Cultural Explanations for Men's Dominance of National Leadership Worldwide

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In January 2015, 93 percent of current heads of state and government were men (IPU 2015). A growing body of literature—including the scholarship in this volume—has sought to explain the success of the few women who have assumed the highest political offices in the world (e.g., Murray 2010a; Jalalzai 2013). But, what about the complementary perspective: why so many men? Scholars of masculinity argue that focusing directly on men is a powerful strategy to 'render …. visible' the gendered privilege that men enjoy in a patriarchal world (Beasley 2008, p. 87). With this in mind, our chapter focuses on the reasons for men's continued dominance of executive political office, zeroing in on the role of culture.

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Culture is a contested concept with varied meanings and definitions.[1] When considering the relationship between 'culture' and women's political representation, scholars typically unpack the ways that attitudes, beliefs, and norms shape gender inequalities in politics (Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Murray 2010a; Paxton and Hughes 2016). Our attitudes toward men and women, beliefs about how they should behave and how they are the same or different, influence who rises to national leadership in myriad ways—nearly always benefitting men. And yet, this gender privilege is not entirely automatic: in order to take full advantage of such benefits, men candidates must also embody the cultural practices and expressions of manhood (Butler 1990; Coe et al. 2007). Men vying to become (and stay) national leaders must actively construct their masculinity in line with cultural expectations and ideals.

Political transitions change these dynamics, in some cases making women more attractive candidates for political leadership (Thompson and Lennartz 2006; Murray 2010a; Thomas and Adams 2010; Jalalzai 2013; Beckwith 2014; O'Brien 2015; Tripp 2015). As countries exit civil war or authoritarian rule, established political elites may be weak or have been discredited, allowing women to take advantage of their status as political outsiders. Stereotypes that women are more ethical, honest, trustworthy, and caring become political assets (Goetz 2007; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Barnes and Beaulieu 2014; Tripp 2015). Women's organized resistance against authoritarian regimes also paves the way for women politicians, in part by transforming attitudes toward women and ideas about their capabilities (Waylen 2007; Schwindt-Bayer 2010). And yet, more often than not, the so-called Third Wave of democratization has not resulted in the election of women as presidents or prime ministers. Even if a woman is successful at rising to national leadership, 'politics as usual' may soon return—and, with it, the election of a man (Craske 1998).

In the following sections, we (1) introduce the attitudes and beliefs that advantage men in politics, (2) discuss how men politicians take advantage of and contribute to a masculinized political culture, and (3) consider how transitions to democracy shift cultural dynamics—in rare cases helping a woman to become president or prime minister.

How Gender Ideology and Stereotypes Consistently Advantage Men Along the Path to National Leadership

Gender ideology—attitudes and beliefs about the ways that men and women should behave in society—varies greatly across and within societies and over time. Yet, in all parts of the world, men and women are seen as different from one another. Ideas about how men and women are (and should be) different permeate all aspects of social life. These ideas influence, for example, candidate emergence, how media follows and portrays politicians, and the voting decisions of the public, and they consistently—although not exclusively, advantage men in politics—especially at the executive level.

Broadly speaking, there are two pervasive sets of ideas that have advantaged men in politics: (1) ideas about men's and women's proper place in society and (2) those about men's and women's inherent nature or capabilities (Paxton and Hughes 2016). First, throughout history and in many parts of the world today, societal norms suggest that women's proper place is in the home, or private sphere, ceding the public sphere to men. Second, societies generally construct men and women as naturally or inherently different. It is common, especially in Western cultures, for men and women to be defined in opposition to one another: men are rational—women are emotional; men are competitive—women are cooperative; men are assertive—women are compliant; and so on (D'Amico and Beckman 1994, pp. 1–11).

Figure 5.1 shows how these ideas operate along the path to executive political leadership to advantage men, looking at three simplified stages: (1) acquiring the profile and deciding to run; (2) running for office; and (3) rising to leadership (Paxton and Hughes 2016). At each stage, we provide examples of how culture shapes men's experiences and behaviors in ways that benefit them politically.

