***Presidentas* Rise: Consequences for Women in Cabinets?**

ABSTRACT: Since 1999, women have democratically won the presidency eight times in Latin America and have named hundreds of ministers. I argue that, under certain conditions, *presidentas* are more likely than male presidents to improve women's cabinet representation. Two mechanisms – *presidenta* mandates and gendered networks – appear to drive the relationship. Furthermore, because the pool of ministerial candidates is shallower for women than for men, *presidentas* are most likely to advance women's representation in cabinets when the female pool is deepest, that is, at the beginning of a president's term and for "feminine" ministries. A case study of Michelle Bachelet's 2006 ministerial appointments reveals initial evidence for the argument. Empirical implications are then tested with an original dataset of 1,908 ministers of all democratically elected Latin American presidents since 1999. Model results are consistent with the theory that *presidentas* are most likely to "make a difference" when they are least constrained by the supply of female ministerial candidates.

Ministerial positions offer national-level visibility and power to Latin American politicians. Appointees draft, promote and execute legislation, and cabinets are recruiting grounds for future presidential candidates. Women still comprise only about 20 percent of the region's ministerial posts. Given the power of these offices, this underrepresentation severely limits the potential for political equality between men and women.

Yet, one understudied and possibly consequential trend in Latin America is the rise of *presidentas*. Women have democratically captured the presidency eight times since 1999 – more times than any other region in the world.[1] Presidents are constitutionally unconstrained in appointing ministers (Shugart and Carey 1992; Payne 2007). The main argument of this article is that *presidentas* – particularly when they are least constrained – are more likely than male presidents to appoint *ministras.* Thus, in addition to breaking the highest glass ceiling, women presidents in Latin America often do improve women's presence in executive cabinets.

I first outline two mechanisms that converge on the prediction that, ceteris paribus, *presidentas* will appoint more *ministras* than male presidents. First, *presidentas* are more likely than male presidents to interpret part of their own mandates as popular demands for greater female presence in the executive branch. Second, because *presidentas'* political networks will likely contain more elite female politicians than male presidents' networks, *presidentas* are more likely to perceive female ministerial candidates to be loyal and like-minded.

Given these affinities between *presidentas* and *ministras,* this article contends that *presidentas* are most likely to "make a difference" when they are least constrained, and

one of the most important constraints is the supply of female ministerial candidates. Presidents seek "competent" ministers – meaning those with political capital resources – to govern effectively, and thus political capital resources are an important determinant of ministerial supply. This imperative dramatically reduces the female pool of ministerables. It follows that *presidentas* are most likely to nominate more *ministras* than male presidents when the supply of women ministerial candidates is most abundant. Conversely, *presidentas* behave in similar ways as their male counterparts when the female supply is low or depleted.

I probe the plausibility of this argument by examining opportunities and constraints in cabinet decision-making during Michelle Bachelet's first term in office. This case study illustrates how Bachelet's popular mandate and elite networks help explain her gender parity cabinet. I then test the argument statistically with a dataset of all ministers appointed by democratically-elected presidents from 1999-2015 in 18 Latin American countries. Results show that the relationship between *presidentas* and *ministras* is statistically significant at the $p<0.10$ level. Consistent with this article's argument, the most robust relationships between *presidentas* and *ministras* occur when *presidentas* enjoy the most decision-making latitude in terms of the supply of female ministerial candidates.

This research suggests that women in the executive branch could have important implications for Latin American democracies. Empirical studies in this region and other parts of the world link higher numbers of women in government to reduced corruption, policy outcomes favoring women and greater satisfaction with democracy (Dollar et. al. 2001; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005; Swamy et. al 2001).

Latin America's political systems have historically underperformed in each of these areas. Potential benefits from greater female leadership in powerful offices therefore provide normative motivations for this and future research.

The comparative literature on female ministerial nominations is sizable (Arriola and Johnson 2014; Barnes and O'Brien 2015; Claveria 2014; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Krook and O'Brien 2012; O'Brien et. al. 2015; Reynolds 1999). However, to my knowledge, no study to date has systematically examined the impact of female presidents (for a partial exception, see Jalalzai 2016). Because no other region has ever elected such a large number of female presidents, the rise of *presidentas* in Latin America offers a unique and timely opportunity to advance our understanding of the consequences of executive's sex for the distribution of formal power between women and men. It also contributes to long-standing debates on the merits of descriptive representation by showing how female presidents "make a difference" and the conditions under which they are more likely to be effective (Dovi 2002; Mansbridge 1999; Phillips 1995; Wangnerud 2009).

1. WHY WOULD *PRESIDENTAS* APPOINT WOMEN?

It is well documented and realistic to assume that all presidents (male or female) aim to fulfill their mandates and achieve their policy objectives (Amorim Neto 2006; Martinez-Gallardo 2012). In light of these fundamental goals, at least two mechanisms converge on the prediction that *presidentas* will appoint more women to their cabinets. While the first mechanism focuses on bottom-up pressures, the second highlights elite-driven factors.

