LA FLOR DE UN SEXENIO:
WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN POLITICS

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I have always had an interest in Mexico and Latin America and my interest in female politicians began during the Walter Mondale-Geraldine Ferraro campaign. During my undergrad I pursued both topics as subjects of many papers, but not until Dr. Roderic Camp's class during my first semester at Tulane University did I truly tie them together.

For their patience and support during the process of data collecting and writing, I owe many thanks to the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Paul Lewis, Dr. J. Timmons Roberts and Dr. Camp. Dr. Miguel Centeno provided insightful, concise and supportive commentary from his office far, far away in the Sociology Department of Princeton University. Special thanks to Dr. Guillermo Nañez Falcón, *mi jefe* at Tulane's Latin American Library, and Dr. Karen Bracken of the Center for Latin American Studies for their concern, guidance and compassion. Thanks also to the Tulane Women's Studies Center for their support. This thesis would have been entirely without luster if not for the time and interest expressed by the women I interviewed in Mexico in 1994, or those who shared a few moments with me at the University of Texas in April 1995.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"There are no female senators," insisted a visitor at a mutual friend's home in Mexico after asking about my purpose for visiting Mexico. The subject of women in Mexican politics has received too little attention by researchers and the general public both in Mexico and the United States. The lack of recent scholarly works on the subject leaves the impression that there are virtually no women politicians in Mexico, or in other Latin American countries. The past twenty years have yielded few studies on the participation women in politics in Mexico and other Latin American countries. Many recent studies have sought to redefine a "feminine" politics and to rationalize women's participation in movements and activity outside of the governmental structure rather than explain the significance of their growing presence within it. In fact, the number of women in Mexican politics is rising at a rate which rivals that of women in U.S. politics. Changes in this group may be grounds to reassess their efficacy and viability as leaders, policy-makers and role models.

In this thesis I will examine how women have penetrated Mexican politics since their enfranchisement in 1954. I will

describe patterns in the careers and education of female Mexican politicians, with special attention to women who have achieved elite positions within the Mexican government. Statistical descriptions of the female members of the political elite will be compared to data for male elites and within the group of politicians and administrators in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of Mexican national government.

The first part of this thesis will be dedicated to a review of the literature, a brief background outlining women's participation in Mexican politics for the first half of the twentieth century and the description of the nearly 300 Mexican women politicians included in the database that forms the basis of this study.

The last part of this thesis will discuss theories of elite circulation and changes in the composition of Mexican elites and the bureaucratic structure, specifically the rise of technocracy, and how that has affected women's entry into politics. Finally I will discuss the relevance of women's participation in politics, and whether the women who are attaining top organizational positions (elective or appointed) are role models for other qualified and interested women.

The review of literature will show that most recent literature focuses on women *and* politics in Mexico and Latin America, rather than women *in* politics and positions of political

power. Most literature emphasizes culture and traditional roles to explain the low rate of women's participation in politics, and focuses on voting patterns, grassroots and community activity, and a redefinition of politics from a "feminine" point of view. The most recent systematic study of female politicians in Mexico is now fifteen years old-- an update is desperately needed.

Changes in Mexican society and culture have allowed women to pursue greater education, making it possible for a gradual broadening or redefinition of traditional gender roles and thus allowing more women to pursue political ambitions. A transformation in the bureaucratic structure of the Mexican government, or "technocratization", and consequently in the credentials necessary to access political positions (whether elective or appointed), combined with the increase of female education and changing expectations, may offer more opportunities for political and/or bureaucratic careers for Mexican women.

A quantitative update on the participation of women in Mexican national politics is long overdue and will contribute to the body of literature on female politicians. This study will show the rate and extent of the assimilation of women into elective and appointive positions in Mexican government at the national level, and the rate of growth of the number of women who have attained elite-level decision-making positions since their

entry into politics in 1954.[1]

I hypothesize that female politicians will be entering office at younger ages than their male counterparts and the women who entered national political office prior to 1980. The younger female elites are also entering politics at younger ages than their female predecessors and male counterparts. Greater societal acceptance of women's participation in decision-making positions in all spheres permits women to pursue their goals rather than fulfilling traditional gender role expectations before their own ambitions. These younger women are seeking more political experience through participation in parties and organizations.

I also hypothesize that the female politicians will be at least as well educated as their male counterparts and far better educated the women who entered national politics prior to 1980. I feel that this will be the case since women are pursuing higher education and entering more traditionally male-dominated professions in greater numbers during the past twenty years or so.

Finally, I hypothesize that the younger female

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1 In addition to contributing to the body of literature on women in politics, Susan J. Carroll points out that: "Research that focuses on the recruitment of women in a contemporary context may provide considerable insight into the responses of dominant elites during periods of peaceful and gradual accommodation of new social interests." P. 91, "The Recruitment of Women for Cabinet-Level Posts in State Government: A Social Control Perspective." *The Social Science Journal* 21(1984).

legislators have more local level elective experience than female elites or older female non-elite legislators. Entering the political structure from the local party or organizational level is one of the most secure footholds for younger politicians, especially women, for whom proven leadership ability combined with education provides credentials that enable them to ascend to key decision-making positions.

Women in Politics: Why Does it Matter?

Much of the literature on women in politics discusses the *need* to increase the number of women in top decision-making positions, but fails to give reasons for the importance and the impact of women on the political system. Many of these writers seem to assume some kind of universal, pro-woman, legislative agenda will be pursued by the newly elected officials.

While there is a plethora of explanations for the low numbers of women in political office, the reasons given for supporting their increased representation may conflict with basic principles of representative democracy. Traditional liberal democracy operates under the assumption that the people who are elected are representative of that electorate and the citizens are voting based on the ideas held by the party rather than for the individual candidate.

The representativeness of women by female politicians

can be placed in at least two categories: descriptive and substantive.[2] Descriptive representation is achieved simply by electing (or appointing) women to public office and may serve to confer greater legitimacy on the political system. It utilizes more of the available political talent and allows women to serve as role models. Substantive representation occurs when the elected or appointed female official acts on behalf of women, submitting or soliciting legislation to improve their political, legal, social or economic status. This is particularly salient to the case of Mexico where many writers argue that the increase in female politicians is irrelevant as long as they continue to come from the socioeconomic elite.[3]

The two basic arguments in support of the increased number of women in political office-holding follow essentially the same lines as descriptive and substantive representation. Paralleling substantive representation, the most commonly heard argument is that women's interests *as a group* are not represented by the predominantly masculine governments found in most countries.

Women's interests, or *gender needs,* are further divided into two categories: strategic gender interests and practical

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2 Mezey, "Increasing the Number of Women in Office," pp. 259-260.
3 See discussion of literature on female political elites in Mexico below.

gender interests[4]. Strategic gender needs address women's subordination to men and seek to recreate an alternative, more egalitarian and satisfactory organization of society. These needs include the abolition of the sexual division of labor, political equality, removal of institutionalized forms of discrimination such as property rights or restrictions against obtaining credit, provision of legal protection for women against sexual harassment, rape, and the freedom of choice over childbearing.

Practical gender needs are basic needs, such as food, shelter and water and "[i]n reality . . . are required by all the family, particularly children, yet they are identified specifically as the practical gender needs of women, not only by policy-makers . . . but by the women themselves."[5] This often reinforces the sexual division of labor and makes it more difficult for the women to recognize and formulate strategic gender needs.

It has been contended that poor women engage in struggles for *practical gender needs* more often than strategic

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4 Maxine Molyneux pioneered the use of these terms, see her article "Mobilization without emancipation? Women's interests, state and revolution in Nicaragua," *Feminist Studies* 11:2(1985). A more recent article that discusses gender interests in the context of development and planning is by Caroline O.N. Moser, "Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs," *World Development* 17:11(1989).

5 Moser, "Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs," pp. 1803-04.

gender needs, which are more often pursued by middle and upper class (educated) women. It cannot always be assumed that there exists a set of interests or an agenda that all women support. While the pursuit of strategic gender needs by female politicians benefits all women, many contend that these women fail to address the needs of lower class women whose problems stem from daily privation. Anne Phillips points out, "We cannot jump too easily into the notion that there is an interest of women; and short of women's constituencies or women's elections, there is no clear mechanism for their representation."[6]

The idea that there is a "women's agenda" that is equally pursued by women politicians, regardless of place and time would deny female politicians individuality and agency. In Mexico there are several women who have reached elite-level decision making positions all branches of government who have not participated in the women's sectors of their parties or in other feminist organizations or agencies. These women have chosen careers that present little opportunity for fulfillment of a "women's agenda."

Along the lines descriptive representation, is the argument of democratic justice and resource utilization.[7] Women are, after

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6 Anne Phillips, *Engendering Democracy*, (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p. 78.

7 According to Moser, "Gender Planning in the Third World," this idea forms the underlying rationale of the Women in Development approach adopted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and has been used to

all, at least one half of the electorate in any given country, and barriers to their participation denies their representation and wastes their talent. Not all male politicians do a good job, so why shouldn't qualified female candidates be sought?

Until women share decision-making positions in politics and business equally with men, it will be impossible to know what the full impact will be. Once parity has been achieved, it is quite possible that those issues that are considered "women's issues" will be equally supported or opposed by politicians of either gender as "family issues." It is not the goal of this paper to discuss the theoretical impact of gender considerations on traditional liberal democratic theory, however:

> Gender does and should change the way we think about democracy, but given the pervasive power of existing traditions, it will be some time before the details of the new landscape become clear. We should not too easily presume, however, that all of the features will change.[8]

Several studies discuss political systems that are most "woman friendly,"[9] although most studies discuss barriers to women's

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develop creative economic development programs aimed at improving the economic status of women.

8 Anne Phillips, *Engendering Democracy*, (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p. 149.

9 Linda C. Gugin, "The Impact of Political Structure on the Political Power of Women: A Comparison of Britain and the United States." *Women and Politics* 6:4(Winter 1986)37-55; Pippa Norris, *Politics and Sexual Equality: The Comparative Position in Western Democracies*. (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987); Wilma Rule, "Electoral Systems, Contextual Factors and Women's Opportunity for Election to Parliament in Twenty-three Democracies." *Western Political Quarterly* 40(September 1987), pp. 477-498; Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman (eds.), *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women and Minorities*. (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1994).

participation in particular political systems and the potential effect (or need) for quota systems to increase their participation. Many of the barriers to women's participation in politics cited by most studies include women's socialization, constraints of the traditional female role of mother and caretaker, the under-representation of women in professions that lead to political careers, and even strong male opposition to the idea of including more women in decision-making positions. Geography and minority representation may also affect the election of women to the legislature.[10]

As a minority, women politicians often feel that they are held to higher standards than their male counterparts. "Women don't have the same right to make mistakes," said Deputy Laura Alicia Garza Galindo, "not all of the male legislators are good legislators, not in any party or in all parties combined."[11] Researchers have shown that women need to have more experience and educational credentials than their male counterparts, especially younger women.[12]

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10 Welch found that women were more likely to be elected as U.S. Representatives from the North, urban areas and from districts with a higher proportion of foreign-born and black residents. Susan Welch, "Are Women More Liberal Than Men in the U.S. Congress?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly* X:1(February 1985), p. 129.

11 Author's interview, February 2, 1994.

12 Paula J. Dubeck, "Women and Access to Political Office: A Comparison of Female and Male State Legislators." *The Sociological Quarterly* 17(Winter 1976), p. 51; Elizabeth Holtzman and Shirley Williams, "Women in the Political World: Observations." Pp. 25-33 in Jill K. Conway, Susan Bourque and Joan W. Scott (eds.) *Learning About Women: Gender, Politics and Power* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1987), p. 26-27.

Women may have different motivations for pursuing political office, and a common stereotype of female politicians is that of women's nurturing and altruistic nature. Elsa Chaney's *Supermadre: Women in Politics in Latin America* explores and exemplifies this type of thinking.[13]

At a recent conference, Chaney made it clear that her thinking on this topic had changed over the years. "If women think running a country is like running a household, then those women are probably in a lot of trouble." She also emphasized the need to challenge women to stay where they are and to "reform, revamp and recreate" the image of women in those fields.[14]

A study of over 3,000 California politicians showed that while women were much less likely than men to base their political involvement on an interest in self-enhancement; this would probably change as more women became integrated in the political community.[15] A survey of men and women holding elective offices in the U.S. in the early 1980s also found that there was no difference in ambition for future public office-holding due to gender.[16]

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13 Austin TX: The University of Texas Press, 1979.

14 Elsa Chaney speaking at a conference at the University of Texas, "Women in Contemporary Politics" on April 7, 1995.

15 Edmond Constantini, "Political Women and Political Ambition: Closing the Gender Gap." *American Journal of Political Science* 34:3:741-770.

16 Susan J. Carroll, "Political Elites and Sex Differences in Political Ambition: A Reconsideration." *The Journal of Politics* 47 (November 1985), p. 1241. In contrast, Janet Clark, Charles D. Hadley and R. Darcy report in "Political Ambition Among Men and Women State Party Leaders." *American Politics*

Women are relative newcomers to politics, and with the exception of Scandinavian countries where quota systems have been adopted, there are few countries where women's representation has reached the level of 15 percent.[17] Putting aside all discussion of the conflicts between the need to increase the representation of women and minorities in democratic systems and the theoretical claims that elected individuals should represent the platform and ideas of the party to which they belong, there is indeed a need to study women in political office. Research has shown that they do indeed practice politics differently in certain aspects. Women represent a largely untapped source of political talent, although they are slowly increasing their presence in politics. However, there is a paucity of recent, quantitative and qualitative research on this subject, particularly in Latin America.

Women's Political Participation in Latin America

Latin America is a very inclusive term and its use tends to obscure the fact that it includes 29 different countries, with different political systems and histories. It also emphasizes the fact that these countries do have a great deal in common, historically, politically and culturally. However, there is

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Quarterly 17:2(April 1989):194-207, that women were just slightly less ambitious than their male counterparts.

17 See Appendix A.

enough similarity between these countries to allow some generalizations about the various factors which influence the political participation of Latin American women. These factors include, but are not limited to: gender roles, the type of political structure, levels of economic participation (which is affected by the type of economy), literacy and access to education, class and mobility, as well as women's attitudes toward politics.

In the past two decades, the amount of research on women's political participation in Latin America has increased, but not as much as the research on Latin American women in other areas, such as their legal and economic status, family and sexuality, and male-female power relations. Research on women's political participation in Latin America has generally been restricted to case studies. Another problem is that many articles within the past fifteen years refer to essentially the same small pool of studies of Latin American women's voting patterns and awareness, particularly in the area of the female political elite of Latin America.

The major works on women and political participation, particularly voting and attitudes toward politics, are all several years old, and widely referred to by both North and Latin American scholars. These represent major studies of particular countries or cases, from which generalizations have been drawn

and applied for more than a decade and a half.

Voting is generally viewed as being only one aspect of political participation and within the Latin American context it often serves more as system reinforcement, or reaffirmation of people's faith in the regime. Abstention from voting or casting blank ballots then constitute significant political acts, as can be casting one's vote for an opposition party in a "one-party" system such as Mexico.

Especially in the area of voting and attitudes, William Blough's 1972 article on the attitudes of urban Mexican men and women is a prime example of a benchmark study that needs to be updated.[18] He based his study on data gathered by Almond and Verba in 1959. That was immediately after the first presidential election in Mexico in which women were allowed to vote.

The three factors that Blough examined in relation to political attitudes were education, religious feeling, and actual participation (voting). He concluded that there are basically three areas where there was a significant difference of opinion between men and women regarding politics: 1) women were less likely to name "political objects" as something that the Mexican people should have pride in; 2) women had a greater tendency than men to think that the government's actions were harmful; 3) women

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18 Blough, William J. "Political Attitudes of Mexican Women," *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, 14(May 1972).

were less sure of equal treatment at the hands of the government.

In general, women appeared to be more pessimistic than men when it comes to politics. Blough also emphasized that neither education nor "devoutness" had a consistent relationship to attitudes toward the system. This study did not take into account class, urban-rural differences, or even what people expect or want from the political system. There has not been a comparable study done since, and this study has frequently been used as primary evidence of Mexican women's political attitudes.

Jaquette considers that the lack of voting and attitudinal studies is due to the general feeling by Latin American scholars that such studies aren't relevant within the Latin American political context, where democratic governments have been replaced by bureaucratic authoritarian structures.[19] With the rise of corporatist theories, such survey research is rejected as behavioristic and associated with pluralism by Marxists who view political events as the result of economic forces and by advocates of Gramsci who place greater weight on cultural factors. Despite such sentiment, attitudinal studies can be valuable tools in aiding social change, because they can show the inadequacies of a political system and can be used to determine

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19 Jane S. Jaquette, "Female Political Participation in Latin America: Raising Feminist Issues." Pp. 243-269 in Lynne B. Iglitzin and Ruth Ross (eds) *Women in the World: 1975-1985, The Women's Decade*, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio Books, 1986).

what potential support exists for change or alternatives.

In general, available studies on Latin American women have shown that they vote less frequently, hold more conservative political views, and are less interested in politics than men. In response, Bonder argues that the key to understanding women's political participation is that "they perceive and practice political activity in conditions and specific ways that do not coincide with the conception and practice of political activity based on the male pattern."[20]

This view is supported by Jaquette who suggests that the reason many Latin American women don't participate in the formal political structure is that they don't feel that it offers clear solutions to their problems.[21] For the majority of women, their most important problems have to do with the economic survival of their family.

However, these conclusions rest heavily on the premise that practical gender needs form the basis of women's political participation in general. Many of these studies are only looking at one aspect of women's participation and creating sweeping generalizations instead of comparing women's participation in social movements *and* in the government at different levels to

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20 Gloria Bonder, "The Study of Politics from the Standpoint of Women." *International Social Science Journal* 35(1983), p. 571.

21 Jaquette, "Female Political Participation in Latin America: Raising Feminist Issues."

determine what kinds of issues women are pursuing and the extent of their commitment and involvement at different levels.

The economic survival of the family is no longer guaranteed by the participation of a single household member in the labor force. Women have long contributed to the family income by engaging in activity that has not always been considered "economic participation". For example, women have been responsible for child rearing and domestic labor. Women's economic participation is often used as an indicator of their political participation, particularly their participation in the non-agricultural labor force.

Several researchers show that Latin American women have the lowest levels of economic participation (except for Middle Easterners) than any other group of women, although Latin American women have higher levels of non-agricultural participation.[22] But again, these conclusions are presented without such relevant information such as the definition of economic participation or work. A great deal of study has been done in the past several years on work in the formal and informal

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22 See, for example: J.F. Aviel, "Political Participation of Women in Latin America." *Western Political Quarterly* 34:1(1981):156-173; Jane S. Jaquette, "Female Political Participation in Latin America." Pp. 55-74 in Lynne B. Iglitzin and Ruth Ross (eds), *Women in the World: A Comparative Study*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio Books, 1976); Steffan W. Schmidt, "Political Participation and Development: Role of Women in Latin America." *Journal of International Affairs* 30:2(1977):243-260.

sectors in Latin America. Latin American women have traditionally been very active in the informal sector. If the definition of economic participation were redefined to include work in the informal sector, it is quite possible that the correlation between low levels of economic participation and political participation would be rendered irrelevant.

The ways women participate economically and politically are also affected by class. Upper and middle class women in particular tend to have greater access to educational and professional resources, as well as familial support in pursuing a public career. Generally, education is correlated with higher levels of political participation, knowledge of, and interest in politics.[23]

Although women's participation in politics is gaining wider acceptance, there is a tendency to view their position as an extension of their traditional role. This phenomenon is termed "supermadre" by Elsa Chaney and refers to the tendency of women to carry over their domestic roles into politics as characterized by their concentration in the areas of education, health and social welfare rather, than finance, labor relations or foreign ministry.[24]

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23 Aviel, "Political Participation of Women in Latin America."
24 Elsa Chaney, *Supermadre: Women in Politics in Latin America*. (Austin TX: The University of Texas Press, 1979).

Chaney's study is based on her interviews with female elites in Peru and Chile in the late 1960s. She found that while these women wanted to advance their career and increase their professional skills, they wanted to appear as feminine as possible. It appears that the price for advancement in the political sphere for women includes denial of competition with men as well as avoiding feminist issues, which are seen as divisive.

Chaney's study is a major work, and as with the study by Blough, there is not really any recent scholarship which is comparable. Rather, this work is heavily relied upon and has not been seriously challenged, although many of the theories of *marianismo* (extreme female submission or subordination) and *machismo* (extreme male dominance) as cultural barriers to women's political participation have been all but dismissed. The conclusions of Chaney's work may be valid for her group of women and for a particular time period, but both Peru and Chile have undergone serious political changes in the past several years. Much of the recent work on these countries focuses on feminism and redemocratization.

Membership in political parties and organizations is another commonly used indicator of women's political participation. Again, women's numbers tend to be low as compared to those of men. Class is an influencing factor: upper class women

participate more than lower class women, although party membership is less frequent than their membership in charitable and religious organizations. Latin American women also participate in professional organizations, some of which are largely composed of women (such as nurses and social workers). Women tend to join organizations that mobilize around specific issues, such as day care centers and access to higher paying jobs. However, women of all social classes have similar barriers to their participation in political organizations, such as lack of time and access to organizations that accommodate their interests and needs.[25]

Overall, class and economic factors appear to have the most influence on women's political participation. However, it is difficult to make accurate generalizations about women's participation in politics because so many of the major works were written years ago, and there hasn't been much recent work that is comparable to some of these comprehensive studies.

Information on female political elites in particular is difficult to generalize about because women's participation in the public sphere has increased considerably in the past decade. Latin American women who have mobilized in human rights movements and in revolutionary movements have received a great deal of

25 Aviel, "Political Participation of Women in Latin America."

attention, for example the Argentine mothers and grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, Sandinista women, Guatemalan human rights activist and recent Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú.

Women in Mexican Politics

The subject of female politicians in Mexico is one that has not suffered from overexposure in recent years. Certain conclusions that can be drawn from available studies are, first, that Mexican women have not played a large role in the Mexican political elite. Second, female politicians do not differ from their male counterparts in terms of education, socioeconomic class, and the resources to dedicate oneself to a political career full-time.[26]

Riddell interviewed about ten women in "top-level" party positions in the PRI (including a senator) and the PAN, and concluded that these women had more in common with North American or European female politicians than with Mexican women.[27] Further, Riddell described most of these women as belonging to wealthy families with a long tradition of political participation. Thus, they were not feasible role models for the

26 Studies of female candidates and politicians in the U.S. have reached similar conclusions: Nikki R. Van Hightower, "The Recruitment of Women for Public Office." *American Politics Quarterly* 5:3(July 1977), p. 310.

27 Riddell, Adaljiza Sosa, "Female Political Elites in Mexico: 1974." Pp. 257-267 in *Women in the World*, edited by Lynne B. Iglitzin and Ruth Ross (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio Books, 1976).

mostly mestiza Mexican women, the majority of whom lack the access to education and resources to be able to pursue such careers.

Riddell found that these women, like their male counterparts, were "more concerned with women's legal status than with issues of political consciousness and the development of alternative directions for Mexican society," leaving Mexican women's status and role to be redefined by the impact of American industrial capitalism.[28] She concludes that these women served to maintain the status quo, a power which generally exceeded that which they had within the system. However, due to the limited sample and lack of quantitative research of women's legislative activities this study is of little use.

Later studies on Mexican female political elites are equally pessimistic. Camp found that the women in the top political positions generally were part of the top social classes and had followed career paths similar to those of male political elites and concluded that the women appeared to contribute little because they accepted, as had the male elites, the informal rules of the dominant political culture".[29] A few years later, a study by DeSilva[30] reiterated the aforementioned article by Camp nearly

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28 Ibid., p. 264.

