

**Chapter 7: Women's Representation in the Argentine National
and Subnational Governments**

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Chapter 7

Women's Representation in the Argentine National and Subnational Governments¹

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Over twenty years has now passed since the birth of the world's first gender quota law in Argentina in 1991. Combining skillful mobilization and lobbying techniques with an appeal to the enduring legacy of the country's one-and-only Eva María Duarte de Perón, or Evita, Argentine women achieved the passage and subsequent implementation of what was at the time audacious and groundbreaking legislation. In doing so, they placed Argentina at the vanguard of the global quota movement and made it the country best suited for the present-day study of the medium to long term effects of quota legislation across a diverse set of experiences and settings.

The novel "Ley de Cupos" quota legislation signed into law by President Carlos Menem in 1991 dramatically increased the proportion of women legislators in the Argentine Chamber of Deputies and several Argentine provincial legislatures from the time of its very first use in the 1993 national and provincial midterm elections. This instant success converted Argentina into a shining example for Latin America and the world, and throughout the 1990s, Argentine women served as evangelists spreading the gospel of quotas at forums, conferences, and workshops in Latin America and the world. Trailblazers from across the political spectrum whose efforts were integral to the passage of the Ley de Cupos, such as Marcela Durrieu, Virginia Franganillo,

¹ We thank Diana O'Brien, Michelle Taylor-Robinson, Leslie Schwindt-Bayer and participants of the Women and Leadership in Latin America Conference at Rice University for very useful comments. We also thank Chloe Atwater for excellent research assistance.

María José Lubertino, and Zita Montes de Oca, found themselves travelling the hemisphere and globe to spread the word about Argentina's successful experience adopting and then implementing quotas. Simultaneously, Buenos Aires became a type of Mecca for activists from throughout the region who made a pilgrimage to learn about the new quota law and its passage, with the end goal of obtaining the adoption of similar legislation in their home countries.

The election of significantly more women legislators resulting from quota legislation in Argentina at the national, provincial, and municipal levels had three important effects. First, it enhanced the legitimacy of the country's democratic system, creating legislative bodies that more accurately mirrored the population they represent. Second, it improved the design, production, and implementation of public policies by better incorporating the views and contributions of women. Third, it helped to create a substantial cohort of female politicians with the power to influence political outcomes in both formal and informal settings.

Argentina's path breaking quota legislation without question had a profound impact on the nation's federal, provincial, and municipal legislatures, almost overnight transforming a majority of them from institutions with only a handful of female members to institutions where between a fifth and two-fifths of the members were women. At the same time however, women have continued to remain relatively absent from the influential subnational and municipal executive offices of governor and mayor. And, women lack access to some of the most powerful and prestigious political posts within legislative offices. The 30% quota in some respects has become both a floor and a ceiling, with Argentina and all but a few of its provinces failing to keep up with global trends in gender quota legislation where parity is increasingly the norm. Although a 30% quota was earth shattering in 1991, today it is rather dated and inadequate. Thus, whereas Argentina was once a world leader in the promotion of gender equality, today it is

decidedly in the middle of the pack, outshined in Latin America by countries such as Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Mexico (Piscopo 2015). And, finally, while without question the past twenty years has seen the passage of a wide variety of laws in Argentina that have positively addressed highly salient concerns in areas ranging from reproductive rights, to sexual education, to domestic violence, and to women's health, Argentina still suffers from serious problems of gender inequality, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, among others, underscoring the limits of gender quotas in addressing the myriad of gender related societal ills in a polity.

In sum, alone among the world's democracies, Argentina has more than two decades experience with well-designed and effective legislative gender quotas at the national, provincial, and municipal levels. For social scientists and other scholars concerned with the medium and long-term impact of gender quotas, there is no better laboratory to understand the strengths and weaknesses of quotas than Argentina.

Women in government in Argentina

Argentina is a presidential system in which the directly elected president is responsible for appointing the cabinet. Argentina is a federal republic comprised of 23 provinces (states) and a federal district, each with its own constitution and electoral laws. The national government and all provinces are presidential systems with an elected executive (i.e., president or governor) and legislature. The head of the executive is responsible for appointing the cabinet. The national legislature is organized into a bicameral Congress; 72 senators and 257 deputies are directly elected from closed list proportional representation (PR) ballots to serve six- and four-year staggered terms respectively.

Historically, Argentina had a highly institutionalized two party system (Mainwaring and Scully 1995) consisting of the Peronist Party and the Radical Civic Union (UCR). Over the past two decades the party systems has broken down and become increasingly fragmented (Jones and Micozzi 2013). Today, Argentine political parties are, with the partial exception of the UCR, mere shells and labels with party directorates that rarely if ever meet. Nonetheless, political parties—particularly provincial party leaders—remain key players in the candidate selection and recruitment process (De Luca 2008; Jones 2008).

[Insert Figure 1 About Here]

Women’s numeric representation in these five arenas of government has increased in Argentina over the past twenty years, but in varying degrees. Figure 1 graphs the evolution of women’s numeric representation in the Argentine Chamber of Deputies and Senate (percentage elected in that year) as well as the presence of women in Argentine cabinet positions.² The values reflect the percentage of deputies elected that year who were women as well as the percentage of cabinet members who were women as of January of that year (see below for a discussion of cabinet posts). In 1991 at national level, women held only 5% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 9% of seats in the Senate. Similarly, women had limited access to subnational legislatures in the early 1990s (see Table 1). In 1990, women did not occupy a single legislative seat in some provinces.³

[Insert Table 1 About Here]

Over the course of the next 25 years, women’s access to both national and subnational legislatures increased dramatically. As of 2015, women were remarkably well-represented in the

² Legislative data was collected from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2009), data for cabinet post come from the *Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) online directory, Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments* (multiple years), and Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor Robinson (2005, 2009, 2016).

³ Data from Table 1 comes from Jones (1998) and Barnes (2016).

national and subnational legislatures in Argentina. Women held 37% of seats in the National Chamber of Deputies, 40% of seats in the National Senate, and on average, about 25% of seats across all provincial level legislatures.

Women have also gained access to executive posts. Argentina is the only country in the region with two different female presidents in its history. And, this of course does not include the most powerful and influential woman in Argentine history, María Eva Duarte de Perón. In addition, in 1973, Isabel Perón (Juan Perón's third spouse) was elected as Vice President on a ticket with her husband. Following Perón's death, she assumed office on July 1, 1974, becoming the world's first female president. She presided over an increasingly conflict-ridden and economically distressed Argentina, until being removed from office on March 24, 1976 by a military coup.

Despite Isabel Perón's rise to power, women's presence in the executive branch has lagged behind their gains in legislative politics. Indeed, with the exception of Isabel Perón, women did not serve in any executive posts (either as the president or as governors) until the twenty-first century. Though, in recent years women have made gains in the executive branch, their overall representation here still lags behind the legislative branch. Following Isabel Perón, Argentina would not see another female president until Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was elected in 2007 for a four-year term, taking the reins from her spouse Néstor Kirchner who had served as president since 2003. She ran for re-election in 2011 where she won 50 percent of the vote, 38 percent ahead of her closest competitor. Constitutionally barred from seeking a third consecutive term, Fernández ended her eight-year tenure on December 10, 2015.