The first argument relates to *presidentas'* mandates. A democratic vote allowed each of the *presidentas* in this study to become the first female chief executive of their respective countries. This suggests these women presidents could justifiably interpret part of their own mandates as popular demands for a greater presence of women in the executive branch. Although increasing women's representation in the executive branch may not be the most important aspect of a *presidenta's* mandate, it still remains that male presidents are less likely than *presidentas* to infer a public call for greater female representation from their mandate.

Anecdotal evidence supports the intuition that *presidentas* are more likely than their male counterparts to interpret part of their mandates in this way. Most of the *presidentas* alluded to their own status as women in their inaugural speeches and expressed a desire to improve gender equality (Bachelet 2006; Chinchilla 2010; Fernández de Kirchner, 2007; Rousseff 2011). Panama's President Mireya Moscoso declared in her 1999 inaugural address that society has often failed to recognize women's political talents. She asserted that both women and men are equally capable of successfully performing as national politicians and called for society to allow women to take up leadership roles. (Gonzalez 1999). *Presidentas'* evocation of gender issues in high-profile speeches suggests that they perceived the entry of women into politics as a goal that their constituencies shared, offering a voter-oriented reason to appoint *ministras*.

Yet, bottom-up pressures from voters are not the only possible drivers of executives' cabinet choices. Networks are especially relevant for appointment processes, which often rely on personal trust and recommendations (Amorim Neto 2006; Camerlo

and Pérez-Liñán 2012; Gallardo-Martinez 2012). The second reason why *presidentas* would appoint more *ministras* than male presidents highlights the consequences of homophily, the tendency of individuals with similar characteristics to "flock together." Recurrent throughout societies, homophily exerts a powerful homogenizing effect on perceptions and worldviews (Marsden 1988; McPherson and Smith-Loving 1986). Sociological research on gender homophily coupled with feminist institutionalist scholarship on gendered networks suggests that elite female politicians, compared to their male counterparts, tend to interact and exchange information more frequently with other women (Bjarnegard 2013; Crowder-Meyer 2013; Kenny 2014). However, because men continue to dominate most political networks, it is likely that *presidentas'* networks will still contain a male majority. The difference is that *presidentas'* networks will have a higher percentage of women than male presidents' networks.

A comparatively higher proportion of women in *presidentas'* networks could lead to a greater likelihood of a *presidenta* naming a female over a male minister. Scholars of cabinet selection tend to agree that executives look for "loyal" and "like-minded" ministers to faithfully pursue the administration's policy agenda (Huber and Martinez 2008; Dewan and Myatt 2010; Indridason and Kam 2008; Martinez-Gallardo and Schleiter 2014). Regarding loyalty, presidents seek evidence – direct and indirect – that the ministerial candidate will not betray them. Repeated personal interactions as well as references from trusted advisors create trust, reduce uncertainty and therefore can enhance mutual perceptions of loyalty. Regarding like-mindedness, a *presidenta* also is more likely than a male president to regularly exchange political information with other elite female politicians. This gendered flow of information may help foster mutual

perceptions of like-mindedness on a range of political issues. Because these homophilous interactions foster mutual perceptions of both loyalty and like-mindedness, these characteristics are best conceived as intertwined rather than independent. All of this suggests that while homophily under a male president can work against women with ministerial ambitions, under a female president, homophilous forces can work against men's overrepresentation in cabinets.

In sum, given their historic elections, *presidentas* are more likely than male presidents to interpret at least part of their mandate as popular demands for enhanced female representation in the executive branch. Second, because *presidentas'* political networks contain more elite female politicians than male presidents' networks, *presidentas* are more likely to perceive female ministerial candidates as like-minded and loyal. Both the mandate and the network mechanisms converge on the prediction that, ceteris paribus, *presidentas* are more likely than their male counterparts to strategically name *ministras.* The next section explains how a reduced pool of female ministerial candidates powerfully curtails *presidentas'* decision-making latitude.

2. *PRESIDENTAS'* CONSTRAINTS AND THE FEMALE SUPPLY

Aside from nationality and age requirements for ministers, Latin American constitutions impose virtually no restrictions on selecting cabinet members. How does a citizen come to be considered for a ministerial position? Latin American presidents draft their lists of *ministeriables* according to informal norms that define the supply of "qualified" ministerial candidates. This helps explain why, when women constitute half the general population and possess similar education levels as men, the female ministerial

pool turns out to be substantially shallower than the male pool (Borelli 2002; Franceschet 2016).

Executives seek "competent" appointees to execute their legislative agendas. "Competency" – the perceived capacity to achieve presidents' goals – is associated with notions of political capital, technical expertise and partisan ties (Dewan and Myatt 2010; Huber and Martinez 2008; Martinez-Gallardo and Schleiter 2014). Following this, Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2014) demonstrate that Latin American presidents recruit ministers with "political capital resources" (PCRs), which they operationalize as political skills, ties to organizations related to the ministry and status as an expert on the ministry's portfolio. More PCRs do not guarantee that ministers indeed will perform their jobs effectively, but Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson do find statistical evidence that ministers with more PCRs tend to be more successful.[2] All of this suggests that because men tend continue to dominate politics, they are more likely to possess PCRs and thus the pool of male ministerial candidates will tend to be deeper than the pool of female candidates.

