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Women's Movements and the Feminization of Power in Post-Crisis Democracies

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Abstract: This undergraduate thesis seeks to explain how women get elected to executive positions in post-crisis democracies. I argue that women's movement in civil society is inextricably linked to changes in attitudes about women's leadership and this organization at a grassroots level both reinforces and challenges gender stereotypes. Election outcomes in which women become national leaders are the result of a process in which the political opportunity structure opens to allow women's organization in civil society, women challenge preconceived ideas about their political participation and reform outmoded gender stereotypes, and the international community and nongovernmental organizations provide support for a feminist agenda. I use Nicaragua, Liberia, and Chile to test whether these variables are present prior to the elections of Chamorro, Bachelet, and Johnson-Sirleaf.

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Introduction

The twentieth and early-twenty first centuries have seen an impressive wave of women come to power in countries around the globe. Despite social and structural barriers to leadership positions, women comprised 13.8% of national parliament seats throughout the world at the turn of the century.[1] In addition, fifty-eight women have served as heads of state or government since 1900, and twelve women are currently heads of state and/or government.[2] While these figures do not seem astronomically high, they can be interpreted as signs of improvement and provide cause for speculation about the many possible reasons for women's increasing leadership. Feminist scholars and political scientists have attempted to articulate variables affecting women's decision-making, such as gender, race, and socio-economic background, but less attention has been focused on describing factors that lead to the election of women. The simple question of why women get elected has not prompted feminist scholars and political scientists to formulate a satisfactory answer. While studies on women at the parliamentary level have produced compelling evidence that institutional design coupled with quotas plays a major role in encouraging the feminization of power,[3] theories explaining the elections of women heads of state and government, such as the gender resistance approach,[4] are far less appealing since they are often unable to explain the multitude of social factors that encourage or prohibit women's advancement in politics. At the same time, institutional features such as quotas, fail to explain the role of gender politics in elevating women to public office.

Another complication that arises when looking at women as leaders and decision-makers is the extent to which past theoretical approaches, especially the gender-leadership approach,[5]

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[1] Hoogensen and Solheim, 2006: 8.
[2] Hoogensen and Solheim, 2006: 15.
[3] Hoogensen and Solheim, 2006: 17.
[4] The gender resistance approach and others will be discussed in detail in subsequent pages.
[5] The gender-leadership approach will be explained in detail in subsequent pages.

insulate women from wider trends in civil society. Scholars studying women in power point to personal obstacles such as discrimination, which are undeniably prevalent throughout societies, that "exceptional" women must overcome in order to become leaders. But this approach fails consider the role of social movements in propelling women into the public sphere. The potential for linking leadership studies, which oftentimes concentrates on the individual, and social movement theory is remarkably salient in the case of women leaders. Especially relevant is the fact that women's rights movements play an integral part in renegotiating gender roles and shaping perceptions of masculinity and femininity, as well as mustering support for women's leadership on various levels, including in the home, community, and local and national politics. At the same time, both women leaders and women's rights activists are engaged in rejecting and confirming gender stereotypes, as well as emphasizing desirable feminine features that help women advance politically. The election of a female executive is not the result of accomplishments made by "exceptional" women, but rather it is influenced by wider trends in society that include support for women's leadership and involvement in politics, attitudes and perceptions about women's roles, and, in post-crisis democracies, the weariness of war, conflict, and instability that many experience.

Because explaining the election of female executives requires more than an examination of women leaders' backgrounds, a few theories and concepts describing wider trends in civil society are needed to understand why women get elected. Frameworks such as contentious pluralism[6] and concepts like inclusionary adaptation[7] help explain how movements in civil society have the potential to open political space to marginalized groups, while gender theories

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[6] Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 273.
[7] Nylen, 2003, 4.

such as difference feminism[8] and gender-leadership,[9] gender resistance[10] promote ideas about feminine stereotypes that have worked to some women leaders' advantages. Together, these frameworks construct a clearer picture of the influences on women's leadership and provide an explanation for the election of women executives, but in isolation they fail to fully explain why women get elected. In addition, looking at social movements, gender politics, and the election of female executives simultaneously may help construct an explanation of the feminization of power as a process, rather than a static event.

Of course, attempts to explain why women get elected presuppose an underlying normative stance that the election of female executives is an important topic, one with potential social and political consequences. Numerous questions tend to flow from the study of women executives, such as: Do women leaders have a different approach to politics? Do they pursue different agendas? Are they more receptive to women's demands? Are they as competent as their male counterparts? Are they more peaceful and less corrupt? These are all important questions, but ones that do not form the foci of this paper. I will take up only issues that may explain the election of female executives, rather than focusing on what happens after female executives take office. For instance, if assumptions about gender assert that women are less corrupt in Liberia, for instance, I will try to explain this phenomenon to the extent that it affects election outcomes. However, I will not attempt to answer questions about whether women are better or worse leaders than their male counterparts. I am simply concerned about how and why women get elected. This paper will examine why women get elected in recently democratizing countries. The cases I have chosen—Liberia, Chile, and Nicaragua—are countries undergoing

[8] Difference feminism will be discussed in detail in subsequent pages.
[9] Gender-leadership will be discussed in detail in subsequent pages.
[10] Gender resistance will be discussed in detail in subsequent pages.

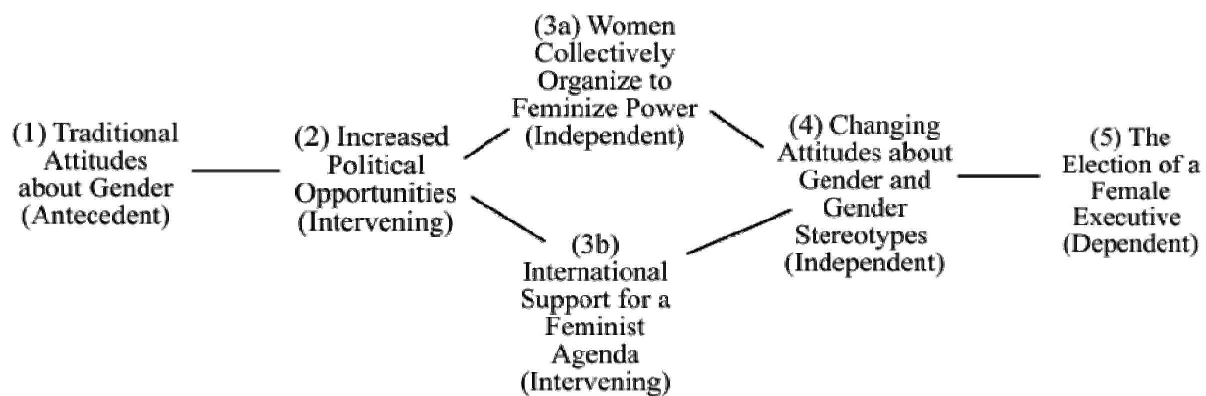
transformation to democracy from crisis situations. This transition may present obvious complications for comparison with other countries where women leaders have been elected.

Research Questions, Hypothesis, and Methodology

This research is primarily concerned with why women executives get elected in post-crisis, democratizing countries. I hypothesize that increased political opportunities, women's movement, international and nongovernmental support for a feminist agenda, and changing attitudes about gender roles and women's leadership capabilities influence the election of female executive in post-crisis democracies. I have chosen three case studies to test my hypothesis. Liberia, Nicaragua, and Chile are recently democratizing countries emerging from crisis situations and each of them has elected a female executive in the past few decades. These three countries are my units of analysis (n=3). Figure 1 shows how the variables interact. First, traditional attitudes about gender shape expectations for women's roles, which usually do not include extensive involvement in politics or political organizations. Traditional roles tend to define women as nurturers and primary care givers in the private realm, while public life is a component of masculinity. Increasing political opportunities for women come as a result of crisis situations and war in which men are sent in large numbers into combat, leaving women to perform tasks that may be traditionally masculine, such as providing services and taking jobs and leadership roles outside the home. Opportunities may also be present as a result of party realignment, cooptation, or relaxed political repression. Women's organizing might begin with philanthropy or relief organizations, but slowly morph into women's organizing specifically as women with gender-specific concerns. In doing so, women's rights groups form to influence politics and promote peace and equality. Around the same time, international support through

international organizations (IOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) encourage women's movements to become involved in the peace process and supporting a women's rights agenda. The women's movement can confirm and disconfirm gender stereotypes, ultimately having the effect of changing attitudes about women's traditional roles and leadership capabilities. Finally, the outcome of liberalized attitudes about gender is the election of a female executive. The feminization of power may, in turn, increase political opportunities for other women who wish to enter politics.

Fig. 1 Methodology



Traditional attitudes about gender is the antecedent variable because it comes before and makes possible women's collective action. [11] Examining traditional attitudes about gender also provides a reference point for explaining changes in women's roles during crisis situations. Increased political opportunities occur after traditional attitudes about gender and before women's organization. Political opportunities are crucial for the development of women's movements because they describe a period when women's organizing is enabled as a result of

[11] Joslyn and Johnson, 1995: 46.

external factors.[12] The women's movement influences changing attitudes about gender and women's acceptable roles in the public sphere. International support through international organizations and nongovernmental organizations tends to occur alongside women's organizing, but may not directly influence the feminization of power. Additionally, international support can help invigorate and sustain women's movements. International support is intervening because it is closer in time to the dependent variable.[13] The feminization of power may have the effect of reinforcing political opportunities for women. Once the executive office has become feminized, the possibility that women can lead countries opens up possibilities for other women seeking office.

To measure the independent variables, I will begin by looking at traditional attitudes about gender and changes in political opportunity structures that allowed women's movements to organize. Then, I will examine the women's movements' agendas to find out whether women's politics of resistance included the feminization of power as a goal, and to see how women used gender stereotypes to argue that feminine qualities are essential to political leadership. Next, I will measure international support by examining whether NGOs and IOs supported the women's movements directly or encouraged an explicitly feminist agenda. Finally, I will look at ways in which changes in attitudes about gender affected election outcomes. Measuring attitudes is difficult without survey evidence, so I will use pre-existing research to examine perceptions of female candidates.

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[12] A more thorough discussion of political opportunities can be found in the review of the literature in subsequent pages.
[13] Joslyn and Johnson, 1995: 46.

Why do Women Get Elected?: Gender Stereotypes and Female Candidates

Gender stereotypes have a negative connotation when we think about the ways in which they hinder individual freedom and have a tendency to construct, rather than tear down, barriers for both men and women. This paradigm has been traditionally true for women in politics. However, women's rights activists and female politicians have found ways to reclaim "feminine virtue" and apply it to public life. Political scientist Gunhild Hoogensen and historian Bruce Solheim examine this phenomenon in their book *Women in Power: World Leaders Since 1960*. In their survey of the political careers of twenty two women leaders, Hoogensen and Solheim apply various gender theory approaches to interpreting women's leadership. Their frameworks are also tools for analyzing women's movements. Although they introduce liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism, postmodern feminism, difference feminism, global feminism, and gender resistance in their framework,[14] only the last three seem to be useful for analyzing Nicaragua, Liberia, and Chile.