In order to become a national leader, one has to be ready, willing, and able. Culture influences the resources and skills that men and women bring to political competition, and the kinds of careers considered as a preparation for a political career. In most countries, men are still much more likely than women to work and lead in law, business, the military, and local politics—all considered 'pipeline occupations' for politics in many countries.[2] That people may see a businessman as more 'ready to lead' than a social worker is tied to culture.
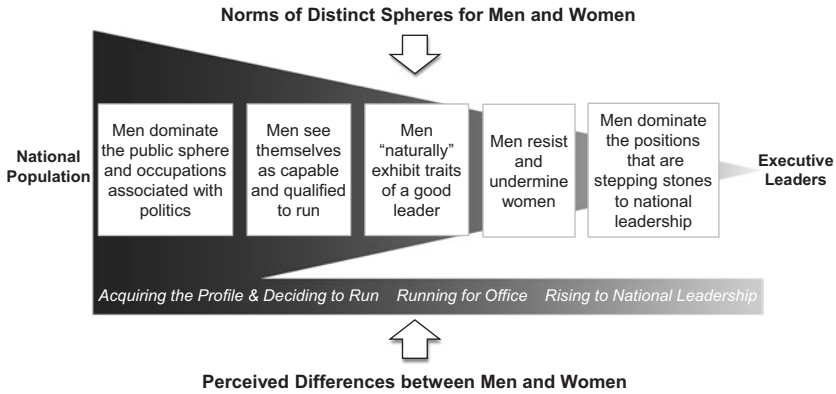
Fig. 5.1 Ways that culture advantages men along the path to executive political leadership
Source: Prepared by the authors

Even if women have the 'right' skills and resources to compete, they must also be willing to participate. If men are the only ones socialized to focus on the public sphere or to believe they are capable of political rule, then men may be the only ones with political ambition (Paxton and Hughes 2016, p. 110). Indeed, research shows that even among similarly 'qualified' men and women, men are much more likely to aspire to run for office, and to consider themselves qualified when asked (Lawless and Fox 2010). Women may also need greater encouragement to run for office or, once in politics, to compete for leadership positions.

Culture may also give men a leg up with voters. Because women have traditionally held subordinate positions to men in society, people may assume that men are more competent leaders than are women (Ridgeway 2001). Further, because men are the status quo politicians, the criteria for judging candidates are biased in favor of men (Murray 2014). Therefore, to be successful in politics women candidates may need to be even more qualified than men (Fulton 2012).

Stereotypes about what makes a 'good leader' also benefit men. Traditionally, effective leadership has been associated with aggression, competitiveness, dominance, and decisiveness—traits associated with men (Paxton and Hughes 2016). Men benefit from displaying this stereotypically masculine behavior (Eagly and Carli 2007). Women, on the other hand, face a double bind: if they do not 'act like men,' they may be seen

as poor leaders, but if they do display stereotypically masculine behavior, they may face criticism for not being feminine enough (Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Carli 2007; Murray 2010a).

By treating men and women candidates differently, the media reinforce the attitudes and beliefs that hinder women in politics, or even create new ones (Murray 2010b; Burns et al. 2013; Raicheva and Ibroscheva 2014). In some elections, men candidates are simply more likely to receive coverage. In others, the quality of the coverage of men and women candidates differs. Often, media reports are more likely to focus on non-political characteristics of women candidates, like their physical appearance, clothing, or family status (Nichols 2014; Murray 2010b). When they do address political issues, they are more likely to link women to stereotypically feminine issues and to portray women as overly emotional, irrational, or unprepared (Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Murray 2010b). Media coverage implies that men are 'normal' in politics, while women are 'different' (Coulomb-Gully 2009; Raicheva-Stover and Ibroscheva 2014).

For women who make it through this gauntlet into politics, gender ideology and stereotypes continue to shape their political experiences and resumes in ways that limit their access to leadership. Women are often channeled into committee and cabinet positions in traditionally feminine issue areas, such as family and youth, which are generally considered lower status (Duerst-Lahti 1997; Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2009; Krook and O'Brien 2012). Men are much more likely to serve in high-status positions and those that serve as stepping stones to national leadership, such as finance and defense. (For examples of women who have overcome these obstacles to assume powerful cabinet posts, including finance or defense, see Chaps. 6 through 10 and 12 in this volume.)

The culture of political parties serves as a further obstacle to women's political leadership. Political parties are critical gatekeepers: for a man or a woman to become a national leader, he or she is first selected and supported by a political party (Kunovich and Paxton 2005). Many political parties—especially those in the majority or ruling coalition—have entrenched norms of masculine leadership and few incentives to challenge them (O'Brien 2015). And just like voters, party selectors judge women against norms and expectations created by men (Franceschet et al. 2012). These unwritten and unofficial rules that guide the selection of party leaders are particularly difficult to challenge, since they are often hidden from view (Franceschet and Piscopo 2014; Waylen 2014).

