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# Latin American gender politics: Examining the relationship between gender and political participation

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Latin American Gender Politics:  
Examining the Relationship Between Gender and Political Participation

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An Honors College Project Presented to  
the Faculty of the Undergraduate  
College of Arts and Letters  
James Madison University

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by Haley Bryson Lawrie

May 2017

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Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Political Science, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

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PUBLIC PRESENTATION

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## Introduction

Contemporary Latin America has some of the highest-ranking female government leaders in the world. In 2012, five women led their respective nations in Latin America as chief executive. In a region historically dominated by cultural machismo, these female leaders are making headway and hopefully setting precedents in their countries. However, female political leaders are only part of the story. As democratization continues to expand in the region, it is crucial to examine how ordinary women within Latin America approach their government and how actively they are in participating, from voting in national and local elections to having political discussions. To understand fully the gendered political culture of the region one must understand the differences and similarities of gender in everyday political participation.

In this thesis, I examine the relationship between gender and political participation within two Latin American countries, Argentina and Peru. Because of their higher socio-economic status in the region, the two nations cannot be representative of the entire Latin American region, but they can serve as a model as to how other nations can motivate women to engage with the government or political causes. Both nations have distinct formats of political participation throughout the nations, so the two case studies make excellent choices for this analysis. By examining these two countries in greater depth, one can explore how this perceived ‘machismo’ has altered the political sphere in recent Latin American history and where the political culture will go from here.

This topic is not only relevant for the academic world but has practical implications for the current political climate. First, as international women’s marches have been surging throughout the globe, it is important to understand how the political culture that encourages (or

discourages) women to feel able to participate in such marches and to what end. Latin American women's marches and their effects are not regionally isolated and in a moment of publicized international women's movements, we in the United States should have an elevated interest as to how our geographic neighbors are participating with their governments. Second, feminist international affairs scholars argue that gender should be accounted for in all international relations and that intrastate gender equality on a national level can greatly impact interstate relations. Therefore, understanding the levels of gender equality and inclusiveness is critical to Latin American relations on a basis of national security and foreign policy as well as an issue of human rights and inclusivity. Lastly, Latin America is an excellent region to examine for political participation. In an era in United States history where voter turnout is extremely low, dissatisfaction with the political system is extremely high, and many feel that their political efficacy is all but naught, this region gives great points of analysis for those in other countries to learn from by understanding how other political cultures adapt institutional and cultural changes to elevate levels of participation.

I will examine voter turnout, political protest participation, cabinet participation, and frequency of political discussions, which will help to understand the rifts between the genders within the region. I believe these factors will help to gauge the levels of political participation of the women in these two nations. A multi-faceted approach is important for examining political participation because not all women participate in the same way due to other external factors such as socio-economic status, time availability, and a plethora of others. Not all women are the same, therefore we must research as if their participation is as diverse as the women we are studying. These facets will help to gauge factors of participation that are inside and external to the traditional political system in these two nations.

Throughout this thesis I will be using terms that limit gender to the gender binary. Although there are clearly more gender identities than simply “man” or “woman” I use these terms because of how they are most frequently categorized in studies. As time moves on, I hope that additional gender identities will also be included in governmental and academic research on political participation, but for now I will work with the terms for gender that I am given.

It is said that “women hold up half the sky” but in an international sense, women clearly do not hold up half of the political power in the world. Peru and Argentina can help us understand women’s political successes as well as some areas with room for improvement for female political participation.

## Literature Review

Gender and political participation must be understood on a regional level before it can be understood through the lens of the individual states of Peru and Argentina. However, it is important to note that while various scholarship has been done on Latin America as a whole, there has been little focus on Argentina and Peru specifically. By using two nations that vary on economic, political, and social levels, the trend of generalizing the entire region of Latin America can have certain pitfalls if done without an understanding that there will be diversity throughout the region. Two case studies cannot generalize a whole region. Therefore, while this literature focuses on the region of Latin America through Peru and Argentina, take into account that in the same way as Europe as a whole cannot be perfectly generalized, the blanket statements for Latin America cannot hold perfectly either. While women's political participation in the region is generally lower than men's, these gaps differ greatly throughout various countries in the region (Schwindt-Bayer, 2011). Nuances within these generalized statements will inevitably appear, and my intent within this thesis will be to analyze these nuances in Peru and Argentina. Nevertheless, moving past these holes in research, it is important to discover what has been done in previous scholarship, because regional studies will lead to an understanding of the individual case studies.

Four formats of political participation will be examined in the region before moving forward to examine the intricacies in our two comparative country studies: voter turnout, political interest, cabinet participation, and political movements. These categories give a multifaceted approach to examining political participation and gender within Latin America. Certain scholars, such as John Booth, note that "action of any kind...aimed at influencing the distribution of public goods entails political participation" (Booth, 1979). These public goods



include regime stability, increased political rights, etc. While we will not go quite as broad as Booth suggests in his work, scholars have pointed to the idea that the definition of political participation must encompass various avenues for participatory action. Gendered participation will vary depending on each facet, so by examining each form of participatory action for the case studies in question, we will gain a more holistic understanding of the relationship of gender. By gaining an understanding of the scholarship that has been done through these categories, we can then dive deeper into what needs to be further examined in this fascinating relationship in Latin America.

### *Background Information*

Although much research has been conducted on women's representation in a political setting, a good majority of the research on hand has been focused on Western industrialized nations, rather than the global south. (Schwindt-Bayer, 2010). It is crucial to discuss the global south rather than just the industrialized nations because much of the global south, especially Latin America, is an environment in which the democratization process has been increasing for the past 30 years. Although democracy continues to expand within Latin America, perceived problems with democracy have unfolded—the issue of vote buying has put a damper on the impact of democratization in the minds of Latin American citizens (Carreras, İrepoğlu, 2013). Carreras echoes the idea that while democracy is seen as the norm by much of the developed world, democratization has distinct challenges within Latin America. Moreover, the political patronage that has repeatedly shown up within Latin America—mainly due to the weak internal system of democracy in many nations—is discouraging to those that are not reaping the benefits of this system, mainly women (Gordin, 2002). These issues with democratization and political patronage are helpful to note when analyzing the region's participatory behavior.

Throughout Latin America, people participate in politics when they are seeking a clear goal and have confidence in the channel in which they are participating (Seligson, Booth, 1976). If Latin American women do not have confidence in the democratic and (now) traditional avenues of participatory action, they may limit some of their action in those avenues and seek alternative methods for participation. To try to combat this problem of lack of confidence, many countries throughout the region have established gender quotas in the government, both on local and national levels. However, governmental gender quotas benefit the elite women and not the general populace of women within Latin America because of the disproportionate effects of financial resources to get into office, making their effects on political participation lacking when it comes to generalizable research (Escrivá, Cruz, Bermúdez, Breña, 2010).

Those these factors (democratization, confidence in the political system, gender quotas) do not directly factor into the four categories of political participation that will be discussed in the following subsections, my intent is to bring some illumination to the institutional factors that may impact the participatory behaviors before the aforementioned analysis.

### *Voter Turnout*

Throughout previous research, gender has played a role in who registers to vote and who comes out to the polls on Election Day. Although voting requires less time and effort than other forms of political participation, citizens still need some amount of incentive, information, and resources in order to be motivated to go to the polls (Carreras, Castañeda-Angarita, 2014).

Voting in local and national elections is a key avenue to examine in the broader term of political participation, because although voter turnout rates are very high in the region, especially when compared to nations like the United States, it is still an area in which gender seems to have an impact. It is also one, if not the most, traditional avenue for political participation for

democracies anywhere in the world, so by examining this clear manifestation of democracy at work in Latin America, we can start to uncover how gender plays its role within the political sphere.

Latin American women are less likely to demonstrate a fondness towards democracy than Latin American men (Walker, Kehoe, 2013). Walker and Kehoe point out that this trend is largely due to the fact that many conventional political avenues in a democratic system are dominated by men. When citizens are less trusting of political institutions, and less satisfied with democracy, they are less willing to use typical forms of political participation such as voting (Carreras, Castañeda-Angarita, 2014). Carreras and Castañeda-Angarita generalize throughout Latin America with their research, because third wave democratization has felt some push back within the region. Political and institutional models of Latin American nations greatly impact the voter turnout rate within their respective nation (Fornos, Power, Garand, 2004). These institutions, as well as other cultural and societal factors, should be examined in voter turnout. When doing a cross-national approach, researchers Schraufnagel and Sgouraki found that female literacy played a significant factor into the actual voter turnout rate within the nation in question (Schraufnagel, Sgouraki, 2014). By analyzing these factors in conjunction with voter turnout in the region, it can be easy to note why there would be a gap between the genders in the participatory behavior that arises.

Additionally, it is important that compulsory voting is taken into account when addressing political participation. Just because a nation has compulsory voting within the country, does not mean that it is properly enforced and that gender does not play a factor into who actually comes out to the polls. In fact, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance notes that compulsory voting may not be as impactful as many political

scientists claim (International IDEA, 2016). The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance also points out that the sanctions that are placed upon an individual that does not show up to the polls impacts the level of voter turnout as well, male or female (International IDEA, 2016). Just because compulsory voting is in a nation, mainly Peru and Argentina, does not mean voter turnout will be 100 percent by any means, and it is crucial that that is established. By increasing the gender equality within democratic representation, it must be examined whether the participatory actions by the general populace follows suit.

### *Political Interest*

Out of the four categories of political participation, political interest—measured through how frequently individuals talk about politics with friends—seems to be the least common for the region of Latin America as a whole. Many women in the region are viewed as apolitical, a stereotype that perhaps affects the political conversations that women hold (Schmidt, 1976). Latinobarómetro, a public opinion yearly survey based in Latin America, asked participants in the region that very question: “How often do you do each of the following things?- Response of ‘Talk about politics with friends’”. Throughout the region, the responses came out with 6.3% saying very frequently, 21.3% saying frequently, 32.3% saying almost never, and 37.9% saying never, with a collective 2.3% saying “Don’t know” or “No Answer” (Latinobarómetro, 2015). As a whole in their 2015 survey, those whom identify as women made up 51.7% of respondents, leading to the idea that women, if consistent with the rest of the survey, also do not discuss politics nearly as often. While the survey does not necessarily connect these two responses (gender and discussion of politics), we can make a reasonable estimation that the two fall into place in the opinion survey. While Latinobarómetro may only be one survey out of many, its

well established, region-wide nature gives credence to a generalizable trend in contemporary Latin America.

Not only does the act of political discussion with friends showcase the individual's interest in politics, but it also highlights the level of interpersonal trust that individuals have for one another, of which Inglehart believes that there is a connection (Inglehart, 1997). Women in particular in the region were found to be more conservative in their ideologies, so perhaps there's a connection between the trust of others, the viewing of women as 'apolitical', and this lower level of political discussion.

While there is a lack of research of the political conversations of women in the region compared to the other tenets of political participation, it is my belief that it is an important factor of the thesis at hand. Political conversations reflect not only the institutional aspect of political participation, but the ease and comfort in which individuals feel connected to politics in their everyday lives. Understanding that cultural side of participation is crucial to get a full scope of the issue in Latin America and our two target nations.

### *Cabinet Participation*

Examining how ordinary citizens participate is important to determining political participation, but understanding the influence of women inside the government is also crucial to our understanding of women's political participation. Silvia Claveria notes in her research that women are traditionally underrepresented in political institutions but that a crucial facet to examine in that representation is that of the executive office. She continues saying that women are also underrepresented in these offices as well, but that their place of greater visibility and power make them very relevant in examining gender dynamics in politics. (Claveria, 2014).

Cabinet participation is a gendered aspect of political participation because in many nations, high up government positions are used as part of a system of political patronage by heads of states or governments, which are quite frequently men. Researchers Arriola and Johnson note in their article that “Ministerial posts are among the most attractive forms of patronage an incumbent can offer big men, since being in government enables them to channel state resources to their followers and thereby shore up their own leadership positions.” (Arriola, Johnson, 2014, p. 497). The big men that Arriola and Johnson mention are more likely to use their political power to benefit fellow men, creating a cyclical pattern of patronage. Their research demonstrates that women are often left out of this process of political patronage, showing the positions’ gendered nature.