29 Camp, Roderic A. "Women and Political Leadership in Mexico: A Comparative Study of Female and Male Political Elites." *Journal of Politics* 41(1979):417-441.

30 DeSilva, Luz de Lourdes, "Las mujeres en la elite política de México:

word for word, and argues that the increase in levels of participation wasn't enough if the interests of women weren't being represented.

During the past two to three years, there has been an explosion of articles and books on women in U.S. politics, at the national, state and local level. To my knowledge, there has not been a parallel development in Mexican academia. Recent studies focus on women's activism at the grassroots or local level.[31]

There are several helpful histories of women's rights and the feminist movement in Mexico. Morton Ward, Shirlene Soto and Anna Macias provide histories through the middle of this century.[32] Publications from ANFER, the women's section of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, are often helpful. One ANFER publication, *Participación política de la mujer mexicana, siglo XX,* provides the text of documents, decrees, and legislation related to women's rights in Mexico.[33]

1954-1984." Pp. 269-308 in *Trabajo, poder y sexualidad*, edited by Orlandina Oliveira. (Mexico, DF: Colegio de Mexico, Programa Interdisciplinario de Estudios de la Mujer, 1989).

31 For example, Lynn Stephen, "Women in Mexico's Popular Movements: Survival Strategies Against Ecological and Economic Impoverishment," *Latin American Perspectives*, 72:19:1(Winter 1992):73-96, and Kathleen Staudt and Carlota Aguilar, "Political Parties, Women Activists' Agendas and Household Relations: Elections on Mexico's Northern Frontier," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 8:1(Winter 1992):87-106.

32 Anna Macias, *Against All Odds: The Feminist Movement in Mexico to 1940* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1982); Ward M. Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico* (Gainesville FL: University of Florida Press, 1962); Shirlene Ann Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman: Her Participation in the Revolution and the Struggle for Equality* (Denver CO: Arden Press Inc., 1990).

33 ANFER. *Participación política de la mujer en México, Siglo XX.* (Mexico, DF: Instituto de Capatación Política, 1984).

Biographies of female politicians, collections of their speeches, and other documents may prove helpful in some cases.[34] Anthologies of essays by Mexican women in academia and politics contain interesting essays on contemporary problems and issues, but these are not usually highly documented or footnoted.[35]

Party documents, collected speeches, and documents presented at congresses and conventions of feminist organizations and female legislators are much more difficult to come by as they are distributed among participants of the meetings and are not usually found in libraries.[36]

In general, there are few thorough and objective quantitative or qualitative studies of women's participation in Mexican politics, especially in elective and appointive office-holding. In choosing to study elites, I am attempting to fill a void in the literature and to illuminate the structure of power as a whole, from a different perspective.

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34 Griselda Alvarez. *Cuesta arriba: memorias de la primera gobernadora*. (Mexico, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992); María Lavalle Urbina, *María Lavalle Urbina: su obra.* 3 volumes. (Campeche, Mexico: Gobierno del Estado, 1988); María del Carmen Marquez de Romero Aceves. *Presencia politica de una mujer bajacaliforniana*, (Mexico, DF: Costa-Amic Editores, 1979).

35 Patricia Galeana de Valadés has edited several volumes of this type, including: *Seminario sobre la participación de la mujer en la vida nacional*. (Mexico, DF: UNAM, 1989); *Universitarias latinoamericanas: liderazgo y desarrollo* (Mexico, DF: UNAM, 1990); *Antología de mujeres universitarias*. (Mexico, DF: UNAM, 1990); *La condición de la mujer mexicana*, Books 1 and 2, (Mexico, DF: UNAM, 1992).

36 I have a few such collections of conference speeches, including: Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres Legisladoras. Memoria, Ixtapan de la Sal, October 16-18, 1992. (Mexico, DF: H. Camara de Diputados, LV Legislatura, Instituto de Investigaciones Legislativas, §1993); *La mujer ante los nuevos retos de la nación*. Cycle of conferences, September 7, 1988. (Mexico, DF: PRI, Coordinacion del Consejo para la Integración de la Mujer, 1989).

Methodology and Definition of Cases Studied

The information used in this study is based on a database created using biographical information for 283 cases drawn from several sources, including the *Diccionario biográfico del gobierno Mexicano* (1984, 1987, 1989 and 1993 editions), *Mexican Political Biographies, 1935-1993* (3rd edition)[37], and from Camp's SPSS/PC+ database which contained over 2,000 cases of Mexican political elites, including over 100 women. Information gathered in informal interviews with six politically active Mexican women in January 1994 will also be referred to where relevant.[38]

Because the editions of the *Diccionario biográfico* rely on self-reporting by the officials, several entries could not be used because they were very incomplete and entries for some individuals are missing. Through careful cross-checking between various sources, I have been able to create a thorough data bank of information of the women in the Mexican government since 1954.

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37 Roderic A. Camp. Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 1995.

38 January interviewees include: Deputy Laura Alicia Garza Galindo (91-94) previously elected as a senator; Deputy Julieta Guevara Batista (91-94), previously elected both as a deputy and senator; Deputy and President of the Chamber of Deputies María de los Angeles Moreno Uriega (91-94), she has previously held both the position of secretary and subsecretary of a cabinet level agency, and was elected as a senator in August 1994; Dr. Patricia Galeana de Valadés, a university professor of 20 years and director of the Matias Romero Institute of Diplomatic Studies; Luz Rosales Esteva, director of Women for Democracy, and also a leader in the affiliated group, Citizens for Democracy; Sofia Valencia, formerly a federal deputy and currently serving on the directory board of the Council for the Integration of Women of the PRI.

The definition of a political elite used by Camp for his male elites, albeit narrow, was strictly followed for this study. Specifically, an individual must have held the legislative position of deputy at least twice or senator once, or the judicial position of supreme court justice, or served in the executive branch as secretary, subsecretary or *Oficial Mayor* of cabinet level agencies to be considered a member of the political elite. Needless to say, this definition may arbitrarily exclude some women who might be included in the political elite, such as Aurora Jimenez de Palacios, the first woman to hold the position of federal deputy in Mexico in 1954.[39] This facilitated comparison of my sample of 283 female politicians and bureaucrats with the male politicians in Camp's database which includes much more information than could be covered or obtained within the limits of this study. Essentially the same coding scheme was used, with a few differences.

For this study the actual number of female political elites is much lower (79 in this study compared to 125) because Camp had made exceptions for the inclusion of female politicians in his sample that he didn't for the men because women meeting those criteria were under-represented.

Throughout the discussion of female politicians who

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39 Jimenez de Palacios was elected after Baja California became a state, and only served in the third year of the 42nd Legislature, without obtaining another elected position afterward.

have held elective office, I have found it useful to divide refer to them as elites and single-term deputies. Additionally, there are differences within the single-term deputies as a group and I have divided this into two subgroups: those who were elected between 1954-1979, and those who were elected after 1980 (the Miguel de la Madrid and Salinas administrations) beginning with the 1982 elections. The year 1979 was chosen as the cut-off for the "pioneer" period because in that year President José Lopez Portillo (1976-82) appointed a woman as secretary of a cabinet level agency for the first time[40].

A remaining group is composed of women who have held the appointive position of Director General just below the cabinet level in the executive branch, I refer to these women as executive branch non-elites or administrators. Since this group will be used to project the profile of future female elites in the executive branch, only those women born on or after 1940, and who held positions since 1980 have been included. This cut-off was chosen because the group of women who have reached the political elite born from 1940-1949 is the largest cohort compared to all others, dominating the executive and legislative branches. This group of executive branch non-elites is compared to executive branch elites.

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40 Rosa Luz Alegría had previously held the position of Subsecretary of Evaluation in the Secretariat of Programming and Planning from 1976-80, and held the position of Secretary of Tourism from 1980 to 1982.

Overview of Succeeding Chapters

Chapter 2 will present a brief history of the legal and political rights of Mexican women, beginning just prior to the turn of the century. Beginning in Chapter 3, a profile Mexican female political elites will be presented, compared and contrasted with Mexican female non-elites, and Mexican male political elites, starting with the distribution and rate of increase of female politicians by government branch, and the distribution of female politicians by age group.

The Mexican saying, "la participación de la mujer es la flor del sexenio", which means that the election of women to political office occurs mostly during presidential elections and drops during the mid-term elections, will also be examined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 will concentrate on the class, geographic, and educational background of female politicians. It will also deal with party affiliation, local level office-holding and professorships among female politicians in Mexico.

Chapter 5 will discuss recent changes in the Mexican government, especially the growth of "technocracy." Theories of elite circulation will be discussed as they apply to the position of women in Mexican politics.

An examination of female elites in the executive branch

will show if there is an emerging group of technocrats. Projections as to whether this trend will continue will be based on a study of female office-holders in the executive branch. Finally, Chapter 6 will present the summary of findings and pose questions for future research.

The Limits of This Study/ What It Is Not About

Having women in politics matters. Many studies claim that women have different legislative priorities and exercise a different style of authority from their male counterparts. In fact, studies of women legislators at the state and national level in the U.S. find that women do make a difference in public policy. "...compared to men, women express more concern for women's issues and accord a higher priority to them; they are also more likely than men to translate their concern into legislative action."[41]

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41 Susan Gluck Mezey, "Increasing the Number of Women in Office: Does it Matter?" Pp. 255-270 in Elizabeth Adell Cook, Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox, *The Year of the Woman: Myths and Realities* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1994), p. 264. See also: Beth Reingold, "Concepts of Representation Among Female and Male State Legislators." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* XVII:4(November 1992), pp. 526-531; Sue Thomas, "The Impact of Women on State Legislative Policies." *The Journal of Politics*, 53:4(November 1991), p. 972; Sue Thomas, *How Women Legislate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), Chapter 3; Sue Thomas and Susan Welch, "The Impact of Gender on Activities and Priorities of State Legislators." *The Western Political Quarterly* 44:2(June 1991), pp. 454-455; Linda Witt, Karen M. Paget, Glenna Matthews, *Running as a Woman: Gender and Power in American Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), pp. 274-276. A much earlier, questionnaire-based study found that policy orientation was less likely to be influenced by sex than other factors, see M. Kent Jennings and Norman Thomas, "Men and Women in Party Elites: Social Roles and Political Resources." *Midwest Journal of Political Science* XII:4(November 1968), p. 492.

Changing gender roles and a broader acceptance of the legitimacy of women's concerns also reduces the amount of time they have to spend convincing colleagues of their seriousness and allows them to dedicate themselves more to issues at hand.

Also worth examining in future research is the rate of growth of the number of female alternative deputies and its effect on helping to increase space for women's participation in legislatures. Unfortunately all the data on this position are not available, and there is little discussion of this position in the literature on Mexican politics.

Finally, a very important question that will not be addressed here is the viability of current female politicians as role models for the women of their country. As will be discussed below in the review of the literature, previous studies have concluded that the women in elite level positions in the Mexican government were from the same socioeconomic elite as their male colleagues, and, by extension, improbable role models for the masses of Mexican women.

However, despite the domination by the socioeconomic elite over Mexican politics, these women are helping to open more space for women with a wider variety of backgrounds to enter politics. This leads to another question for future research: how do women network? Do they establish independent networks or *camarillas* and mentor-protege relationships among women? How

extensively do they participate in established, predominantly male, *camarillas*? The exploration of the possible existence of feminine *camarillas* and their horizontal or vertical linkages to broader *camarillas* is a topic that could illuminate the workings of women's ascent in the political structure enormously. But again, this is far beyond the potential scope of the present investigation.

CHAPTER 2
WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY MEXICO

The struggle of Mexican women for political rights has been long and difficult. Although they began the fight for suffrage around the same time as their North American and European counterparts in the early twentieth century, there have been many events that have frustrated the fulfillment of feminist goals and the development of a strong and unified feminist movement.

Many groups and individuals have supported feminist ideas and attempted to create legislation to improve the position of women in Mexican society and though success appeared imminent several times, many of the attempts to obtain recognition of women as equal and full Mexican citizens ended in failure. A major reason that Mexican women were denied the right to vote was the belief (or excuse) of the strongly anti-clerical Revolutionary leaders that the Catholic Church would control the government through the female vote. Despite these failures, in 1953 Mexican women were granted the political equality for which they had struggled for over half a decade.

The goal of this chapter is to show the political participation of Mexican women during the first part of the twentieth century up to 1953, when they were included in the

Constitution as full citizens with the right to vote and hold political office at all levels. This chapter will discuss Mexican women's legal status, social, professional and political activity during the years before 1953, beginning with the regime of Porfirio Díaz.[42]

The Porfiriato: Roots of an Incipient Feminist Movement

The regime of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910), or the *porfiriato*, brought many changes in the Mexican economy and society. Díaz tried to implement changes that would raise Mexico to the level of other countries that were industrializing at the end of the nineteenth century. Under Díaz, Mexico's railroads, ports, and mines were expanded and telegraph and postal systems were established. Foreign investment was encouraged during the *porfiriato*, resulting in domination of several important sectors of the Mexican economy by foreign investors. However, very few Mexicans were able to enjoy the benefits of this development and the lower classes were hard hit by an economic depression at the turn of the century. Despite the apparent stability and progress, "wages and living standards were deteriorating for many, and probably more than four in five Mexicans remained

42 Note: The goal of this chapter is not to cover the development of feminism and anti-feminism in Mexico during this time period. Several works that cover this subject in great detail are discussed above in Chapter 1.

illiterate."[43]

The Legal Status of Mexican Women During the *porfiriato*

While the Mexican Constitution of 1857 did not specifically discriminate against women, it had always been interpreted in a discriminatory manner as would later versions. Semantics invariably proved to be either a smoke screen for the Liberals under Benito Juarez or a convenient loophole for later politicians to deny women the right to citizenship. Since the Constitution was written in "general" terms using the masculine forms of nouns such as *mexicanos* and *hombres*, the equivalent to "males" rather then "men" in English and was interpreted by many as pertaining only to men.

However, others disagreed and felt " . . . there is no fundamental reason to interpret Article 34 of our Constitution in a restrictive sense. In the first place, a proper grammatical analysis of the terms used in this article does not justify in any manner the opinion that the adjective *todos* (all) refers strictly to men . . . ".[44]

The Civil Code of 1884 granted single women nearly the same rights as all adult males although they were legally

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43 Daniel Levy and Gabriel Székely, *Mexico: Paradoxes of Stability and Change* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 26-27.
44 Elodia Cruz F., "Los derechos políticos de la mujer en México." *Universidad de México* (Mexico City, 1931) 2:12:505-519, pp. 515-516.

required to live with their parents until they were thirty years old. A married woman did not have any rights: she could not divorce, vote, draw up a contract of any kind, dispose or administer her personal property, make decisions about the education of her children, or engage in lawsuits. Married women were considered *imbecelitas sexus* by the government and the law. A married woman could not even *tutor* anyone other than her husband. Because of this, female school teachers who did not want to leave their jobs would not marry. The Civil Code of 1884 also discriminated against children who could only investigate their maternal lineage and men were not allowed to legally recognize their illegitimate offspring.[45] In 1904, a bill legalizing divorce finally passed the Chamber of Deputies.[46]

Women's Educational and Professional Opportunities under Díaz

Educational opportunities for a minority of Mexican women, those in the middle and upper classes, increased considerably during the *porfiriato*. The foundation for these gains was laid in 1867 by President Benito Juarez who "declared primary education obligatory and laid extensive plans to expand

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45 Anna Macias, *Against All Odds: The Feminist Movement in Mexico to 1940* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1982); Shirlene Ann Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman: Her Participation in the Revolution and the Struggle for Equality* (Denver CO: Arden Press Inc., 1990); Vivian M. Vallens, *Working Women in Mexico During the Porfiriato, 1880-1910* (San Francisco CA: R & E Associates Inc., 1978).

46 Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 10.

educational facilities nationwide."[47]

Although Juarez was not able to follow through on all of his plans for creating a broad and inclusive educational system, Díaz continued his plans and further expanded educational opportunities for all Mexicans, including women. However, many schools that were established for girls limited their education to traditional subjects and arts and crafts such as tapestry and needlework, photography, bookbinding and offered few courses in science.[48]

Despite opposition and because of a lack of funds to open special universities for women, several women were admitted to the National University to study for degrees in medicine, law, pharmacy, chemistry and dentistry. Among the first women to hold professional degrees from Mexican universities are: Margarita Chorné, dentistry (1886), Matilda P. Montoya, medicine (1887), María Sandoval Zarco, law (1889), María Guerrero, public accounting (1908). However, traditional sex roles limited these women in their duties. The first two female medical doctors, Montoya and Columba Rivera, specialized in women's diseases but were prohibited from making house calls because women of their social standing were not permitted to go out alone or at night.

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47 Ibid, p. 11.

48 Macias, *Against All Odds*; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*; Vallens, *Working Women in Mexico*.

The first female lawyer was restricted to practicing civil law after her first criminal case scandalized the *gente decente*.[49]

Middle and upper class women had a little more freedom as writers and journalists; many women began feminist and women's magazines and newspapers. Mexican women have always been active in literature and journalism, but began to express a greater interest in national political life.

In 1901, two writers and political activists, Juana Belén Gutiérrez and Elisa Acuña y Rossetti, began the anti-Díaz periodical *Vesper*. They criticized the condition of the miners in Guanajuato, the Catholic Church, and the government. Despite being jailed several times, Belén Gutiérrez continued her petitioning for social justice and the end of the Díaz regime.[50]

In 1904, Dr. Columba Rivera, María Sandoval de Zarco and a normal schoolteacher, Dolores Correa Zapata founded the feminist magazine *La Mujer Mexicana*, which was published monthly until 1908, a victim of economic problems. This magazine is credited with beginning an incipient feminist movement at the end of the Díaz regime, and criticized the Civil Code of 1884, the exploitation of workers and other problems of women at this time such as the double standard for men and women.[51]

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49 Macias, *Against All Odds, pp. 11-12*; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, pp. 11-13.
50 Macias, *Against All Odds*; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*; Vallens, *Working Women in Mexico*.
51 Ibid.

These are only a few of the periodicals established by women at the end of the *porfiriato*. Women also collaborated on other periodicals established by the opposition to the Díaz regime, and in political clubs and discussion groups that were essential to the development of the ideas that ignited the Revolution in 1910.

Las precursoras: Pre-Revolutionary Political Activity Among Mexican Women

Many middle and upper class women attended *tertulías* and political clubs, and contributed to the efforts of politically oriented newspapers and magazines, particularly those opposed to the Díaz regime. One example is the Club Ponciano Arriaga, founded in San Luis Potosí in 1900. The club served as the organizational and political base of the Flores Magón brothers. During the same year, the Flores Magón brothers also established the newspaper *Regeneración*, the mouthpiece of their opposition party, the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* (Liberal Mexican Party [PLM]). All these elements of the Flores Magón-led opposition depended on the support of both men and women.

The first meeting of the Club Ponciano Arriaga made proclamations in support of gender equality as to salary and

work.[52] In 1903, important feminist writer, Juana Belén Gutiérrez, and another, Elisa Acuña y Rossetti, acted as the leaders of this club. Both women played important roles in the development of Mexican feminism and the ideology of the Revolution.

Margarita Magón de Flores, the mother of the Flores Magón brothers, selected the subtitle of the newspaper *Regeneración* and played an active role as their collaborator. Her influence was so clearly visible that when she was dying Díaz offered to free her sons from jail on the condition that she would ask them to renounce political activity. She responded to the messenger, "Tell General Porfirio Díaz that I would rather die without seeing my sons Ricardo and Jesús and even see them hanging from a tree than to know that they have retracted or repented for something they have said or done."[53]

Other women who supported the PLM cause include Dolores Jiménez y Muro who is credited with writing the "Political and Social Plan" of the *Complot de Tacubaya* which sought to replace Díaz with Francisco Madero.[54] Teresa Arteaga, one of the earliest participants in the PLM and later wife of Enrique Flores Magón,

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52 Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, pp. 19-20.
53 Angela Alatorre Mendieta, "Galeria de mujeres mexicanas en la revolución." *Revista de la Universidad de México*, 28:3:15-21 (1973), p. 17.
54 Alatorre Mendieta, "Galeria de mujeres mexicanas en la revolución"; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman.*

spent several months in jail for collaborating with the PLM.[55] Many women participated and collaborated in opposition parties on all points of the political spectrum as writers, propagandists, teachers and journalists. These women dedicated their lives to social justice but the majority found lives of persecution, imprisonment, and poverty. Most died poor and forgotten.

The PLM was only one of the politically oriented organizations that supported women's political activity and rights. Working class Mexican women played active roles within the *Gran Círculo de Obreros Libres* (Great Circle of Free Workers [GCOL]), an anarcho-syndicalist union affiliated with the PLM. Women participated in strikes and protests sponsored by the PLM at mines in Cananea, Sonora, in June 1906, and at the textile mills in Orizaba, Veracruz. Some of the protests ended with hundreds of fatalities as did the strike at the Río Blanco textile mills in 1907.

Although organizations such as the PLM and GCOL could not begin an armed revolt, with all their strikes, propaganda and other efforts they helped to discredit the Díaz regime. Díaz responded by supporting a lockout of the workers that resulted in "93 of the nation's 150 mills being closed and thirty thousand laborers out of work in twenty states."[56]

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55 Ibid.
56 Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 25.

The strikes, lockouts and subsequent violence against the working class by the government that occurred all over the country in 1907 served to weaken the authority of the Díaz regime considerably and set the stage for the Revolution.

The Participation of Mexican Women in the Revolution of 1910

It is clear that at the beginning of the twentieth century that many Mexican women across all social classes were politically conscious and active through their participation in strikes, protests, political clubs and parties and journalism. Many women sought social justice on a multi-dimensional scale and demanded that women's needs and equality be considered specifically, to avoid being lost in gender neutral language.[57]

The rising tide of feminism was not unnoticed, and on the eve of the Mexican Revolution it was increasingly criticized. Claims which have been heard in response to feminism in other countries were also heard in Mexico, such as the claim that feminists were not "feminine", and that an educated women was condemned to live alone because intelligence diminished her beauty. At the same time, there were many men who supported feminist ideas and helped advance the feminist cause as part of

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57 In Spanish, as in many other languages, including English, the "neutral" gender language is usually masculine: he, his, him, man's, men etc. In Mexico, because the Constitution was written in this "neutral" form it was very easy to say afterward that the writers of the document intended only for men, literally rather than figuratively, to have political rights.

the overall program of social justice that was to be carried out with the Revolution.

During the Revolution, women served in many capacities: as officers, spies, couriers, snipers, saboteurs and warriors on the battlefield; as propagandists, teachers, journalists, collaborators and conspirators; founders of periodicals and hospitals. The new roles assumed by women during the Revolution gave them a place from which they could begin to fight for their own rights as well as for their country. For the women, the two struggles were the same; they fought for a society where they could cultivate social justice.

Although women of the middle and upper classes were able to avoid the violence of the Revolution, poor and lower class women had little or no refuge. Many women were raped and victimized and had to survive in a chaotic and hostile environment. Women who followed their husbands and lovers during the Revolution were called *soldaderas* or *galletas* (cookies). Generally, the *soldadera* fed her man, carried his things, looked for food, munitions and a place to put up the tent. It was not uncommon to see women fighting in the battles alongside the men.[58]

Women who fought in the Revolution had to exist in a world of chaos, sadness, insecurity and death. Many turned to

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58 Macias, *Against All Odds*; John Plenn, "Forgotten Heroines of Mexico: Tales of Soldaderas, Amazons of War and Revolution," *Travel* 66:6:24-27, 60; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman.*

prostitution to survive, others put on pants and fought as men. Some of these women were thrown out of the army upon discovery of their true sex. Others were assimilated and respected since they had proved their valor in battle.