Women have made some electoral gains in executive positions in the provincial governments, but progress has been slow. To date, only three women have served as governor in

the Argentine provinces. Fabiana Rios (ARI) in Tierra del Fuego (2007-2015) was the first woman to be elected to the governor's post in Argentina. She was first elected in 2007, served a four-year term, and was reelected in 2011. Having previously served in the provincial and national legislatures, she sought the governor's office in 2003, but lost the election, coming in third place with 32% of the vote. Since that time, two other women have been elected to the post of governor: Lucia Corpacci in Catamarca in 2011 and Claudia Ledesma Abdala de Zamora in Santiago del Estero in 2013. Corpacci was elected governor after serving in the national senate from 2009 to 2011. Like many powerful provincial leaders, she comes from a prominent political family. Her father served as the Minister of Government (the most powerful provincial cabinet appointment) under Governors Vicente Saadi and Ramón Saadi. Ramón Saadi is her uncle. Ledesma Abdala also belongs to an influential political family. When elected to office, she replaced her husband (Gerardo Zamora) who held the gubernatorial post from 2005 to 2013 (and who could not seek a new term due to term limits) and who since 2005 has been the undisputed political boss of Santiago del Estero. Alicia Lemme of the *Partido Justicialista* also served as governor in San Luis when Adolfo Rodríguez Saá, the elected governor, resigned in 2001. She held this post for two years and later served as a national deputy (2003-2007) and mayor of San Luis (2007-2011).⁴ Despite having broken the glass ceiling, women have rarely held the top executive posts in the Argentine provincial government.

With few exceptions women were virtually absent from national executive cabinet posts until the late 1990s. In May of 1989, Susana Ruiz Cerruti became the first female cabinet minister in Argentina. She was assigned the foreign relations portfolio. However, she was only

⁴ Two additional women were appointed to serve as the provincial executive by President Carlos Menem. In 1991, prior to Tierra del Fuego achieving provincehood, Matilde Menéndez was appointed governor. In 1992 Claudia Bello was appointed to serve as the federal intervenor in the province of Corrientes after the federal government was forced to take over the provincial government as a result of a disputed gubernatorial election.

appointed to occupy the post for the final six weeks of President Raúl Alfonsín's term in office after his long-time Minister of Foreign Relations, Dante Caputo (1983-89), resigned (Barnes and Jones 2011).

It was not until the mid-1990s that Argentina had its next female cabinet appointment. In 1996 Susana Decibe was appointed Minister of Education and served for almost four years—until the end of President Carlos Menem's (1989-95, 1995-99) second term in 1999. Figure 1 charts increases in women's access to cabinet appointments over time. Although women were absent from the cabinet for the first half of the 1990s, the appointment of Susan Decibe marked the beginning of an upward trajectory. In the last fifteen years under presidents Eduardo Duhalde (2002-03), Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007), and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2015), women's numeric representation in cabinet posts has increased substantially, with women occupying 30 percent of all cabinet posts in 2009 (Barnes and Jones 2011). After this peak, women's presence in cabinet posts declined slightly and has hovered around 20 percent since. As of 2015, women hold 23 percent of national cabinet posts.

Although women's initial appointments were to "feminine" or "low-prestige" posts such as education and social development, in the last decade women have been appointed to a few "masculine" and "high-prestige portfolios" (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2009, 2016). In November 2005, Nilda Garré was appointed Minister of Defense and, on the same day, Felisa Miceli was appointed Minister of Economy and Production under President Néstor Kirchner. Garré continued serving in the cabinet as Minister of Security under President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. These appointments are consistent with broader trends in Latin America and across the globe (Barnes and O'Brien forthcoming; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005, 2016; Krook and O'Brien 2012).

Similar to trends in the national government, women's representation has been slowly increasing in provincial ministerial posts. As Argentina is a federal system, and the policy-making process is decentralized to the provincial level, women's appointment to subnational cabinet ministries is important for understanding women's access to political power more generally and women's influence over policies that shape the quality of women's lives. In Argentina, subnational governments have jurisdiction over health, education, and social policies, giving them considerable influence over policies such as violence against women and reproductive rights (Franceschet 2011; Franceschet and Piscopo 2013; Escobar-Lemmon and Funk Chapter 6, this volume; Lopreite 2014; Smulovitz 2015). Using original data from all 24 provinces, Figure 2 charts the number and percentage of women in provincial cabinet posts from 1992 to 2015. The percentage of women in each year is aggregated across provinces. In 1992, across all 24 provinces in Argentina, only 12 women held provincial-level cabinet portfolios. Women held about 10% of provincial-level ministerial posts throughout the majority of the 1990s and 2000s. Between 2005 and 2015, however, more women were included in the provincial-level executive branch, with women reaching a high of 19% in 2015. Consistent with the cross-national insights provided by Taylor-Robinson and Gleitz (Chapter 3, this volume) women's access to cabinet posts—both at the national and subnational level in Argentina—indicate that it is becoming less acceptable to have male-only cabinets in Latin America.

[Insert Figure 2 About Here]

Finally, women's participation in political parties is on par with men's. Still women lag behind in their access to leadership posts in the five largest political parties—particularly in the largest two parties. Table 2 shows the total party membership for the five largest parties in

Argentina in 2009, and lists the percentage of members that are women by political party.⁵

Women make up slightly more than half of the membership in all political parties. Yet, women hold only 12% and 13% of executive posts in the PJ and UCR, respectively. Women fare better in the smaller political parties holding 31%, 44%, and 20% of positions in the executive body in the PS, ARI, and PRO, respectively. This underrepresentation in political party leadership is important because, in Argentina, party leaders are central in determining who is elected to office. Political party leaders have access to financial and material resources that allow them to maintain control over the political party (Jones 2008).

[Insert Table 2 About Here]

Causes of women's numeric representation

The causes of women's numeric representation in Argentina vary significantly across different political arenas. Whereas women's access to national and subnational legislatures is largely attributed to formal institutions, women's access to cabinet posts is better explained by cross-arena diffusion. In this section we examine the causes of women's representation in each of the five political arenas.

Causes of women's access to national and subnational legislatures

Formal institutions—namely the adoption and design of gender quotas as well as electoral systems—are critical for explaining increases in women's numeric representation in the legislative branch in Argentina. In 1991, Argentina became the first country in the world to adopt

⁵ Data on party composition is comes from Género y Partidos Politicos en América Latina Database: <http://www.iadb.org/research/geppal>. See also Morgan and Hinojosa, Chapter 5 in this volume.

a legislative gender quota (Bonder and Nari 1995). Initially, the gender quota was implemented only in the National Chamber of Deputies (in 1993). It was not until 2001—when senators were directly elected for the first time—that a legislative gender quota was implemented in the national Senate. In 1992—the year after gender quotas were first adopted at the national level—many provinces began following suit and adopting provincial-level gender quotas of their own (Alles 2009, Archenti and Tula 2008; Barnes 2012a; Caminotti 2009; Jones 1998). The adoption of quotas was staggered across the 1990s, with the vast majority of provinces adopting a quota by 2000.⁶ Still, there are a few exceptions. Quotas were not adopted in the provinces of Jujuy or Entre Ríos until 2010 and 2011, respectively.