Because of the uneven structure of cabinets, their political infrastructure, and their level of political power across nations, Claveria informs us that “there is no clear pattern of female representation in...cabinets across advanced industrial democracies” but that they are still an influential position to be in for a woman no matter what the cabinet looks like. She also points out in her article that Cabinet participation is a unique portion of women’s participatory action because of the fundamental nature that cabinet participation does not require campaigning, but rather focuses heavily on internal party politics and the political structure that exists within a particular nature. (Claveria, 2014). By examining the number of women in these high ranking positions of power, we get a better understanding of how women engage within the party system and their perceived leadership capabilities.

Additionally, we cannot examine cabinet participation as if it were an isolated phenomenon, but recognize it is connected to other forms of women’s participation in the political system. Cabinet members are typically chosen from a pool of legislative or ingrained

political figures that are influential or seen as highly qualified for a high ranking position. Therefore, the choice to appoint women to these positions showcases a certain level of political capital in a nation's political system. For example, Whitford, Wilkins, and Ball point out in their article that representation of women in cabinet positions is related to an increase in women in subministerial positions. (Whitford, Wilkins, and Ball, 2007). Other scholars, such as Mannon Tremblay point out that "the higher a political role, the harder it is for women to attain" making it increasingly important to understand women's access to these roles in upper level government. (Tremblay, 2012). This facet of internal political participation—or how women fit into 'the system' once they've already reached a certain threshold of political power—can show how a country will or will not allow women to rise in the ranks of political power as well as demonstrate how comfortable women feel in participatory with their government, even as they themselves are part of that government.

Women in high ranking positions can play a large role in descriptive representation within a particular nation (Whitford, Wilkins, and Ball, 2007). It is important to examine cabinet participation due to the increased importance of the executive branch within Latin America, so moving forward this facet of participation will showcase more elements of our two nations' political culture as well as they participatory action women are 'allowed' to have in their respective political spheres.

### *Political Movements*

Political movements and protests have been pivotal points of research for political participation in Latin America (Moseley, Moreno, 2010). Movements beginning at the grassroots level have become a prominent space in which women can participate informally—there is a tradition of women participating in revolutionary movements within the region (Jaquette, 1973).

Jaquette notes that revolutionary action within Latin America has been an important avenue for the region as a whole, and women were sure to be a part of it. Participation in these revolutionary roles has been an excellent outlet in order to bring about political and social change.

Additionally, participating in non-political organizations on a community level can lead to more participation in political entities as well, which is how many women in the region get involved in political participation (Klesner, 2007). Through communal venues, Klesner argues that non-political groups can still make a large-scale political message, leading them to be included somewhat in political movements indirectly.

Untraditional venues of political participation are good transitions in participatory action as culture comes to accept women as political actors. Unconventional formats of participation are common for women, partially due to the fact that there has been a large disconnect between women's movements and "actual democratic regimes" in Latin America—therefore, 'uncommon' has become conventional for the woman trying to engage in political dialogue (Rousseau, 2006). Especially during times of transition from authoritarianism to electoral democracy, women were much more likely to take to social movements to create a political message. (Espinal, Zhao, 2015). Espinal and Zhao note that these times of political uncertainty are excellent periods for women, because the norms have not been established, leaving room for traditionally less visible actors to be heard and seen. While these social and political movements typically remain outside of the traditional political environment for much of the world, they are included within the scope of political participation in Latin America, largely due to the culture of populism that resides within the region, giving social movements more normalcy than might have otherwise been allowed (Roberts, 2006). This culture of populism gives social movements much more credence and spreads their impact throughout a nation. Unconventional formats of



political participation, such as participating in political and social movements, show a significantly smaller gap between the genders than that of typical political participation, making it important to note for our analysis of gender in the region (Desposato, Norrander, 2009).

Social movements dominated by women include issues such as economic inequality, human rights, and gendered issues on a national or local level (Waylen, 1993). Movements led by women are not just for “women’s issues” within Latin America. These social movements have had a gendered connotation to them in the eyes of the state, due to the predominance of women participants, but these social movements have a wide range of political messaging within their midst. Moving closer to the present, women’s movements have started to work closer to within the established political system rather than against it—making change to the system rather than trying to change it completely, mainly in response to the political climate (Jaquette, 1994). As stated previously, social movements have had more success with transition periods rather than with the established system, but Jaquette notes that these movements adopt strategies to the current social and political atmosphere.

Although the political movements that women participate in are not always that of “women’s issues”, the literature on this topic does indicate that women typically use their status as mothers or motherly figures in order to capitalize on political power and ensure that their voices are heard. Examples such as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo have utilized their maternal identities to demonstrate outrage and protest, to now serving as a reminder of the political injustice of a cruel regime (Burchianti, 2004). Because the status of homemaker and having children is a significant factor in political and community participation (Espinal, Zhao, 2015), women are sure to use their status in these traditional roles in their social movements as well.

Political movements that highlight social issues are commonplace within Latin America and prove to be an impressive route and commonplace for women to have their voices heard by the political system.

## Methodology

There are a plethora of ways in which gender and political participation could be studied in a global context. However, for the purposes of this thesis, comparative case studies of the nations of Argentina and Peru were chosen to get an in-depth analysis of this relationship in the Latin American region. Additionally, some quantitative data was added into the comparative study chapter in order to better understand the region as a whole outside of the two country studies. The facets of political participation to be measured are: voter turnout, political interest, cabinet participation, and political movements. This researcher believes this system to be very applicable to creating a holistic understanding of the crucial relationship between gender and participatory rates. By further understanding these two countries and their comparative relationship, we can better grapple with the complexities of a gendered political arena in Latin America.

Case studies are a proven method to get an in-depth analysis of a particular relationship. In the analysis of gender, there are multiple facets that must be examined in order to understand the whole story in the political sphere. As John Gerring points out in his analysis, case studies are beneficial not necessarily to define all cases that are remotely similar, but to better understand the cases themselves, in our case the countries of Peru and Argentina (Gerring, 2004). Case studies help to examine the depth of an analysis in a particular relationship, not try to create a generalizable understanding of the analysis at hand. This qualitative, small-N analysis helps us to better understand the entirety of those particular cases, in this instance the countries themselves and their citizens' relationship to the government.

As for the temporal analysis of these country studies, these studies focus on contemporary Argentina and Peru (from 2000 to 2014 with the data collected), but some of the

sections look to the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well in order to better understand the historical political culture that resides within the two nations. Historical context is important when trying to understand how gender affects participation because as gender relations change and large political movements come into place within a country they will create a state of fluctuation in how ordinary citizens participate. However, for the most part the study attempts to focus on the 21<sup>st</sup> century for measuring women's political participation in the two country studies.

Most of the quantitative data used came from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), which has been thoroughly examining Latin American values for a substantive amount of time. Other data came from professors at James Madison University and the Inter Parliamentary Union. Quantitative data were used in order to supplement the case study information. For time considerations, it was unable to do additional qualitative studies to examine the surrounding nations for various facets of participation, so it was added to all of the sections of participatory action except for political movements. This added data gives a more complete scope of the surrounding nations and helps to justify the claims made later on in the thesis.

Argentina and Peru were the chosen case studies in this analysis because they represent relatively urbanized countries in the middle of the spectrum on a variety of measures within Latin America. They were not chosen on a most-similar or most-different basis, but rather by the knowledge and interest that the researcher had about the two countries and how they fit into the larger regional sphere. While the two nations are not representative of the entire region—being more urbanized and economically developed than other nations—they can help to understand how to examine other nations as well in this political relationship on gender.

The four facets of political participation were chosen to represent how the typical Latin American woman would participate within her political system in the respective countries. With voter turnout, political interest, cabinet participation, and political movements, we can get a better understanding of how citizens interact within the political sphere.

Voter turnout is one of the most traditional measures of political participation. In any nation, it is an important measure of civic engagement and communication between citizens and their governments. For this measure of political participation, this researcher used data from the 2012 LAPOP survey for Argentina and Peru. In the comparative chapter, we utilize regional data for historical elections to better comprehend the surrounding nations' voter turnout. The percentage of eligible voters that come out to vote speaks volumes about a particular nation's political culture—whether voting is mandatory, optional, or seen as a non-issue—and their political participation. Utilization of this facet of participation was clear for an analysis of gender; we must understand how women participate within the traditional political institutions in their respective countries.

Political interest was measured because it helps to better understand the informal connection women have to their governments. Yes, women may have certain obligations to go out to the polls on Election Day but they have no mandated tie to discuss politics with one another. The Latin American Public Opinion project supplies the data and information necessary for examining this part of political participation. In a question specifically asking what their personal interest in politics is, we get our data and can make conclusions for measuring this facet of political participation. There have been key demographic predictors that have been closely related to political interest so choosing this facet of political participation seemed to be a clear indicator of an individual level measure that relied upon demographics in a population.

Cabinet participation by women is measured by looking to data collected by Dr. John Scherpereel and Dr. Melinda Adams at James Madison University. In looking at their analyses we can measure institutional participation by women in the two respective nations. This facet helps to understand how institutional aspects by a select few women can help to create progress in other parts of the nation, for ordinary citizens. The influence of women in government position, especially at high levels such as in the cabinet, can make a great deal of influence of how a large portion of the women in a nation will participate, so examine this internal format of participation is crucial to a well-balanced understanding of political participation in Peru and Argentina.

Political movements were added into the analysis of gender and political participation because this ‘outside of the Western norm’ format of participation is crucial in understanding how specifically Latin American women participate. While not in the political norm for a large portion of political participation in nations like the United States and the UK, this external to traditional political institutions format of participation is quite common and crucial to Latin American politics. These movements are outside of the institutional political sphere and usually deal with political protest, oftentimes against the government and its workings. To better examine the political movements, this researcher chose to work with LAPOP 2012 data once again to better determine the number of Argentinian and Peruvian women engage in this participatory facet.

Additionally, it should be noted that I will discuss the subject of intersectionality, which I define as being the intersection of various identities, such as being an indigenous woman or a bisexual person of color. People are impacted by multiple identities, not just being indigenous or a woman separately, so intersectionality tries to grapple with the multitude of identities that

people experience. Also with defining terms, I would like to define machismo as “an overwhelming sense of masculine strength or pride” which is quite common in Latin America. This term falls along with patriarchal standards in which the masculine is preferred over all else.

Through the outlined methodology, we will better understand the relationship between gender and political participation in our two nations of analysis. Hopefully through them we will better understand the region as a whole and how to study gender and political participation in the future.

## Peru Case Study

Peru must be differentiated from the larger Latin American sphere if we are to truly understand the comparative nature between the two nations in an in-depth analysis of gender and political participation and how the two factors impact one another in a systematic manner. Each point of analysis--voter turnout, political interest, cabinet participation, and political movements—help to understand the overall spectrum of female political participation within the state of Peru. Each point can help understand a different facet of the political climate, understanding the conventional and unconventional strategies that exist to express political opinion. Although there are a plethora of ways in which to measure political participation, these three give a well-rounded yet concise way of measuring the somewhat abstract measure of political engagement within a state, tailoring the measurement away from a Western-based measurement as well. This Latin American- based measurement will help to conceptualize the female participatory rates within Peru, rather than examine it in an ideological basis of the United States. Within each subsection of the overall understanding of this political participation, I examine some necessary historical context to the situation and how it relates to that particular facet of participation, background and social factors, and then dig into the analysis of each manifestation of political participation. Each aspect of political participation is crucial to get a holistic understanding of how women feel the most confident in the political sphere and how they take action to make their voices heard within the larger political climate.



### *Voter Turnout*

To preface the analysis of voter turnout rates between the genders in Peru, we should examine the historical context of Peruvian voting rights. Within the nation of Peru, electoral participation was made mandatory for literate men over the age of 21 in 1931, however this same concept for women was not passed until 1955--24 years later (Birch, 2009). While this number of years may not seem very impactful in the large scale of history, it is important to note that this was made mandatory at the same time that women got the right to vote—almost a 150 years after men earned the same right.

After the political crisis that befell Peru within the 1980s, many “women from lower-income sectors were able to learn the intricacies of local politics, to vote and be elected within their organizations.” (Blondet, 2002) This general understanding of the political workings of a democratic system are going to greatly influence the female turnout rates, leading to an amplification of the impact of female voters within the nation, thanks to historical context and factors leading up to this development.