Margarita Neri is one such woman, and though many conflicting tales about her life exist, some details are clear. She rapidly rose in ranks to become and officer and commanded her troops with much success. She was not the only woman to do so during the Revolution.[59] Many women dressed as men and took on the stereotypical traits and characteristics of men: fighting, smoking, gambling and killing without fear of anyone (men in particular). While not all women rose to prominence as guerrilla leaders, many achieved respect for their valor in battle or for their skill with dynamite or their marksmanship.

On the other hand, the *soldaderas* who were camp followers fulfilled the traditional female role. Because of the mundane activities of these sacrificing and suffering women, they have not been as celebrated as the heroic women who fought as men during the Revolution.

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59 Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 45.

The Yucatan: Leading the Nation in Women's Rights (1915-1924)

Many revolutionary leaders tried to establish advanced programs to improve the condition of women politically and socially. During the period of 1915-24, the State of Yucatan took the initiative in granting rights to women under the leadership of General Salvador Alvarado.

When Alvarado was named as governor in 1915, the counter-revolutionary government of Ortiz Orgumedo ended and a period of experimental and revolutionary change began. Alvarado was a radical and moral man, and "...considered the fight for the emancipation of women as an integral part of the struggle in Mexico to help the weak and oppressed."[60]

Alvarado declared the intention of his government to help women support themselves economically and followed up those words with actions. His labor law reforms helped many working women by establishing a minimum wage and maximum hours for domestic workers and prohibited employers from requiring domestic help live in the place of work. Educated middle and upper class women were also given opportunities in the Alvarado government as he actively sought qualified women to fill positions as clerks, cashiers, and accountants in the state government.[61]

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60 Anna Macias, "La mujer y la revolución social mexicana." Pp. 3-14 in *Boletin Documental Sobre la Mujer* (Cuernavaca, Mexico: Comunicación, Intercambio y Desarrollo Humano en América Latina, 1973), p. 9.
61 Macias, *Against All Odds*, p. 67; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 72.

So that middle class women could work in civil posts, Alvarado changed the civil code to permit them to leave the family home at the age of twenty-one, like men.[62] He insisted that the old law kept women in an inferior condition that was not in agreement with the ideals of the Revolution. He wanted to help women to be free of religious and superstitious ideas, so he implemented programs to train women in secondary and vocational schools.

Alvarado was a moralist who campaigned against gambling, alcohol and drugs. He reformed prostitution by prohibiting brothels and opening free clinics where prostitutes would be required to be examined by doctors on a regular basis. While Alvarado realistically could not expect to stop prostitution altogether, he had hoped to end the exploitation of prostitutes by procurers and vice officers and to control the spread of venereal diseases through legal reforms and state sponsored programs.[63]

Alvarado's successor, Felipe Carrillo Puerto, carried out these plans until his assassination in 1924. After that all the progress in women's rights in Yucatan was reversed. Under Carrillo Puerto, women obtained the right to vote and hold office

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62 Macias, *Against All Odds*, p. 67.
63 Macias, *Against All Odds*, p. 66; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 72.

at the municipal level. They were provided access to family planning and birth control information, and were encouraged to join the Socialist *Ligas Feministas* under the leadership of his sister Elvia Carrillo Puerto.[64]

The First and Second Feminist Congresses (1916)

Alvarado tried to bring to light feminist concerns by supporting a feminist congress in 1916. The congress was the first of its kind in Mexico, and was organized completely by women. While he left the organization and planning to women, Alvarado selected four themes for consideration during this congress: (1) the best way to liberate women from the yoke of tradition; (2) the role of primary education in preparing women for their lives; (3) which kinds of careers and offices the government should help women train for, and; (4) what public offices women should and could fill.[65]

More than 600 women attended the congress, mostly school teachers and members of the educated middle class. These women represented a broad spectrum of opinions, from Catholic anti-feminists to radical feminists and anarchists. As was to be the case in later congresses of this type, moderate feminists set

64 Macias, *Against All Odds*, pp. 87-100; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, pp. 81-96.

65 ANFER, *Participación política de la mujer en México, Siglo XX* (Mexico: Institución de Capacitación Política, 1984), pp. 10-12; Macías, *Against All Odds*, pp. 71-72; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, 72-73.

the pace and had the greatest influence over the final statements that were issued.

The moderates believed lay education should be offered to all women, that a women should marry by choice rather than economic necessity or familial coercion, that men and women were already intellectually and morally equal, and that women should have the right to vote in the near future. The moderates and the radicals agreed about the need to revise the Civil Code of 1884 in every aspect that discriminated against women. The influence of these demands can be seen in the changes in the code put forth by President Carranza on April 9, 1917.

The most important agreement of this congress was the proposition submitted by more than two dozen of the radical delegates to the congress proposing a change to the constitution of Yucatan that would permit women over twenty-one years old to vote and hold office at the municipal level. The radicals also asked that the state government initiate an appeal to amend the national constitution to allow municipal-level suffrage to women in all states.[66] Alvarado wanted clearer mandates and support for his programs, and immediately called for a second congress.

The Second Feminist Congress took place in November 1916, and was similar to the first. The participants discussed

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66 Macias, *Against All Odds*, p. 77; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 76.

marriage, the rights of divorcees and their children, primary education, and the right to vote and hold office at the municipal level. Both congresses showed that the women at this time did not view suffrage as their most important concern. Even the radical feminists aspired to political participation only at the municipal level. Instead, they sought equality in a more methodical manner, demanding equality of quantity and quality of education, followed by equal opportunity in work. Only once women achieved educational and professional equality would they ask for political equality. These congresses also placed the women's concerns in the forefront of public awareness at the national level, thus representing a great advance for the feminist movement in Mexico.

The Carranza Administration

Upon taking office as president, Venustiano Carranza made clear his support of women's rights. He included several intelligent and outspoken feminist women in his government, hoping to solicit the loyalty of Mexican women through them. These women included Artemisa Sáenz Royo, Margarita Robles de Mendoza, and his most visible and outspoken critic, Hermila Galindo de Topete.[67]

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67 This is noted by several authors, but Macias sums it up nicely: "In her brief (1916-1919) career, Hermila Galindo published more books and essays than did any other feminist in her time or after, largely because she had official

In 1915, when the *carrancista* government returned to Mexico City, Galindo and Sáenz Royo founded the feminist magazine *Mujer Moderna.* Galindo and other writers of *Mujer Moderna* demanded political rights for women, equality in education, and expounded very advanced ideas about divorce, female sexuality, religion and prostitution.

Galindo served as editor of *Mujer Moderna* during its publication (1915-1919). She was invited to speak at the Second Feminist Congress after a presentation of her paper at the First Feminist Congress ignited controversy among the delegates there.[68]

The Constitutional Congress of 1917

When the Constitutional Congress convened in Querétaro in December 1916 and January 1917, no serious consideration was given to political rights for women, although it did not specifically deny women's political rights.[69] Important rights for working women were included in the Constitution, entitling working women, particularly pregnant women, protection against certain types of work. Galindo had sent a request to the Congress asking them to consider the rights of women, reminding

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support from President Carranza and General Salvador Alvarado." *Against All Odds*, p. 171.

68 Galindo was not able to attend the conference personally and sent a representative to present a paper that she had written. Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, pp. 50-51.

69 ANFER, *La participación política de la mujer en México*, pp. 12-13.

them of their participation in the Revolution.[70]

Several male delegates, including General Francisco Múgica of Michoacan and Luis G. Monzón, both of whom were considered radical, and conservative Félix F. Palavinci, actively lobbied for the women's right to citizenship, suffrage and public office-holding.[71] However, the First Committee on Constitutional Reforms concluded:

> The fact that some exceptional women have the qualifications necessary to exercise political rights satisfactorily does not justify the conclusion that these should be conceded to women as a class.[72]

The report further stated that because women had been traditionally restricted to the home and family, they had not developed a separate political consciousness and "do not understand the necessity of participating in public affairs, which is demonstrated by the lack of any collective movement for this purpose."[73]

Disappointed with the decision of the Constitutional Congress, Hermila Galindo made the announcement that she would run for a seat in the Chamber of Deputies in the next election.

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70 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 5.

71 Mexican women were not considered citizens under the Constitution and had few rights if any as such. At this time, not all citizens had the right to vote and hold office.

72 Quoted in Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 6.

73 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 7; Soto, *The Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman,* p. 55. Soto's work contains a paragraph almost identical to that found in Morton, including the same reference to the report from the First Committee on Constitutional Reforms.

According to Macías, she announced her candidacy to the leading newspapers in Mexico and was backed by hundreds of supporters:

> Galindo made it clear that she had no hope of being elected, but that she had two other objectives in mind. One was to bring to the attention of the nation and its leaders the large number of women who wanted to vote. The other was to set a precedent for the next generation.[74]

Galindo won the election but was rejected by the Electoral College of the Chamber of Deputies when she appeared to claim her seat because they claimed the electoral law of 1918 specifically limited the vote to men.[75]

The Law of Family Relations (1917)

While laws promulgated in 1917 did not give women political rights, Carranza's divorce decree of 1915 improved women's legal status slightly. The Law of Family Relations which legalized divorce and gave women the right to alimony and child support.

Specifically, changes in the law guaranteed the rights of married women (1) to extend contracts; (2) to seek legal counsel; (3) to act as tutors; and, (4) to have the same rights as men in the custody of their children. Women would also have equal authority in matters concerning family expenses. The law

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74 Macías, *Against All Odds*, p. 37.
75 Macias, *Against All Odds*, 37; Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico,* p. 9, Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman,* p. 52.

would also permit judgement of paternity and gave men the right to recognize illegitimate children.[76] The moderates believed that Carranza only legalized divorce because his friends asked him to do so. As written, the law discriminated against women and harmed them more than it would help them. The law:

> ...permitted legal separation to the spouse whose spouse committed adultery, under certain conditions...upon committing adultery in the home, keeping a lover and provoking public scandal by mistreating or permitting the lover to mistreat the other spouse.. a man could remarry immediately after having been granted a divorce, but a woman could not do so until after 300 days after the divorce was legalized to guarantee to a man that she was not pregnant by her first husband.[77]

There were other inequities as well. While a man could acknowledge paternity of illegitimate children born before or during his current marriage, regardless of his wife's sentiments, a woman could not.[78] Single women under thirty could not leave home without their parents' consent, and a married woman could not engage in any profession or business without the consent of her husband.[79]

Many women did not take advantage of the divorce law because divorce was still considered very unacceptable and many women were economically dependent on their husbands. Further,

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76 ANFER, *La participación política de la mujer*, p. 12; Macias "La mujer en la revolución social", p. 12, *Against All Odds*, p. 76; Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 9; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, pp. 58-59.
77 Macias, "La mujer en la revolución social", p. 7.
78 Macias, *Against All Odds*, pp. 85-86.
79 Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 59.

many women in the lower classes weren't married to their partners. According to the 1930 census figures, nearly 700,000 women were living in free union.[80]

Catholic women resisted divorce, and despite a strong anti-clerical sentiment following the Revolution, many women joined Catholic circles and organizations and supported conservative ideas. They established and distributed pro-clerical periodicals, formed soup kitchens, and distributed clothing among the poor.[81]

Despite setbacks in the fight for suffrage, the governor of San Luis Potosí granted to women who could read and write the right to vote and stand for office at municipal elections in 1924 and state elections in 1925. Under these changes, Elvia Carrillo Puerto ran for office as deputy in 1925. She and her female alternate won the election with a majority of over 4,000 votes but they were rejected when by the Electoral College when they presented their credentials at the Chamber of Deputies.[82]

Other states continued to grant suffrage to women, and in 1925 the state legislature of Chiapas passed a bill that provided equal political rights to women, including voting and

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80 Macias, *Against All Odds*, p. 103.

81 Macias, *Against All Odds* and Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, provide more details on the participation of conservative women in "anti-feminist" activities.

82 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, pp. 9-10.

holding office. But in San Luis Potosí, the women's suffrage granted in 1923 was repealed under the next governor who was opposed to political rights for women.[83]

The 1927 Reform of the Civil Code

The series of successes and setbacks in the fight for legal and political equality for women was continued in the 1927 reform of the Civil Code, which equalized the legal status of men and women and afforded certain protection to married women. It implemented features of the Law of Family Relations of 1917 that gave women the right to take part in lawsuits, draw up contracts and act as guardians. It also permitted Mexican women to practice law without any restrictions. Single women were now allowed to leave the family home at twenty-one years old, the same as men.

The previous change in the Law of Family Relations of 1917 which allowed married women to administer their property, also kept them from administering their husbands' property, putting at a disadvantage women who had no property or income of their own. This was corrected in 1927, requiring couples to draw up a prenuptial agreement to specify whether the couple would administer their property jointly or separately.

83 Ibid., p. 12.

However, married women still needed the permission of their spouse to work outside of the home while the husband could travel or change residence without his wife's permission. Overall, this reform provided juridical protection for women of the middle and upper classes, but meant little to the masses of impoverished Mexican women for whom daily survival was the most important concern.[84]

The Right to Vote: A Dream Promised, Passed, Ratified and Pigeonholed

During the 1920s and 1930s, several states granted women the right to vote and hold office at the municipal level. Women were slowly gaining greater legal recognition as human beings and were demanding a more active role in national life. However, the traditional religious conviction of women continued to play a role in the repeated denial of these rights.

The increased activity of the League of Catholic Women and the participation of women in the Cristero Rebellion in 1926 served to again increase doubts in the so-called political "maturity" of Mexican women. Mexican men were concerned still that the Catholic Church would control the country through the feminine vote, thus reversing the progress of the Revolution.

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84 Macias, *Against All Odds*, p. 119-121.

Another setback was the assassination of President-Elect General Alvaro Obregón

> ...by León Toral, a religious fanatic, at the instigation of a Catholic nun. The vigorous anti-clerical reaction of President Calles immediately eliminated all prospect of a Church-State settlement and once more there was raised in the minds of Mexican politicians the specter of fanatical women voters dominated by the Church.[85]

During the following presidential administration, women's rights received little attention by Plutarco Elias Calles. The Mexican government's lack of support did not dissuade women who continued to organize congresses and were writing increasingly about political issues. One such writer argued:

> I firmly believe that there is no incompatibility between the functions and obligations of citizenship and the sacred duties of the home. Women do not cease to be feminine simply by exercising political rights, simply as they do not when they go to work to satisfy their enormous needs-- because of this there is no danger of failure to fulfill one's role as wife or mother... Women should be granted the right to fully exercise political rights equal to those of men, and it should be demanded of the government to give the same guarantees for the capacity of exercising those rights to women.[86]

The Cárdenas administration (1934-1940)

The tide seemed to turn upon the election of Lázaro Cárdenas who declared his support for women's political rights and asked for the women's support of his campaign in his 1933

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85 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 12.
86 Cruz F., "Los derechos políticos de la mujer en México," pp. 518-519.

candidacy acceptance speech. Cárdenas further stated that women were "beings eminently aware of human problems and sufficiently generous to seek the general interest."[87] However, he later stated that women's rights would be granted gradually and over an unspecified period of time.[88]

Women participated extensively in his campaign, and he followed through on his promise for the inclusion of women in national political life by appointing Palma Guillén as the Mexican minister to Colombia in 1934, making Mexico the first Latin American country to appoint a female diplomat. He then created the Acción Feminina (Feminine Action) as a sector of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Party [PNR]) and appointed Margarita Robles Mendoza as director.[89]

After nearly 2,800 women voted in the primary elections in the spring of 1936, the feminist organization Frente Unico Pro-Derechos de la Mujer (Single Front for Women's Rights [FUPDM]) began an active campaign to attain to right of women to vote and to be candidates without restrictions for all elective offices. Other issues on which the FUPDM called for action included the modification of the Civil Code to give women the same rights as men; modification of the Agrarian code to allow

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87 Quoted in Macias, *Against All Odds*, pp. 138-139 and Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 17.
88 Macias, *Against All Odds*, p. 139.
89 Macias, *Against All Odds*, p. 140; Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 17; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 124.

women to receive grants of land under the same conditions as men; legal protection of women in government employment; the incorporation of Indian women into national sociopolitical life; the establishment of work centers for unemployed women; the creation of a children's bureau to protect infants and children from neglect, abuse and exploitation; and the initiation of a program of cultural education for women.[90]

At about this same time, in the mid-thirties, several Mexican states again took the initiative to grant women the right to vote in municipal elections, beginning with Guanajuato in 1934, and Puebla in 1936 followed by Veracruz, Durango, Tamaulipas and Hidalgo.[91] In 1937, the PNR supported the candidacy of FUPDM secretary, María del Refugio García in her campaign for deputy in Michoacán and that of Soledad Orozco Avila in Guanajuato.[92] As did Galindo and Elvia Carrillo Puerto before them, they reasoned that the semantics of the Constitution did not specifically deny women the right to vote and stand for office. García and Orozco Avila won the election, but in August 1937, as with their predecessors, they were not permitted to take their seats in the Chamber of Deputies.[93]

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90 Macias, *Against All Odds*, pp. 141-142; Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, pp. 17-18; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 126.
91 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 22; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 136.
92 ANFER, *La participación política de la mujer en México*, pp. 14-15.
93 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, pp. 28-29; Macias, *Against All Odds*, pp. 142-143; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 129.

The members of the FUDPM staged a protest and hunger strike outside of President Cárdenas' home at Los Pinos in Mexico City, demanding immediate action. Two weeks into the protest, Cárdenas promised in a speech at the Mexican Feminine Confederation that he would submit a bill to rewrite Article 34 at the beginning of the next congressional session in September. He followed through on this promise, and the Senate passed it before the end of the year. By May 1939 all of the states had ratified it. All that remained was the formal declaration of Congress that the change was in force. Mysteriously, it was tabled and did not take effect.

Women's organizations, including FUPDM, protested vigorously from July 1939 to June 1940. In an address before the end of his term, President Cárdenas asked Congress to fulfill its duty and finish the ratification process, but he failed to call a special session to ensure its completion and the amendment failed.

In a 1946, the Chamber of Deputies' Committee on Constitutional Reforms reported to President Miguel Alemán:

> This reform, which lacked only the legal declaration, was left abandoned in the archives of the Chamber in an inexplicable form for almost ten years, possibly in fear of the undesirable results it might produce in the political life of the nation.[94]

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94 Quoted in Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 41.

Many authors attribute this failure to a conservative shift in the Mexican government after Cárdenas, the participation of women in Catholic Church sponsored organizations, and their support for the campaign of the conservative candidate, Juan Andreu Almazán. The defeat of the Spanish Republic by the Francoists in 1939 also affected the mood in Mexico, causing them to become extremely cautious. Spanish women had voted for the first time at both the municipal and national level in 1933. The women voted conservatively spelling disastrous results for socialist center parties supporting the Republic and confirming the worst fears of Mexican politicians. Mexico had supported the Republic government in Spain, but:

> The Church, fighting bitterly against the anticlerical reforms of the hated Republic, openly exerted its influence over feminine voters, who in some places marched directly from the churches to the polling places.[95]

Nonetheless, women in several neighboring countries to the north and to the south were granted the full or partial political rights during this period, including: Canada (1917), the United States (1920), Ecuador (1929), Brazil and Uruguay (1932), Cuba (1934), Puerto Rico (1935), El Salvador (1939), Dominican Republic (1942), Venezuela (1945), Panama (1946), Argentina (1947).[96]

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95 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 23.
96 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 46; Barbara J. Nelson and Najma

Official discrimination against women in the election law continued, including an incident wherein "the Chamber of Deputies answered a request by Señora Castillo Ledón for permission to accept a decoration from the Dominican Republic by declaration, on the 15th [of May 1946], that permission was not necessary since Article 34 of the Constitution did not recognize the citizenship of women."[97]

In a successful attempt to gain women's support and participation in his campaign, Miguel Alemán declared his support for immediately granting the right to vote at the municipal level.[98] He cited the importance of women's potential contributions in local level issues that pertain to their children such as schools, cost of living issues, sanitation and other "welfare and home" matters.[99] While such phrasing might be seen as cautious, humble and necessary to appease the largely uncertain members of Congress, it can also be seen as an affront to the importance of local political issues and the role of women in politics.

No further concessions were made to women during the remainder of Alemán's presidency (1946-1952), although the number of women chosen to represent Mexico in diplomatic posts and in

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Chowdhury (eds.), *Women and Politics Worldwide* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 774-775.

97 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, p. 51.

98 ANFER, *La participación política de la mujer en México*, p. 17.

99 Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, pp. 51-53.

various commissions increased.[100]

PRI-candidate Adolfo Ruiz Cortines promised to submit the amendment to Congress to grant suffrage to Mexican women if he won the election. A week after his inauguration as president in December 1952, he proved to be a man of his word. Before the end of 1953, the change was ratified, passed and formally adopted, granting women the right to vote and to stand for office in the 1954 congressional elections.[101]

The first female deputy, Aurora Jimenez Palacios, was elected from the newly christened state of Baja California. Ruiz Cortines also appointed Paula Alegría as Ambassador to Denmark, and Gloria León Orantes and María Luisa Santillán as Magistrates to the Superior Tribunal of Justice at the Federal District.[102]

The next milestone in women's rights in Mexico was the adoption of an article in 1974 similar to the proposed U.S. Equal Rights Amendment. This revision of Article 135 of the Constitution established the equality of men and women before the law and guaranteed the equality of opportunity in professions, industry, commerce and work. These changes also established equality between men and women in other matrimonial issues, allowing foreign-born spouses of Mexican women to attain

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100 Ibid., pp. 58-59.
101 ANFER, *Participación política de la mujer en México,* pp. 33-36; Macias, *Against All Odds*, p. 145; Morton, *Woman Suffrage in Mexico*, pp. 80-81; Soto, *Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman*, p. 143.
102 ANFER, *Participación política de la mujer en México,* p. 19.

citizenship. Protection and rights of pregnant women workers were also established in this legislation, setting work day length, leave time, and overtime payment among other issues.[103]

Mexican women have experienced hard opposition from the male-dominated government in their struggle to attain equal political and legal status. Although they were not permitted to participate within the government on an equal basis with men for much of this century, Mexican women have been politically active through other channels such as feminist organizations, labor unions, the press, and in various professions. Since they were granted equal rights and privileges of citizenship in 1953, women have slowly penetrated Mexican politics, attaining positions at the highest echelons.

What has the rate of this increase been since 1953? What are factors that have affected this rate? Who are the women who aspire to political power in Mexico? These are all questions that will be addressed in the following chapters.

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103 The text of the December 31, 1974 decree from the *Diario Oficial* is reproduced in: ANFER, *La participación política de la mujer en Mexico,* pp. 48-51.

CHAPTER 3
PRESENTATION OF CASES: WOMEN IN MEXICAN POLITICS

Despite the lack of quantitative research in this area, there are women in Mexican politics. Exactly where these women hold positions, where they come from, their age and education and their previous political experience are matters which this chapter will explore. To do so I will rely upon a database of women who have attained elective and appointed positions at the elite level, and echelons just below what is considered the elite level, in the Mexican federal government.[104]

Besides the basic questions of what positions women have held and how the level of female participation has changed in the different branches of the Mexican government, I will address to what extent the Mexican aphorism "*la participación de la mujer en la política es flor de un sexenio*" holds true. Female and male politicians will be compared as to age, repeat-office holding, and the length of political career.