The broader culture of political institutions also reinforces men's political overrepresentation. In some countries, aggressive masculinity dominates the political culture. Formal political activities like debate come with jeers, shouting, and insults, and informal negotiations happen in closed-door smoking rooms, complemented by heavy drinking—all of which may alienate women (Htun 2005). Men may also take more direct actions to undermine women's political success, from being uncooperative to outright harassing them (Tamale 1999; Bardall 2011). Consider Botswana, where women parliamentarians reported 'being repeatedly badgered and harangued by their male counterparts in the National Assembly when trying to introduce motions or even to speak on the house floor' (Bauer and Burnet 2013, p. 109). Women executives, too, have testified to harassment by men politicians during and after their campaigns.

One way of making sense of men's harassment of women in politics is by understanding gender embodiment. In these political spaces, men's bodies are normalized and their presence is unquestioned; women's bodies and their presence are thus abnormal (Puwar 2004; Starck and Sauer 2014). As women move into politics, men feel the encroachment from women on 'their' territory, heightening feelings of threat. Women's lower numbers also may mean that they are put under the microscope, with any mistakes they make amplified (Puwar 2004). These dynamics can lead women to leave politics sooner than men, hinder women's chances of moving up the ranks within their political parties, or—if they do become leaders—limit the opportunities of women who hope to follow in their footsteps.[3]

Cultural Variation Across Place and Time

Before moving on, it is important to return to the reality that gender ideology and stereotypes—and their influence on politics—vary greatly across societies, individuals, and time. How do we make sense of this cultural variation? Where does it come from? One place to start is with religion. Patriarchal religious institutions have long been a source of messages that women are inferior to men, that women should stay at home, and even that women should not serve as political leaders. In societies where these beliefs are deeply felt, women have a difficult road to political leadership. Gender ideology also diverges between adherents of distinct religious traditions. Although historically all major world religions have treated women as subordinate to men, views concerning the place of women in

the religious hierarchy, in society, and in political life differ across religious traditions. Yet, no religious tradition has proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for women leaders.

Traditional ideas about women's roles clearly do not preclude women from rising to national leadership (Jalalzai 2013). At times, they may actually be advantageous. Where traditional gender ideology is dominant, women have risen to national leadership following powerful men in their families, often when these men have died (D'Amico 1995). Seeing women as submissive to the men in their lives makes it easier to see them as stand-ins for their husbands or fathers (Derichs and Thompson 2013, pp. 11–26; Jalalzai 2013). This path to leadership—sometimes dubbed the 'widow walk'—was more common for early women leaders, particularly in Asia. Nearly half of the women who became national leaders before 1995 were preceded by their husbands or fathers, including Corazon Aquino and Khaleda Zia (Paxton and Hughes 2016, p. 90; see also Chaps. 10 and 11 in this volume).

Looking at communist regimes also reveals a complex relationship between gender ideology and women's political leadership. On the one hand, communist regimes nearly always champion the idea of gender inclusiveness and work to undermine public-private divides (Gal and Kligman 2000; Matland and Montgomery 2003). On the other hand, women's formal participation in politics in communist countries was often only symbolic. Although communist countries used informal quotas to ensure women's presence in legislatures, these women had little, if any, real power (Waylen 1994). Indeed, women have only rarely been included in communist politburos—the seat of power for the Communist Party. And to this day, women have never headed up a ruling Communist Party. That a society or its elites espouse gender equality is not enough for women to rise to national leadership in a formal capacity.

Gender ideology and stereotypes also vary over time. Indeed, in recent decades, global norms of gender equality and human rights have expanded and increasingly emphasized women's full political participation and representation (Paxton et al. 2006; Fallon et al. 2012). The Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 is often identified as a turning point, ratcheting up pressure on countries to incorporate women into political decision-making, even if they had to use affirmative action measures to do so (Fallon et al. 2012; Hughes et al. 2015). These shifting global norms help explain why women are increasingly breaking through cultural barriers to rise to national executive leadership.