In Latin America's presidential systems, the relative importance of each PCR may vary. For example, in multi-party systems, party leadership experience and reputation among party elites is a particularly relevant resource. In countries such as Brazil and Chile, presidents tend to abide to "Gamson's law" by distributing ministerial assignments among party members (Carroll and Cox 2007). This allows presidents to preserve coalition discipline and legislate effectively. Party leaders often recommend other political elites as ministerial candidates, and thus a positive reputation among party elites

is often the key to first qualifying as a ministerial candidate, and then potentially earning an appointment.[3]

The concept of ministerial supply employed here diverges from conceptions of supply in some women in politics scholarship (Hinojosa 2012; Inglehart and Norris 2003). Revised modernization theories often argue that the female supply for politicians is growing, and this literature operationalizes supply with national-level measures of gender equality – for example female fertility rates and female participation in the labor force. However, in a global study of cabinets, Krook and O'Brien (2012) found that mass indicators of gender equality are relatively poor predictors of female ministerial appointments.

In contrast to the operationalization of supply prevalent in the modernization literature, this article's concept of supply could be operationalized by a variety of elite-based factors. Some of these factors include women's national political trajectories, women's experience as leaders in the business and intellectual spheres, as well as their standing among (historically male) party leaders. However reliable, quantitative cross-national data on these variables are unavailable.

I therefore use cabinet appointment theories to derive two determinants of the quantity of female *ministeriables*: (1) timing within a presidential administration; (2) gender stereotypes associated with ministries. First, Dewan and Myatt (2010, 2012) have formalized the argument that the pool of all ministerial candidates is largest at the beginning of executive terms. Executives routinely replace ministers who unexpectedly underperform, become implicated in a scandal or retire for exogenous reasons.[4] Because replacements happen relatively quickly and the candidate pool is finite, by the end of

their administrations, executives are often forced to substitute some of their once-preferred ministers with their second- and third-choice candidates. They contend that the supply of high-quality ministers eventually can deplete, thereby diminishing cabinet performance. Dewan and Myatt's (2010, 2012) influential models generate the expectation that presidents are best equipped to pursue their preferences at the beginning of their administration, when the talent pool is deepest and executives can select their most desired candidates.

Because the female ministerial pool is much shallower than the male pool, it is more prone to depletion. This leads to the first hypothesis concerning the conditions under which *presidentas* will name more women. In light of the *presidenta* mandate and gendered networks, *presidentas* are more likely to make a difference in terms of women's cabinet representation at the beginning of their administration rather than at the end of their terms.

In addition to intra-administration timing, the second factor that affects the supply of female ministerial candidates and thus reduces *presidentas'* decision-making latitude relates to gender stereotypes. Certain ministerial portfolios are often associated with stereotypically feminine characteristics (for example education and health) while other ministries are associated with stereotypically masculine characteristics (such as finance and agriculture) (Davis 1997; Krook and O'Brien 2012). Multiple studies in Latin America and other parts of the world show that women tend to be disproportionately assigned to "feminine" ministries (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005, 2009).

There are at least two reasons why women are more likely to possess political capital resources related to stereotypically feminine ministries, and therefore why the

female ministerial pool would be relatively larger for "feminine" rather than "masculine" or "neutral" ministries. Theories of the gendered division of labor predict that women will possess more ties to organizations relevant to "feminine" ministries and more technical expertise in "feminine" domains.[5] Women could "naturally" gravitate toward these areas, but the male political establishment's sexism also could play a role. For example, Heath, Schwindt-Bayer and Taylor-Robinson (2005) show that in Latin America, male legislators marginalize their female counterparts by assigning them to "feminine" committees, which often are low-prestige ones. Female politicians may accrue more political capital resources disproportionately related to "feminine" ministries not because women are necessarily more attracted to these domains but also because male elites have limited these women's political experiences to "feminine" areas. In either case, "feminine" ministries are more likely to have an abundant pool of female candidates – that is, women with political capital resources – than "masculine" or "neutral" ministries. Because elite women are more likely to have political capital resources tied to "feminine" ministries, the pool of female ministerial candidates is deepest for these ministries. *Presidentas* therefore are least constrained in appointing women to "feminine" ministries.

I so far have argued that mandate pressures and gendered networks mean that, ceteris paribus, *presidentas* are more likely than male presidents to appoint *ministras*. *Presidentas* are nevertheless constrained by the informal imperative to name ministers with political capital resources, and this means that the supply of female ministerial candidates is more reduced than the supply of male candidates. I hypothesize that *presidentas* will tend to nominate more women than male presidents when the female

supply is most abundant – that is, at the beginning of their administrations and for "feminine" ministries.

The next section explores Michelle Bachelet's first-term cabinet selections, which resulted in Chile's first gender parity cabinet. This case constitutes an extreme instance of a president striving to advance women's presence in the executive branch (Gerring 2007). Extreme cases are useful for conducting plausibility tests and tracing pathways between the primary independent and dependent variable (here presidents' sex and ministers' sex). The case study illustrates how the theorized mechanisms of popular mandates and gendered networks both seemed to drive the relationship.

3. AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE: BACHELET'S FIRST-TERM CABINET

On January 15, 2006, Bachelet earned over 53 percent of the vote in the second round – handily defeating her conservative male opponent. The media immediately began to pepper her with questions concerning her ministerial line-up, and Bachelet told the press her cabinet would be "made up of the best." What did "the best" really mean?