Liberal feminism—the brand that we in the United States are most familiar with—stresses the need for legal equality and equal rights. Liberal feminists often adopt rights rhetoric that is highly individualistic and culture-specific. Hoogensen and Solheim find that "What is compelling about this approach is the strength of the individual—it is assumed/expected that through legal equality all individuals, women included, would have access to the same opportunities."[15] The assumption that women would have the same opportunities because they are similar to and equal to their male counterparts is an idea that does not seem to be shared by feminists in Nicaragua, Liberia, and Chile. Surely women desire to have more opportunities, but

[14] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006, 25-36.
[15] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006, 25.

their demands are framed in terms of a shared identity and collective experiences, such as motherhood or participation in philanthropic associations.[16]

Marxist feminism also fails as an analytical framework because of its ignorance of women's position in the home. Certainly women in Nicaragua, Chile, and Liberia organized based on class status, but the elimination of capitalist oppression was not their main goal in organizing as women. Instead, women's groups tended to emphasize traditional feminine qualities, such as women's roles as peacemakers and nurturers in the home, to negotiate their roles in the politics and conflict negotiations, a position more closely associated with difference feminism. In addition, women in many societies "do not work in the public domain, and therefore contribute to the unpaid labor force in the home, upon which the capitalist system depends."[17] Women in Chile, Nicaragua, and Liberia did not denounce their roles as unpaid nurturers, but instead called on them to justify their involvement in the public sphere. Similarly, radical feminism is unable to account for women's organizing to feminize power in Nicaragua, Liberia, and Chile because "its object was to escape the sex/gender system,"[18] rather than to reinforce and renegotiate traditional perceptions of gender.

Finally, postmodernism is problematic when attempting to assess women's movement and the feminization of power. Postmodern feminists seek to deconstruct gender roles and expose their flaws in an anti-essentialist way. This process conflicts with the fundamental basis of women's politics of resistance, a concept that has guided women's organizing in post-crisis countries. Hoogensen and Solheim admit that even the best assessment of postmodern feminist thought is tainted by flaws in logic:

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[16] I will discuss more about women's collective resistance when I talk about Sara Ruddick's concept of "women's politics of resistance."
[17] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006: 27.
[18] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006: 27.

> The benefits of the approach are that the social constructs that pose as obstacles to women entering political office are torn apart, revealing the nonsensical basis of these constructions (gender roles), supporting the notion that women, like men, should not face any hindrances. How to export this critical thinking to the society, however, without constructing other concepts that would thereafter be subject to deconstruction is often not clear.[19]

In addition, the theoretical basis of postmodernism and its reliance on deconstructing gender roles is antithetical to tactics used by women's rights advocates in Nicaragua, Chile, and Liberia because postmodernism threatens to take the away domestic power that many women rely on to justify their authority and worth in patriarchal societies.

Difference feminism seems to be the most applicable for describing the election of female executives in post-crisis countries. Hoogensen and Solheim offer a controversial description of difference feminism:

> Unlike the radical feminists . . . difference feminists argue that men and women are coded to behave differently. Females, in this view, are primarily oriented toward life giving, cooperative, nurturing activities, while males are inherently more aggressive, sexually promiscuous, prone to violence, and oriented toward dominating women sexually. Women are inherently more nurturing, more submissive (particularly to men), sexually less promiscuous, and less driven by sexual urges, while more concerned about children and infants.[20]

The authors are careful to point out that "While there is disagreement as to the causes of these differences, there is a remarkable level of agreement on the differences themselves."[21] This idea is important for distinguishing the difference feminists who believe these behaviors are innate from the ones who advocate a strict social constructionist view.[22] In any event, the difference feminist approach has several implications: it promotes and reaffirms gender stereotypes that may make it more difficult for women to enter politics, it sees women's under-representation in

[19] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006: 31-32.
[20] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006, 30.
[21] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006, 30.
[22] See Iris Young's "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics" in *Theorizing Feminisms* (New York: Oxford UP, 2006) 174-187. Young explains that difference feminism, while focused on privileging feminine qualities over masculine ones, is still the result of gender differences, not sexual ones. Traditional feminine values are the result of socialization rather than "coding" as Hoogensen and Solheim state in their definition.

politics as a choice rather than a result of structural and social barriers,[23] and it raises questions about women's fit-ness for public office.[24] When women's movements adopt this approach, it can oftentimes be a double-edged sword, casting women as either inept for office holding, or peaceful, uncorrupt candidates whose purpose in politics should be to clean up the messes left by male politicians.

Another framework for analyzing women's leadership is global feminism. The notion that all women's experiences with oppression are different and vary across borders forms the core of this theory. Global feminism also underscores the importance of diversity within the women's movement, and, for female leaders, this lack of universality means that "What makes, therefore, a non-Western woman leader may not be the same circumstances, values, or roles that influence the election of Western woman leaders."[25] The global feminist framework posits that leadership qualities vary across nations and ethnic groups, and warns us not to assume that masculine qualities that are seen as valuable among women leaders in the West, such as aggressiveness and bellicosity, are marketable to voters in non-Western countries.

Finally, looking at women's leadership as an act of gender resistance can be helpful for explaining individual cases of female leadership, but taken alone this approach fails to consider ways that gender politics change over time. For example, women's political leadership may be less antithetical to prescribed feminine roles for women after periods of women's widespread political participation and involvement in civic organizations. One the other hand, if slightly revised to take into account the ways that both female leaders and the women's movement engage in defying gender expectations, the gender resistance approach is useful for connecting women's collective gender resistance with female leader's individual resistance. Hoogensen and

[23] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006, 30-31.
[24] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006, 30-31.
[25] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006, 32-33.

Solheim define gender resistance as the act of defying one's expected role in society. Women leaders engage in gender resistance because they seek power, an act that poses a direct threat to women's subordination in patriarchal societies.[26] Women's entrance into politics is threatening not only because of the responsibilities that come with public office holding, but because of the symbolic act of electing a woman into power. Once one or a few women have broken through barriers to public office holding, their actions send a clear message that a more widespread feminization of power is possible.

Another way of looking at female candidates and gender is what I call the gender-leadership approach. In Michael Genovese's and Seth Thompson's piece "Women as Chief Executives: Does Gender Matter?" they consider gender a variable affecting women's leadership. The authors describe the importance of the gender-leadership approach:

> The study of women in leadership positions, particularly at the very highest levels of public decision making in society, promises to contribute to our understanding of both *gender* as a politically defined and politically relevant variable and the politics of the dynamics of *leadership*. . . . When the person who achieves a top leadership role is female, the political and personal biography both allow and force attention to interplay of perceptions, expectations, interpretations of life experiences, and myths that make up the social definition of reality and "appropriate" gender roles [Baxter and Lansing, 1983; Conway, et al., 1989].[27]

In other words, gender *affects* leadership. Female candidates must cope with a range of issues that bear little consequence for their male counterparts. Women have to negotiate their gender roles and find ways of appealing to an electorate that has preconceived notions about women's competence and leadership ability. Most importantly, Genovese and Thompson highlight the relationship between women's leadership and changing attitudes about gender: "The emergence of a woman head of government may be both effect and cause of social change and fundamental

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[26] Hoogensen and Solheim: 2006, 35
[27] Genovese and Thompson, 1993: 3.

shifts in the distribution of political power between men and women."[28] Therefore, the women's movement may be a major force in liberalizing gender stereotypes, followed by the election of a female executive, or the feminization of power may influence the development of a women's movement. In the cases of Nicaragua, Liberia, and Chile, the former is the case.

Another concept that pervades gender stereotypes about female candidates is corruption. Female politicians are oftentimes thought of as less corrupt than male politicians, whether or not this idea is true in specific cases. In post-crisis political systems, perceptions about women's political purity may be an important factor in the way voters foresee women's ability to serve in political office. The desire for clean government could propel women into leadership positions, where they will have to continue efforts to negotiate their roles as both women and politicians. Women's movements, using the difference feminist approach, have taken up claims about women's tendency to be less corrupt than men and used them to argue for the feminization of power and to renegotiate women's traditional roles to include participation in politics. The debate over whether or not women are actually less corrupt reflects widespread perceptions about gender, but whether or not this stereotype rings true varies on a case-by-case basis.[29]

Additionally, most societies tend to view women as more peaceful and nurturing than men, although attitudes about gender vary between cultures and over time. In his controversial piece on women and world politics, Francis Fukuyama asserts that the stereotype that women are inherently more peaceful is true. Arguing from a biologically determinist stance, Fukyama believes that women are less aggressive and more peaceful than their male counterparts, but that

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[28] Genovese and Thompson, 1993, 3.

[29] It is not my intention to explore the debate over whether gender influences the level of corruption in government. However, there are numerous studies available on gender and corruption at the parliamentary level from international organizations and political scientists. For more information, see Hung-En Sung's "From Victims to Saviors?: Women, Power, and Corruption" in *Current History* 105.689 (2006): 139-143 or Dollar, et al. "Are Women Really the Fairer Sex? Corruption and Women in Government" in *Engendering Development* (World Bank, 1999).

men, like the chimpanzees they have evolved from, are prone to violence and more inclined to participate in coalition building.[30] Fukuyama extends his ideas to democratic peace theory, stating:

> Democratic peace theorists have been less persuasive about the reasons democracies are more pacific toward one another. The reasons usually cited—rule of law, respect for individual rights, the commercial natures of most democracies, and the like—are undoubtedly correct. But there is another factor that generally has not been taken into account: developed democracies also tend to be more feminized than authoritarian states, in terms of expansion of female franchise and participation in political decision-making.[31]

Fukuyama goes on to say that the feminization of power on a mass scale will shift the nature of international relations into a more peaceful direction.[32] While Fukyama's insistence that women are biologically more peaceful than men is controversial and highly contested by social constructionists, his idea that women's leadership could lead to peace seems to be in line with common perceptions about women at home and abroad.

The Feminization of Power

The term "feminization of power" has its roots in the United States women's movement in the 1980s. Eleanor Smeal, former president of the National Organization for Women and the current president of the Feminist Majority Foundation uses the term to refer to the election of feminists to national office.[33] However, I will use "feminization of power" to refer to the process and outcome of women's movements in civil society. While the purpose of the feminization of power is to ultimately elect a woman to national office, the process is much more complex.

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[30] Fukuyama, 1998: 27.
[31] Fukuyama, 1998: 35-36.
[32] Fukyama, 1998: 36.
[33] The Feminization of Power. Prod. Peg Yorkin. Videocassette. The Fund for the Feminist Majority, 1987.