Gendered Political Culture and the Deployment of Masculinity

So far, we have discussed how gender ideology and stereotypes generally favor men in contests for political leadership. However, simply existing in a male body is not enough to fully enjoy the benefits of being a man. Masculinity and femininity are ephemeral presentations that require constant reproduction to successfully portray 'man' and 'woman' (Butler 1990, 1993). That is, to benefit from the 'currency of manhood,' men must embody certain cultural practices and expressions (Coe et al. 2007, p. 33). In an election, men candidates actively construct their masculinity in line with cultural expectations and ideals. In doing so, they construct and reinforce gendered political culture.

To deploy masculinity is complicated (Kimmel 2003, p. 605). All societies have dominant or honored ways of being a man—sometimes known as hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2002; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Yet, societal ideals of masculinity are neither static nor entirely homogenous, and hegemonic masculinity is not accessible to all men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Men occupy varying positions in social hierarchies, and thus are simultaneously constrained and enabled by their own identities and statuses. The masculinities they produce compete with others and operate in relation to one another and to women (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Women, too, participate in this process, and yet they are handicapped (Duerst-Lahti 2014). This is no accident. Hegemonic masculinity ideologically legitimates the subordination of women (Connell 2002; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Scholars highlight many ways that national leaders—and candidates for president and prime minister—deploy masculinity (Ducat 2004; Messerschmidt 2010; Wuokko 2011; Katz 2012; Cannen 2013; Duerst-Lahti 2014; Sperling 2014). One way that men in politics deploy masculinity is by performing heterosexuality. In the popular imagination, normative masculine performances are read as implying heterosexuality, and are thus strengthened by direct references to virility, sex appeal, and prowess (Butler 1993). In other words, men show their masculinity by demonstrating their sexual appeal to—and even sexual dominance over—women. Take as an illustration Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has deliberately cultivated a public image as virile and sexually ideal (Sperling 2014).

Men politicians also deploy masculinity via athletic performances (Wuokko 2011; Moore and Dewberry 2012). This strategy is commonplace in politics, even as different countries and regions favor sports that emphasize different kinds of skills and strengths. For example, Finish President Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, who served as head of state for over 25 years, built up his achievements in skiing and other national sports to almost mythical proportions, to construct an image of power and competence (Wuokko 2011).

Another way for men to take advantage of their masculinity is to emphasize their ties to the military. Typically, one of the jobs of a chief executive is to oversee the military. By playing up their ties to the military, men accomplish two tasks at the same time—showing their readiness to lead and helping them to display masculinity. For example, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, a former military officer, relied heavily on militaristic rhetoric and policies that projected masculinity (Cannen 2013). This included actively integrating the military into social services in the community and dressing in paramilitary uniforms frequently.

In addition to shoring up their own masculinity, political candidates and their supporters also seek to emasculate their competitors. Homophobic derisions are also a classic strategy to delegitimize the opposition and shore up one's own masculinity (Pascoe 2007). For example, Putin once commented on the Georgian 'Rose Revolution' by saying 'next they'll come up with a light blue one,' knowing that 'light blue' in Russian is a slang term for gay man (Sperling 2014, p. 78).

Women politicians have a much more difficult time deploying masculinity than do men. There are certain types of performance—such as showing their sexual dominance over women or playing sports—that are not open to women; if enacted by women, they would mean very different things. However, this is not to say that women are entirely excluded. In fact, once in power, many women global leaders have been described as strategically embodying masculine traits. Georgia Duerst-Lahti (2014) argues that women are more likely to be successful deploying what she terms 'expertise masculinity.' Rather than exhibiting general dominance, men and women candidates present themselves as experts in particular areas that are associated with masculinity, such as military affairs or economics. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet pursued such a strategy, emphasizing her expertise in military affairs, satisfying masculinist demands, in addition to claiming a 'feminine leadership style' that relied on compassion and skills in negotiation (Thomas and Adams 2010).

Like Bachelet, many women who have risen to national leadership have strategically deployed a mix of stereotypically masculine and feminine traits and behaviors. For example, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher developed a reputation for a masculine negotiating style—she was described as aggressive, ruthless, and even rude—but she also sometimes flattered the men politicians around her to get her way (Genovese and Steckenrider 2013; Young 2013). In Brazil, Dilma Rousseff's presidential campaign worked to offset her reputation as a tough and abrasive cabinet minister by feminizing her appearance and using maternal language (dos Santos and Jalalzai 2014).