104 See pages 29-28 in Chapter 1 regarding methodology and definition of cases selected for the database.

Distribution of Women in the Mexican Federal Government

Legislative Branch

In Mexico, Congress has long been a common path for politically ambitious women. It contains many more women than either the executive or judicial branches. Election to the Senate and Chamber of Deputies is party-based. That is, the voter selects a party slate rather than voting for an individual. Therefore, party affiliation is a more important aspect of any aspiring legislator's career than it is for other government officials. This will be discussed below, in Chapter 4.

Figure 3-1 illustrates how the number of women in the Chamber of Deputies has increased dramatically since the entry of the first woman in 1954. The total number of deputies in the Chamber has changed over the years, increasing to allow for greater representation of opposition

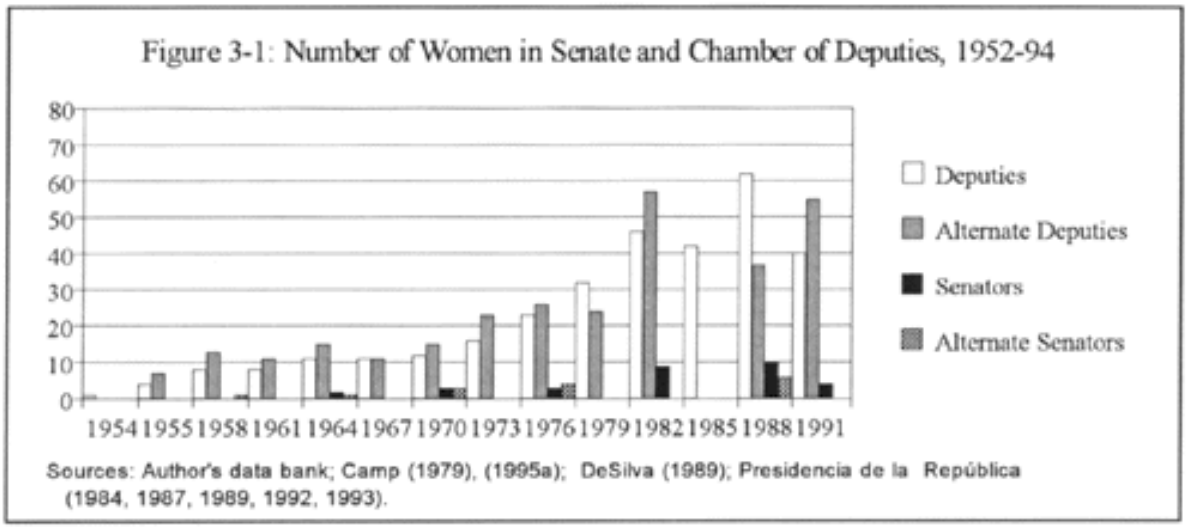
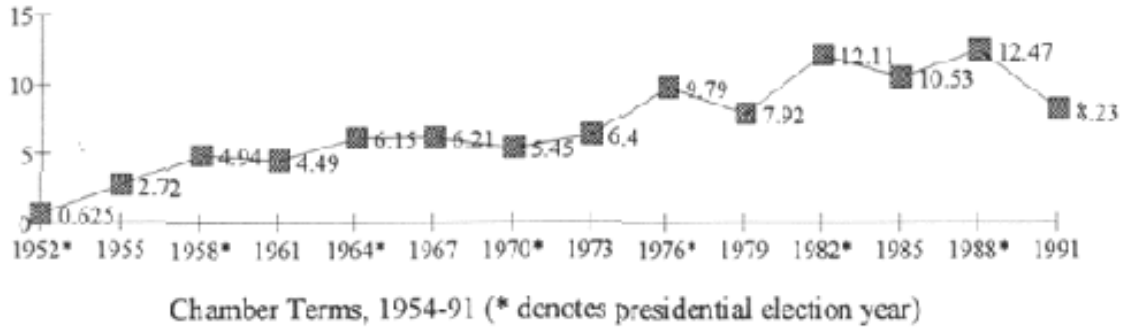


Figure 3-2: Women in the Chamber of Deputies, 1954-91 (%)



Chamber Terms, 1954-91 (* denotes presidential election year)

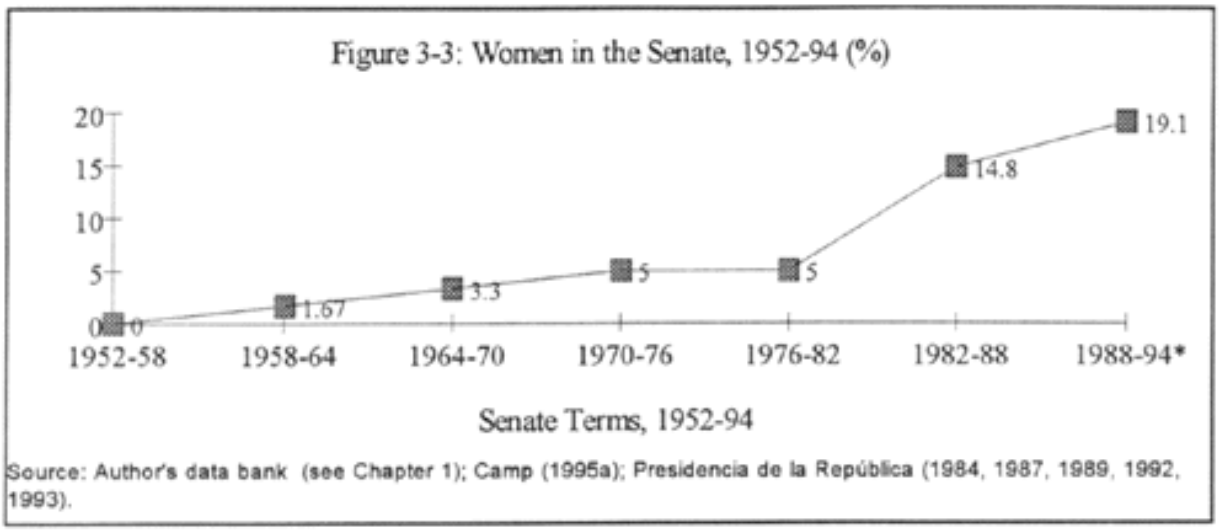
Sources: Author's database; Camp (1979), (1995a); DeSilva (1989); Presidencia de la República (1984, 1987, 1988, 1992, 1993).

parties. Changes made for the 1988 elections increased the number of Deputies elected to the Chamber to 500, while the number of Senators elected remained at two for each of the 32 Mexican states.

Deputies hold a three year term. They are elected at the same time as the president and then midway through his term. Senators hold six-year terms. Until 1988, they were always elected at the same time as the president. The 1988 electoral reform which increased the number of deputies also altered Senate terms, staggering them so that half of the senators are elected at the same time as the president and the other half during the mid-administration elections. A more accurate reflection of the presence of women in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies is reflected in the percentage of women in each term for the Chamber, and for the Senate by presidential administration (Figures 3-2 and 3-3).

Mexico selects alternate deputies and senators who take over in the event that their elected counterpart is unable to continue in office. Since 1955, the number of female alternate deputies usually has been higher than the number of female deputies (Figure 3-1). Unfortunately, information for alternates is not available for the 1982 and 1985 elections.

The percentage of female Senators during Salinas' administration (1988-94) increased sharply over all previous administrations.[105] This figure is slightly inflated because of aforementioned changes in 1988, which staggered Senate terms for the first time.[106] Overall, there have been more women in the Chamber of Deputies than in the Senate. This was also the case in the U.S. where one author noted that it was



105 This term is denoted with an asterisk (*) in Figure 3-3.
106 According to Camp, lots were drawn among the winning senators in 1988 to determine who would have to step down in 1991.

"much more difficult for a woman to win a seat in the Senate by her own efforts than a seat in the House of Representatives."[107]

Ironically, the changes intended to increase opposition party representation actually decreased the representation of women when it took effect in 1991. The change affected almost all of the ten women elected to the Senate in 1988, the largest group in Senate history (16.8 percent). In 1991, the number of women in the Senate dropped from ten to four, or approximately 7 percent.

Several female politicians who were elected to the Senate at the beginning of Salinas' administration won deputyships for the 91-94 term. These politicians include Laura Alicia Garza Galindo, Blanca Ruth Esponda Espinosa, Julieta Guevara Batista, and Graciela Larios Rivas, while María Cristina Sangri Aguilar, a deputy for the 1988-91 term, became a Senator in 1991.

Executive Branch

In the executive branch, the total number of women in elite positions has gradually increased with each administration, although not at the same rate as the legislative branch. As discussed above, the elite-level positions in this branch

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107 Emmy E. Werner, "Women in Congress: 1917-1964," *Western Political Quarterly* 19:1(March 1966), p. 24.

include: secretary, subsecretary and *oficial mayor*[108]. Because of the fluctuation in the number of Secretariats and number of positions available, it is no small feat, and of dubious value given the low number of women who have attained these positions, to provide the percent of women who have held top decision-making positions in the Executive branch over the past forty years. For example, there is often more than one subsecretary post, but usually only one Secretary and *oficial mayor* per Secretariat.

It is beyond the limits of this thesis to attempt to assess women's participation in elite-level executive branch positions in relative terms (percentages). It would also be pointless since the number of women holding elite-level positions has been extremely low since the first female Subsecretary was appointed in 1964.

Echeverría (1970-76) appointed one woman to the position of *oficial mayor* and two women subsecretaries during his administration. López Portillo (1976-82) appointed the first woman to a Cabinet-level position near the end of his term, as well as three women to the each of the positions of subsecretary and *oficial mayor*.

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108 *Oficial mayor* is a position that does not have an equivalent in English. This position is rather like a chief of staff of the Secretariat.

Table 3-1: Women in Elite-Level Executive Branch Posts of the Mexican Government (1964-1994)

Secretariat of Agrarian Reform
- Subsecretary (1970-76), (1982-85)

Secretariat of Agriculture
- Subsecretary (1964-70)
- Oficial Mayor (1983-84)

Secretariat of Communications and Transport
- Oficial Mayor (1988-92)

Secretariat of the Controller General
- Secretary (1988-94), (1994-)

Secretariat of Elementary Education
- Subsecretary (1982-88)

Secretariat of Fisheries
- Oficial Mayor (1982-88)
- Subsecretary (1988-91)
- Secretary (1988-92), (1994-)

Secretariat of Foreign Relations
- Oficial Mayor (1970-76), (1976-78), (1979-82)
- Subsecretary (1976-82)
- Subsecretary D (1978-79)
- Subsecretary C (1992-94)

Secretariat of Interior
- Subsecretary (1993-93), (1993)

Secretariat of Health
- Subsecretary (1988-94)

Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare
- Oficial Mayor (1978-82)
- Subsecretary (1991-94)

Secretariat of Programming and Planning
- Subsecretary (1976-80)
- Oficial Mayor (1982-85)
- Subsecretary (1983-88)

Secretariat of Public Education
- Subsecretary (1976-80)

Secretariat of Tourism
- Secretary (1980-82)
- Oficial Mayor (1982-86), (1991-94)
- Secretary (1994-)

Secretariat of Urban Development and Ecology
- Subsecretary (1982-86)

Source:Camp (1995a); DeSilva (1989); Presidencia de la República (1984, 1987, 1989, 1992, 1993).

De La Madrid (1982-88) appointed one woman to the position of secretary, four to the position of subsecretary, and four to the position of *oficial mayor*. Under Salinas, the number of women in top executive branch positions continued to grow at a sluggish pace, with one woman appointment at the cabinet level, five to the position of subsecretary and two women to the post of *oficial mayor*.

President Ernesto Zedillo made history in December 1994 by appointing a record-breaking total of three women to the cabinet level, doubling the total number of women who have attained that level in the history of Mexican politics.[109] However, even these figures may appear slightly inflated since only 24 women have held the 31 positions. Zedillo's female cabinet appointees were not part of my data set.

Additionally, many of the women who have held positions at the cabinet-level in the executive branch went on to hold other positions in both the executive and legislative branches. Repeat-office holding will be discussed at the end of this chapter. Below are some brief biographical sketches of women who have held multiple elite-level positions in two or more branches of government:

> Graciela Aceves de Romero: first female Subsecretary, elected Deputy three times between 1967-1982.

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109 The appointments included: Norma Samaniego, Comptroller General; Silvia Hernandez, Tourism; Julia Carabias, Fisheries.

> Interestingly, she was a member of the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) rather than the ruling Partido Institucional Revolucionario (PRI).
>
> María de los Angeles Moreno Uriega: Subsecretary of Programming and Budgeting, Secretary of Fisheries, Deputy and President of the Chamber of Deputies. In August 1994, she won a position in the Senate.
>
> Beatriz Paredes Rangel: one of two elected female governors, Ambassador, Subsecretary of the Interior during two presidential administrations.
>
> Silvia Hernandez Enriquez: elected as Deputy at a young age, served two Senate terms and is currently the Secretary of Tourism.[110]

The careers of these women are impressive. Yet, repeat-office holding combined with the low numbers of women holding cabinet-level posts, which are *appointed* positions, shows how few opportunities really exist for women in the executive branch. This is not to say that women who are repeat-office holders are denying opportunities to other women. Instead, it illustrates the smallness of the pool of female candidates for such positions, and the likelihood that once women reach elite-level positions that they are more likely to attain other elite-level positions and continue their political careers. This might also indicate that once women have attained positions at this level, that the length of their career is not much

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110 Hernandez Enriquez has been named in a recent scandal because she allegedly never finished the program for the degree she listed in her entry in the *Diccionario biográfico del gobierno mexicano*. Five other politicians were named in an article which was reproduced in the Usenet Newsgroup soc.culture.mexican.

different from their male colleagues.

Women's office-holding in the executive branch has been limited to 14 secretariats (Table 3-1). The number of secretariats that have existed since Lázaro Cárdenas first took office is approximately 40, and the number varies with each presidential administration. At present, there are 27 cabinet-level departments in President Ernesto Zedillo's regime, meaning that women hold about 10 percent of the very top cabinet level positions in his administration.

Considering that there has often been more than one subsecretary for most of the cabinet-level agencies, the level of women holding cabinet-level positions in the executive branch in past administrations was never higher than 5 percent.

The Judiciary

The judiciary in Mexico suffers from a lack of political prestige and competition because of widely publicized allegations of corruption, and the fact that little influential legislation comes from the Mexican Supreme Court. Although the judicial branch in Mexico appears to be patterned after the U.S. judicial system, it does not function in the same capacity.

One of the reasons the Mexican Supreme Court has little influence is that it does not establish binding precedents because it rarely reaches "identical conclusions about precisely

the same issues repeatedly," and rules on appeals of individuals rather than issues of constitutionality.[111] Another factor contributing to the lack of consensus is that appointments are not life-long, and are politically oriented. The judiciary generally plays a nonpolitical role and serves to affirm the decisions of the president, and to solve the problems of businessmen, landowners and members of the middle class related to taxation and other trade issues.[112]

For whatever reason, the number of women serving on the Supreme Court has only increased gradually. María Cristina Salmoran de Tamayo was the first woman appointed to the Supreme Court. She served through five presidential administrations (1961-1985). For the past two administrations (1982-88, 1988-94) women have made up 20 percent of the Supreme Court. Only one woman sat on the Supreme Court during the three presidential administrations spanning 1958-1976, and two women served during the administration of López Portillo (1976-82).

There is not much lateral mobility between the judiciary and elite positions in other branches. Only two Supreme Court members have held elite-level positions in other branches of government. Martha Chavez Padron held the position of

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111 Roderic A. Camp, *Politics in Mexico*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 140-141.

112 Camp, *Politics in Mexico*, pp. 140-141; Judith Adler Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, (NY: Holmes and Meier, 1983), p. 127; Martin C. Needler, *Mexican Politics: The Containment of Conflict*, (NY: Praeger, 1990), p. 90.

subsecretary in the Secretariat of Agrarian Reform, and served in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies for one term each before her appointment to the Supreme Court. Supreme Court Justice Victoria Adato Green de Ibarra was appointed Attorney General of the Federal District in the early 1980, and her assistant Attorney General was also a woman. De Silva also reports that a woman once held the position of assistant Attorney General of the Republic, although this was not confirmed by other sources.[113]

The Big Picture: The Distribution of Women in Mexican Politics

Overall, the total number of women in politics and in the political elite has slowly increased with each administration. The rate of increase has gained increasing momentum during the last three *sexenios* beginning with the López Portillo administration. Although López Portillo appointed the first female Secretary of a cabinet level agency, the actual number of female political elites did not increase past the level set during the Echeverría administration (1970-76).

The number of female politicians in the legislative branch has increased substantially over the past forty years, beginning with the election the first female federal deputy in 1954. The total grew to 100 female deputies during the Salinas

113 De Silva, "Las mujeres en la élite política de México: 1954-84", p. 280.

administration, higher than the total of elites (79) for the entire period covered in this thesis (1954-1994).

The rate of entry of women into the elite level of Mexican politics via certain decision-making positions discussed above in Chapter 1 has been slower. However, both the number of female politicians and elites increased after 1976.

The number of female elites in the legislative branch held at 2 until 1964, when it rose to 8. The number then increased to 10 during the Echeverría administration (1970-76), 30 during the López Portillo presidency (1976-82), and remained at 37 for both the de la Madrid (1982-88) and Salinas (1988-94) administrations.

Out of the 79 female elite members in my data base, more than half of them obtained their first high position during either the de la Madrid (n=21) and Salinas (n=34) administrations. The number of women entering elite level political posts was very low and grew little until López Portillo's administration.

Opportunities for women to reach top decision-making positions and national elective positions appear to have increased substantially during the de la Madrid (1982-88) and Salinas (1988-94) administrations, with significant increases in both the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, the Cabinet, Supreme Court and State governorship.

"*La flor de un sexenio*"

More women are elected to the Senate and Chamber of Deputies during years of presidential elections than during interim elections (Figure 3-2). This phenomenon that has given rise to the aphorism "*la participación de la mujer es flor del* (or *de un*) *sexenio*" (women's participation in politics is the flower of the *sexenio*).[114]

It appears to have a double meaning because *sexenio* often refers both to the presidential term of six years, and to the year during which the president is elected. Mainly, this means that the number of women elected and appointed to political office is greater during the year of a presidential election. Another inference is that women's political careers are shorter than those of men, that is, their political careers only last one presidential administration, for whatever reasons.

There are many factors which influence the level of female representation in politics. Elective positions lend themselves more readily to causal analysis due to certain variables which are easily identifiable and quantifiable. These include political system type, which in turn affects turnover or

114 During a January 1994 research trip to Mexico, this aphorism was mentioned by several people, both interviewees and other Mexicans who chatted informally with me about women in Mexican politics.

circulation and nominations for candidacy among other things.[115] Because popular wisdom often is grounded in reality, analysis of rates of success of female candidates may illuminate whether presidential campaigning is correlated with a higher awareness of and receptivity to women in politics.

The first half of the period represented in Figure 3-2 demonstrates a very slow, gradual increase. The percentage of female Deputies remained at nearly the same level for the four elections held from 1964-1973. However, there is a definite pattern in the 1976, 1982, and 1988, when the number of women elected to the Chamber of Deputies was indeed higher than in non-presidential election years. Overall, the representation of women in the Chamber continued to rise.

Interestingly, there is no mention of such a pattern in the election of women to similar legislative bodies in other countries. A study of women in the U.S. Congress from 1917-1964 notes "women have been more successful in getting elected to Congress during the years of presidential elections and during World War II; their numbers dropped in times of economic depression."[116] And more recently, the 1992 U.S. House, Senate and state governor elections received widespread media attention as

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115 Wilma Rule, "Electoral Systems, Contextual Factors and Women's Opportunity for Election to Parliament in Twenty-three Democracies." *Western Political Quarterly*, 40:1987:477-498.

116 Werner, "Women in Congress, 1917-1964," p. 29.

the so-called "Year of the Woman." In the United States, women made up less than 6 percent of the House of Representatives from 1967 to 1989, 6.7 percent in 1991, and in 1992 a noticeable number of women were elected, raising their presence in the House to 10.8 percent in 1993.[117]

This raises some interesting questions for future research: Do voters participate in elections in higher numbers during presidential elections? Or, are voters more receptive to female candidates during presidential elections than during interim elections? It would be quite interesting to correlate patterns in voter turn-out with the patterns in the election of female candidates.

During the recent presidential campaigns, candidates in both the United States and Mexico have made attempts to reach out to women voters and have promised to include more women in decision-making positions. In Mexico, all parties have increasingly included women on the ballot. The dominant political party, *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), has sought to maintain women's support through the establishment of the *Consejo para la Integración de la Mujer* (Council for the Integration of Women) in the early 1980s.[118]

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117 Barbara C. Burrell, *A Woman's Place is in the House*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 8-9.

118 I have not been able to pinpoint the exact date this Council was established because the pamphlets and other materials from CIM are quite vague with respect to the organization's history.

In 1991, the *Consejo* was given nominal independence, though it continued to use as one of its objectives "the enrichment of our democratic system and the renovation of our Partido Revolucionario Institucional to reaffirm its role in the national political vanguard."[119] The director of the *Consejo*, Sofia Valencia Abundis, stressed the role of the *Consejo* in making women more active as voting citizens and raising their awareness of political processes, as well as helping more women obtain decision-making positions at all levels of government:

> We want to help make the women of our country more capable of participating politically through preparation and education. It is definitely not easy, especially from top to bottom. We have to win it by pushing from the bottom up. It is important that they demand fair-play, not just political but personal also.[120]

She stressed that her organization was working to increase the number of women in popularly elective positions, from municipal president or mayor to Senator, and also to increase the recognition of women's abilities in public administration and judiciary so that they could advance into decision-making positions.

Esteves, the director the non-partisan *Mujeres para la*

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119 Consejo para la Integración de la Mujer, *Estatuos* (PRI: Mexico, 1991), p. 10.

120 Author's interview with Sofia Valencia Abundis, Mexico City, February 3, 1994.

Democracia (Women for Democracy),[121] emphasized that women hold the majority in the electorate (56 percent) and consciousness-raising and mobilization of this group could result in a permanent change in Mexican "politics as usual".[122]

This interpretation is supported by Patricia Galeana Herrera, a professor at the Matias Romeo Institute for Diplomatic Studies:

> It is clear that whatever party really wants to win the vote of the women, it will need a discourse that isn't protectionist like it has been up to now. Women have only been seen as mothers, baby producers, not as a conscious citizen who collaborates in a definite way in the integral development of society.[123]

Distribution of Female Politicians by Age

Female politicians in Mexico appear to be younger than their male colleagues based on cases available (Table 3-2). Tracing the progress of politicians by age cohort tells less about the social prerequisites of career-building than about the mechanisms of political ascent.[124] This will allow analysis of the amount of time necessary to attain elite positions and the amount of circulation of different types of persons in top decision-

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121 This group is a sister organization to *Ciudadanía para la Democracia* (Citizens for Democracy).
122 Author's interview with Rosa Luz Esteves, Mexico City, February 5, 1994.
123 Author's interview with Dr. Patricia Galeana Herrera, Mexico City, January 26, 1994.
124 Peter Smith, *Labyrinths of Power* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 97.

making positions.

Table 3-2: Age Distribution of Male and Female Politicians in Databases (%)

Generation (10 year cohorts)	Elite-Level Officeholders Male (N=1816)	Female (N=79)	Single-Term Female Deputies 1952-91 (N=181)	1952-79 (N=49)	1982-91 (N=132)
1900-09	19.0	2.5	2.2	8.2	
1910-19	19.1	5.1	4.4	14.3	0.7
1920-29	14.8	20.3	7.7	20.4	3.0
1930-39	14.4	24.0	23.8	30.6	21.2
1940-49	7.5	31.6	29.3	24.5	31.1
1950-59	2.3	16.5	28.2	2.0	37.9
1960-	1.0		4.4		6.1
	78.2	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: This table only includes information for valid cases in both databases, which are based on complete information available for politicians. All male elites do not total 100% because 5.6% of the individuals included in Camp's survey were born between 1880-89, and 16.2% 1890-99, but no female politicians were born during those years.

