

**Breaking the Latin American Glass Ceiling:
An Analysis of the Southern Cone
Female Presidents' Paths to Power**

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper will examine the political and social environments in Argentina and Chile prior to Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Michelle Bachelet's elections to their respective presidencies. The ways in which both countries viewed women in politics matters for how and why these two politicians were elected in the patriarchal region of Latin America. Argentina is known as a progressive country for women because of Eva Perón's vivacious personality, Isabel Perón's first female presidency worldwide, the famous Madres de la Plaza de Mayo movement, and the creation of the world's first legislative gender quota. Chile, on the other hand, has a history of excluding women from both politics and the public sphere, and Augusto Pinochet's seventeen-year long military dictatorship furthered this public-private divide for women. Interestingly enough, though, within the past decade, both countries have witnessed the election and reelection of a woman to the presidency. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, whose husband was her presidential predecessor, was committed to social justice and her femininity, much like her role model, Eva Perón. Michelle Bachelet was instead dedicated to creating a new precedent for women in government in Chile and utilized her feminist ideals in the process. This paper will explain Argentina and Chile's differing women's political histories, demonstrate how and why each woman was elected in her respective country, and compare both women's paths to presidential power. This topic is important because there is a lack of female leaders worldwide; therefore, by studying and examining two distinct countries with successful female presidential elections, political patterns can develop.

Chapter 1

Introduction

“With few women in politics, it’s the women who change. With many women in politics, politics changes.”¹

For centuries patriarchal societies and ideals have dominated world regions. Today, every major world area from the Americas to the Middle East is still affected by these remaining values, especially in government. Patriarchy is defined “a male-dominated power structure throughout organized society and in individual relationships” (Napikoski). Latin America, in particular, has been known for its own brand of strict patriarchy called *machismo*. While Catholic ideals, authoritarian military governments, and laws that excluded women from the public sphere undoubtedly have influenced the region, recently this male-dominated society has begun to change with the elections and appointments of female politicians. These women have started to break these stereotypes and barriers for entry into politics, and instead create opportunities for female advancement. Most notably, Latin American countries within the past decade have elected female presidents in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Nicaragua. Compared to other world regions, these countries

¹ Franceschet, Susan and Piscopo, Jennifer M. “Gender Quotas and Women’s Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina.” *Politics & Gender*. (2008) 393-425. Web. 24 Nov. 2014.

and Latin America as a whole is beginning to be recognized as a world leader for promoting women. While it may seem uncharacteristic for a historically patriarchal society to do so, this paper will examine specifically why two women, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina and Michelle Bachelet of Chile, were elected to the presidencies. While the two countries share culturally similar backgrounds and have been financial leaders in the region, they are quite different in regard to their histories of women. However, these histories and perceptions of women, particularly the influence of the Catholic Church, previous female leadership, women's political activism, and gender quotas, had a bearing on how and why Fernández and Bachelet campaigned for the presidency. This paper will demonstrate how each woman responded to the political environment of her country in regard to women in order to successfully be elected as president.

Barriers and Opportunities for Women in Latin America

Historically, Latin America has been known for its harsh public-private divide for men and women. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this division is not exclusive to Latin America. Patriarchy exists worldwide and continues to plague today's societies and governments. Latin America is not less advanced than the United States of America or other developed nations. Instead, as this paper will help to explain, Latin America is much like other regions in terms of its patriarchy, but is unique in its recent global leadership of furthering women's rights.

The ideological construct of men participating in the public sector of the economy and working outside the home excludes women from advancing themselves

or politically representing their sex (Horton 2007: 165). This subordination of women can also be explained by the Latin American concept of “el círculo excluyente” (the excluding circle) and “el círculo virtuoso” (the virtuous circle) (del Campo 2005: 1702). The excluding circle demonstrates the fact that women are unable to enter politics because it has been labeled as a man’s world and men feel threatened by the addition or inclusion of women in it; this leads to both women’s exclusion in politics and barriers to achieving positions even when women are included. The second circle leads back to the first one because when women have limited opportunities to politically involve themselves, they lose interest in even wanting to do so. This reinforces the barriers for women that the excluding circle created because without women’s political involvement, no one is pressuring governments to change their patriarchal ways, and the vicious nature of the second circle is created (del Campo 2005: 1702). Latin America’s traditional teachings of the Catholic Church and a “machista” mindset have created a political environment for women’s exclusion and lack of involvement.

Latin American gender constructs have also been influenced by the concepts of machismo and marianismo. It is important to note that gender is an ideological creation, while sex refers to men and women’s biology. Essentially, then, gender is society’s made-up way of dividing the sexes and placing them into representational categories. So, machismo in particular stresses “male power over women, masculine strengths, and sexuality, and male violence or aggression,” whereas marianismo stresses “female piety, sacrifice, and virtue” (Diekman 2005: 212). These concepts,

which reinforce one another, are based upon heteronormativity and Catholic families' social relations (Radcliffe 1996: 141). These gender divides socialize men to be aggressive and dominant, whereas women are supposed to be submissive extensions of men. While women acting as sacrificial and pious people is not damaging, the fact that both men and women are placed into such restrictions for how to act is destructive for Latin America's future; still, as will be discussed, these stereotypes are diminishing and changing as women begin to enter governmental positions. Further, women are thus excluded from the men's aggressive world of politics or from "machista" political positions. Men, in that same token, are not supposed to be gentle or maintain the social positions women have in Latin America, such as the caretakers and religious teachers. These socializations have had negative impacts on politics in Latin America. While democracies are designed to be inclusive, equal forms of government, with the machismo/marianismo concept, Latin American democracies cannot be fully representative of their citizenry. By law, women are no longer restricted from participating in government or public life. Instead, the ways that Latin Americans tend to view women create perceptual barriers for entering politics and previously male dominated positions. The informal gender constructions of machismo and marianismo have shaped the actors that participate in formal institutions in Latin America, like business and government.

With these gender interpretations and the influence of the Catholic Church's traditional views of men and women, promoting women in government has been challenging in Latin America. The reason behind this recent increase of female

politicians, though, is that many countries have enacted gender quotas to fight against the patriarchy and machismo. While other countries around the world have also implemented gender quotas to involve women in politics more, Latin America has seen a wave of them in recent years and acts as a worldwide leader. Argentina began this trend in 1991 with the creation of the world's first legislative gender quota, which mandated that thirty percent of the legislature be composed of women (del Campo 2005: 1708). Prior, the quotas that existed had been party quotas, in which political parties mandated a certain number of women be in the party, and reserved seats, which required a certain amount of seats in government be given to women (Krook 2009: 7). The legislative gender quota that Argentina created stated through a constitutional reform that a certain percentage of the parliament would have to be females (Krook 2009: 8). Gender quotas are important for increasing female participation in Latin America because not only are more opportunities provided for women's involvement, but they also send a message to a country's citizens that gender equality and women's representation matters (Schwindt-Bayer 2010: 20). This message, in turn, changes people's feelings toward politics and women's involvement. Twelve countries in Latin America have enacted a gender quota, as well, which demonstrates the region's commitment to changing gender stereotypes. Therefore, gender quotas simultaneously act as an opportunity for women in Latin America to become politically active and eliminate barriers for women caused by the socialization of machismo.

Nevertheless, in countries that have not enacted such a gender quota, political parties prove to be the biggest barrier for women's entry into politics (Franceschet

2005: 1). When political parties feed into the concept of patriarchy and machismo, they do not believe that women's place is in politics and they thus exclude them even beginning to be politically involved. For example, Chile has yet to create a gender quota and in 2005, only sixteen percent of political party leadership positions belonged to women (Franceschet 2005: 3). While women may want to be politically engaged, the Chilean government and political parties have not made gender equality a priority, which results in low levels of women's representation. Women thus feel obligated to act as wives and mothers rather than join a political party for fear of acting uncharacteristically "machista". Again, a vicious cycle of exclusion emerges.

While all of these barriers exist in Latin American today for women, the region is also acting as a global leader by electing females as their presidents in certain countries. Both leadership and the presidency have been characterized as masculine institutions, though. As the authors of *Gender in Politics*, Pamela Paxton, Sheri Kunovich, and Melanie M. Hughes, state, "Women face prejudice as leaders because people tend to assume that leadership is a masculine trait" (Paxton 2007: 271). By patriarchal social standards, women are meant to be submissive, not leaders. Moreover, the executive branch, specifically the presidency, has been and today remains the most masculinized of the political offices worldwide. It represents the highest form of leadership, which, as has been noted, is a male-dominated quality. Limits are thus placed on who can and cannot be in executive leadership roles since both executive positions and the concept of leadership in general are perceived as masculine (Duerst-Lahti 1997: 22). So, the task of being a presidential candidate as a

woman becomes difficult since women in Latin America are supposed to be meek and passive. The next chapters of this book will explain, though, how Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Michelle Bachelet, two women who expressed their femininity, were able to break through the barriers not only into politics, but also, and more importantly, into the highly masculinized position of president.

Thesis Overview

The next four chapters will demonstrate how Argentina and Chile's histories of and perceptions toward women mattered for the presidential elections of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Michelle Bachelet. Chapter 2 focuses on Argentina by first examining Argentina's patriarchal history. While this introduction has given a general overview of Latin American patriarchy, this background information will be important to understand why men and women act in certain ways specifically in Argentina. Next, there will be an assessment of Argentine women in politics, starting with Eva and Isabel Perón. Evita Perón, the beloved wife of Juan Perón, truly began the progressive nature of women's political participation in Argentina. She fought for women's suffrage and was just as politically significant as her husband during the Peronist movement. Isabel Perón, Juan's third wife after Evita, was also politically involved and became the first female president in the world after her husband's death. Both women's positions of power, whether formal or informal, created a precedent of female governmental leaders in Argentina. Eva and Isabel's time in the public light also demonstrated that femininity could exist in the man's world of politics. The chapter will then explain the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo movement in which mothers during Argentina's military dictatorship peacefully protested for the return of their

disappeared children. Like the Perón women, these mothers utilized their feminine roles and nature to become politically involved and internationally recognized. Then, there will be an overview of Argentina's legislative gender quota and how it positively affected and added to the country's progressive nature toward women.

The second half of chapter 2 will examine how Cristina Fernández de Kirchner rose to power both because of and in spite of its history of women. From a young age, Fernández was inspired by Eva Perón and her commitment to social justice. She then attended college in order to fight against human rights abuses that were committed under the military dictatorship. Before her campaign for the presidency, Fernández was married, became a senator, and acted as the First Lady while her husband was president. She was known for her controversial nature and strong dedication to the *desaparecidos*. In 2007, Fernández chose to run for the presidency as her husband, Nestor's, term was ending. Because of the Argentine women that came before her, Fernández had a precedent to live up to; like Eva, Isabel, and the Madres, Fernández was motivated to use her femininity to campaign, rather than being a feminist. Many described her as the "new Evita," which positively added to her image. Due to her governmental experience, the influence of her political party, her previously established political fame, and her feminine nature, Fernández was elected as the President of Argentina in 2007 and again in 2011.

Chapter 3 examines Chile and its election and reelection of Michelle Bachelet. Chile, though, is quite different than Argentina in regard to its history of women. First, the paper will explain Chile's patriarchal past, which was much more deeply embedded than Argentina's. It will begin by looking at Chile's women after colonization and through obtaining women's suffrage. After women's suffrage,

women's movements diminished and women were uninvolved and excluded from government. Next, the effects that Salvador Allende and his presidential regime had on Chile will be examined. Women at this time were ignored by Allende's government, and toward the end of his reign, they fought for better treatment from the government. However, Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship proved to be far more deleterious for women. His conservative, military government committed violence against opposing forces and mandated that women remain solely in the private sphere. Again, at the end of his regime women began to fight against him, but in fragmented movements and organizations. All of this political exclusion and these traditional mindsets have contributed to a country today in which women are politically underrepresented because of the precedent Chilean leaders have set.

However, the rest of the chapter will explain how Michelle Bachelet, as a feminist, agnostic single mother, was elected as the head of state of such a conservative, male-dominated country. Bachelet, a survivor of Pinochet's abuse, was able to defy gender stereotypes from the onset of her political career. Originally a doctor, Bachelet held positions in the Ministry of Health. When presented with a military scholarship, Bachelet took the opportunity and was educated at military schools in Santiago and Washington D.C. This education led to her appointment in one of the most masculinized ministerial positions – Defense Minister. She was the first woman in Latin America to gain this position. These governmental positions helped establish Bachelet as a strong, dedicated woman committed to government. Bachelet then chose to run for the 2006 presidential election. Her campaign agenda focused on socio-economic change and helping women who had long been suppressed by government's laws and society's social norms. Bachelet broke away from the

marianista gender construction and instead created her own version of a woman in politics. This image, along with the help of her dominant political party La Concertación, both helped in electing her as the president of Chile in 2006 and later in 2014.

Chapter 4 will compare Argentina and Chilean women's histories and how they affected Fernández and Bachelet's paths to presidential power. Specifically, the comparison will examine the differences in influences of the Catholic Church, early political female leaders, women's movements in response to military governments, and the role of gender quotas. All of these factors influenced different perceptions of women in Argentina and Chile, which mattered for how Fernández and Bachelet rose to power and the type of presidents they became. Argentina had a history of promoting women in government and letting them express their femininity. This eased Fernández's political barriers, while also setting a precedent of how to act as a political figure. Chile, on the other hand, was accustomed to women's lack of political participation because of the country's history of exclusion of women in government. Michelle Bachelet set out to construct what it meant to be a female leader in Chile's political sphere by defying previous notions of gender. Both *presidentas* responded to the political environments their countries provided for women and responded appropriately to them during their presidential election campaigns.

Chapter 5 will speculate on how both women have influenced other women in their countries and throughout Latin America. Their elections have opened up more doors for women's political participation. Fernández and Bachelet demonstrated that women can be elected in conservative countries, like Chile, or progressive countries, like Argentina so long as they are aware of and respond correctly to their countries'

perceptions of women. The two presidents have not let machismo and patriarchy define or limit their careers, but instead have used it to inspire them and defy institutional sexism.

Chapter 2

Argentina the Pioneer: How Argentina has been a Regional and Worldwide Leader for Women

Introduction

In Latin America, and most other world regions, politics has been classified as a man's world due to traditional gender constructions. Currently, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner acts as the President of Argentina. Despite being negatively and wrongly characterized as an obedient puppet of the former president's, Fernández has defied stereotypes for women and presidents. She has legalized same sex marriage, addressed human rights abuses of the past, and renewed contracts with the International Monetary Fund ("Profile: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner" 2014). Cristina Fernández de Kirchner as the Argentine president reinforces the idea that Argentina is a Latin American world leader for improving women's political and social status.

As will be outlined, since the onset the country, the women of Argentina have consistently fought for and achieved that which had been considered outside of the women's sphere of influence. Argentina began as a country with Catholic and Spanish ideals that instilled the belief that men were superior to women. However, throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, women fought for full citizenship and education. Leaders such as Eva Perón, a woman who remains a beloved figure in Argentina for her fight for female suffrage, and Isabel Perón, the first female president, also allowed Argentina to become a pioneer for women in Latin America. By instituting the world's first legislative gender quota, the nation again demonstrated its ability to advance

women's status. As this chapter will show, Argentina has been and remains a leader among nations in Latin America and around the world for helping women achieve more politically, socially, and economically.

All of the events and people outlined have contributed to an environment in which Cristina Fernández de Kirchner has been elected twice and has been able to succeed in both terms as *La Presidenta*. A country's political environment can create both opportunities and barriers for women. Fortunately, Argentina's history of leading the improvement of women's positions in society allowed there to be a national environment where men and women were treated more equally; this equality in turn led to a political and social sphere that Cristina Fernández de Kirchner grew up, thrived, and campaigned in. However, Fernández did not win the presidency solely because Argentina was a less conservative country in Latin America; rather, Fernández became the first elected female president of Argentina both due to this accepting environment and her own political abilities. Because of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's presidency, Argentina remains a pioneer for women in Latin America.

A Brief History of Argentina's Patriarchal Past

Catholic Spanish settlers colonized Argentina, like most other Latin American countries. Throughout its history, Argentina has been able to shake some of the gender stereotypes and traditions that its colonizers brought over to the New World. The education and full citizenship of women helped advance women's political and social status in Argentina, which in turn has allowed Argentina to become a strong, global actor and leader for women's progress.

After Argentina's colonization, it became Spain's Viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata. The Spanish Civil Code was the governing institution. Under this code, "women, along with children and the insane, were legally classed as imbeciles. Married women existed entirely under male authority; single women were classified *patria potestad* or "under the rule of their fathers until they were twenty-five years old" (Carlson 1988: 7). This ideology toward females stemmed from European and Catholic traditions. The Church's opinion guided most aspects of life and governance of both Spain and its colonies. The Church believed that it was women's God-given right and primary duty to reproduce children and act as an obedient wife, rather than being a part of politics, or the "men's world" (Carlson 1988: 61). Hence, a practice of civic and political female exclusion developed at the onset of Argentine society. These sexist barriers, which emerged during the creation of Argentina as a political entity, disadvantaged women by establishing traditional mindsets for years to come. It would later be up to Argentine female leaders to break down these barriers.

In 1816 Argentina pronounced itself independent from Spain, and later in 1853 established a constitution declaring the area a republic ("Argentina: History" 2012). This constitution created a two-house legislature, a judiciary, a Bill of Rights and the abolition of the slave trade; however, much like other constitutions of the time that it resembled, it did not give women the right to vote (Carlson 1988: 39). From the female perspective, it was as though the Spanish Civil Code was still in place because women's status in civil society was not improved. The lack of female political participation reflected religious views and Europeans traditions.

After its independence, Argentina became modernized and its middle class grew from an influx of European immigrants. Females, though, continued to be

underrepresented, undereducated, and uninvolved, even as the country progressed. As Marifran Carlson states in her book, “Female public education was almost non-existent in the colonies until after the wars for independence” (Carlson 1988: 14). Education is the basis of development and civic knowledge. In order to later achieve a more developed political status and female suffrage, women would first need a more equal education to men. Toward the end of the eighteenth century into the nineteenth century, women and girls began to be more formally educated. Various controversial journals were published throughout this period that encouraged women to change how they dress, become more officially educated, and have men assist them with gaining intellectual knowledge (Carlson 1988: 67). These articles planted the first seeds of the women’s movement.

Women’s rights movements in Argentina began with educational opportunities for women. Due to Domingo F. Sarmiento’s help, Argentina transformed into an educational leader in Latin America; he brought male and female American teachers to Argentina, established schools for girls, and appointed females to assist him when he became Argentina’s Minister of Education (Carlson 1988: 67). These actions helped more girls become enrolled in schools; while many of the schools did primarily teach about women’s role in the home and as a wife, recognizing that females deserve an education, too, allowed women’s status in society to progress. By 1910, Argentina “had an international reputation for having the best educational system in Latin America, and was...morally and financially committed to the education of women” (Carlson 1988: 83). Therefore, despite religion’s power and the lingering effects of the Spanish Civil Code in Argentina, as a nation, it grew into a regional leader for women in society.