The deployment of masculinity is not an equally effective political tool across societies. One important factor is the depth and structure of patriarchal gender norms, or 'regulatory sexual regimes' (Butler 1993, p. 15; Sperling 2014). The more attached people are to traditional gender norms, the more likely they are to approve of masculine political figures. In these contexts, women use their ties to men to gain power. For example, Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto made sure her father—a previous national leader—appeared in the background of her official portraits (Anderson 2013, p. 93; see also Chap. 11). During her campaign for president of Nicaragua, Violeta Chamorro spoke often of her martyred husband: 'I am not a politician, but I believe this is my destiny. I am doing this for Pedro and for my country' (Saint-Germain 2013, p. 125).

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND CULTURAL SHIFTS IN THE GENDERED STATUS QUO

So far, we have explained how gender ideology, stereotypes, and the deployment of masculinity all typically benefit men in ways that contribute to their political dominance in executive office. Yet, not all political contexts are the same. Women's rise to national leadership is particularly unlikely under authoritarianism. The world's supreme leaders, ruling monarchs, and military dictators are men. These regimes both draw from and reinforce traditional gender attitudes and hegemonic masculinity (Sperling 2014). When authoritarian rule breaks down, however, gender dynamics tend to shift.

This volume shows that post-transition democracies elect women presidents and prime ministers. What is happening culturally to disrupt men's dominance and facilitate women's political success? This section introduces two cultural shifts in post-transition democracies that help explain the rise

of women executives: (1) greater support for political outsiders and for stereotypically feminine traits and (2) women's increased participation in social movements. Ultimately, however, men presidents and prime ministers remain the norm, even in post-transition democracies. Thus, in discussing these shifts, we address the experiences of men and show how they, too, benefit during such periods of intense change.

Support for Outsiders and Stereotypically Feminine Traits

Citizens in post-transition democracies may look for different qualities in their leaders. New democracies may be vulnerable to swift economic downturns and high levels of corruption, which increase the popularity of political outsiders (Mainwaring et al. 2006). Because of their historical exclusion from power, women are natural outsider candidates (Jalalzai 2013). Voters see women as bringers of change (Wiliarty 2008; Murray 2010a; O'Brien 2015). Because of the widespread belief that women are less corrupt than men, the average voter may see women as capable of 'cleansing politics' (Thompson and Lennartz 2006, p. 106; Barnes and Beaulieu 2014). When the political establishment loses favor, women may gain new political legitimacy (Adams 2008).

As countries try to leave their pasts behind, other stereotypical feminine traits may also become politically advantageous. In countries recovering from repressive regimes or the atrocities of war, stereotypes that women are more peaceful, softer, and more cooperative may work to women's advantage (Adams 2008; Hughes 2009; Tripp 2015). Women candidates also invoke maternal frames, running as mothers who can heal or unite their countries. For example, in Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf claimed that she could heal the wounds of war by bringing 'a motherly sensitivity' to the presidency (BBC News 2005; see also Chap. 9 in this volume). Cases like Brazil's Dilma Rousseff also show that even after years of relatively peaceful democracy, these maternal frames may continue to resonate (dos Santos and Jalalzai 2014).

And yet, the very forces that increase the popularity of outsiders and feminine traits create other barriers women must overcome. During the last few decades, democratization has been tied to neoliberalism, bringing with it a focus on market deregulation, debt control and repayment, trade liberalization, and privatization—and an ideology of individualism that fueled lasting economic inequalities (Cornwall 2016). Arguably, popular dissatisfaction with the socioeconomic consequences of neoliberalism

helps explain the success of political outsiders in some post-transition democracies. However, the neoliberal state otherwise provides few opportunities for women; leadership is typically dominated by professional cadres of policy experts and economists, who are less likely to include women (Montecinos 2001).

Women do not have the monopoly on outsider status or on stereotypically feminine traits. Men from nongoverning parties or movements, and men from outside of politics altogether, also run and win as political outsiders. Some men break out as 'mavericks,' leaving their political parties and rebranding themselves as antiestablishment (Carreras 2012). Men from historically marginalized groups also make good outsiders (e.g., indigenous Bolivian President Evo Morales). Men may also be seen as ethical, honest, trustworthy, and caring. For example, in 1998, Venezuelan voters concerned about political corruption supported Hugo Chávez, who they saw as honest (Hawkins 2010). In circumstances where stereotypically feminine traits prove appealing, voters may choose men that display feminine characteristics—what Michael Messner calls 'hybrid masculinity' (2007, p. 461).