Bachelet had three aspirations. First, she asserted that "nadie se repite el plato" – or that "nobody go for seconds" (Navia 2007). This phrase indicated that she looked for new faces within the dominant coalition, and the promise seemed to respond to a widespread perception (confirmed by polling data) that Chileans, after 15 years of Concertación rule, were tired of the political establishment and desired new leadership.

The second aspiration – not entirely at odds with the first – was to assemble Chile's first gender parity cabinet. Bachelet had pledged to voters that she would allocate half of her cabinet to women during the presidential campaign. Gender parity challenged traditional norms concerning the criterion used to evaluate ministerial candidates, and

opposition to this promise emerged both within and outside the Concertación ("Diputado Burgos…" 2006; Solinas 2007).

Bachelet's first and second criteria constituted responses to popular demands for certain kinds of leaders while her third criterion responded to concerns of political elites. *Cuoteo*, or party quotas, was not a priority that Bachelet herself trumpeted, but nevertheless was evident given the historical context, party leaders' statements and journalists' speculations (Siavelis 2006). Even though constitutionally presidents can appoint virtually any citizen to their cabinets, Bachelet confronted intense pressure to continue the Concertación tradition of distributing posts among the coalition's party elites. Two days before the second round, coalition parties were preparing resumes and reference letters for their proposed ministerial candidates (Astorga 2006). Socialist Party Senator Carlos Ominami asserted that Bachelet's cabinet should reflect the substantial number of socialist votes (Alcaíno Rodrigo 2006). Radical Party President José Antonio Gómez said he expected that members from his party would be named to the cabinet since during the election the radicals managed to elect three senators and seven deputies ("Bachelet Se Reunió…" 2006). "If the commitment is not fulfilled, we are going to act with absolute independence," he affirmed. Bachelet's ability to legislate would be jeopardized if she did not – at least partially – satisfy party leaders' appetite for ministerial posts.

Chile's *presidenta* therefore faced a tall order. She aimed to deliver on her campaign promises and appease her coalition's party leaders. On January 30, 2006, Bachelet unveiled Chile's first gender-parity cabinet. The cabinet also, according to the press, featured new talent and partisan balance. Seven positions were allocated to the

Christian Democrats, five to the Party for Democracy, four to the Socialists, three to Independents and one to the Radical Party ("Presidenta Electa…" 2006). Bachelet appeared to meet all of her proposed goals upon her inauguration: she was relatively less constrained because supply is most abundant at the beginning of a presidential administration.

Mechanisms Why did Bachelet name so many women? She promised voters a gender parity cabinet. Yet, in addition to this clear mandate, gendered networks appeared to play a role in Bachelet's cabinet decision-making. Franceschet's interviews with Chilean politicians reveal that Bachelet seemed to interact more with elite women (potential ministerial candidates) than her male predecessors. According to one interviewee, Bachelet nominated more women than other Chilean presidents "because she knew more women and she saw more women. Women see women. Men do not see women" (quoted in Franceschet 2016). Some news reporters speculated that Bachelet – like many Latin American presidents – would name some of her "friends" to ministerial positions. All of the alleged friends mentioned were women – Estela Ortiz, María Angélica Álvarez and Ingrid Antonijevic. Ortiz ended up as the Director of the National Preschool Association (Junji). Álvarez became Bachelet's agenda director, and Antonijevic was named Economy Minister ("Gabinete: Lo que Tienen las Carpetas" 2006). Bachelet's Health Minister María Soledad Barría was also described as Bachelet's "friend." Like the nominations of other Latin American presidents, Bachelet's appointments – although not all of them ministerial – suggest the relevance of personal networks, which can foster mutual perceptions of trust, loyalty and like-mindedness. Nevertheless, because men continued to dominate the Concertación's political

establishment, women in Bachelet's expansive political networks did not seem to outnumber men, and Bachelet also named male ministers with whom she had previously worked and therefore trusted.

Therefore both mandate and networks mechanisms appear as key factors for Bachelet's decision-making. First, the fact that Bachelet promised gender parity during the campaign provides straightforward evidence for the mandate mechanism. Second, evidence from personal interviews and the national press suggest that Bachelet personally knew more female ministerial candidates than her male predecessors and appointed at least a handful of female friends or acquaintances.

End of Parity In accordance with Dewan and Myatt's (2010, 2012) theory, the supply of female ministerial candidates seemed to diminish over time. Soon after her presidential "honeymoon," she confronted several crises that prompted her to fire and hire ministers. The first crisis that prompted a cabinet shake-up was a series of student protests known as the "Penguin Revolution." Hundreds of thousands took the streets to demand education reforms. Bachelet shuffled her cabinet and managed to maintain gender parity – in part because the Education Minister happened to be male and could be replaced by another male without affecting the proportion of *ministras*.

The second crisis was the disastrous implementation of Transantiago, the capital's renovated public transportation system. Chileans questioned her leadership and decision-making capacity, Bachelet's approval rating fell to about 40 percent, and the *presidenta* publicly apologized for her administration's mistakes. She was able to maintain relative partisan balance after reshuffling her cabinet, but the modifications ended gender parity. Consistent with this article's argument, Bachelet tended to name a high proportion of

women to stereotypically "feminine" ministries. Women in her 2006 inaugural cabinet occupied 80 percent of "feminine" ministries, and after Bachelet's first cabinet shuffle, women led 100 percent of such ministries.