Women generally collectively organize as a result of changing political opportunity structures,[34] but sometimes the roots of women's movements are not overtly political. For example, some movements may form from philanthropic efforts or specific social issues but later evolve into a consciously feminist political movement. During this time, women organize outside the home and become publicly visible, while influencing people's perceptions about women's leadership and their roles in public life. Once the women's movement has reached a point in which it has adopted a consciously political agenda, feminists will encourage other women to become more influential in government by running for public office or taking on civic leadership roles. Finally, the outcome of collective organizing is the election of a female candidate to national office. Therefore, the feminization of power can refer to women's empowerment in civil society through their participation in collective action outside the domestic sphere, while simultaneously describing the outcome of successfully electing women to political office. For the purpose of this research, the final outcome, or the feminization of power, refers to the election of a female executive specifically and the process by which women are empowered in civil society. An examination of the feminization of power illuminates the connection between movements in civil society and the election of female candidates.

The term "power" is also worth defining because it underscores the connection between groups organizing in civil society and the individual. Sociologist Margaret Andersen states that "power is the ability to influence others. It can be exercised by individuals or groups and within and outside of formal social institutions. . . . Power in society comes as the result of a social process and social relationships; the use of power cannot be understood without reference to its social context."[35] The social context is important because it determines when and how women

[34] I will define and discuss political opportunity structures in subsequent pages.
[35] Andersen, 2003: 292.

can exercise power. Certainly women in societies that value feminine domesticity have the ability to wield power over household affairs because they are able to influence their husbands and children. But in civil society and public decision-making, women tend to be disempowered, especially when public activism is seen as antithetical to women's accepted roles.

Two caveats should be mentioned when discussing the feminization of power. First, the election of a woman to national office does not mean she will automatically have a feminist agenda or will be willing to consider one. In fact, she may choose to emphasize traditional feminine qualities in order to seem less threatening to voters with conservative beliefs about gender. Second, female candidates do not have to be involved in the women's movement to benefit from its collective action. The women's movement provides a foundation for challenging perceptions about women's leadership. Once the movement negotiates gender stereotypes and offers evidence of women's leadership capabilities, it has paved the way for women from across the political spectrum to become active in politics.

Contentious Pluralism, Inclusionary Adaptation, and Women's Politics of Resistance

One way the women's movement helps encourage women's participation in formal, as well as informal, political institutions is through a process that political scientists John A.Guidry and Mark Q. Sawyer call contentious pluralism. In their article, "Contentious Pluralism: The Public Sphere and Democracy," Guidry and Sawyer argue that democracy is profoundly shaped by the interaction between marginalized groups in civil society and political elites. Additionally, in "authoritarian or democratizing situations, public politics is important to the maintenance of regimes and states. Attempts by marginalized groups to gain a foothold in the public sphere can contribute to the development of democracy, even when those actors aren't consciously

organizing for the purpose of advancing democracy."[36] In this way, women's movements take on greater significance because they not only encourage the feminization of power but also strengthen democracy in post-crisis countries by making politics more inclusive.

Similarly, the concept of "inclusionary adaptation," as defined by William Nylen in his book *Participatory Democracy Versus Elitist Democracy: Lessons from Brazil*, describes democracy as a process in which government adapts to demands from marginalized groups in civil society. Nylen states: "Throughout the twentieth century, democratic adaptation came to include the extension of government-provided social goods and services in favor of citizens suffering the effects of various types of market failure, from economic downturns, to entrenched poverty rooted in ethnic and gender discrimination."[37] He also notes that adaptation is driven by collective movements in civil society. Inclusionary adaptation means that while some movements may be ignored, others may be acknowledged when political elites are moved toward more open and inclusive government as a result of pressure from groups in civil society. In post-crisis countries, inclusionary adaptation may be fueled by international and nongovernmental support for groups in civil society and their inclusion in the peace process and at all levels of society. In the case of a women's movement that intends to put women's representation on the agenda, inclusionary adaptation might include politicians' attempts to consciously increase the number of women who run for office or are appointed by members of their party for fear of losing women's electoral support.

Women's politics of resistance provides one example of collective movement necessary for inclusionary adaptation and contentious pluralism to occur. Sara Ruddick provides a succinct definition and criteria for women's politics of resistance: "A women's politics of resistance is

[36] Guidry and Sawyer, 2003: 273.
[37] Nylen, 2003: 3.

identified by three characteristics: its participants are women, they explicitly invoke their culture's symbols of femininity, and their purpose is to resist certain practices or policies of their governors."[38] Ruddick is careful to point out that "a women's politics often includes men" but "nonetheless it is women who organize themselves self-consciously as women."[39] As mentioned earlier, it is important to note that women's politics of resistance may confirm gender stereotypes, while simultaneoulsy challenging notions about female leadership. In addition, women's politics of resistance forms as a reaction to particular political and social circumstances, making it less spontaneous than it may appear at first glance. The timing of women's movements has much to do with changes in political opportunities that make women's organizing less dangerous. For example, in the case of Chile, political opportunities in the early 1980s opened because of a short period of relaxed political repression and realignment within the opposition. These factors enabled the women's movement to coalesce in 1983.[40]

Political Opportunity Structures

Women's power is constrained by the opening and closing of political opportunity structures. Increasing opportunities have the effect of further encouraging women's participation in the public sphere. Sidney Tarrow describes political opportunities in his book *Power in Movement.* Political opportunity structures are

> consistent—but not necessarily formal, permanent or national—dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action. . . . political opportunity emphasizes resources *external* to the group—unlike money or power—that can be taken advantage of by weak or disorganized challengers. Social movements form when ordinary citizens, sometimes encouraged by leaders, respond to changes in opportunities that lower

[38] Ruddick, 2006: 230.
[39] Ruddick, 2006: 230.
[40] Baldez, 2002: 7.

> the costs of collective action, reveal potential allies and show where elites and authorities are vulnerable.[41]

The concept of political opportunities is essential for explaining the timing of collective action and how movements form. Tarrow emphasizes that everything "from the opening up of access to power, from the shifts in ruling alignments, from the availability of influential allies and from cleavages within and among elites" constitutes change in political opportunity structures.[42] In post-crisis, democratizing regimes, political opportunities should be opening to the general population, thus creating more room for movements to influence politics. There may also be gender-specific political opportunities for women based on traditional or changing attitudes about gender, party co-optation, external encouragement of women's organizing, or the feminization of power at lower levels of government during periods of choas.

While changes in political opportunity structures have implications for collective movement, it is uncertain whether they might have direct consequences for individual women seeking political office. However, the collective organizing resulting from changes in opportunity structures may have the effect of encouraging the feminization of power at the national level. Once again, women's involvement in civil society can shape perceptions about gender, which in turn affect how citizens view women's leadership capacity. In return, the election of women to office can shape the political opportunities available to women. In a sense, political opportunities and women's participation in politics may have a cyclical relationship. While political opportunities for women may be created during a period of realignment, those opportunities are enhanced by the election of women to public office.

The three case studies I've chosen to test are Liberia, Chile, and Nicaragua. These countries have emerged from crisis situations in the last few decades and have held subsequent

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[41] Tarrow, 1994, 18.
[42] Tarrow, 1994: 18.

elections resulting in female executives. I will use these cases to illustrate the women's mobilization, gender politics and changing attitudes about women's roles, and the feminization of power. In all cases, I will look for the variables I discussed in the methodology section—traditional attitudes about gender, increased political opportunities, women's organization, international support, changing attitudes about gender, and the feminization of power.

Nicaragua

The history of the feminization of power in Nicaragua is largely intertwined with the development of the 1979 Sandinista-led revolution. In 1961, the Sandinistas, taking their name from Augusto Cesar Sandino, a former soldier who was executed by the Nicaraguan National Guard under Anastosio Somoza Garcia, established the National Liberation Front that was to become the Sandinista Front of National Liberation (FSLN). The FSLN adopted Sandino's resistance to imperialism, and advocated Marxism, liberation theology and nationalism.[43] In the period between Sandino's death and the 1979 Sandinista revolution, the Somoza family maintained a 42.5 year long dictatorship.[44] Anastosio Somoza Garcia's regime violently repressed opposition parties and used the National Guard to suppress dissent. In 1956, his sons Luis Somoza and Anastasio Somoza Debayle carried on their father's tradition of using military power to restrict movement in civil society, but despite their rigid control of politics, the FSLN still managed to emerge as an underground opposition organization.[45]

The creation of the FSLN marked an opening in political opportunities for Nicaraguan women. Traditionally, women in Nicaraguan society had never been encouraged to become active in politics because their roles were rigidly dictated by both internalized and codified

[43] Weber, 2006: 30.
[44] Weber, 2006: 29.
[45] Weber, 2006: 30.

gender norms. Part of the prevailing gender ideology under Somoza was that women were solely to occupy the private sphere, while men were free to engage in public life through work outside the home. Under the law of *patria potestad*, "the father had sole rights over his children, and his wife was regarded largely as his property."[46] In addition, the dominant binary gender system promoted two complementary prescriptions for men and women in society. *Marianismo*, or the association of "women with the figure of the Madonna, the pure and virtuous mother,"[47] was a powerful symbol of femininity in Nicaraguan society, one that would influence women in political life throughout the revolutionary years to the present. At the same time, *machismo*, or the "system of male superiority and dual standards"[48] worked against women's freedom of movement, entrance into the work force, and overall equality in society. However, the system of *marianismo* and *machismo* is largely prescriptive, meaning that many times women transgressed acceptable gendered behaviors in order to enter the workforce, for example.[49]

The Sandinistas eagerly took advantage of women's traditional nurturing roles to garner support for their opposition movement. This effort signaled the opening of political opportunities for women to become involved in the public sphere. In 1977, the Sandinistas used their doctrine of "Sandinismo," or the belief in "personal salvation through group alignment," to mobilize women under the Association of Nicaraguan Women Confronting the National Problem (AMPRONAC).[50] AMPRONAC began as a female-dominated human rights organization. The emphasis on human rights, rather than specifically women's concerns, was a result of the FSLN's control over AMPRONAC's agenda. Katherine Isbester explains why the FSLN chose to organize women using the maternal politics of resistance model:

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[46] Seitz, 1994: 199.
[47] Seitz, 1994: 199.
[48] Seitz, 1994: 201.
[49] Seitz, 1994: 202.
[50] Isbester, 2001: 29.

> The FSLN was conscious of the role that women played in undermining the socialist government of Salvadro Allende in Chile (1970-1973) and in supporting the government of Fidel Castro in Cuba. . . . It is reasonable to assume that they were also aware of the influential Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, which helped bring down the dictator there. It is not surprising that AMPRONAC superficially resembled the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo.[51]

Using women's traditional roles as mothers both appealed to women who had lost relatives under Somoza's dictatorship and the FSLN because of the women's ability to peacefully resist the Somoza regime.