### *Political Interest*

Political interest can be a somewhat daunting task to measure to get a representative sample for the political attitudes and actions of an entire nation. However, the Vanderbilt 2010 Barometric study led to a great amount of advancement in the understanding of Peruvian political interest and gauging how everyday citizens felt about talking about their government, critiques and all. Within the study of Peru and its electorate, the researchers in Vanderbilt University and their affiliates in the Latin American Public Opinion Project asked the question of survey participants: “How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?”

(Vanderbilt, 2010). With a sample size of approximately 1,500 people answering the survey of the project, the participants answered with the following responses: “Less than 30% of the respondents in Peru in 2010 acknowledge having some or much interest in politics, while a third (33.6%) affirm not having any interest in it. Between these two poles we find a majority (38.1%) who declare having little interest in public issues” (Figure 1). A large portion of the general populace does not seem to be interested with the political workings of the Peruvian government, lacking incentive to talk about the issues with friends or family around them in a domestic setting. The Barometric Latin American Public Opinion Project also gives us information about Peruvian political interest levels in a cross-national comparative context as well, pointing out that “the median point value [of political interest] in Peru (33.5) is relatively low, but it is not the lowest (it is located between the options of “low” and “high”) when compared with that of other countries.” (Vanderbilt, 2010). When a third of the general populace within a nation has very little interest in the political actions and activities of the democratically elected officials and only another third is actively interested in democracy, it is clear that there is an issue of lacking political confidence throughout the nation, not just in the female population. With the reminder that Peru does hold the policy of mandatory voting for its citizens, this disinterested populace showcases a great ideological distance from the general populace within Peru. Women’s political interest (and political participation) may be the study of this thesis, but this Barometric survey demonstrates that Peruvians as a whole may have a political interest issue hitting their nation.

Peruvians, compared to many nations within North and South America, have a significantly smaller percentage of the electorate that are interested in political issues, not just that of the female populations within the nation. In her book, Elsa Chaney notes that Chilean women “are recognized by many observers as the most active in the Americas in terms of

professional and political involvement, whereas Peruvians usually are classified as the least active.” (Chaney, 2014). However, it has been a strategic move by the ruling parties within the government since the 1970s within Peru to keep key women’s groups interested in and favoring the ruling party (Boesten, 2003, p. 115). Although this has received some pushback within these organizations, the state (especially under the Fujimori regime) has attempted to monitor the political attitudes and opinions of its female citizens.

In their studies from 2008 to 2014, Vanderbilt measure political interest and in every year they found women had very little interest in politics—every year, the majority of women had little or no interest in politics, with about 80 percent of women in these two categories every time. This is compared to their male counterparts, where men had approximately 70 percent in those two categories. Clearly it seems as though none of the electorate is simply talking about politics in Peru. There is not a clear line of gender discrepancy in political interest, showing that it is not a huge factor, especially when no one is really interested in politics.

### *Cabinet Participation*

The Presidential Cabinet of Peru, also known as the Council of Ministers, is very powerful within the nation. Its jobs include approve laws that the president submits to Congress, deliberates on areas of high public interest, and generally deals with the president of Peru in order to influence policy making power. There are currently 18 members of the Peruvian Cabinet. The cabinet is chosen directly by the president of the republic and upholds a strong place in Peru’s government. Therefore, we should examine women’s presence in that cabinet through the lens of Dr. Scherpereel’s and Dr. Adams’ data set on Peru’s Cabinet Participation in order to determine where women hold their place in Peru’s political prestige and demonstrate whether they are allowed to be at the political table as well as participate in it.

The data set for women's cabinet participation in Peru goes from 1975 to 2012, an expansive time frame in which the Presidential Cabinet had a good deal of substantive power in the executive branch of the nation. Within our data set however, it is clear that women did not hold a particularly high level of influence within that position of governmental power. We will analyze the participation based upon the prestige that the researchers give cabinet positions (top, high, medium, and low). Obviously there are some cabinet positions that are deemed as higher in importance, so it is important to note not only when women are participating, but also in what rank of position that they are participating in these high levels.

The first time a woman held a top cabinet position within Peru was in 2007 and there would remain one woman in a top cabinet position until 2011. However, in the other 33 years of the data set, there were absolutely zero women in top prestige positions in the nation. Next, when looking to the high level of prestige positions, the researchers note that there has been a singular woman in a high level position in 2003, 2007, and 2010. In the other years of the data collected there were, again, no women in a high prestige position. The first time any woman held any level of cabinet participation in Peru was in 1990, in a position that the researchers characterize as a medium-prestige position within the cabinet. A woman would hold this type of position in a higher frequency than the others though—another 2 women would pop up in 1995, 1 in 2005/2006, a whopping 4 women in 2007, dropping to 2 in 2008, rising again to 3 in 2009, and 1 woman in 2010/2011. In the lowest level of the cabinet, 1 woman has held down the fort from 2000-2011, allowing at least some representation by women in low prestige cabinet positions.

From 1975 to 1990, women had absolutely zero representation in the Presidential Cabinet of Peru and little representation until 2000, with only 3 members serving in the 1990s. Essentially, there is little representation by women in this cabinet, with only one woman except

from the year range of 2003 to 2011, with a noticeable spike in 2007 with a whopping 7 women in an 18 person cabinet. While the data set does not reach this far, researcher Petra Poskočilová notes that this participation does rise to “50 per cent in 2014” (Poskočilová, 2015). While 50 percent may not seem like much to celebrate about in women’s participation in cabinets, if women are making up half of one of the highest ranking groups in Peruvian government, it showcases that participation is moving past the system of machismo in upper level government and sometimes move past the system of patronage system of cabinet positions that might have been the political culture in the 1970s and 80s. This spike in participation may be due to institutional pressure from the international community, such as the gender quotas put in place in Peru in 1997, in which 30 percent of legislative candidates had to be women. This procedure helped to put more women in place in the legislative body, which in turn helped to increase participation in the cabinet within the nation. While this institutional factor may not be the sole factor in why participation jumped in this section of the government, it seems to fit the chronological model that the data set has outlined for us. Institutional factors such as gender quotas can have larger impacts than just on the legislative, but also to the executive branch as well, increasing women’s participation in various spheres.

All in all, women’s cabinet participation was pretty low before the 1997 legislative gender quota was put into place. While there is certainly room to examine the gendered nature of each position in the cabinet, the sheer fact of women’s participation in these spheres are important to recognize and learn from moving forward—perhaps one day there will be even more women in the Presidential Cabinet of Peru, allowing even more representation by women already within Peru’s political system.

### *Political Movements*

Political Movements are increasingly common within Peru, with the Vanderbilt 2010 Political Culture noting that Peru has one of the highest protest rates in the region (Vanderbilt, 2010). However, it is imperative to not only understand that Peruvians as a whole enjoy a heightened practice of political protests and ‘untraditional’ practices for political participation, but how women are specifically targeted within this population. Since the 1970s and 1980s with times of economic hardship befalling the people of Peru, a sense of grassroots movements have taken place within the nation (Radcliffe, Westwood, 1993). The Peruvian government was seen as failing the people that it was supposed to protect and encourage with a livelihood, leading to a necessity for people-oriented action by the general populace in order to get the desired monetary and political goals. The government failed to address women as “citizens with rights”, so women had to act in order to defy the current political system and find a way in which women could work to gain new headway on their own political, economic, and cultural rights (Blondet, p.281, 2002). With this people-oriented ideology in place within the nation, women were able to set a precedent and utilize historical female models of political involvement and advocacy to shape their movements, giving birth to the concept of female as figures that can actively participate in shaping the world around them. Blondet notes in her 2002 book that “a particularly favourable set of circumstances existed in Peru during the 1990s that accounts for the increased participation and visibility of women in the country’s social and political life.” (Blondet, 2002, Ch. 9). These factors, including the historical factors of modernization, 1980s protests, and others as well as the political interest of President Fujimori to engage women in order to get votes for his campaign, helped to set the stage towards political involvement through political protest.

With this historical frame in place, we can start to understand how women become interested in political participation through political movements. Women's movements had to fight to gain access to be a true "grassroots organization"—because the women's groups were so closely monitored by many of the executive administrations within the nation, they wanted to have the ability to speak out against the government if they wanted to by adopting the legal terminology of grassroots (Boesten, 2003, p.121). Becoming a grassroots organization made it so that these women could critique the current system without being inherently tied to the ideological or physical demands of the executive in power at the time. Even when the government was seemingly, and from an outsider's perspective shallowly, attempting to give women political access to the government in a mainstream manner, because the women's groups were not given adequate voices in this format of participation (nor able to articulate and discuss the critiques they may have had with the government) they made sure to move to a less conventional format. Political participation through political movements has been made into the standard for women's voices, both through a physical and metaphorical sense, to be heard by the general populace and those in the political elite in the national and local governments. The format and main way that many Peruvian women participate in politics today is through political protests and movements, moving away from the traditional, and giving way towards an alternative format that would remain popular to the present day.

The Latin American Public Opinion Project done in part by Vanderbilt University also examines through logistic regression several key factors that influence the political movements within Peru: "first, persons who reside in the Sierra Sur (an area of high concentrations of indigenous people and extreme poverty) have a greater tendency to participate in this kind of activity; second, persons affected by corruption and delinquency are more likely to participate in

protests and demonstrations and, finally, those who declare having a greater interest in politics also participate more in protests.” (Vanderbilt, 2010). These findings lead us to understand that those that are affected negatively by the executive or legislative powers in Peru at any given time are going to be more likely to step forward in a situation of political protests. The historical context within Peru shows that women were not getting the political incentives they were promised, witnessing the political corruption that leads to trying unconventional formats of participation. Additionally, we can understand through Vanderbilt’s findings, that there is a close connection between vocalizing your interest in political issues and participating in political movements, leading to a connection between the various formats of political participation.

The Vanderbilt 2010 study gives us a wide variety of factors into political protests and demonstrations, creating a regression analysis that understands the impact of various factors: including that of being a *mujer* (woman) had a  $-.118$  influence on the factor of political participation in protests within the nations, meaning that it does not directly impact the participation levels in number of protests. While this particular factor will be discussed later on in the analysis, other factors such as education and political interest,  $.096$  and  $.394$  respectively, had a clear positive and upstanding effect on the political participation in protests and demonstrations noted within the 2010 survey. (Vanderbilt, 2010). Vanderbilt’s data following political interest and its connection with political participation through protests and demonstrations connects our facets with one another, showing that political participation does not happen in a vacuum. Additionally, women’s political participation in protests within the nation can be understood with the knowledge of the educational disparity between girls and boys in the Peruvian society. Peru did pass a law in 2001 to improve education for girls, especially in rural areas, but that law has much more bark than it has bite, giving more awareness to the



situation than structurally changing the divide between the genders of who finishes secondary schools (Salazar, 2011). Due to the fact that education has a fairly impactful connection to political participation in protests, the fact that women face institutional setbacks in this department, the political protests will be varied between the genders in Peru.

Vanderbilt's Barometric of 2010 also factors in that Peruvians as a whole have a very low confidence level in their own government, ranking third lowest on the list (Figure 2), labeling the nation "from the perspective of attitudes, a 'democracy at risk.'" (Vanderbilt, 2010). This lack of confidence in the current political system and more traditional aspects of political participation leaves the door wide open for less traditional participatory actions such as demonstrations and protests. Because of the widespread disappointment that women have received from the Peruvian government, both in a historical context and connecting their disenfranchisement to the lack of effectiveness from the gender quota within the nation (Blondet, 2002), women turn to political protests because it defies the idea of traditional government. Whereas other forms of participation are controlled (and sometimes mandated) by the government, political protests utilize the voices of the people, creating a sense of political voice that showcases the sentiments of lack of trust towards the traditional government.

Femininity cannot be examined in isolation, but should be examined through an intersectional lens—in Peru, the lens that is crucial to understand is that of indigenous identities and how that intersects with gender identity. Radcliffe and Westwood note in their 1993 book that "peasant women" or "campesinas" in Peru have made large scale impacts within the scope of political protests towards land rights and that Peruvian women have "distinct femininities [which] arise through the different class, ethnic and regional cultures in which the women live and act" (Radcliffe, Westwood, 1993, p. 197). The intersectionality of indigenous identities is

crucial to understand the political nature of women in Peru and their participation in land rights movements and demonstrations about indigenous political rights. For example, issues such as illiteracy and adolescent pregnancy in the state of Peru are “primarily a problem among women and the indigenous population” (Blondet, 2002, Ch. 9) so those issues would impact indigenous women greatly and if the Peruvian government is not taking care of it (like many issues within the indigenous communities in Latin America), political movements would be one of the best solutions for these women. Like the economic and educational aspects of womanhood, indigenous identities in Peru are crucial to understand when examining a holistic understanding of female participation in protests in politics, especially when taking into account the Vanderbilt Latin American Public Opinion Project study.