The case study thereby advances this article's theoretical argument. Given a perceived popular demand for gender parity and a network with a seemingly higher proportion of women, Bachelet tended to appoint more women when her female pool was largest – at the beginning of her administration and to "feminine" ministries. The next section tests whether the hypotheses hold up cross-nationally and through time.

4. DATA AND MODELING

To conduct statistical tests, I built an original dataset of ministers appointed by all democratically elected presidents in 18 Latin American countries from 1999-2015. The online CIA World Leaders Factbook lists minister names and ministries by monthly intervals, and I sampled both inaugural and end-of-term cabinets (Central Intelligence Agency 2015). To help preserve balance among the number of observations per president, I only include the first inaugural term and their end-of-term cabinet for each president who was elected to a consecutive term.[6]

The first modeling objective is to find out whether *presidentas* "make a difference" in terms of female ministerial appointments. "Making a difference" refers to whether *presidentas* display statistically different nomination patterns from male presidents. Three dependent variables assess this: the percent female in a cabinet (OLS), a count of women in cabinets (Poisson), and the minister's sex (logistic). The unit of analysis for the OLS and Poisson models is the cabinet, and the dataset includes 104 cabinets. The unit of analysis for the logistic models is the minister, coded 0 for male and

1 for female. My dataset includes 1,908 ministers. The same president appoints all of her/his ministers, and therefore observations of ministers appointed by the same president are likely to be correlated in the logistic models. Fifty-four is a large enough number to use either random effects for president or to cluster the standard errors by president (Angrist and Pischke 2008). I report the results for the random effects models and all results are robust to clustering the standard errors by president.

The first set of models includes all the observations in my dataset to test whether *presidentas* make an impact on women's cabinet representation overall. This paper's argument also implies that *presidentas'* impact is most likely to be statistically robust when *presidentas* are least constrained by the pool of female ministerial candidates. Following Dewan and Myatt's (2010) modeling of pool depletion, I first expect *presidentas* to name more women to "inaugural" cabinets but not necessarily "end-of-term" cabinets. I disaggregated the data by "inaugural" and "end-of-term" cabinets/ministers to test these predictions.[7] I again use OLS, Poisson and logistic models to examine the potential *presidenta* effect.

The next empirical implication is that *presidentas* are most likely to advance women's representation for "feminine" ministries. Only the logistic models can test the ministry gender hypotheses (feminine vs. masculine/neutral) since these data are at the minister level (with the dependent variable being the minister's sex). I used Krook and O'Brien's (2012) gender stereotype classification and coded each ministry as -1 if "feminine," 0 if "neutral" and 1 if "masculine."[8] This generated the variable *ministry gender*. Many scholars have pointed out that "feminine" classifications often overlap with low-prestige classifications. To untangle the effect of ministry gender from ministry

prestige, I coded low prestige ministries as "1," medium prestige ministries as "2" and high prestige ministries as "3" according to Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson's (2005) classification of Latin American ministries. The ministry gender and prestige categories indeed tend to correlate (p=0.53). The logistic models – featuring minister-level data – thereby employ *ministry prestige* and *ministry gender* variables.

The OLS and Poisson models are not equipped to test the ministry gender hypotheses because they contain cabinet-level rather than minister-level data. Yet, these models also must control for prestige and gender because these variables could confound the relationship between *presidentas* and *ministras*. Cabinets vary cross-nationally and temporally in terms of the proportion of "high," "medium," and "low" prestige ministries and the proportion of "feminine," "masculine," and "neutral" ministries. These models require modified versions of the variables since presidents with a higher proportion of high-prestige and/or "masculine" ministries may face greater constraints in naming women to their cabinets. I totaled the ministry prestige and ministry gender scores and averaged them for each cabinet to produce the variables *cabinet prestige score* and *cabinet gender score.* Higher prestige scores mean that the cabinets contain a greater proportion of prestigious cabinet positions. Higher gender scores mean the cabinets are more "masculine."

All models control for additional variables that could mediate or confound the relationship between *presidentas* and *ministras*. First, female presidents could be elected in times and places characterized by greater female access to elite positions. I use two proxies to account for this possibility: the percent female in Congress and the number of women in the predecessor's end-of-term cabinet.[9] The former variable routinely appears

in models of female appointments (Arriola and Johnson 2014; Claveria 2014; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Krook and O'Brien 2012; O'Brien et. al. 2015). Data on the percent female in the legislature comes from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2015). If a country has both an upper and a lower chamber, I average the percentages of each chamber. I include the second variable because some of the *presidentas* in the sample were ministers in their predecessors' cabinets and identified with the same party. *Presidentas* potentially could govern countries that already are on a path toward greater female presence in cabinets.

