide for their candidates. This differs from previous research findings based on context with a strong two-party system. However, parties' contributions might go beyond the active efforts of their members. Party brand matters in Bolivian elections. For a separate project, I conducted focus groups with Bolivian voters and found that, in a context where voters are not familiar with the candidates, they rely heavily on the name of the political party to cast their vote.<sup>54</sup> As a result, women who run under small or new political parties are at a clear disadvantage compared to men candidates from stable political organizations.

#### 4.6.2. The campaign process: The role of gender stereotypes

Once women are selected to run for political office, they might still face particular gendered challenges in developing their campaigns. The interviews asked candidates about the most significant obstacle they encountered on the campaign trail. Among the main barriers identified by women, family burdens (25% of women compared to 6% of men) and discrimination for being a woman are still some of the most common challenges they must confront. Interviewed women,

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<sup>54</sup> This result is in line of previous studies of the United States context (Dolan 2014).

particularly mayoral candidates, expressed concern about their children's care and how political life represented a burden to fulfill their duties as mothers and wives. In contrast, when men cite their families as challenges, they are concerned about their honor; how political competition negatively affects their relatives. For women, being a mother, particularly of young children, can be an obstacle in politics. However, most women elected to office in the region are mothers (Schwindt-Bayer 2011). A woman is more likely to get elected if she is highly successful in both her career and family, posing a double bind (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018).

Even more, in Latin America, motherhood has been an entry point to politics (a third of the interviewed women had experience working on children issues), and materialism has been used strategically in the campaigns (Franceschet, Piscopo, and Thomas 2016). "Supermadres" are morally better fit for political leadership than men. Their roles as mothers keep them away from corruption and make them better public administrators.

As a result, half of the women interviewed perceived positive evaluations from the side of voters, disregarding if they were running for executive or legislative office. Women's characteristics as mothers are at the forefront of their electoral advantage. Their feminine characteristics and their role in life's reproduction are believed to be valuable attributes for politics and economic administration. The interviewees manifested that female leaderships are desired because women, as women, possess characteristics suitable for politics:

It is believed that women are more dedicated to doing our job. It is also believed that we are more incorruptible, as if we have our principled moral bar a little higher. What is wanted is this, people with high principles and who do not get carried away with power and money, who learn to respect and know what they are there for in that place (Women deputy candidate, translation by the author).

There are examples of how women have managed public positions, and there is also the fact that they have done so with greater responsibility. We can say that for the simple fact that women are mothers, plan their family, and manage the home, they see the economy as

a matter of responsibility, saving, to give to their children (Women deputy candidate, translation by the author).

Voters have hope in a woman. So many men mayoral candidates have done nothing in the municipality (Women mayoral candidate, translation by the author).

History itself has made indigenous women, the woman herself, to be at the forefront of all social demands. Instead, they [voters] have faith in women (Women mayoral candidate, translation by the author).

These perceptions align with previous research that points to positive stereotypes of women politicians. Women are perceived as less corrupt than men and present themselves as more honest than typical politicians (Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton 2018b; Dollar, Fisman, and Gatti 2001; Swamy et al. 2001). In addition, there is the perception that women, as political outsiders and more risk-averse individuals, will bring a positive political renewal (Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo 2017).

Despite the seemingly women's advantage, the favorable evaluations depend on conforming to gender roles (Gervais and Hillard 2011). However, campaigns that draw heavily on feminine stereotypes, such as presenting the candidate as primarily a mother, might activate negative stereotypes of women's leadership, such as lack of political knowledge (Bauer 2015). In their campaigns, women walk a thin line between presenting themselves as politicians and as impeccable women. This is an extra burden that men do not need to confront. Political leadership is associated with masculine traits. Therefore, men are automatically perceived as politicians (Schneider and Bos 2014). As a result, the apparent favorability of women's feminine characteristics may contribute to gender inequality (Diekman and Goodfriend 2006).

This complex scenario is reflected in women candidates' interviews. They point to individuals' strict evaluations of visible women politicians and how they influence their own voters' evaluations. During the general election of 2021, Bolivia had an interim women president in office, Jeanine Añez. Almost a third of women candidates mentioned that Añez's presence

affected voters' perception of them as political leaders. "Right now, as the president is managing the country, there is a disappointment in the people. Somehow she gives a bad image of all women" (Women deputy candidate, translation by the author).

This has severe implications for women's electability. When real women in positions of power are assessed poorly, when they do not meet the gendered expectations, other women candidates face damaging consequences. It is possible that when women do not occupy political office, the stereotypes used to assess women as politicians are gender stereotypes on issues such as motherhood. Once women gain political seats, they become the reference point for all women politicians. This opens the possibility for women to be evaluated more harshly as the number and visibility of women in power increase. In fact, one gender quotas shortcoming suggested by recent work is that they do not change gender bias. Moreover, they might reinforce negative stereotypes regarding women's capacities as politicians (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008).

So far, the selection and the electoral process harm women's opportunity to be elected to office. Women candidates are aware of the uphill battle they must fight. 25% of the women candidates recognized that women are still underrepresented in politics during the interview, and 60% realized that it is more difficult for women to participate in politics than men.

In politics, if as a woman you are divorced, if you are married, they review your resume from the day you were born. It has to be flawless. So it's harder for us to show our capacity (Women deputy candidate, translation by the author).

A politically active life for women is more difficult because it involves doing a triple job, working outside the home, working politically, and also having to work at home. They make a greater effort (Women deputy candidate, translation by the author).