Playing up their outsider status or accentuating stereotypically feminine traits also has pitfalls for women. Candidates running on 'change' are often perceived as less experienced a stereotype women candidates already face (Murray 2010a). The public may also change its mind about what it wants; once prized feminine characteristics may lose their appeal. Under these circumstances, women who built popularity portraying themselves along traditional feminine lines may have difficulty pivoting to display themselves in more masculine ways. Ultimately, the political success of women who emphasize stereotypically feminine traits is far from guaranteed, especially in the long term.

Women's Participation in Social Movements

Women's political success in post-transition democracies is also linked to their participation in social movements. In many countries, women played key roles in organized resistance against authoritarian regimes, transforming gender ideology and stereotypes in the process (Waylen 2007; Viterna and Fallon 2008; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Viterna 2013). Women have participated in political violence (as armed combatants or guerillas) and in the struggle for regime change (as peace or human rights activists). These experiences spurred women to participate in formal politics, and

ultimately changed the ways that societies see women, opening doors for their rise to leadership. In her global analysis, Jalalzai (2013) finds that more than one-third of women presidents and prime ministers had participated in independence or democratization movements prior to their rise to power. Two examples are Presidents Michelle Bachelet of Chile and Dilma Rousseff of Brazil, who both participated in resistance movements against authoritarian governments in their countries (see Chaps. 6 and 7 in this volume).

Transitions to democracy also contributed to the rise, strength, and popularity of women's movements in various ways. Many women active in pro-democracy and peace movements later turned their attention to gender-based concerns (Viterna and Fallon 2008; Hughes 2009; Tripp 2015). Civil liberties like free speech and a free press created space for women's movements to organize and pressure governments for women's greater inclusion (Hassim 2010; Paxton et al. 2010). In some countries, the hardships for women created by neoliberal economic policies spurred their mass mobilization and the formation of women's organizations (Alvarez 1999; Borland and Sutton 2007; Maier and Lebon 2010).[4] And, women's participation in pro-democracy and peace movements changed the way people saw women's organizing. For instance, in Liberia, the women's movement was credited with helping to speed up the peace process, leading to record levels of popularity around the time that Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president (Tripp 2015).

Women's movements improve women's political fortunes in numerous ways. Some forms of influence are direct, such as when they pressure governments to adopt gender quotas, advocate for women's inclusion in cabinets, or support women's political campaigns (Hughes et al. 2015; Tripp 2015). Other forms of influence are indirect: women's movements seek to empower women in their homes, schools, workplaces, and societies more broadly, along the way challenging gender stereotypes and traditional gender norms. Indeed, in some parts of the world, women's movements have dramatically transformed attitudes toward women in politics (Ferree 2006; Duerst-Lahti 2014).

Of course, not all democratic transitions fuel women's movements. In particular, countries transitioning from communism did not see a simultaneous rise of strong women's movements (Rueschemeyer 1994; Waylen 1994; Matland and Montgomery 2003). In post-communist Europe, 'gender equality' became associated with the former regime, whereas 'feminism' was still thought of as western, conditions that limited

the formation of women's organizations (Rueschemeyer 1994, p. 233). Without strong independent women's movements, women's rise to political leadership may be slower. Indeed, the two women prime ministers from Central and Eastern Europe who are profiled in this volume came to power several years after the fall of communism.

Some transitions from communism also undermined women's political success because of the proliferation of nationalist ideas and discourse. Although nationalism's emancipatory orientation has inspired and enabled women to address gendered oppression throughout the world, nationalist governments often involve a patriarchal element (Enloe 2014). Women become symbols of, rather than actors in, independence, a status that excludes them as serious contenders for leadership.

Ultimately, women's participation in social movements does not ensure that women will be leaders in post-transition democracies (Viterna and Fallon 2008). In many cases, women's critical roles in democratic and independence movements go unrecognized (Waylen 1994, 2007; Jaquette and Wolchik 1998). Women's participation in democratic movements provides pathways to executive leadership, but does not guarantee that they will successfully integrate into the transition or post-transition government.

Are Post-Transition Democracies Favorable to Women Leaders?