Eva Perón and Isabel Perón also contributed to women's development. After two world wars, two military interventions and conflicting political parties' ideologies, the Argentine government became unsteady in mid-twentieth century (Lewis 2001: 73). It seemed as though Argentina's "promising future," economically and politically speaking, was shattered (Lewis 2001: 73). In the midst of this breakdown, Juan Perón emerged as a national leader representing the working class. He was later elected as President. As will be discussed, Perón greatly changed Argentina, most importantly to this paper's argument by marrying his two wives. Both women added to an environment that accepted women into the political sphere and executive office. They, as well as the women before them who fought against traditionalist gender stereotypes and fought for an education, created the building blocks of Argentina's leadership in Latin America for women and provided Fernández with political inspiration.

Argentine Women in Politics

How the Perón Women Advanced Argentina

Juan Perón, one of the most famous Argentine presidents, could not have been as politically successful with his Peronist movement without the help of his wives, Eva and Isabel Perón. Through their husband's political movement, these two women broke down barriers for other Argentine women, while maintaining their femininity. Eva and Isabel were just as important to changing the landscape of Argentina as Juan was. The three of them were essential public figures in the Peronist and women's movement. Throughout the Perón regime, women were granted the right to vote, encouraged to join political parties, and were a part of a nation with the world's first

female president. Eva and Isabel's political positions opened up new doors for women in their country, set the stage for Argentina accepting women into government, and helped foster a nation that would elect a female president.

Most easily identified as a right wing military leader who adored Argentina's sovereignty, Juan Perón was a powerful force in his country (Lewis 104). Prior to becoming President, Juan acted as both the Minister of Labor and, in 1944, the Minister of War (Carlson 1988: 183). Both positions allowed him to rise through the ranks of government and his military junta to later be elected as President and leader of *Peronismo* (Peronism). Peronism was a brand of populism that sought to deny elites' and capitalism's power, empower working class constituents, and help the politically and economically oppressed (Zabaleta 2000: 26). His political ideology was quickly respected by many financially struggling Argentines.

In the 1940s, Argentina and its government believed that men were superior to women. When girls went to school, they had to memorize the following: "The Argentine women should know how to jealously fulfill her natural obligations. The dignity of woman consists in accepting her specific bodily functions." (Carlson 1988: 184). Argentina, like most other Latin American nations, was a patriarchal, machista society in which women's primary duties were as wives, mothers, and house-makers, as in most other parts of the world at this time. These feelings stemmed from traditional Catholic teachings and the image of the eternally moral Virgin Mary. Women in Latin America were thus expected to resemble her and be giving, gentle, and sacrificial people; in fact, this image of Mary was an important symbol for the creation of women's national identities (Radcliffe 1996: 141). Being generous and kind is certainly not a poor image for any woman or person to have. However, the

problem with marianismo lies within the strict dichotomy of perspective between it and machismo. As one author, Farida Jalalzai, states in her book *Shattered, Cracked, or Firmly Intact?*, marianismo “simultaneously empowers and confines women” (Jalalzai 2013: 97). It teaches women to be morally superior people, and yet people that are restricted from participating in the man’s world of politics and government. Moreover, at this time, most men saw Argentina as “a maternal body where [they] could project their drives and frustrations” (Zabaleta 2000: 13). This same mentality was applied to men’s wives. Therefore, the attitude in the country toward women during Perón’s early political life was not promising.

In 1945, though, the Peronist perspective on women, and thus that of the country, began to shift after Juan met María Eva Duarte, or, better known in Argentina, as Evita. Eva was born into a lower class family without any father figure, and she never received a stable education. However, through becoming an actress and building a vast social network, Eva began to achieve a higher status and fame (Carlson 1988: 187). She greatly appealed to Juan after they met, and in 1945 the two were married (Carlson 1988: 187). Without her public relations skills, attractive character, and ability to relate to the public, Juan Perón would not have been as successful as he was in gaining support from men and women alike. Eva helped to increase women’s political and civic presence in Argentina.

During Juan’s election campaign, he had suggested there should be female suffrage as per presidential decree. This strategy angered women, though, because they saw Juan as using this concept as a ploy to gain more appeal from women; many people believed that once elected, Juan would not implement female suffrage despite his campaign promise (Carlson 1988: 187). So, his first attempt at integrating

Argentine women was unsuccessful. Nonetheless, Juan won the presidency, and after only a few months as First Lady, Eva presented a suffrage bill and campaigned for its approval via speeches and radio announcements; she declared that women should have the right to political participation because it “would make women more feminine and attractive” (Carlson 1988: 189). She said that excluding women from voting was comparable to “excluding the family and the home from the immediate future of the revolution” since women’s main duties were to serve the family (Zabaleta 2000: 286). Because of her dedication and popularity throughout Argentina, women did receive the right to vote in Argentina on September 27, 1947 (Carlson 1988: 189). Eva and her persuasion were essential tools to this campaign for women. She became the face of women and women’s rights in Argentina, which meant that after suffrage women were encouraged to be both civically involved and feminine.

Female suffrage was successful in Argentina because it allowed women to rise into government positions. In the next election that women were able to vote and, as one author states, “over ninety percent of the eligible women voted, with Juan a share of their vote running between fifty three and eighty three percent. Seven women senators and twenty four women deputies were elected, all Peronistas” (Carlson 1988: 193). The same author also says that before Juan came into office, women did not have a decent chance at getting an education or attaining economic security. Arguably it was not Juan that allowed this to happen, but rather the influence and power of Eva. She was the voice of Argentine women, women’s rights, and peronismo at this time.

Not only did Eva help women gain the right to vote, but she was also placed in charge of the Women’s Branch of the Peronist Party (Lewis 102). Perón had divided the Judicialist Party into three branches: the political branch, the women’s branch, and

the trade union's branch (Krook 2009: 164). Through this position, she helped to install a minimum wage for women who worked from or at home (Carlson 1988: 192). However, Perón seemed to send a message to Argentina that women were not supposed to be mixed with politics since he divided the political branch from the women's branch. Most speculate that he created this women's branch and supported women so that they in return would support him, his regime, and his ideology (Zabaleta 2000). Despite the progress women were making under Juan's leadership, barriers and traditional mindsets still posed as obstacles for them.

Eva, though, did not acknowledge this distinction between sections of the political party and continued with her work. Much of her time was spent working with the poor and working class. She set up a relief program called the Fundación de Ayuda Social that provided funding to hospitals, charities, food programs, and disaster relief (Lewis 2001: 101). This position Evita had within the charitable organization fed into the concepts of machismo and marianismo. While machismo stressed male dominance over women and the need for men to be aggressive, marianismo emphasized female piety and virtue (Diekman 2005: 221). While helping the poor was a virtuous way of Eva Perón expressing her influence and character, it also fed into the traditional Latin American stereotypes of females being directly uninvolved in the aggressive and masculine realm of politics. Therefore, while it was a great feat for a woman to be such a powerful Argentine figure and maintain such influence, Eva Perón also fell into the confinements of marianismo.

Despite all of her accomplishments, Eva was never placed into an elected or appointed position in government; her role was unofficial even though her contributions were plentiful. She had the ability but lacked the formal agency. In 1951,

Eva hoped to become her husband's Vice President, but was persuaded not to be on the ballot (Jensen 2008: 20). This made her the first female in the world to attempt to fight to be in this position (Zabaleta 2000: 22). Eva was technically the strongest woman in Argentina, and most likely Latin American, politics at this time. Unfortunately, the influence she had was not legitimized through true political means due to gender stereotypes and traditional mindsets. Like Jalalzai previously stated, the *marianismo* empowered her to be a feminine role model, but limited how far that empowerment went. Still, Eva remained essential to the Peronist movement despite her lack of the vice presidency. She was just as significant in Argentina as Juan was. While her husband was the originator of the Peronist movement, Eva was the face and voice of it.

These stereotypical Latin American views even affected how Eva thought of herself and women. She would iterate to Argentina that a woman's place was beside a man's and that she would rather serve her husband's needs than be in political office (Carlson 1988: 194). Moreover, Eva fought for women's rights and wanted women to advance themselves, even though her ideals may not reflect what one now thinks of as a traditional feminist. The following statement made by Eva reflects her feelings:

"I felt that the women's feminist movement in my country and all over the world had a sublime mission to fulfill, and everything I knew about feminism seemed to me ridiculous. For, not led by women but by those who aspired to be men, it ceased to be womanly and was nothing: feminism had taken the step from the sublime to the ridiculous. And that is the step I always try to avoid taking!" (Carlson 1988: 183).

Eva seemed to create her own brand females involved in the public life- one in which women were still allowed to be feminine, fulfill their wifely duties, and be politically active. If Eva had been a radical feminist at this time, though, like the women she discusses in the quote above, she would not have been as successful as she was. By allowing women to maintain their femininity and providing them with the right to vote, Eva was holding onto some amount of tradition while creating a new tradition to complement it. Eva pushed the women's movement in the right direction, and yet still maintained and fostered a traditional view of women, which fit into Argentine culture well. Therefore, Eva was not a politically revolutionary figure, but rather a revolutionary figure for females. What she said and what political movement she represented was not considered radical. Rather, her ability to maintain such a powerful public position demonstrated her seemingly revolutionary nature.

Sadly, in July of 1952 Eva Perón passed away at a young age from cancer (Opfell 1993: 53). As Daniel K. Lewis says, her death "sent the Peronist faithful into mourning" since she embodied and represented the movement (Lewis 2001: 109). Eva was greatly valued in Argentina for her ideas and her character; she was remembered as a dynamic and significant figure. Juan even wanted to canonize her, but because of the tension that he had with the Catholic Church at this point in his political career, the plan did not come to fruition (Lewis 2001: 109). Despite her lack of sainthood, Eva still left an impression on Argentine society, and she is credited with the advances for women at this time. Therefore, for Argentines, Eva represented a new Argentine woman who, most notably, could access government and politics.

Although deeply saddened by his wife's death, Juan Perón chose to marry for the third time in November of 1961 to who would soon be known as Isabel Perón, the

world's first female president (Opfell 1993: 53). In most ways Isabel did not resemble Eva's character and ability to create change for Argentines. Isabel was much less politically involved and politically motivated; she was not as enthusiastic and gregarious as Evita, either. Still, Isabel attempted to physically look like Evita by dyeing her hair blonde and wearing it in the same style as Evita (Opfell 1993: 59). Moreover, both women had the same mentality about females; Isabel is quoted as saying "I am only a disciple of Perón" (Opfell 1993: 59). Like Evita, Isabel became a public figure and recognizable face of the Peronist movement. She, too, became an important character for her husband's ideology and the Perón legacy.

Interestingly enough, although Isabel was less politically active and lacked inspiration to be in government, unlike Evita, she gained roles in government as Vice President and later as President. Isabel came to act as President through her husband's preferences. Her familial tie and name, not her political ability or character, is what brought her into power (Opfell 1993: 51). Juan Perón, after ideologically struggling with both the church and the military, was exiled from Argentina by the new military regime in 1955 (Opfell 1993: 54). He devised a plan, though, called "Operation Return" to regain the presidency (Opfell 1993: 57). Isabel was used as his campaigning pawn in Argentina. Although she was not as dynamic as Evita, when people heard the name Perón, "she was treated almost like a saint because the magic of Perón's name had not been dimmed" (Opfell 1993: 57). Isabel would travel the country to campaign on behalf of her exiled husband and his political movement, thus making her the new face of Peronism.

Then, in 1973, Juan became President again, and Isabel was named his Vice President. Many Argentines and Peronists were shocked by this decision to choose his

wife as Vice President when previously Eva had desired the same position but never received it (Opfell 1993: 59). People questioned whether Juan chose Isabel because she would show no resistance to the Peronist policies and ideology, or if there was no agreement within the party on who to choose; perhaps, both ideas are valid (Jensen 2008: 20). This situation also speaks to the fact that Juan may have thought of his wife as an easily manipulated person who would essentially be his political servant. Isabel responded to the criticisms of her political placement by stating her obligation to her husband and his wishes. By proclaiming her obedience to the Peronist movement, she sent a message to her country that she was dedicated to the political movement. While she may have been a woman in a historically male-dominated position, her compliance to her husband's ideology may have mattered more for Argentines than her gender did. Still, during her time as Vice President, Isabel again attempted to imitate Eva by trying to advance women's rights. Unfortunately, she lacked the charismatic nature and compelling character of Eva and was not successful (Opfell 1993: 59). As stated, Eva lacked the agency but had the ability; Isabel seemed to lack the ability while maintaining the agency.

By the end of the first year of Perón's return to the presidency, he fell ill and passed away (Opfell 1993: 60). Before his death, though, he chose his wife to be President while López Rega, a Peronist political advisor, would dictate her political moves (Opfell 1993: 60). The two years that Isabel acted as President were not successful for her or the country, and she became a puppet of a political movement. Despite Isabel's lack of achievements, she will always be known as the world's first female President and a dedicated Peronist politician. The fact that Argentina produced Eva Perón, a beloved worldwide figure and advocate for women, and Isabel Perón, the

first woman president, showed promise for the future of women in Argentina. Through Peronist policies, women were gaining access to government and no longer were solely confined to their homes. These women's leadership created an opportunity in Argentina for women to mobilize against government policies, create the world's first legislative gender quota, and later elect a female president based upon her abilities and political experience instead of her husband's choosing. The fact that two women were political leaders in Argentina early on was a radical and important piece of the puzzle of Argentina's representation and advancement of women in politics.

Madres de la Plaza de Mayo Movement

After Isabel Perón's government was overthrown by the military in 1976, the "Dirty War" in Argentina commenced. In brief, the military committed atrocities and human rights abuses against Argentine citizens that had different political ideologies. It has been named "one of the most flagrant and brutal military dictatorships in recent times" (Bouvard 1994: 1). Because of this regime's misuse of power and extreme violence, people would disappear and families would never hear from their loved ones again. Beginning in 1977, a group of mothers began to meet in secret, discussing ways to get their disappeared children back and oppose the military regime (Bouvard 1994: 2). As the group's numbers grew, mothers of the disappeared people mobilized together to protest the wrongdoings that were occurring in their country (Lewis 2001: 1). They would demonstrate their movement and their dedication to the return of the 15,000 disappeared Argentine citizens in the Plaza de Mayo, a spot near the presidential palace where Argentina declared its independence from Spain and various groups had previously fought for their rights (Bouvard 1994: 2). These women then

became known as *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* (henceforth referred to as Madres), and their demands well defined; they wanted their children to be returned safely to them, for the military rule to end, and for future children and mothers to not experience their suffering.

The Madres, in their attempts to fight for their children's return, simultaneously fought for the return of democracy. They opposed the military authoritarian government and advocated for one that would instead embody democratic values (Bouvard 1994: 2). Although many of the women lacked previous political backgrounds or even education, they were the only group to begin to oppose this government. Therefore, because of their dedication to the removal of the military regime, when Argentina did become a democracy again, the Madres played a part in helping to redefine the nation, both through this group and through working with political parties (Bouvard 1994: 15). One author on the Madres says that they "sought to transform the political system to reflect their definition of maternal values as concern for the well-being of all children, a concern expressed through health care, education, full employment, grass-roots participation in governance, and the international pursuit of peace" (Bouvard 1994: 15). They wanted all people to be equal before the law and to have a government that provided protection instead of abuse.

Most importantly for the argument presented here, the Madres utilized their femininity for political engagement. These women embodied political motherhood and proved that women could indeed create political change without reliance on men. Political motherhood is when women employ their motherly identities as a political mobilizer to attract other women toward a movement, make a statement, and be perceived as a legitimate force (Craske 1999:196). Thus, the Madres blatantly defied

the military's ideals of hierarchy, obedience, and violence by using peace, cooperation, and collective love in their visual and symbolic movement (Bouvard 1994: 1). These ideals reflected those of marianismo; the Madres did not disregard their traditional roles as mothers, but instead transformed them to suit their needs. The Madres "defined themselves as both mothers and revolutionaries" and "they saw no contradiction between these roles" (Bouvard 1994: 14). The previous Perón women motivated these mothers to achieve their goals through political activism. They had seen how Eva Perón used her femininity to gain a position of authority and advocate for female suffrage. The Madres de la Plaza de Mayo began to build upon that same social identity for women in Argentina (Radcliffe 1996: 158). The Madres played vital roles in ending the military dictatorship, shedding light on their wrongdoings, and increasing women's political involvement in Argentina at this time.

The identities the Madres created for mothers and politically involved women in Argentina would be reflected in their country's policies and the election of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Women would tap into their feminine identities to advocate for their rights, for instance, during the creation of the legislative gender quota. Additionally, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner is a politician who denied neither her womanhood nor her political drive. She even referenced the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in her presidential victory speech to pay homage to their spirit and activism (Barrionuevo 2007: A19). She was inspired to become involved in politics by these women's ability to merge femininity and political engagement. Instead of letting the restrictions of machismo or marianismo confine them, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo instead capitalized on the roles society and patriarchy provided for them (Zabaleta 2000: 33). Therefore, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo were essential to Argentina's

return to democracy and reminded Argentine citizens of the important role women can play in the public sphere.

How the Legislative Gender Quota Advanced Argentina

The legislative gender quota that Argentina adopted in 1991 demonstrated the nation's global leadership for the advancement of women. This quota was the first of its kind and created a wave of other similar quotas throughout Latin America and similarly developing countries. Without the installation of this gender quota, women like Cristina Fernández de Kirchner may not have had the opportunity to run for Congress or executive office. Gender quotas inspire gender equality beyond government by influencing social norms.

After the military dictatorship in Argentina ended in 1983, the country became, and has remained since, a representative democracy (Lewis 2001: 7). Democracy's core lies within equality, so this shift back to a representative and equal government was crucial for women's representation and gender equity. With the previous democracy in Argentina, Perón and his administration made strides to include women in government and represent their voices through female suffrage. To further bring about change for women, in 1991 Argentina introduced the "Ley de Cupos" or the legislative gender quota law, to its citizens (Peschard 2003: 20). This quota law was a historic one worldwide; Argentina implemented the first legislative gender quota (Krook 2009: 613). It also became the first country of many in Latin America to adopt any type of gender quota. This law mandated that 30% of legislative candidates had to be women (Peschard 2003: 20). While previously quotas had come in the forms of reserved seats and party quotas, the legislative quota was much different (Jalalzai 16

Beyond). This type of quota is passed by a national parliament as a change to electoral law. Legislative quotas are now most commonly seen in developing nations, especially in Latin American and in post-conflict societies, like Argentina post-military dictatorship (Krook 8). Yet again, Argentina seemed to be both a leader for women and a leader in Latin America.

Still, what ignited this change? How did Argentine society choose to become a pioneer in women's political status once again? Globally, the discussion on gender quota policies began in 1995 during the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing; at this conference, all of the 189 states present signed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that asked governments to give equal political access and participation to female citizens (Krook 2009: 3). Prior to this conference, though, the United Nations General Assembly also adopted the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) treaty in 1979 that emphasized that all women deserve equal political rights to their male counterparts (Craske 1999: 178). The CEDAW signing was the first major step that the United Nations took to ensure gender equality. It sparked many other conferences, conversations, and ideas, like the Beijing World Conference on Women.

The first instances of gender quotas worldwide appeared in the 1930s with reserved seats, or those that mandated "a minimum number of female legislators" (Krook 2009: 7). Nations utilized and adopted reserved seat gender quotas from the 1930s into the 1970s. Still, very few quotas were enacted worldwide until the 1970s. Party quotas, or those which required that a certain number of women compose a percentage of parties' electoral slate, then became popular in the 1970s (Krook 2009:

7). Finally, the third type of quotas, legislative quotas, came about after Argentina's creation and adoption in 1991.