The Vanderbilt Barometrico negates many of the preconceived notions that this research held before investigation into further research of this thesis. They note in their 2010 study that “It is interesting to note that none of the variables associated with a precarious economic situation or with negative evaluations of the economy emerge as significant predictors of protest in Peru.” (Vanderbilt, 2010). Their study also examines the fact that the factor of ‘woman’ was actually on the negative side of the Barometric chart that Vanderbilt composed. We can take this finding to mean that although women participate more in political protests than any other form of participation within Peru, their status as a woman may not be the explicit deciding factor for the women that participate in political protests. It may have to deal with implicit situations of being a woman—the perception of corruption in the government (due to the previously noted historical factors) or evolving political perceptions of womanhood—but at the very least, women aren’t necessarily participating in protests because they feel disenfranchised as a *woman*. Generally, women in Peru do feel disenfranchised by the political system around them—that much is clear

by the elevated rates of political participation compared to our other two facets of participation. However, the political culture is not in a state in which gender is a deciding factor for women to take action in the political world. Patriarchal systems are strong, so even if women did feel there was a gender divide in economic inequality or justice that should be manifested for women, they may not take action against it as women in solidarity with one another solely due to the fact that they are being discriminated against as women within their society. Essentially, women will wholeheartedly protest and participate in political demonstrations, but not because they're women.

Political participation through political movements within Peru leads to a clearer understanding of the political discomfort women feel in the current political structure in their nation. By examining the various facets as to why women participate in political protests, we can see that the political landscape in Peru for women makes it easier to participate in this unconventional fashion, rather than through voter turnout and discussion of politics. However, this does not mean that women are in the majority of Peruvians that use protest as a major form of participation. In fact, many women in the nation don't use protest due to the fact that they are women often at all, disassociating the collective idea of "female protesters" as a collective group within the nation. But, as a whole, political protest is a necessary mechanism for women in the nation, whether they explicitly realize it or not.

## Argentina Case Study

Unlike Peru, Argentina has a plentiful amount of research done on its gendered political movements throughout history, and areas of famous political movements as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo are particularly well-documented. Karina Barker claims that “women in Latin America are less involved than men in nearly all arenas of public life.” (Barker, 2007, p. i). However, she also remarks that Argentina is the exception to the rule. It is important to examine the various approaches of political participation within the nation as a whole in order to better understand the gendered aspects of politics in the nation. Political movements may be one of the largest points of analysis due to the pure breadth and depth of research that surrounds the political movements in Argentina, but each aspect of political participation builds upon itself and helps to better understand the full encompassing nature of participation of women in the nation as well as the political culture (inside and outside of the traditional system) that helps to create that political space for female participation. “Argentina has been thought of as the most ‘Western’ and most successfully ‘developed’ Latin American nation, with a high level of industrialization and a highly educated populace.” (Burchianti, 2004, p. 134-5). By understanding the political participation in the nation through the four different facets of examination, we can glean a better comprehension of how gender affects these forms of participation in Argentina and in the larger Latin American sphere.

### *Voter Turnout*

As the most ‘traditional’ format of political participation, electoral participation has played a monumental role in laying the ground work for how accepting and open other facets of participation will be in a nation. In order to examine voter turnout in Argentina, we will look at the history and of the pro-suffrage movement in Argentina and how that historical movement has

built fundamental momentum towards the nation's morale with regards to women's electoral participation in the present day. Next, we will look to recent electoral data in the nation and see the implications of a nation-wide mandate to vote and how this impacts turnout rate and the discrepancies that may arise between men and women in the nation. These two aspects of examination for voter turnout in the nation of Argentina will prove to be useful when looking to the further study of political participation.

The right to vote in Argentina for women was achieved first on a regional and then on a national basis. Women got the vote first in the province of San Juan in 1927, twenty years before, women were allowed to vote nationally. According to Hammond, the San Juan province had the "correct" ingredients early for women to get the right to vote: positive economic conditions, higher populations of women, and a national suffrage movement. (Hammond, 2009). Additionally, ideological arguments did wonders both on the national and provincial level for women's suffrage in Argentina and specifically San Juan. Using identities as mothers and the "strong moral quality of women that suffragists considered analogous to motherhood" (Hammond, 2009, p. 10), those in favor of suffrage were able to use their traditional gender identity to inflate their argument towards female participation. The suffrage movement in the region also saw the vote as something as more than just a vote, but a symbol for political and cultural capital that women could yield in the country. For example, Hammond notes in his article that "pro-suffrage feminists viewed the ballot as 'the weapon' with which women could 'fight ... for their own wellbeing'" (Hammond, 2009, p. 1-2). With the vote and voter turnout being tools in which female strength could be utilized, both culturally and politically, the suffrage movement set the political groundwork for female voter turnout to be amplified in the country.

In more recent years in Argentina, women have been more frequently utilizing their ‘weapon’ of the ballot on a regular basis in the electoral system. In fact, so much so that “there does not exist a significant difference in electoral participation between men and women.” (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). For example, in the Latin American Public Opinion Project of 2012, Vanderbilt University found when conducting their survey that when measuring the percentage of people that voted in the last election, Argentina had 88.8% women and 88.6% men (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). While this only includes a relatively small sample in one election, it is monumental to understand the progress that has been made in female political participatory rates in the nation of Argentina. Even if this number were to be reversed, the level of equity between the two genders noted in the survey point to a level of relatively equal participatory rates when accounting for voter turnout in the nation.

The decision to make voting mandatory in Argentina has resulted in Argentines voting so that they are not penalized. Compulsory voting has resulted in a voter turnout rate of 88.7% as a whole for the nation. (Vanderbilt, 2012). Argentina has high voter turnout rates for Latin America, ranking third of the nations that are incorporated in the survey, placing it “approximately 13 percentage points higher than the regional average”. (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). Compulsory voting is known to elevate voter turnout, so this finding is not terribly surprising in that regard. It is important to understand the political culture that buttresses political participation.

In Argentina, this political culture creates a relationship between citizen and the political process that is deep. For most Argentines, voting is a political right and a civic obligation. (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). This civic obligation is quite possibly a large factor as to why political participation is so close in this facet—because the obligation of voting (with consequences

attached) pushes away some of the factors of differences between social groups, gender, and other socio-economic factors when voting is voluntary. Reflecting on the turnout rates, it is quite likely, as Vanderbilt noted, that this proximity between men and women can be connected to the structural addition of compulsory voting.

Whether due to the nature of the fight to get the right to vote in Argentina or the case of mandatory voting as is common throughout the region, the close comparison between men and women in voter turnout rates demonstrates that gender may not be a deciding factor in problems between the two standard genders in the nation. The combination of the historical factors and the structures put in place in order to better create equality and full participation help move the nation in a positive direction for political gender equality in the nation. While it does not appear that gender has any substantial effect on political participation in this facet, it is promising when solely looking at the differences between men and women to see political momentum moving for both genders through the historical and contemporary precedents. If anything, Argentina proves to be an exemplar nation in the region for female voter turnout due to the elevated levels and close rates between men and women, proving to be an excellent example of progress for this study.

### *Political Interest*

Although the trend towards gender equality in political participation is moving in a positive direction in Argentina, Vanderbilt notes in its study that “participation of different social groups [or different genders] in other types of political activities may or may not follow the same trends observed in electoral participation.” (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). Political interest may be harder to quantitatively measure than electoral participation in a nation, but it can help to understand another part of the story of political participation for women. We will examine

political interest by situating Argentina in the region comparatively to other nations within Latin America as well as understanding the nature of the political persuasion that occurs within this action of talking about politics.

As a nation, Argentines find themselves roughly in in the norm of rates of political interest for the region, with the Vanderbilt study noting that “in general, those consulted are distributed into thirds: one third expresses some or a lot of interest, another third expresses little interest and the final third expresses no interest.” (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). Figure 3 demonstrates these results, if so desired to observe the responses from the populace. Vanderbilt continues saying that Argentines have a political interest rate of about 36.7%, which is fairly typical for the region of the Americas. (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). Argentina is pretty normal for a Latin American country when it comes to political interest, but for a nation with such a high voter turnout rate, it is slightly surprising that this would be the norm. However, as its own separated facet of political participation, Argentina isn’t necessarily telling any spectacular story in regards to political interest as a form of participation. The Vanderbilt study continues, noting from 2008 to 2014 that women had lackluster interest in politics, with an average of about 60 to 70 percent for the “little” or “none” categories for political interest in that time. This is compared to their male counterparts whom had 55 to 60 percent in those same categories during the same time period. Argentinians do not seem terribly interested in discussing politics, no matter which gender is involved.

Additionally, “with respect to more indirect forms of political participation (trying to convince others to vote for a particular party or candidate), it can be seen that Argentina occupies a relatively low position among the other countries. Only 12.7% (close to 4 point below the regional average) of Argentines report having attempted to at some time influence the vote of



others.” (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). Slightly different than the traditional form of gauging political interest, this form of political interest and engaging one another in political conversation in a more informal manner shows that political interest in this sense in the nation is also situated in a low position when placed in comparison to its American region counterparts. Political persuasion can be seen as a stereotypically masculine form of political interest due to the persuasive nature of the conversation. Talking about politics is one thing, persuading a friend to listen to your point of view about politics is quite another. Nonetheless, this finding is interesting when noting that Vanderbilt finds that while there is some difference between men and women and how much they attempt to engage in political persuasion of others (13.3% of men and 12% of women), the researchers at Vanderbilt point out that “that there does not exist a significant statistical difference between men and women” in this informal act of political interest. (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). 1.3% is not significant enough to say that even though persuasive aspects of conversation are often deemed masculine, they do not fulfill the gender difference to say that this form of participation is masculine itself. Essentially, low amounts of men try to persuade others that another political candidate is the right choice for them and even though lower amounts of women try to do the same, not a lot of people are trying to convince their friends to vote for someone else. It seems as though, according to some of the work by Vanderbilt, that Argentinians are not focusing their efforts on talking about politics, but perhaps more of ‘actions over words’ mentality in their political sphere.

The Vanderbilt study reflects a political culture that seems to be lacking in an overtly politically interested electorate outside of the mandated electoral participation within their nation. As will be directly compared in numerical form in the comparative chapter, we can note that women are not as politically interested as their male counterparts but not by a large amount.

However, by examining the elements of political persuasion that were incorporated into the study, it can be noted that there is not significant different between men and women in Argentina and how they demonstrate their pure political interest. Strange that citizens do not find themselves to be interested in politics around them in their nation, or do not perceive themselves to be. However, it is important to note that though the various facets of participation build upon one another, they do not necessarily connect in all cases. Political interest does not seem terribly impacted by gender in the case of Argentina, but the understanding of political interest, when juxtaposed to other facets, will help continue our examination moving forward.

### *Cabinet Participation*

Argentina's Cabinet of Ministers is appointed by the president, but is not technically part of the Executive Power. However, as noted in the previous chapter, Cabinet Participation can give a good sense as to how women participate when they have already gotten some access to the political system, but demonstrates the political culture and participatory rates inside the established government. Despite the fact that the cabinet does not immediately influence policy initiatives, it is still an honor to be so close with the head of the executive branch and have indirect influence through that individual on policy decisions. For reference for the Cabinet numbers, there are 21 positions in the current Cabinet of Ministers in Argentina, chosen by president. By turning again to Dr. Scherpereel and Dr. Adams' data base, we can better understand the political elite of Argentina's Cabinet of Ministers, helping to understand women's political participation in the political system.

When turning to our data set, we can extract several key findings. Although the data set dates back to 1975, we can see that the first time a woman was given a top prestige position within the Cabinet of Ministers in 2008 and a woman held one top position until 2011. Meaning

that in the rest of that time expanse, women had no participation in a top position in the cabinet—leaving all of the top rank responsibilities to their male counterparts. Additionally, 2006 was the first time in which a woman were in a cabinet position of high prestige in Argentina, with a woman in a high prestige position from 2006-2010 and 2 women holding high prestige position in 2011. Moving forward (and slightly earlier than the previous prestige levels), 2001 was the first time a woman held a position of medium prestige in the cabinet, with additionally one woman also in 2002, 2 in 2003, 1 in 2006-2008, 2 in 2009, and 1 in 2010-12. Lastly, the first woman to hold any cabinet position was one woman in low prestige starting in 2000-2004, as well as one in 2007-2011.