With the adoption of legislative gender quotas, women’s numeric representation grew precipitously in both national and subnational legislatures over the next ten years. Quota adoption, however, did not result in immediate or uniform increases in women’s numeric representation in all legislatures due to significant variation in quota design and existing electoral rules. The three most important electoral rules influencing the success of gender quotas are variation in legislative election cycles, the use of placement mandates, and variation in district sizes (Jones 1998; see also Alles 2014; Jones 2009; Jones, Alles, and Tchintian 2012; Schwindt-Bayer 2009; and Schwindt-Bayer and Alles, Chapter 4 of this volume, for discussions of when gender quotas are most effective). Argentine chambers that renew every seat in the legislative chamber at once have tended to have large immediate gains upon implementing gender quotas, whereas chambers that renew only half of the legislative chamber in each election typically incurred only moderate increases in women’s representation in the first election (Jones 1998). Quotas often became fully effective in the second election in which the gender quota was

⁶ Moreover, gender quotas have enjoyed a high level of support among citizens. See Barnes and Córdova (2016) for a discussion of citizen support for quotas across Latin America.

employed. In both the immediate and long term, gender quotas were more effective when they were combined with large district sizes (Alles 2007, 2008; Htun and Jones 2002). Although all Argentine legislatures use closed-list electoral systems to elect legislatures, the chambers vary significantly in district size (i.e., district magnitudes). This also accounted for a substantial portion of the variation observed in women's numeric representation across the Argentine chambers.

Variation in women's numeric representation in Argentina was also due to the design of the quota policy (Archenti and Tula 2008; Barnes 2012a; Caminotti 2009; Granara 2014; Marx et al. 2007, 2009). Although the vast majority of legislative chambers in Argentina had adopted a legislative gender quota by 2000, not all quota designs were equally effective. Some quotas included a placement mandate—language stipulating that women must be included on the list of a political party's candidates and be placed in an electable position—whereas other quotas did not include this language. When quotas were adopted without a placement mandate, party leaders often placed women at the bottom of the list where they did not have a chance to be elected (Jones 2004). Over the course of the 1990s and early 2000s, quotas used in both national and provincial elections underwent a number of reforms aimed at improving their effectiveness (Barnes 2016). By 2003, a placement mandate had been implemented in every province that employed a gender quota except for San Juan. As a result, women occupied at least 20% of seats in the majority of provincial legislatures.

Despite the ubiquity of quotas across the lower houses in the Argentine provinces, multiple upper chambers, including Catamarca, Entre Ríos, Salta, San Luis, or Santa Fe, do not use gender quotas. Each of these senates elects legislators using single member districts, which

are not compatible with legislative gender quotas.⁷ As a result, whereas women's numeric representation has risen sharply in Argentine upper chambers with quotas, women have not been well represented in upper chambers without quotas. A direct comparison of women's numeric representation in the upper and lower chamber in the five provinces without quotas in the upper chamber provides further evidence that increases in women's access to legislatures in Argentina is due to formal institutions—namely gender quotas—and not cultural and socioeconomic or political factors. As cultural and socioeconomic factors, political factors, and women's representation in other political arenas are held constant within individual provinces, we would expect for women's numeric representation to attain similar levels in the upper and lower chamber within a single province if these factors were critical for explaining variation in women's representation in Argentina. Yet in four of the five provinces (with the San Luis senate as a clear outlier) women's numeric representation in the Senate lags far behind the women's representation in the House. For example, in 2014 women only held 5.3% of seats in the Santa Fe Senate compared to 32% of seats in the Santa Fe House. Thus, similar to other parts of Latin America and as argued in the introduction to this book, cultural and socioeconomic factors do not explain women's access or exclusion from legislative office. Instead, as Schwindt-Bayer and Alles (Chapter 4, this volume) explain, gender quotas have “minimized the negative consequences” that other factors such as the conservative machismo culture can have for women. Instead, women's numeric representation is best explained by the adoption of quotas in combination with closed list proportional representation electoral systems.

⁷ Other senate chambers (i.e., Buenos Aires, Corrientes, and Mendoza) use multimember districts to elect legislators and do enforce the use of a gender quota.

Causes of women's access to executive posts

Women have made fewer gains in national and subnational executive posts. In recent years, however, more women have risen to top executive posts. Gains in women's representation at the executive level are often associated with political factors. In particular, some scholars argue that women—typically political outsiders—are often elected to the presidency following political crises signaling change and renewal (Chaney 1997; Jalalzai 2004; Murray 2010). Yet the first woman elected to the presidency in Argentina was not a political outsider and did not ascend to power as a result of political crisis (Jalalzai 2015; Piscopo 2010). Prior to holding the presidential post, Fernández de Kirchner had served in several prominent political positions. She was first elected as provincial deputy in 1989 and later elected to the national congress as both a national deputy and as a national senator (representing first the province of Santa Cruz and then later the province of Buenos Aires). Thus, rather than emerging as an outsider, Fernández's prior political experience in other political arenas and her insider status positioned her to be a credible candidate. Her election fits the broader Latin American pattern suggested by Thomas and Reyes-Housholder in Chapter 2 of this volume.

Indeed, in many respects, Fernández's pathway to power is consistent with the premise that informal institutions—in this case a centralized selection procedure for the Front for Victory's presidential candidate—are key to explaining women's explanation (Hinojosa 2012). In 2007 and again in 2011, it was a foregone conclusion that the Front for Victory's presidential nominee would win the general election. Thus, when Fernández was selected as the Front for Victory's presidential candidate by her predecessor and spouse, President Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007), her general election victory was almost a foregone conclusion (Barnes and Jones 2011).

Finally although cultural factors were not important for explaining Fernández's election, public opinion towards women in office was at least conducive to the election of a female president in Argentina. Indeed, by the time the first female president was elected to office in Argentina, female politicians were seen as "commonplace" (Piscopo 2010, 199). Effective gender quotas had been in place for well over a decade and President Néstor Kirchner had recently appointed two women to the Supreme Court, a female defense minister and a female economic minister. Public opinion was generally accepting of female political candidates.

Women's access to cabinet appointments

Women's representation in ministries has increased significantly over the past 30 years. Unlike women's access to the legislature, women's representation in the cabinet is not due to a change in formal rules. Although very few studies have centered specifically on women's appointments to cabinets in Argentina, time-series data analysis from the national Argentine cabinet shows that increases in women's cabinet appointments are associated with increases in the country's gender development index (Barnes and Jones 2011). Figure 1 also shows that increases in women's representation in cabinet posts have followed increases in women's numeric representation in the legislature. That said, earlier work by Barnes and Jones (2011) shows that increases in women's numeric representation in the national legislature is not a significant predictor of women's appointments to cabinet posts.

