

# Women and Democratization in Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe

## *A Comparative Introduction*



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The last decade has marked a major political watershed. In a few short years, the ratio of individuals living in democracies has risen from one-third to two-thirds of the world's people, and the debate has shifted from the issues of democratic transitions to the challenges of democratic consolidation and the quality of democratic life.

Within that discussion, the comparison between the processes of democratization in Latin America and those in Central and Eastern Europe has drawn significant attention.<sup>1</sup> Yet, despite the participation of women in both sets of transitions and despite the obvious centrality of women to any sustainable process of democratic consolidation, the roles of women in the political transformations of these two regions are rarely examined. The essays in this volume help to fill that void. In doing so they address a range of questions of interest not only to those who analyze comparative politics but also to those who study both democratic and feminist theory. How significant were women's roles in the transitions in each region? How did their participation affect women's activism and the policies directed toward women in the post-transition democracies? What can a comparison explicitly based on gender tell us about the prospects for democratic consolidation and the kinds of democracies which are evolving in Latin America and in Central and Eastern Europe?

The essays in this book are case studies. Each addresses issues of transition and consolidation in a country-specific way, yet the authors were aware of one another's work and had the opportunity to compare their assumptions and to

probe their differences.<sup>2</sup> As case studies, however, they are not explicitly comparative. We undertake that task in this introductory chapter.

### COMPARING LATIN AMERICA AND CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Early discussions of transitions to democracy were global in scope. Samuel P. Huntington described a "third wave" of democratization, and Francis Fukuyama's now famous reference referred to the demise of Communism as the "end of history" because it marked the end of a fundamental conflict over how modern societies would be organized.<sup>3</sup> The momentum of this democratic wave can be traced from its origins in southern Europe through Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe to the few but important democratizations under way in East Asia. Some argue that the wave is spent, but others project further democratic change in Southeast Asia and in Africa, where South Africa is leading the way.

In addition to the fall of Communism, these ambitious analyses focus on large-scale phenomena, including the spread of neoliberal market reforms, the exponential expansion of communications and communication technologies, and the evidence that such changes are creating a new, truly global society. Norm-setting institutions like the World Trade Organization and the World Bank reinforce global capitalism and global democratization, while nongovernmental organizations that cross national boundaries diffuse new concepts, change expectations, and fuel political participation.

The initial studies of transitions emphasized how pacts and roundtable discussions set the rules of the game for political openings and guaranteed the basic interests of key political actors.<sup>4</sup> The rational choice model effaced the historical differences between countries and regions, and with them the very real difficulties of doing interregional comparisons. Those who criticized the rational choice approach—on the grounds that it privileged elites and narrowed the content of politics to pursuit of individual or group interests—saw an alternative in the solidarity and communitarianism of the new social movements.<sup>5</sup> But this too was a universal model, one that pitted the "genuine" democracy of social movements and civil society against the hierarchies and instrumentalism of parties and the state.

The comparison between Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe is far from straightforward. There are certainly similarities: in both regions, authoritarian rule was successfully replaced by democratic elections. Social movements played an active role in the transitions in both regions, but the crucial decisions resulted from negotiations among key actors. Most of the countries we

compare in this volume (Argentina, Chile, and Brazil in Latin America; Poland, Hungary, and the Czech and Slovak Republics in Central and Eastern Europe)<sup>6</sup> are similar in the sense that they compose part of the "semiperiphery"—dependent on an industrialized center but having achieved an appreciable level of industrial production and fairly strong rates of growth during much of the postwar period. The two additional cases—Peru and Bulgaria—are less developed in their region and share other characteristics that differentiate them in regional terms but also suggest similarities between them. In particular, they share characteristics of development and political culture which may compromise democratic consolidation.

In all the cases under review, elements of "civil society" mobilized publicly against authoritarian rule, although the period of state/"society" opposition was shorter in most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and longer in Latin America, where (with the exception of Argentina, where the military withdrew after being defeated by the British in the Falklands/Malvinas War) the transitions took several years.

Both types of transition left a legacy of fragility: the abruptness of the transitions in Central and Eastern Europe highlighted the lack of past democratic experience in much of the region and the destabilizing potential of right-wing nationalism. In those countries, such as Poland and Hungary, where the transitions took place more gradually, opposition forces had more experience in politics. However, Communist officials and managers also had more time to translate their political power into economic advantage as the economies privatized. In Latin America the longer transitions facilitated the political reemergence of political parties and gave the social movements substantial political experience, but the ebb and flow of the transition process underlined the ongoing vulnerability of democratic governments to military control. In both regions, moreover, disenchantment set in rapidly, the result of persistent or worsening economic crisis, the pace and uneven results of economic reform, and high expectations for democracy itself.

Yet there are significant contrasts between the two regions which make comparisons difficult. Ellen Comisso summarizes them succinctly: Central and Eastern Europeans recovered national sovereignty and moved out from under Soviet control, whereas Latin Americans recovered popular sovereignty from their military authoritarian rulers. The political spectrum in Latin America is class-based and goes from left to right, while in Central and Eastern Europe political divisions go from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. In addition, the military is the most important destabilizing factor in Latin American politics but virtually absent as a political force in Central and Eastern Europe. The prede-

cessor regimes in Latin America were based on the military, but in Central and Eastern Europe they were based on Communist parties.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the most important difference that most analysts recognize is that the Latin American governments are undergoing political *transitions* but the Central and Eastern European societies are experiencing simultaneous economic, social, and political *transformations*.