The data set reminds us that while Argentina may be lauded for its higher rates of participatory action in the political system by ordinary citizens, it took until the 21<sup>st</sup> century for women to even hold a position in the Cabinet of Ministers and even with that, few women have held these positions, with the largest number of women serving in the cabinet being five members in 2009. The type of position in which women are given more frequent positions is that of low prestige cabinet positions, holding one position in the majority of the 2000-2012 time span. This demonstrates that even when women are allowed access to these cabinet positions, they are still placed in the lowest levels that they can be given, with the higher positions being given to a man. The fact that 2008 was the first time that a woman was given a top prestige position in the nation showcases that the political elite are still wary of female political participation inside the government.

Camerlo and Pérez-Liñán note in their 2015 article that “When governments are weak, the chief executive may be forced to pursue cooperative strategies to appease the opposition, but when governments are strong, leaders have great leeway to consolidate their control over the

cabinet.” (Camerlo, Pérez-Liñán, 2015). From the time range presented within 1975 and 2000, the Argentinian government is facing the ‘dirty war’ (a time in which the government arrests and kills many of its own citizens for left wing suspicions), a 10 week war with the British, and economic hardship is widespread. Not in any way to excuse the Argentine government for not including women, but these hardships putting pressure on the government may be justifications as to why women were absent—there could have been some room for ‘weakness’ if women were in these positions of higher leadership. As historical precedent shows, when government is pressed, women are often left out of the equation; machismo can easily come into play in cabinet participation when in times of political pressure in a nation. Party politics and political games can be strong motivators when choosing cabinet members and women can often be left on the wayside.

It should be noted that Argentina also has one of the highest levels of minister turnover within democracies (Camerlo, Pérez-Liñán, 2015) potentially showcasing that a cabinet position may not be the best position to be in anyway as a woman in a high ranking position close to the executive leader. However, the lack of access to these positions for women prior to 2000 and the low levels that still remain in Argentinian government shows that there is still a great deal of work to do inside the political elites of Argentina’s government to be more inclusive of women. Women need to have access to these positions if there will be any sort of push for women to be in upper level executive leadership as a standard for Argentina.

Cabinet participation is but one facet of women’s political participation in Argentina, but it does shine a light on the ways in which the political system, even when looking to contemporary times, is not terribly inclusive to women. Argentina has a gender quota for the legislature, with larger percentages of female representation and participation are present within

that governing body, but when minimal percentages of female participation are present in the upper level executive body such as the Cabinet of Ministers, the political system has not taken tangible steps to make strong female leadership and participation a reality. Cabinet participation can be a strong factor in influencing the participation of ordinary women in the nation as well as show descriptive representation, but the absence of women in this body shows that this facet of female participation is ultimately lacking.

### *Political Movements*

Argentina has a rich history of female participatory action in the form of political movements, most well-known of these movements being Las Madres de la Plaza Mayor in Buenos Aires. “Social movements and mass protests have been defining aspects of Latin American politics” and Argentina is no different. (Mosely, Moreno, 2010, p. 1). In an additional study, the Latin American Public Opinion Project determined that approximately 27.3% of respondents have participated in a political protest in the last two years, situating Argentina second on the list of protest rates in the region. (Figure 4). This area of political participation is especially interesting in Argentina, with the Vanderbilt 2012 study pointing out that when determining factors that would make people more likely to participate in community involvement that may lead to political engagement “on average, women virtually double the level of community participation of men: 18.5 and 9.9 points, respectively.” (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). This particularly gendered form of community action turned political action has been exemplary in Argentina, with Victoria Goddard noting that “their resistance had an important effect on political culture, encouraging participation and innovative forms of political action” in women within the nation (Goddard, 2007, p. 81). However, other engendered political protest groups have also produced political and social capital within the nation that are not as well

known, but still worth the examination of this study to gain a better understanding of female participation in Argentina in political movements and protests. By focusing on the Mothers of the May Plaza (1970s-present) and the Movimiento Mujeres Agropecuarias en Lucha, or the Agricultural Women in Struggle Movement (mid 1990s) as well as the determining factors that led to action for these movements, we will better understand the nature as to why political protest is so full of female engagement.

Las Madres de la Plaza Mayor, or as I will refer to them in this paper, The Mothers of the May Plaza, are a famous long-standing group of women and mothers that have used their roles as such to gain political momentum in Buenos Aires to look at human rights abuses conducted by the government. Victoria Goddard notes in her 2007 book that that Mothers of the May Plaza “have been the most visible actors in Argentina’s human rights movement. Over a period of thirty years, they have engaged in a variety of protests through which they have challenged the violence of the state. Emerging from their grief over their disappeared sons and daughters, they broadened their claims and began to fight for the right of a dignified life for all individuals” (Goddard, 2007, p. 85). They have a specific place in Argentinian political culture that is completely accessible and female created to engage in political commentary surrounding human rights abuses. Starting in 1977 and continuing into present day Argentina, while the women may have aged and cycled out throughout time, their identity as mothers stays consistent in the political culture.

The construction and usage of a maternal identity has been crucial within the Mothers of the May Plaza movement in Buenos Aires. They use what Jadwiga Mooney describes as “Militant motherhood, defined as women's use of maternal responsibilities to justify engagement beyond the domestic sphere, [which] has transformed the characteristics of political discourse

and the gendered underpinnings of political participation.” (Mooney, 2007, p. 976). Due to the nature of the subject being protested, the disappearance of children (which can be expanded to a nation-wide issue of human rights abuses), maternal identities were key in instituting a pathos-filled political message against the cruelty of the state in Argentina in the 1970s. Victoria Goddard argues that “their position as mothers and house wives combined with the constraints imposed by military rule... produce a novel set of circumstances and practices” in which female created movements can be actively engaged. (Goddard, 2007, p. 85). When creating a juxtaposition in between feminine caring identities and the masculine violence that the state was generating during the time of *los desaparecidos*, or the disappeared ones, female only protest was widely deemed socially accepted throughout the nation, both in the particular context of the Mothers and in a sense of longevity in the political climate that the Mothers have produced throughout time. This movement has inspired a multitude of female created movements in which female identity and cultural ideas of maternalism were interwoven. “Women’s initial involvement in the picketing movements was tied closely to their performance of the traditional roles of mother and wife. Over time, and as a result of women’s social participation, these roles acquired new meaning.” (Frey, Crivelli, 2007, p. 243). While we will discuss this new meaning as we move on in our study, it is crucial to understand that while human rights are not inherently a “women’s issue,” women in Argentina very strategically used their identities as women in order to build momentum towards a cause and create a political voice for themselves. The Mothers use everything maternal from symbolic gestures to a more physical manifestation as Goddard mentions, noting that “the Mothers’ white scarves remained a key symbol; the images of their disappeared children were displayed on the Mothers’ bodies, on flags, and on posters, eventually covering the entire surface of the pyramid in the centre of the Plaza. The Plaza

gradually became the Plaza of the Mothers.” (Goddard, 2007, p. 89). It was never forgotten that these protesters were women and these protestors were mothers.

These maternal identities within political movements in Argentina create a conflicting arena in which women can participate in politics. Karina Barker taps into this complicated relationship when she explains that maternal identities can be beneficial in these movements because they “facilitate women’s involvement – while at the same time reinforc[e] traditional divisions of labour. Although this is problematic, since it encourages participation in specific, gendered ways and reproduces patriarchal structures within the movement, it has nevertheless created a space for women’s participation.” (Barker, 2007, p. 1). This complicated relationship and identification of motherhood throughout the political movement has created controversy throughout the academic community and scholarship that encompasses Argentine protest movements. Maternal identities have inspired female political participation, but it is important to know the cost of that participation on societal factors. Barker, along with other such scholars as Bosco have argued that “motherhood has occupied a central role, arguing that even though the Madres are an example of successful women’s mobilization in Latin America, the movement drew on existing myths and narratives of motherhood and therefore did not challenge the dominant patriarchal rules of Argentine society...however, the power of the Madres’ performance is that, by being out in the Plaza de Mayo, they brought motherhood out of the domestic closet...and opened new spaces of representation for Argentine women.” (Bosco, 2006, p. 343). The intentional usage of the female and mother identity that Argentinian women in the Mothers of the May Plaza movement have intentionally capitalized on is both progressive in a sense in that it creates a space in the political sphere for women to participate and allow their voices to be heard, but at the same time creates a contradictory social statement that reinforces



that women must fulfill these specific gender roles in order to be heard in a political setting. However, the maternal identity used in the Mothers of the May Plaza create specific gender interests, in which Barker defines as “those interests that women (or men, for that matter) may develop by virtue of their social positioning through gender[ed] attributes.” (Barker, 2007, p. 1). Essentially, women in a gendered political movement in Argentina are completely aware of the specific gendering that they are creating while engaging and creating this movement, but develop political interests and gains through the movement that outweigh some of the social baggage that they may acclimate during their political statement. Any way you look at the usage of maternal identities in political movements in Argentina, complications arise, but it has been an effective political strategy by political formers and actors alike to elevate female political participation rates.

The protests for human rights issues has been the main focus of the Mothers, but their work has been expanding into a new format of political movement in recent years in addition to their political involvement in the plaza itself. “The Mothers also lecture at schools, universities and conferences in order to testify to the state violence and the disappearances that occurred during the dictatorship. In addition, in the last several years, the Mothers have become engaged in social and political questions not directly related to the issue of the disappeared. They have begun symbolically supporting social movements that fight against unemployment, poverty and state-sponsored violence.” (Burchianti, 2004, p. 135). What began as maternal identities utilized to protest an issue that directly their own families in the late 1970s to now have begun to transform to a movement that encompasses a larger amount of political capital and breadth than was probably intended in the original protests. Whatever their legacy, human rights political protest (which arguably, it will always be) or political conversations in institutions of education,

the Mothers have altered the dynamic of female participation in explicitly female-created movements in Argentina. “Furthermore, the opening up of the public sphere for women has been reinforced by their participation in movements of social struggle, a process which contributed to the generation of women’s own sense of political competence.” (Frey, Crivelli, 2007, p. 255). By opening up the sphere for women to come in and participate freely (albeit with an explicit gendered connotation and role attached to the participation in this particular political movement), female participation has been expanded in the nation, showcasing female incentive to engage in political participation when issues of family and community are directly involved. When this is the case, Argentine women are free to participate in the political sphere and use a ‘motherly instinct’ to take such action.

However, although the Mothers of the May Plaza are by far the most famous example of female created, female political participatory movements in Argentina, there are more spaces in which women are able to voice their political opinions and actions through protest. The last section of the political movement analysis for Argentina will start to focus on the Agricultural Women in Struggle Movement, a mid-1990s movement for women in the nation. This movement of Argentine women focuses on economic issues. They are combatting increased levels of debt for small farmers and trying to keep the disappearance of Argentina’s small and medium-sized agricultural producers alive in the national political discourse. (Giarracca, Teubal, 2001, p.38). Like the Mothers, they use a variety of forms of protest, some non-traditional, such as prayer to display themes of injustice around the nation as well as more traditional (and occasionally, violent) forms of collective action to ensure that their voice would be heard, generating new forms of participation.

The background to their movement is related to the importance of the agricultural sector which is quite large within Argentina and when injustices came to the movement through economic hardships, the sector as a whole took action. This included a great amount of unions and large male-dominated groups that made their political voices heard. However, because of the male-dominated nature of the groups, women's voices weren't being heard to the extent to which they would like. Therefore, women such as Lucy de Cornelis and other educated women stepped up to start a female-led movement of agricultural, rural women. (Giarracca, Teubal, 2001). These women bonded together due to various factors that created a collective identity within the group. Factors such as their "social background—their families' progress, their own development as rural women, their cultural traditions as daughters and granddaughters of immigrants, and the image they carry of their immigrant grandparents—is important for an understanding of the sources of their strength" (Giarracca, Teubal, 2001, p. 48). By bonding together in this way through a collective identity, the women were able to have a female created space in which to voice their opinion in a political movement that would gladly hear their voice. From media usage to creating social networks among other women in the agricultural sector, this movement gained momentum by capitalizing on female power and participation that hadn't been utilized in the nation.