AMPRONAC's first major public protest occurred after the murder of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro in 1978. Chamorro was the editor of *La Prensa* and an opponent of Somoza. He is also the husband of later president Violetta Chamorro. In response to his assassination, AMPRONAC staged a sit-in at the United Nations office, where they were imprisoned and tortured. Images of the strike were particularly powerful:

> The sight of women acting independently of men in such a defiant political manner was unusual, yet it appeared legitimate given that as wives and mothers they were selflessly defending their loved ones. In contrast, the militant crackdown . . . by heavily armed men was popularly portrayed as unnecessarily aggressive and even cowardly.[52]

Most importantly, women's well-publicized resistance as mothers had the effect of allowing women to step into the public realm and justifying their activism. This revision of gender roles would remain a way for women to argue their place in politics. Soon after the strike, AMPRONAC was forced underground. Many of its members participated in the resistance by offering first aid, safe houses, and controlling food supplies.[53] Other women actively fought in the resistance.

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[51] Isbester, 2001: 31.
[52] Bayard de Volo, 2001: 26.
[53] Bayard de Volo, 2001: 31.

Women who decided to take up arms incited a different sort of gender revolution, one that broke the boundaries of traditional roles, but still relied on maternal imagery. The hegemonic prescriptive role for women was to become mothers.[54] Karen Kampwrith describes the dominant image portrayed on government posters: "A young woman, she grinned while holding a nursing infant; over her shoulder a rifle was slung. Originally a photograph, the image of the nursing guerilla was reproduced in many forms, including public murals, postcards, and the official poster that commemorated the tenth anniversary of the revolution."[55] Lorraine Bayard de Volo, in her research on maternal politics, refers to this image as "combative motherhood."[56] Combative motherhood is not necessarily antithetical to traditional notions about women's peaceful and protective nature. In fact, "In contrast to an interpretation of these women as unfeminine or bad mothers, Sandinista discourse stressed that military women were exemplary mothers willing to offer their lives for the defense of their children and the country—the epitome of the selfless, self-sacrificing mother."[57] However, women would later use their roles in the revolution and the Contra War to defend their demands for equal rights, suggesting that—although the Sandinistas did not recognize it at the time—women combatants had created a competing gender ideology separate from women's roles as nurturers.

After the revolution, women took advantage of the new political opportunities open to them. Still bound to the FSLN, AMPRONAC tried to simultaneously promote the goals of the Sandinistas and create a base of support for communicating women's concerns to the party. In order to reinvent itself, AMPRONAC became The Association of Nicaraguan Women "Luisa Amanda Espinoza" (AMNLAE). Like AMPRONAC, the Sandinistas made AMNLAE a broadly

[54] Kampwrith, 2004: 19.
[55] Kampwrith, 2004: 19.
[56] Bayard de Volo, 2001: 41.
[57] Bayard de Volo, 2001: 42-43.

focused women's organization dedicated to the goals of the party. Twenty-five thousand women belonged to AMNLAE by 1981 and the majority of their projects were "feminine but not feminist."[58] AMNLAE's activities included an emphasis on health care reform and literacy. The fact that the organization's advocacy did not include a direct critique of patriarchy is reflected in its membership:

> Throughout 1980, AMNLAE's membership grew among housewives, market women, and mothers of combatants of Sandinistas killed in the insurrection. It attracted health and education workers who had been drawn in as a result of specific campaigns such as literacy, neighborhood cleanup, and health. But it drew only lukewarm support from Sandinista women professionals, government employees, and members of the party apparatus. Women agricultural and industrial wage workers, young women, and women in the army were noticeably absent from its ranks.[59]

One explanation for the lack of young women, industrial and agricultural workers, and women in the army in AMNLAE is the hesitancy that women had toward the difference approach used by AMNLAE to emphasize women's traditional roles and justify their participation in public life.

The Committee of Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs, formed by AMNLAE shortly after the revolution, is one example of how the Sandinistas privileged maternal politics over feminist ideology. During the Contra War, the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs organized to convince other women to support the draft, an event that marked a turning point in the gender ideologies espoused by the FSLN.[60] Bayard de Volo argues that in 1983, when the draft began, the combative motherhood image was replaced with the "Spartan mother" or the "patriotic womb" ideology, which "refers to the popular depiction of mothers as bearers of future soldiers."[61] When women lost their male children in the war they were popularly portrayed as "suffering mothers" in the media, an image comparable to that of the Virgin Mary. Comparing mothers to

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[58] Kampwrith, 2004: 28.
[59] Chinchilla, 1994: 179.
[60] Bayard de Volo, 2001: 94.
[61] Bayard de Volo, 2001: 96.

the Virgin Mary had two major political advantages for the Sandinistas. First, they could dispute "the counterrevolutionary discourse that presented the Sandinistas as godless"[62] and they created a vision of womanhood that supported the war, while offering an image of the party as peace loving.

Another way the Sandinistas sought to undermine the spread of feminist ideology when it conflicted with the goals of the revolution was to promote the idea of "personhood." Sandinista personhood meant that women should largely conform to masculine codes of behavior in order to help the revolution. Because the motherhood image retained much of its power through the revolution to the present, the Sandinistas' insistence that "women were to act like 'persons,' that is, like neither women nor men"[63] did not gain much popularity among the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs and other women thought the best way to support the revolution was through the promotion of the maternal image, especially the suffering mother image that the Sandinistas attempted to use to gain international support.

By 1986, gender expectations for women had begun to change at the same time political opportunities were once again opening for women. As a result of the Sandinistas' need for an increase in production during the war, and the increasing feminization of the Association of Rural Workers (ATC), the Sandinistas created the women's secretariat under the ATC to advocate for women workers and devoted more resources to the ATC.[64] The women's secretariat of the ATC was the first of all the Sandinista organizations to initiate an open critique of patriarchy. [65] In 1985, over 400,000 women attended constitutional negotiations to put women's rights on the agenda. In turn, AMNLAE expanded the discussion and began articulating

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[62] Bayard de Volo, 2001: 100.
[63] Isbester, 2001: 48.
[64] Isbester, 2001: 72.
[65] Isbester, 2001: 77.

women's demands for birth control and intolerance of sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence. The negotiations were a result of the opening of opportunities for women and the product of the negotiations was that "women redefined their roles as citizens, which not only had an immediate effect but also empowered them to shape their political world in a way that a thousand union meetings and literacy campaigns had not."[66] Women became politicized through articulating their own concerns, rather than adhering to the Sandinistas' ideology of personhood.

This new way of thinking about gender demands transformed the way women felt about their role in politics. Still bound to the maternal stereotype, women found ways to incorporate their involvement in public life into their conception of femininity. In this way, women manipulated traditional gender roles to gain leverage in politics. They drew upon images of combative motherhood, Spartan motherhood, and maternal suffering to justify work outside of the home. Bayard de Volo notes that

> Such [stereotypical] portrayals did not necessarily confine women to the domestic realm and traditionally female tasks. Rather, women as mothers were encouraged to take an active part in the construction of a new society and enter traditionally male activities such as grassroots politics, productive work outside the home, and the predraft military.[67]

In other words, women could draw on their collective experiences as mothers or as patriotic nurturers of the revolution without being relegated to the private sphere.

This final shift in thinking about gender is particularly important for explaining the feminization of power in Nicaragua during the 1990 election because of the explicit use of gender stereotypes in Daniel Ortega's and Violeta Chamorro's campaigns. Chamorro ran as a candidate for the newly formed United Nicaraguan Opposition, a coalition of opposition parties that enjoyed considerable financial support from the United States. Ortega ran as the Sandinista

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[66] Isbester, 2001: 77.
[67] Bayard de Volo, 2001: 101.

candidate.[68] Several factors seem to make Chamorro an ideal candidate, despite her support from the United States and her upper class status. First, she used her experience as a widow to gain support from citizens who identified with Virgin Mary image and the ideas espoused by the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs. Not only did she use her status as a widow to her advantage, but the fact that her husband, Pedro Joaquin, was a hero for the Sandinistas became an important part of her use of widowhood to justify her political aspirations.[69] She could call on her husband's patriotism and her role as a suffering wife to appeal to voters while invoking a traditional gender stereotype and experience that Nicaraguans, especially women, sympathized with. Second, she heightened awareness of her status as a mother and the fact that she was able to heal political divisions within her own household. Chamorro's children had varying political affiliations, yet the family maintained a closeness that she emphasized in her campaign. The message was that if Chamorro could heal the wounds of political division in her own household, she could do the same for the nation.[70] Finally, a vote for Chamorro was seen as a vote for peace. Florence Babb, in her research on Chamorro's neoliberal reforms, explains her election in terms of security:

> Nicaraguan's yearning for peace and economic security carried the vote, coupled with increasing criticism of the Sandinista government's management of the crisis. A gender gap in the vote, with more women favoring Chamorro, suggested that the revolutionary leadership paid too little attention to the disproportionate effects of economic hardship and political turmoil on women.[71]

The gender gap in Chamorro's election shows that women were tired of the ongoing Contra War and saw the election of a non-Sandinista candidate, especially one who projected a familiar maternal image, as a possible solution to protracted conflict and state crisis.

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[68] Weber, 2006: 69-70.
[69] Kampwrith, 2004: 40.
[70] Kampwrith, 2004: 41.
[71] Babb, 2001: 9.

Ortega also acted out masculine stereotypes to gain support during his campaign. He portrayed himself as a family man, "a sex symbol surrounded by young women, [and] a cowboy leading a charging herd of men on horses."[72] However, Ortega had the distinct disadvantage of being associated with ongoing Contra War, while Chamorro, a political outsider, was not associated with war, but rather the peaceful, maternal images she invoked.[73] It is not surprising, then, that Chamorro won the 1990 election after almost a decade of war, earning 54.1 percent of the vote,[74] with 52.4 percent of housewives voting for her over the 33.2 percent who voted for the FSLN.[75]

Most noticeably absent as a contribution to Chamorro's election was international support for the women's movement. It was not until Chamorro's election that the women's movement gained international support and resources, while at the same time it experienced the negative effects of Chamorro's neoliberal policies. However, the United States provided the financial backing that made the UNO's and Chamorro's electoral victory possible. The United States also helped to perpetuate the Contra War, and in turn, forced the Sandinistas to devote many of the country's resources to war rather than valuable social services and other necessities. Another variable that stands out is political opportunities. The revolution created political opportunities for women to organize, participate in the military, and enter public life, but not autonomously. The fact that the women's movement did not become autonomous until after Chamorro's election suggests that the transition of power opened more political opportunities for women to organize, but this time in opposition to the ruling regime. There are also notable changes in the priorities of the Sandinistas throughout the Contra War that had the effect of

[72] Kampwrith, 2004: 39.
[73] Kampwrith, 2004:39.
[74] Weber, 2006: 69.
[75] Bayard de Volo, 2001: 156.

mobilizing or demobilizing women, therefore opening and closing political opportunities for collective action.