I also control for presidential ideology since *presidentas* may appoint more women not because of their same sex but because of their common ideology. In Latin America, ideology generally is conceptualized on a left-right continuum according to state intervention policy stances (Kitschelt et. al. 2010). Some scholarship suggests that left-leaning presidents express a commitment to social equality, and therefore they are more likely to appoint women (Levitsky and Roberts 2011). However, regional public opinion polls show that female citizens in Latin America often self-identify as more conservative, and thus conservative presidents could strive to please women by naming more *ministras* (AmericasBarometer 2004-2012). Since the relationship between ideology and female appointments therefore may be non-linear, I include dummies rather than a single ordinal variable. I coded president's ideology according to Murillo, Oliveros and Vaishnav (2010). Three *presidentas* were classified as "left" (Bachelet, Fernández and Rousseff) while one was classified as "far right" (Moscoso) and another as "center" (Chinchilla).

Finally, time may confound the relationship between *presidentas* and *ministras*. *Presidentas* tend to appear in the sample at later time periods, and the number of *ministras* increases over time as well. For the logit models, I control for the year the minister was appointed and for the OLS and Poisson models, I control for the year the cabinet was appointed. I also include a cabinet size variable (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005).

5. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results for the full OLS, Poisson and logistic models, which examine both inaugural and end-of-term cabinets and all ministry gender types. The *presidenta* coefficient is positive and significant at the $p<0.10$ level in all of the models. This is consistent with the argument that, ceteris paribus, *presidentas* tend to enhance women's cabinet representation. The OLS results show that the presence of a *presidenta* increases the percent female in a cabinet by just 6 percent. I used the margins Stata command to calculate the predicted probabilities for the number of female ministers (Poisson models) and the probability of observing a *ministra* (logistic models**).** According to the Poisson results, the presence of a male president generates the prediction of 3 female ministers, while the presence of a *presidenta* predicts 6. According to the logistic results, the probability of observing a *ministra* under male and female presidents is 19 percent and 27 percent, respectively. In other words, the presence of a *presidenta* augments the probability of observing a female minister by 8 percentage points, or about 40 percent.

<Insert Table 1>

A review of the cabinet characteristics for the OLS and Poisson models shows results generally consistent with the anticipated relationships. The cabinet gender score shows the expected sign (negative), and the coefficient is significant. This means that cabinets with a greater proportion of masculine and/or neutral ministries have a lower percentage female (OLS) and feature fewer female appointees (Poisson). Ministry gender is negative and significant for the logistic model. Cabinet prestige score is not significant for the OLS or Poisson models, but ministry prestige is significant and negative for the logistic model. The percent female in Congress is positive and significant in all of the models as is the number of women in the predecessor's cabinet.

In terms of presidential ideology, far left presidents (none of whom are women) exert a significant and positive impact on women's representation in cabinets. The dummy variable for far left presidents has a larger magnitude than the *presidenta* variable and is significant at the $p<0.01$ level. This result on the impact of left-leaning male leaders confirms findings from O'Brien et. al.'s (2015) study, which shows that left-leaning prime ministers tend to nominate more women.

Despite these initial results that reveal that *presidentas* make a difference when we take into account all the observations, the *presidenta* coefficient fails to attain the $p<0.10$ significance level for a few of the robustness checks, which are explained at the end of this section. Nevertheless, we do find some evidence consistent with the argument that *presidentas* influence women's cabinet representation overall. Is the evidence stronger when *presidentas* are least constrained by the supply of female ministerial candidates? Because the pool of female ministerial candidates is deepest at the beginning of the executives' term, *presidentas* should be most effective in enhancing women's

cabinet presence right after presidential elections. The ministerial supply diminishes as presidents replace ministers over the course of their administration, and *presidentas* are less likely to have an impact when they are about to hand power off to their successor.

The middle columns in Table 1 show the first set of results, consistent with this argument, concerning the conditions under which *presidentas* are most likely to make a difference. The *presidenta* coefficient is positive and significant at the $p<0.05$ level for all the inaugural models and fails to reach significance for all the end-of-term models. I again used the margins command to generate predicted probabilities for the other inaugural models. The Poisson results show that the number of *ministras* under male presidents is 4, and under *presidentas*, that number jumps to 8. The logistic results further reveal that the probability of appointing a *ministra* is 0.21 for male presidents – while this probability is 0.32 for female presidents, a difference of 43 percent.[10]

The results again show that far left presidents exert a significant and positive impact on women's representation according to the results for the inaugural logistic model and all the end-of-term models. This might suggest that unlike *presidentas,* far left presidents may not be so prone to a depleted pool of female ministerial cabinets. This could be because parties from the far left are more likely to have a plentiful supply of female politicians – and hence women with political capital resources (Beckwith 2000). Presidents with other ideologies – such as the *presidentas* in this study – may be more susceptible to female pool depletion.

The rest of the inaugural and end-of-term results are roughly similar to those produced by the full model. Cabinet gender is significant and negative for the end-of-term cabinets but not for the inaugural cabinets. Furthermore, ministry gender and

ministry prestige are significant and negative for the logistic models. The percent female in the legislature is significant and positive for the inaugural models, and the number of women in the predecessor's cabinet is significant for the OLS inaugural model and the logistic models.