The female created space that brought women together through ideas of economic hardships for their families allowed for "a process of identification—a symbolic integration of these women whose voices had not been heard by other farm-union actors" (Giarracca, Teubal, 2001, p.39). Identifying as a women that was impacted by economic hardships in the agricultural sector as well as structural injustices (in the form of banks mistreating those in the agricultural sector) bonded the women together and brought them towards activism. The political

participation for females is so strong in these groups largely due to this concept of collective identity and having a female-created space in order for all voices to be heard, rather than male-dominated farm labor unions. This tying together of women towards a common cause leads to “the noticeable majority of female membership in the movements (women make up about 75 percent of their members) [which] seems to challenge traditional stereotypes of women that usually exclude them from the public sphere, and relegate them to the domestic realm.” (Frey, Crivelli, 2007, p. 244). Additionally, the collective identity ran farther than just through gathering women in a specific locale, but a collective of rural, agricultural, Argentine women throughout the nation. The Agricultural Women in Struggle Movement allowed for the opportunity for “even those women who lived in the relative isolation of rural areas [to be] able to meet other women like themselves through networks of acquaintances” (Bosco, 2006, p. 348). Networking, connecting women towards a common cause, even when that issue is not necessarily one of a “women’s issue”, is essential for female participatory action in the political sphere.

The agricultural movement in the 1990s is an example of how Argentine women have taken to creating their own group, not necessarily to showcase a motherly identity such as the Mothers of the May Plaza, but rather because structural and cultural barriers were in place in other political movements and groups in the political arena. Women chose to get involved in the Agricultural Women in Struggle Movement because “women are often excluded from participation and positions of leadership in political parties and institutions at a national or regional level, [so] many women choose to become involved in community organizations” (Barker, 2007, p. 8). Political movements are so unique to female participation in Argentina because they allow women to pick up and start their own group, and the collective action of

women (as explained previously) allows for women to use their voices and start their own movement that gains political capital more readily than a female voice in a male dominated group. Understanding the mentality of ‘making one’s own’ is essential to comprehending political movements. Political protest and political movements are so common throughout Argentina largely due to the fact that “weak political institutions in democracies can push citizens toward adopting contentious tactics” such as normalized political protest. (Moseley, 2015, p. 10). If other political movements are seen as institutionally weak, a similar phenomenon may occur, pushing women to participate in their own groups and political movements, leading women away from the status quo of protests in Argentina.

In both of the movements examined, it is clear that “women’s traditional gender roles often persist even when women move from the domestic sphere to the political sphere.” (Barker, 2007, p. 5). While the Mothers movement shows this more readily than the Agricultural movement, we can understand how women’s social role can play into their political participatory action in political movements. “Women’s experiences of political participation have been complemented by those lived in the ‘women’s spaces’” (Frey, Crivelli, 2007, p. 255). Social roles and expectations cannot be taken away from female political action, and political movements is a clear manifestation in which gender may not impact the level of participation in exceeding amounts, but very much *how* participates in political movements. “Women assume new practices and responsibilities [in these political movements], but these only come in addition to the traditional ones” such as the Mothers’ identities as mothers. (Frey, Crivelli, 2007, p. 255). The Mothers expand upon their traditional identities and essentially move them to the public sphere, whereas the Agricultural Women in Struggle Movement don’t use their ‘domestic’ identity, but rather just come together as women to work for a common cause. Understanding

how the multiplicity of reasons come together to form female participatory action is important to understanding why women participate in the nation.

### *Summary*

Throughout the different formats of political participation, female engagement is clearly elevated within Argentina. As we saw throughout our first facet, voter turnout for women is practically equal to their male counterparts in the nation. This demonstrates an active effort by the political infrastructure to create equality in participation by making voting a mandatory civic duty for all in the nation. These structural gateways to participation in the way of gender equality mark a positive sign in closing the gap in other nations throughout the region, demonstrating that gender impacts voter turnout very little. Political interest is not terribly impacted by gender within Argentina as well. The art of political persuasion was found to have very few aspects of gender to it, with the difference between men and women participating in political conversations to be approximately the same. Within political movements and protests within Argentina, it is clear that a gendered aspect of participation has been created and is continued through other movements besides the Mothers of the Plaza Mayo. Maternal identities have played a role in instigating participation, but through the Agricultural Women's group, it is clear to see that maternal identities are only one mechanism for starting political participation. It was found that Argentina has an elevated rate of political protests, but there wasn't found to be great discrepancy in numbers of participation between the genders, but rather how they participated in protest was different. By understanding these facets as a whole, female political participation in the nation of Argentina can be better understood, with hopes of better understanding Latin America as whole through this analysis.

## Comparative Analysis

Now that we have examined Peru and Argentina and their relationship to female participation in politics, we can now turn to comparing the two nations to better understand Latin America as a whole. Although these two nations can't encompass the totality of the region, a comparative analysis of the nations will lead to a better understanding of political culture of the region.

### *Voter Turnout*

Within Peru and Argentina, voter turnout rates were not vastly different between men and women in either of the nations. This level of equity between the genders could be attributed to a plethora of justifications, but it seems most reasonable that much of the lack of gender differentiation is due to the policy of compulsory voting in both nations.

In Peru, when examining the voter turnout rates of men and women in between the years of 2004 and 2012, there was never more than 2% difference in turnout rate between men and women, with the turnout rate being in between 73% and 76% turnout rate for both. (Carrión, Zárate, 2012). Argentina, on the other hand, had 88.8% women and 88.6% men turnout rate, less than a percentage in between the genders surveyed. (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). The fact that there is less than a 2% difference between the genders in both case studies is remarkable and highlights the miniscule difference between the genders for participating in elections.

However, while the two nations both have high turnout rates, it is important to note that Argentina has higher turnout rates as a nation and small percentage between genders surveyed, with a voter turnout rate of 88.7% as a whole for the nation. (Lodola, Seligson, 2012). This can largely be attributed to the political culture and historical progress made, noted in the Argentina

chapter. If the institutional process and political culture and history are present, it makes sense that the rates will be higher in the nation as a whole. The justification for this difference has to do with wealth, age, education, and ethnic identity, which will be further explained in the conclusion chapter. Nonetheless, the positive political culture for Argentina is a model for other Latin American nations to look towards to strive for equal participation in between the genders.

When comparing these two case studies to nations like the United States, it seems clear that mandatory voting elevates voter turnout as a whole and pushes away differences between the genders to a considerable degree. Mandatory voting seems to eliminate factors of gender discrepancy, socio economic differentiation, and other demographic-specific differences in voter turnout. The monetary fines that are placed upon citizens that do not fulfill their civic obligation seem to be sufficient to keep their participatory rates high, regardless of gender in both nations. When examining the two nations in comparison to South America, the nations without these mandatory voting policies are relatively lower. When examining the average turnout rates since 1945 in the chart below, with the exception of Guyana, it seems to show that Argentina and Peru are nearer the top of these turnout rates, quite possibly because of the mandatory voting policies as well as the historical contexts already illustrated in previous chapters. However, even the lower scale of these countries with mandatory voting, such as Ecuador at 68.9%, hold higher rates than that of the United States. Argentina and Peru are only two of the examples to highlight the potential effects of mandatory voting, but the numbers clearly show that the policies are impacting their voter turnout for all genders involved.



Average Turnout since 1945 in South America

Name of Country	Number of Elections	Mandatory Voting	Voter Turnout (%)
Guyana	7	No	88.5
Argentina	18	Yes	84.2
Bolivia	11	Yes	82.2
Peru	9	Yes	80.3
Venezuela	10	No*	80.0
Uruguay	11	Yes	80.0
Chile	11	Yes	78.9
Paraguay	9	Yes	78.3
Brazil	14	Yes	77.8
Nicaragua	6	No*	75.9
Ecuador	12	Yes	68.9
Colombia	18	No	47.6
Average	X	X	71.5

(Pintor, Gratschew, 2002).

\*Previously had mandatory voting but not in 2017

Our two case studies reflect the impact of mandatory voter policies and their impact on eliminating voter discrepancies on a basis of gender. While there are clearly historical circumstances that bring these policies into fruition and pushing for an earlier start to women’s suffrage in the first place is impactful, it seems to be that mandatory voting can help nations to reduce their discrepancies between gendered participation in this facet—highlighting the real impact legislative policies can make throughout time and how they can make political progress towards institutional equality.

### *Political Interest*

Although voter turnout was very high in both of the case studies, political interest does not seem to follow the trend of elevated rates. It seems as though participation is higher in facets like voter turnout, the compulsory voting does not change much about how interested citizens are in talking about their government. However, there were some larger discrepancies between the nations in this type of participatory action.

Political interest was lower in Peru for both genders, with a majority of genders having little to no interest in politics when surveyed from 2008 to 2014. (LAPOP) This could be potentially due to lack of confidence in government showcasing a disconnect between their mandatory civil duty and low level of political efficacy. Additionally, there was a discrepancy between the genders as well in how interested they were in their political environment. For example, when examining the 2012 data, a whopping 81 percent of females had little to no interest in politics compared to the 68 percent of males. This data shows that political efficacy is low across the board, but even more so for females in this particular political climate. As we examined in the Peru chapter, although the justification for policies like gender quotas are supposed to elevate female political engagement, it is found that while they get women into the legislature, they do not make substantial impact on engagement on the front of political interest (Zetterberg, 2008). Peruvian dissatisfaction with their government, the lack of a deep political culture that fosters female participation, and a lack of impact of policies like gender quotas on the average female citizen show that Peruvian generally aren't seeing themselves typically as political actors on a day to day basis, leading way to negative implications for other facets on participatory action in the nation as a whole.

Argentina, on the other hand, had a much smaller discrepancy between men and women and their level of political interest in their nation. While the nation also had a majority of people across the board being disinterested in politics, the majority was smaller and the difference between genders was smaller as well. For example, in the 2012 data collected by LAPOP, 66 percent of women had little to no interest in politics and men had 65 percent of men held the same beliefs. The percentage of men disinterested with politics is relatively similar between Argentina and Peru for the same year, however when looking at the 15 percent difference between women in the two countries, the difference is substantial. On a day to day basis, Argentinian women feel more politically equal in their interest in the political system. While they have similar policies of gender quotas and compulsory voting like Peru, their rich female political history lays a lot of groundwork for women to feel more invested in their own political system. The political culture is a large justification for women to feel closer to their male counterparts in Argentina, positioned in such a way that Argentinian women have more stake in their political system.

The Latin American Public Opinion project also examined political interest and the relationship to gender throughout the various years of its survey and by analyzing the data in the chart below, we can garner a better understanding of political interest in a contemporary period for the two nations.

### Political Interest in Peru and Argentina, 2008 to 2014

	2008	2010	2012	2014
Peru	0.2168	0.1744	0.2039	0.1374
Argentina	0.1430	0.0716	0.0479	0.1083

Cramer's V calculations

Independent Variable: Gender (Male as 0 → Female as 1)

Dependent Variable: Political Interest (Much as 1, Some as 2, Little as 3, None as 4)

(Vanderbilt, LAPOP)

These calculations taken from the data base from LAPOP from 2008 to 2014, showcase that while it is clear that there's more of a trend in Peru, both nations have a positive relationship between being female and being less interested in politics, as shown by the Cramer's v in all years. The data does not conclude whether the relationship is statistically significant, but we can see the relationship present in the two countries. Political culture and a history of women as political entities that can manifest their own political movements and know that their political voices matter—with some examples such as Eva Peron and the first feminist conference in Latin America being held in Argentina being key parts of Argentina's political history—makes a great difference when gauging political interest. This facet of political participation is extremely important because it doesn't just measure what women are required to do (go out to vote) or what they do when met with distinct political frustration (political movements), but showcase the ordinary political mentality between the genders on a day to day basis.

While institutional variables like compulsory voting and gender quotas are in place in order to get a more engaged female populace, this analysis shows that other factors besides

institutional efforts are possibly a stronger pull on everyday female political interest. Peru's political climate doesn't have quite the historical precedent that Argentina has, but with efforts made on a cultural level, they can move in a similar direction towards genuine political interest across the board for their female citizens to have confidence in their political system and their abilities to make political change.