Gender roles have undergone a remarkable shift since the Sandinista revolution. The ideologies of personhood, combative motherhood, Spartan motherhood, and the politicized mother image have given women a new license to become civically involved, while reshaping their traditional motherhood role. Chamorro's election signaled the beginning of the autonomous women's movement, while simultaneously posing new challenges that came along with the downsizing of the public sector and the implementation of neoliberal policies. With institutions such as AMNLAE and the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs being so closely tied to and dependent on the FLSN, the transition of power and the institution of neoliberal policies means that the women's movement had to seek out new forms of support, whether it was from nongovernmental organizations or a strategic break from the Sandinistas. Despite new challenges, women's political participation in civil society increased significantly in the 1990s, suggesting that Chamorro's election was a hindrance to the substantive progress of the women's movement, but it also helped reinforce political opportunities for women seeking to organize autonomously.[76]

Chile

Traditional gender roles in Chile are very similar to those in Nicaragua before the Sandinista revolution. The ideologies of *machismo* and *marianismo* postulate that men are "*macho*, dominant and sexually aggressive" and women are "weak, submissive, and requiring men's protection."[77] The image of women as pious and apolitical is also commonly associated with traditional gender roles. Women often model themselves on the Virgin Mary ideal,

[76] Babb, 2001: 25.
[77] Baldez, 2002: 12.

asserting a kind of "moral feminism" that is supposed to "render the women morally and spiritually superior to men" and emphasize "sacrifice, humility, passiveness and dislike for immoral, public activities (such as politics)."[78] Moral feminism has the effect of discouraging women from engaging in politics, while stressing the importance of women's contributions and power in the domestic realm.[79]

After Chilean women gained the vote in 1949, a "period of silence" ensued that effectively demobilized women and discouraged their organization on the basis of women's concerns and rights.[80] Women did not step back into the public sphere in a significant way until the election of socialist Salvador Allende in 1970, but because his regime was short-lived, the women's movement did not fully develop until the 1980s when Chile was ruled by a military dictatorship under Augusto Pinochet. The transition from socialist government to military dictatorship occurred in 1973, when the Chilean upper classes, with support from the United States, overthrew Allende and installed Pinochet. The results were disastrous for Chilean civil society since "thereafter, the constitution was suspended, media censured, political parties and trade unions prohibited." In addition, "During the bloody days of the coup, thousands were captured, detained, tortured, disappeared, and/or executed. Almost 3000 people were assassinated by the Chilean state during the dictatorship years, 1000 of which remain disappeared."[81]

The military government instituted the national security doctrine that guided the underlying ideology of the dictatorship. The doctrine "presented an extremely traditional and reactionary vision of women's 'correct' place and contributed to reconstructing a new cultural,

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[78] Dandavati, 1996: 26.
[79] Dandavati, 1996: 19.
[80] Dandavati, 1996: 19.
[81] Chovanec, 2004: 9.

political and socio-economic fabric in Chile."[82] Pinochet's government avidly promoted women's traditional roles as mothers and emphasized women's contributions to raising apolitical children who would grow up to support the military regime.[83] Pinochet saw women as supporters of the revolution, especially upper-class women, and sought to retain their support by appointing "female opposition leaders to positions of power within the government" and creating "a vast network of new women's organizations."[84] He appointed his wife Lucia Hiriart to the voluntariat, "an enormous voluntary service core of middle- and upper-class women," created CEMA-Chile, a coalition of mothers' centers, and created the National Women's Secretariat.[85] While these measures seem to acknowledge some women's concerns, Pinochet failed to consider any reforms that would advance women's rights. Instead, his heavy reliance on traditional gender roles had the effect of confining women to domestic activities and promoting their submissiveness to the regime.

Several openings occurred in the political opportunity structure under Pinochet that allowed for the development of a women's movement. During the early part of the 1980s, a period of declining political repression allowed women to form oppositional activist networks for human rights, although oftentimes they were clandestine. Political scientist Lisa Baldez explains that women's networks emerged as a result of two factors: the proscription of political parties because of their partisan nature[86] and widespread beliefs about women's supposed political apathy.[87] Women manipulated commonly held notions about gender in order to organize in a seemingly nonpartisan way. Baldez uses the term "maternalist discourse" to describe the way

[82] Dandavati, 1996: 26.
[83] Churchryk, 1994: 73-74
[84] Baldez, 2002: 116.
[85] Baldez, 2002: 116.
[86] Baldez, 2002: 126.
[87] Chovanec, 2004: 17.

that women used their traditional roles as wives and mothers to frame their oppositional activities, which were largely based on economic and feminist issues.[88] By 1983, the women's movement had coalesced because of the increased opportunities for protest and the formation of a number of women's rights organizations. However, women's organizations and other opposition groups held very few protests because they were still subject to severe repression.[89] Nonetheless, the decline in state-sponsored violence allowed women to come together in a public forum and demand rights and services from the military government.

Another opening in 1983 that contributed to the fruition of the women's movement was the realignment of political opposition parties. Two coalitions, the Democratic Alliance (AD) and the Popular Democratic Movement (MDP) emerged with women playing a vital role in each.[90] In addition, "women's organizations within the opposition formed a series of coalitions aimed at supporting the transition to democracy and advancing women's interests."[91] These organizations utilized preexisting conceptions of women as political outsiders who were fundamentally different from men in their political style and approach to argue that women could offer a nonpartisan solution to political, social, and economic problems. In doing so, they portrayed women as healers of political strife and division.[92]

Among the many important groups that formed in the same year as a result of increased political opportunities were the Movement for the Emancipation of Chilean Women (MEMCH-83) and Mujeres por la Vida (MPLV), or Women for Life. MEMCH-83 formed to promote women's equality and a return to democracy,[93] while MPLV "formed in November of 1983 as a

[88] Chovanec, 2004: 17.
[89] Baldez, 2002: 132.
[90] Baldez, 2002: 146.
[91] Baldez, 2002: 146-147.
[92] Baldez, 2002: 146-147.
[93] Baldez, 2002: 150.

coalition of sixteen women representing each of the various parties within the center-left opposition" with the shared goal of "establish[ing] unity among the opposition political parties" by "claim[ing] that women possessed a superior ability to transcend partisan divisions."[94] MPLV enjoyed tremendous success in mobilizing women against the regime and increasing support for women's concerns. Lisa Baldez explains the coalition's impact on women's politics of resistance:

> Between 1983 and 1988, MPLV organized and participated in more than 170 events, including protests, demonstrations, and hunger strikes, as well as roundtable discussions, meetings with officials, and press conferences. The group provided a safe forum for women's organizations to join together and articulate a common view of women's role in the movement against the military regime. The participation of notable female party leaders played an important role in this regard. Their presence signaled to various organizations that it was safe to attend and that attending might have some impact.[95]

Interrupting women's protest, Pinochet attempted to quell oppositional protest by imposing a "state of siege" in 1985. Although effective in temporarily sending opposition groups underground, Pinochet did not eliminate these groups from civil society or reduce their activity. Instead, they simply became less publicly visible until the period immediately preceding the referendum in 1988.[96]

Pinochet had written the 1988 plebiscite into the 1980 constitution, wrongly assuming that he would win the election and remain president. Women's opposition groups campaigned heavily for the "NO campaign," which would remove Pinochet from office and call from a return to democracy. In addition, in July 1988, twenty-two feminist organizations advertised in a Santiago newspaper their demands for a women's agenda. They named several concerns affecting the status of Chilean women including: the "ratification of the United Nations

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[94] Baldez, 2002: 154.
[95] Baldez, 2002: 158.
[96] Boyle, 1993: 166.

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the creation of a national government office . . . that deals with women's issues, the elimination of . . . sexism . . . in the educational system, and a requirement that 30 percent of all government decision making positions be held by women."[97] Other women's groups became active in attempting to feminize power in government. The Coalition of Women for Democracy (CMD), a "group [that] included women from political parties, social organizations, and feminist groups, as well as independents,"[98] generated lists of 100 women candidates for office. In their attempt to remain nonpartisan, the CMD included right-wing candidates.[99]

Women's mobilization until the plebiscite had been nurtured by the international community, nongovernmental organizations and the Catholic Church. International organizations supported the opposition's goals of returning the country to a democracy through organizing a series of forums on Chilean women's issues and providing funds to groups in civil society. Oftentimes, Chilean exiles would bring back ideas about women's rights after being exposed to other national rights movements, or they raised awareness about the human rights situation abroad to gain international support for pressuring Chile to return to a democracy. The Catholic Church also "sheltered the opposition from repression and lent moral and material support to victims of the regime and their family members—most of whom were women."[100] The United Nations played a major role in encouraging women to articulate their demands in *encuentros*, or regional gatherings held every three years. The *encuentros* helped garner support for feminism and connect Chilean women with the larger global feminist movement."[101] Nongovernmental organizations reinforced efforts by the international community to promote

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[97] Shayne, 2004: 103.
[98] Baldez, 2002: 175-176.
[99] Baldez, 2002: 176.
[100] Baldez, 2002: 126.
[101] Baldez, 2002: 141.

women's rights through funding women's studies programs and offering grants for research conducted on women's status. The Ford Foundation and other international NGOs contributed money to groups like the Center for Women's Studies (CEM) to study women and fund academics who organized workshops and public discussions on women's status. All of these measures contributed to feminism's growing popularity. [102]

During women's organization in the 1980s, two major competing gender ideologies emerged. The first is based on women's roles as mothers and the insistence that women require government support to perform their traditional roles. Women who believed that Pinochet's human rights abuses impeded their ability to keep their families together, and therefore maintain their traditional motherhood role, supported the transition to democracy to end human rights abuses. Their more conservative position on gender issues has been challenged by feminists who criticized women's traditional roles in the home and stereotypes about women's participation in public life. Well-known Chilean feminist and writer Natacha Molina comments that this approach has produced assumptions about women's nature that have limited their ability to engage in a wide range of political activities:

> Women's participation in social organizations has been closely related to wider economic, social and political processes in Chilean society. However, the dominant assumptions of our political culture have impeded the construction of women's citizenship. One widespread stereotype associates women with procreation and care for others and sees these as the underlying motivation for women's social involvement. This reflects the rigidity of gender socialization and is reflected in the content of women's demands from social and popular organizations (income, health care, housing, social services, safety, etc.) as well as from some labor organizations (education, health) in which women's participation is growing.[103]

While this gynocentric approach subverts traditional gender roles in some ways, particularly by insisting that the public and private spheres overlap significantly and that women's roles should

[102] Baldez, 2003: 262.
[103] Molina, 1998: 137.

be expanded to include participation in social organizations, some question whether defining women's identities in terms of motherhood is productive. But for women seeking to justify their involvement in politics, framing their identities around their roles and wives and mothers might not have been a conscious behavior, but one that still redefined gender roles because it encouraged the same women to question their roles in society.[104]

Chilean feminists presented alternatives for defining womanhood. Using a difference approach to gender politics, feminists similarly argued that women have a distinct way of being civically engaged. Feminists aggressively encouraged the passage of rights legislation, the feminization of power in government, and demanded socio-economic rights, calling on the government to "eradicate unemployment . . . provide sources of dignified labor, adequate housing, free education, debt relief and better salaries."[105] Like women who sympathized with activism framed in terms of motherhood, feminists also believed that motherhood is devalued and "that there ought to be greater social and economic value attached to motherhood . . . [including acknowledgement] that women's 'domestic work is one of the pillars on which the national economy rests, although it is neither recognized nor valued.'"[106] However, feminists sought not only to raise awareness about women's devaluation in the home; they also supported women who wished to step out of the domestic sphere. Protest against the military regime provided this opportunity:

> Women began to protest against stereotypical notions of their roles in society—roles of being mothers and housewives, roles that restrict their activity to the private realm, and roles that could not and did not permit them to take on the battle against a repressive state. Increasingly large numbers of women began to realize that if respect for life and liberty was to be reinstated in Chilean political and social culture, the military would have to go."[107]

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[104] Chuchryk, 1991: 159.
[105] Franceschet and Macdonald, 2004: 9.
[106] Franceschet and Macdonald, 2004: 9.
[107] Dandavati, 1996: 57.