Similar to the national cabinet, at the subnational level, women's appointments to cabinet posts may be best explained by cross-arena diffusion. Specifically, the number of years that have passed since quota adoption in the legislature and the presence of a female governor are strongly correlated with the gender composition of provincial cabinets (Lopreite 2015). Despite that few

women have held the gubernatorial post in Argentina, when women govern the province, they are systematically more likely to appoint women to ministerial posts than are their male counterparts. Interestingly, Lopreite (2015) finds that the share of female legislators is negatively correlated with women's appointments to cabinet portfolios and that socio-economic factors are not related to women's cabinet appointments in Argentina.

Women's access to party leadership

What explains women's continued exclusion from party leadership in Argentina? Argentina is one of the most progressive countries in the region (Hinojosa 2012) and is generally accepting of female political leaders (Piscopo 2010). Feminist NGOs outside of government and female party activists organized to increase women's access to Congress (Waylen 2000). Moreover, Argentina has a wealth of qualified female candidates who have served in other branches of government (Franceschet and Piscopo 2014), and women make up the majority of political party members. Yet these factors have not translated to more women in party leadership positions. Women's marginalization from political party leadership is likely best explained by political factors and the informal and behind the scenes selection procedures that give rise to party leaders. Nonetheless, no systematic research has carefully considered the causes of women's exclusion from political parties in Argentina.

Consequences of women's representation

There are a number of consequences associated with women's numeric representation. Women bring new perspectives to bear on policies and introduce new issues to the legislative agenda. In

conjunction with the rise of women in the national and provincial legislatures over the last two decades, Argentina has passed a number of landmark laws extending the scope of women's rights. In this section, we first review research on the substantive consequences of women's representation in Argentina. Then, using an original analysis of survey data, we examine the symbolic consequences of women's representation in sub-national governments across Argentina. This is a novel contribution, as previous research has focused almost exclusively on the symbolic effects of women in national governments.

Substantive consequences of women's representation inside the political arena

One of the most important consequences of women's numeric representation in politics is that women bring to the table new ideas, perspectives, issues, and concerns. Indeed, female legislators in the Argentine Congress report that they have different priorities than their male colleagues (Schwindt-Bayer 2006, 2010), and evidence from cosponsorship patterns in the Argentine provincial legislatures shows that they exhibit a set of distinct policy preferences (Barnes 2012b). Women work diligently to advance their priorities and represent their constituents by authoring a large number of bills across the spectrum of issues. In fact, women tend to author more legislation than their male colleagues—women in the Chamber of Deputies, on average, sponsor seven more bills per session than their male colleagues (Schwindt-Bayer 2010). At the provincial level, women cosponsor almost 30 percent more bills than the average male legislator (Barnes 2016). Women's presence in decision-making bodies thus has important consequences for the representation of all constituents.

Women's numeric representation also has important consequences for the representation of women's interests, specifically. Women in the Argentine National Legislature report

prioritizing women's rights more than do men (Schwindt-Bayer 2006, 2010) and many female legislators even feel obligated to act on behalf of women (Francheschet and Piscopo 2008). To accomplish these goals, female legislators use speeches and legislative debates to articulate women's interests (Piscopo 2011), and they introduce legislation intended to advance women's rights and advantage children and families more than do men (Jones 1997, Schwindt-Bayer 2006, 2010). Htun et al. (2013) show that, in Argentina, many women desire to advocate women's rights through bill introduction, and their tendencies to do so increase as women's numeric representation increases (Htun 2014). Yet, only a minority of women in office are responsible for bills on women's rights—that is, not all women are equally active in introducing women's rights legislation (Htun 2014). Similarly, in the provincial legislatures, approximately a quarter of women refrain from coauthoring women's issues legislation (Barnes 2016). Whether or not female legislators choose to author and coauthor legislation on women's issues may vary depending on their personal ideas and religious beliefs, preferences over policy outcomes, policy priorities, and their party's current policy stance on issues (Barnes 2012b; Lopreite 2012, 2014; Piscopo 2011). Finally, despite the large body of research on women's bill sponsorship in Argentina, research has not devoted significant attention to bill success. Future research should consider whether women's efforts to influence the policy-making process are successful beyond the agenda-setting phase (Htun, Lacalle, and Micozzi 2013).

Increases in women's legislative activity also motivate male legislators' interest in women's rights legislation (Htun 2014). Men were responsible for sponsoring and cosponsoring a few prominent women's issues bills in the national (Schwindt-Bayer 2010) and subnational (Barnes 2016) legislatures. For example, in the national congress, men sponsored bills to assist low-income pregnant mothers, provide monthly allowances to mothers with five or more

children, and authored multiple bills focused on reproductive rights (Schwindt-Bayer 2010, 93). Further, women are strategic in seeking male allies to advance important legislation (Barnes 2016) and to oversee its implementation (Psicopo 2014). Given women's ability to develop allies and work within the chamber to advance their interests, it is not surprising that the rise of women in parliament over the last two decades has been accompanied by passage of a number of important laws extending the scope of women's rights in Argentina (Schwindt-Bayer 2010).

In Argentina the executive branch—presidents and ministers—have been instrumental in defining women's rights (Lopreite 2015). Health Minister Ginés González García (appointed by President Eduardo Duhalde, 2002-2003), developed policies to reduce maternal and child mortality rates and to provide women access to contraceptive services. When President Néstor Kirchner was elected he continued the policies implemented under Duhalde to advance women's reproductive rights. In particular, he charged the Ministry of Justice with the task of designing legislation to decriminalize first-trimester abortions. But, when President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was elected as president, this progress halted—as she strongly opposed abortion (for details, see Lopreite 2015). Indeed, Fernández is typically seen as uncommitted to promoting progressive women's rights (Jalalzai 2015).

Fernández promoted women's issues that reinforced a “traditional conception of women as poor mothers rather than placing women on a more feminist path” (Jalalzai 2015, 117). She is credited with promoting the visibility of housewives, improving violence against women laws, introducing a childcare allowance, and extending the child allowance to pregnant women. Nonetheless, these policies are often criticized for reinforcing traditional gender roles and discouraging poor mothers from joining the work force (Lopreite 2015; Lopreite and Macdonald 2014). Despite her conservative stance on women's rights, President Fernández supported

marriage equality and new progressive gender identity laws. Although she did not introduce the policies, the legislation would not have been passed into law without her explicit support (Jalalzai 2015). Overall, President Fernández is not seen as having spent her two terms in office championing women's rights, but she is recognized for working to improve the economic well being of poor women.