I also argued that *presidentas* are most likely to improve women's presence for "feminine" ministries because they face weaker constraints than for "masculine" and "neutral" ministries. Table 1's final columns display results consistent with this article's hypotheses: the *presidenta* coefficient is positive and significant at the $p<0.05$ level for the feminine model, but the *presidenta* coefficients are not for the masculine/neutral model. The probability of a male president appointing a *ministra* to a feminine ministry is 0.31, and the probability of a female president nominating a woman to the same kind of ministry is 0.46, about a 48 percent increase.

As expected, ministry prestige is negative and significant at the $p<0.01$ level. The percent female in Congress and the number of women in the predecessor's cabinet is not significant for the feminine model, but both are significant and positive for the masculine/neutral model. Again, far left presidents name more women to both "feminine" and "masculine/neutral" posts, perhaps suggesting that these leaders are less constrained by gender-specific ministerial pools.

As a robustness check, I used data from the ILO and World Bank to include three indicators of female empowerment that vary by country and year.[11] Female in labor force is the percent of women 15 years and over who are actively employed. The second indicator is fertility rate, the number of children born to women. The third is female education, the female to male ratio of tertiary enrollment. Adding these female

empowerment variables does little to change the results. The *presidenta* coefficient is always significant at the same level of significance as the models without the controls for female empowerment with one exception: For the Poisson model, the *presidenta* coefficient is positive, but nevertheless fails to reach conventional significance levels (p=0.13). I also removed Bachelet's 2006 inaugural cabinet from the models to see whether the results were robust to excluding this extreme case. The *presidenta* coefficient failed to reach significance for the full models, but again reached significance for the inaugural and "feminine" models.

In sum, this article contends that when *presidentas* are least constrained, they are most likely to enhance women's representation in cabinets. Model results provide some evidence that *presidentas* make a difference when we observe both the inaugural and end-of-term cabinets and all ministry types. Consistent with this article's argument, we find the stronger evidence that *presidentas* make an impact under two conditions: at the beginning of their administration and for "feminine" ministries. I have argued that both of these conditions are best interpreted as indicators of a relatively abundant supply of female ministerial candidates. The following section considers a few rival interpretations and reveals that each falls short of accounting for the empirical results.

6. ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Could a lack of political capital instead of a lack of supply act as *presidentas'* primary constraint on female ministerial appointments? Presidents' political capital is often operationalized as public approval, the margin of victory in the previous election, and partisan support in Congress (Light 1999). According to this alternative explanation, *presidentas* face a trade-off between like-mindedness/loyalty and "competence."

Presidentas have strategic reasons to name women but because of this trade-off, doing so requires extra presidential capital. *Presidentas* therefore only improve women's representation in executive cabinets at the beginning of their terms when they are still on their honeymoon and tend to enjoy greater public approval.

It is likely that both measures of presidential capital and female ministerial supply can be interpreted as constraints on *presidentas'* appointments, and because presidents often shuffle their cabinets when their popularity falls, both of these variables tend to decline over time (Light 1999). Diminished capital and supply could together contribute to the empirical finding on inaugural cabinets. While we cannot completely untangle the presidential capital vs. supply variables with the Bachelet case study, a quick look at her cabinet decision-making nevertheless yields little immediate evidence for this rival explanation. Women's cabinet presence under Bachelet did not seem to co-vary well with her political capital. First, Bachelet's coalition controlled a similar percent of the lower and upper chamber – that is, majorities ranging from 54-56 percent – during her 2006 and 2014 terms. Thus, the party support in Congress component varies little and cannot help explain variations in women's cabinet presence. Second, Bachelet won a greater vote share in 2013 (about 62 percent) compared to 2006 (about 53 percent). Yet, she named women to 50 percent of her cabinet in 2006, and just 39 percent in 2014. Third, Bachelet ended her first term with record-breaking popularity – about 80 percent approval – but she never re-obtained a gender parity cabinet.

Moreover, if the presidential capital argument were true, we would expect the costs of naming *ministras* to depend on ministry prestige. According to this alternative explanation, *presidentas* should be most willing to sacrifice "competence" for low-

prestige ministries since the costs would be lower than the costs of appointing women to high-prestige ministries.[12] Empirical implications of the presidential capital argument are that *presidentas* make a difference for low-prestige, possibly medium-prestige and not high-prestige posts. Empirically, however, the *presidenta* variable is positive and significant at the $p<0.10$ level when we observe either low or high-prestige ministries, but not medium prestige ministries.[13] In sum, although presidential capital usually does offer presidents greater decision-making latitude and thus the argument appears theoretically compelling, this study reveals little empirical evidence consistent with its observable implications. Future research nevertheless should attempt to puzzle out the ministerial pool and political capital variables by process tracing cabinet nominations of other *presidentas* and expanding the cross-national, time-series dataset to include direct measures of political capital.

A rival interpretation of the ministry gender results relates to the role of public opinion in determining cabinet appointments. This article argued that *presidentas* tend to name more women to "feminine" ministries because the supply of candidates is deepest for these ministry types. However, it could be that voters prefer to see *ministras* in charge of "feminine" ministries and *presidentas* appoint more women at the beginning of their term because this is when the public pays the most attention (Martin 1988). *Presidentas'* decision-making is exclusively motivated by public demand, according to this account.