While the Left generally offered more opportunities for women to become active in the public sphere through resistance efforts, they, like other political parties, appealed to women as mothers and wives. However, during the 1989 election campaign, "the parties of the *concertacion* also expanded this narrow definition to include women as citizens, as workers, and as participants in the creation of a new democracy."[108] This redefinition of women's traditional roles signified the high level of influence that the women's movement had achieved.

The return to democracy and subsequent decline of the women's movement occurred as *Concertacion* (Center-Left) candidate Patricio Aylwin took office in 1990. Some attribute the movement's decline to the entrance of women in large numbers into political parties and the cooptation of women's issues by the state through the establishment of government-sponsored policy-making institutions aimed at creating and passing gender-specific initiatives.[109] Alywin's campaign promised women as mothers and feminists that his government would "strengthen the family . . . [by] increasing the rights of women," "creat[ing] family tribunals, com[ing] up with programs to assist abandoned and separated families, and mak[ing] the rights of illegitimate similar to those of legitimate ones." In addition, "the *Concertacion* would pass legislation regarding domestic violence, equal rights over children, and establish equality between men and women."[110] When Alywin took office, his campaign promises translated into the establishment of the National Service for Women, *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (SERNAM), a permanent agency[111] that "pushed for three kinds of initiatives: legislative reform, specific social programs for women, and policies aimed at confronting inequality in society as a whole."[112]

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[108] Churchryk, 1994: 87.
[109] For some examples see Churchryk, 1994: 88 and Dandavanti, 1996: 112.
[110] Dandavati, 1996: 26.
[111] Baldez, 2002: 182.
[112] Molina, 1998: 131.

Since the transition to democracy, government sponsored initiatives have greatly improved the quality of life for many Chileans. The *Concertacion* has been responsible for a number of measures that have reduced poverty and maternal mortality, improved women's education so that women now average higher education than men, passed laws protecting women from domestic violence, and passed legislation to create a universal day care program for poor families.[113] Over the next decade, the Left remained in power and laid the groundwork for Bachelet's election through their support of women's rights and women's participation in politics.

The election of Michele Bachelet in 2006 with 53% of the vote marked the first time a woman had been elected in Latin America independent of her husband's poltical success.[114] Bachelet, a socialist, divorced mother of three, torture victim under Pinochet's government, and atheist, seems an unlikely president for a country as conservative as Chile. However, Bachelet's election is the result of a number of factors—the institutionalization of the women's movement and the "double militancy"[115] approach, the success of the Left in improving the quality of life in Chile, and the transformation of acceptable gender roles for women. But Bachelet's background provides another key for interpreting election results. Under the Pinochet regime, she was arrested, tortured, and forced into exile,[116] an experience that many Chileans were familiar with or at least knew someone who was. In 1979, Bachelet returned and obtained her degree in pediatrics and public health and, because of her involvement in the Socialist Party, President Lagos appointed her Health Minister, and later, Minister of Defense. During the campaign

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[113] Tobar, 2007: 28.
[114] Sugmund, 2006: 9.
[115] Susan Franceschet and Laura Macdonald discuss the concept of double militancy in their article "Hard Times for Citizenship: Women's Movements in Chile and Mexico." They state: "Double militancy has been defined as 'the location of activist women in two political venues, with participatory, collective identity and ideological commitments to both' (Beckwith, 2000, p. 442)." (6).
[116] Sigmund, 2006: 9.

against Sebastian Pinera, the candidate for the center-right National Renovation Party, Bachelet "expressed her explicit commitment to past achievements and goals in terms of equal opportunities for women, yet shortly after the runoff election it became clear that she meant to make gender equality one of the key themes of her government."[117] Some of her measures after taking office have included the creation of the "first-ever gender parity cabinet (50-50 men and women members)," the inclusion of "an unprecedented number of women into key political positions."[118] Bachelet's support for women's rights and equal participation in public life may increase political opportunities for women seeking to further improve the quality of life for Chilean women.

Bachelet's election represents changing roles for women in Chilean society as a result of women's widespread participation in social and political organizations during the opposition. The period of relaxation in the early 1980s opened the political opportunity structure for women, as well as party realignment in the opposition. Although the women's movement declined after the transition to democracy, women's issues were taken up by political parties and institutionalized through SERNAM. Simultaneously, the decline of church influence and women's involvement in the public sphere challenged the tenants of *marianismo* and offered women new ways of framing their identities. In many ways, Bachelet represents the New Chilean Woman, a feminist whose goals to increase women's representation in politics could not have been achieved without support from the women's movement and the subsequent emergence of new possibilities for self-identification.

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[117] Tobar, 2007: 28.
[118] Tobar, 2007: 28.

Liberia

Traditional gender roles in Liberia before the onset of the 1989 civil war are difficult to generalize because they depend on a number of factors, including membership in a particular ethnic group, class status, and educational attainment. Indigenous groups define masculinity and femininity differently than early American-born elite settlers and tend to define women's roles in terms of their status in the community. However, all indigenous Liberian ethnic groups hold in common is their belief in male dominance and patrilineal family systems.[119] The most extensive documentation of women's roles in Liberian society comes from anthropologist Mary Moran's field work with the Glebo in Southeastern Liberia. Indigenous women with high status are likely to conform to the traditional conservative Western definition of "true womanhood" and are called "civilized" in their communities. "Civilized" men and women generally speak English, claim to be Christian, are literate, and work in the cash rather than subsistence sector. Civilized women often wear Western-style dresses, while non-civilized native women are referred to as "lappa" women, a reference to their native dress.[120] Women, regardless of status, are responsible for domestic chores and nurturing. Agricultural labor is reserved for lower status women, while civilized women and elite women claiming descent from American ancestors perform domestic chores such as washing clothes, decorating the home, and they may also work in white-collar professions.[121]

Glebo women's participation in local politics has traditionally been high. Moran describes the "dual-sex political organization" in which "each sex manages its own affairs and women's interests are represented at all levels."[122] However, Moran goes on to state that "dual-

[119] Moran, "Culture": 1998.
[120] Moran, "Culture": 1998.
[121] Moran, "Culture": 1998.
[122] Moran, 1990: 30.

sex political organization does not imply political parity."[123] Glebo women have their own political organizations at a local level and can impose fines on men and women, but the men's political organizations ultimately make community decisions.[124] While local officials can be male or female, the Liberian administrative system tends to be single sex. Moran describes how women can enter the system:

> Although the Glebo dual-sex system recognizes a town chief and a town women's chief, each independently elected and having no kinship or marital relationship to each other, the overarching Liberian single-sex administrative system supports only one set of offices, always filled by men, who are expected to represent both the male and female populations of the town. For a woman to participate in this system, she must either take on the role of a man and perform according to male standards . . . or fulfill the complimentary role expected of the wife of a male officeholder, entertaining guests and presiding at functions but without a legitimate status of her own.[125]

Moran's description suggests that women in higher ranking political positions were expected to either completely reject their feminine role or to embrace a highly feminine and subservient version.

The civil war of 1989 interrupted women's traditional roles and created political opportunities for women to become involved in the peace movement "as women." Members of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), consisting of 120 men led by Charles Taylor, invaded Liberia on December 24, 1989.[126] By 1990, the NPFL had attracted over 10,000 fighters in opposition to the Doe regime, much larger than the two thousand belonging to the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL).[127] On July 28, 1990, Charles Taylor declared himself the president of Greater Liberia.[128] A month later, the Economic Community of West African States Cease-Fire

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[123] Moran, 1990: 31.
[124] Moran, 1990: 31.
[125] Moran, 1990: 167.
[126] Sawyer, 2005: 25.
[127] Pham, 2004: 99.
[128] Pham, 2004: 103-8.

Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) prepared to install Amos Sawyer as interim president while another faction leader of the Independent National Front of Liberia, Prince Johnson, captured, tortured, and killed then-president Samuel Doe.[129] Taylor backed out of negotiations to establish a new government, and Sawyer, who was without an army and solely dependent on ECOMOG, was again voted interim president.[130] In 1992, Taylor launched an unsuccessful campaign to take over Monrovia, and another failed attempt at a coup came in 1994 when Charles Juju, former commander of the AFL, entered the executive mansion in disguise and proclaimed himself president of Liberia.[131] Because of the lack of state stability and collapse, women's organizations had the opportunity to provide services to both victims of the war and combatants, leading many to join later women's peace organizations that organized explicitly as women's organizations.[132]

Women's response to the war was almost immediate. At first, they organized loosely, mostly through mixed-gender organizations in which women occupied key positions. Less than one year after Taylor's invasion, women's organizations began to provide relief for civilians escaping the war-torn countryside,[133] but it was not until 1994 that women formally organized against the war, establishing the Liberian Women's Initiative (LWI) in Monrovia on February 4, 1994. Six days later, the LWI drafted their first position statement on the civil war.[134] This document illuminates how women's activists framed their peace building activities in terms of

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[129] Pham, 2004: 103.
[130] Pham, 2004: 110.
[131] Pham, 2004: 115.
[132] Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: 17.
[133] Women engaged in charity and providing much needed social services through a number or organizations, most notably the Special Emergency Life Food Programme (SELF) which "organized food distribution systems for international relief during the chaotic period of the early 1990s that was marked by massive displacement and the subsequent relocation of individuals, families and communities." Cited from Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: 9.
[134] Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: ix, x.

their roles as mothers.[135] Additionally, the LWI's establishment in 1994 provides a unique example of the way charity and philanthropy organizations have the potential to transform into politically conscious pressure groups. Mary Brownwell, president of the LWI describes the metamorphosis of women's philanthropy organizations:

> I saw other women's groups engaged in relief activities, taking food and clothes to displaced people. But I said that we the women should do a little bit more than that because there were still atrocities all around. . . . And so, this wild thought came to me that instead of sitting down and saying men should play the major role [in peacemaking], we women should do something also. . . . So, we called a mass meeting . . . for women from all walks of life, regardless of where they came from, their ethnic background or religious affiliation . . . to form this pressure group or this movement, to help in the peace process. We did not have guns, but we felt that we women needed to do something.[136]

When women collectively organized to provide services where the government failed like distributing food, hiding and protecting male civilians, and developing organizations to help war victims, but they came to realize that they were only treating the symptoms without considering the underlying illness. In addition to these actions, women realized that a better way to affect change was to concentrate their energies on attacking the source of instability and resisting violence. Women's politics of resistance ultimately formed to combat violence, human rights abuses, and poverty, but was later extended to include women's participation in national politics.