Consequences of women's representation outside the political arena

Women's presence in elite political positions may also have symbolic consequences. Although research on the symbolic effects of women's representation are mixed, numerous studies find that women's presence in politics improves citizen's perceptions of women's ability to govern (Alexander 2012; Morgan and Buice 2013; Reyes-Housholder and Schwindt-Bayer 2016; Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017), motivates more women to become politically engaged (Barnes and Burchard 2013; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007; Reyes-Housholder and Schwindt-Bayer 2016; Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017), and engenders trust and satisfaction with democracy among citizens (Barnes and Beaulieu 2014; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005).

The majority of these studies, however, have focused on they symbolic effects of women's presence in national legislatures, and more recently, national executives (e.g., Barnes and Taylor-Robinson forthcoming; Reyes-Householder and Schwindt-Bayer 2016; Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017). Yet, in the opening chapter of this book, Schwindt-Bayer posits that this relationship may vary across arenas. On one hand, she suggests that the impact may be stronger when women are involved in the national political arena where they occupy more visible positions. On the other hand, in the same way that Escobar-Lemmon and Funk

(Chapter 6, this volume) argue that subnational governments may be more accessible to women's descriptive representation because they are closer to home, there is reason to believe that women's presence in subnational politics may also have powerful symbolic effects because individuals may be more likely to have personal contact with subnational government officials. Additionally, subnational governments have jurisdiction over policies that shape the quality of women's lives and other service provisions (e.g., healthcare and education) that profoundly effect ordinary citizens' daily lives. Thus, we posit that the inclusion of women in subnational governments may also have positive effects on women's symbolic representation.

In this section, we provide the first systematic investigation of whether women's numeric representation in provincial level legislatures and cabinets improves representation in Argentina by cultivating trust in the government and engendering political engagement. Using Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) data from 23 Argentine provinces across 4 waves of surveys from 2008 to 2014 for a total of 70 province-years (not every province is included in each survey wave), we examine two dependent variables to evaluate citizens' trust and engagement in subnational governments. First, to evaluate trust in the subnational government we use a survey question that asks citizens to respond to the following question by placing themselves on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (a lot): "To what extent do you trust the local or municipal government?"⁸ Second, to evaluate political engagement with subnational governments we use a survey question that asks: "In order to solve your problems have you ever requested help or cooperation from a local public official or local government, for example, a mayor, municipal council, councilman, provincial official, civil governor or governor)." Citizens respond by answering yes or no.⁹

⁸ The dependent variable for trust is ordinal (a 7-point scale), thus we estimate an ordered logistic regression.

⁹ Given that this variable is binary (yes=1, no=0) we use a logistic regression.

For both analyses we employ an interactive multilevel model (with random intercepts for the province-year) that accounts for the sex of the respondent, percentage of women in the provincial legislature, and the percentage of women in the provincial cabinet. Then to examine if these two provincial-level factors are associated with both men's and women's political trust and engagement, we include an interaction between each of these provincial level variables and the respondent sex (see the appendix for details and tables of coefficients). Additionally, we control for important provincial level factors including development (HDI), gender equality (GDI), and income inequality (GINI), as well as individual-level demographics, socioeconomic characteristics, and interests in politics.¹⁰

We find that increases in women's numeric representation in provincial level legislatures is associated with increases in trust in local governments among both men and women. Figure 3 shows that as women's numeric representation increases (x-axis) the probability of citizens displaying the highest level of trust in local governments (a 7 on the 7-point scale; y-axis) increases significantly.¹¹ Among women, the probability of having high levels of trust in the government is 5.2% for provinces with the lowest level of women's numeric representation (10.7%), and rises to 16.8% (an increase of 11.6 percentage points) in provinces with the highest level of women's numeric representation (51.4%). A similar pattern holds for men. The probability of displaying high trust in the government increases from 6.0% to 13.4% (an increase of 7.4 percentage points) as we move from provinces with the lowest to the highest level of women's legislative numeric representation. Our analysis provides support for the notion that increases in women's numeric representation improves trust in government among all citizens. We do not find, however,

¹⁰ HDI refers to the Human Development Index, GDI refers to the Gender Development Index, and GINI refers to the Gini coefficient.

¹¹ Predicted probabilities were calculated using the Margins command in STATA 13. Following Mitchell (2012) we calculate predicted probabilities across all of the cases in the sample and to present the mean predicted probability. Thus, the predicted probabilities represent the average value across individual predicted probabilities.

that increases in women's numeric representation in cabinets is associated with higher levels of trust in government.

[Insert Figure 3 About Here]

Next, turning to citizens' political engagement, whereas increases in women's numeric representation in the legislature are not associated with the likelihood that citizens contact their local government to solve a problem, increases in women's numeric representation in the cabinet is associated with slightly higher levels of citizen engagement among women. Figure 4 graphs the predicted probability of contacting local government officials (y-axis) as women's representation in the cabinet increases (x-axis). The left panel shows that at low levels of women's representation (0%) the probability of the average female citizens contacting the local government is 11.7%, whereas at high levels of women's numeric representation (50%) the probability increases to 18.7%, all else equal. This difference of 7 percentage points is statistically significant at the 0.10 confidence level. The relationship between women's numeric representation in the cabinet and men's political engagement is not statistically significant.

[Insert Figure 4 About Here]

In sum, this analysis makes several important contributions to the research on women's representation. First, as very little research has examined how women's presence in government—and particularly subnational government—affects citizens attitudes and opinions, this analysis fills an important gap in the literature by systematically examining how increases in women's numeric representation in subnational legislative and executive branches gives rise to trust in local governments and engenders citizens' political engagement. Second, this analysis provides evidence that increases in women's numeric representation in subnational governments works to improve trust in the government and engender political engagement. We find that women's representation in provincial legislatures is significantly correlated with trust in

government (among both men and women), and women's representation in cabinets incites political engagement specifically among female citizens. Thus, our findings provide some evidence that women in the executive branch should have greater symbolic effects than women in the legislative branch. Further, we find that in Argentina—where subnational governments have substantial policymaking power—women's presence in subnational governments have important consequences for symbolic representation. Finally, this analysis sets the agenda for future work on the symbolic effects of women's numeric representation—particularly at the subnational level where governments often have more influence over citizens' day-to-day lives.

Challenges facing women's representation

Despite major gains in women's numeric representation at both the national and subnational levels of government and across the legislative and executive branches, challenges remain for women's representation in Argentina. As of yet, women entering historically male-dominated institutions are not being fully incorporated into the legislature, political party leadership, powerful ministerial posts, or informal political networks. Women are far less likely to hold legislative leadership posts such as the chamber president or vice president (Barnes 2016; Schwindt-Bayer 2010). Leadership posts in the National Chamber of Deputies have a disproportionate amount of power. The Chamber President (speaker), for example, determines which bills will come before the chamber for a vote. Yet, women have never held this powerful position in the Chamber and only one woman has ever assumed the office of Provisional President of the National Senate—the highest office in that body. Consistent with this trend, women have rarely held this position in the provincial-level legislatures (Barnes 2016). Female

legislators are also proportionally underrepresented on powerful legislative committees such as the budget and economics committees and are virtually absent from the leadership on these powerful committees (Barnes 2014, 2016; Jones and Htun 1997); although, women's access to powerful committee posts varies dramatically by province (Granara 2014) and has improved over time (Barnes 2014).