Sources: Information for female politicians from author's database of Mexican female politicians; information on male politicians from Camp, Mexican Political Biographies Project database, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

Women born in the youngest age cohort (1960-69) have begun to enter politics, but through the end of the Salinas administration in August 1994, no female elites born after 1959.[125] Unfortunately, I cannot verify the existence of any male elite members born in the same age group in Camp's data bank.

Based on available information, younger women are testing the political waters, if not necessarily staying in

125 This may be different due to the August 22, 1994 elections for federal deputies and senators, and may also be affected by the cabinet appointments by the new president.

politics as a long-term career. Evidence of this can be taken from higher percentages of younger women among single term deputies who held office during the de la Madrid and Salinas administrations (1982-91) in comparison with female and male elites, both of which include politicians who have held elite level office.[126]

It is interesting to note that the number of male political elites does not appear to be increasing as rapidly for the last three age cohorts, while the number of female elites and non-elites has increased with each successive generation. Politicians born since 1940 account for 48.1 percent of female elites, and 61.9 percent of legislative non-elites, compared to 10.4 percent of the valid cases of male elites.

A major factor is the fact that *very few* older women held elite positions. Other factors that would affect the comparability is the *size* of the male and the female elite populations. The total number of male elites born after 1940 is two and a half times greater than the total number of female elites. Needless to say, there are many more male politicians at the elite level than female politicians because of the fact that the men had a head start of more than twenty years over the women in *contemporary* Mexican politics.

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126 See Chapter 1, pp. 25-28. Elite level positions include: Senator, Deputy (twice), Secretary, Subsecretary, *Oficial Mayor*, Supreme Court Justice, State Governor, and in the case of the men, President.

Another reason for this difference might be that older male politicians are remaining in politics longer, making it more difficult for younger male politicians to access key decision-making positions. It would follow that it would be more difficult for women to obtain key decision-making positions as well, which might account for the slow growth of female elites in the executive branch. Yet another explanation might be that this difference indicates an influx of younger female politicians who are entering politics at an earlier age and remaining in political careers longer than their predecessors.

Camp predicted that the female members of the political elite would be younger than their male counterparts.[127] He reasoned that traditional sex roles in Mexico had just begun to change and this would allow more young women to become actively involved in political careers. He found that his hypothesis held true for the first two administrations in which women held political office, but due to the low number of female politicians and relatively short period of participation, he did not find a consistent age pattern.[128]

Comparing the ages of male and female deputies at the

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127 Camp, "Women and Political Leadership in Mexico," pp. 424-427.

128 One study of U.S. legislators covering the same period suggests that the female legislators tended to be slightly older than their male counterparts when first taking office. Paula J. Dubeck, "Women and Access to Political Office: A Comparison of Female and Male Elite Legislators," *The Sociological Quarterly*, 17(Winter 1976), p. 46.

time of their first high office, Camp concluded that during administrations when the women were slightly younger than the men, it was probably due to the fact that they had gone directly into professional careers. Because of their skills and appropriate political contacts, they were able to achieve success at a young age. During periods when the women were slightly older than the men, it was probably because early marriages and later professional training got their political careers off to a later start. However, given the increase of female elites in the 15 years that have elapsed since his study, age patterns are now more readily evident.

A comparison of the generational representation in each administration illustrates the differences in duration of influence of particular generations of male and female political elite members (Table 3-3).

Table 3-3: Age of Male and Female Elite-Level Office Holders at Time of First High Office (%)

	GENERATION											
	1900-09		1910-19		1920-29		1930-39		1940-49		1950-59	
Admin-istration	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1958-64	32.6		37.9	100.0	12.9		.8					
1964-70	19.0	20.0	36.9		26.8	60.0	10.1	20.0	1.5			
1970-76	1.7	11.1	23.8	11.1	25.1	44.4	30.0	33.3	5.8		2.2	
1976-82	1.7		15.7	22.2	30.9	22.2	34.7	33.3	14.0	22.2	2.8	
1982-88			8.5		13.7	19.0	39.0	23.8	33.9	47.6	4.5	9.5
1988-94					14.0	8.8	23.25	20.6	39.5	38.2	23.25	32.4

*The total percent for male elites does not equal 100% in some cases because a number of them were born before 1900. NOTE: This table only contains information for complete cases; a tiny percentage of cases used in both data banks did not include birth dates.

Sources: Author's data bank; Camp, Mexican Political Biographies Project data bank, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

In the Chamber of Deputies, there appears to be a trend toward earlier participation by women (Figure 3-4).[129] For example, women born after 1939 made up nearly half of the female legislators elected during López Portillo's administration; 65 percent of the female legislators during de la Madrid's administration were born after 1939; and 48 percent of the female legislators elected during Salinas' administration were born after 1949.[130]

In the legislative branch, with the exception of the 1958-64 administration, female elites, as a group, are indeed younger than their male counterparts. In the first several administrations during which female elites held positions, their total number is very low, making comparisons to the high number of male elites unreliable and statistically insignificant.

In the three most recent presidential administrations, the increase in younger female elite members in the Legislature is significant. During López Portillo's term (1979-82), 40 percent of female elites were born on or after 1940, compared to only 13.5 percent of the men.

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[129] For ease and time considerations, the birth dates of the politicians were not coded by the actual year, but by generation (ie, 1940-49). Because of this I am not able to precisely determine the change in average age at entry to first high office for the male elites since I do not have the actual data.

[130] Note that these figures are from the author's database and reflect available information. As discussed above in Chapter 1, these figures are quite accurate except for two Chamber of Deputy terms (1961-64; 1973-76) where information for only about half of the individuals was available for inclusion in the data bank in its current form.

Approximately 60 percent of new female elite-level officeholders during the de la Madrid administration (1982-88) were born on or after 1940 compared to just under 20 percent of the men. The younger male elites seem to be catching up slightly in the Salinas administration (1988-94), making up 29.5 percent of the group born on or after 1940 compared to nearly 70 percent of the women.

A more inclusive comparison may be made by examining the age at entry into first high office over each administration for male and female political elite members of all branches of government (Table 3-3).

The female elites are younger than the male elites, as a group, with the exception of the first administration listed (1958-64). This difference is slight in many of the administrations, and may be due, in part, to the much lower numbers of women who held positions in earlier administration. During the 1964-70 presidential administration, women were much younger than their male counterparts, but again, low numbers of women entering high positions at this time make comparisons difficult.

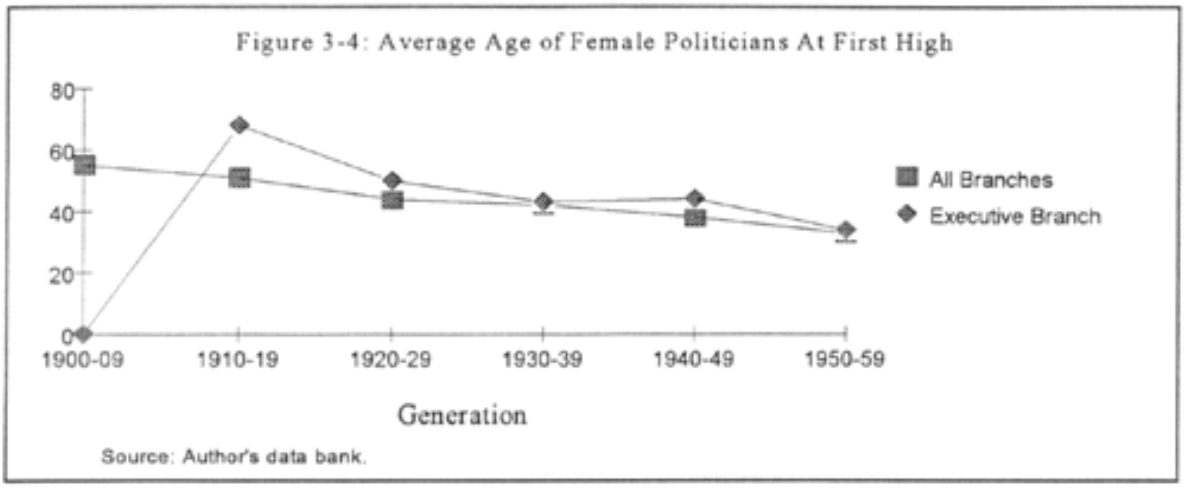
However, the number of women entering elite positions increased over the following administrations, allowing a slightly more accurate comparison. During the Echeverría (1970-76) and López Portillo (1976-82) administrations there was little

difference between the men and women who entered elite level positions, although the women were slightly younger.

During the following two administrations the number of women entering both elective and appointive positions in the Mexican government increased significantly (Figures 3-2 and Figure 3-3). Nearly 67 percent of the women in elite-level positions held their first high office during these two periods, and these women were definitely younger than their male counterparts.

This could be due to the fact that female elites born between 1920-1939, who have the highest rates of repeating in top offices, made up nearly 80 percent of female elites during the Echeverría administration and over half of the group during the next administration. The representation of women born before 1940 declines in the following two administrations, perhaps indicating that they retired from political life at the same time that younger women were entering politics in higher numbers. This also raises the question of repeat-office holding which will be discussed in the next section. Are younger women more likely to repeat office than their predecessors? Do women repeat office at lower rates than their male colleagues?

De Silva noted the "rejuvenation" of the group of female political elites over time and explained this by the increase in education and participation in the job market which helped change sex roles, thus reorienting attitudes of women



(and men) regarding women in politics, permitting increased numbers of younger women to seek careers in public administration.[131]

Women who attain elite-level positions are doing so increasingly younger than their predecessors (Figure 3-4). The average age of all women who held elite-level positions, including the pioneer group, is increasingly lower for each successive generation.[132] The same holds true for women who held elite positions in the Executive Branch, who are slightly older than the average of the group overall. The same decline in age exists among first-time office-holders in the Senate: the average declines from 59 years old among the 1910-19 generation to 36.5 among the 1950-59 generation.

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131 DeSilva, "Las mujeres en la élite política de México: 1954-84", pp. 285-286.

132 The pioneer group consists of women who were elected to the Chamber of Deputies once before 1982 and did not hold any other positions at the elite-level. See discussion in Chapter 1, pp. 26-27.

Repeat Office Holding

Female politicians do not have shorter careers than their male counterparts, but repeat office-holding among female politicians at the elite level may create an impression of a greater number of women in politics. The total number of elite level positions held by women (150) is nearly double the number of women defined as political elites in this study (79).[133]

Many of the women who attain elite positions repeat offices or continue careers in other branches of the government and go on to hold other elite positions. For example, Graciela Aceves de Romero, the first woman appointed to a Cabinet-level post (Subsecretary of Agriculture, 1964-70), was reelected as deputy three times (1967-70, 73-76, 79-82). Because of her repeat office- holding, she is counted in three presidential administrations (Figure 3-1), because, unlike most of the other legislative elites, she already had reached the "elite" level before her first deputy post.

Silvia Hernandez Enriquez, the youngest deputy in Mexican political history (1976-79), was also elected to the Senate twice (1982-88, and 1988-94), and currently holds the position of Secretary of Tourism. The two women who have been elected as governors had previously held top-level

133 This total does not include women appointed or elected to positions that would place them in the category of "political elite" during the 1994 elections.

positions in Congress and the Cabinet. The first female governor in Mexico, Griselda Alvarez Ponce, was elected as Senator (1976-79). Then in 1979 she was elected Governor of Colima. Beatriz Paredes Rangel held two deputyships, and was a Subsecretary prior to her election as Governor of the state of Tlaxcala (1986-92). Dulce María Sauri Riancho served as interim governor of Yucatán (1991-93), and was elected senator the following term.[134]

Little difference exists between men and women when it comes to being re-elected or reappointed: 60.2 percent of all women in this study and 63.3 percent of all men held elite positions only one time (Table 3-4 and Table 3-5).[135]

Female elite members born during the 1930-39 generation have a slightly higher repeat office-holding rate than the men of the same generation. Men repeating three or more times generally do so at higher rates than women. Among women as a group, the 1950-59 generation has a much higher level of repeat office holding. However, the numbers are still growing and there is a high likelihood that within the next six years both the

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[134] Because she was not *elected* to that position, she was not coded as a governor in the author's data bank.

[135] Table 3-4 shows the rate of repeat office-holding by age among female elites. "Once" means that the individual held high office one time, whether that be a second-term deputy, a senator or one of the other high positions mentioned earlier.

Repeat rates for Supreme Court Justices are included in this table because those positions are not lifetime appointments, as they are in the United States. Each administration that position was held was coded as a repeat.

Table 3-4: Patterns of Repeat Office-holding Among Female Political Elite Members (N=79)

	GENERATION						
Rep.	1900-1909 (N=2)	1910-1919 (N=4)	1920-1929 (N=16)	1930-1939 (N=19)	1940-1949 (N=25)	1950-1959 (N=13)	All Age Groups (N=79)
Once	50.0	25.0	62.5	52.6	72.0	77.0	63.3
Twice	50.0	50.0	25.0	36.8	18.0	15.4	29.1
3x			6.25	5.3		7.6	3.8
4x			6.25	5.3			2.5
5x		25.0					1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's data bank (See Chapter 1).

1940-49 and 1950-59 generations will see an increase in both the number of female elite members and in repeat-office holding rates. The male elite members show a generally consistent rate of repeat office-holding that will probably hold true for future female politicians.

What does this mean for female politicians? One interpretation might be that once they get into the political system that they are able to continue a political career because of the contacts they make initially. Or, since the group of women who have achieved elite positions is so small, it could be that female politicians are carefully selected for these top decision-making positions because while their presence helps legitimize the political system it is unlikely that someone who would rock the boat would be allowed to an influential post.

Table 3-5: Patterns of Repeat Office-holding of Male Political Elite Members

Times Repeated	Generation 1880-1889 (N=96)	1890-1899 (=274)	1900-1909 (=308)	1910-1919 (=294)	1920-1929 (=218)	1930-1939 (=222)	1940-1949 (=113)	1950-1959 (=31)	1960-1969 (=15)	All Groups (=1571)
Once	72.9	58.8	51.9	60.2	59.2	61.7	68.1	64.5	93.0	60.2
Twice	21.9	27.4	27.6	24.5	24.8	27.0	26.5	32.3	7.0	26.0
3x	3.1	10.6	11.4	10.9	10.6	8.1	4.4	3.2		9.3
4x	1.0	1.8	6.5	2.4	3.2	1.8	1.0			2.9
5x	1.0	1.4	2.6	2.0	2.3	1.4				1.7

*This table contains information for valid cases only.
Sources: Camp, Mexican Political Biographies Project data bank, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.

Smith maintains that the Chamber of Deputies functions less as a training ground for Mexican politicians than as a tool of co-optation, and he refers to it as "an institution of, by and for the ruling elite."[136] As a tool of co-optation, the Chamber of Deputies draws up-and-coming leaders with local bases of support into the promotion system and removes them to Mexico City. Once the new deputies are relocated away from their constituency and support networks, they immediately have to start looking for another job because of the principle of no-reelection. This means that the individual either has to seek a term in the Senate or get a post in the executive branch in order to wait out a term before seeking another seat in the Chamber of Deputies. Since most people are interested in moving up in their careers, "the primary hope for political survival... lies in gratifying elites up above, not representing the interests of the people down

136 Smith, *Labyrinths of Power*, pp. 239-240.

below."[137]

It is difficult to assess the characteristics of a group that is growing quite rapidly, but it is apparent that the rate at which women are entering politics in Mexico is increasing. In fact, it is gaining momentum, as evidenced by fact that 43 percent of the entire group of female elites first attained elite positions during the most recent presidential administration (1988-94). Judging by the nearly equal number of women from the 1940-49 and 1950-59 age groups who emerged as elites during this period, it appears that women in each generation are entering elite positions earlier than their predecessors.

The small number of female politicians in the first two administrations (1958-64, 1964-70) during which women attained elite positions makes it difficult to use these groups for comparison. Nonetheless, for both terms, women were between 50-55 when they entered their first high position (Table 3-8).

During the Echeverría administration (1970-76) the majority of women obtaining their first high positions were been between 40-45 years of age, although a third were younger. The concentration of young women increased in the following administration, when nearly one quarter of the women attaining

137 Smith, *Labyrinths of Power*, pp. 221-222.

elite positions were younger than 37 years old. During the de la Madrid (1982-88) administration, over one half of the women were under 42 years old, and 10 percent were under 32 years old, and from 1988-94, one third of were in their mid-thirties or younger.

What exactly is the situation of up-and-coming female politicians? While it appears that there is an increased recruitment of politically talented younger women, probably due to the increase in women attending universities and entering professions that lend themselves to political careers, women are also repeating in office at about the same rate as men. Are women being co-opted or recruited into the political system to prevent their mobilization as an interest group? Or are they entering politics based on more altruistic motives and finding themselves in a system that doesn't allow them to operate in the interests of their constituency? Without further research into the activities of women politicians in Congress and in the Cabinet it is difficult to form responses to these critical questions. However, if women are entering politics because they are motivated by altruistic reasons or are "true believers" in democracy, this might be manifested in higher rates of participation in local level politics.

The next chapter will create a broader picture of who Mexican female politicians are, based on their education, family and geographic backgrounds, and career paths.

CHAPTER 4
BACKGROUND AND PREPARATION OF FEMALE POLITICIANS AND TOP-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS IN MEXICO

Do women politicians require stronger credentials to prove their competence? Are social and geographic origins more important to female to male politicians? Or, are the backgrounds and careers of female politicians becoming more like those of their male colleagues? This chapter discusses variables which influence the individual's chances of entering a government career. Trends toward convergence in the origins, credentials, and careers of female and male politicians will also be examined.

Socioeconomic origins are useful in determining one's chances for entering politics, and are key to identifying patterns among those who attain elite positions. Due to this study's limits, the parents' occupations is used to define social class background. Birthplace is also an important factor because it reveals patterns of regional recruitment and illuminates the importance of urban as opposed to rural birth for those who would aspire to political leadership.

Education, especially at the post-secondary level, has long been an elite privilege. "In Mexico, as elsewhere, education thus functions as a critical determinant of career opportunity--what Max Weber has called 'life chances' --and educational attainment becomes a valuable indicator for assessing the social

requisites of rule."[138] Educational credentials have become the most important key to gaining access to positions within the Mexican government. Level of education and profession can be used to approximate the socioeconomic class of an individual and to predict her future mobility.

Place of education is crucial because it can provide important opportunities for friendships and contacts among colleagues and professors that may later prove valuable as reverences, mentors or employers. And, because a high percentages of female officials (both elected and appointed) have held positions as university professors, this will be examined to determine what link teaching may have with government office.

Other factors which may affect the continued political career of an ambitious woman include party affiliation and office-holding at the local level. Pursuing leadership positions within the party and active involvement in local level politics may be more important to women to gain proven experience. These factors can help indicate the representativeness of the female office-holders relative to Mexican women in general, to predict the likelihood of vertical mobility for certain sub-groups within the sample, and to predict the make-up of future female office-

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138 Peter Smith, *The Labyrinths of Power: Political Recruitment in Twentieth Century Mexico* (Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ, 1979), p. 80. He also notes: "In 1900 around 74 percent of the population could neither read nor write, in 1930 about 59 percent could neither read nor write, and by 1960 the figure remained as high as 32 percent."

holders.

Social Class Origins and Family Background

Family background and socioeconomic class origins are an essential aspect of the study of politicians. The occupation of the parents and the place of birth of the female politicians can illuminate certain socioeconomic circumstances which may engender certain benefits or advantages.

Class plays an important role in shaping individuals' lives. People from identifiable social classes are conditioned by common experiences and are inclined to share a set of common assumptions that shape their attitudes, behavior and motivations.[139]

Other, less tangible benefits are also associated with one's class and parents' occupation. The child of a government official could benefit from contact with an established network. Her parents' influence as well as the informal knowledge of the "rules of the game" that she picked up along the way would be advantages.[140]

Previous studies have shown that Mexican politicians represent the middle and upper classes.[141] Camp found that 75

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139 Roderic A. Camp, *Mexico's Leaders: Their Education and Recruitment* (University of Arizona Press: Tucson AZ, 1980), pp. 196-197.
140 Miguel Al Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason: Technocratic Revolution in Mexico* (The Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park PA, 1994), pp. 114-115.
141 See for example, Smith, *Labyrinths of Power*, p. 78.

percent of women compared to 66 percent of the men came from middle and upper class backgrounds.[142]

Table 4-1: Region of Birth (%) of Politicians and Population by Region for All Mexicans

	Male Elites (N=1843)	Female Elites (N=79)	Female Deputies (1954-79) (N=51)	Female Deputies (1982-91) (N=127)	All Men (1990) (N=39,878,536)	All Women (1990) (N=41,262,386)
Federal District	18.8	26.6	11.7	15.7	9.9	10.4
East Central	14.8	11.4	11.7	12.6	13.6	13.7
West	15.3	13.9	15.6	17.3	13.2	13.3
North	14.9	19.0	13.7	16.5	17.0	16.5
South	9.0	10.1	7.8	11.0	12.6	12.3
Gulf	12.7	10.1	15.9	11.8	11.0	10.9
West Central	13.3	7.6	23.5	15.0	22.7	23.0
Foreign	1.2	1.3				

Key: East Central: Hidalgo, Puebla, Queretaro, San Luis Potosi, Tlaxcala, Zacatecas; West: Aguascalientes, Colima, Durango, Jalisco, Nayarit, Sinaloa, Baja California del Sur; North: Baja California del Norte, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Sonora, Tamaulipas; South: Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca; Gulf: Campeche, Tabasco, Veracruz, Yucatan, Quintana Roo; West Central: Guanajuato, Mexico, Michoacan, Morelos

Sources: Author's data bank; Camp, Mexican Political Biographies Project data bank, Tulane University, New Orleans LA, 1994; 1990 General Census of the Population, Regional Populations, reproduced in Consejo para la Integración de la Mujer, *Programa de Trabajo* (Mexico, n.d.).

142 Roderic A. Camp, "Women and Political Leadership in Mexico," *Journal of Politics*, 41(1979):417-441. Unfortunately, the scope of this thesis does not permit the research that would be necessary to attempt a revision or corroboration of this finding.

Camp concluded that family involvement in politics was a dubious connection at best.[143] However, the involvement of one or more family members in politics might provide incentive and opportunity for other family members to pursue government careers. For example, a sibling in a minor administrative post might not be able to provide access to a top position, but would be able to help with learning informal rules, hierarchies, and political gossip. A thorough analysis of the class origins cannot be pursued within the confines of this study. However, an approximation of the socioeconomic backgrounds of the women included in this study can be made using their parents' occupations and rural/urban origins as a guide.

As discussed above, occupation and education are often valuable indicators of socioeconomic class and the occupation of one's parent(s) provides advantages in the pursuit of education and career. Geographic origins also are a determinant since cities play such an important role in Mexican public life and in access to higher education. State capitals, and especially Mexico City, provide an atmosphere where contacts with potential mentors and/or patrons can help shape an aspiring politician's

143 As an aside, there were several cases of siblings in various positions, including three sisters named Lajous Vargas, and a pair of sisters named Moreno Toscano and several of their cousins. These were easily picked out while leafing through the biographical dictionaries. Also noted were several married couples that included an appointed official, or even a college professor. This is a subject which merits further analysis and would require a specific and carefully structured questionnaire.

career.