Therefore, since the 1930s, women from around the world sought a means of becoming more politically involved and equal to men; female mobilization was an essential part of the adoption of gender quotas in every nation that chose to establish one (Krook 2009: 9). Other times, gender quotas were adopted to give political parties a competitive edge for strategic purposes (Krook 2009: 9). Additionally, gender quotas were established in nations whose political ideals matched with "notions of equality and representation" (Krook 2009: 10). Therefore, democratic countries, like Argentina after 1983, rather than non-democracies, like Argentina during its military dictatorship, were more likely enact quotas due to its government's political and moral values. In order for gender quotas to be engaging, effective, and representative for women, democracy should be in place first. Not only do gender quotas reflect democratic ideals, but also, and more importantly, they demonstrate a nation's commitment to the advancement and inclusion of women. One author states, "By adopting quotas, governments hope to send signals to their citizens that gender equality is important" (Schwindt-Bayer 2010: 30). Argentina, as explained, was a democracy with a history of dedication to women, which caused the quota to have been so successful and revered.

Argentine political parties, specifically the Judicialist party, had a history with gender quotas (Krook 2009: 162). The Judicialist Party, or the Peronist party, had a thirty percent quota law during Juan Perón's presidency (Krook 2009: 163). While this may have been Perón's attempt to appeal to more women, it began to set the stage for the eventual adoption of Argentina's legislative quota. In the 1980's, Argentine

women participated heavily in politics and yet they did not influence or have a hand in policy creation. As mentioned, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo movement became well known throughout Argentina; they sought equality and a political voice in their nation. Additionally, the Sindicato de Amas de Casa (SACRO) began in 1983 as the first working class women's organization since Perón (Fisher 2000: 322). These mobilized women, among many others, became crucial components in setting the political stage in Argentina during its transition to democracy (Krook 2009: 165). Thus, in order for Argentina to fully be a representative democracy, women needed to be more welcomed, included, and equal in politics. As David Watson and Amy Moreland state in their article "Perceptions of Corruption and the Dynamics of Women's Representation," "Quotas are expected to affect women's engagement with the political system and women's attitudes toward women in government" (Moreland 2014: 395). If these groups of passionate, empowered women already existed in Argentina and there had been a history of female leadership in Eva and Isabel, it seemed that there then needed to be a more legitimized, legal way of politically including women. Therefore, after attending another United Nations sponsored conference in Kenya in 1985, signing the Convention on the Elimination of the Discrimination against Women, and conversing with other Latin American countries about similar women's issues, the concept of legislative gender quotas was formed first the first time (Lubertino 2003: 33). Argentina began a global movement of legislative gender quotas.

Since its implementation, the quota law has been successful. In 1994, the national constitution of Argentina was amended to include Articles that addressed gender equality and equal opportunity for women and men (Lubertino 2003: 35).

Within the first four years of its creation, the amount of women in the Chamber of Deputies jumped from five percent to twenty-seven percent, which indicates that the gender quota was performing well (Franceschet 2008: 405). In 2001 the law was also mandated for the Senate, and similarly, the percentage of women's presence increased within just a few years (Franceschet, 2008: 405). Not only has the *Ley de Cupos* placed more women in government, it has also engaged and represented more women than ever before in Argentina's history (Franceschet 2013: 105). One study on the quota system in Latin America notes, "by 2002, Argentina... had 30.7 percent women representatives in the Chamber of Deputies and 35.2 per cent in the Senate, that is Argentina's Quota Law has already been successful" (Peschard 2003: 23). The quota law was thus a positive force in placing women in government positions.

Susan Franceschet and Jennifer M. Piscopo have studied the quota law in Argentina closely and believe that the law and the amount of women in government has changed the legislative agenda and topics discussed, but has not necessarily always changed the outcomes of these conversations (Franceschet 2008: 406). Nevertheless, important bills that have been passed in the female favor include the Labor Union Quota, the Sexual Health Law, and the Surgical Contraception Law (Franceschet 2008: 415). All three bills signify Argentina's commitment to the proper treatment and inclusion of women. Moreover, since 1991, all but two Argentine provinces have come to adopt their own version of quota laws, which thus gives women even more opportunities to become politically involved (Franceschet 2013: 91). The quota law has been an important step in placing women in political positions in Argentina and beginning important conversations to represent women's interests.

The *Ley de Cupos* was another instance of Argentina's global leadership for its growing dedication for women and women's representation. From the successful education of Argentine women in the 19th century, to Eva Perón's campaigns for female suffrage, and from Isabel Perón's term as the first worldwide female president to the creation of the legislative gender quota, Argentina set the stage for a larger female presence and representation to come. These women and events gave Cristina Fernández de Kirchner the political opportunity to run for president of Argentina and be elected for two consecutive terms. If such strong females had not existed before her in Argentina, Kirchner may not have been as inspired or even thought about becoming politically involved. The next section of this chapter will thus exam Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's political life and how she was able to further define the role of women in government in Argentina.

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner

In his book, *Women as National Leaders*, Michael A. Genovese says that society's definitions, expectations, and perspectives on gender shape women's strategies to gain political office (Genovese 1993: 7). Therefore, the way that Argentine society perceived Cristina Fernández de Kirchner during her election campaign in 2007 was based upon their preconceived notions of gender, women in politics, and previous Argentine political females. The history of Argentina in relation to women matters for how Fernández de Kirchner was and is still viewed today. Eva and Isabel Perón created a precedent of Argentine females, which allowed women to maintain their womanly characteristics and roles while still being civically active. The legislative gender quota also gave women who aspired to be politically involved a

greater chance to do so. Therefore, the culmination of all that created a welcoming environment for women in politics. It was an environment that Fernández felt comfortable enough in to get a college education, become politically active, stand up against human rights abuses, gain the necessary experience and intellect to run for the executive office, and get elected for two consecutive terms as president.

How Argentina Set the Stage for Fernández

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was raised in the La Plata region of Argentina (Reel 2007: A.9). She attended college in this area, as well, where she met her future husband, Nestor Kirchner (Jalalzai 2013: 217). Nestor and Cristina were involved with the Peronist Youth Movement together in college (Van Dembroucke 2014: 1057). The two were strong advocates against the military dictatorship's use of undemocratic power (Jalalzai 2013: 217). Kirchner also personally campaigned for those whose human rights were violated or abused during the dictatorship, reflecting the mentality of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo movement (Reel 2007: A.9). She believed in holding the government accountable for their misdoings and abuses. Such beliefs and care for the less fortunate are reflected in her political career and added to her credibility. She was not a woman who wanted to be politically involved for the fame, but rather to advocate for those without a voice. Her early political motivations positively affected her integrity.

Fernández went on to receive her law degree from the University of La Plata in 1979 with hopes of using it to address human rights grievances; she then also became a member of the Judicialist party (Jalalzai 2013: 217). After she and Nestor were married, they moved to Santa Cruz, where they both participated in politics, with

she as a senator with her own law firm and he as the governor (Reel 2007: A.9). The couple was nicknamed the “penguins” because of their political start in the colder region of Patagonia (Barrionuevo 2007: A19). Fernández and her husband also had two children, Máximo and Florencia (Van Dembroucke 204: 1058). Fernández was a mother and a strong political woman in Argentina, which represents her commitment to both womanhood and personal political goals.

Perhaps Fernández would never have been elected as a senator if not for the legislative quota and the Perón women’s early political engagement. She began her political career shortly after the installation of the quota law, which demonstrates the importance of the quota in giving opportunities to powerful, capable women. As a senator, some would describe Fernández as a “fiery and often combative orator” who would challenge the president, Carlos Menem, to uphold a more transparent government (Reel 2007: A.9). She also had strong feelings about economic independence of Argentina and defending the poor (Reel 2007: A.9). Therefore, Fernández was a personally motivated and politically strong woman. She had begun to defy the marianismo stereotypes of soft, timid women in Argentina. To say the least, Fernández had great political ambition and drive, which supported the significance of the impact of the legislative gender quota.

In 2003, Nestor Kirchner was elected President of Argentina just as his wife was elected for her third term as senator, the first of which she would be representing the prominent province of Buenos Aires (Reel 2007: A.9). Many believe that Fernández was a necessary part of her husband’s election. Some even said that she was more popular than Nestor (Sax 2004: 86). They frequently compared her to their beloved Eva Perón, who continues to be thought of fondly in Argentina (Mohiuddin

2008: 258). One journalist even claimed Fernández was “a boon to her husband’s presidential campaign” (Mohiuddin 2008: 258). Without Cristina, it seems that Nestor Kirchner would not have been as popular during his campaign and presidency, a theory that reflects that of Eva and Juan Perón’s time and popularity in the Casa Rosada.

During this time, Fernández was wearing two hats as senator and First Lady. Not only was she officially placed in these two positions, but she was also an advisor to her husband. One journalist of the time said “The first lady is consulted regularly on policy matters, contributes to International Monetary Fund negotiations, chairs the Senate’s Constitutional Affairs Committee and sits on the Judiciary Committee” (Sax 2004: 87). She was regularly consulted for important decisions; her influence as senator, first lady, and a political advisor exceeded expectations (“Profile: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner” 2013). Therefore, during this time, Fernández built a reputation as an intelligent and successful political leader (Bauer 2011: 112). Her senatorial duties and time as First Lady in Argentina gave her great responsibility and a chance to improve her political career. This four-year term of her husband’s presidency, then, offered Cristina presidential, diplomatic, and decision-making practice.

Cristina and Nestor shared Peronist ideals and Judicialist party labels. The roots of the Judicialist party trace back to Perón’s government and his populist style. This party ideology focuses on the promotion of “a populist nationalism built around a strong central government” (Sax 2004: 86). They believed in economic development and independence coupled with lower inflation (Jalalzai 2013: 217). In fact, some even took to calling the couple’s version and implementation of the ideology

“kirchnerismo” (“The Palindrome of Kirchnerismo” 2014). They had created their own brand of the Judicialist party by committing themselves to the poor and creating modern economic public policies to benefit the less fortunate.

Before Nestor Kirchner entered office, Argentina experienced economic turmoil. The 2001 economic crisis led Argentina to having the largest sovereign debt in history (Mohiuddin 2008: 256). Luckily, Nestor’s presidential term was marked by economic growth by means of steering clear of free-market policies that had been enacted in the decade prior (Reel A.9). He chose to remedy this recession through Judicialist economic policies and cancelling the debt Argentina had to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Mohiuddin 2008: 256). Nestor and Cristina were both publicly against big business, the IMF, and the Washington Consensus policies (Mohiuddin 2008: 256). The two, though, as she had stated in an interview, were not against capitalism; rather, they wanted capitalists to assume their own social responsibilities so economic crises would not occur in the future (Mohiuddin 2008: 256). Overall, Nestor Kirchner’s presidential term was marked by economic success and growth, which added to the Kirchners’ popularity and their brand of Kirchnerismo. Nestor left office with a sixty percent approval rating (Mohiuddin 2008: 256). Nestor Kirchner’s presidency’s positive impacts would later influence his wife’s future campaign, presidency, and representation.

Path to the Casa Rosada

Toward the end of her husband’s time in executive office, Fernández began to announce her plans to run for president in the upcoming 2007 presidential election. Fernández’s representation and political achievements before her presidency

contributed to her election success. Such influential factors were her husband, her comparison to Eva Perón, and her own political experience. Fernández's campaign centered about maximizing her husband's successful policies as president. As will later be discussed, she was not positioning herself to be a revolutionary feminist like Michelle Bachelet, president of Chile. While she never explicitly promoted women or fought for women's rights in Argentina, she still became a leader for women and symbol of Argentina's progress for women. Further, many of times women encounter barriers to power from political parties, gender stereotypes, and a lack of opportunity for education or experience. Fernández was able to utilize her political opportunities and forgo the barriers to achieve the position as Argentina's first elected female president.

Fernández's success in becoming president can be attributed to her husband's previous presidential position and popularity. Certainly if Nestor had left his presidency with a less than favorable approval rating, Cristina would have had a difficult time during the campaign. Nevertheless, both the Kirchners were well liked by the Argentine public throughout and at the end of Nestor's presidency. Scholars on female political leaders have identified familial political ties as a means of women obtaining executive power. Isabel Perón's presidency demonstrates this theory; she did not have the political power or means herself to be elected president of Argentina and yet acquired it after the death of her husband (Jensen 2008: 20). Many other widows, like Isabel, without political experience or leadership became presidents because their husbands or family members provided them with the opportunities to do so (Jensen 2008: 20). Jane S. Jensen also notes in her book *Women Political Leaders: Breaking the Highest Glass Ceiling*, that many of times these transitions occurred in developing

democracies because the election or selection process was not yet fully established (Jensen 2008: 36). In Latin America, women's identities have been linked to their male relatives for centuries (Jalalzai 2013: 98). While Nestor Kirchner's death did not prompt Fernández to achieve the presidency, in a more modern sense of the theory, his presidential experience was a factor that helped her to obtain the most masculinized of the governmental positions.

Fernández also benefitted from her comparison to Eva Perón. Yasmeen Mohiuddin, author of "Cristina Fernández and Nestor Kirchner: Latin America's first couple" says "[Cristina's] gender was never much of an issue, either because of her prominence or because Argentina has been enamored of female leaders in the past" (Mohiuddin 2008: 255). Here Mohiuddin refers to Eva Perón, who even today remains one of the most admired figures in Argentine history. She was known as a voice of the poor and a hero for women in Argentina and beyond. Eva Perón was "a symbol of the regime's concern for the poor and unfortunate" and was "a close and valued advisor, as well as a capable organizer" (Lewis 2001: 109). Similarly, Fernández concerned herself with those whose human rights abuses were violated, and she played an important advising role to her husband during his presidency. Additionally, Kim Fridkin Kahn, in her book *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman: How Stereotypes Influence the Conduct and Consequences of Political Campaigns* closely studies what helps and hurts females' campaign strategies. She says that in order for women to gain approval from voters, they should "unintentionally reinforce stereotypes by choosing to emphasize personality traits and policy priorities that are consistent with voters' stereotypical views of women" (Kahn 1996: 11). Fernández did so by reflecting Eva's feminine looks and support of her husband. During public

campaign rallies she would even put her hands to her heart, a pose made famous by Evita (Carroll 2007). This positive comparison between the two women demonstrated Argentina's acceptance of strong, political women.

It was easy for Argentines to see the connections between the two women due to Evita's legacy. This comparison with Eva worked in Fernández's favor during her presidential campaign because of the positive connotation associated with Eva. Both women demonstrate that Argentina is not a country that can survive on male power alone. Women are a strong, recognizable force in Argentina, and have changed the face of the nation and the world. Fernández's life and election reinforced Argentina's commitment to women in power. Without the brave women that came before her, Fernández would not have had the chance to receive an education, vote, or join politics.

Fernández also chose to express her femininity and womanhood as Evita had done. Eva never told women to surrender their feminine ideals (Carlson 1988: 196). Fernández, in the same vein, is always one to be criticized and seen by the public as a woman who enjoys clothing and her womanhood. Fernández's biographer states in her defense "others have no right to expect her to surrender her femininity just because it doesn't conform to political stereotypes" (Reel 2007: A.9). While her looks and opinion on clothing may feed into gender stereotypes of femininity, it also draws a further comparison between her and Eva. The media frequently comment on female politicians' style and attribute it to a supposed lack of political competence (Van Dembroucke 2014: 1063). Traditional gender stereotypes demonstrate women being more interested in their fashion, entertainment, or gossip rather than that which is in the man's world, such as politics, economics, and war. Ester Del Campo, author of

Women and Politics in Latin America: Perspectives and Limits of the Institutional Aspects of Women's Political Representation states “Those who exercise governmental or regional positions tend to give less authority to women than to men... because other leaders are less likely to recognize the authority of a woman” (del Campo 2005: 1718). Politics in Latin America is frequently seen as a man's world, which leads to ignorance of women's voices in politics and recognition of their fashion instead (Craske 1999: 3). Fortunately for Fernández, her authority in the political sphere was recognized early on. She certainly is a woman that enjoys wearing designer clothes but also a woman who has an extensive political history. Her attention to fashion should not have diminished her experience and political competence. Instead, her clothing and style choice signified that she was in fact a woman and proud of her personal femininity, even in the midst of the male-dominated political world. Moreover, for the Argentine public, Fernández's image and portrayal resembled that of Evita and her femininity. Eva represented hope and change for all people in Argentina, not just women. By creating parallels between the two women, Fernández's election campaign was strengthened.

Moreover, Fernández's election to the presidency rests upon what Rita Mae Kelly, Mary Boutilier, and Mary Lewis identify as the four stages of socialization of women attaining political leadership. These stages include developing a modern perspective of women at a young age, having personal control over her life, making politics an important facet of her life, and accomplishing political goals at critical periods in her life (Hodson 1997: 36). Throughout her life, Fernández was able to achieve all four steps. First, she was influenced by Eva Perón's legacy at a young age to begin to see women as necessary constituents in politics. Moreover, she attended

college and received a law degree, all while protesting against the military government's human rights abuses; these instances demonstrate the control that she had over her the direction of life and her opinions early on. One man that voted for her even said that he believed that she would work for all the people in Argentina based upon her fight against human rights abuses (Reel 2007: A.9). Additionally, Fernández used her law degree to involve herself in politics and obtain positions in the upper and lower houses of Congress. Finally, both Fernández's successes and those of her husband allowed her to later achieve the highest form of political leadership in Argentina. Fernández's gender was not a great barrier to attaining political successes because she was recognized early on as a knowledgeable, respected woman.

How a country's citizens generally feel about and define women can greatly affect their election to political leadership. Thus, the Argentine public was also a factor that influenced Fernández's election to the presidency. As noted, the female figures in the past and Argentina's legislative gender quota created a culture of accepting women into governmental positions. When a country has a history of many eligible and capable women in government positions, there are greater odds of a woman being president there (Jalalzai 2013: 16). So, the fact that a legislative gender quota was enacted and was successful at placing women in government allowed for more of a chance for a woman to be elected as president. Additionally, the longer that women have had access to politics and voting, the more likely that women are to attain high political positions (Jalalzai 2013: 29). Both women's suffrage and gender quotas created this tolerant atmosphere early on in Argentina's democratic history. Eva Perón's character in the 1940s during the fight for suffrage broke the boundary of strong Argentine women in the man-centered, political sphere. While she still fed into

marianismo stereotypes, she began to change Argentines' view of women in government. Eva showed Argentina's citizens that regardless of gender, a passionate person with the right opportunities, government, and leaders can achieve political success.

Also important to note is that the position of executive office is the most masculinized political position in a democracy. Presidents are normally seen as quick decision makers, strong, and natural born leaders, which are all masculinized gender associations (Jalalzai 2013: 27). Based on society's and Latin America's machismo and marianismo division, imagining a woman or feminine person in this role does not seem congruent. Additionally, in executive office, certain positions have been masculinized or feminized. For instance, Cabinet positions involving defense, foreign policy, or economics are normally defined as masculine roles (Jalalzai 2013: 30). However, Fernández, prior to becoming president, had practice with foreign policy and economic issues while Nestor was in power. She was able to find her own advising role within these sectors without having to define herself as masculine. Fernández created her own opportunities by heavily involving herself with more masculinized areas of politics during her husband's presidency. Fernández was more than the First Lady of Argentina; she was her husband's political partner, a mother, a nationally recognized Senator, a human rights activist, and the most important woman in Argentina.