Women are rarely appointed to powerful ministerial posts. We find that between 1992 and 2015, most women appointed to provincial-level cabinet posts held feminine, low-prestige appointments (similar to what Taylor-Robinson and Gleitz, Chapter 3, report for national cabinets regionwide). Specifically, women were frequently assigned the social development, health, education and culture, and tourism portfolios. Only a few women have been appointed to high-prestige portfolios that grant them substantial policy influence and access to resources. At the provincial level in Argentina, the two most powerful cabinet posts are Minister of Treasury and Finance and Ministry of Government. In Corrientes, Zunilda Míguez served as the Minister of Treasury and Finance from 1994 to 1998. Estela Robaina de Domínguez was then appointed to take her place. During this 23-year period, women have only held this prestigious post in six of the 23 provinces and only for short periods of time. Similarly, during this period, only six women have ever served as the Minister of Government, but none of them served in this post for more than two years. All in all, women's access to prestigious and powerful cabinet posts at the provincial level has been minimal.

Furthermore, though gender quotas have been instrumental in affording women access to legislatures at both the national and provincial level, most political parties continue to comply with only the minimum requirements established by quota legislation. As such, women's numeric representation falls short of 30% in multiple provinces as well as in many

municipalities. A case in point is found in the 135 municipal councils in the Province of Buenos Aires. Municipal councilors are elected from closed party lists in a single multi-member district (ranging in number of members from 3 to 12 with a median of 8) using the LR-Hare formula and a one quota threshold. The quota law requires that a minimum of 30% of the candidates be women and that, at a minimum, every third candidate be a woman. At present, 57 of the 135 municipal councils have a percentage of women below 30%.

To further investigate the challenge posed by political parties' minimal compliance with quota laws, we gathered original data on legislators' list positions.¹² We find that of those legislators elected into the national Chamber of Deputies between 2002 and 2013, the *cabeza de lista* (i.e., the person at the top of the closed party list) was a woman in only 18% of party lists. By contrast 69% of legislators occupying the second place position on the ballot were women. Given that national level quota legislation requires political parties to place women in "electable positions" on the ballot, political parties/alliances that do not have a realistic chance of winning more than two seats (demonstrated via their past electoral track record) are required to place women in the second place on the ballot. Similar trends, albeit slightly more discouraging, occur at the provincial level. Data from eight provinces indicate that the *cabeza de lista* was a woman in only 10% of cases, and the second position on the ballot was occupied by women in only 18% of cases. The exclusion of women from the *cabeza de lista* poses a major challenge for the election of women in districts with small district magnitudes. The vast majority of provinces elect no more than five representatives to the national congress in a given electoral cycle, with over half of the provinces electing three or fewer representatives. In such cases, even if women are placed second on the list, it is difficult for women to win seats in office.

¹² List placement data comes from elite surveys conducted by *Directorio Legislativo* in Argentina.

Finally, women continue to be underrepresented in powerful party leadership positions. Viewing this alongside women's representation in other arenas, there appears to be a trend wherein women are gaining access to low-level rank-and-file political posts, but they are rarely attaining political power.

Conclusion

Two decades ago, Argentina was the world leader in gender quota adoption and implementation. However, today, Argentina's national quota as well as all of its provincial legislation (save in three provinces) no longer places it in the global vanguard (Piscopo 2015). The country's quota legislation is clearly in need of updating, with the most common reforms needed being something similar to what was proposed in the Province of Buenos Aires in 2014 by Senator Sebastián Galmarini that focused on gender parity on the closed lists employed for the election of national, provincial and municipal legislators.

The natural experiment that has taken place in Argentina since the first use of gender quotas in 1993 underscores the tremendous potential of positive action to dramatically transform the composition of legislative bodies. The Argentine case makes clear that quotas represent a reliable and effective mechanism to significantly increase the proportion of women in national, provincial, and municipal legislatures. Evidence from Argentina also underscores that this improvement in descriptive representation has procedural and policy consequences, changing the way legislative politics is conducted as well as the impact of public policy on the lives of women.

Scholars have devoted significant attention to understanding the causes and consequences of women's representation in Argentina, yet a number of questions remain unexamined—particularly at the subnational level. As a consequence, Argentina provides promising avenues for future research. As subnational governments in Argentina are key actors in the political process, it is critical that scholars understand the causes and consequences of women's access to subnational political arenas. Beyond the analysis provided here, scholars have not considered the symbolic consequences of women's numeric representation in subnational Argentine governments. Future research should consider the extent to which women's representation in different political arenas in Argentina shapes attitudes towards gender equality. Additionally, little is known about women's access to political party leadership, how this has changed over time, and what consequences women in political parties may have for the selection and recruitment of women into other political arenas.

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Table 1: Women's Numeric Representation in Provincial Legislatures

Chamber	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014
Capital Federal	--	--	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.8	40.0
Buenos Aires House	6.5	6.5	21.7	26.1	21.7	26.0	31.0
Buenos Aires Senate	7.5	11.3	18.5	28.3	29.3	22.2	26.1
Catamarca Senate	0.0	12.5	6.3	6.3	12.5	12.5	12.5
Catamarca House	0.0	4.9	11.1	26.2	22.0	29.3	32.5
Chaco	12.5	18.2	28.0	28.1	25.0	34.4	40.6
Chubut	11.1	11.1	33.3	29.6	29.6	29.6	33.3
Cordoba Senate	1.7	0.0	10.0	30.8	--	--	--
Cordoba House	6.1	7.9	22.7	30.0	34.3	31.7	40.0
Corrientes Senate	7.7	7.7	7.6	30.7	30.7	38.5	46.7
Corrientes House	3.7	7.7	14.3	30.8	30.8	38.9	30.0
Entre Ríos Senate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.8	0.0	11.8
Entre Ríos House	7.1	0.0	7.1	7.1	14.3	10.7	26.5
Formosa	17.9	13.3	20.0	33.3	33.3	30.0	30.0
Jujuy	12.5	20.8	25.0	25.0	27.1	31.3	33.3
La Pampa	8.7	9.5	26.9	30.8	34.6	30.8	30.0
La Rioja	13.3	3.6	10.0	2.3	30.4	22.2	50.0
Mendoza Senate	2.6	13.2	18.4	15.7	23.7	33.3	27.7
Mendoza House	6.3	14.6	18.8	22.5	22.5	29.2	24.4
Misiones	12.5	25.0	30.0	30.0	22.9	22.5	34.2
Neuquén	4.0	12.0	25.7	26.5	31.4	28.6	25.7
Río Negro	11.1	19.0	23.3	20.9	37.2	41.9	40.0
Salta Senate	4.3	9.1	8.7	13.0	13.0	13.0	12.0
Salta House	10.0	18.9	11.6	16.6	19.0	18.3	26.3
San Juan	0.0	14.6	13.3	11.1	14.7	14.7	23.5
San Luis Senate	0.0	22.2	22.2	11.1	22.2	22.2	33.3
San Luis House	2.4	9.3	18.6	31.0	32.6	23.0	27.9
Santa Cruz	13.6	20.8	16.7	4.6	12.5	20.8	16.7
Santa Fe Senate	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.5	7.1	5.3
Santa Fe House	0.0	4.0	28.0	26.0	26.0	32.0	32.0
Santiago del Estero	0.0	--	26.0	38.0	36.0	47.5	40.0
Tierra del Fuego	--	33.3	13.3	40.0	40.0	26.6	40.0
Tucumán Senate	0.0	--	--	--	--	--	--
Tucumán House	7.5	20.0	20.0	22.5	12.5	26.5	22.4
Average	6.1	12.0	17.9	22.1	24.9	25.9	28.9