Men face politics and difficulties with shouting, cursing, and sometimes punching. Shortly after, they are embraced, having a drink. Women do not. Because of our very structure, betrayal, disloyalty, mistreatment... we face them with tears and pain in our soul (Women mayoral candidate, translation by the author).

Because women candidates face more severe consequences if they are accused of not conforming to gender stereotypes, the campaign context matter for women's electability. The national general election happened during Bolivia's most critical months of the COVID pandemic. As expressed by a quarter of the deputy candidates, the health crisis posed extra burdens to their campaigns. Most importantly, the style of the campaigns had to change. Instead of relying on face-to-face events, they had to use social media and other forms of communication to deliver their messages to voters. The change affected women differently. In-person campaigns are more suitable for women (Freidenberg et al. 2018). When they engage in virtual campaigns, women become more susceptible to attacks on social media. A fifth of interviewed women, almost twice as men, reported being victims of aggression.

I am attacked by the famous bots on social networks. But, it is not much. I do not know if it is because the political issue is restarting, but the truth is that the famous memes are so witty. I also see it as a sign that you are moving forward and that someone is concerned and somehow wants to attack you (Women deputy candidate, translation by the author).

It is not necessary to have money to be known on Facebook, but there are so many fake profiles and so many smear campaigns [...]. I have seen a lot of dirty war, a lot of dirty war on social networks. I have understood this concept that instead of benefiting you, they only destroy you.

As mentioned in a previous section, gender political violence—define as the “stigmatization, harassment and outright attacks have been used to silence and discredit women who are outspoken as leaders, community workers, human rights defenders, and politicians” by the UN Human Rights Council working group noted—threatens democracy in Latin America. In Bolivia, despite having a specific law against political violence against women, 60% of women interviewed experienced a form of violence during the course of their campaigns (compared to 12.5% of men). It is important to note that all women mayoral candidates and 43% of deputy candidates reported being victims of any form of attack. Complaints range from insults and



defamation, to political harassment from members of their own political parties and physical violence from their opponents' partisans.

I see it as a dirty war. They call you names, they distort things, mainly the brothers (Women mayoral candidate, translation by the author).

I am the only woman candidate for mayor. The other nine candidates attack me. Or it seems they look at me as if I were a lot of competition. But instead of letting me work transparently on the campaign, everyone attacks me (Women mayoral candidate, translation by the author).

I notice that there is an excessive desire on their part for me to leave my candidacy. More than one, more than once, has sent emissaries before registering the candidacy and after registering the candidacy to say "so get off the candidacy" (Women mayoral candidate, translation by the author).

It is very painful and sad to touch on these topics. To this day, we continue to be subject to political persecution. Last year they tried to burn down my house three times. If it weren't that the population had come out to defend my home, perhaps we would be lamenting sad episodes. My sister was mistaken for me and they almost killed her. They left her on the ground bleeding (Women deputy candidate, translation by the author).

Two candidates mentioned violence towards other women in their localities. They were forced to "borrow" a political party structure, after their own party denied them the opportunity to run for office. The interviewed women reported that their party members prevented other women from participating in the candidates' selection process. The men co-partisans were afraid of the possibility of women electing women to run for office, and they resorted to violence to prevent it.

#### 4.7. Discussion and conclusion

In contexts where electoral quotas for women are in place, is the process of running for political office affected by the candidate's gender? To answer this question, the paper explores the experiences of Bolivian candidates for national legislative office and local executive office. Bolivia offers a critical case to study due to its gender quotas system and representation landscape. The country secures gender parity at the national legislative level by a strict quota design. Still, it fails to increase women's numeric representation at the local executive level, where quotas are not

in place. Studying the case of Bolivia reveals quotas limitations for women's representation and gender equality.

During the selection process, women face challenges and opportunities that differ from those faced by men candidates and depend on the presence or absence of gender quotas. Men's and women's political backgrounds differ significantly. While women tend to gain experience in social organizations related to women and family issues, men participate more in political parties, unions, and social movements. In general, women's involvement in children's and women's organizations is a valuable background to gaining a candidacy. However, this is especially true for candidates for the national legislative body. When quotas are in place and parties demand women candidates, women are selected even if their experience is in gender-related organizations. However, this is not enough when parties are not obligated to present women candidates. Women's profiles must be similar to men's to be selected as candidates for the local executive office. Women candidates need to be well-known, have experience as elected officials, and be active in political organizations, which raises the entry bar for women.

Ambitious women have to resort to weak political organizations to present their candidacies. In the context of Bolivia, local elections' normative represents an opportunity for women, as they run under the brand of small or local political parties. The weak party system might be perceived as leveling the field for men and women running campaigns. However, in practice, strong party brands are crucial to getting elected. Of the 22 women mayors elected in 2021, 14 run under the current national ruling party, Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). Three of the eight remaining winning candidates were the municipalities' former mayors (two previously under the MAS brand). Even in the legislative race, the needed support of a strong party is evident.

The Movimiento al Socialismo won 56% percent of the congressional races. However, 74% of women elected from single-district races run under the MAS acronym (compared to 61% of men).

Despite more than twenty years of experiencing women running and winning seats due to gender quotas, parties still act as the primary gatekeepers and hinder women's participation in elections when quotas are not in place. Bolivia's current progressive legislation results from the strong lobby of women's organizations, international cooperation, and the political willpower of the ruling party to enact gender quotas (Zabala Canedo 2014); it did not come from political parties' demands. Gender quotas, after two decades, did not transform the institutional gender discrimination within the party system. In contexts where quotas are not in place (Anzia and Berry 2011), women still need to have more robust profiles than their male counterparts to be selected as candidates.