Therefore, based upon Fernández's experience and Argentina's history, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's election campaign for the presidency in 2007 was a success. During campaigning, though, Fernández did not need to spend time making herself known to the public. Argentines already knew her name, face, and political

experience, so she easily and quickly remained far ahead of other candidates running for election (Jalalzai 2013: 217). Many would describe her election campaign as minimal or vague (Mohiuddin 256). She did not stray from her husband's policies and opinions; instead she reinforced the same Judicialist ideals about the government, the economy, and the poor (Jalalzai 2013: 217). In an interview, she credited her husband with a fantastic term as president, and said that she hoped to continue his economic policies while also focusing on improved education and public health ("Interview: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner" 2007). If she had strayed from her husband's views, she may have not been elected. As stated, Nestor left office with a high approval rating, so there would not be a need to change the policies that made him so popular.

Furthermore, Kim Fridkin Kahn's book *The Political Consequences of Being a Woman: How Stereotypes Influence the Conduct and Consequences of Political Campaigns* says that how society preconceives women's strengths and weaknesses can alter the manner in which someone chooses to campaign herself (Kahn 1996: 1). Latin American society can perceive womanhood as a weakness due to its stereotypical association with timidity and emotionality. Fernández, unlike other Latin American female politicians, was not known to verbally remind others of her womanhood. Of course how she chose to physically represent herself was feminine. However, unlike Michelle Bachelet, as will be later discussed, Fernández never explicitly represented women or women's issues. Her campaign strategy was basically maintaining her husband's policies and maximizing those.

When Fernández announced her run for the presidency, many Argentines saw it as a ploy to keep the Kirchners in charge of the country for the next sixteen years by swapping out roles each presidential term (Barrionuevo 2007: A.19). The media

presented Kirchner as a puppet of her husband rather than a politically experienced and motivated woman (Van Dembroucke 2014: 1059). The media would continually emphasize Fernández's dependence on her husband, rather than demonstrating her previous nationally held positions and political passion. Fernández had been a politically inspired and driven person since she attended college. In fact, in an interview during her campaign, she clarified that her husband had only wanted to be president for one term, which, she knew, was hard for most Argentines and people to understand ("Interview: Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner" 2007). Certainly having her husband as a popular president before her election allowed her more success than she would have had without him. During his presidency she had the opportunity to make herself known, liked, and perceived as a legitimate choice for the next election. This is not to say that a woman in Argentina cannot achieve the presidency or executive power without the help of her husband; rather, for Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's success in Argentina, her husband's presidency gave her a four year long campaigning opportunity to practice utilizing and understanding executive power. This chance is one that few people in the world can say that they have had; Fernández was provided with an insider's perspective and advisory voice for the president before she was elected.

So, in December of 2007, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was elected as the President of Argentina, making her the first elected Argentine female president and the second elected female president in South America. With the help of Argentina's past prominent females, like Eva and Isabel Perón, and the institution of a legislative quota in 1991, the political atmosphere in Argentina toward women was one of acceptance compared to other more conservative Latin American countries. Fernández was able to

utilize her husband's successful presidency as an opportunity to learn about executive office. Fernández was able to establish her own brand and personality, while benefiting from the comparison to Evita. Fernández may have been the former president's wife, but once she was elected president, she became more than that and still paid honor to his successes. Fernández legitimized women in Argentina that day in December. While she was never an outspoken advocate for women's rights and women, she, like Eva, created a new opportunity for women. Fernández created a hope for women that the presidency and executive power can be obtained with a commitment to a modern view of women, dedication to politics, and perseverance toward political achievement. For the past century, Argentina has acted as a regional leader for women in Latin America, and now Cristina Fernández de Kirchner is a part of that story.

Chapter 3

How Conservative, Catholic Chile Elected a Female President

Introduction

While Argentina and Chile are culturally similar and geographically close, Chile's history varies from its neighbor because, comparably, it has historically lacked women's advancement and promotion, especially in the political realm. While Argentina has acted as a leader for women in the Latin American region, Chile, a historically conservative country has a large gender gap. In fact, the World Economic Forum is a study that examines a country's women's economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Chile was ranked 91st in 2013 on the study (Bodzin 2013). It also performed the worst in the political empowerment category ("Chile"). Compared to other similarly developed Latin American countries, Argentina ranked 34th, Brazil ranked 62nd, and Colombia ranked 35th that year ("World Economic Forum Chile" 2013). This study signals a large gender gap and a lack of female inclusion in government, which stems from Chile's strong Catholic traditions and the lingering effects of the Pinochet dictatorship. Augusto's Pinochet's reign, which was one of the last dictatorships to end in Latin America, overtly excluded women from politics and encouraged traditional gender roles instead. Current president of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, has represented a change for Chile, though. She is a role model for females and female politicians in Latin America. Previously a doctor and the first female Minister of Defense in Latin America, Bachelet fights for women's rights and improved status.

She served as the first female President of Chile from 2006 to 2010 and was reelected to the position in March 2014. Between her two terms as president, Bachelet acted as the first leader of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (Jalalzai 2010: 217). Her personal accomplishments have allowed Chile, despite its traditionally conservative past and previous oppression of women, to start to become a Latin American leader for women.

Throughout her career, Michelle Bachelet has been a female leader committed to other women and their wellbeing. She has dedicated many of her efforts as president to ensuring improved gender equality. While Chile is one of the most conservative countries in Latin America for women, her perspective has begun to make the country seem less inattentive to their needs. As stated, in 2013 Chile sat in the 91st spot on the World Economic Forum's gender gap report; however, in 2014, Chile moved up to the 66th position, which is the year she was reelected as president. Additionally, in 2010, when Michelle Bachelet finished her first term as president, Chile was ranked 48th out of 134 countries, while it began in the 78th spot when she was first elected ("Chile" 2010). Therefore, Bachelet has been and is fighting for women's rights and gender equality in her country and beyond. Despite their lack of political inclusion, Chilean women before her fought for higher education, suffrage, the end to Salvador Allende's presidency, and the fall of Pinochet's military dictatorship. Chilean females in the past have found informal methods of voicing their concerns. However, somewhere between the return to democracy and her election, women seemed to be less politically charged and active, perhaps due to women's history of explicit political exclusion. Bachelet has reignited that flame in Chile and for Chilean women. By using the stability of the La Concertación party, her feminist

drive, and her own political experiences, Michelle Bachelet was elected president of Chile, and this election symbolized a change for Chilean women and beyond.

A Brief History of Chile's Patriarchal Past

Like most other countries in Latin America, Chile was settled and colonized by Spaniards who imposed their Spanish language, Catholic religion, and European culture on the area and its people. Over time, those imposed values became norms in Chile. Even today the nation remains guided by its Catholic heritage, most notably in its attitude toward women and women's rights. Despite these traditional mindsets, women in Chile have mobilized themselves at significant points throughout history to gain higher education, the right to vote, and a government to advocate on their behalf. Later in the twentieth century, though, both the Salvador Allende and Augusto Pinochet regimes either ignored or actively excluded women from government. The two leaders, especially Pinochet, proclaimed a traditionalist mindset toward gender. After the return of democracy and the end to Pinochet's long reign, women have not been as politically active as compared to other Latin American countries. The Catholic Church, a strong moral force in Chile, fuels this exclusion, as well, by believing that women's primary job is as a mother. Thus, this section will demonstrate that the negative influences of women's active exclusion during the Allende and Pinochet dictatorships coupled with the Church's moral authority over Chilean life have all resulted in women being separated and excluded from politics since the return to democracy.

From Colonization to Women's Suffrage

Since the onset of Chile's independence from Spain, women have been viewed as apolitical beings. The idealized image of a woman, inspired by Catholic beliefs, was as the house-maker and mother (Craske 1999: 14). A woman's life was a private one and did not involve the man's world of politics. Therefore, the Civil Code, which governed daily life in Chile since its establishment, reflected these Catholic values. The 1855 Civil Code essentially made women completely subordinate to their husbands; women had no control over their bodies, their possessions, or even their children (Franceschet 2005: 38). Chile was undoubtedly a patriarchal society. This fact is important to the argument of this chapter; Chile's patriarchal beginnings resonated beyond the Spanish Civil Code. Men and women learned for years that women were their subordinates and that women's primary role was as a mother, like the Virgin Mary (Chant 2003: 10). As will be noted, this patriarchy inspired male political leaders to create and sometimes manipulate specific areas where women could essentially practice their inferior roles while men remained in charge, such as mandatory workshops for women to learn how to cook and clean properly.

Despite these strong traditional roles, since the end of the nineteenth century, women challenged the patriarchal norms through mobilization and advocacy efforts. At the end of the nineteenth century, middle and upper class Chilean women began to demand a similar opportunity to men to receive higher education (Franceschet 2005: 41). Once other elite males supported the idea, in 1877, Chile became the first nation in Latin America to provide women with access to higher education (Franceschet 2005: 41). Women thought that this would be their first step toward political rights and inclusion. However, shortly thereafter, the Chilean constitution was amended to

specifically exclude women from voting (Franceschet 2005: 41). Nevertheless, this attempt at halting women's progress was not the end of their political activism. As women in the middle and upper classes became educated at universities, they began to form various groups and organizations. A prominent one created in 1915 was named *Círculo Lectura*; this group was composed of women who would get together to discuss intellectual issues and improve upon the culture of women in Chile (Lavrin 1995: 286). While this group did not achieve political suffrage, it did begin to demonstrate that women had the ability to self-mobilize. Therefore, the attainment of female higher education led to associations and groups that promoted women outside of the home thinking and conversing about important topics.

By taking part in higher education and such organizations, women were better equipped to mobilize themselves into politically inspired groups and communities in the early twentieth century (Franceschet 2005: 42). Women also began publishing newspapers like *Nosotras* and *La Voz Femenina* that told readers about what women were fighting for and against in Chile (Lavrin 289: 1995). Additionally, in the 1920s, two women's political parties were created named the Feminine Civic Party and the Feminine Democratic Party (Franceschet 2005: 42). Women were becoming both formally and informally organized. Moreover, democratization in Chile began in 1932 as the oligarchic state ended; the growing middle class, which resulted from the booming mining industry, challenged the land owning oligarchs to create a more equal form of government (Franceschet 2005: 20). Thus, with the creation of democracy and the progress women were making from their mobilization efforts, female suffrage was close at hand.

At this time, women had yet to attain full citizenship and the right to vote, despite their access to higher education and their various organizations. Chilean females continued to mobilize themselves and their communities in the 1930s to form the Chilean Women's Proemancipation Movement (Franceschet 2005: 43). This group fought for women's right to vote on the basis of the biological and cultural differences between men and women. They proclaimed that women would bring a moral voice of reason to politics. The premise of their call to action was "We want women to vote not because she is like man, but because she is different" (Franceschet 2005: 44). The first step toward suffrage occurred in 1934 when women won their right to vote in municipal elections. Essentially, this was a testing period to see how women would vote, and in the end, they tended to vote conservatively (Franceschet 2005: 44). With this information in mind, in 1948 women were given full suffrage (Franceschet 2005: 45). With the addition of women's votes, Chile became a more equal state. Around the world, attainment of full female suffrage has been a celebration of democracy and equality, as it was in Chile.

Unfortunately, though, after women attained suffrage, their organizations and political parties began to diminish. Latin Americans saw women as morally superior beings because of the concept of *marianismo* and Catholic teachings; thus, women's issues seemed to be "above politics" (Franceschet 2005: 46). Female and feminist political parties then began to disappear because of social pressures and gender stereotypes. Some authors on women in Chile call this time in the country's history as the "illusion of integration" or the "feminist silence" (Franceschet 2005: 47). If women were involved in politics, it was through male-created and male-dominated parties, which did not address women's needs and issues (Franceschet 2005: 47).

Instead, women became involved in other government-led initiatives to support women's motherhood, and essentially, their political exclusion. For instance, in 1947 a program called the Housewives Association was established to help wives prepare themselves to fulfill their household duties and interest them in supporting the Radical Party's government (Franceschet 2005: 48). The government developed other similar charitable social programs to support women in their traditional roles. These initiatives included women in politics just enough to draw them in to eventually vote for the party in power. Thus, although Chilean women received the right to vote, their political will to be fully included in politics afterward diminished because of traditional social norms.

Overall, the beginning of the twentieth century for Chilean women demonstrated promise and progress. Women acknowledged their differences from men and yet wanted to be equal before the law in spite of it. Chile was a Latin American leader in the late nineteenth century, as well, for granting women access to higher education before any other country in the region. This change provided certain women with the opportunity to venture outside of the traditional boundaries of motherhood and house making. As the century continued, patriarchal standards and social pressures disengaged women from their mobilized and politicized groups. Even with the addition of female suffrage, politics in Chile remained a man's world. While certain government programs were put in place to include women, these plans were instead attempts at gaining a vote instead of a voice. The programs also reinforced women's traditional place in society that had been established by the Catholic Church and the Spanish Civil Code. As with be discussed, two national leaders further weakened the progress that women made in Chile. Later, though, Michelle Bachelet's

election would reinstall that fire in Chilean women to fight to break the female stereotypes and patriarchal barriers.

The Effects of Salvador Allende's Reign

After women gained suffrage, women's movements for rights and fair treatment diminished. Even if women were politically involved between 1932 and 1970, they had supportive roles and were primarily seen as wives and mothers, thus reinforcing the traditional, subordinate responsibilities of women that Chileans had become accustomed to (Franceschet 2005: 22). Two presidents, Salvador Allende and Augusto Pinochet, also had deleterious effects on women during their respective terms. As will first be examined, socialist president Allende and his political party ignored women. He still referred to women as mothers and wives rather than simply equal Chilean citizens. His economic and political parties did not reflect that which most conservative Chilean men, and especially women, wanted. So, at the end of his regime, through movements like the March of the Empty Pots, many women used their femininity to rally against his party, the Unidad Popular (Franceschet 2005: 24). Once again, Chilean women utilized informal methods of mobilization to make their voices heard.

Salvador Allende was a socialist politician of the Unidad Popular party. This party, in its socialist and sexist mentality, viewed women as wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters, but certainly not as workers (Franceschet 2005: 51). Allende even said: "When I say 'woman,' I always think of the woman-mother... When I talk of the woman, I refer to her in the function in the nuclear family... the child is the prolongation of the woman who in essence is born to be a mother" (Chaney 1974:

269). While this view was not different than that of most other Chileans, the majority of women aligned themselves with the conservative party more than Allende's due to their religious values. These conservative political ideals were fostered in the Centros de Madres, which had been an ongoing program established years prior by Catholic Church-affiliated organizations (Franceschet 2005: 49). Here, Chilean women were taught stereotypically feminine life skills. Women also learned Catholic moral values at these organizations, which were in line with the conservative Christian Democratic Party's values. These community groups created spaces for a political dichotomy to develop amongst women: one that stood for the Unidad Popular and one that stood quite conservatively against it (Franceschet 2005: 50). Thus, the Centros de Madres and their conservatively Catholic origins, along with previous government sponsored programs, essentially socialized women to be against Allende and socialism.

Therefore, when Salvador Allende was elected as President of Chile in 1970, he did not win with a vast majority of votes from women (Power 217). He blamed the lack of women's votes and women in Unidad Popular on men's machista tendencies (Chaney 1974: 268). Still, he never proposed an exact plan as to how to fix such a patriarchal norm. Moreover, in Chile, male and female votes were reported separately. So when Allende was elected, the information showed was a clear lack of women that voted for him (Chaney 1974: 268). From the onset of Allende's term, there was great female opposition to him and his Marxist policies.

During his presidency, Allende did not do much to help advance women. His leftist party simply did not know how to address the "women question," especially since most women voted conservatively (Franceschet 2005: 51). The 1970s in Chile, though, was a period of feminist growth and a sexual revolution; more women were

becoming involved with local organizations and governments, while also exercising their freedom of expression through fashion and social changes (Acuña Moenne 2005: 152). Women started to make their way out of the confines of the private sphere into the public life. So, after two years of Allende essentially ignoring women during his presidency, he realized that he needed to address this large and important constituency, especially at a time when nationally and internationally women were joining the public sphere. Allende, then, finally appointed a woman to his cabinet (Franceschet 2005: 51). Moreover, he sent a bill to Congress asking for the creation of a family ministry to help women. However, he did nothing more than send the bill, and he never pushed for it to be in effect (Franceschet 2005: 51). When he left office, it still had yet to be fulfilled. Additionally, Allende decided that there should be a wing of Unidad Popular for women – a plan which merely turned out to be an attempt at gaining female voters rather than empowering them (Franceschet 2005: 51). These three acts were done in an effort to gain female support rather than support females. While women had made political progress prior to Allende's government, during his term, their development remained stagnant and ignored which further angered women in the opposition.

However, one instance that Allende did actually help women involved his health program and family planning methods. Allende and his government provided contraception to 40% of the female population from adolescence to 45 years old, as well as post-natal care, birth control, and other gynecological healthcare practices (Acuña Moenne 2005: 155). These new methods of family planning discouraged the need for unsafe abortions. The Chilean Catholic Church, though, was opposed to this policy. Later, Augusto Pinochet would change this in an attempt to rebuild the nation.

This instance, seems to be one of the few of Allende's policies both recognized and helped women in their feminine roles, rather than forcing them into their stereotypes.

Still, Allende frequently misused his executive power and implemented controversial economic policies, both of which were not beneficial for most Chileans, especially women. Under his administration, Chile was launched into financial tragedy because conservative forces attempted to create crises for Allende's economic policies by disrupting the transport of goods (Franceschet 2005: 52). This interference created food shortages as well as an increase of women at the Centros de Madres. In fact, women attended these centers more often because they were especially angered by the food shortages and needed a place for assistance (Franceschet 2005: 52). Because women were viewed as and frequently took on the role of the food providers for the family, they chose to mobilize themselves in outrage to Allende's wrongdoing. So, in December of 1971, over 5,000 anti-Allende women gathered for the "March of the Empty Pots" (Franceschet 2005: 53). This group protested fiercely against Allende, similarly to how Argentine women were opposed and used their motherhood to protest against the Dirty War during the Madres de la Plaza de la Mayo movement. Again, Chilean women mobilized themselves for a cause that they believed in and that affected their daily lives. While they may not have been behind the scenes like men plotting political plans and schemes, they were the face of the anti-Allende movement (Power 2002: 220). Women both in favor of and in opposition to Allende were being treated as social and political inferiors to men. While their mobilization was courageous and greatly helpful, women's primary duty in life remained as the familial reproducer and caretaker.

Because of Allende's failing policies and the increasing conservative mobilization against him, in 1973, there was a military coup d'état that transformed Chilean history (Klubock 2001: 494). The United States even supported the demise of Allende's government because they did not approve of his type of democracy; the US funneled millions of dollars into Allende's opponents' bank accounts to overtake his government ("Salvador Allende" 2003: 2015). The military believed that people were demanding that they stop the chaos that Allende created in Chile. Although men and women alike desired this change, little did they know, that Augusto Pinochet would create a nation far worse than that of Allende's, especially for women. Still, this section demonstrates that again in Chilean history women were able to participate in an important movement, but were simultaneously excluded from over-involvement because of their gender. They helped overthrow Allende's reign, but were socially constricted from being formally involved because of their traditional, feminine roles.