Women's groups resisted exclusion in the peace process. In December 1994, ECOWAS organized the Accra Clarification Conference to negotiate the terms of a ceasefire between factions. Lacking an invitation to the event, women's groups wrote to ECOWAS requesting their admittance, but the organization refused to take them seriously. On the conference's first

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[135] The first few sentences are particularly interesting: "We, the women of Liberia, are the mothers of the land. We feel the joys and sorrows of this land in a special way because we are women. Not only do we represent one half of the population, but we also feel a special sense of responsibility for our children, our husbands and our brothers who make up the other half of the population. We take care of society. We soothe pains. We are the healers and peacemakers." Cited from Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: 8.
[136] Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: 17.

day, the women arrived and were refused entrance. In response, the women's delegation protested by sitting outside of the conference hall where they lobbied delegates during breaks. They were granted participant-observer status on the second day and continued their lobbying efforts. The women used media connections through friends and family to publicize their exclusion and finally received participant status on the third day. Through their participation in the Accra talks, the women's organizations learned that they needed to form a cohesive vision for peace. The LWI led a group of women's organizations to document atrocities against women and form a position statement on the war. The resulting statement relied primarily on extremely well-documented, factual accounts of gender-based violence.[137]

Although the women's groups were excluded from the first Abuja conference where the 1995 ceasefire was negotiated,[138] they received news at the second that Ruth Sando Perry, an active member of numerous women's peace organizations, was selected by ECOWAS to become Head of the Council of State with preparations for elections were being made.[139] Her nomination was a progressive step forward, but in 1997 Charles Taylor won the presidential election with 70% of the vote over Johnson-Sirleaf's 10%. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf later noted that Ruth Perry's selection opened the doors for future female leaders and she "dispelled the myth that women cannot be leaders."[140] Unfortunately, Taylor's election was a major setback for attaining the goals forwarded by the women's movement and for civil society in general, but women peace activists continued to meet the former warlord and his violent policies with peaceful resistance.

The second civil war began almost immediately after Taylor took office. This time, domestic and regional women's collectives organized to unite women from several factions of

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[137] Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: 24-5.
[138] "Abuja Agreement," 1995.
[139] "Ruth Sando Perry,"
[140] Liberian Women Peacemakers:, 2004: 30-1.

the peace movement. In 2000, Mary Brownwell and others formed the Mano River Union Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) to unite the Liberian women's peace movement to other women's peace movements in Sierra Leone and Guinea. The purpose was to emphasize the need for regional stability to achieve peace in Liberia.[141] Part of their mission is also to "raise awareness amongst women's groups and organizations on various issues fundamental to reaching a sustainable peace, such as respect for human rights, democracy, gender equality and development,"[142] suggesting that MARWOPNET serves not only to include women in the peace process, but to also strengthen democracy in the region as a whole.

In the nascent days of the women's movement, women's groups staged mass street demonstrations and protests to raise awareness about the peace movement and protest the first civil war. During Taylor's presidency, the women's movement did not neglect these tactics, even as they worked to negotiate peace accords with regional governments. The grassroots aspects of their resistance remained. In March 2003, the LWI, Muslim Women of Peace, and newly formed Liberian Women in Peace-building Network (WIPNET) organized refugee protests in Monrovia.[143] For the next two months, the groups led protests, including the assembly of one thousand women wearing white to symbolize peace in front of the Monrovian government offices and the gathering of hundreds of women chanting for peace and disarmament.[144] The protesters demanded "an immediate and unconditional ceasefire," international intervention, and negotiations between warring factions.[145]

In June 2003, the Accra Ceasefire talks began. It was not until August of that year that the agreement was signed, and soon after Taylor resigned. During the Accra talks,

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[141] Liberia Country Profile, 2007.
[142] "History," 2004.
[143] Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: 46-48.
[144] Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: xii.
[145] "Liberia: Women Demand End to Hostilities," 2003.

representatives from numerous women's organizations presented the Golden Tulip Declaration. This document presents a list of demands on behalf of Liberian women to boost their status in the peace process and in society. A notable transformation in the movement is evident. What began as women's involvement in charity organizations became a women's peace movement, and once again morphed into something more encompassing—a movement for complete political equality, with an emphasis on women's right to be involved in public decision-making. A few of the demands in the Golden Tulip declaration are particularly progressive, including provisions requesting women to make up 50% of the transitional leadership, women observers at the Accra talks to be made delegates with voting rights, and a proposition that all women should support female candidates.[146] During the Accra agreement, MARWOPNET became a signatory as a result of their role in mediating the peace discussions.[147]

That September, the United Nations Secretary Council approved the deployment of peacekeepers to Liberia and the Secretary-General submitted a report on the status of Liberia's humanitarian crisis. In it, he stresses the importance of disarmament and reintegration for approximately 27,000 to 38,000 children and women combatants.[148] He pledged to support "gender mainstreaming" in the Office of the Special Representative and civil society, and to "coordinate activities in the Mission area for the prevention of HIV transmission among civilian and military personnel and host communities." In addition, he announced the establishment of a human rights and protection unit to aid in disarmament and reintegration.[149]

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[146] The Golden Tulip Declaration , 2003.
[147] Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: 51.
[148] Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: 3. It is unknown how many of the women combatants were forced to fight and how many freely chose to. Many young girls were captured and forced to cook for combatants and become sex slaves to multiple men, suggesting that while women fought alongside men, male combatants continued to exploit and dominate women, oftentimes using sex as a weapon. I would argue that although thousands of women fought in the war, female combatants were seen as an aberration.
[149] Liberia Country Profile, 2007.

Kofi Annan submitted a progress report in October 2003 to the Secretary Council detailing reintegration plans for female ex-combatants. The report states that "female combatants will be placed in separate interim care centres . . . where they will receive special assistance in areas such as reproductive heath, conselling, training on women's rights and sexual trauma support."[150] Female combatants' reintegration was openly supported by many of the women's organizations. In March 2004, Gender Advisor Joana Foster called numerous women's organizations together, including WIPNET, MARWOPNET, the National Women's Commission of Liberia (NAWOCAL), the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) and the Liberian Female Law Enforcers Association (LIFLEA), to discuss the purpose of the newly formed Gender Unit. Among the many agenda items the organizations pushed were "peace advocacy, micro-credit, skills-training, trauma-healing, advocacy on sexual and gender-based violence, legal advice and representation, leadership programs, and research and activities relating to the reintegration of female ex-combatants." The women also identified several impediments to achieving their goals such as a lack of funding and education about women's participation influencing international institutions and their organization.[151]

In May 2004, the Liberian Ministry of Gender and Development organized the "National Women's Conference on Peace and Socio-Economic Recovery in Liberia" to develop a plan for women's incorporation into the reconstruction and development process. A few hundred women attended, including "women's NGO's, professional women, religious groups, women in political office, businesswomen, female traditional leaders, representatives of youth, the elderly, internally displaced women and Liberia refugee women."[152] At the same time, UNIFEM and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) coordinated efforts to disarm and reintegrate ex-

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[150] "First Progress Report," 2003: 6.
[151] Liberia Country Profile. 2007.
[152] "Liberia: National Women's Conference," 2007.

combatants. By September, the Secretary-General reported the disarmament of 71,000 ex-combatants, and among them 12,598 were women and 1,356 were girls.[153] By December 2004, those numbers had raised to 22,313 women and 2,477 girls."[154]

Women's involvement in combat and in peace negotiations demonstrated changes in gender politics. Traditionally, men in Liberian society were seen as warriors and women were assigned roles as family breadwinners and producers.[155] Although some women were active in local politics, like Glebo women, their influence in national politics was relatively small. The peace negotiations and the collapse of state and economic institutions provided women with an opportunity to become active as peacemakers, redefining their political roles as conflict mediators. Throughout the conflict, and particularly after the 1992 attack on Monrovia, women showed they "could organize and cross fighting lines more easily than men."[156]

With disarmament underway and demands for the inclusion of more women in politics, Liberian women's organizations looked forward to supporting female candidates in the 2005 elections. Women's groups presented a resolution to require political parties to adopt a 30% minimum for slots on their candidates list and decision-making positions within parties. The National Transitional Legislative Assembly voted it down, but the National Election Commission continued to reiterate to political parties the importance of women's representation in political decision-making. As voter registration began, women's organizations developed campaigns to encourage women to register for the presidential election. [157]

The 2005 elections marked a significant turning point for the women's movement. Their efforts to register female voters and encourage female candidates to run for the presidency were

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[153] Liberia Country Profile, 2007.
[154] Liberia Country Profile. 2007.
[155] Moran, "Culture": 1998.
[156] Liberian Women Peacemakers, 2004: 10.
[157] Liberia Country Profile. 2007.

fairly successful. The payoff came in October 2005 when, in the primaries, Unity Party candidate Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf garnered 19.8% of the vote and George Weah, candidate for the Congress for a Democratic Change, received 28.3%, qualifying them for the final election in November.[158] Johnson-Sirleaf's entrance into the general elections opened more possibilities for the women's movement to put women's and children's issues on the agenda. Johnson-Sirleaf, a native Liberian, economist, and Harvard graduate, had been exiled several times from Liberia under the Doe and Taylor administrations and charged with treason after running against Charles Taylor in the 1997 elections. In 2001, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) appointed her to assess the status of women throughout war-torn nations.[159] Johnson-Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn published *Women, War, and Peace: The Independent Experts Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Roles in Peace-Building*. The report focused on a number of issues including: violence against women, healthcare, HIV/AIDS, displacement, participation in the peace process, and accountability for those who perpetuated violence against women during war.[160] In addition to her experience assessing women's issues, Johnson-Sirleaf worked as a finance administrator under the Tolbert regime in the 1970s, Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa at the UNDP, and Senior Loans Officer at the World Bank.[161] Her opponent, on the other hand, lacked political experience and instead depended on his fame as an internationally known soccer player. His campaign focused on his triumph over poverty and a less-than-high school education to become a famous soccer player.[162]

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[158] Liberia: Staying Focused. (Dakar: International Crisis Group, 2006), 2.
[159] "UN Appoints Ellen Johnson Sirleaf," 2001.
[160] Johnson-Sirleaf and Rehn, 2002: 10-1.
[161] Harris, 2005.
[162] "Profile: George Weah." 2005.