Not only did political parties' predispositions not change, but gender stereotypes are still prevalent among voters and influence their perceptions of women candidates. Despite the differences in the levels of office (executive or legislative) and the presence or absence of quotas, the paper shows how women (differently than men) walk a thin line between negative and positive consequences for being of a particular gender. As for the positive effects of gender stereotypes, women candidates believe they are evaluated more favorably because they are women. Voters extrapolate feminine and motherly characteristics to women's political leadership, giving women a seemingly electoral advantage. However, the features that grant women the association with positive stereotypes pose a double bind. First, despite being associated with maternal characteristics that might be perceived favorably by voters, a significant proportion of women candidates still cite family issues as the main challenges they must overcome in their campaign experience. Women candidates feel guilty about neglecting their families due to the time-

consuming political activities they must perform (Schwindt-Bayer 2011). Second, women candidates who showcase feminine stereotypes may activate negative stereotypes about women in politics. For example, they might also be perceived as less knowledgeable or not fit to address security issues or international relations. Third, to profit from a feminine electoral advantage, women need to conform to gender norms, which makes them more susceptible to gender political violence. Women candidates can be attacked by their political opponents if they deviate from feminine expectations. In addition, within their own political parties, if women are perceived as weak or soft, they risk challengers' violent efforts to remove them from the candidacy.

In sum, in contexts where women's representation has increased significantly due to gender quotas, gender continues to be a defining variable of a candidate's experience in the electoral process. More than their male counterparts, women have to sort out the obstacles political parties pose and actively look for a nomination. In addition, they still need to conform to the gender expectations of voters and endure political violence for being a woman. By identifying the persistence of gender inequalities despite the enactment of effective gender quotas, this paper contributes to the study of the effects of electoral legislation in favor of women and provides new insights on the role of gender in electoral processes. Moreover, the methodology employed here contributes to the literature on gender barriers to representation by recovering candidates' perceptions and unveiling the gender differences in their lived experiences running for political office.

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## Appendix Chapter 2

Table A2.1. Summary statistics by country

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	N
<b>Argentina</b>					
Age	47.44	16.77	18	94	1244
Years of education	13.34	3.29	0	18	1244
Woman	53.78	49.88	0	100	1244
<b>Chile</b>					
Age	44.06	13.78	18	92	1273
Years of education	14.41	2.35	0	17	1273
Woman	57.19	49.5	0	100	1273
<b>Colombia</b>					
Age	42.12	14.85	18	86	1299
Years of education	12.33	3	0	17	1299
Woman	50.27	50.02	0	100	1299
<b>Mexico</b>					
Age	49.02	15.22	18	91	1296
Years of education	13.31	3.08	0	18	1296
Woman	52.31	49.97	0	100	1296

Appendix A2.1. Questionnaire in Spanish

Español

[NOTAS DE PROGRAMACIÓN:

- Asignar un tercio de la muestra a cada grupo
- Mostrar solamente 10 características de forma aleatoria
- Mostrar el orden de las características en orden aleatorio]

GRUPO 1

Por favor piense en las características que le vienen a la mente cuando se habla de <b>personas que ejercen liderazgo político</b> . ¿Cuán bien describen cada uno de los siguientes adjetivos a las <b>personas que ejercen liderazgo político</b> ?							
	<b>1 Nada bien</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7 Muy bien</b>
Son personas que inspiran respeto							
Son personas inspiradoras							
Son personas líderes							
Son personas que hacen las cosas							
Son personas compasivas							
Son personas a las que sí les importa la gente							
Son personas cercanas a la gente							
Son personas que tienen valores morales							
Son personas decentes							
Son personas honestas							
Son personas inteligentes							
Son personas trabajadoras							
Son personas conocedoras							
Son personas cariñosas							
Son personas amables							
Son personas gentiles							
Son personas sensibles							
Son personas competitivas							
Son personas valientes							
Son personas audaces							
Son personas enérgicas							

GRUPO 2

Por favor piense en las características que le vienen a la mente cuando se piensa en <b>mujeres candidatas a cargos políticos</b> . ¿Cuán bien describen cada uno de los siguientes adjetivos a las <b>mujeres candidatas a cargos políticos</b> ?							
	<b>1 Not well at all</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7 Very well</b>
Son personas que inspiran respeto							
Son personas inspiradoras							
Son personas líderes							
Son personas que hacen las cosas							
Son personas compasivas							
Son personas a las que sí les importa la gente							
Son personas cercanas a la gente							
Son personas que tienen valores morales							
Son personas decentes							
Son personas honestas							
Son personas inteligentes							
Son personas trabajadoras							
Son personas conocedoras							
Son personas cariñosas							
Son personas amables							
Son personas gentiles							
Son personas sensibles							
Son personas competitivas							
Son personas valientes							
Son personas audaces							
Son personas enérgicas							

<p>Escriba el nombre de la primera mujer que se le vino a la mente al momento de contestar la anterior pregunta</p>