### *Cabinet Participation*

Peru and Argentina both hold gender quotas within their political systems, but it is clear that the two nations have vastly different participatory action by women in their executive cabinets. While it was argued that gender quotas in the legislative branch in Peru were a key factor for women holding higher numbers of cabinet participation, this is not the case in Argentina, despite their similar legislative policies. Institutional variables can only do so much when accounting for women's participation rates in a nation—what seems to have worked well for Peru didn't have a lasting effect on upper level leadership positions in Argentina. Gender quotas were clearly made in order to promote women's voices in government, but apparently applying policy to the legislative branch isn't always enough to extend this representation and participation to upper level executive branch positions.

Gender likely plays a role in women's participation in cabinets in both Peru and Argentina. In Peru, this facet played out in less clear terms, but largely due to political patronage and the patriarchal structure of political patronage to other 'big men' in government shows justification as to why women weren't present in these positions until 1990, when a larger international push for women's rights was also being initiated. Argentina on the other hand was later to the game than Peru, with their first woman cabinet member not starting until 2000. Unlike some of the other facets of political participation, Cabinet participation is ultimately

higher in Peru than in Argentina. When comparing the two political systems' political culture towards women in executive leadership, Peru proves to be advancing—moving towards almost 50% of this group to be women. Its cabinet also appears to be more influential than that of Argentina's, which isn't technically part of its executive branch. Argentina will frequently have at least one female member of this political elite group, but when there are 21 members, one woman is hardly anything to celebrate about when talking about women's equality in the political system and for political participation as a whole. While it is nearly impossible to compare the two nations' political stability and other political factors that may have caused lackluster female participation in cabinets in the two nations, Argentina's president clearly did not make women's political voices a priority in the cabinet of ministers. Cabinet participation shows a lot about the political culture of a nation, but also of the impact of gender on Peru and Argentina's respective presidents. These positions are hand chosen by the president and the gender ratio of these groups highlights gender inequality in the political culture and political system in a nation, but also of the rationale of the leader of the nation itself. Peru's presidents have made choices to hear women's voices and see greater amounts of political participation in the higher levels of government, but unfortunately Argentina's presidents are not making the same efforts.

One quality that the two nations had in common was that of women occupying a majority of lower prestige level positions within their respective cabinets. In Peru, even where cabinet participation was higher, showed that women often occupied positions of lower level prestige. Only one woman has ever been in a top level prestige position in the cabinet at once, as compared to the four women that occupied a medium level prestige position at one time. In Argentina, the same can be shown in our data set—one woman has held a top position at once as

compared to the two women that have held medium prestige positions at once. While the discrepancy is smaller in Argentina (due to their overall lower levels of participation), it still illustrates a powerful point: women are rarely trusted with top level prestige in the two nations' cabinets. Gender impacts cabinet participation in the fact that even when women are allowed into the cabinets—some of the highest levels of government positions—they are still not allowed to go to the top ranks as frequently as their male counterparts.

Cabinet participation is an excellent metric in which to examine female participation in a nation because it highlights political culture, the role of women internal to the political system, as well as descriptive representation in positions of the politically powerful in a nation. Overall, Peru seems to be more inclusive of women in its political system and Argentina still has room to make its executive branch a more inclusive environment in which women feel comfortable in participating and are allowed to be chosen by their presidents. Cabinet members hold a great deal of power in their governments. When women aren't allowed access to these positions, it highlights the fact that women cannot gain access to higher positions of power and potentially limits female participation rates throughout all of the facets.

### *Political Movements*

When examining Latin America's participation in political movements and protests, it can be seen that Argentina and Peru hold the second and third top spots of percentage of participation in the region. (Mosely, Moreno, 2010). However, the type of movements that are present in each nation is where the true differentiation lies. In short, within our analyses, we found that Peruvian females' participation was not directly connected to gender, but Argentina holds a much closer connection between maternal identities and their participation in the larger political sphere.

Both groups of women in the nations protested in political movements because they found that their voice was not being adequately represented in a traditional institutional standpoint in their respective nations. This led to a less conventional format of participation—protest and political movements. Peruvian women were led to these movements because of sentiments of corruption and low confidence rates (low political efficacy) in their government. Argentina held similar sentiments, but to a bit more extreme degree—kidnappings by their government in the case of the Mothers and economic destitution in the case of the agrarian protests and movements. Protest happens because of dissatisfaction with the status quo, so it is no surprise that these two nations have elevated rates of political protests and movements for women if patriarchal roadblocks are in the way for these women in both nations.

The political movements in which women are engaged in Peru are often not specifically ‘female groups’, but rather indigenous groups in which they find community driven incentives to participate. For female populations in Peru, we found that demographics such as education and indigenous identity may be causes of participation as well. Although it wasn’t examined in this thesis, it may also be a factor of rural versus urban participation in the nation as well, a point of future research in this field of study. However, Peruvian women may participate because of the lack of trust in their government similar to Argentinians, but their indigenous identity seems to drive much of the participation. Women’s participation is grounded not in their own women-created movements, but usually in larger indigenous political movements. (Radcliffe, Westwood, 1993). This is not to say that women need to have their own political movements to be justified or that their participation isn’t legitimate if not in a “women’s movement”, but rather taking note of the political culture in the nation, a distinct difference to the female-oriented movements that encompasses our other case study. Peruvian women do not form the same sort of collective



movements like we find in Argentina, but the fact that we find a large sense of disenfranchisement with the government action around them showcases a lack of political efficacy that can be supplemented in political protests in the nation. Women's participation in indigenous political movements in Peru highlight the community-minded mentality that resides in the nation, coupled with the desire for political action.

In Argentina there is a plethora of female created groups in which women can use their maternal role to participate in the larger political sphere. In both movements analyzed in the case study for Argentina, it is clear that distinctly female and/or maternal identities are used in order to better situate themselves in a political position where their voices will be heard by the larger population. Female created groups with a female user base expands the opportunities for women within that group, making it clear why the Mothers of the Plaza Mayor have garnered so much political support. But, it is also notable that the women's movements don't always center on what Western women might take for 'women's issues'. The Mothers focus on human rights abuses and how they directly impact their families, but the Agrarian women are focusing on economic hardships that the government has not helped to alleviate. The agrarian movement in particular is not a traditionally feminine cause, but by using their maternal social status, the women were able to amplify their political messaging. By using a concept of collective action in the larger political sphere—their status as granddaughters of immigrants, rural women, and their status as women in families that bonded them—the agricultural movement was able to move forward as a female group with vast political power. (Giarracca, Teubal, 2001). The Argentinian women dramatically capitalized on their gender identity to earn political capital and political voice, a clear differentiation between the two case studies.

Political movements are clearly more popular in Latin America due to the lack of faith in the government, however the differentiation between the two nations showcase that political movements can come in various shapes and sizes, even in the same region. Just as many Western nations don't share the same format of political protests, these two cases show a part of the range of female participatory action in the region in their political movements. Both formats in which women are participating are legitimate and make their impact known in their respective movements. Whether a woman decides to use her gender identity to make a political statement is a personal decision and many times ends up being wrapped up in the political cultures of their respective nations. However women want to participate is their choice—it is excellent that they are making their voices heard through political movements in any shape or form.

### *Summary*

Overall, gender did not seem to have a significantly large pull in how women participated in our two case studies for ordinary women in the two nations. While this made it more difficult to identify causal factors driving gendered political differences, it is wonderful when considering contemporary life in Latin America. Institutional factors help to create equity in voter turnout, political interest was askew between the genders but inching towards more equality in more contemporary years, and political movements differ more in appearance than number of participants between the genders. These two cases can serve as models, albeit not perfect ones, to other democracies as they try to tackle the issue of gender equality in the political sphere. Through these three facets of participation, we can better understand the political voices of women in the region as a whole—their frustrations with the political system, where the line is drawn as to when and where they take a personal interest in the political climate, and how

institutions can both help women and be to their detriment simultaneously. The women of Argentina and Peru are helping us to better understand the region, one facet at a time.

## Conclusion

Now that we have completed our analysis of our two country studies, it would behoove us to look to a summary of the findings, drawbacks of the research, larger implications, and points for future research of the relationship between gender and political participation.

When looking to the summary of the findings in this thesis, we must ask the following question: Does Gender Impact these facets of Political Participation in meaningful ways?

	Voter Turnout	Political Interest	Cabinet Participation	Political Movements
Peru	No	Somewhat	Yes	Somewhat
Argentina	No	Somewhat	Yes	Yes

When looking to our chart of the findings presented in this project, we can summarize that voter turnout isn't meaningfully impacted by the factor of gender in either of our country studies. Because of institutional factors such as mandatory voting in both nations, gender plays less of an important role in determining who comes out to vote, but rather the fine that they may face if citizens should choose not to. This findings demonstrates the role of institutional variables in helping to decrease factors of inequality between genders and potentially other demographic characteristics in our two country studies. Next, when looking to political interest, we noted that gender impacts this particular facet of political participation only somewhat in both of our countries. Peruvians seem to overall have a lower level of political interest, but women definitely have lower levels of high political interest and higher levels of absolutely no political interest. We found similar analysis in Argentina, with the data showing that while in Argentina there was

higher political interest, gender does not matter as significantly in the nation. Therefore, gender only somewhat impacts political interest. Moving on to Cabinet Participation, it is clear that gender impacts this facet. Cabinet participation is entrenched in party politics and our data showed that women were left out of this facet of participation for a significant amount of time in both nations, with Peru having more cabinet participation by women than Argentina. Peru does seem to be moving forward in its equitable representation by women in these upper level positions, but due to the fact that women were left out of both nations' cabinets for quite some time, it is clear that at least historically gender has played a role on this participatory action. Lastly, with political movements, I noted that gender only somewhat plays a role in Peru due to the lack of gender-specific movements. Women are participating in political movements, but they are not for a specifically gendered purpose. Peruvian women are often participating in indigenous movements that are run by men, but they are still participating in them. I note that it is only somewhat because levels of participation in this facet aren't differentiated greatly by gender in Peru. Argentina on the other hand has a great number of female created political movements and while pure numbers of political movement participation didn't vary greatly, the style of participation differed a lot in between men and women. Women were more likely to participate in movements run by women and with other women, exemplified in the Mothers of the Plaza Mayo. Overall, gender plays an important role in how these two nations participate in their political spheres, but to varying degrees based upon the nation. Gender is not a clear factor of deciding levels of participation, especially for ordinary women. On higher levels of the government it matters but outside of that, gender is not a huge facet in itself for impacting levels of political participation.

The main drawback faced by this particular thesis is the inability to examine intersectionality, or the intersection between various identities (race, class, education level, etc.). Especially in the nation of Peru, these intersecting identities could potentially show more of an influence on an individual's participatory rates than just one's gender. Due to the time restrictions of this particular project and lack of available data, I was unable to examine this intersection of identities, however it is worth mentioning when examining female political participation, especially when looking to future research for this area of scholarly work. Peru's female political participation is largely centered upon indigenous populations' work, but Argentina is more Euro-centric, so a drawback was not being able to identify the differences in this particular intersection of race and gender. Additionally, when intersectionality comes into play, urban versus rural participation would have been a rich place to examine. Similarly, in the rural (more indigenous) areas of Peru, one will find very different styles of participatory action than that of an urban sphere. Whether that means more 'tradition' action in the urban sphere or more political movements in the rural locale, not being able to examine these facets are a detriment to this research. Lastly, with intersectional identities, education level and socioeconomic status is crucial to examine in further research. As noted in the Argentina chapter, many of the political movements were started by women with education, showcasing its importance as a political motivator. The factor of level of education is crucial when examining political participation in both countries, because it can be an impetus for political movements beyond the status quo as well as political interest. Similarly, a higher socioeconomic status can allow for more time to participate in political movements, take up more interest in politics, and perhaps be in a position where one can participate in the government (and eventually, the cabinet). All of these intersectional identities would have been beneficial to examine to better

understand female participation with the political sphere, however due to time this was not possible.

One other drawback to this thesis is the number of facets to measure political participation. While I attempted to gain a multifaceted approach through these four types of participation, I simply could not cover all types for all women in these two nations. I began the thesis simply thinking about how ordinary women participated and only focused on the three facets that I believed to be commonplace—voter turnout, political interest, and political movements. I believe that by adding Cabinet participation I have extended the reach of measuring participation but of course I could not measure every facet due to time restrictions. While I do believe the facets I have provided give a good starting point to measuring female political participation, more measurements could have been added to extend this measurement's validity a bit farther.