Fortunately, information on at least one parent's occupation was available for 216 of the women included in my data base. Of those women, 83 percent listed their parents' occupation as professional, middle class, or landowner. Most of the women (n=198) listed information for both birthplace and parents' occupations. Of that group, 7.5 percent reported rural and 76.8 percent reported urban birthplaces. The minority of women politicians who claimed peasant parents (15.7 percent) breaks down into 3.5 percent born in rural areas and 12.2 percent who were born in urban areas.[144]

Regional origins can provide insight into recruitment patterns and illuminate the importance of cities. An approximate comparison to the Mexican population overall can be made against the distribution of the population by region. This illustrates how representative the backgrounds of the female politicians are when compared to their male peers and Mexicans generally (Table 4-1).

Interestingly, the regional origins of the women are not totally dissimilar from those of the men. Both groups appear to represent the state populations rather closely with the exception of over-representation of the Federal District and the under-

144 The definition of "urban"for both the author's data base and Camp's Mexican Political Biographies Project includes cities which have a population of 5,000 or more.

representation of the South and West Central region. The Federal District figures prominently for both female elites and male elites, and together with the Western and Northern regions accounts for 60.4 percent of the female elites, and 49 percent of the male elites.

The geographic origins of both groups of female single-term deputies show little difference in comparison to the distribution of all Mexican women. This is to be expected since deputies represent states based on population. However, the more recent group of single-term deputies over-represents the Federal District a little and slightly under-represents the West Central region. This might indicate that there are more opportunities and/or more politically ambitious women in the capital; or it might show that parties are trying to attract the votes of women by putting more women in the ballot.

The predominance of the Federal District as region of origin among female elites is slightly deceiving. Of the 21 female elites born in the Federal District, 12 of them include executive branch elites who never held an elective position. This small group accounts for more than half of the 79 female elite members who were born in the Federal District. This also brings to light another interesting aspect-- all of the other female elite members have held *some* type of elective office except for this small group of 12.

Excluding this minority group, the percentage of natives of the Federal District for the rest of the female elite population drops to 13.4 percent; the percentage of Federal District natives for all single-term deputies is about 14.7 percent. Both of these groups only slightly over-represent the Federal District, which is home to just under 11 percent of all Mexican women according to 1990 census statistics.[145]

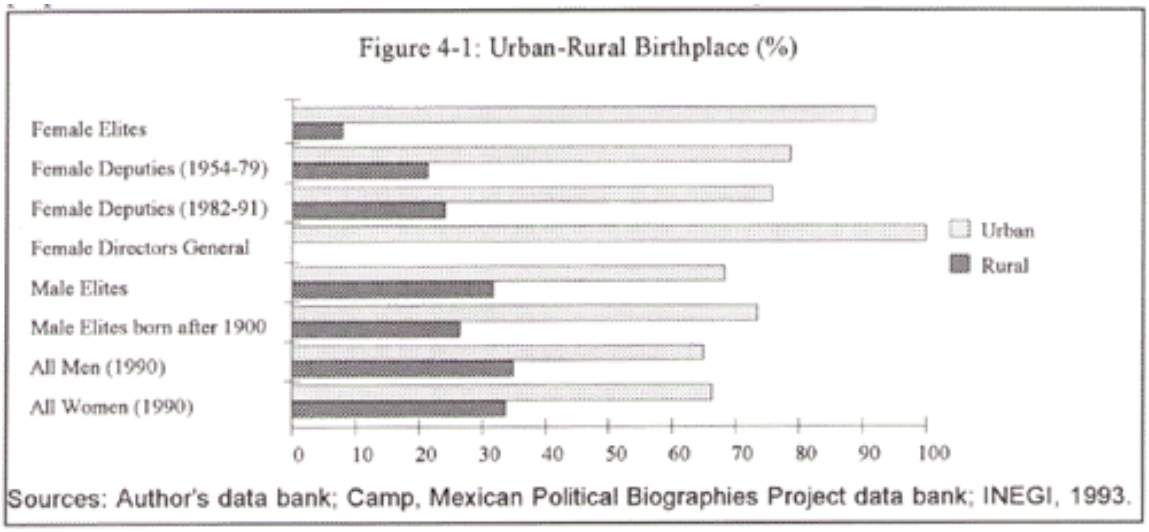
Urban-Rural Birthplace

Interestingly, there is little difference in predominance of urban origins of the male elites and the female deputies (Figure 4-1).[146] Camp found that women were generally from urban areas and tended to over-represent state capitals when compared to both male elites and the general population.[147] He further notes that urban birthplaces are one more variable which has narrowed the pool from which Mexican Politicians emerge.[148] While this may not affect their policy orientations, it does have an effect on education, involvement in political activity and socioeconomic

145 Current data was used because most of the women politicians are legislators and represent the population based on where they *live* rather than where they are born. A more specific analysis based on the birthplaces of all Mexicans was not done because that information is not readily available.
146 To make the two samples more comparable, I excluded two age groups (1880-89 and 1890-99) from the male elite sample. Those groups were not represented among female politicians.
147 Camp, "Women and Political Leadership in Mexico."
148 Roderic A. Camp, *Political Recruitment Across Two Centuries, 1884-1991* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 1995), Chapter 6.

class origins which do. My findings partially confirmed this-- female elites do over-represent urban areas compared to their male peers, but all groups over-represent urban areas compared to all Mexicans in 1990.

It is interesting to note that the group of women who held the post of Director General have the highest rate of urban birthplace. The extremely high concentration of urban-born female office-holders in this group is largely due to the centralized nature of the Mexican government-- the government offices (and the jobs) are all in Mexico City with some branch offices in regional or state population centers. However, women do make up a slightly higher percentage of the population in the Federal District, 52.2 percent in 1990.[149]



149 1990 General Census of the Population, Regional Populations, reproduced in Consejo para la Integración de la Mujer, *Programa de Trabajo*, (Mexico, n.d.).

There are several reasons why more female elites have urban birthplaces, but most important is greater access to channels of recruitment in cities, especially through education. Women have increasingly relied up on educational credentials to obtain access to key government positions.

Academic Preparation of Female Officials

Educational credentials are increasingly the key to entry-level positions on the government career path, especially in the executive and judicial branches, and have always been essential for recruitment to elite level positions. ". . . Mexico's *universitarios* have maintained a steady grip on upper-level offices, regardless of the era or the president."[150]

Women's enrollment in university and graduate education has grown significantly since the late 1970s, while their enrollment in normal schools (teacher training schools) has dropped by nearly half over the past decade. The number of women enrolled in normal schools dropped from 130,034 in 1980 to 71,365 in 1992. This drop was slightly less drastic for men enrolled in normal school, from 69,963 in 1980 to 39,610.[151] This drop might be part of a trend away from normal school education as preparation for

150 Smith, *Labyrinths of Power*, p. 82.
151 INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática), *Anuario de Estadisticos de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos* (INEGI: Mexico D.F., 1993), p. 134.

primary and secondary school teachers.

The number of women enrolled in university courses at the *bachillerato* level, roughly the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in the United States, more than doubled from 354,177 (33 percent) in 1980-81 to 834,080 (47 percent) during 1992-93. The number of schools granting *bachillerato* degrees also doubled, from 1,938 in 1980-81 to 4,812 in 1992-93, providing more opportunities for women and other minorities to obtain post-secondary education. Likewise, the number of women enrolled in graduate programs (*educación superior*) increased from 316,576 in 1980-81 to 532,119 in 1992-93.[152]

Level of Education

Must women have higher levels of education than men in order to advance in a political or administrative career? Camp predicted that the female elites would be better educated than their male peers, but was unable to confirm that.[153] He found that 62 percent of the women in the political elite lacked professional degrees. That may have been a premature conclusion since women had only recently entered politics and their level of participation was much lower than it is now. Overall, only slight differences in the level of education are seen between

152 Ibid., p. 132.
153 Camp, "Women and Political Leadership in Mexico," pp. 433-436.

male and female office-holders. Greater differences are seen within the women as a group, specifically between elite members and non-elites (Table 4-2).

The percentage of individuals who hold a university degree or better is very close to the same for female elite members, male elite members, and recent female deputies. The earlier group of female deputies shows a clearer tendency toward normals school education: only 24.4 percent hold a university degree or higher. This could indicate two developments. First, women's educational and career opportunities are expanding, and they are able to pursue professional degrees at a greater rate. Second, this may indicate that, as a group, female schoolteachers were more active politically and prominent enough in the local political scene to be considered for election to the Chamber of Deputies.

TABLE 4-2: Highest Level of Education (%)

	Female Elites (n=77)	Male Elites (n=1766)	Female Single Term Deputies (1954-79) (n=51)	(1982-91) (n=124)	Female Director Generals
Primary	0	7.0	10.2	0	0
Secondary	6.5	5.8	10.2	3.2	0
Preparatory	3.9	6.1	8.2	6.5	0
Normal	11.7	4.8	46.9	15.3	1.5
University	42.9	51.0	18.4	57.3	39.4
Post Professional	10.4	6.2	2.0	5.6	6.1
M.A.	13.0	5.3	2.0	6.5	30.3
PhD or LID	9.1	7.4	2.0	3.2	22.7
Medical Degree	2.6	6.5	0	2.4	0

Sources: Author's data bank; camp, Mexican Political Biographies Project data bank.

Female director generals constitute the most educated group: 98.1 percent hold a *bachillerato* degree or higher. Further, the sub-group of 12 executive branch elite members who have never held elective positions has the highest rate of all: all hold a university degree or higher.[154]

The level of education of female elite members has increased with each generation. Only about 73 percent of women in the 1920-29 and 1930-39 generations held a university degree or better, rising to 80 percent of the 1940-49 generation, and 91.3 percent of the 1950-59 generation (Table 4-3).

Table 4-3: Highest Level of Education of Male and Female Political Elites by Generation (%)

	1900-1909		1910-1919		1920-1929		1930-1939		1940-1949		1950-1959	
Level	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
(1)	57.0	50.0	53.6	50.0	53.6	40.0	50.4	47.0	37.8	32.0	46.0	58.0
(2)	4.7		5.5		13.6	13.4	24.8	15.8	34.8	36.0	26.8	33.3
(3)	12.3		14.5	25.0	14.7	19.0	16.4	10.5	21.5	12.0	19.5	
Total:	74.0	50.0	73.6	75.0	81.9	72.4	91.6	73.3	94.1	80.0	92.3	91.3

KEY: 1=University level 2=Post Professional, MA 3=PhD,LlD, MD

Sources: Author's data bank; Camp, Mexican Political Biographies project data bank.

154 Carroll notes that credentials, especially education and prior appointive or administrative office-holding experience, appear to assume a more important role for younger women. Demonstrated loyalty (campaign and party work) appears to be more important for older women. Susan J. Carroll, "The Recruitment of Women for Cabinet-level Posts in State Government: A Social Control Perspective." *The Social Science Journal*, 21 (January 1984):91-107.

The female elite members in the younger generations are attaining levels of education that are nearly comparable to those of their male counterparts. Only the two younger generations among the single term deputies, show levels of education comparable to the elite members: only 71 of the 1940-49 generation hold university degree or higher, compared to 83 percent of those born during 1950-59 and 85 percent of those born during 1960-69.

Area of Study

Female elites are pursuing degrees in areas traditionally dominated by men. For example, law is the field of study of 40 percent and economics of 11.5 percent of the women in the sample with professional degrees who held posts at the beginning of Salinas' administration. Law and economics maintain this prominence among degrees held by the most women politicians and administrators overall (Table 4-4). The rest of the degrees are scattered in fields such as business, architecture, public administration, sociology, political science, biology and history to name a few.

Women entering positions in Mexican government are not only increasing their educational level, but are obtaining in greater numbers degrees in fields that would seem more

Table 4-4: Types of University Degrees

	Female Elites	Male Elites	Female 1-Term Deputies (1954-79)	(1982-91)
No Degree	21.8	26.2	75.5	27.4
Law	28.2	37.3	12.2	21.8
Economics	14.1	6.7	4.1	5.6
Medicine	2.6	6.5	--	2.4
Architecture	1.3	.8	--	1.6
Engineering	1.3	7.8	--	.8
Agriculture	--	2.7	--	--
CPA	1.3	2.2	--	6.5
Education		--	--	1.6
Other	29.4	9.9	8.1	32.1
Breakdown of "Other" for female politicians:				
Social Sci	6.4	--	6.1	12.9
Poli Sci	3.8	--	--	2.4
Public Admin	7.7	--	--	5.6
Humanities	3.8	--	2.0	5.6
Natural Sci	2.6	--	--	2.4
Other	5.1		--	3.2

Sources: Author's data bank; Camp, Mexican Political Biographies.

congruent with pursuit of a government career, such as law, political science, public administration, international relations and social science.

A comparison of male and female politicians shows little difference in the *type* of degree they hold, although the percentages are vastly different in some cases. Law degrees predominate for all groups but a much higher percentage of men than women hold that degree.[155] The second most common degree is

155 Law was found to be the most common degree among female politicians in the United States in both early and recent studies, see: Paula J. Dubeck,

economics, but twice as many women studied in that field as men. The male elites appear to have their interests a little more narrowly contained within half a dozen other fields and a small percent of "other" fields of study. However, female politicians have a much more broadly scattered range of interests, and more of them studied social sciences and humanities than their male colleagues.

The differences in degree types between the men and women may be both a function of gender and of the universities attended. The categories included in the original code book for degrees are concentrated in traditionally "masculine" fields of study, especially engineering, medicine, and agriculture: areas which still have low female representation in many countries.

University Attended

Where an individual studies can be more important than the course of study. Previous studies have shown that the National Autonomous University (UNAM) has provided the majority of Mexico's political leaders.[156]

"Women and Access to Political Office: A Comparison of Female and Male State Legislators," *The Sociological Quarterly*, 17(Winter 1976):42-52; Christine B. Williams, "Women, Law and Politics: Recruitment Patterns in the Fifty States," *Women and Politics*, 10:3:(1990):103-123.

156 Camp, *Mexico's Leaders*, p. 197; Wilfried Gruber, "Career Patterns of Mexico's Political Elite," *Western Political Quarterly*, 24:3(1971):467-482; Smith, *Labyrinths of Power*, pp. 46-48.

Camp also found that the female elites who had professional degrees were limited to about five universities, although it appeared that UNAM was as important in their recruitment as it was for the men. For female politicians, UNAM continues to play an important role-- all the female Supreme Court justices received their law degrees there, and the majority of female elites in the executive branch also attended UNAM. However, only about 20 percent of the women in the legislative branch overall attended UNAM.

Table 4-5: Institution attended for highest level of education.

Female Elite Members (N=61)
UNAM 49%
University of Puebla 6.5%
European Universities 6.5%
U.S. Universities 6.5%
University of Guadalajara 4.9%
Ibero American 4.9%
ITAM 2.6%
University of Nuevo Leon 2.6%
Colegio de Mexico 2.6%
All others 14.7%

Male Elite Members (N=1327)
UNAM 58%
National Military College 6.4%
National School of Agriculture 3.2%
National Polytechnic Institute 3.0%
University of Guadalajara 2.8%
Escuela Libre de Derecho 2.5%
Naval College 1.9%
San Nicolas de Hidalgo, Morelia 1.8%
U.S. Universities 1.5%
All others 16.2%

Single Term Female Deputies (N=95)
UNAM 30.5%
European Universities 4.2%
University of Nuevo Leon 3.2%
San Nicolas de Hidalgo, Morelia 3.2%
University of Guadalajara 3.2%
University of Puebla 3.2%
Higher Normal School 3.2%
All others 49.3%
Sources: Author's data bank; Camp, Mexican Political Biographies Project.

More women have attended universities in Europe and the U.S. while the only men have attended the Heroic Military College and the Naval College, neither of which admit women (Table 4-5). While UNAM plays a

dominant role, there is still a somewhat fair distribution among a handful of other universities. This is important since UNAM has served as one of the most important recruitment channels for Mexican politicians for many generations.

The lower level of UNAM graduates among female politicians is significant: it may explain the low number of female politicians at the elite level and it may also point to other channels of recruitment that are more important for women, such as local government and party office-holding. If these figures remain low, it may affect the importance of UNAM as a channel of recruitment for female political talent.

Distribution of Educators in Government Office

Despite the growing rift between the worlds of academia and politics, a surprising number of politicians have also taught at universities. Prior to the 1968 massacre of student protestors at Tlatelolco, it was quite common for politicians and prominent intellectuals to be one in the same person. Many university professors in Mexico only teach part-time and hold other jobs as it is impossible to make a living as an intellectual.

The participation of public officials as professors is not so surprising if one considers the extent to which universities are used as a social mechanism of the recruitment process. Teaching at a university provides many advantages to politicians.

> As teachers or professors, would-be politicians could develop their senses of leadership, cultivate their skills in interpersonal relations, and --perhaps the most important-- begin to build up followings. *Camarillas* were frequently formed in schools and universities, and teaching positions have thus offered valuable political resources to ambitious Mexicans.[157]

A politician who is taking a break from the legislature for a term by teaching also has the opportunity to scout fresh political talent. Professors are able to transmit to the students a set of values that will help reduce gaps between generations and help preserve continuity and stability.

The female elites have, as a group, a higher proportion of university professors (53.8 percent). However, almost exactly the same percentage of male as female politicians have taught at UNAM and/or some other school (Table 4-6). The early group of single term female deputies has the lowest rate of all the groups: 77.6 percent never taught at the university or preparatory level. This is likely due to the fact that this group of deputies also has the highest proportion of normal school graduates and the lowest proportion of university degree holders. The women who have held the post of Director General during the past two administrations have the highest rate of teaching overall, and 30.2 percent have taught at UNAM and/or some other school.

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157 Smith, *Labyrinths of Power*, p. 91.

The rates of teaching among female politicians are important. Teaching experience of women who have held elite positions is on par with their male colleagues. Without further available research on women's participation in *camarillas* and the type and extent of networks formed by women, it is difficult to assess the significance of this fact. While one should not expect women to select female protegés, the low number of women in elite posts might indicate that female politician-professors' selections of male vs. female protegés is counteracted by other factors. Factors might include differential influence of the female politicians as compared to their male peers and discrimination against women within the political structure despite playing *camarilla* politics. Another possibility

Table 4-6: Rates of Teaching Among Mexican Politicians

	Female Elites	Male Elites	Single-term Female Deputies (1954-79)	Female Deputies (1979-91)	Executive Branch Directors General
Never taught - Prep or College	46.2	52.2	77.6	73.6	39.7
UNAM (and other)	20.5	21.6	4.1	5.6	30.2
Colegio de Mexico and UNAM	1.3	1.4	2.0		1.6
ENP and UNAM		1.3		.8	
Private and UNAM	3.8	2.3			
Private only	6.4	2.3		.8	7.9
IPN	1.3	1.7		1.6	
National Preparatory School			.8		
Other only	20.5	13.7	16.3	17.6	20.6
	(n=78)	(n=1828)	(n=49)	(n=125)	(n=63)

Sources: Author's data bank; Camp, Mexican Political Biographies project data bank.

might be that these women select male protegés because they feel that the men would have a greater chance of attaining success (ie, decision-making positions) that would later help their own career.

Another reason that universities are important is that politicians often begin their careers as student leaders at the university. The percentage of women who reported holding student leadership roles is very low, however. Only 5 percent of female elites and 3.5 percent of single-term deputies said they had been student leaders.

Party Affiliation

Although party affiliation is an area that Camp did not cover in his study of female political elites, it is important to take note of it since it is often an important mechanism for recruitment and promotion.

Information on party affiliation was available for most of the women included in this study, and many of these women have held party posts (Table 4-7). The majority of each group is made up of PRI members, with higher rates among male elites and single-term deputies prior to 1982. The female deputies elected since 198 show much more diversity in their party affiliations, with only 65.6 percent declaring membership in PRI, compared to

about 90 percent for the other groups. However, this group shows a higher rate of conservative party membership.

Women in both the elite (95 percent) and the recent single term deputies group (88 percent) who declare PRI membership have high rates of participation in party offices. However, the rate for the early single term deputies is much lower (65 percent). All women in the elite or pre-1982 single term deputy groups (100 percent) who declared membership in all other parties had held decision-making postions in their party, but only 85 percent of single term deputies elected since 1982 had done so.

By contrast, only about 10 percent of the male elites who declared PRI affiliation reported holding party office at the national level, and only 25 percent of them did so at the regional or local level. The rates are also low (20 percent) for males who declared membership in left-wing opposition parties. By contrast, 80 percent of male elites who declared membership in

Table 4-7: Party Affiliation

	Female Elite Members	Male Elite Members	Female Single Term Deputies pre-1982	1982-91
PRI	88.3%	91.3%	91.8%	65.6%
Right Wing	5.2	5.7	2.0	20.6
Left Wing	6.5	3.0	6.1	13.7

Key: Right wing: PAN, PDM
Left wing: PRT, PSUM, PST, PRD, PCM, PPS, PFCRN, PARM

Sources: Author's data bank; Camp, Mexican Political Biographies project data bank.

right-wing parties reported having held party office.

This emphasizes the underlying importance of participation in party positions for female politicians.

Additionally, of all the women who declared party affiliation, most of them also declared participation in party offices of some type or another. Participation in party politics appears to be a more important recruitment channel for female politicians, and in fact, may act to further narrow the pool from which future female politicians are drawn. The percentage of men who lack party office-holding experience is much higher than that for women. Does this signal that women are held to higher criteria than their male counterparts, such as more political *experience*? If so, then women may hold higher rates of local level elective office-holding experience, and perhaps higher rates of experience in other types of organizations.

Local Level and Organizational Office-Holding

Participation in elected positions at the local level, while not a prerequisite for office, may be more important for female elite office-holders than male elites (Table 4-8). It is interesting to note that these local level elective offices do not even figure into the profile of the female Supreme Court members (n=7) or for the group of non-legislative elites (n=12)

who do not report holding either the position of local deputy or mayor.

Of the 22 women who have held the 28 elite positions in the executive branch, 12 of them have never held an elective office, nor have they been appointed to Supreme Court. Of the remaining ten, seven are Supreme Court justices, five of whom never held elective offices.

The position of local deputy was held by more female elites (15.2 percent) than male elites (10.3 percent) but the numbers can be misleading in that respect. As mentioned above, these positions are more important to those pursuing legislative careers. Slightly more female senators (20.7 percent) and female elite deputies (19.7 percent) held local deputyships, compared to the male senators and deputies (18.3 percent and 17.4 percent). The recent group of single-term female deputies holds the highest rates of local deputyship, at 21.2 percent, compared to all other groups, including the pre-1982 group of female deputies (14.3 percent).

These numbers would seem to indicate a general trend among younger female legislators to seek the position of local deputy before running for national office. This is supported by the fact that eight of the twelve female elites who reported holding the position of local deputy were born in or after 1940.

Another possible explanation is that more women are entering local politics and may not have considered running for federal deputy until after holding the position of local deputy. Alternates are elected along with the federal deputies, and it would be interesting to update the tables to examine women who have held that position as well to determine how many went on to hold a regular deputyship or other position(s) in the federal government.

The number of individuals who reported having been elected as mayor or municipal president is rather low for all groups (Table 4-8). However, a higher percentage of those who have held positions in the legislature have also held local political office. In contrast, none of the five women who have served on the Supreme Court have listed experience as a local deputy, mayor or municipal president.

While male senators and deputies are equally likely to have been mayor or municipal president (11.4 percent), 13.8 percent of female senators had previously been elected mayor compared to

only 7.9 percent of the female elites who had held the position of federal deputy. Only 7.2 percent of all of the recent single-term female deputies reported holding the position of mayor, although the early group of single term female deputies had a slightly higher rate overall.