GRUPO 3

Por favor piense en las características que le vienen a la mente cuando se piensa en <b>hombres candidatos a cargos políticos</b> ¿Cuán bien describen cada uno de los siguientes adjetivos a los <b>hombres candidatos a cargos políticos</b> ?							
	<b>1 Nada bien</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7 Muy bien</b>
Son personas que inspiran respeto							
Son personas inspiradoras							
Son personas líderes							
Son personas que hacen las cosas							
Son personas compasivas							
Son personas a las que sí les importa la gente							
Son personas cercanas a la gente							
Son personas que tienen valores morales							
Son personas decentes							
Son personas honestas							
Son personas inteligentes							
Son personas trabajadoras							
Son personas conocedoras							
Son personas cariñosas							
Son personas amables							
Son personas gentiles							
Son personas sensibles							
Son personas competitivas							
Son personas valientes							
Son personas audaces							
Son personas enérgicas							

<p>Escriba el nombre del primer hombre que se le vino a la mente al momento de contestar la anterior pregunta</p>

Table A2.2. Cronbach's alpha – Stereotype scales

Scale	Political Leadership	Women Politicians	Men Politicians
Leadership	0.9235	0.9137	0.8969
Empathy	0.9272	0.8743	0.9121
	0.8930	0.9471	0.9095
Competence	0.8606	0.8726	0.7956
Positive female personality	0.9202	0.9214	0.9129
Positive male personality	0.8393	0.8925	0.8244

## Appendix Chapter 3

Table A3.1. Chi-square test

		Benevolent sexism	
		Men are more corrupt	Women are better at running the economy
Hostile sexism	Men are better political leaders	1.95 (0.163)	6.42 (0.011)

Source: AmericasBarometer 2018/19

Table A3.2. Percentage of women mayors in 2019 and in the survey sample

	% of women mayors 2019	% of women mayors sample	Difference
Argentina	10.2%	15.5%	5.30%
Bolivia	8.2%	14.3%	6.10%
Brazil	11.6%	8.4%	-3.20%
Chile	11.9%	10.0%	-1.90%
Colombia	12.1%	6.4%	-5.70%
Costa Rica	14.8%	7.4%	-7.40%
Ecuador	7.2%	14.6%	7.40%
El Salvador	11.1%	11.3%	0.20%
Guatemala	3.0%	3.8%	0.80%
Honduras	7.4%	6.0%	-1.40%
Mexico	21.6%	19.4%	-2.20%
Panama	14.3%	16.7%	2.40%
Paraguay	10.4%	6.0%	-4.40%
Peru	2.9%	2.0%	-0.90%
Dominican Republic	13.3%	15.8%	2.50%
Uruguay	21.4%	22.2	0.80%



Table A3.3. Hostile sexism: ordered logistic regression odds ratio

	Full sample	Men are better political leaders	
		Women	Men
Experienced a woman's presidency Woman mayor	0.759*** (0.039)	0.905 (0.063)	0.643*** (0.043)
% of women in congress	1.032 (0.128)	1.024 (0.182)	1.056 (0.178)
% of women in the cabinet	1.001 (0.003)	1.007 (0.005)	0.995 (0.005)
Satisfaction with democracy	0.994*** (0.002)	0.998 (0.002)	0.989*** (0.002)
Trust in political parties	1.288*** (0.105)	1.297** (0.151)	1.257** (0.145)
Trust in local government	1.161* (0.102)	1.153 (0.143)	1.236* (0.154)
Trust in the national legislature	1.162** (0.088)	1.151 (0.125)	1.169 (0.124)
Woman mayor * Trust in local government	1.216 (0.216)	1.909** (0.488)	0.757 (0.189)
% of women in congress * Trust in the national legislature	1.007 (0.212)	1.108 (0.34)	0.893 (0.259)
Economy is better	0.998 (0.006)	0.984* (0.008)	1.011 (0.008)
Amount of corruption among politicians	1.142** (0.075)	1.121 (0.12)	1.149* (0.097)
Woman	0.891 (0.077)	0.977 (0.122)	0.82 (0.1)
Education	0.498*** (0.02)		
Age	0.419*** (0.039)	0.361*** (0.049)	0.479*** (0.062)
Catholic	1.584*** (0.106)	1.81*** (0.185)	1.387*** (0.124)
Ideology (Left / Right)	1.1** (0.046)	1.033 (0.063)	1.183*** (0.068)
Wealth Quintile	1.391*** (0.094)	1.424*** (0.141)	1.37*** (0.128)
Urban	0.861** (0.053)	0.961 (0.087)	0.755*** (0.063)
Cut1:Constant	0.844***	0.831***	0.852**

	(0.042)	(0.059)	(0.056)
Cut2:Constant	0.157***	0.452***	0.106***
	(0.025)	(0.101)	(0.023)
Cut3:Constant	1.881***	5.803***	1.216
	(0.297)	(1.313)	(0.261)
Observations	9615	4649	4966

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Source: AmericasBarometer 2018/19

Table A3.4a. Benevolent sexism expanded: mixed effects logistic regression odds ratio