Notes: Tierra del Fuego became a province in 1992. The Capital Federal became a federal district in 1996. Santiago del Estero had a federal government intervention in 1994. Córdoba and Tucumán possessed bicameral legislatures prior to 2001 and 1994 respectively.

Table 2: Political Party Membership in 2009

	<i>Partido Justicialista (PJ)</i>	<i>Unión Cívica Radical (UCR)</i>	<i>Partido Socialista (PS)</i>	<i>Afirmación para una República Igualitaria (ARI)</i>	<i>Propuesta Republicana (PRO)</i>
Total Membership	3,586,326	2,500,237	115,423	48,063	1,848
% Women in Membership	51%	53%	52%	53%	52.90%
Total Executive Body	75	24	13	9	5
Percent Women in the Executive Body	12%	13%	31%	44%	20%
Year the Party was founded	1946	1891	1896	2004	2003

Source: *Género y Partidos Políticos en América Latina* (GEPPAL)

Figure 1: Women in the National Parliament and Executive Cabinet

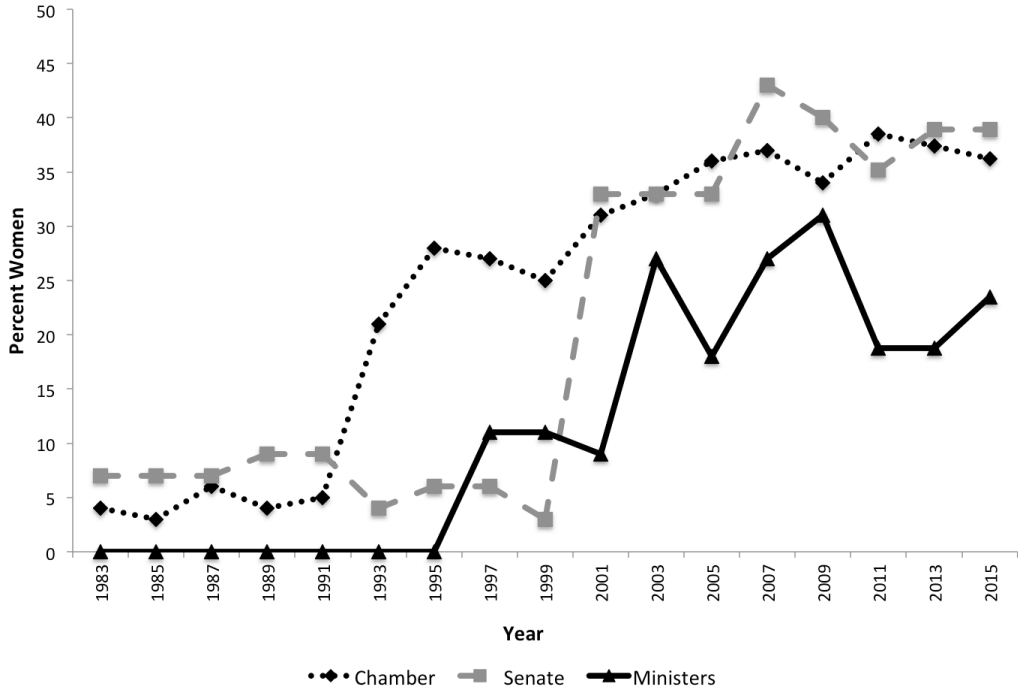


Figure 2: Women in Provincial Level Cabinet Posts

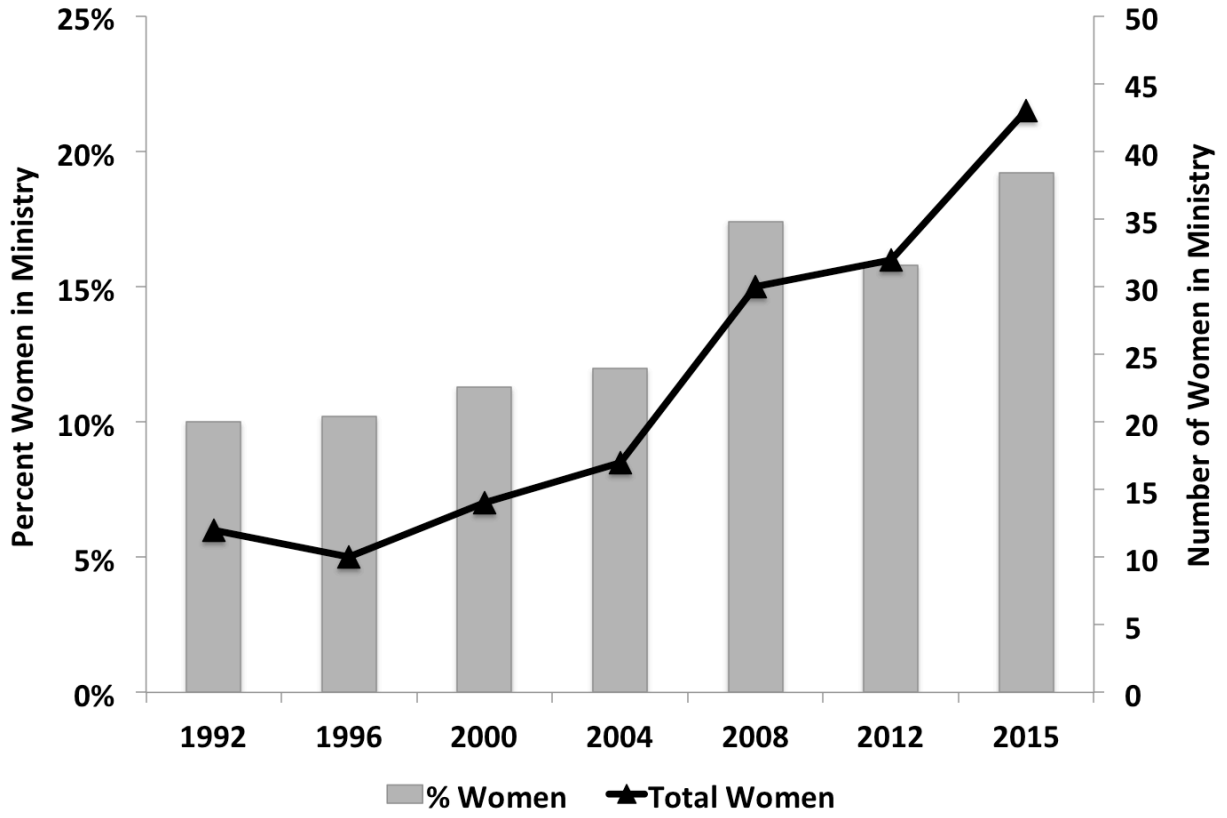


Figure 3: Trust in Local Governments

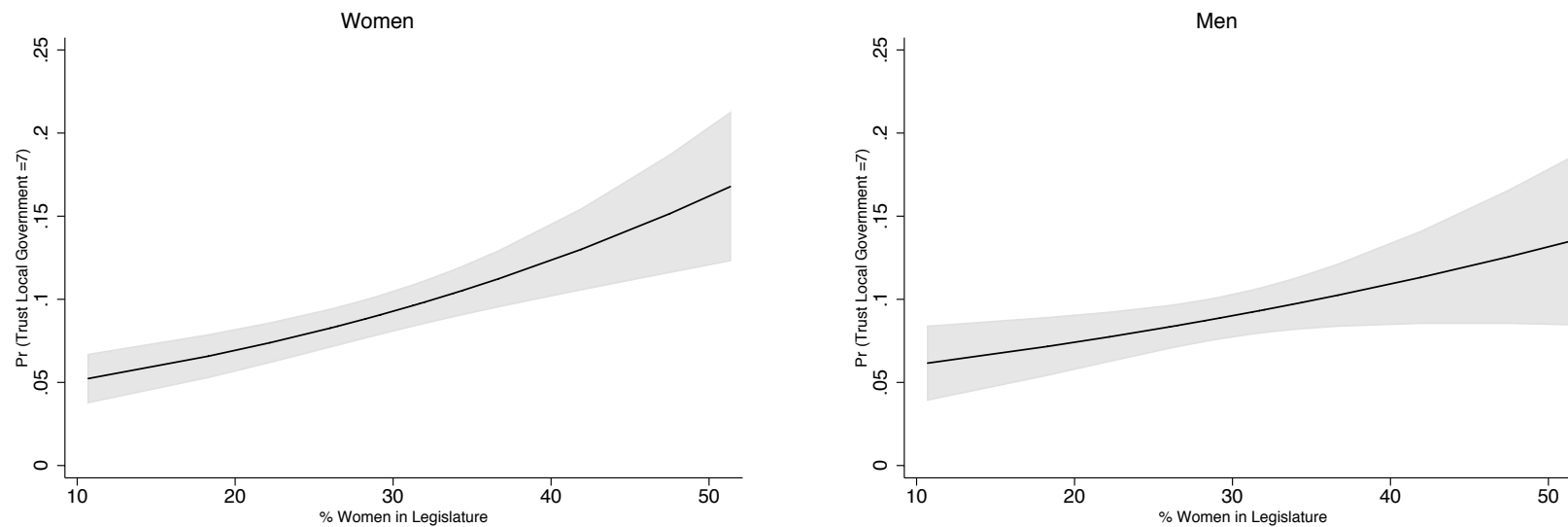