The larger implications of this research show ways that other countries can model their political culture in such a way that women feel more apt to participate in the political realm. While our two country studies may not be perfect, when we juxtapose Argentina and Peru to nations such as the United States, the difference between the styles of participation and the levels of participation itself is staunch. Both nations have higher participatory rates than that of a multitude of other nations. When we look to voter turnout, we can see the impact of institutional policies such as mandatory voting. While I am not arguing that every nation should enact this policy in order to raise the level of female participation in this facet, it does show that this policy helps to limit discrepancies between demographics in our two country studies. Additionally, political interest highlights the multifaceted nature of political participation. While institutional facets make it possible for voter turnout to be high, political interest does not match this elevated

level in either of our countries. The implications for this facet demonstrate that participation in one area will not always equate to participation in all different facets. When looking to cabinet participation, there are large implications that relate not only to political participation but political culture in Latin American political systems. Despite attempts at reform in the legislative branch in Peru and Argentina through gender quotas at the legislative level, historical precedent shows that lackluster efforts have been made to improve representation and participation on the executive level. Cabinet participation is important to women's equality and should be treated as such. By examining the political participation of women at this level (or lack thereof) we can understand that nations need to start taking more interest in including women in the executive branch as well. Countries, no matter what their level of participation shows in other facets, need to take steps to include women on higher executive levels. Implications of this particular section show how the internal political system and the 'outside' nation do not always match up. Lastly, political movements provide implications on what 'traditional' political participation entails. Political movements may not be perceived as commonplace in the US or European nations, but the high rates of participation by men and women alike show that it could be classified as traditional in a Latin American setting. This analysis also implies that participation should not just be measured by sheer quantity, but also type of participation. In Argentina, political movement's participation doesn't differ greatly in numbers, but the quality and characteristics of

Points of future research will definitely be to examine the intersectionality of female identities in these two nations and in the larger Latin American sphere. As mentioned in the drawbacks of this research, a multitude of facets are helpful in looking forward to further research on the intersection of identities and getting a holistic understanding of womanhood in our two nations, so examining these intersections are crucial in future studies. Additionally, with



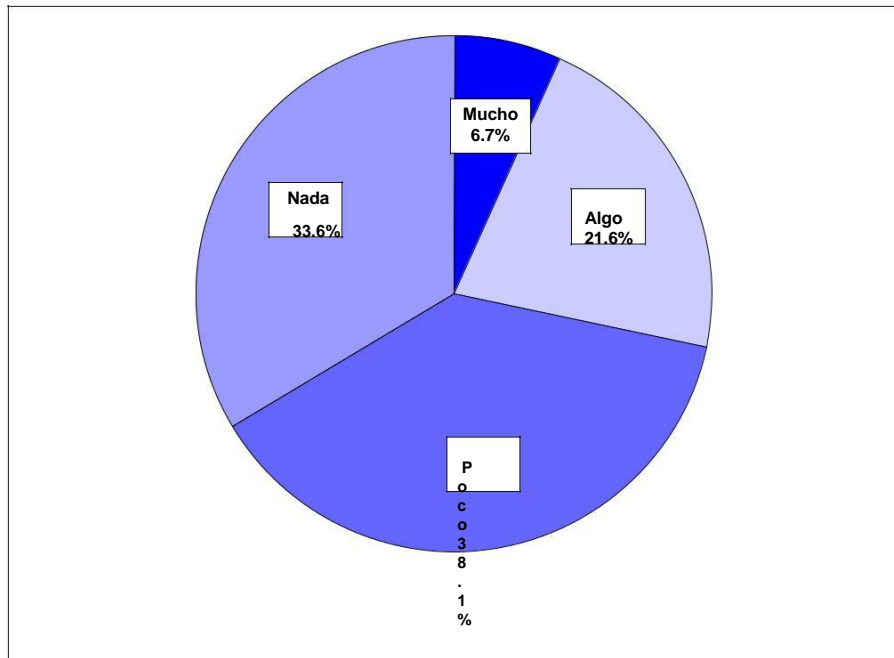
longer studies we should start to look at a variety of political participation. I looked at more common facets, but aspects such as communication (whether traditional or on social media) with politicians, running for political office, and others could be examined to truly understand where women fit into the political equation in Peru and Argentina. Lastly, future researchers should look to the direct impact of institutional factors, such as gender quotas and mandatory voting, on women in these two nations to compare it to the larger Latin American sphere. This thesis focused on two nations to serve as a building block for future research on the subject, but as with any subject of political research, more can be done to better improve understanding of the relationship between gender and political participation.

Through this thesis, we have understood how institutional and cultural factors must come together in tandem to help elevate levels of political participation. Gender by itself in these two nations does not significantly impact the levels of participatory action, but it does impact how that participation occurs and how it is done. Research on women's political participation will continue to be relevant until gender equality is achieved in all facets of the political sphere, but our analyses of Peru and Argentina can prove to be a starting point towards this political goal.

**Figures and Charts:**

Peru

Figure 1:

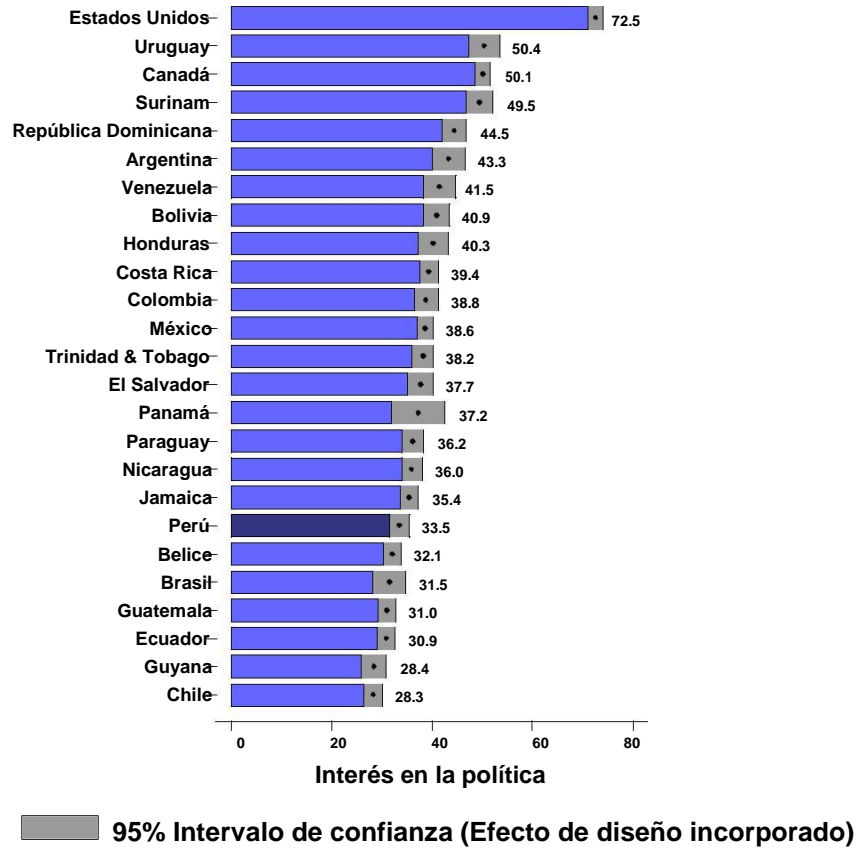


**¿Interés en la política?**

Fuente: Barómetro de las Américas por LAPOP

**Figure VI.14. Interest in Politics in Peru, 2010**

Figure 2:

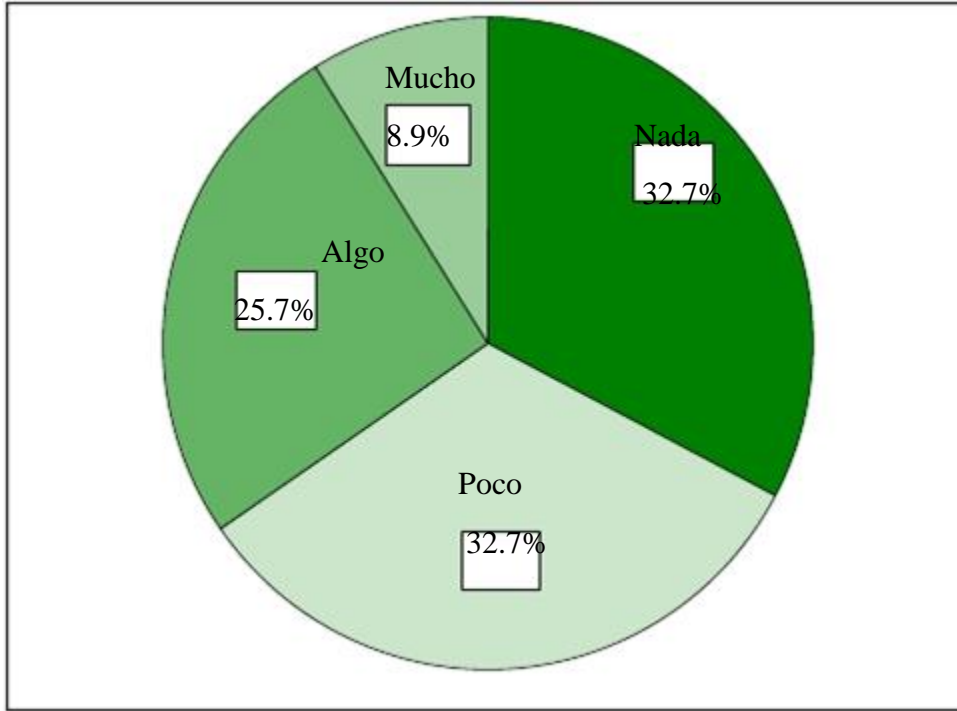


Fuente: Barómetro de las Américas por LAPOP

Figure VI.15. Interest in Politics in the Americas, 2010

Argentina

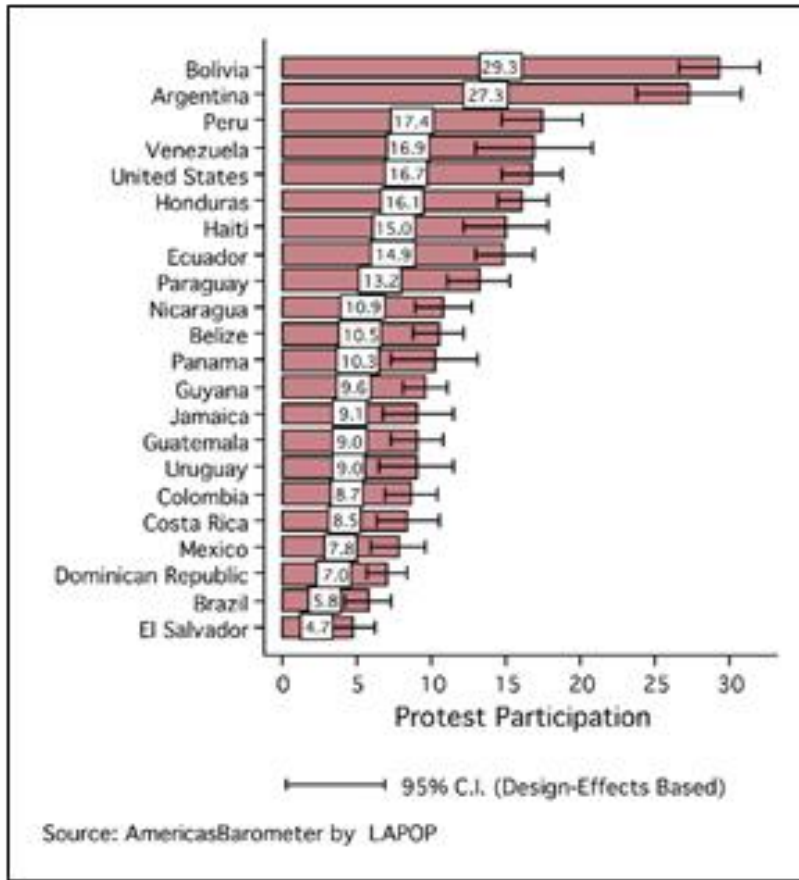
Figure 3:



Political Interest in Argentina

(Lodola, Seligson, 2012)

Figure 4:



### Protest Participation in Latin America

(Mosely, Moreno, 2010)

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