The Effects of Augusto Pinochet's Dictatorship

Augusto Pinochet, with the help of the military, the Chilean Right, and the United States' government, staged a coup d'état over Salvador Allende's government, which dramatically effected Chile's history and woman (Klubock 2001: 495). Throughout his reign, Pinochet ensured that his conservative ideals penetrated not only the government, but also people's daily lives. He rid his nation of other political parties and opposition through the use of fear, imprisonment, and concentration camps (Franceschet 2005: 63). He also encouraged the same, traditional perceptions of women. Under his dictatorship and through his policies, women were suppressed, subordinate to men, and excluded from politics. The Centros de Madres became even

more of places to suppress women and exclude them from politics. In spite of their suppression, though, women, rather than opposing political parties, were the strongest force in toppling Pinochet's regime. While this women's movement was fragmented amongst various ideologies, it was united in the decision that Augusto Pinochet should no longer be in power. These women helped re-politicize their gender and create a nation and a democracy in which later, Michelle Bachelet, would have the opportunity to run for president.

Pinochet's Chile was certainly a patriarchal one, and one in which he was the symbolic father figure, in control of all citizens (Acuña Moenne 2005: 155). As the author of "Embodying Memory: Women and the legacy of the military government in Chile" stated, "The objective of the military political project was not just to combat and conquer the Left, but also to transform Chilean Society" and to re-found the nation, "a process that entailed re-establishing the bases of the social pact" (Acuña Moenne 2005: 151). Pinochet's dictatorship sought to alter society to create loyal citizens that would produce loyal children. This concept diminished any sort of progress women made during Allende's presidency. Eventually, though, women became enraged at these policies and their effects, so they rallied together against Pinochet's government for a democracy that would treat them justly. Yet, because his reign was so long and severe, the effects of this explicit female exclusion and degradation lingered long after Chile's return to democracy.

Pinochet's seventeen-year regime sought to refuel a conservative nation. At the beginning of his government, not only did he close down Congress and forcibly remove some left wing political parties, but he also seemed to revert to the mindset of the Civil Code of 1855 in which women were entirely obedient to men (Franceschet

2005: 25). Pinochet even said that women should be seen as “bearers of the Fatherland” (Franceschet 2005: 25). He believed all Chileans should be loyal to “*la patria*,” the nation, and defend it at all costs, which entailed, then, women producing as many children as possible. Thus, contraception that was once available during Allende’s presidency was gone and banned (Acuña Moenne 2005: 155). Pinochet was in charge of a frightening patriarchy in which he was the sole male figure in charge. This severe patriarchy greatly disadvantaged women’s progress and began to deteriorate any social progress they had previously made with their gender roles.

While women were supposed to be loyal to Pinochet, they also were pushed to be apolitical and dependent upon their husbands (Franceschet 2005: 37). Women were discouraged from working outside of the home, unless it was in a Centro de Madres, which were used at this time to depoliticize women rather than assist them as they were originally intended to do (Franceschet 2005: 61). Most women were put into difficult situations because men were forced to abandon their families. With the high unemployment Chile suffered at this time and many men being sent to concentration camps or prison for believing in a different ideology than Pinochet’s, women were left to fend for themselves and their families (Franceschet 2005: 62). In fact, at the end of the 1980s, over 40% of poor families were led by women (Franceschet 2005: 62). Despite these conditions, women were not allowed to work outside of the home, which resulted in increased poverty and the development of squatter settlements (Franceschet 2005: 63). Patriarchy was overtly evident; although women became the familial leaders in the absence of their husbands, they were not able to enter the men’s private world to become formally employed. This effect would linger with Chilean women

even after the return to democracy since a norm of life only within the private sphere was forced upon them.

When women campaigned for Allende to leave office, they never realized the severe effects of the Pinochet dictatorship to come. However, in Pinochet's opinion, women pushed to have his military government come to power and instill these traditional values:

“Women wanted the fall of the Marxist government, which symbolized slavery for their children, but they also wanted a new order: [women] sought the protection of a strong and severe military authority, that would restore order and the moral public sphere in our society” (Franceschet 2005: 60).

While women certainly wanted a change after Allende, the change the Pinochet had created was restrictive and threatening. Nevertheless, later into Pinochet's reign, women began to fight against the suppressive dictatorship that abused human rights and tore apart families. Feminism and women's mobilization started to reemerge, perhaps due to the recently declared United Nations Decade for Women or because of the dislike women had for Pinochet's policies and ideologies (Franceschet 2005: 68). This disapproval began after the economic crisis in 1982. A group named Women for Life organized a 10,000 women protest in 1983 for those that opposed Pinochet and his policies (Franceschet 2005: 71). This movement was a monumental first step toward women beginning to informally advocate for the return of democracy, particularly a democracy that respected women and allowed them to progress in society.

Other women's organizations in active opposition to Pinochet began to emerge from the areas such as the Centros de Madres to soup kitchens around the country.

Thomas Miller Klubock says in his article *Writing the History of Women and Gender in Twentieth Century Chile*, “Feminists, women, and the urban poor, rather than industrial workers unions or the leftist parties seemed, to be the subjects of the social movements that sought to topple Pinochet” (Klubock 2001: 496). Once again in Chile’s history, women worked toward a cause that they were passionate about. These women and groups emerged from various classes, races, and cultures in Chile. While representing varied groups and ideologies, they shared a common vision of returning to democracy, especially one with a women’s rights agenda that treated females as full Chilean citizens (Franceschet 2005: 69). A particularly strong force against Pinochet and in favor of a democracy was the feminist movement that emerged in the early 1980s. This movement held similar beliefs to the organizations Women for Life and the *Movimiento Pro-Emancipación de Mujeres de Chile* (MEMCH ’83). Overall, the feminist movement demanded that the government “improve the material conditions of life for women through the provision of social services and access to jobs and education,” but they had no specific plan for reform (Franceschet 2005: 73). So, about five years later, the feminist movement created a comprehensive list of issues they wanted addressed called the “Women’s Demands of Democracy,” which asked for a state agency to support and empower women (Franceschet 2005: 73). Therefore, feminist women helped to begin a movement to recreate democracy.

As the 1980s progressed, more groups of both men and women emerged with the purpose of overthrowing Pinochet and reinstalling democracy. However, because Pinochet had banned most political parties, political movements instead housed themselves within social organizations, such as many women’s groups and workshops (Franceschet 2005: 74). This political party rise also divided women and their beliefs

more. The groups, like MEMCH '83 with their leftist origins sought a type of democracy that allowed freedom of expression, while other more conservative women wanted to address issues of motherhood rather than female political participation (Franceschet 2005: 74). The stratification of beliefs boiled down to an ongoing debate of whether women belonged in formal or informal politics. While for most of Chile's history women's lives in the private sphere forced them to be excluded from politics or informally involved, some women desired a change in the system and wanted to actively and formally participate in government. This controversy posed a problem for many feminists, because if women did not want to be formally included in politics, then their concerns, even if about their motherly and wifely duties, would never be heard (Franceschet 2005: 76). Chileans had been socialized to believe that a woman's place was in the home, so even when women wanted to speak up, their learned social roles restricted them from doing so. This division would manifest itself later during Chile's return to democracy.

In 1988, Chile held a plebiscite asking whether to keep Pinochet in power or not. Women against Pinochet tried to rally people together to vote "no" (Franceschet 2005: 78). Once the "No" vote won, women also began to realize that their informal use of power was ending, too. As candidate lists for new political leaders were being formed, few women were included (Franceschet 2005: 79). Despite the opposition group's success in ousting Pinochet, women remained house-makers and mothers rather than political beings. In the same vein, controversial women's issues, like divorce and abortion, were not placed on the potential political agenda because of their controversial nature in Chile (Franceschet 2005: 79). Although Chile was moving

toward a democracy and a government that would not commit human rights abuses, its perception of women remained traditional and stagnant.

Since the return to democracy, women have not been as politically active as in years past with their informal political leadership. While women are not explicitly excluded from politics any more, there are still lingering effects of the past dictatorship. Pinochet forced citizens to comply with his social standards, and if not they would face severe consequences. Chileans were socialized to see women's duties as motherly or wifely duties. Women were actively excluded from politics and the economy. Therefore, it seems natural that after the return to democracy that Chile's people would need some time before beginning to perceive gender and gender roles differently.

Chilean Women in Government Today

Chile is undoubtedly one of the most conservative Latin American states today (Jensen 2008: 59). This conservative nature, though, is a combination of the Catholic Church's influence and Augusto Pinochet's long-standing, conservative dictatorship. Although neither the Church nor Pinochet are in charge of Chile, both have had effects on women's perception and advancement today in Chile. While many other Latin American nations boast large numbers of women in government, have installed gender quotas, and welcome women in political parties, Chile does not live up to that same standard, even with the return to democracy. Moreover, the Catholic Church was a strong force against the Pinochet dictatorship and its abuses. So, when the state returned to democracy, the Church remained a highly respected moral authority both

in political and social life (Haas 2010: 85). This power would further separate women from politics and reinforced the ideology that women's primary duty was motherhood.

Chile's political progress for women is inconsistent. More women after the return to democracy in 1990 seem to have been appointed to governmental positions rather than elected (Franceschet 2005: 85). Thus, it can be concluded then that largest barrier for women entering politics in Chile is political parties (Franceschet 2005: 85). Women also only hold 16.2% of parties' leadership positions (Franceschet 2005: 3). Chilean women see the parties as displaying "machista" attitudes and an unfriendly environment for them (Franceschet 2005: 86). Many women work outside of the home while still performing their wifely duties at home, so attending a political party meeting or event on top of their other work takes away family time and time at home (Franceschet 2005: 90). Thus, having to sacrifice something to be politically involved does not sound appealing for women and gives politics a negative connotation for them. These feelings toward politics, though, are deep seeded. For generations women have be taught that women are different than men and do not belong in the man's world of politics because of such distinct behaviors (Franceschet 2005: 91). Most of the women who are of the age to participate in politics or government have lived through the repressive Pinochet dictatorship. They have been socialized to not become involved in politics because of their past overt exclusion from it.

Even when women are able to succeed in attaining a political post, they barely ever bring women's rights and issues to conversation because of the controversial nature of many issues in Chile (Franceschet 2005: 8). Politically involved women have been afraid to label themselves as feminists for fear of reminding people that they are women, the group of people that has been ostracized and subordinate to men for

decades of Chilean history. These uneasy feelings women in government have are confirmed by María Rozas, a former parliamentarian, as she talks about how men reacted to her:

“There is a tendency not to see you when you ask to speak, not to look at you when you do speak, therefore they don’t hear you and your proposals are not taken. In order that they do listen to you, women have to shout or swear, but that means adopting masculine behavior, and it should not be like that”

(Franceschet 2005: 91).

Some Chilean women like María Rozas want to be able to maintain their femininity and womanhood, and they feel that joining politics means giving part of this away. Women recognize that they do not have control over their bodies in regard to abortion or that the laws about violence against women do not protect women enough, but they have been socialized to not enter politics for fear of being accused of being too masculine and losing a piece of their feminine identity. Other women in Chile’s government, though, have more of a feminist nature, as will be discussed with Michelle Bachelet. They try to break the idea that politics is a machista, man’s world that women have to shape themselves accordingly for. Instead, women like Bachelet and other Chilean feminists, seek to recreate the image of the Chilean woman.

One organization that has tried to advocate on behalf of women in Chile is the *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*, or SERNAM. SERNAM was a ministry created in 1991 to “to ensure equality of rights and opportunities for women... respecting the nature and particularities of women that derive from natural differences between the sexes, including a proper profile for family relations” (Franceschet 2010: 160). However, SERNAM, like most other political institutions in Chile, took a conservative

path. It did not bring up issues like divorce or reproductive rights for fear of creating conflict in Chile. Instead, these issues were left to members of Congress to introduce as bills; yet as has been seen, female government members were afraid of such consequences, as well (Franceschet 2010: 161). SERNAM has the ability to shift Chilean citizens' thinking and Chile's political atmosphere, but its budget and priority in government have been too low (Haas 2010: 61).

Fortunately, once Michelle Bachelet entered the political scene in Chile, many things began to change for women. While Chile is and has been a modern, financially strong country, its attitude toward women is stuck in the nineteenth century. Bachelet's election and administration has helped the state make its way toward no longer lagging behind other Latin American countries in terms of women's advancement. Michelle Bachelet, like the many women and women's groups before her, sought a change that needed to be made in Chile. She openly advocates for women and fights for what she believes in. As dictated by the country's past with the fights for female suffrage, against Allende's policies, and against Pinochet's dictatorship, Chilean women have had the chance to be involved in politics through informal means. Bachelet, like many passionate Chilean women before her, seeks to shift the environment of her country; unlike these women, as president, she has been able to initiate the change in a formalized political manner.

Michelle Bachelet

A Chilean Trailblazer

While Chile's patriarchal past has excluded women from politics and the private sphere, Michelle Bachelet represents a change and a break from the machista past. With her feminist agenda and passion for socioeconomic transformation, Bachelet became the first elected female president in South America in 2006. Her family history, educational attainment, and previous government positions all demonstrate her unique character and determination to do what she believes to be best for Chileans and Chilean women. To most conservative Chileans who lived through the Pinochet dictatorship, Bachelet and her feminist spirit may seem strange and not reflective of their perception of women. However, by becoming president, Michelle Bachelet has been able to begin to break the stereotypical mold of Chilean women and create opportunities for social, economic, and political advancement.

Before being elected the first female Chilean president in 2006, Michelle Bachelet led a life that allowed her to be politically involved from a young age. Bachelet was born in 1951. At 19 years old, she joined the Socialist part of Chile (Ross 2006: 726). Then, in 1973 Pinochet held his coup d'état over Allende. Just a few years later during Pinochet's reign when Bachelet was 22 years old, her father was accused of being a detractor (Ross 2006: 726). He, Alberto Bachelet Martínez, was an air force general and opponent of Pinochet's (Jalalzai 2013: 97). Due to his beliefs, Alberto was imprisoned and tortured after the coup d'état. At the same time, Michelle Bachelet and her mother were imprisoned in Villa Grimaldi prison for a few weeks (Borzutsky 2010: 6). Bachelet says that she was "roughed up" at the prison (Ross 726). After the two weeks, she and her mother lived in exile from Pinochet in Germany until Bachelet finished medical school there (Ross 2006: 726). Once Pinochet was no longer in power in Chile, Bachelet and her mother returned to their

homeland (Jalalzai 2010: 219). Within a decade of her return to Chile, she began work as the sub-secretary of health due to medical experience (Jalalzai 2013: 219).

Bachelet started shifting her political career, though. She received a scholarship to attend the Inter-American Defense College in Washington D.C in 1997 (Ross 2006: 727). Because of her father's military past and the large civil injustice she and her family experienced, Bachelet said that she felt as though she "could serve as a bridge between the military and the civil society," and thus chose this military education ("A General's Daughter" 2002). Bachelet also decided upon this route to ensure that future Chileans would not undergo what she and her family did; she said, "I feel a pressing need to guarantee to future generations that what happened [with the dirty war] will never happen again." ("A General's Daughter" 2002). Due to this military education, Bachelet was first chosen as an aid to the Chilean Defense Minister in 1998 (Ross 2006: 727). Then, because of her health and medical experience, she was appointed as the Health Minister under the Lagos administration; this appointment can be attributed to Ricardo Lagos's quota system in which he appointed five female ministers in his eighteen person cabinet (Ross 2006: 727). The quota demonstrates the slow progress that Chile was beginning to make for female political leaders compared to other Latin American nations that created legislative gender quotas many years before. However, as the authors of *The Bachelet Government: Conflict and Consensus in Post-Pinochet Chile* state, "Michelle Bachelet was an unknown political quantity when Ricardo Lagos appointed her as his minister of health" (Borzutsky 2010: 6). Nevertheless, through this cabinet position, she was able to gain popularity, especially through her reform of the health care system that expanded coverage (Borzutsky 2010: 7). These changes focused primarily on healthcare for families ("Michelle Bachelet,

Former Executive Director”). She wanted to ensure that all families, regardless of financial status, would be able to access health care at primary care facilities. This health reform was important because prior, Chile’s health care system was exclusionary and disastrous for many. Her work with the healthcare plan helped many Argentines, and she began to be recognized for that.

Then, in 2002, Bachelet was positioned in a more prestigious post as the Defense Minister (Ross 2006: 727). In fact, she became the first female defense minister in Latin America, thus firmly establishing herself as a trailblazer (Jalalzai 2013: 89). As Silvia Borzutzky and Gregory B. Weeks state in their book about Bachelet’s presidency state:

“She was, in fact, more qualified for the position than many others who have served in it, since she had taken courses at the Inter-American Defense College in the United States, and later received a Master’s degree from the Chilean Army War College. She worked well with the armed forces and received the respect of the military leadership” (Borzutzky 2010: 7).

Bachelet made an especially important impression on women in the military and the police force during her time in this position. She created gender policies that provided these women with better conditions (“Michelle Bachelet, Former Executive Director”). Her vibrant personality coupled with her ambitious political goals gained her popularity among Chilean leaders and citizens, not only as a woman, but also as a government official. From the onset of her career in Chile’s executive branch, Bachelet was a pioneer. She defied stereotypes by gaining military experience and earning the “masculine” position of Defense Minister. These two ministerial positions would later assist her in her race to the presidency.

In addition to her unique political history, Michelle Bachelet is a unique type of woman in Chile. She is an agnostic, socialist, divorced single mother of three. Other women in Chile and other members of La Concertación, the leftist political party that has been in power since the return to democracy, were more conservative and religious than she was. Michelle Bachelet represents a woman that Chile had not been exposed to since the end of Pinochet's reign – a politicized woman fighting for other women's rights. As one author on Bachelet says, her “novelty rested on a combination of her biography and her gender” (Borzutsky 2006: 31). Despite her differences from other women and politicians, Bachelet has become a beloved woman and president in Chile and around the world, perhaps in part due to her uniqueness.

Bachelet's Campaign for the Presidency

Michelle Bachelet's campaign for the Chilean presidency showed its citizens a new brand of woman and politician. Her personal experiences, past political positions, and personality all assisted her in being chosen as her political party, La Concertación's, presidential candidate for the 2006 Chilean elections. During the campaign, Bachelet brought up tough issues for Chilean people and challenged previous traditional stereotypes through her personality and experience. This campaign and her election allowed Bachelet to be seen as a beacon of hope for women in Chile, Latin America, and around the world because she was the only elected female president who gained the position on her own merits and achievements, not through familial ties. As Bachelet herself stated:

“I was not reared for power, nor did I do anything to obtain it. I do not belong to the traditional elite. My last name is not one of the last names of the founders of Chile. I was educated in public schools and at the University of Chile... My candidacy surged spontaneously from the people. It did not grow out of a negotiation behind closed doors or from some party conclave. My government program reflects these origins.” (Siavelis 2010: 35).

Michelle Bachelet, throughout her campaign, has demonstrated her unique character and her qualifications for becoming Chile’s first female president, and the first South American female president elected on her own merits.

While the candidate selection can be attributed to Bachelet’s qualifications and experience, it is also due in part to La Concertación, the left-center political party that has been in power since Chile’s return to democracy in 1990. La Concertación’s main drive is to find consensus and work together to avoid conflict in the post-Pinochet era (Borzutsky 2010: 3). Such a peaceful mindset and the fact that they are not from the right wing, like Pinochet, have allowed them to have their candidate win the presidency each term for the years prior to Bachelet’s election. Undoubtedly by choosing a woman, La Concertación was choosing “a political outsider” since women were often uninvolved with government and politics (Borzutsky 2010: 31).