	Men and women equally corrupt			Women are more corrupt		
	Full sample	Women	Men	Full sample	Women	Men
Experienced a Woman's Presidency	1.152 (0.101)	1.373** (0.176)	1.002 (0.115)	1.167 (0.303)	1.79* (0.633)	0.731 (0.312)
Woman Mayor	1.032 (0.232)	1.174 (0.395)	0.964 (0.288)	1.131 (0.72)	1.753 (1.291)	0.547 (0.874)
% of women in Congress	1.014** (0.006)	1.006 (0.008)	1.022** (0.009)	0.999 (0.019)	1.023 (0.025)	0.972 (0.032)
% of women in the cabinet	0.998 (0.003)	0.999 (0.004)	0.998 (0.004)	0.999 (0.008)	0.986 (0.012)	1.008 (0.012)
Satisfaction with Democracy	1.206 (0.169)	1.272 (0.266)	1.23 (0.236)	1.799 (0.771)	1.994 (1.21)	1.588 (1.032)
Trust in Political Parties	1.008 (0.151)	0.952 (0.21)	1.094 (0.23)	1.863 (0.788)	2.734* (1.569)	1.401 (0.894)
Trust in Local Government	1.055 (0.135)	1.246 (0.233)	0.92 (0.164)	0.515* (0.205)	0.38* (0.221)	0.622 (0.361)
Trust in the National Legislature	1.349 (0.416)	1.344 (0.619)	1.312 (0.559)	0.917 (0.86)	1.575 (2.096)	0.532 (0.742)
Woman mayor * Trust in local government	1.201 (0.461)	0.941 (0.547)	1.41 (0.727)	1.436 (1.487)	3.497 (4.169)	0.117 (0.414)
% of women in congress * Trust in the nat. legislature	0.993 (0.01)	1.003 (0.016)	0.983 (0.014)	1.007 (0.032)	0.963 (0.043)	1.051 (0.052)
Economy is better	0.737*** (0.081)	0.731* (0.135)	0.738** (0.102)	0.917 (0.339)	0.648 (0.421)	1.043 (0.498)
Amount of Corruption	1.161 (0.174)	1.046 (0.232)	1.227 (0.255)	1.675 (0.787)	2.807 (1.901)	1.059 (0.734)
Woman	1.347*** (0.094)			1.04 (0.24)		
Education	2.089*** (0.339)	1.558* (0.373)	2.773*** (0.622)	0.121*** (0.065)	0.134*** (0.099)	0.114*** (0.092)
Age	0.441*** (0.051)	0.492*** (0.089)	0.395*** (0.06)	1.321 (0.504)	1.55 (0.876)	1.062 (0.577)
Catholic	0.88* (0.064)	0.812* (0.091)	0.964 (0.094)	1.363 (0.337)	0.844 (0.286)	2.41** (0.944)
Ideology (Left / Right)	0.843 (0.097)	0.698** (0.12)	0.974 (0.154)	2.138** (0.769)	4.498*** (2.375)	1.16 (0.601)
Wealth Quintile	0.945 (0.102)	1.131 (0.185)	0.818 (0.12)	0.342*** (0.129)	0.501 (0.266)	0.196*** (0.109)
Urban	0.901 (0.077)	1.027 (0.13)	0.804* (0.092)	0.908 (0.227)	0.613 (0.217)	1.187 (0.443)
Constant	1.843** (0.497)	2.859*** (1.117)	1.591 (0.587)	0.024*** (0.021)	0.011*** (0.013)	0.045** (0.063)
Observations	5142	2498	2644	5142	2498	2644

Standard errors in parentheses.

Source: AmericasBarometer 2018/19

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Table A3.4b. Benevolent sexism expanded: mixed effects logistic regression odds ratio

	Men and women equally good at running the economy			Men are better at running the economy		
	Full sample	Women	Men	Full sample	Women	Men
Experienced a woman's presidency	1.404*** (0.114)	1.526*** (0.165)	1.3** (0.14)	0.886 (0.129)	0.573** (0.158)	1.079 (0.185)
Woman mayor	1.156 (0.246)	1.095 (0.327)	1.181 (0.342)	0.939 (0.389)	0.573 (0.485)	1.127 (0.534)
% of women in Congress	0.9998 (0.005)	1.008 (0.007)	0.994 (0.007)	1.002 (0.011)	0.995 (0.019)	1.006 (0.013)
% of women in the cabinet	1.001 (0.003)	1.001 (0.003)	1.001 (0.003)	0.983*** (0.005)	0.987* (0.008)	0.982*** (0.006)
Satisfaction with Democracy	1.267* (0.165)	1.189 (0.219)	1.37* (0.25)	1.541* (0.371)	1.878 (0.74)	1.344 (0.407)
Trust in Political Parties	0.923 (0.129)	0.872 (0.168)	0.965 (0.192)	1.272 (0.311)	1.386 (0.535)	1.192 (0.379)
Trust in Local Government	0.845 (0.101)	0.755* (0.126)	0.961 (0.162)	0.96 (0.211)	0.902 (0.317)	1.004 (0.281)
Trust in the National Legislature	0.953 (0.273)	2.035* (0.819)	0.499* (0.201)	1.387 (0.719)	1.278 (1.093)	1.491 (0.97)
Woman mayor *	1.135 (0.407)	1.049 (0.531)	1.339 (0.668)	0.701 (0.48)	1.372 (1.728)	0.556 (0.46)
Trust in local government	0.999 (0.01)	0.982 (0.013)	1.014 (0.014)	0.999 (0.018)	1.013 (0.03)	0.989 (0.022)
% of women in congress * Trust in the national legislature	0.843 (0.089)	0.915 (0.154)	0.803* (0.107)	1.261 (0.223)	0.973 (0.343)	1.384 (0.282)
Economy is better	0.706** (0.099)	0.639** (0.125)	0.787 (0.156)	0.767 (0.192)	0.702 (0.277)	0.783 (0.254)
Amount of Corruption among Politicians	1.024 (0.067)	1.812*** (0.38)	2.304*** (0.492)	0.557*** (0.073)	0.206*** (0.097)	0.337*** (0.122)
Education	2.061*** (0.311)			0.269*** (0.077)		
Woman	0.324*** (0.035)	0.302*** (0.049)	0.349*** (0.051)	2.339*** (0.475)	4.497*** (1.631)	1.711** (0.422)
Age	0.905 (0.062)	0.889 (0.087)	0.919 (0.086)	1.278* (0.17)	1.344 (0.311)	1.254 (0.203)
Catholic	0.821* (0.088)	0.865 (0.132)	0.802 (0.121)	1.279 (0.249)	1.607 (0.507)	1.066 (0.262)
Ideology (Left / Right)	1.488*** (0.15)	1.252 (0.18)	1.741*** (0.244)	0.515*** (0.101)	0.503** (0.172)	0.509*** (0.121)
Wealth Quintile	1.184** (0.092)	1.182 (0.128)	1.146 (0.12)	0.757** (0.103)	0.685* (0.155)	0.79 (0.132)
Urban	2.362*** (0.092)	2.356** (0.128)	2.186** (0.12)	0.189*** (0.103)	0.084*** (0.155)	0.213*** (0.132)
Constant						