Transitions to democracy can and do shift cultural dynamics. Yet, women presidents and prime ministers are not the norm. To illustrate the continued dominance of men and masculinity, one only has to look at the numbers. Of the 68 countries that transitioned to democracy since 1975, less than half (28) have elected a woman president or prime minister in the years since the transition.[5] And, only in Liberia and Bangladesh have women held national leadership for more years than men. The fact that 28 countries elected women leaders shows an impressive break with the past. However, even if we focus on countries that have elected women leaders, their numbers and time in office are outpaced by men. Table 5.1 shows our analysis of the eight countries that are given the greatest attention in this volume. In the years since their transition to democracy, these eight countries have elected 31 more men than women. And, out of all of the years since each country transitioned to democracy, rule by men has outpaced rule by women by 108 years.

Table 5.1 Statistics on men and women presidents and prime ministers in countries that transitioned to democracy after 1975 (from transition year to 2015)

Country	Transition year	# Leaders since transition		# Years of leadership		Women executive leaders
		M	W	M	W	
Brazil	1985	5	1	26	4	Dilma Rousseff (P, 2011–)
Chile	1990	4	1	20	5	Michelle Bachelet (P, 2006–2010, 2014–)
Liberia	2005	0	1	0	10	Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2005–)
Philippines	1987	3	2	14	14	Corazón Aquino (P, 1987–1992) Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001–2010)
Bangladesh	1991	1	2	4	20	Khaleda Zia (PM, 1991–1996, 2001–2006) Sheikh Hasina Wajed (PM, 1996–2001, 2009–)
Latvia	1990	11	1	23	2	Laimdota Straujuma (PM, 2013–)
Mozambique	1994	7	1	36	6	Luísa Días Diogo (PM, 2004–2010)
Slovakia	1990	10	1	48	2	Iveta Radičová (PM, 2010–2012)
Average	*1992*	*5*	*1*	*21*	*8*	
Sum		*41*	*10*	*171*	*63*	

Note: The analysis includes only those leadership positions that are most powerful in a country, excluding leaders with mainly symbolic power. Under these rules, we exclude Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, President of Latvia between 1999 and 2007 (see Paxton and Hughes 2016 for more on this distinction). M = Men; W = Women; P = President; PM = Prime Minister

Source: Prepared by the authors

CONCLUSION

Culture helps explain women's complete exclusion from politics in the past and their difficulty in attaining power in the present. Gender ideology and stereotypes that favor men in politics persist at all stages of the political process. In some countries, citizens still openly express a preference for men to be their leaders. In other countries, the cultural advantages men experience are harder to see. In all countries, men embody and deploy masculinity to appeal to parties and voters.

There is also cause for optimism. Culture is not static. Attitudes toward women and men in politics have changed dramatically in some places. These changes have created opportunities for women once unimaginable. With women's political representation on the rise, the political cultures of some parties and institutions are becoming more inclusive. Men today do not have an exclusive claim on masculinity in the political arena, and societies increasingly are seeing value in feminine characteristics and styles. Although the numbers of women leaders are rising slowly, they are rising nonetheless.

But even in post-transition democracies, where cultural shifts can create opportunities for women, there is also cause for pessimism. For every explanation of the political success of a woman leader, there are examples where similar conditions benefited men. As cultural expectations change, men also shift their behavior and gender performance, and different types of men may have opportunities to lead. Women must also navigate a political terrain rife with double binds. Ultimately, the path for women to access national executive office remains a narrow one.

What will the future bring? Continued progress toward gender equality in executive leadership will be tied to democratization. Yet, democracy itself is not enough to ensure gains for women in executive leadership. Citizens, social movements, parties, and the media must confront the attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes that reinforce the norms of masculine leadership and limit progress toward gender equality at the highest rungs of political power.

Notes

1. We see culture as the 'symbolic dimension of all structures, institutions, and practices' (Polletta 2004, p. 100)—a definition that captures the ways that culture permeates all aspects of social life, while also linking culture directly to social structure and human behavior.
2. As research in this volume shows, if women can break into these fields, these same credentials can serve them politically. For example, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Luísa Diogo, and Dilma Rousseff all trained in economics, and Michelle Bachelet studied military affairs (see Chaps. 6 through 9).
3. Consider the effects of Dilma Rousseff's suspension from office in 2016. After her removal, Interim President Michel Temer appointed a new cabinet composed entirely of men.

4. This is not to say neoliberalism is always a positive force for women's movements. Indeed, neoliberalism has contributed to the demobilization and co-optation of women's movements.
5. This count focuses on only the most powerful executives in a country, excluding interim and symbolic leaders (for more on this distinction, see Paxton and Hughes 2016).

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