A thorough statistical study of women in local politics would reveal the rate of participation in the positions of mayor, municipal president or local deputy, because without that information it is difficult to assess the importance of these offices on the careers of female politicians in the national arena.

Rates similar to participation in local politics are

Table 4-8: Local Political Activity and Union Activity of Mexican Politicians

Local Deputies	Mayors
10.3% of male elites	7.0% of male elites
18.3% senators	11.4% senators
17.4% deputies	11.4% of deputies
15.2% of all female elites	6.3% of all female elites
20.7% senators	13.8% senators
19.7% deputies	7.9% deputies
Female Single Term Deputies	Female Single Term Deputies
14.3% of (1954-79)	8.2% of (1954-79)
21.2% of (1982-91)	6.8% of (1982-91)
Union Leadership	**Feminine or Feminist Organizations**
13.1% of male elites	46.0% of reported having held
19.8% senators	leadership positions
21.9% deputies	51.9% of elites
13.9% of female elites	58.9% of single term deputies (1954-79)
10.7% of senators	56.8% of single term deputies (1982-91)
7.9% of deputies	3.7% of all reported membership
Female Single Term Deputies	in women's organizations
11.8% of (1954-79)	

found in the rates of leadership in union organizations. That is to say, low rates. In this case, male elite legislators hold much higher rates than any of the groups of female elites and recent group of single term female deputies, though the early group of single term deputies holds the highest rate among the women (11.8 percent).

The female senators are second, with 10.7 percent listing union leadership positions, while only 2.3 percent of the post-1982 female deputies listed union leadership positions. This latter figure is difficult to assess-- it could be due to faulty reporting, or it might actually represent a drop in importance of union leadership positions for women who aspire to national political office. It may also reflect the declining significance of unions in general during the past fifteen years.

Participation in feminist or women's organizations is a one way to show the political commitment to women's interests and concerns. One-half of all of the women included in this study reported such activity, and one-quarter reported having held a leadership position of an organization dedicated to women.

The organizations were very broad and included regional or local leaders of party organizations such as ANFER or the National Council for the Integration of women of the PRI, professional organizations (such as women reporters or professors), or independent feminist organizations.

Interestingly, only a minority (3.7 percent) reported membership only in such organizations (Table 4-8).

DeSilva contends that the female political elites are not likely to be "feminists or to be in any manner interested in changing traditional gender roles."[158] However, it is obvious that at least half of these women included in this study are interested in the problems and concerns of women as a group. The women interviewed for this paper all discussed with the concern and understanding of the plight of women across different socio-economic groups and the need to increase women's participation at all levels of politics.

Parties, Recruitment and Quotas

While the importance of participation in party office for female politicians has been noted above, parties are also important because they can influence the rate at which women enter politics by the number of women they nominate for positions in the Senate and Chamber. Because of such control, candidates cannot enter a political race without the endorsement of a recognized political party, as they might in the United States.

Female politicians are not blind to this situation. Toward

158 De Silva, Luz de Lourdes, "Las mujeres en la élite política de México: 1954-1984." Pp. 269-308 in Orlandina Oliveira (ed.), *Trabajo, poder y sexualidad*, (Mexico, DF: Colegio de Mexico, Programa Interdisciplinaria de Estudios de la Mujer, 1989), p. 301.

the end of Salinas' administration one of the hot topics of debate was whether to impose a minimum quota of female nominations for each political party. Interestingly, most of the primarily PRI women I interviewed in 1994 supported quotas. They echoed Laura Alicia Garza Galindo's on the subject:

> We haven't established quotas, but I think it would be very beneficial to do so. Before I began participating in politics, I thought that quotas were weak, and that it was better for women to win space through our participation in every part of national public life. But now, I think differently. We are in politics to open space for new generations, and we should establish a quota system for the participation of women because, after all, the quota for men is 90 percent.[159]

This subject was also discussed at the National Meeting of Female Legislators in October 1992, where it received support from women of many parties, including the prominent feminist politician Amalia Garcia Medina (PRD member):

> I am for quotas because I know that the relationship between unequals only permits inequality if clear norms aren't established to guarantee equal treatment.[160]

In any discussion of quota systems, the high levels of female office-holders in the Scandinavian countries is almost invariably mentioned as a success story.

> The fact that gender quotas are increasingly accepted is no doubt a reflection of this: with women distributed (however unevenly) across the range of occupations and professions, they can be incorporated into our representative assemblies

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159 Author's Interview with Deputy Laura Alicia Garza Galindo, Mexico City, February 2, 1994.

160 Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres Legisladoras, *Memoria*, Conference at Ixtapán de la Sal, Mexico, October 16-18, 1992 (Mexico DF: H. Camara de Diputados, 1993), p. 114.

> without disturbing the conventions of competence and leadership, and without disrupting the dominance of class.[161]

It must be noted that the Scandinavian countries are relatively homogeneous culturally, politically stable, and have relatively small populations. In contrast, Mexico is a country with nearly 90 million inhabitants of Indian, European, African and Asian ancestry, with a high level of poverty, and a great deal of political turmoil.

However, Rule noted that party list/proportional representation systems with large geographic district dimensions may help increase women's opportunity for election to parliament.[162] In Mexico, there is a provision for limited proportional representation, or "party list deputies" in the Chamber of Deputies. This means that a district is represented by a certain number of deputies per *x* number of constituents. This was initiated in the administration of López Mateos. The number of PR/party list deputies in the Chamber has increased from 100 to 200 since then.[163] Under this type of system, the parties could in fact increase the number of women who enter congress, without changing the political system, simply by

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161 Anne Phillips, *Engendering Democracy*, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p. 90.
162 Wilma Rule, "Electoral Systems, Contextual Factors and Women's Opportunity for Election to Parliament in Twenty-Three Democracies," *Western Political Quarterly*, 40(1987), p. 494.
163 Martin C. Needler, *Mexican Politics: The Containment of Conflict* (NY: Praeger Publishers, 1990), pp. 88-89.

increasing the number of women they include on the party list to 50 percent.

However, as has often been the case in Mexico, women's issues take a back seat to other issues of national and international concern. It appears that this debate was interrupted early in 1994 by several events of major importance, including the armed insurrection in Chiapas, followed by the assassination of PRI candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, the questions surrounding the investigation of his death, and many other events leading up to the elections in August 1994. Considering the turmoil that has continued through the Zedillo administration so far-- the fall of the peso, continued insurgence in Chiapas, assassinations and political intrigue-- it appears unlikely that the subject will receive more than academic attention in the next year.

Trends Toward Homogeneity: Office-Holders in the Executive Branch and Judiciary

As we saw above, female politicians overall exhibit some important differences from their male colleagues. However, there is a smaller sub-population of female politicians that exhibit many of the same background, credential and career characteristics of their male peers. During Salinas' administration there was a increase in the number of women

appointed to elite positions who had not held previous elective office. They tended to have high education and low levels of political activity. The characteristics of women will be examined in this section. They appear to be part of the trend of technocratization which will be examined in detail in the following chapter.[164]

Only twenty-two women have held the positions of Secretary, Subsecretary and *Oficial Mayor* since women first entered Mexican politics over forty years ago. Within this group, two subgroups can be identified: one (n=10) is made up of women who have held elected positions, and this subgroup overlaps with the legislative and judiciary elites. The other (n=12) is made up of women who have never held an elected position nor a judicial position.[165]

The age distribution among executive branch elite members on the whole is only a little different from the entire population of female elites. The executive branch elite members are only slightly younger, with the age groups 1940-49 and 1950-59 representing 36.4 percent and 18.2 percent respectively, compared

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[164] It is highly likely that *camarilla* politics played a significant role in the appointments of these women. Unfortunately, complete data on this variable is not yet available.

[165] These cases include: Rosa Luz Alegria, Alicia Isabel Barcena, María Eugenia de Leon Garcia, Aida Gonzalez Martinez, María del Rosario Green Macias, Mercedes Juan Lopez, Clara Jusidman Rapoport, Valeria Prieto Lopez, Norma Samaniego Breach, María Elena Tellez Benoit, Renata María Valdez Gonzalez Salas, and María Elena Vazquez Nava.

to 31.6 percent and 16.5 percent in general. The smaller group of non-elected executive branch elite members is substantially younger: nearly 67 percent were born in the 1940-49 and 1950-59 age groups.

Nearly half of the female elites in the entire sample are "new" elite members, that is to say that they had not previously held an elite-level position. That figure is lower for the executive branch office-holders: only 31 percent of the entire

Table 4-9: Backgrounds of Female Office-holders (%)

	EXECUTIVE BRANCH OFFICEHOLDERS			
	†All Elite Office-Holders	‡Executive Branch Top Posts	*Director General	*Técnico* Sub-group*
Born since 1939	48.1	54.6	100.0	66.7
Urban birthplace	92.0	90.9	100.0	91.7
Middle class parents	68.4	77.3	72.7	75.0
Level of Education				
BA degree or higher	78.0	100.0	98.5	100.0
MA degree	13.0	18.2	30.3	33.3
PhD or MD	11.7	18.1	22.7	16.6
Subject of Study				
Law	28.2	22.7	15.2	8.3
Economics	14.1	31.8	21.2	41.7
Attended UNAM	49.0	63.6	27.7	75.0
Graduate Study in:				
United States	6.9	9.1	18.2	0.0
Europe	15.2	22.7	19.7	25.0
Both	3.8	13.6	1.5	25.0
Taught at UNAM	25.6	50.0	31.8	50.0
PRI member	88.3	95.5	100.0	100.0
	(n=79)	(n=22)	(n=66)	(n=12)

†This sub-group includes all women who held these positions at least once: Senator, Oficial Mayor, Subsecretary, Secretary, Supreme Court Justice, or the position of Deputy (twice).
‡ This sub-group includes only those women who held elite-level positions in the executive branch, including: Oficial Mayor, Subsecretary, and Secretary.
*As discussed in Chapter 1, only women born since 1939 who held the office of Director General were included in this version of the database.

** The sub-roup includes only women who held elite-level executive branch posts who did not previously hold elective or judicial positions.

Source: Database of Mexican female political elites compiled by Jennifer R. Accettola, Center for Latin American Studies, Tulane University, New Orleans LA, 1994.

group obtained their first high position during the Salinas (1988-94) administration. However, for the executive elite sub-group discussed above, this rate is nearly 60 percent.

The female office-holders in the elite branch also have lower rates of political experience. Nearly 85 percent of the all women who have held elite-level positions have held elective office, compared to only 45 percent of those who have held executive branch elite-level positions.

It is also interesting to note that women who have held positions in the executive branch are better educated than female elite-level office-holders in general. In fact, nearly all women who held executive branch positions have university degrees, and they are more likely to hold graduate degrees as well (Table 4-9).[166] Executive branch office-holders are also more likely to have attended UNAM than all of the female elite members as a group, and the sub-group has an even higher rate.

Among women who have held executive branch positions, the percentage of economists rises and lawyers declines dramatically in comparison with all female elite-level office-holders. Although, both Camp and Centeno have shown that the mostly male technocrats attend U.S. universities, it appears that the trend among women who have held elite-level office (and those who have

166 Tables showing figures comparable to those used in Table 4-9 may be found in Camp, *Politics in Mexico*, p. 107, and in Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason*, p. 139.

held the position of *director general*) is to attend European universities for graduate studies.

Women who held executive branch positions also teach more frequently (half) at the National University (UNAM) than female political elite members overall (one-quarter). While executive branch office-holders have a high membership in PRI, all of the executive branch sub-groups have lower rates of participation in party offices than female elite members as a group. Two-thirds executive branch women leaders have some type of party office at the regional level, compared to about 42 percent for both the *técnico* sub-group and those who held the *director general* position. Women who have held elite positions in the executive branch exhibit many of the same characteristics of male political-technocrats, including a lack of party experience, lack of elective office experience, and specialized education abroad (see discussion below in Chapter 5).

Supreme Court Justices

While characteristics of women who have held elective and bureaucratic positions have been discussed extensively in this study, women in the judiciary have not been as thoroughly examined for two major reasons. First, the number of women in top-level positions in the Judiciary, the Supreme Court, is very small. Second, the judiciary plays a minor role in national

political decisions. I have examined briefly the characteristics of women in this branch to determine to what extent their career paths overlap laterally with the other branches of the government.

The seven women who have been appointed to the Mexican Supreme Court appear to be as alike as seven peas in a pod. None of these women served as local deputies or mayors, and only two held elective office. As mentioned above, only one member, Martha Chávez Padrón, also has held elite posts in other branches of government including Subsecretary in the Secretariat of Agrarian Reform, Senator and Deputy for one term each before her appointment to Supreme Court. The other justice to hold an elected position was Irma Cué Sarquis, a deputy (1982-85) before her appointment in 1988.

Their geographic origins, given their small number, are surprisingly spread out, and it is interesting to note that none of them was born in the West Central region, where the largest percentage (23 percent) of male Supreme Court members were born. All of the female justices are from urban areas, compared to 71 percent of the male justices.

Education is the variable where their homogeneity is most evident: all of them graduated with a law degree from UNAM. A law degree is a prerequisite for a post on the Supreme Court. However, two went on to pursue doctorates, including Chávez

Padrón pursued a post-doctorate in rural sociology. All of the male Supreme Court justices hold degrees in law, while only two-thirds graduated from UNAM.

Teaching at UNAM is also an important trait of female justices, all but two of them taught at the university or preparatory level, and four of them at UNAM (or UNAM and another school). Among the male justices, two-thirds taught at the university or preparatory level, and 45 percent had UNAM (or UNAM and another school).

Six of the female Supreme Court justices listed membership in the PRI, and only one woman did not report a party affiliation at all in the *Diccionario biográfico*. Only Cué Sarquís listed any party posts, having served as the Secretary General of the CEN of PRI from 1984 to 1987.

As previously mentioned, only 2 of 7 female justices have career experience in other branches of government. The majority of the female Supreme Court justices come from within the judiciary. While none held positions on State Supreme Courts, three served as local judges, three on the Superior Tribunal of the Federal District, and three as Agents of the *Ministerio Publico*.

Only Chávez Padrón is an exception in terms of her career path, which is very different from the other justices. Because that the Supreme Court has not always been a prestigious

institution in Mexico, and not very powerful in terms of setting legal precedents as does the U.S. Supreme Court, these female elites have little influence in high level decision-making processes.

Conclusion

Are the careers and socioeconomic backgrounds of female politicians becoming increasingly like those of their male counterparts? My preliminary findings and the results of other studies show that the majority of female politicians do tend to come from urban areas and middle and upper class backgrounds, as do the male politicians. Mexican women in general are pursuing higher education in greater numbers than they were in the past. This is reflected in the changes in the educational level of female political elites, who are very similar to their male colleagues in this area.

Women are also pursuing traditionally masculine fields such as law in higher numbers, a field which is typically considered a spring-board to a political career. However, female politicians still show a little more variety in the universities where they received their education although UNAM still plays an important role for both male and female politicians.

Finally, female politicians show much higher rates of party office-holding than their male colleagues, although participation

in local level politics is nearly equal for both men and women. Interestingly, the younger female politicians exhibit much higher levels of education, local level political office-holding and party office-holding.

The resumés of male and female politicians may appear increasingly alike. This does not mean that female politicians legislate, operate and negotiate in the same ways as their male colleagues. This is an area that should be investigated further. Women still have a long way to go to reach parity in representation in leadership positions in politics and business in Mexico.

There has been an increasing homogeneity in the credentials and social backgrounds of Mexico's politicians during the past fifteen years or so. As we saw above, female politicians in the executive branch tend resemble their male colleagues to a much greater extent than female politicians in the legislative branch. What are the implications of this phenomena for female politicians in Mexico? Are they adopting more successful strategies and emulating their male colleagues or is the rise of the technocratic state recruiting more women? The following chapter will examine the effects of the rise technocracy on the careers of female politicians and present some conclusions trends and patterns found in their backgrounds, credentials and careers.

CHAPTER 5
LEVELLING THE FIELD? TECHNOCRATIC REVOLUTION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEMALE POLITICIANS

Why has the number of women in Mexican politics increased? Is it because of the nature of the Mexican political system? Are opportunities increasing for women or less-represented groups in general?

Mexico has remained one of the most stable regimes in this hemisphere. It is the only major Latin American country that has not experienced a major military coup in the post-World War II period. Each president elected since 1934 has survived his six-year term and then peacefully relinquished the position to his successor. Given the stability of the Mexican political structure, is it possible that circulation of the political elite has been allowing more women to rise to important positions? On the other hand, are gradual changes in attitudes toward gender roles, and broader educational and occupational opportunities more important factors?

The Mexican government has consistently strived to maintain high economic growth, and as old methods have proven to have unfavorable results on economy, polity and society, the PRI-

led regime has proven flexible enough to adopt new or different approaches.

During the past fifteen years or so Mexico has undergone a process of increased economic liberalization and, nominally, democratization. Despite the drama being created around decentralization and democratization in Mexico, the legislature has been declining in power while government decision-making power has been increasingly centralized in the Presidency and various secretariats. It is interesting to note that as the number of deputies has increased, so has the ratio of women in the legislature.

The emphasis on economic growth at any cost rather than political equality has had serious implications on political decision-making in Mexico. Yet, the stability of the Mexican government has yet to be seriously challenged. Why and how has the state in Mexico been able to maintain this control despite the economic and political turmoil it has experienced? What are some of the changes or shifts that have occurred within the state as it has worked to hold on to legitimacy and power?

One of the ways that a regime can maintain stability and legitimacy is by ensuring economic growth. Conversely, prolonged economic failure will erode its legitimacy. Another important factor for survival is the rejuvenation of a regime by

recruiting dynamic individuals into its leadership ranks.[167] Elite circulation provides a mechanism by which women and other under-represented social groups can attain access to positions of political decision-making.

Changes in the Mexican political structure may present new opportunities for female politicians. A new type of politician has risen to the fore: the technocrat.[168] Much like the *cientificos* of the *porfiriato*, the technocrats emphasize rational and methodological strategies in policy making. Unlike politicians of the past, the technocrat is not necessarily a charismatic mover-and-shaker or an adept personnel administrator. Rather, the technocrat possesses certain skills, education and professional experience which qualify her/him for certain positions.

An examination of female executive branch office-holders in the previous chapter shows a convergence of the backgrounds and qualifications with those of the male technocrats.[169] What are the implications of this on the careers of female politicians? In what ways do women politicians figure into the "technocratic revolution"? Are the women entering

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167 Cothran cites institutionalization, adaptability, elite cohesion, and coercion as other factors essential to regime survival. Dan A. Cothran, *Political Stability and Democracy in Mexico: The "Perfect Dictatorship"?* (Westport CT: Praeger, 1994), p. 83.

168 This type of politician is also referred to as a "political technocrat."

169 See pages 127-131.

politics in higher numbers because of changes in the political structure such as the decreasing influence of the legislature, or greater reliance upon credentials in the executive branch?

The next sections will discuss the changes in the past several decades which have resulted in the ascendance of a new type of politician, the technocrat-politician. This politician is increasingly trained as a specialist, pragmatic and realistic, and lacks the electoral experience of many politicians from years before.

Circulation of the ruling elite is an important characteristic of a government that desires to maintain stability and legitimacy over a long period of time. The following section will discuss how elite circulation functions to facilitate the examination which follows of the viability of the technocratic state to this end.

Elite Circulation and the Rise of Technocracy in the Mexican Government

Elite circulation is an important mechanism for maintaining regime stability and legitimacy because it helps provide flexibility. This is the process of rejuvenation of a political elite by recruiting young, dynamic and skilled individuals to continue regime policies and foster a democratic appearance rather than that of an oligarchy. Other processes

essential to regime flexibility include co-optation (such as financial incentives or public office), both legal and illegal out-migration, and permitting public protest. Co-optation manifests in many ways in the Mexican government, primarily through patron-client or mentor-protegé relationships and membership in *camarillas*. These alliances preserve party stability and control and provide rewards to those who help maintain the system. Out-migration and protest are permitted because they enable the expression of discontent and dissent while preserving the image of opportunity and mobility integral to maintaining legitimacy and support for a regime.

This section will discuss the concept of elite circulation and describe the categorization of the Mexican politician into different types, namely the *político* and the *técnico*. Next, I will discuss the differences among these types of politicians and the significance of the increasing dominance of the *técnico*, or the political technocrat, during the past twenty years. What does this change in type of politician mean for politics in general in Mexico? More specifically, does it positively or negatively affect the ability of women (or minorities in general) to attain top-level decision-making positions in the Mexican government?

Elite Circulation

Two early elite theorists, Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto, emphasize the universality of the existence of a ruling elite composed of those individuals who directly or indirectly play a considerable part in government. Elite circulation is the process by which a closed group recruits new members, thus increasing select characteristics pertinent to its survival.[170]

Mosca and Pareto both state that the circulation of the governing elite is intrinsic to regime stability.

> There is only one way to avoid what is called the death of a state or a nation . . . to provide for a slow but continuous modification of the ruling classes, for a slow but continuous assimilation by them of new elements of moral cohesion that gradually will supplant the old. . . . a nation . . . can, literally speaking, be immortal, provided it learns how to transform itself continuously without falling apart.[171]

> The history of man is the history of the continuous replacement of certain elites . . .[172]

According to both, circulation of the ruling elite is not only necessary but desirable. "True circulation is desirable, because it promotes prosperity and strengthens society."[173] It can also act as a conservative force, preserving dominance of a ruling elite for an extended period of time. This is one way an elite can protect and preserve itself. However,

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170 It is a closed group insofar as it is a relatively clearly defined group and opportunities for admission to it are *not* equal.
171 Mosca, *Elements of Political Science*, p. 462.
172 Pareto, *The Rise and Fall of the Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology* (Totowa, NJ: Bedminster Press, 1968), p. 36.
173 Pareto, *Mind and Society*, §2485.

the free circulation of talent is impeded by obstacles like inherited wealth, family connections and social rank.[174]

As mentioned earlier, the Mexican government has been the most stable in this hemisphere for sixty years. The continual and gradual elite circulation is one of the major reasons that the PRI-dominated government has maintained control and relative stability. Smith states that:

> On the average, national elites in contemporary Mexico have undergone 90 percent renewal over the course of every three presidential terms. The significance of this fact is slightly modified by the tendency for long-time elite members to occupy particularly key positions but the basic pattern holds: the Mexican political elite has been self-renewing as well as self-perpetuating.[175]

Elite circulation can also serve as a co-optive mechanism, allowing a governing class can protect itself from individuals who might overthrow it. This is attained by granting "admission to membership in the governing class of any individual potentially dangerous to it provided he consents to serve it."[176]

This is an important mechanism that has not been overlooked by the Mexican government. The sectoral structure of the official party, the PRI, incorporates all the strata of society with a high potential for dissatisfaction. Wilfred Gruber points out that, in Mexico, "if leaders emerge, the elite

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174 S.E. Finer (ed.), *Vilfredo Pareto: Sociological Writings*. (Totowa, NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 1966), p. 52.
175 Smith, *Labyrinths of Power*, p. 166.
176 Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, §2482.

will undertake great efforts to absorb them into, and neutralize them in, the existing organization of the Revolutionary Party."[177] Over the years, opposition parties have been given a greater voice in the legislature, while at the same time more power has been shifted to the presidency. Thus, the illusion of democratic participation and mobility is maintained.