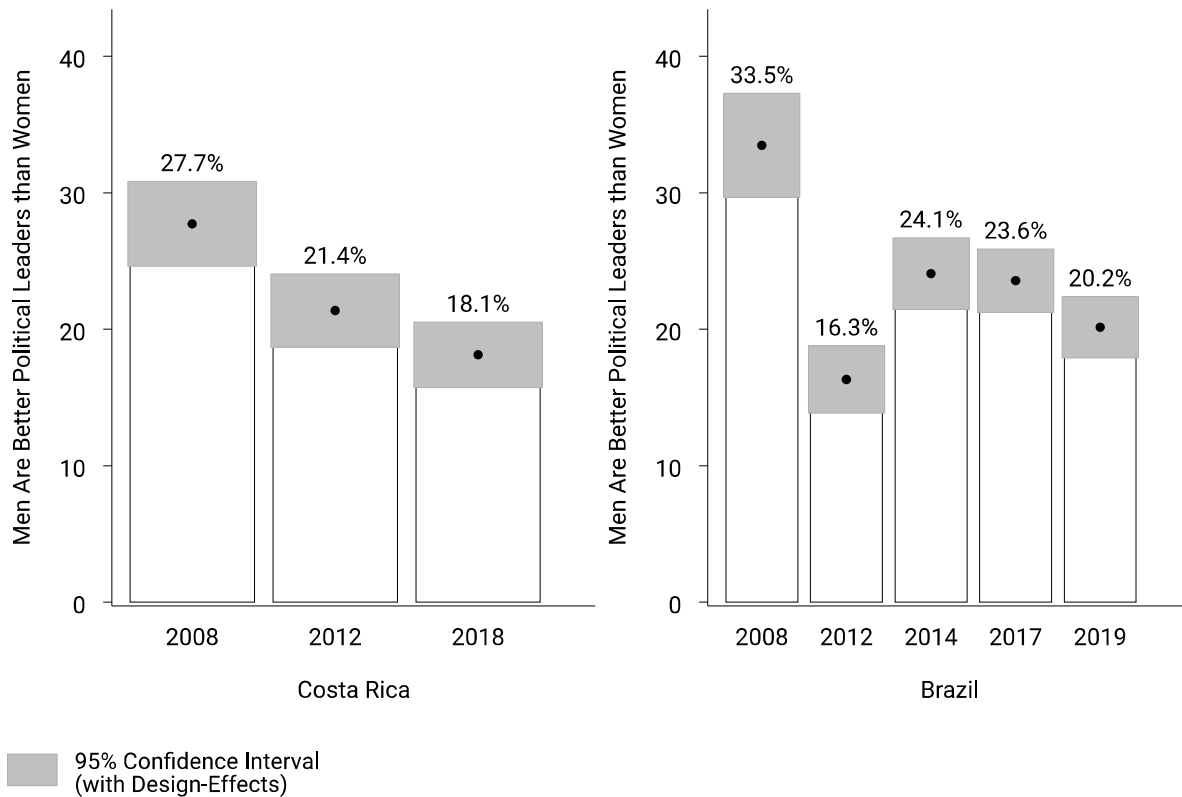
	(0.596)	(0.815)	(0.766)	(0.089)	(0.065)	(0.123)
Observations	5140	2495	2645	5140	2495	2645

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Source: AmericasBarometer 2018/19

Figure A3.1. Hostile sexism before and after the election of women presidents. Costa Rica and Brazil.



Source: AmericasBarometer

## Appendix Chapter 4

The chapter is based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with 36 candidates for local and national elections. Here, I explain how the interviews were set up and conducted.

The primary means to identify suitable interviewees was using the official information published by the Bolivian Electoral Organization. This institution in charge of organizing and carrying out Bolivian elections releases the list of official candidates three months before the elections. In the case of the national elections, I identified the political parties of the three candidates leading the race using information from the first polls of voting intentions (march 2020)<sup>55</sup> for the presidential elections. Before starting the interviews, the most relevant political parties were Movimiento al Socialismo, Comunidad Ciudadana, and JUNTOS. In the case of local elections, all parties were included.