Nevertheless, La Concertación chose a woman to represent them in the race for the presidency, which defied their normal campaign tactics of continuity. However, this situation is precisely what La Concertación wanted and needed. They realized that their fourteen years of being in power of the presidency were stable. Still, they knew that in order to maintain power and excite Chilean citizens, there needed to be a slight change. By adding Michelle Bachelet to the mix, La Concertación was able to

campaign on a platform of both continuity and change (Borzutsky 2010: 34). Both factors were important to Bachelet's election because she needed a stable base for her socially transformative ideas and unique personality.

Bachelet frequently and explicitly talked about gender issues while campaigning, too (Borzutsky 2010: 162). She knew that other people could see she was a woman and she did not want to hide that or her feminist ideals. Bachelet believes in the installation of gender quotas, the need for women to have more control over their bodies, and a change in the violence against women laws. Despite SERNAM's mission, it was not an effective organization nor was it a highly vocal or aggressive institution. Bachelet chose to bring these ideas up during her campaign to demonstrate the changes she was willing to create for women who had been suppressed by traditionalist ideals since the onset of Chilean independence. Bachelet even said, "women say that my election represents a cultural break with the past – a past of sexism, of misogyny" (Rieff 2007). By blatantly attaching herself to gender issues, she served as a reminder of the strong women that had come before her in Chile to attain suffrage or the end of a military dictatorship. People recognized this change and appreciated it.

Moreover, Chile is a country without many women in government. In 2004, when Bachelet was campaigning, women only occupied 12.5% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and an astounding 4.1% of seats in the Senate (Franceschet 2005: 1). Therefore, it was important for Bachelet to run on a campaign of inspiring women to be more involved. She openly supported gender quotas, as well, which signified that she believed the amount of women in government was unacceptable. She is quoted as saying "I do not believe that all countries should have quotas, but in a

society of machismo where people believe that politics is a right or men, it is necessary to have quotas” (Schwindt-Bayer 2010: 61). No quota exists in Chile because not enough women have been mobilized around the topic, which is a result of their political exclusion (Franceschet 2009: 100). Farida Jalalzai, in her book *Shatter, Cracked or Firmly Intact? Women and the Executive Glass Ceiling Worldwide*, says that gender can help women ascend to political office, but it needs to be in the right time and place (Jalalzai 2013: 18). Bachelet was campaigning for her presidency at a time that the nation needed women’s mobilization and a change, and she represented both for Chilean citizens.

However, Bachelet’s election cannot only be attributed to the right timing and La Concertación’s support of a female candidate. Michelle Bachelet was a highly qualified individual who previously defied expectations for women in government by becoming Chile’s first female Health Minister and first female Defense Minister in Latin America. The Defense Minister position and experience was especially important for Bachelet’s campaign. By filling this “masculine” cabinet position, Bachelet gained respect and more votes from Chilean citizens (Jalalzai 2013: 89). In Latin America, military service is a relevant and significant contributing factor for how citizens vote (Jalalzai 2013: 91). The origin of the executive branch power is from a mix of the military and bureaucracy (Duerst-Lahti 1997: 18). Therefore, for Chileans, someone who has served in a military position seems more powerful and suitable for a political post in the executive branch than those who have not had the same experiences. Furthermore, Bachelet was an effective and well-liked minister because she “institutionalized the military’s subordination to civilian power, prioritized human rights, and stressed good relations with Chile’s neighbors – changes

that have all brought the military to a ‘ high point of intellectual development’ in its highest commands” (Ross 2006: 727). Because Bachelet defied stereotypes by being both the first female Latin American defense minister and proving to be valuable in that position, she was able to appeal to more Chilean people and earn respect from Latin Americans. Overall, Bachelet’s defense position helped to further define her political personality, intellectual ability, and growing popularity in Chile.

Bachelet’s familial history with the military dictatorship also gained her more votes because she became relatable to many people. She and her parents were victims of Pinochet’s reign, and yet she was able to show resilience and a desire to change Chile for the better. Because she was imprisoned and exiled, she had no positive affiliation with the military dictatorship. Still, she tried to change the military in Chile for the betterment of all citizen through her military education and military position. Bachelet’s experience with the military also represented the “furthest possible point away from old style politics” of Pinochet’s, (Langman 2005). This clear distinction between Pinochet and Bachelet was an effective tool in gaining the presidency, as well, because the lingering effects of the Pinochet government were still present in Chile; by embodying a definitive break with his policies, Chileans trusted Bachelet more.

Moreover, some political scientists see Bachelet’s election as the first significant event in the post-transition from the democracy (Rieff 2007). She represented a move toward a better form of democracy since women were more explicitly included than before. Democracy rests on the principles of equality and representation. So, Bachelet’s election and administration have implied that women also belong in politics, which thus creates a more representative democracy for all of

Chile. Bachelet was also able to relate to many people who experienced the negative effects of Pinochet's dictatorship. One political science professor from the Catholic University of Chile said, "She's nice. She laughs, she's smart. She looks like one of us in a way" (Ross 2006: 726). She did not fit the mold of most traditional presidents and political elites, which Chileans appreciated (Siavelis 2010: 31). Bachelet, to most voters, was a woman of the people and a woman who cared about Chile's future, while recognizing its dark past.

Moreover, all female presidents and prime ministers that had come before her on a global scale had familial ties to previous presidents or other governmental positions. While Bachelet's father was an air force general and she was from an elite family, her family was not what gave her the presidency. She earned the position based upon her own experiences and credentials. Bachelet was the first female president worldwide whose dependence on family connections seemed to not matter any more (Jalalzai 2013: 97). As Gretchen Bauer and Manon Tremblay state in their book about women in executive power, "Bachelet owes her success primarily to her own popularity and ability, not to other political elites" (Bauer 2011: 114). Bachelet has been proud to be the first popularly elected female President in South America (Siavelis 2010: 32). In Latin America, a region that has normally been dominated by machista politicians and political parties, Bachelet proved to be a fresh face and defied the traditional stereotype of female executives.

Bachelet's personal experiences, previous positions, and unique personality all led to her becoming La Concertación's presidential candidate and winner of 2006 elections. Her political party needed a change, so she, a self-declared feminist, agnostic single mother who experienced Pinochet's military imprisonment firsthand,

became that change. While her values are still in line with La Concertación's, she has brought her own personal convictions into the discussion, mostly centered about gender and women. She noted that she did not have a gender-based agenda, but rather is personally sensitive to women's issues and needs. Chile also needed Michelle Bachelet in 2006. It was a country that began to lag behind others in terms of women's advancement. Other Latin American states were creating gender quotas and changing traditional laws that oppressed women, while Chilean women's rights remained stagnant and ignored. Michelle Bachelet's campaign reminded women of the rights they deserved and served as inspiration for many in Latin America with hopes of attaining political achievement. Chile is still certainly a conservative Latin American country, but Michelle Bachelet's campaign and election to the presidency began to change this notion. Bachelet's steps she took during her presidency and even after helped improve women's status in Chile. Overall, Michelle Bachelet's campaign broke away from traditional gender constructions in Chile, which allowed her to be seen in a different light than other women in her country.

Chapter 4

A Comparison of the Southern Cone *Presidentas* Paths to Power

Through assuming the presidencies in Argentina and Chile, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Michelle Bachelet were both pioneers for Latin American women. The two leaders have defied institutional sexism through their historical elections and their terms in office. Still, both women came into power in two distinct countries and through different paths. Chile is a more conservative country, politically and religiously, and has excluded women from politics for the past century. Argentina, though, has a history of accepting women in government and even in the presidency. Internationally, Argentina is known as a progressive country for women because of Eva Perón and the creation of the legislative gender quota; Chile, on the other hand, is known worldwide for its strict laws on abortion and lack of strict laws on violence against women. Therefore, the two countries' political climates and attitudes toward women were important for Fernández and Bachelet's elections. The effects of the countries' perceptions of women would fuel how each of these two women chose to campaign for the presidential election and was perceived as she rose to power. Both women were successful in their campaigns for two terms, which demonstrates their ability to respond appropriately to their respective countries' views toward and histories of women. In this section, I will argue that Argentina and Chile's varied influences from the Catholic Church, early political female leaders, women's movements, and gender quotas mattered for the political and social environments that Fernández and Bachelet were exposed to during their elections for the presidency.

Argentine and Chilean Histories' Effects on Presidential Paths

Chile and Argentina, while sharing similar cultures and European influences, differ with their religious, political, and historical background toward women. As has been highlighted in the previous two chapters, Chile is a more religiously conservative country than Argentina. In both countries, the Church was closely tied to the state since colonization. Later, though, in the mid-twentieth century the Church responded differently to different political movements. As will be discussed, the Catholic Church has a stronger presence and authority in Chile than in Argentina. Thus, after the end of the Pinochet dictatorship, it already had a respected moral authority. In Argentina, though, the Catholic Church supported the oppressive military dictatorship in the mid twentieth century instead of speaking out against its wrongdoings. Thus, in Chile the Church's perspective on women became respected after the military dictatorship, whereas in Argentina, the Church was a supporter of the dictatorship and its moral authority was then diminished.

Chile and Argentina's political women and movements also created specific environments for Fernández and Bachelet's elections. Argentina has been accustomed to women in the executive branch because of Eva and Isabel Perón's leadership and dedication to the Peronist movement. Chile, though, did not have similar female political role models. Eva and Isabel were products of the Peronist movement, which many Argentines followed, especially before Eva's death. When Chile had comparable political movements, such as Allende's socialist movement or Pinochet's military government, there was not as much of a majority support for it as there had been for Argentina's Peronist movement. Furthermore, while both countries experienced military dictatorships, women responded differently in Argentina than in Chile. The women's movements in Argentina were consistent, sustainable and united

movements, while the organizations of women in Chile were fragmented, single instances of a political movement. The way that women mobilized, then, thus created certain precedents in the two nations about women's political activism and perceptions of civically involved women. Additionally, Argentina's gender quota was both a product of its progressive nature toward women and helped to produce a country that elected a female president. Due to Chile's conservative nature, the strength of the Catholic Church in the post-Pinochet era, and its lack of a gender quota, Fernández and Bachelet were in dissimilar positions prior to becoming presidents because of their countries' different religious histories and views of women. These differences have implications for each woman in power.

For example, because of Argentina's infatuation with Evita, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner had certain social standards to follow both as a First Lady and as President by being an obedient wife to a powerful male leader. Moreover, she never explicitly promoted women's rights, perhaps both because of Argentina's progressive nature toward women and the image Evita created for women in politics. Bachelet, on the other hand, chose to recreate gender constructions in her country. She had a strong focus on feminist politics and advancing women in Chile during her campaign and her presidency because of the country's less progressive nature. At the same time, though, whatever Bachelet chose to do or advocate for women had to be done in a clear, strong manner so as to fully destroy the perceptual gender construction barriers. The beginning of this chapter will explain and compare the two countries' religious, social, and political environments for women. Understanding these facets of Argentina and Chile are important because they not only affected how and why Fernández and

Bachelet campaigned for the presidency, but also their political agendas and overall success.

A Comparison of the Strength of the Catholic Churches in Chile and Argentina

Argentina and Chile share similar beginnings in regard to the Catholic Church. Both countries became independent of Spain in the start of the nineteenth century, but still maintained a strong cultural to tie the Church and its teachings. The Church and state were closely linked after independence and during the nation building periods in many Latin American nations. The Church would support conservative political groups, too, during this process. Still, as the author of *Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* states, “Nowhere else has the relationship between church and state been more volatile than in recent decades” (Gill 1998: 3). Chile and Argentina’s governments, as well as the rest of Latin America, had to learn how to manage their relationships with the Church. The cultural link was so strong that many of times the Church had a greater influence than expected over politics in both nations. Argentina and Chile’s differences with the Church and its impact on the state and society began in early 1900s and continued throughout the century. The Argentine and Chilean Churches responded differently to the countries’ respective military dictatorships. These reactions influenced the strength of the Church’s moral authority and thus the strength of diffusing its traditionalist views of women into society. The perceptions in turn impacted how Argentine and Chilean society viewed women and women in politics.

Chile's Church, as will be discussed, had a great influence over the creation of the new government after the return to democracy. This meant that women were socially excluded from the new government because of the Catholic influence. The Argentine Church, though, was not as politically respected after the country's military dictatorship ended, which created an environment in which women were not solely socially bound to the confines of marianismo and reflecting the Virgin Mary. Both Churches' influences matter for how Fernández and Bachelet were elected and the political and social environments they were exposed to their entire lives.

While the Chilean Church has seen more challenges than the Argentine Church has, it has also been recognized as more of a moral power in society today because of its responses to those challenges. This difference affected Fernández and Bachelet's paths to power because of the various influences each nation's church had on politics after the return to democracy. Through their decisions during the twentieth century, both churches were trying to appeal to as many people as possible to gain followers. However, the Churches took separate paths in regard to how to gain such followers. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Latin American countries experienced a period of religious disestablishment in which religious freedom was granted (Gil 1998: 32). Chile officially mandated this in 1925, which was very late compared to other nations, like Argentina who dismantled the formal relationship in 1884 (Gill 1998: 32). Therefore, the Church and State had been closely tied in Chile for a while after independence, which meant that their traditional view of women as solely wives and mothers became more engrained in society. While the Chilean Church and state seemed to be progressive at this with the new law, it was also following the pope's *Rerum Novarum* of 1891 and the *Quadregesimo Anno* of 1931.

The *Rerum Novarum* mainly spoke out against communism, but also mandated that women be men's subordinates and remain as the homemakers (Gill 1998: 127). Internationally the Pope and the Catholic Church spoke about this topic and the encyclical; while most of the focus was on the fight against communism, the sections about the traditionalist view of women still penetrated societies and reinforced previous Catholic images of women. As one passage in the encyclical states:

“Women, again, are not suited for certain occupations; a woman is by nature fitted for home-work, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family” (“*Rerum Novarum*” 1891).

This ideology reflects the concept of *marianismo*, which encourages women to be reflections of the Virgin Mary whose moral superiority and role as mother were regarded as the most important aspects of her life. Therefore, with Chile's late religious freedom and its close following of the Church's *Rerum Novarum*, Catholicism and its traditional ideals influenced social norms.

With the fear of communism and the Church's strong feelings against it, the Chilean Church sought a way to appeal to those that communism would seem attractive to, particularly the poor. So, the Church, which had been known for its elitist base, began to appeal to and support the lower classes (Gill 1998: 128). The episcopacy in Chile did not want to lose its followers, nor did it want Chile to fall to communism. It created the *Acción Católica Chilena* in 1931, an organization that opposed Marxist ideals and communism (Gill 1998: 129). The Church recognized, though, that being a popular religious entity in Chile was not an easy job with other Christian religions and opposing political ideologies in the mix. So, during Salvador

Allende's regime, despite his socialist nature and policies, the church chose to peacefully coexist alongside him to appeal to move followers instead of fighting against him (Gill 1998: 140). In fact, a Chilean bishop wrote a pastoral letter stating that the non-Marxist type of socialism could perhaps be consistent with Catholic ideology (Gill 1998: 140). The Church even blessed the Allende government with a special prayer in 1971 (Gill 1998: 141). Essentially this period marked the Church's attempts to gain a broad based appeal in the midst of a politically and religiously changing environment. The Chilean Church chose to be realistic in its goals and adapt its policies to that of the time period. This information will be important for how the Church would be viewed during the Pinochet dictatorship.

In 1973 Augusto Pinochet's military coup ended Allende's three-year presidency. While the Church seemed to support Allende, it was actually relieved when a non-Socialist took power (Gill 1998: 141). However, the Church would be regretting this feeling a year later as the government began to commit human rights abuses against its people and enacted economic policies that decreased the poor's chances at financial success (Gill 1998: 142). The Church chose not to support the authoritarian government any longer because its church activists were being hurt, the poor (who the Chilean Church had been supporting), were suffering, and there was enough international funding to support the Church if it would be cut off from government funding. The Church set out to help its countries' people by creating refugee centers and establishing organizations that strived to promote peace (Gill 1998: 142). As Pinochet's image became tainted throughout his reign, the Church's image grew appealing to many because of its genuine help and support. It was basically the only organization that could not be controlled by the government, unlike

unions and political associations that had been shut down (Aguilar 2003: 713).

Chileans saw the Church as a force that existed to assist people and understood their pain. Therefore, it became a trusted, moral authority and hero of sorts during and after the transition to democracy. Because of this, the Church's teachings, like those about women and marianismo, penetrated society and were more easily accepted by many. The tie between Church and state was blurred as the transition to democracy occurred because of the Church's status. The Chilean Church was even recognized internationally with prizes for its human rights work in Chile (Aguilar 2003: 713). Its newfound popularity coupled with the lasting effects of the traditionalist views of Pinochet's dictatorship fueled a democratic society of women uninvolved in government and instead involved in traditional duties of the home.

Unlike Chile, Argentina's Catholic Church supported its military dictatorship during the twentieth century, which resulted in an entity that was not viewed as a moral authority during the transition to democracy. Prior to this, though, the Church in Argentina appeared to be more stable than in Chile, whose Church competed with a growing number of Protestant religions (Gill 1998: 149). As noted, Argentina officially separated the Church and State in 1884 (Gill 1998: 32). With this separation also came a secular public education system and civil marriages in the 1880s (McGee Deutsch 1991: 304). Then, in the early twentieth century as an influx of immigrants made their ways to major cities in Argentina, so did many Argentine women; both groups competed for jobs, especially those of the personal service industry (McGee Deutsch 1991: 305). With the increase of female workers at the same time as the worldwide communist movement, the Church, especially Social Catholics of Argentina, sought ways to appeal to and help women. They did so through various

groups to assist women with employment, housing, and finances, so as to protect the “virtue of young working women” (McGee Deutsch 1991: 317). Like Chileans, Argentines were influenced by Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*, which encouraged women to stay “submissive [to men], pious, and morally pure” (McGee Deutsch 1991: 309). Church leaders thought that the changing Argentine economy and work place would weaken the family structure and social hierarchy, which is why they chose to focus on women, the moral leaders of the family (McGee Deutsch 1991: 320). Therefore, by creating Catholic organizations to assist women in Argentina, these women were also being socialized and subjected to traditional Catholic and “marianista” views.

At the beginning of his reign, Juan Perón, who was not a devout Catholic, still reflected Catholic ideals. Juan wanted the support of the church during his regime, and tried to appeal to it through his views and values (Gill 1998: 157). As the author of “The Catholic Church, Work, and Womanhood in Argentina, 1980-1930” states, he and his wife, Eva, “accepted hierarchical relations within the family and society, and it tended to describe both women and the masses as irrational, unthinking beings requiring control of male leaders” (McGee Deutsch: 1991 320). While Evita was a powerful woman capable of influencing many, her power came from her husband, which thus signaled her submission to him. However, the support the Catholic Church demonstrated toward Juan reflected its upcoming nature of supporting inadequate governments in power. Although Juan’s government was undemocratic, the Church did not care as long as it was not communist (Gill 1998: 158). However, tensions arose between Juan Perón and the Church; he legalized divorce, created “justicialismo” which threatened church’s charity, legalized prostitution, cut off the Church’s public

funding, and tried to suspend Catholic holidays for his wife's death (Gill 1998: 159). These changes, which modernized Argentina in some instances, were not in line with traditional Catholic views. For instance, the legalization of divorce supported women and women's rights; however, the Church, reflecting machista attitudes, still wanted women to be submissive to their husbands in all instances and remain in marriages to produce more Catholic children. Thus, with the Church actively opposing a popular leader's policies, perhaps its moral authority and feelings toward women were less validated. The Church had always been a popular moral force in Argentina, but with opposing views toward a well-liked government, its moral superiority may have dwindled.