One way to probe this pure popular demand explanation for the "feminine" ministry type results is to see whether presidents seeking immediate re-election reshuffle their cabinet – ostensibly to earn greater public support. Using the CIA World Leaders Factbook, I reviewed ministerial lists for the months leading up to the election contests

for all presidents seeking re-election. Ministerial lineups are extremely stable as cabinet shuffles rarely appear during these relatively short, campaign periods. There are no signs that these executives began to appoint more women to feminine ministries – or to any cabinet positions – in anticipation of the next presidential election. In sum, this article maintains that *presidentas'* mandates for a greater female presence in the executive branch could help motivate *presidentas'* strategic choices to name more women when they are least constrained. A pure public demand theory falls short of accounting for this article's main empirical results. The article's elite-based supply explanation thus seems to constitute a more plausible interpretation of the empirical results concerning ministry gender type and administration timing.

A third alternative explanation again relates to the finding that *presidentas* are more likely to appoint women to "feminine" ministries. Rather than supply factors accounting for these results, they may be driven by the fact that that *presidentas* and *ministras* are like-minded on precisely the issues handled by "feminine" ministries – such as health, corruption and social welfare. It is possible that *presidentas* and *ministras* may share similar views *especially* on issues handled by "feminine" ministries. Research on homophily and gendered networks would nevertheless predict that elite female politicians would share information and exchange ideas on a broader range of topics. Furthermore, given that loyalty and like-mindedness are related characteristics, it is unclear why *presidentas* would value these traits only for "feminine" and not other positions as well. Again, future research should explore homophilous interactions among elite politicians to sort out exactly when homophily plays a role in generating perceptions of like-mindedness.

7. CONCLUSIONS: MANDATES, NETWORKS AND INFORMAL CONSTRAINTS

Men won every Latin American presidential election from colonial independence until the 1990s. Scholars still know very little about *presidentas'* consequences. Some work has examined individual *presidentas* (Jalalzai and dos Santos 2015; Staab and Waylen 2016), but this study constitutes the first cross-national analysis of the impact of Latin America's *presidentas*.

More specifically, the present article contributes to this literature by generating *a priori* explanations for why *presidentas* would deploy their appointment powers to improve women's representation in the executive branch and theorizing on some of the informal constraints preventing *presidentas* from doing so to a greater extent. The proposed theory yielded specific implications concerning the conditions under which *presidentas* are most likely to make a difference, and these predictions hold up according to the empirical tests.

This study highlights the power of unwritten norms for presidential decision-making and therefore contributes to the growing research on informal norms in Latin America and how institutions might be gendered (Annesley 2015; Helmke and Levitsky 2006; Krook and Mackay 2010). Bachelet may have insisted in 2005 that her ministerial decisions "…depend on me. I am the one who decides who will be my ministers" ("Bachelet reitera..." 2005). Latin American presidents do face minimal formal restrictions on their appointment powers. Yet, this article makes clear that informal constraints can powerfully dictate executive nominations.

How then should we characterize *presidentas'* impact on women's cabinet presence? Male presidents have slowly been nominating more women to their cabinets since the return to democracy in the 1980s, and *presidentas'* impact thus is best conceived of as one of acceleration rather than initiation. Provided that elite women continue to accrue more political capital resources, my argument cautiously predicts that future *presidentas* will advance women's representation more than what this first generation of *presidentas* has already done. As supply constraints ease, subsequent *presidentas* will pursue their strategic preference for *ministras* to a greater extent than this first generation of *presidentas*. In this sense, this study could be interpreted as a study of "contagion" when the enhanced presence of women in one political office leads to greater gains for women in other offices (Thames and Williams 2013).

Yet, this optimistic forecast requires a caveat. One of the mechanisms driving the positive relationship between presidents' sex and women's cabinet presence is a public mandate. The fact that women have already shattered this glass ceiling in several countries could mean that subsequent *presidentas* may hesitate to interpret their mandates as popular calls for enhanced female leadership. This means that as *presidentas'* novelty erodes, their accelerating effect on women's representation in the executive branch could slow down. Although no country has elected two different *presidentas*, the Bachelet case offers some evidence of that *presidentas'* impact could diminish over time. Bachelet in 2013 ran as a former president – not as Chile's first female president as she did in 2005. Although she did say in the run-up to the elections that she would like to assemble a gender parity cabinet, this was not a central component of her 2013 campaign. Overall, major campaign promises – such as education and health care reforms – were far more

prominent components on her agenda than gender equality. In light of this, it is less surprising that women comprised 39 percent of her 2014 inaugural cabinet – far higher than the regional average of 20 percent but below parity.

Finally, female chief executives' impact may depend on whether a country features a presidential or a parliamentary system. Latin American presidents can nominate virtually any citizens, but in many parliamentary systems, prime ministers must choose their cabinets from a smaller pool of members of Parliament. It is unsurprising, then, that my results contradict O'Brien et. al's (2015) findings on the impact of female prime ministers in advanced industrial democracies. Evidence that female prime ministers do *not* appoint more women to their cabinet than male prime ministers and could be at least partly explained by a more restricted pool of female ministerial candidates. Nevertheless, as more women are elected to legislatures globally, the supply of female ministerial candidates may become less of a constraint for female chief executives around the world.

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