Before starting fieldwork, I contacted a Bolivian NGO, CIUDADANÍA, to support my research and act as the local partner. CIUDADANÍA is a renowned interdisciplinary research center that conducts studies on democracy, citizenship, and equality. For six years before starting graduate school, I work at this institution conducting research and promoting citizen political participation and public space revitalization. During this time, I met and interviewed politicians, candidates, and members of social movements. This allowed me to be part of a network of relevant political actors in Bolivia. Using personal connections and institutional alliances of the local NGO that supports my research, I reached out to representatives of the three most relevant political parties and requested contact information of the candidates who met my study's inclusion criteria.

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<sup>55</sup> <https://www.paginasiete.bo/nacional/arce-aumenta-ventaja-a-33-se-distancia-de-mesa-y-de-anez-OFPS249766>

In the case of the national elections, the criteria of inclusion were the candidacy for deputy positions from single-districts. For the local elections, interviewees needed to be candidates for local mayors from the metropolitan municipalities of the three most populated Bolivian departments. The study did not exclude participants based on gender, ethnicity, age, or place of residency. I obtained partial lists of candidates' phone numbers and email addresses. For those candidates who were not included in the lists, I searched for their official social media accounts. The list of potential interviewees was heavily concentrated in the urban regions of Bolivia's main departments: Cochabamba, La Paz, and Santa Cruz. All of the candidates for whom I gathered contact information received the IRB-approved invitation letter (Appendix A4.1. and Appendix A4.2.) through email, phone, or social media message. The following table shows the dates and duration of the interviews, as well as the gender, party, office-level candidacy, and department of residency.

Table A4.1. Interviewed candidates' characteristics

Date	Interview duration	Candidate's sex	Party	Office Level	Department	Elected
6/10/20	27 minutes	Woman	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	Santa Cruz	No
6/12/20	33 minutes	Man	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	La Paz	No
6/16/20	26 minutes	Woman	Al Movimiento Socialismo	Deputy	La Paz	Yes
6/17/20	53 minutes	Man	Al Socialismo	Deputy	La Paz	No
6/19/20	26 minutes	Man	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	La Paz	Yes
6/19/20	39 minutes	Woman	Juntos	Deputy	Cochabamba	No
6/20/20	40 minutes	Woman	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	Tarija	Yes
6/20/20	31 minutes	Man	Juntos	Deputy	Cochabamba	No
6/20/20	25 minutes	Woman	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	Pando	No
6/30/20	68 minutes	Woman	Juntos	Deputy	Cochabamba	No

7/3/20	30 minutes	Man	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	Tarija	Yes
7/3/20	29 minutes	Woman	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	Cochabamba	No
7/4/20	33 minutes	Woman	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	Potosí	Yes
7/5/20	25 minutes	Woman	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	Tarija	Yes
7/18/20	39 minutes	Woman	Movimiento Al Socialismo	Deputy	Santa Cruz	No
7/18/20	51 minutes	Woman	Movimiento Al Socialismo	Deputy	Cochabamba	Yes
7/19/20	37 minutes	Man	Juntos	Deputy	Cochabamba	No
7/27/20	54 minutes	Woman	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	Chuquisaca	Yes
7/28/20	40 minutes	Woman	Juntos	Deputy	Tarija	No
8/2/20	32 minutes	Man	Movimiento Al Socialismo	Deputy	La Paz	Yes
8/3/20	42 minutes	Man	Comunidad Ciudadana	Deputy	Santa Cruz	No
8/4/20	62 minutes	Woman	Movimiento Al Socialismo	Deputy	Tarija	Yes
2/2/2021	36 minutes	Woman	UNIDOS	Mayor	Cochabamba	No
2/3/2021	42 minutes	Man	Demócratas	Mayor	Santa Cruz	No
2/4/2021	23 minutes	Man	Comunidad Ciudadana	Mayor	Cochabamba	No
2/6/2021	23 minutes	Woman	Somos Pueblo	Mayor	La Paz	No
2/6/2021	33 minutes	Man	Comunidad Ciudadana	Mayor	Cochabamba	No
2/7/2021	28 minutes	Woman	Somos Renovación	Mayor	Cochabamba	No
2/8/2021	24 minutes	Woman	MPS	Mayor	La Paz	No
2/10/2021	22 minutes	Man	Comunidad Ciudadana	Mayor	La Paz	No
2/11/2021	33 minutes	Man	Comunidad Ciudadana	Mayor	La Paz	No
2/11/2021	19 minutes	Man	MPS	Mayor	La Paz	No
2/12/2021	34 minutes	Woman	UNIDOS	Mayor	Cochabamba	No
2/12/2021	38 minutes	Man	Venceremos	Mayor	La Paz	No
2/13/2021	51 minutes	Woman	MPS	Mayor	La Paz	No
2/13/2021	32 minutes	Man	SUMATE	Mayor	Cochabamba	No



All interviews were conducted on Zoom, requiring a password to join the meeting. Before starting the interviews, I read a consent letter and asked permission to record the session for all interviewees. Using an external voice recorder, I saved the audio of the interviews. The digital files were named using candidates' sex, interviews' dates, and references number (order of recording). They did not include candidates' names or any other identifying information.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix A4.3. and Appendix A4.3.) asking about early career and motivation to participate in politics, experiences running for office, the challenges faced and anticipated (personal, around the party, with voters), the strategies used or future strategies to overcome those challenges, and their perceptions about the future for women in politics.