The health of the economy or the success of an economic model also affect the legitimacy and stability of a regime and the governing elite. Both Mosca and Pareto contend that elite circulation increases during times of economic prosperity. "In periods of rapid economic growth . . . governing is a much easier task than when the economy stagnates . . ."[178] Centeno also notes that "those authoritarian regimes that depend on pure repression are much less successful economically than those who have institutionalized mechanisms for coapting opposition and maintaining social support" as Mexico has succeeded in doing.[179]

Growth in religious sentiment or changes in ideology also signal a shift or change in the governing elite. In the case of Mexico, the governing elite has increasingly defined its role in primarily economic terms, as will be discussed below. Camp notes that:

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177 Wilfried Gruber, "Career Patterns of Mexico's Political Elite." *Western Political Quarterly*, 24:3 (1971), p. 481.
178 Vilfredo Pareto, *Sociological Writings* (Totowa NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1976 [1966]), p. 275.
179 Centeno, *Democracy within Reason*, p. 35.

> Among the ideological beliefs of Mexican politicians are a belief that the state should play a large role in economic development, a preference for pragmatism over divisive ideology, and a strong commitment to peace, order and political stability.[180]

Social change accompanied by economic tension result in instability and openings in the political structure that permit new actors to enter. This may been seen as both an opportunity to effect changes by the challengers but also a mechanism to relieve tension and co-opt or counter groups that pose a threat to the legitimacy and stability of the regime.

It might be argued that in Mexico elite circulation, or at least the appearance of circulation or change, is an essential mechanism to maintaining stability during times of economic crisis. During such periods, it may be wiser to simply coöpt dissenting individuals or groups by increasing their representation, permitting protest and offering small concessions with great pomp and ceremony, or sacrificing an officeholder and replacing her/him with another who at least *appears* to be different. These types of activities would preserve the stability of the regime and help bolster support and legitimacy rather than shattering it as did the military repression of student protestors in the *Plaza de las Tres Culturas* in 1968.

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180 Roderic A. Camp, *The Making of a Government* (Tucson, AZ: University of Tucson Press, 1984), pp. 130-140.

The Rise of the Technocratic State

Originally, the words "technocracy" and "technocrat" referred to a movement that gained popularity in the United States during the 1930s.[181] A group of social engineers and technocrats, concerned with social and economic inequalities, believed that through the application of technology there could be abundance for all. Their radical plan would assure a more egalitarian distribution of goods by controlling the price-wage system and giving citizens greater control over production and distribution. However, this model was not chosen and would have been doomed to fail for two major reasons:

> First, social issues are less adequately understood, precise and measurable (scientifically) than technical concerns. Second, expert decision-making bodies must also confront the highly emotional normative considerations . . .[182]

Following a technocratic ideology is one way of translating social issues and objectives into public policy, but it is not the most effective way to do so. In Mexico, the *tecnócrata*, or political technocrat has risen to the fore of the ruling elite during the past fifteen years, and has increasingly dominated the

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181 Works on this topic include: William E. Akin, *Technocracy and the American Dream: The Technocrat Movement, 1900-1941* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1977); Jack DeSarvo and Stuart Langton (eds.), *Citizen Participation in Public Decision-Making* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1987); Donald Stabile, *Prophets of Order: The Rise of the New Class and Socialism in America*, (Boston MA: South End Press, 1984).

182 DeSarvo and Langton, "Citizen Participation and Technocracy," in *Citizen Participation in Public Decision-Making*, p. 9.

political structure. Following bottom-line logic, recent presidents have been able to make draconian cuts in social programs in order to meet debt payments to international lenders.

Technocrats view solutions to Mexico's problems as primarily economic. Like the *científicos* of the *porfiriato*, the political technocrats believe that the application of rational and logical policy planning and programming will remedy Mexico's ills.[183]

The political technocrat is not a new type of politician. Alemán's administration (1946-52) began cultivating an environment conducive to its growth and development. What is new is the extent to which the political technocrat has permeated the upper levels of decision-making, including the presidency, in the Mexican government.

The differences between the traditionally trained *político* and political technocrat (sometimes referred to as *técnico* and *tecnócrata*) are important because they result in different responses and considerations of the needs of a given constituency or population. The *político* is the traditionally trained politician, who has elective experience and skill in consensus and coalition building, bargaining and social

183 The *científicos* were a group of intellectuals and professionals who advised Porfirio Díaz. They were disciples of the work of Saint-Simon and Comte, and espoused positivism and the application of scientific to government administration.

intercourse.

The features that characterize the *técnico* include: an upper-middle to upper class social background; an urban birthplace (particularly Mexico City); youth (most born after 1939); a high level of education (four-year college degree or more); graduate education in the U.S. or Europe; little if any elective experience and a career path that tracks largely through the national bureaucracy.

The political technocrat is trained in skills needed to solve or manage problems on the basis of rationally efficient or apolitical criteria, placing an emphasis on the application of theoretical knowledge to problem-solving. The perspective of the current group of political technocrats is distinctly financial as economics degrees dominate the group. This type of politician also lacks the elective and partisan experience of many of her/his colleagues.

While differences between the *político* and *técnico* are ambiguous in some areas and make it difficult to make assertions based on these characteristics, Camp would argue that:

> . . . in Mexico all top-level decision-makers are politicians but that it is possible to delineate certain types of politicians on the basis of education, career experiences, means of recruitment and sources of influence. Such variables contribute to the values and skills held by political technocrats and distinguish them from nontechnical public officials.[184]

184 Roderic A. Camp, "The Political Technocrat in Mexico and the Survival of

Academic literature has identified and analyzed the *técnico* for over thirty years.[185] During the past ten years, the significance of the distinction between the *político* and the political technocrat has been hotly debated, resulting in the redefinition and expansion of typologies of Mexican politicians. Lindau analyzes internal conflicts in the Mexican governing elite which he claims are hidden by the discussion of the focus on the *político/técnico*. He concludes that political and ideological differences in within elite factions are more important than career path and training.[186] However, Lindau fails to credit or recognize the effect of training, career path and other variables on the formation of ideology, planning and policy-making skills which is one of the main purposes of such typologies.

Recent research by Centeno and Maxfield analyzed the differences between types of politicians with a fourfold typology that includes *políticos*, *burócratas políticos* (political bureaucrats), *técnicos*, and *tecnoburócratas*.[187] The types of

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the Political System." *Latin American Research Review*, 20:1(1985), p. 98.

185 Raymond Vernon's *The Dilemma of Mexico's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965) is credited as first recognizing the importance of the political technocrat, especially his chapter "Role of the *Técnico* in Policy Making in Mexico: A Comparative Study of a Developing Bureaucracy."

186 Juan D. Lindau, "Schisms in the Mexican Political Elite and the Technocrat/Politician Typology." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 8:2(Summer 1993): 217-235.

187 Miguel Angel Centeno and Sylvia Maxfield, "The Marriage of Finance and Order: Changes in the Mexican Political Elite." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24(February 1992):57-85. However, in a more recent work, Centeno replaced the term *technoburócrata* with *tecnócrata*, the equivalent to the

politicians are differentiated by four sets of variables: demographics and social origins, education, type of political activity and the government institutions that they dominate.

The *políticos* as a group are commonly referred to in Mexico as political "dinosaurs." The type of political activity linked to the *político* is mass mobilization or representation of one of the PRI's three sectors, the CTM (*Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos*), the CNC (*Confederación Nacional de Campesinos*), or the CNOP (*Congreso Nacional de Organizaciones Populares*) which serve to coöpt labor, peasants and the urban poor. The *políticos*, therefore, "serve as the 'ward bosses' of the system, managing the distribution of patronage, arranging attendance at political rallies, and securing electoral support for PRI candidates."[188]

The background characteristics of the *político* are very different from those of the technocrat. There is a much higher representation of worker and peasant backgrounds and rural birth, lower average educational attainment, and higher degrees of party militancy and commitment to the Revolutionary ideals.[189] The power of this group has been declining as resources for the PRI

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political technocrat to bring, perhaps, his terminology on par with other researchers. See Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason*, See Chapter 5, "The Technocratic Vanguard."

188 Centeno and Maxfield, p. 61.
189 Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason*, p. 105.

apparatus have been cut and its importance has diminished.

The *burócratas políticos* have made their careers within the party bureaucracy and function rather as political managers than electoral politicians.[190] They differ from the *políticos* in that they "do not directly represent any constituency, but are more concerned with the management of the central political apparatus as a whole."[191]

The *burocratas políticos* represent more a mixed group with a lower percentage of upper-class backgrounds than the *técnicos* and *tecnócratas*, but with a lower representation of peasant and working-class backgrounds than the *políticos*. They graduate from UNAM and other state universities, and are more likely to have studied abroad in Europe or Latin America than in the United States. The majority of this group hold law degrees. "Traditionally, this was the most powerful wing of the governing elite concerned with the maintenance of political stability with a minimum of change in the system."[192] The power of the *burocrata político* has been declining since the Echeverría administration.

The *técnico* is a specialist, usually trained in fields such as economics, agriculture, engineering and the natural sciences.[193] The *técnico* originates in the professional and

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190 Ibid., p. 105.
191 Centeno and Maxfield, p. 61.
192 Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason*, p. 105.
193 Ibid., p. 105; Centeno and Maxfield, p. 63.

managerial middle class. According to Centeno, this group consists of two sub-groups, the economists in SCHP (the Secretariat of the Treasury) and the banking sector, and engineers in the secretariats of Ecology and Urban Development (SEDUE) prior to 1992, Agriculture, Energy (SEMIP), and parts of Communications and Transport (SCT), Commerce and the parastatals. Centeno also includes doctors and scientists of the Secretariat of Health and the Social Security Administration, and diplomats in the Foreign Service in this category.[194] This group is more sensitive to limiting the role of the state in Mexican society, apolitical, and unwilling to play a role in the "dirty games" of politics but has been losing strength with the rise of the political technocrats who are not above such types of activity.[195]

The political technocrat, or *tecnócrata*, is a younger generation version of the *técnico*, and blends the characteristics of several politician types. They tend to come from upper-class social backgrounds and are more likely to have fathers who have held positions in the political elite. The political technocrat is more likely to study economics in UNAM and private universities such as the Colegio de Mexico, and to seek a graduate degree at a U.S. university. They lack elective office and grass-roots party experience, but make up for it with

194 Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason*, pp. 105-106.
195 Ibid.

intraelite politicking. Membership in political cliques, known as *camarillas* has also been a highly important mechanism for their political success (and failure). As discussed above, the technocrats impart a distinctly financial perspective to policy-making in Mexico and seek economic solutions to all types of problems. Among female politicians and administrators, a subgroup strongly identified by the traits of the political technocrat raises the question: Are female politicians becoming increasingly like their male counterparts?

The history of the rise of the political technocrat is a complicated one. It is difficult to sort out the conditions that fomented their ascension from those that they created to bolster their position. Centeno analyzes three developments in the Mexican State which have allowed this situation to develop. First, power was centralized within a group of state institutions that espoused a technical-analytical model and sought to impose their perspective on the entire government apparatus. Second, the ruling elite became dominated by a cohesive faction with specialized training. *Camarillas* assured integration of the faction into the ruling elite and further limited recruitment. The third development was the growth the hegemony of a single, exclusive policy paradigm that emphasized optimal (economic)

resource utilization and preservation of political stability.[196]

The *tecnócratas* reached a majority in the upper-levels of political decision-making for the first time during the De la Madrid administration. Although most of this group tends not to have party experience, an exception is a group of individuals who worked in the Institute for Political, Economic and Social Studies (IEPES), a PRI think-tank that helps write the party's presidential platform during election years.[197]

One of the main turning points that has contributed to the domination of the Mexican government by the technocrats stems from Echeverría's need to purge the *políticos* loyal to Díaz Ordaz with individuals whose loyalty was assured and who would support his policies.[198] According to Centeno, Echeverría remolded the civil service to fit his needs and aspirations with neither *técnicos* nor *políticos*, but a new group of bureaucrats that combined characteristics from both groups.

Over the past twenty years, the reorganization of Secretariats, resulting in shifts in power and influence in economic planning and decision-making, enabled the political technocrats to assure their own survival and dominance of the political structure. The Secretariat of Programming and

196 Ibid., pp. 38-41.
197 Ibid., p. 126.
198 Centeno and Maxfield, p. 81.

Budgeting (SPP) was created in 1976 which rivalled the Treasury (SHCP) for control of the purse strings.

Many of the careers of current group of *tecnócratas* include tenure in SPP and IEPES. Nearly half of the De la Madrid and Salinas cabinets had worked in IEPES, and its replacement in 1991 with *Fundación Cambio Siglo XXI* highlights the importance of this organization not as an instrument of power but rather a locus of network connections.[199] The increasing homogenization of the governing elite, given the specific traits discussed above, is not a healthy development for Mexican politics.

> . . . as political technocrats become more esteemed in the political system, and as they bring advanced educational experiences, both domestic and foreign, with them, they also bring intellectual baggage that is foreign to the needs of Mexico and her political system.[200]

In fact, the emphasis on meritocratic values, skills and education is counterbalanced by the reliance on informal credentials that include *camarilla* membership.

The technocratic revolution is not necessarily a woman-friendly one. It does not seek out women to participate in the upper echelons of power as tokens or political experiments. The women who attain these positions are very carefully selected, in fact even more so than their male counterparts.

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199 Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason*, p. 126.
200 Camp, "The Political Technocrat in Mexico," p. 104.

THE TECHNOCRATIC REVOLUTION: THE OUTLOOK FOR WOMEN

The effects of the rise of the technocrat to primacy in the Mexican government are many. In further restricting recruitment by increasing the importance of membership in the president's *camarilla* and other credentials discussed above, "Salinas was concerned with creating a tightly knit group that would follow his directions for restructuring Mexico."[201]

The governing elite in Mexico is narrowing. It is likely that women who attain top-level decision-making positions are much more carefully selected by gatekeepers, patrons and mentors than their male peers. In her study of female appointees to U.S. state cabinets, Susan Carroll concludes that even less deviance from established standards and norms is tolerated from women in high-level positions simply because they are "*physically* identifiable with a conflict-producing societal group even if the women themselves do not *psychologically* identify themselves with that group."[202]

Because of this *biological* difference women are

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201 Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason*, p. 166.
202 Susan J. Carroll, "The Recruitment of Women for Cabinet-Level Posts in State Government: A Social Control Perspective." *The Social Science Journal*, 21:1(January 1984), p. 94.

perceived as outsiders who could not automatically be trusted to be team players.[203] By more carefully scrutinizing women candidates for top-level positions and less often allowing women to deviate from accepted standards, a political leader is heading off any opposition to his candidate and circumventing any blame on his part for mistakes that this person might make. Carroll's conclusions may be applicable to the Mexican case. The high degree of homogeneity found among female elite-level executive branch office-holders would certainly point to a similar phenomenon.

Mexican women are attaining higher education, and those who matriculate into non-gender specific fields or traditionally male dominated fields such as law and economics are more likely to be able to pursue political careers. Additionally, those who attend selected universities, grow up in certain social circumstances, etc. have better chances of attaining top-level decision-making positions, as is the case with men.

The technocratic revolution has succeeded in narrowing the channels of recruitment and therefore reducing true elite circulation. Women who have attained elite positions in the executive branch are not so different from their male counterparts. The increase of women in those positions appears

203 Ibid.

to be more a reflection of female generational differences as younger women selected the "correct" career and professional associations, and are slowly being matriculated into the upper echelons of the Mexican government.

Are contemporary leaders less biased against women in selecting their proteges and successors? A combination of societal factors, those who are in power are part of a generation that believes it is more acceptable for women to participate in politics, and structural factors allowing more women to enter careers that lead to political positions and the creation of more positions.

Attitudes toward women's participation in positions of authority are changing. Conversations with both Mexican men and women reveal that they are still quite conscious of the inequalities. Many women I spoke with believed that Mexican women's attitudes towards gender roles are changing much more quickly than the majority of the men.

Finally, since *camarillas* have played such an integral role in the consolidation of the power of the political technocrats, it will be interesting to analyze the participation of women in these political cliques. Do women have equal access to cliques and mentor/protegé relationships that would potentially lead to successful careers? No doubt a "good old boy" network exists in many ways within the Mexican government,

leading to the question: Do women have their own professional and mentor/protegé networks or *camarillas* parallel to or distinct from the *camarilla* system in general? This facet of female political participation in Mexico merits further research.

The number of women will continue to expand in Mexican politics, but unless greater changes are made, the elite will continue to be selected from an increasingly narrow pool of individuals with highly specialized characteristics. This will prove to be a self-defeating process for the Mexican government.

Summary and Avenues for Future Research

While there have been several valuable studies on Latin American women's political participation, attitudes and public office holding at decision-making levels, much of this work needs to be updated. The current work is a preliminary step in the direction toward a more comprehensive survey of the backgrounds, associations, attitudes and career paths of female politicians in Mexico. The results of my analysis of the *curricula vitae* of female politicians has illuminated some key patterns. Overall, the total number of women in Mexican politics at all levels except the judiciary has slowly but climbed progressively with each administration since women were granted the right to vote in 1954. This growth has gained increasing momentum during the last three presidential administrations.

The rise in the number of women in the Legislature is partially due to an increase in the total number of deputies in the Chamber to allow for greater representation of opposition parties. Additionally, slightly higher percentages of women are elected to the Chamber of Deputies during presidential election years than during interim elections.

Since Lopez Portillo's appointment of the first woman to the position of Secretary in 1979, successive presidents have slowly increased the number of women holding cabinet-level positions. This increased representation is influenced by a number of factors, including broader educational and career opportunities for women and overall changes in attitudes toward gender roles.

Past studies of female politicians have shown that they are slightly less educated than their male counterparts. This has changed. The women are much better educated on the whole than their predecessors. The women politicians have been steadily improving their level of education and are nearly on par with their male colleagues. These women do still show a tendency to overrepresent urban areas which may help to explain their high levels of education. Level, place, and type of education have become key indicators of success in a given government career track. However, in a country where very few people graduate high school, the increasing level of education and high levels of

urbanity of female politicians may signify crucial ideological differences between them and their constituencies.

Growing numbers of women are pursuing fields of study that are more highly politicized, especially law and economics. They also appear to continue to follow the same recruitment patterns as the men, as illustrated by a 50 percent rate of attendance at UNAM (National University). Education will continue to be a determining factor for office holding, and that may tend to impede the progress of rural and poor citizens to hold federal office.

Female politicians in Mexico are a growing and increasingly youthful group. In elected positions they tend to be younger as a group than their male counterparts. Female elite members also tend to be younger than their male colleagues, and have been entering elite positions at a younger age. Generational analysis revealed that women are entering elite-level office at an increasingly earlier average age than their predecessors. This marks a change from earlier patterns, and is perhaps one trend that will contribute toward more equal participation of women in political life.

Participation in public life at the local level, in parties and women's organizations is a characteristic of these female politicians that merits further research. This provides experience and hones skills of women who might not have the

opportunity to enter politics via other channels, particularly education at UNAM or a career in the government bureaucracy. This may allow women with a broader array of backgrounds, credentials, experience and ideas the chance to exercise some influence at the policy-making level whether through office-holding, voting or participation in political pressure groups.

A surprisingly large percent of women declared participation in feminist/women's groups or political party office, a fact that may be useful in a later examination of women's participation in mentor/protegé networks and the *camarilla* system in general. Female politicians also reported holding local-level political office at higher rates than the men.

It appears that women's increasing access to positions in the political elite at all levels depends more on an expansion of women in political positions overall. The intensifying saturation of the top levels of the executive branch by the political technocrat is a key change, further narrowing the channels of recruitment and limiting the type of individual who might access those positions. This has serious implications for women and other under-represented minority groups.

Much more research is needed to determine whether these female politicians, as well as office-holders in lower levels, are from a homogeneous, urban, middle and upper class elite.

Using rural-urban birth and the occupation of parents, a basic idea of the socioeconomic origins shows that just over three-quarters of these women come from middle class or wealthy urban backgrounds with professional/educated parents. As mentioned previously, class plays an important role in shaping individuals' experiences and assumptions that form the basis of their attitudes, behavior and motivations.

In order to further examine the full implications of the growing number of women in Mexican politics, more in-depth analysis is necessary and may reveal a wealth of previously untouched areas. Research on the attitudes, goals, legislative action, policy and program support of female politicians is essential to determine whether their presence in Mexican politics affects or broadens access to decision-making positions for other Mexican women.

A combination of questionnaire research and archival research would be necessary to accomplish this. Female politicians in all branches could be surveyed on their attitudes, goals, legislative action and policy and program sponsorship and support. Documentation could be obtained from the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate and various Secretariats to confirm and elaborate their responses.

Questionnaire extensive research may also clarify the effect of life cycle on careers of female politicians and vice

versa. For example, in some women's career histories, obvious gaps at certain ages during careers of some women might point to a time-out for child rearing. Is this common? How does it affect women's changes for mobility in the political structure? Is this a continuing trend? How has the age at marriage and birth of first child changed for Mexican women? Are younger women putting off marriage and children for careers in politics or the foreign service?

Analysis of women's membership and office-holding in women's and feminist organizations may be combined with information about teaching positions and kinship to provide information on *camarillas*. The existence of mentor-protege networks among women as a group and the ways that the interlock with the *camarilla* system in general would illuminate key behavioral traits of female politicians.

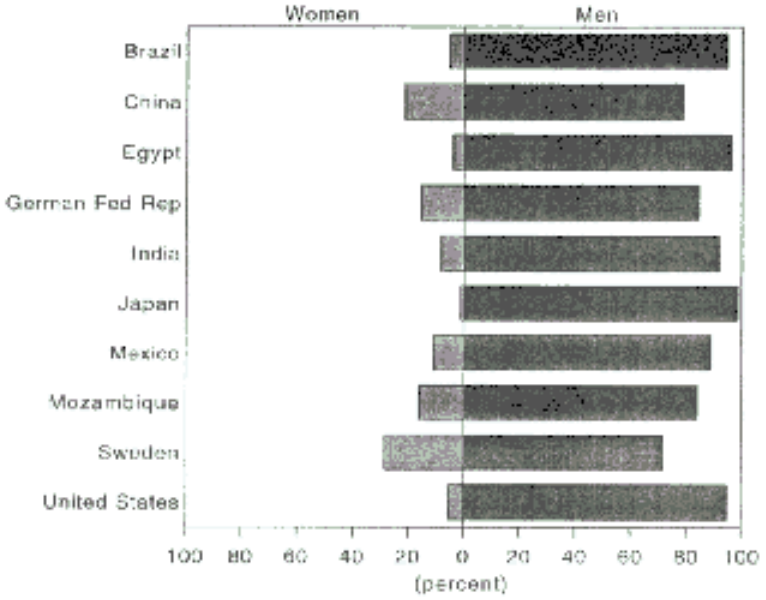
Camp has had success obtaining such information from male politicians simply by interviewing them and asking: Who is your mentor?

Ambition is another factor which needs to be addressed in future research. Specifically, what factors or events contributed to an individual's pursuit of an elective office? What might be reasons a single-term deputy did not continue her political career? Changes in goals and ideals upon attaining elective office also need to be explored and compared to

realizations gained by experience to identify characteristics that contribute to successful government careers for women. Administrative style and negotiating abilities are other related areas that need to be analyzed in order to clear many myths surrounding female politicians. Finally, this type of research opens the door for countless comparative studies of women from political systems and cultural perspectives. Nothing exists in a vacuum, particularly political systems. Trends and patterns found in Mexico might have parallels in countries with similar a political system, history, culture or level/type of economic development.

APPENDIX A:

Parliamentary Seats Held by Men and Women in Selected Countries, 1987



Source: United Nations (U.N.), *The World's Women, Trends and Statistics, 1970–1990* (U.N., New York, 1991), Table 3, pp. 39–43.

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