Like Chile, an authoritarian government took over Argentina twice between 1966 and 1983. Unlike Chile, though, during these periods, the Argentine Church supported the military dictatorships, despite the many human rights abuses committed against Argentines by the government (Gill 1998: 12). This support would further decrease the Church's moral authority in Argentina as the Chilean Church's moral standing increased. Although people were dying and disappearing because of the government, the Argentine Church fared better with this government than a democracy (Gill 1998: 162). While the Church did issue statement of concern about the desaparecidos, they never blamed the authoritarian military government for it, so that the support and laws assisting the Church could remain (Gill 1998: 164).

Therefore, while the Chilean Church at this time was speaking out against human rights abuses and becoming a political hero for many, the Argentine Church essentially supported its government's widespread violence and abuse. Because of this support, it can be easily derived that Argentines and the new Argentine government

did not begin to look toward the Catholic Church for guidance unlike Chileans who flocked to the Church for assistance during the transition. The strength of the Church in both countries could reflect the ways women were treated after the return to democracy. Since the return in Chile, women have been less politically involved; in Argentina, women have had more opportunities for government inclusion with the implementation of the gender quota in 1991. Still, as will be noted in the rest of this section, the Church was among other factors that influenced each country's female political inclusion and eventual election of a female president. Nevertheless, both the Argentine and Catholic Church influenced machista attitudes since the onset of the countries' creations. The Chilean Catholic Church, today, though, just seems to be more religiously conservative and reflect such ideals more; women have been politically uninvolved and excluded because the Church has emphasized women's roles as wives and mothers first. The Argentine Church stressed these same values, but with previous female political role models and activism that Chile did not have, women were more likely, and even inspired, to become politically involved. Therefore, the Church's influence on both countries' political environments and social norms was important for the elections of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Michelle Bachelet.

A Comparison of the Influence of Early Political Female Activism

Argentina and Chile continue to differ in their histories of women. Both countries share Catholicism, patriarchy, and machismo. Despite these similarities, the distinctions for women's advancement in both countries lie within with the attainment of female suffrage, emergence of national female leaders, female political activism

during authoritarian regimes, and the implementation of gender quotas. Argentina can be considered a more progressive society for women than Chile, too. The differences between the two matter for how Fernández and Bachelet ascended to power.

Fernández's campaign for the presidency reflected Argentine female leaders of the past, while Bachelet chose to break traditional female stereotypes.

Eva and Isabel Perón changed the landscape for women in government in Argentina. The Perón women created opportunities, such as the right to vote and access to the executive branch, that previously had been unavailable for women in Argentina. Both women acted as role models for Latin American females of today, like Fernández and Bachelet. Evita and Isabel set a precedent in Argentina that women have a right to participate in formal politics. Nonetheless, despite these accomplishments, Juan Perón was a key reason behind Eva and Isabel's achievements. Without Juan, Eva would not have had the opportunity to be as politically popular, and Isabel most likely would have never had the chance to be president. Both women ascended to power because of their husband's leadership and popularity. However, each woman remained respected because of her dedication to the Peronist movement. Their political ideologies were familiar for many Argentines who supported Juan and his government. Thus, while Juan created this specific, political ideology, his wives assisted his goals by becoming popular public figures and faces of the movement. Eva and Isabel were just as important as Juan was to the Peronist movement, which symbolizes women's growing political significance in Argentina at this time.

Both women exceeded expectations for politically involved females when patriarchy was still an evident force in Argentina and Latin America. Eva and Isabel, still, were subordinate to Juan's political movement that put them in their positions.

This obedience was exhibited in the frequent speeches both made about their loyalty to their husband and his ideology. Neither woman strayed from his ideas, which shows both a strict dedication to Juan and the Peronist movement in general. Additionally, Juan's popularity and belief in his wives' leadership allowed both women to be in positions of power. He was not only in control of the Argentine government, but also his wives. This perception was a direct effect of machismo and the patriarchal Latin American society. So, while Isabel was the first female president, she was also widely known as Juan Perón's widow, especially since she was handed the presidency due to his pending death. Even without Juan's presence, though, Isabel represented his ideology. While she was not her husband, Isabel acting as president may have been the next best thing for Peronist supporters. Multiple other women around the world have since assumed the presidency after their male family member passed away. Jane S. Jensen explains in her book *Women Political Leaders* that widows that become presidents have been exposed to politics during their husband's regime. Their ties to these men allow them to be trusted and supported by those who were their husband's political followers (Jensen 2008: 35). Isabel symbolized the consistency of the movement, Juan's regime, and the Peronist government. Overall, Argentina certainly made progress for women and women in government with the two Perón women's powerful public positions, but their ascents to power indicate the gender imbalance that ran rampant throughout all of Latin America, both of which would later be reflected in Fernández's rise to power.

Chilean women's political history was different than that of Argentina's and later influenced Michelle Bachelet's campaign for the presidency. Chile's history before women's suffrage is much like that of other Latin American nations. It was an

area colonized by the Spanish, until it became independent in the mid-nineteenth century. Chilean women gained the right to vote in 1949 after they gained the right to vote in municipal elections in 1934 (Franceschet 2005: 45). Female suffrage was attained somewhat later in Chile than other Latin American nations, like Argentina. This late political progress was also demonstrated in Chile's delayed disestablishment of the Church and state in 1925 (Gill 1998: 32). This separation of the two entities may have influenced the delay in women's suffrage, because the Catholic Church had a strong perspective on keeping women as wives, mothers, and homemakers instead of political beings.

While there were many women that mobilized in various movements to achieve suffrage, the Chilean women's movement seemed to diminish after that goal was attained, mostly due to women's groups' conflicting ideologies (Franceschet 2005: 47). In Argentina, though, after Eva Perón fought for female suffrage, she continued to be an advocate for women and women in government by leading the Women's branch of the Peronist movement (Lewis 2001:102). Unlike Argentina, Chile did not have a famous woman like Eva leading the fight to vote, uniting women, and encouraging wives and mothers to be politically involved. Evita lit a fire in Argentine citizens and gave women hope. Chile, though, lacked this inspiration. The Peronist movement, as explained, placed Eva and Isabel in unique positions of power for women. Chile, though, did not undergo such a social and political transformation, like the Peronist movement, until the Allende and Pinochet regimes in the 1970s and 1980s. Neither man nor his political ideology, though, recognized women enough to even think about placing them in political positions. The Peronist movement embraced and promoted women by providing them with female leaders and the right to vote. In

order to have similar female leaders in Chile, there would have needed to be a strong movement that began to break down barriers for women, like Juan Perón's ideology did in Argentina. Instead, Chile had strong political movements that created barriers for women. Eva and Isabel were able to achieve and inspire so much for women in their country because of the Peronist movement. Chile lacked a similar ideology and women's advancement became further stifled by Allende and Pinochet's regimes.

A division of Chilean women's perspectives on women's rights and political involvement began to emerge after female suffrage, too. While some Chilean women believed that they needed to be treated as equals to men, other women recognized their differences and wanted to be treated differently before the law because of it. Moreover, women in Chile, compared to Argentina, were more involved in local rather than national politics (Matear 1997: 85). As Sylvia Chant says in her book *Gender in Latin America*, "few women became important actors in party hierarchies and political systems were not more sensitive to women's issues as a result of the vote" (Chant 2003: 36). Perhaps if Chile had leaders like Eva and Isabel, there would have been a more united women's movement and more women involved at a national level. It seemed as though after women won the right to vote, because of the lack of national leaders and a united movement, they did not fight for anything else for until Allende and Pinochet's poor treatment of women occurred.

A Comparison of Women's Movements in Reaction to Military Dictatorships

In the mid to late twentieth century, Argentina and Chile both experienced authoritarian military governments that transformed politics and society. Central to this paper's argument is how women and women's groups interacted and reacted to

these governments. In both states, women fought against the oppressive governments with hopes of the reestablishment of democracy. However, the women's groups differ per country in their unity, consistency, and political desires. The most prominent group of female protesters in Argentina was the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, an organization of wives and mothers who advocated for the return of their disappeared loved ones during the Dirty War. This organization has been a sustainable movement that still exists today and is known throughout the world. Chilean women's movements, while effective at helping to oust Allende and Pinochet, were varied and fragmented. Women's groups of both a liberal and conservative nature would hold large-scale events, but the events were not sustainable and as internationally recognized as the Argentine women's. This section will compare how and why the women's movements against Argentine and Chilean military governments differed, and the effects they had for Fernández and Bachelet's elections.

After Isabel Perón's lack of success during her presidency, the military took over Argentina. The Church, which disapproved of the Peronist movement, supported the military in its political conquest (Gill 1998: 162). However, this authoritarian government was violent and abusive toward its citizenry. Because of this widespread violence, mothers of the disappeared united under their feminine role to protest against the government and for the return of their children (Fisher 2000: 338). They cleverly used their feminine roles as mothers and the ideals of marianismo to fight against the military government in the 1970s. As one author on Argentina says, these women chose to publicly demonstrate "visual and symbolic resistance to a regime that 'disappeared' over 15,000 citizens between 1976 and 1983" (Bouvard 2000: 22).

Their dedication to ending the military rule helped to shape the agenda during Argentina's return to democracy (Radcliffe 1995: 157). It's also important to note that the Madres did not simply hold one event; their movement, instead, was consistent and sustainable. In fact, it still exists today since many families are not aware of the whereabouts of their loved ones that were lost during the military regime many years ago. The Plaza has become a famous place in which Madres and their families still honor their lost family members (Bouvard 1994: 2). The Madres became such a famous group because of their ability to combine political activism and motherhood, especially in Latin America, a region which most think of as maintaining machista attitudes and a dominant patriarchal structure. However, the Madres did not choose to act in such a way to gain international recognition. Instead, they cared about the nation's desaparecidos and the future children of Argentina. The Madres became the symbolic caretakers of the country and were admired for doing so.

Chile also experienced oppressive governments in the later half of the 1900s and had women's groups react to their oppressive nature. However, as will be demonstrated, these women's groups were not as consistent, unified, or as sustainable as the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. This difference was an effect of Chile's female political exclusion and resulted in a continued form of this exclusion. Specifically, Salvador Allende and Augusto Pinochet's governments excluded women from formal politics in Chile, which resulted in a stagnant, traditionalist perception of women. Salvador Allende mostly paid no attention to women's needs or desires until two years into office when he realized that women were a large and potentially powerful constituency (Franceschet 2005: 24). His lack of success, especially for women, was evident with the movement of the March of the Empty Pots (Franceschet 2005: 53). In

this instance, anti-Allende women used their motherhood to protest Allende's failure at feeding his citizens. Because women were not encouraged to be heavily involved or included in politics, they had to find alternate and informal methods to express their disapproval and political desires. They used political motherhood to oppose Allende's regime since mothers are traditionally known as the caretakers and food providers for families. This movement is comparable to Argentina's Madres de la Plaza de Mayo; in both instances women used their feminine role to fight for a political change. Unlike the Madres movement, though, the March of the Empty Pots was not a consistent or sustainable movement. The Madres continued their political activism and involvement throughout Argentina's military dictatorship into the return of democracy. Both movements were powerful, but the single instance of the March of the Empty Pots reflected Chilean women's lack of political motivation, which was a result of political exclusion in patriarchal Chile.

Augusto Pinochet's military regime recognized the mistakes that Allende's government made in ignoring women and sought to change that after his military coup d'état. However, this change in female recognition was not beneficial for the advancement of women. Instead, Pinochet chose to utilize the active motherhood that Chilean females demonstrated in the March of the Empty Pots and put it to use in mandatory workshops that demobilized and depoliticized women (Chant 2003: 27). In these workshops, women would learn how to perform traditional duties of women (Franceschet 2005: 61). Women were not only excluded from politics, but also from employment (Klubock 2001: 494). The roles that men played in society, the economy, or politics were off-limits for women, even when men were forced to abandon their

families (Franceschet 2005: 26). Augusto Pinochet represented extreme patriarchy in Chile.

Pinochet's attempts at keeping women at bay, though, were unsuccessful in the long term. Women from urban and rural areas, different economic classes, and various ideologies formed their own women's movements to protest against Pinochet (Matear 1997: 89). For example, the organization, Women for Life, created a 10,000 women protest against Pinochet in 1983 (Franceschet 2005: 71). Still, like the March of the Empty Pots, this was a single instance of unity instead of a sustained fight. After this protest, women in Chile were politically activated to fight against Pinochet, but their reasons for doing so were fragmented. The feminist women had a different perception of what they wanted politically than the conservative women did. They were united in the belief that Pinochet needed to be stopped and democracy should be reinstated, but, unlike the Madres and their political motherhood, there was not a unifying reason for all women to band together. This lack of cohesion resulted in a democracy after Pinochet was no longer in power that was equally confused as to what women wanted, and instead created a government and society that reflected traditional ideals and Catholic guidelines.

Chile returned to democracy in 1990 with a new constitution, but the women's movement remained fragmented (Matear 1997: 97). The new constitution, instead of creating a space for women to politically included, reflected the traditional values that women had experienced in Chile since its colonization. For instance, the constitution now says that "men are born free and equal in rights and dignity," "the family is the fundamental of the nucleus of society" and "the law protects the life of those about to be born" (Chant 2003: 31). These few examples demonstrate that patriarchy and

Catholic traditional views of gender in Chile were still present even with the return of democracy. These few lines from the constitution emphasize the importance of family and heteronormativity, both of which have the ability to foster gender inequality and traditional, restrictive mindsets (Chant 2003: 31). A constitution is arguably a state's most fundamental document; it outlines how a country is to be governed. So with such a powerful document blatantly excluding women from being "free and equal in rights and dignity" and instead emphasizing the importance of family, this constitution sent a message to Chile's citizens that not much had changed for women. While Argentina was changing its constitution to incorporate a legislative gender quota to include more women and their ideas in government, the new Chilean constitution still seemed to be excluding women and recognizing them only for their contributions to the family. Although Pinochet was no longer in power, his lingering view of women still negatively penetrated social norms. This constitution was also a reflection of all the oppression and exclusion Chilean women had faced and all the political activism that they did not have the opportunities to experience.

The ways in which women in Argentina and Chile reacted to the military dictatorships in their countries demonstrated the progression that women had made in the past in their countries and dictated the way that politics and society would perceive women in the future. In Argentina, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo continued the precedent that Eva Perón set in the 1950s with combining femininity and political activism. These women's bravery and determination helped to end the authoritarian government and instead reestablish a nation that would create the world's first legislative gender quota and elect a female president. Chilean women's movements during Allende and Pinochet's dictatorships were not as united and everlasting as the

Madres because the precedent for women in Chile had been to fight for temporary needs instead of long-term desires. Moreover, because of the lack of unity of Chilean women, there was not a strong, female presence during the transition to democracy, which resulted in a traditional constitution fed by Catholic ideals and patriarchal social norms. These women and their movements mattered for Fernández and Bachelet's paths to the presidency later; Fernández had a precedent to uphold, while Bachelet had to break down outdated barriers and create her own precedent for Chilean women.

A Comparison of the Acceptance or Rejection of Gender Quotas

Chile and Argentina's political histories also differ in regard to gender quotas. Argentina has been labeled a progressive society for women and women's rights because it already experienced women as heads of state, had a vibrant women's movement, as evidenced by the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, and enacted one of the strongest gender quotas to promote women in parliament. Still, like Chile and many countries around the world, Argentina remained a society with patriarchal norms. Unlike other countries, though, women have been continually making progress in Argentina. A gender quota was also put in place to ensure that women would be given equal opportunities in men's machista world of politics. While this law was progressive, it also demonstrated a need to promote a place in politics for women. In patriarchal societies where men have been dominant, sometimes it is not enough to empower women and provide them with education. A gender quota can help address a society's governmental sex imbalance.

Argentina is recognized as the first country in the world to enact a legislative gender quota (Krook 2009: 163). Gender quotas produce women's engagement with the political system and create positive feelings toward having women occupying government positions (Watson 2014: 398). There is less of a perception of corruption in countries that have gender quotas or pass laws related to gender issues (Watson 2014: 400). Therefore, when Argentina implemented this quota in 1991, its results promoted women's political activism. Argentine females were encouraged, and even mandated to a certain extent by the new law, to be involved in politics. They were actively included in the governmental system. Chile, though, has not enacted a similar policy. While Michelle Bachelet encourages this law, Chilean lawmakers apparently do not see the benefits of it that Argentina did. Moreover, there has not been a coalition of women in Chile fighting to enact the gender quota as there had been in Argentina in 1991 (Franceschet 2010:167). This lack of mobilization falls in line with Chile's history of inconsistent and fragmented women's movements, and, as one author states, is "symptomatic of the elitist base of Chilean politics" and the women's movement after the return to democracy (Franceschet 2010:167). Moreover, the creation or lack of creation of this quota in Argentina and Chile reflects each nation's history and feelings toward women. Argentina was accustomed to revolutionary political females with Eva, Isabel, and the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. People around the world knew about both Perón women and the Madres group, so enacting a gender quota, another revolutionary change affecting Argentine women, seemed in line with past policies. Chile, though, because of its history of active exclusion of women in government, does not seem as though it would readily accept such a policy. Chile did not have a united female movement or significant female figures yet to motivate them

to create a gender quota. Argentina's gender quota would aid Fernández in her ascent to political positions, while Michelle Bachelet had to rely on other factors.

Few women were involved in Chilean politics after the transition to democracy occurred because of the influential and lingering effects of the seventeen-year Pinochet dictatorship and the lack of a gender quota. In 2000, only 8.9% of legislators were females in Chile (Chant 2003: 4). This number was low compared to other similar Latin American countries, especially those countries with gender quotas. Comparably, Argentina had 27% of women in its national parliament in 2000, and this number increased for Argentine women as the years continued and as the gender quota advanced ("Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments" 2015). Moreover, SERNAM, the ministry that was created to advance women in Chile, had not attempted to address many controversial topics for fear of backlash from the government and the church (Franceschet 2010: 161). Chile was one of the last Latin American countries to sign onto the CEDAW treaty, which again demonstrates the nation's lack of a commitment toward recognizing women (Chant 2003: 28). The effects of the Pinochet dictatorship in conjunction with the Church's values and a lack of a gender quota created an environment in which women were still politically underrepresented and inferior to men in Chile. Argentina, at the same time, was quickly progressing and advancing women's status, especially in regard to their political inclusion and participation. Both countries' histories of women as outlined in this section have a bearing on how Fernández and Bachelet rose to their presidential positions of power in Argentina and Chile.