## Appendix A4.1

### Invitation letter – Spanish

Estimada \_\_\_\_\_,

Mi nombre es Daniela Osorio Michel. Soy cochabambina, candidata a doctora por la Universidad de Vanderbilt en Estados Unidos. Actualmente, estoy trabajando en mi tesis doctoral que es sobre participación política en Bolivia. Kariduen fue tan amable de facilitarme su número de teléfono.

Considerando su trayectoria política, le agradecería mucho que me concediera una entrevista. Le tomaría alrededor de 30 minutos de su tiempo. Me gustaría hablar con usted sobre su experiencia política, su candidatura en las próximas elecciones y sus impresiones políticas generales.

Debido a la pandemia actual y para asegurar su salud y la mía, realizaremos la entrevista utilizando la plataforma virtual de su elección (Zoom, Skype o Whatsapp), en la fecha y hora de su mejor conveniencia.

Gracias por su consideración.

Saludos cordiales,

Daniela Osorio Michel, Ph.D. (c)

Vanderbilt University

Para referencias:

- Vivian Schwarz – Executive Director of CIUDADANIA (4- 4406393 - [vivian.schwarz@ciudadaniabolivia.org](mailto:vivian.schwarz@ciudadaniabolivia.org))
- Tariq Thachil – Vanderbilt Professor ([tariq.thachil@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:tariq.thachil@vanderbilt.edu))

## Appendix A4.2

### Invitation letter - English

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Daniela Osorio Michel. I am a Ph.D. candidate at Vanderbilt University. Currently, I am working on a research project about political participation in Bolivia. I have the support of CIUDADANIA, Comunidad de Estudios Sociales y Acción Pública, a local NGO dedicated to research and developing projects (I am providing contact information at the end of this email).

Considering your political trajectory, I would very much appreciate it if you could grant me an interview. It would take around 30 minutes of your time. I would like to talk to you about your political experience, your candidacy in the upcoming elections, and your general political impressions.

Due to the current pandemic and to secure your health and mine, we will conduct the interview using an online platform of your choice (Zoom, Skype or Whatsapp) at the date and time of your best convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Daniela Osorio Michel, Ph.D. (c)  
Vanderbilt University

- For references:
- Vivian Schwarz – Executive Director of CIUDADANIA (4- 4406393 - [vivian.schwarz@ciudadaniabolivia.org](mailto:vivian.schwarz@ciudadaniabolivia.org))
- Tariq Thachil – Vanderbilt Professor ([tariq.thachil@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:tariq.thachil@vanderbilt.edu))

## Appendix A4.1

### Semi-structured questionnaire – Spanish

Informantes clave: Mujeres que se postulan para la Asamblea Nacional (Diputadas Uninominales) de los tres partidos políticos más relevantes de Bolivia (MAS, CC y JUNTOS).

- Inicio de su carrera y motivación para participar en política.
  - Para comenzar, podría decirme ¿cuándo comenzó su carrera en la política y cuál fue su principal motivación?
- Sobre la candidatura
  - ¿Cuáles fueron los hechos más importantes que le llevaron a lanzar su candidatura?
- Dificultades previas
  - ¿Cuáles fueron las dificultades más importantes que usted enfrentó al decidir buscar la candidatura?
    - Personal
    - Partido
      - ¿El partido se mostró reticente a presentarla a usted como candidata? Si fue así, ¿por qué?
- Estrategias para superar las dificultades
  - ¿Qué fue lo que usted hizo para superar las dificultades que se le presentaron al momento de convertirse en candidata?
- Futuras dificultades
  - Ahora que la campaña está por reanudarse, ¿está usted anticipando algún tipo de dificultades?
    - De parte de sus contrincantes, de otros partidos
    - Votantes
      - Que usted sepa, ¿hay algunas ideas o percepciones que las y los votantes puedan tener de las mujeres candidatas? ¿Cuáles son? ¿Son estas todas negativas o existen formas en las que éstas son positivas?
- Estrategias futuras
  - ¿Qué es lo que planea hacer para sobreponerse a estas dificultades?
  - ¿Cómo planea ganar el apoyo de las y los votantes?
    - Slogan y plataforma
- Para finalizar
  - ¿Cuál cree que será el futuro de las mujeres en política en Bolivia?
  - ¿Cree usted que existen ventajas para las mujeres que deciden participar en política/presentarse como candidatas?

## Appendix A4.2

### Semi-structured questionnaire - Invitation letter - English

Key informants: Women running for the National Assembly (Diputadas Uninominales) from the three most relevant political parties in Bolivia (MAS, CC and JUNTOS).

- Early career and motivation to participate in politics
  - To begin, could you please tell me when did you take the first steps on your political path and what was your main motivation?
- Running for office
  - What were the main events that drove you to run for office?
- Past challenges
  - What were the most important challenges you faced after you decided to run for office?
    - Personal
    - Party
      - Was the party reluctant to field you as a candidate? If so, what were the reasons?
- Strategies to overcome the challenges
  - What did you do to overcome those challenges to become a candidate?
- Forthcoming challenges
  - Now that the campaign is soon to restart, do you anticipate any challenges?
    - From opponents, other parties
    - Voters
      - Are there certain perceptions voters have of women candidates that you are aware of? Which ones? Are they all negative or are there ways in which they were positive?
- Future strategies
  - What are you planning to do to overcome those challenges?
  - How are you planning to you win the voters' support?
    - Slogan and platform
- Final thoughts
  - What do you think it would be the future for women in politics in Bolivia?
  - Do you think there are any advantages women have in politics/running for office?