Figure 3 graphs the mean predicted probabilities of displaying high levels of trust in the local government (trust=7) as women's numeric representation provincial legislative chamber increases. Predicted probabilities are based on a multilevel mixed-effects ordered logistic regression model with a random intercept for the province-year (See Table A2, Model 1 in the appendix). Shaded areas represent 95 percent CIs estimated using the Delta Method. Following Mitchell (2012) we calculate predicted probabilities across all of the cases in the sample and to present the mean predicted probability. Thus, the predicted probabilities represent the average value across individual predicted probabilities.

Figure 4: Contact Local Governments

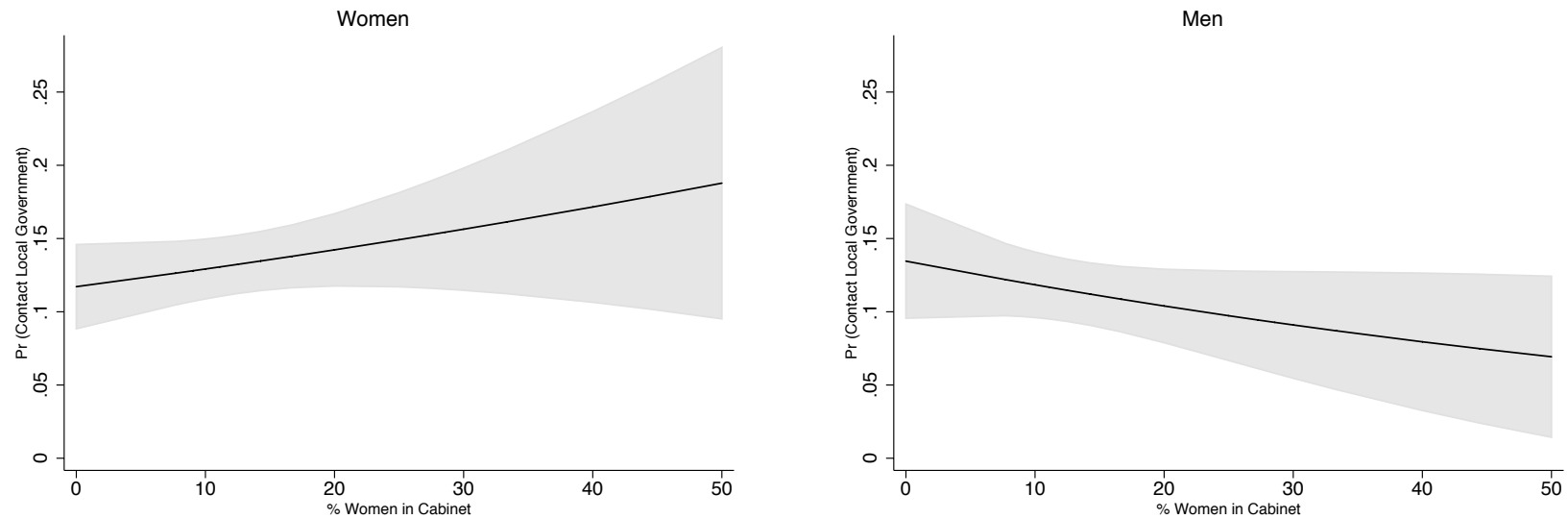


Figure 4 graphs the mean predicted probabilities of contacting local government officials as women’s numeric representation in subnational cabinets increases. Predicted probabilities are based on multilevel mixed-effects logistic regression with a random intercept for the province-year (See Table A2, Model 2 in the appendix). Shaded areas represent 95 percent CIs estimated using the Delta Method. Following Mitchell (2012) we calculate predicted probabilities across all of the cases in the sample and to present the mean predicted probability. Thus, the predicted probabilities represent the average value across individual predicted probabilities.