Despite his celebrity status, Johnson-Sirleaf won the final presidential election with 59.4% of the vote, leaving George Weah with 40.6%.[163]

While women's participation in the peace movement demonstrates the versatility of gender roles during the civil wars, little research has been done to confirm whether attitudes about women's traditional roles have changed over the period from 1989 to the present. The dearth of information on gender politics before, during, and after the civil wars prevents this case study from being conclusive. Women's organizing as a result of increased political opportunities was bolstered by the international community, peace negotiations, and a number of women's NGOs, but extensive research is needed to conclude whether women's roles in combat and in the public sphere changed Liberians' views of women as primarily producers or if women's roles now include a political component as well. Mary Moran briefly makes a connection between the dual-sex political organizations and the presence of female politicians like Perry and Johnson-Sirleaf at the national level, suggesting that the election of a female executive may be an outgrowth of women's participation in indigenous political organizations.[164] In addition, Johnson-Sirleaf herself has used the image of peacemaker in her election bid. According to the BBC, "Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf said she wants to become president in order 'to bring motherly sensitivity and emotion to the presidency.'"[165] Further research on Liberian's attitudes and perceptions of women and politics must be performed to conclude whether Johnson-Sirleaf's gendered appeals had an affect on her election, and whether they are linked to a wider trend of changing gender roles for women.

[163] "2005 Election Results." 2005.
[164] Moran, "Culture": 1998.
[165] Blunt, 2006.

Findings and Implications for Future Research

Nicaragua, Chile, and Liberia share similar traditional attitudes about gender roles that discourage women's involvement in public decision-making. In Nicaragua and Chile, women's traditional roles are based on their identity as mothers, but women's public organizing as mothers both challenged the idea that women had to be confined to the domestic sphere and that motherhood excluded women from the realm of politics. In Liberia, traditional attitudes about gender were not as strict as the other cases and women had some authority in politics through local dual-sex political institutions, but ultimately decision-making power rested with male dominated political organizations in the community. During crisis situations in all countries, women took on nontraditional roles in civil society, and in Chile and Nicaragua, women's changing roles altered attitudes about gender and women's leadership capabilities. In Nicaragua and Liberia, some women fought in combat alongside men, while many chose to resist violence and join peace efforts.

Changing political opportunity structures played a major role in encouraging women's collective organizing. The Nicaraguan women's movement was able to form as a result of the emergence of the FSLN and the call for women to join the opposition. The women's movement remained dependent on the Sandinistas until Chamorro's election, but throughout the party's rule, changes within the organizational structure and the government's needs during the Contra War encouraged women to take a more active role in influencing policy, eventually leading to the cultivation of a feminist consciousness. Feminists began to demand gender equality and sought to define womanhood outside of the traditional motherhood role, while more traditional women used their roles as mothers to justify their participation in public life. Similarly, changes in political opportunities brought Chilean women into the public sphere. In 1983, a short period

of relaxed repression and the realignment of opposition parties gave women the opportunity to become involved in a larger resistance movement, while forming various new women's organizations and coalitions. Women in Chile also redefined women's roles when they organized in opposition to Pinochet's regime by utilizing maternalist discourse to justify their political activism. Feminists chose to critique the motherhood frame and but still utilized the difference approach, arguing that women have distinct abilities that make them particularly well-suited for public decision-making. In Liberia, the need for services during the immensely destructive civil war opened opportunities for women to come together in charitable organizations. A few years later, women formally organized against the civil war, calling on public officials and international organizations to allow women to be a part of peace negotiations. Liberian women activists also called on other women to give their political support to female candidates.

International support was a significant factor in sustaining the women's movements in Chile and Liberia, but is more complex in the case of Nicaragua. During the years leading up to the plebiscite in Chile, the Catholic Church provided space and resources for women's groups, while nongovernmental organizations offered funding to women's studies programs and feminist groups to conduct research on women's status. International organizations sponsored regional meetings where women could gather and express concerns about gender inequality and formulate goals for the movement. In Liberia, international organizations also played a major role in supporting the peace movement. The United Nations monitored the status of women and encouraged women's inclusion in peace negotiations. Numerous regional nongovernmental organizations sponsored women's protests, including WIPNET and MARWOPNET. In Nicaragua, there was little international support for the women's movement because of its

relationship to the FSLN. However, Chamorro's election was influenced by international support for the UNO, which came in the form of financial resources from the United States.

The election of a female executive in Chile and Nicaragua was influenced by women's participation in civic organizations and the women's movement's reshaping of acceptable political roles. However, in Liberia, not enough research on gender politics from 1989 to the present has been published to determine whether the women's peace movement had far reaching consequences for redefining gender expectations and attitudes about women's leadership capabilities. Perhaps the most important contribution this research makes to the study of transnational gender politics is identifying crucial gaps in research on women's roles across numerous ethnic groups and classes in Liberian society.

Conclusion

The feminization of power in post-crisis democracies as a result of women's organizing can best be interpreted through difference feminism, global feminism, gender resistance, gender leadership, contentious pluralism, inclusionary adaptation, and women's politics of resistance. Taken separately, each of these approaches fails to capture the complexity of gender politics and the feminization of power. However, each contributes to a fuller explanation for the election of female executives. The case studies reveal that women framed their organization in terms of women's distinct political abilities and the argument that women "do politics" differently than men. Women in Nicaragua negotiated their roles as mothers to elicit support for their public activism and reshaped femininity to include competence in political decision-making. Nicaraguan women implicitly and explicitly argued that women's participation in the public sphere would bring peace to their war weary nation, and Chamorro's campaign, featuring her

status as a widow and healer of political divisions in her own home, provided an antidote to the ongoing Contra War. The United States' support for Chamorro and the UNO meant that peace was much more likely under a Western-supported woman candidate than the current regime. Chamorro manipulated her gender role by taking on the "suffering mother" image while running for public office, an act that could be seen as antithetical to the traditional values Chamorro preached. In addition, the fact that Chamorro divided housewives suggests that many women wanted to see a woman elected to power and an end to the war.

Chamorro's leadership can also be interpreted through global feminism. In Nicaragua, Chamorro's "suffering mother" image did not cast her as politically inept or inexperienced. Instead, it made her more relatable to the Nicaraguan population, who experienced the Contra War with a similar sense of loss. Chamorro's decision to run for public office while invoking traditional symbols of femininity was also an act of gender resistance because she was taking on a public role while publicizing aspects of femininity that are generally associated with the women's roles in the private sphere. Additionally, gender was influential in Chamorro's election because she was able to take advantage of gender stereotypes in obvious ways. The image of the suffering mother as passive, peaceful, and nurturing gave Chamorro significant leverage during the election. Ortega, who intentionally campaigned using traditionally masculine stereotypes, was associated with ongoing violence and bloodshed that accompanied the Contra War. Chamorro was seen as an outsider who could end the war and restore peace and stability.

The feminization of power in Nicaragua demonstrates the processes of contentious pluralism and inclusionary adaptation. Women's resistance to Somoza's dictatorship enabled them to contribute to the opposition movement and aid the Sandinistas in their attempt to overthrow the regime. When the Sandinistas came to power, they created opportunities for

women to work within the regime to promote the party platform. Yet women strayed from the party's ideology of personhood when they began to articulate explicitly feminist demands. In doing so, women's organizations participated in challenging the Sandinistas' resistance to feminism and pressured the party to incorporate gender-specific policies into their agenda. While Chamorro's election was a major setback for the movement, it also offered the opportunity for the women's movement to break its dependence on the FSLN. However, the challenges posed by the transition of power from the Left to the conservative Chamorro government rendered the women's movement unable to shape policies in the way that it previously had. AMNLAE's dependence on the FSLN was a hindrance to the formation of a distinct vision, but it also offered the women's movement a reliable source of financial support that was lost during Chamorro's economic restructuring.

Chilean women, like women in Nicaragua, used their roles as mothers to connect traditionally private issues to politics while utilizing difference feminism. The disappearance of relatives propelled women into the opposition movement, and strengthened gender stereotypes while reconfiguring women's roles to include involvement in shaping policy. Eventually the women's movement shifted from a focus on women as mothers into two strands—the more traditional emphasis on women and mothers, and the more explicitly feminist component that demanded women's inclusion in all levels of society. Bachelet was able to take advantage of women's demands for political inclusion and difference feminists' choice to cast women as more sensitive than men. The fact that Bachelet had been tortured during the Pinochet years lent her even more credibility because she could connect with the Chilean people and relate to their suffering under his regime. However, Bachelet's election may be surprising because of the conservative climate of Chilean politics. But when looking at the gendered ways she appealed to

voters, it becomes clear that her sensitivity, especially considering the trauma Chileans experienced under Pinochet, was an asset to her political image. Bachelet's decision to run for office was also an act of individual gender resistance, since women in Chilean politics in the past had been assigned to traditionally feminine offices working usually in health care and education. Bachelet's position in Lagos' administration offered her the opportunity to become active in a nontraditional role.

Women's organizations in Chile also created pressure on Pinochet's regime to address women's concerns, especially women's calls for a return to democracy. In organizing to strengthen Chilean democratic institutions, women were also able to put their concerns on the agenda, especially when they aligned themselves with the opposition and eventually took on active roles within the opposition parties. And, with Bachelet's election and her subsequent calls for women's increased representation in government, women's groups have shown that they have gained enough political clout to influence the presence of women in formal decision-making bodies. Women's politics of resistance in Chile contributed to the transition of power from Pinochet to the Left and to the election of a feminist leader.

Liberian women's organizing also emphasized women's traditional qualities, such as passivity, but not enough information on gender politics or attitudes about gender during the civil war to conclude whether this had an effect on women entering politics or if women's public roles in the peace making process has encouraged women to adopt participation in civic organizations as a part of their identities. However, the fact that women participated in the peace process and encouraged other women to support female candidates because of their distinct way of "doing politics," exemplifies how the women's peace movement utilized the difference approach. In

addition, after two civil wars, Liberians saw Johnson-Sirleaf's "motherly sensitivity" as an opportunity to achieve peace and stability.

Johnson-Sirleaf's decision to run for office was an act that defied traditional notions about gender. However, Johnson-Sirleaf's elite background and Western educational training placed her among the Liberian elite. Like many "civilized" Liberian women, Johnson-Sirleaf had the opportunity to work in a white collar profession or embrace domesticity. Most women in Liberian society did not have the same opportunities as Johnson-Sirleaf. Finally, women's politics of resistance forced international and regional organizations to include them in the peace process. Women's constant organizing in opposition to their exclusion, and their interruption of peace negotiations, led regional organizations to incorporate women and grant them participant status. They were able to strengthen Liberia's democracy by making it more inclusive.

The feminization of power in post-crisis democracies represents a transformation in how women's roles in politics are viewed in many cultures. While the election of a female executive does not signify women's liberation or the elimination of patriarchy in these societies, women's participation in civic organizations and public office marks a period of relaxed gender roles in which women's visibility is clearly apart of definitions of femininity. These changes may not be permanent, especially since gender politics are constantly shifting, but for a moment in history the feminization of power has the potential to open up opportunities for women and create new possibilities for reconstructing political identity.

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