A Comparison of Fernández's and Bachelet's Rise to the Presidency

Argentina and Chile's political and social histories of women are important for how each country elected a female president in the twenty-first century. Argentina, a seemingly progressive nation for women, was accustomed to females as public figures, both in positions of power and through political movements. Chile, though, proved to be a country that politically excluded women and lacked strong, united female leadership. Argentina and Chile still today both experience machismo and Catholic traditionalist ideals, which have created barriers for women's entry into politics. Chile certainly has a stronger Catholic presence, though, especially since the Church became more of a moral authority before and during the transition to democracy. Despite these distinctions, Argentina and Chile were able to elect two dynamic female presidents who further transformed their respective states' histories of women. The elections of these two women demonstrate that in countries with either a history of advancing women and countries with a history of oppressing women, that it is possible for a female president to be elected, so long as she responds to her respective environment.

Fernández's rise to power has been frequently related to that of the Perón women since her husband was in power before her. Fernández was not trying to be like Evita during her campaign, but rather her wifely obedience and charismatic political nature seemed, for most Argentines and the media, to resemble that of Eva. Much like Evita, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner gained fame as First Lady while her husband Nestor was president, even though she was Senator beforehand. Argentines were accustomed to men influencing women's power with both Eva and Isabel Perón. Juan gave his wives the opportunities for political popularity, and they, through their dedication to the Peronist movement, created their own reputations. Similarly,

Fernández's time acting simultaneously as the First Lady and Senator proved to be a testing period for her approval and admiration. Like Eva, she was able to gain people's hearts and resembled a feminine, intelligent, charismatic, motherly figure for the nation (Reel 2007: A.9). Fernández, it seemed, would resemble Eva during her campaign, as well, by playing old video footage of the Eva and Juan and by imitating Eva's well known pose of putting her hands over her heart (Carroll 2007). This reflection of Evita allowed Fernández to obtain an identity that coincided with Argentines' view of women in power. Additionally, both women saw their husband's political ventures and their own and chose to be their husband's political partners rather than outshine them. By sharing this resemblance with Evita, Fernández gained people's approval during her time as First Lady and senator, which then assisted her during the campaign for the presidency.

While the media portrayed Fernández as a reflection of Evita, they also frequently highlighted stereotypes that the patriarchal system created regarding women. The media and the Judicialist party's opponents portrayed Fernández as her husband's puppet in power, which thus influenced the public's opinion of her (Van Dembroucke 2014: 1059). They said things such as "Cristina is nothing more than Kirchner wearing skirts," and "Kirchner is present in all configurations, even when the meetings are not precisely to discuss who gets to go to the grocery store" (Van Dembroucke 2014: 1059). The media even named her government "double command" because they saw Nestor Kirchner as the mastermind and she as simply the figurehead (Van Dembroucke 2014: 1059). These opinions all created an image of Fernández's political incompetence and inability to think for herself. Nevertheless, while this idea undermines Fernández's extensive political experience, education, and desire to lead,

it may have helped Argentina to elect her. Again, the people of Argentina had been familiar with women in power, yet by the means of their husband. By posing Fernández as an extension of her husband's previous regime, it may have been easier for citizens to accept a female president in their patriarchal society, similarly to how Isabel represented her husband's ideology (Jensen 2008: 35). Fernández not only symbolized consistency of the government, but also consistency of the familial name.

Fernández's campaign was also heavily based upon that of her husband's presidential agenda and his Judicialist, political ideals. His presidential regime and policies had been successful, so it only seemed prudent that Fernández, much like any other Judicialist president after Kirchner, remained in line with the same agenda. While the public may have seen her similar presidential agenda as wifely obedience and acting as a paw of her husband's, if a man instead had been in her position and campaigned with the same policies, he would have been labeled as politically intelligent and obedient to his party instead. While Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was in a unique position succeeding her husband's regime, her presidential agenda reflected her own personal political feelings and were not simply an extension of her husband's, as the media portrayed her to be. In fact, during her presidency, Fernández created programs and passed laws that her husband had never before done. For example, she approved the Gay Marriage Act because of her commitment to social justice and equality (Barrionuevo 2010). Additionally, she created the Universal Monetary Assignment per Child law, which was labeled as Argentina's "most comprehensive social program to date" (Van Dembroucke 2014: 1058). Both of these decisions were revolutionary in Argentina and helped to demonstrate Fernández's own political personality and agenda that was separate from that of her husband.

Similarly, during her campaign for the presidency, Bachelet was aware of the way Chilean society perceived women. She knew that because she was a woman, she was disadvantaged in most aspects of Chilean life, especially politics. Compared to Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, though, Bachelet had no previous female Chilean leader to admire or resemble. For Bachelet, there were no limits on how she were to act or behave since no precedent for a political female leader had been set; Fernández, though, had to ensure that she was an obedient political wife, like Evita, to create a positive correlation between them. Bachelet's tactic, then, was using her feminist ideology to undermine Chile's patriarchy. By advertising herself as an untraditional, agnostic woman, Bachelet removed herself from the confines of a male-dominated, Catholic society in which women were supposed to be submissive. She posed herself as a strong, independent female leader who believed in empowering women and changing the structures of society to no longer disadvantage women. Fernández, on the other hand, took a safer route with her campaign and based it on her political party's ideals and her husband's presidential policies. If she were to stray too far away from a reflection of Eva's image – a strong female tied to a powerful male leader- then she would lose voters. Fernández was not trying to be Evita, but rather creating an image of herself that reflected those characteristics that Argentine citizens admired in Eva Perón, such as a commitment to social justice and obedience to one's husband. Bachelet, on the other hand, because of the nature of Chile, needed to present herself in such a way that challenged gender norms. If she had instead acted submissively instead of revolutionarily, Chilean citizens would perceive her as they saw most women – inferior to and living in the shadows of men.

Nevertheless, Bachelet was aware that conservative citizens would not be receptive to this feminist image, which is where her political party, La Concertación, helped her. She was able to shake up the system while also remaining a part of a loyal and stable political party; this situation offered voters, especially female voters, the best of both worlds (Borzutsky 2010: 7). Similarly, Fernández was a member of the Judicialist party, which had its roots in Peronism and had been respected and dominant in Argentina since the return to democracy (Lewis 2001: 8). Bachelet and Fernández utilized the strength of their political parties to augment their campaigns for the presidency. Their womanhood represented a political change, while the party symbolized political consistency, both of which were necessary to winning the election and an array of voters.

Fernández and Bachelet's previous political successes also helped them on their paths to the presidency. Fernández had been a two time national senator right before her election (Franceschet 2008: 419). Perhaps the legislative gender quota helped Fernández in being elected to this legislative position. While there is no way of knowing whether or not she would have been elected as senator without the gender quota in place, based upon research of gender quotas, one can say that when a country enacts a gender quota, it sends signals to their citizens that gender equality is important in politics (Schwindt-Bayer 2010: 30). So, after Fernández's position in the legislature of Santa Cruz ended, she was elected to the national senate in 1995, just four years after the gender quota was implemented (Jalalzai 2010: 217). Again, this is not to say that Fernández needed a gender quota in place in order to be elected, but it may have encouraged her to continue her political career by running for a senator position. As explained, Chile did not have a gender quota, but Michelle Bachelet was

affected by her presidential predecessor's quota for his cabinet. During his presidency in 2000, President Lagos wanted to appoint at least five females to his eighteen-person cabinet, and Michelle Bachelet, because of her previous political experience and extent of her education, was chosen as the Health Minister (Ross 2006: 727).

Therefore, both Fernández and Bachelet's political careers prior to the presidency were enhanced by the presence of some kind of gender quota that was enacted not long before their campaigns. Because of the quotas, citizens of Argentina and Chile were primed to see that that women in government mattered. This perspective slightly then opened up the possibility of electing a female president.

It was also important for Fernández and Bachelet to begin to break down gender constructions that their countries and the Latin American region had created prior to their presidencies. Despite both countries' previous female leaders and women's movements, machismo and patriarchy still existed, especially in politics. Nikki Craske, author of *Women and Politics in Latin America* explains three factors behind women's lack of civic involvement in the region. She notes that absence of female participation in politics, the construction of politics as a man's world, and the ignorance of both men and women in politics contribute to conditions in which women do not run for political office, let alone the presidency. However, during their paths to the presidency, Fernández and Bachelet were able to surpass these obstacles.

Argentina was already a nation that boasted a large number of women in politics prior to Fernández's election, so the lack of female participation in politics did not prove to be much of a roadblock for her. Still, Fernández helped to deconstruct politics as a man's world by being a fervent fighter of human rights in her government positions. While she reflected Evita's representation, she still was able to break down barriers for

women in politics as Eva had done by being a strong female voice in politics. Additionally, like the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, she utilized political motherhood, the process of identifying oneself as a motherly figure in order to make a political statement, and her femininity to denounce the previous military government and fight for human rights with her “trademark confrontational nature” (Goñi 2015). As First Lady and Senator, she was frequently called upon to help make important executive decisions, with “her influence exceeding that of an ordinary lawmaker,” once again like Evita. (“Profile: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner” 2013). One news article even says that her political career outshone her husband’s (Goñi 2015). With all of this in mind, it seems as though Fernández’s personality and political career before her election to the presidency continued the change that Evita began about having strong women in government.

However, Chile, as discussed, had few women in politics before Bachelet campaigned for the presidency. While Bachelet did not increase the amount of women in government prior to winning the position, she was able to begin to change the perception of women in government through her time as the Defense Minister. No other woman before her had gained such a male-dominated position in Chile or Latin America (Jalalzai 2010: 89). Craske notes that gender constructions have insisted that politics is a man’s world. Bachelet began to change this fact in Chile by not only being in a political position, but also by being in one of the most masculinized positions. Her contributions in this post were also successful, which continued to deconstruct the image of women’s political incompetence or lack of belonging in government. For instance, she explicitly promoted women’s participation in politics through the establishment of gender parity in her cabinet. By making women’s participation in

politics a priority on her presidential agenda, she represented a country making a change toward equality. Similar to Fernández, Bachelet used her strong personality to further counteract stereotypes of females. She recognized her differences as an agnostic, feminist, single mother and used them to her advantage. She never denied or was embarrassed by her gender, but instead sought to augment her gender's possibilities in politics. Hence, for both Fernández and Bachelet's campaigns for the presidency, it was necessary that both responded to the patriarchal, male-dominated field of politics by reconstructing gender roles and providing people with a fresh perspective.

As demonstrated in this section, both Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Michelle Bachelet reacted to their country's political environments and views of women. Fernández chose to remain loyal to Eva Perón's image and political style to create a positive correlation between them. On the other hand, by straying away from the traditional image of a woman in Chile, Bachelet proved that a female could be a strong feminist and effectively enter into politics in her country. Both women utilized their political parties' strength, and a gender quota augmented their chances at political success. The two also used their fervent personalities and political positions to deconstruct traditional notions of gender in politics. Fernández chose to use political motherhood to do so, like Argentine women of the past; Bachelet wanted to create a well defined divide between old and new perceptions of Chilean women in government, and did so through assuming one of the most masculinized ministerial positions. Both women reacted appropriately to their countries' political environments and perceptions of women, which helped them to win the presidencies by wide margins. The awareness both presidents had for their respective countries' histories of

women helped them to define themselves during their campaigns. Fernández and Bachelet's strategies were successful at both winning them the presidencies, and opening up more doors for women in both countries.

Chapter 5

The Future of Women in Argentina and Chile

This paper has demonstrated that a country's culture, religion, social standards, and politics all influence the creations of certain perceptions of women. These gender constructions along with each country's history of women matter for how and why women have been elected as the president of Argentina and Chile within the past decade. Women, especially in Latin America, are beginning to break down gendered political barriers. Females in Argentina, Chile, and beyond are beginning to feel the loosening of the strains of machista policies and histories. While gender stereotypes are a long way away from disappearing in Latin America (and most other countries), Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Michelle Bachelet's elections and reelections to the presidency symbolize a social transformation for the whole of Latin American society. As women around the world begin to emerge as national leaders, it is important to study their ascents to power in order to create political patterns for future leaders.

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's election allowed Argentina to continue on a path of accepting women into government and civil society. Eva and Isabel Perón, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, and the women who initiated the legislative gender quota turned Argentina into a progressive country in Latin America for women. Despite these successes, Argentina was not a nation with perfect gender equality. The traditional patriarchal values that the Catholic Church instilled during the onset of Argentina's creation and the concept of machismo remained strong, even during

Fernández's campaign for the presidency. For example, the media's portrayal of Fernández made her seem like an incompetent, uneducated woman acting as the pawn of her husband, rather than a capable and qualified female leader with support from her political party. They overlooked the fact that she had government experience, political passion, and a university education and instead focused her political identity as solely Kirchner's wife. Her election and reelection, though, demonstrated that a female is just as capable as a male in the position of the presidency.

Still, unlike Michelle Bachelet, Fernández did not explicitly help to advance the status of women in Argentina. While she opened doors for other women by assuming the position, her feminine qualities were not explicitly translated into feminist policies. Fernández's presidential agenda was based upon Judicialist ideals. She is regarded as enacting marriage equality, though, which adds to Argentina's progressive nature (Llana 2010). She also created Argentina's "most comprehensive social program to date," with the Universal Monetary Assignment Per Child (Van Dembroucke 2014: 1058). Both of these can be perceived as feminist because of their commitment to social justice, but the roots of their creation, for Fernández, did not lie within feminism, but instead Judicialism. If Fernández had exemplified the same obviously feminist agenda and fierce personality that Bachelet had, perhaps she would not have been elected; Argentina was accustomed to female leaders, especially ones that were feminine and not feminist. Therefore, Fernández's lack of an explicit feminist nature is reflective of Eva and Isabel Perón's approach to female leadership. Still, she showed respect for the strong Argentine women that came before her, while simultaneously becoming an effective Argentine female leader herself.

Michelle Bachelet used her gender to influence her political career, even though Chile was less progressive for women than Argentina. Its conservative past and traditionalist mindset restricted women's advancement. At times in Chile's history, women would mobilize together against atrocities or injustices. However, women lacked inspiration to continue these efforts because of their consistent exclusion from government and the men's world. Michelle Bachelet's election, though, helped to further motivate women. Since Chile's return to democracy, the country remained stagnant in its attitudes toward women and women's rights. There was a low amount of females in government and few laws that progressed women's rights or civil status, which can be attributed to the concept of the "círculo excluyente" and the "círculo virtuoso" (del Campo 1702). Ester del Campo explains this theory:

"For these reasons women have few opportunities to participate, either in a subordinate way or in the directive position. If they do not have many opportunities, they lose interest. If they lost interest in participating, they don't pressure the government to obtain changes in the current situation of participation, which means that no new opportunities are being generated and with it the vicious circle is sealed" (del Campo 1702).

After Chile's return to democracy, women were less interested in government because they had not and were not offered opportunities or encouragement to be involved. There was not a precedent in Chile of women's inclusion in government, which thus created the círculo excluyente. Michelle Bachelet's election, though, attempted to break this vicious cycle by creating more opportunities for female empowerment through motivation and policy change.

Her election brought women's issues to the forefront and demonstrated that women were capable leaders in Chile. She created explicitly feminist government policies to give women more personal freedom and choice, creating new family health centers and strengthening domestic violence laws (Haas 2010). Unlike Fernández, Bachelet was fierce in her feminist agenda; however, this personality is what Chile needed to be a politically modern power. If someone like Fernández, who chose to express her femininity but not her feminist ideals, ran for president in Chile, she would be weakened by society's stereotypes of women. Still, Bachelet's election and reelection, like that of Fernández's, showed Latin America that women are qualified leaders, even when they embrace their womanhood. Bachelet left office with unprecedented approval ratings and was reelected in the same fashion. She has been able to begin to progress her country's previously conservative and traditional perspective on women. Michelle Bachelet represents a new woman in Chile – one that is in control, has the ability to step out of the confines of her home, and believes in equality of the sexes.

Therefore, at the very least, Fernández and Bachelet's elections to the presidency were monumental for their respective countries. The fact that they were both then reelected demonstrates Argentina and Chile's changing nature. Elections prove that citizens believe in their leaders and their political agendas. Whether or not voters elected these women for their gender or not is irrelevant. What matters is that Fernández and Bachelet have been placed at the same level as male presidents before them; they have entered into positions that seemed to have been off limits to women. The two arrived at these executive offices on their own merits and experiences. They need not rely on men to be elected or succeed politically. Their elections demonstrate

that the majority of Argentine and Chilean citizens believed in both women's visions for the futures of their countries.

These transformations can be indicative of a changing nature of Latin America, the land of machismo. Chile and Argentina are two of the largest, most influential, and modern countries in Latin America. They have been economic, social, and political leaders for Latin America in the past. Therefore, the elections of female presidents also have the ability to influence how other countries think about women in politics. For instance, since Michelle Bachelet's first election, there has been a wave of female presidents in Latin America, specifically in Argentina, Brazil, and Costa Rica (Bodzin 2013). Perhaps this trend can be attributed to an increase in female education and employment, and partially, perhaps, to Bachelet acting as a political motivator. She was a strong woman who believed in the power of women. Additionally, she was the first elected female president in South America, which allowed this position seem achievable in other culturally similar countries. Not only did it inspire other women to run for presidential positions, but also demonstrated to voters that a female president can be educated and experienced enough to be elected. Michelle Bachelet broke the barrier of only men being elected to the presidency and widened the field of who could be qualified for the position. Moreover, during Bachelet's reelection, her competitor was also a woman, which showed that even the conservative right political party in Chile was beginning to change and include women (Montealegre 2015). Therefore, Michelle Bachelet's election in 2006 transformed the mindsets of women involved in politics and voters in Latin American countries.

Significant strides have been made in many Latin American countries' legislative branches through the installation of gender quotas, the increased education

of women, and political parties' realization that women are an important constituency. However, still today across the world and in Latin America, more men than women are involved in politics in all branches of government. Does this mean that men are the dominant actors in politics? Well, if women like Fernández and Bachelet begin to emerge in more nations, then men will begin to loosen their stronghold on controlling governments. Men and women in Argentina and Chile respect Fernández and Bachelet. Of course, like any politicians, they receive their fair share of opposition. Still, they were elected not only by women, but also by citizens of different genders, religions, and backgrounds who believed in them and desired a change in their countries. In fact, when men vote, they base their decision on ideology more than gender (Morgan 2014). Women vote for female candidates when the option is presented to them even if the candidate does not share their political view (Morgan 2014). Therefore, it can be deduced that Fernández and Bachelet were elected both because of their gender and their ideologies. This fact provides hope for other women who hope to ascend to high political office. In Latin America, their gender will appeal to women, and, if their ideology aligns with that of the majority of men's, they will be elected.

Because of Fernández and Bachelet's presidencies, the identity of Latin America has begun to change, as well, from a region that previously confined women to the private sphere to one that now welcomes women into the presidency and the legislature for multiple terms and in various countries. Sarah Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood wrote the book *Remaking the Nation: Place, Identity, and Politics in Latin America*; in it, they say that in Latin American history, states' gender ideologies have transformed the ways that men and women are involved in nation building and

national identity creation. (Radcliffe 1996: 135). Bachelet and Fernández have begun to change how women are seen in their countries; this shift in gender has started a national identity transformation in which women are now becoming involved in the process. Females in Argentina and Chile have the opportunities now to change the machismo that many identify as a part of Latin American culture. Women can be empowered by “the fragile possibility for re-imagining and re-positioning themselves” (Radcliffe 1996: 159). Hence, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Michelle Bachelet have reshaped their countries’ identities. While the history of machismo and traditional Catholic mindsets will forever be a part of Latin America’s history and identity, it is now up to strong women like these two presidents to decide whether the patriarchal past will simply define their nation’s women or instead motivate them to progress and advance.

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