But important similarities remain. The struggles for democracy have also been struggles for identity,<sup>8</sup> and in both regions (again, with the partial exception of Peru and Bulgaria), post-transition identities were built in part on rejection of the modes and policies of the prior regimes. Because transition politics are periods of crisis and thus of intense politicization, they bring new ideas and institutions into political life. In our view, they provide a rare window on how social structures underlie political structures and practices, and they lend themselves well to a comparative approach that includes gender.

We hypothesized that women would be drawn into politics during the transition and that this involvement, nurtured by a broader international context of women's organizing sparked by the United Nations Decade for Women, would give rise to specific demands for improving the status of women in the post-transition democracies. Among the issues we anticipated would be common to both regions were the political representation of women, women's changing economic roles under conditions of neoliberal economic reforms and globalization, and concerns about the family, including family law and violence against women, and women's reproductive rights.

What these chapters show is that women's political experiences in the two regions were in fact quite different. In both regions, women participated in the oppositional politics of the transition, joining movements that expressed their discontent with existing authoritarian regimes, marching in opposition demonstrations, taking part in strategy sessions, and speaking out. In Latin America, women organized to protest economic conditions and undermined the claims of authoritarian regimes that they were creating the necessary conditions for economic growth. In Central and Eastern Europe women contributed to undermining support for the Communist regimes by fostering values in the home which were not approved by the Communist leadership. In Latin America these strategies of resistance resulted in the mobilization of women around gender issues, whereas the reverse was true in Central and Eastern Europe, where women's movements have been slow to organize after the transitions. There some women expressed their desire to return to the home; others voiced open skepticism about the value of equality in labor force participation and politics, the core goals of Western feminism.

The analysis that follows contrasts the experiences of women in these two regions. It examines explanations for these differences and explores their implications for feminist politics and for the process of democratic consolidation.

## WOMEN IN THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

Women's politicization in the case studies we review here—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru—provides dramatic support for the model we hypothesized. Women were visible participants in the political oppositions to military rule in these four countries<sup>9</sup> and acted not only as individuals but as participants in a range of social movements, including women's movements. Some joined human rights groups, following the lead of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, who marched weekly in front of the presidential palace in Buenos Aires to demand the return of their children who had been imprisoned and tortured or murdered by the military. Poor women in the cities organized boycotts to protest rising prices and communal kitchens to feed themselves during the harsh economic crisis; many of these groups formed federations to increase their political clout. In Brazil, an active day care movement was the basis for cooperation between poor urban women and urban feminist groups. Groups of women, urban and mostly university-educated, some active in political parties and some opposed to such involvement, openly declared themselves feminist and organized explicitly to demand women's rights. Women returning from political exile brought their experiences of American and European feminism into these groups.

What united these women was their commitment to political action to bring about the withdrawal of the military and the return to democratic government. And, although most of these women rejected the term "feminist," their experiences in meeting together outside the home and their growing recognition of their relative powerlessness brought about an awareness of gender issues and a willingness to cooperate with the feminist groups in raising women's issues.

The politics of the transition itself offered unusual opportunities. In many cases political parties were banned, so that social movements, including those championing environmental concerns and human rights as well as women's issues, were at the center of political life. The notion that democracy would be created anew, with much broader representation than in the past, provided an opening for new issues and new ways of doing politics. This rethinking affected politics from top to bottom, as gender issues were included in the new constitutions of Brazil, Peru, and Argentina and changing norms affected the politics of everyday life.

The effects of this mobilization, documented in the chapters in this book, are complex and are still in progress. During the transitions, women cooperated in innovative ways across party and class lines to develop new agendas. Among the many changes that were instituted as a result of this process were the creation of women's ministries; the Brazilian experiment with councils on the status of women to initiate and review legislative proposals; special police stations staffed to aid women victims of rape or abuse; several constitutional initiatives; and changes in marriage and family law, including the legalization of divorce in Argentina. Argentina and Brazil enacted national legislation imposing gender quotas on political party nominations, and in Chile some of the political parties have adopted voluntary quotas to ensure greater representation for women.<sup>10</sup>

The return to democratic politics created unexpected problems for the women's movements and for social movements in general. The politics of the transition had been intense, with a strong emphasis on rhetoric and mass mobilization. Democracy meant that brave concepts had to be turned into workable legislation, that sustained organizational effort would be needed to ensure that women's issues would be taken up by the political parties, and that legislation would be implemented and monitored.

Social movements, which had prided themselves on their autonomy, now found themselves marginalized. And although they viewed themselves as committed to being a moral voice and to providing solidarity to members, they had to confront the need to act like interest groups in order to maintain a political presence. The heady enthusiasm of the transition, with its sense of mass involvement and solidarity, gave way to smaller and more focused efforts. There were serious divisions within the women's movement on the issue of whether to be autonomous or to work with the state and risk being coopted.<sup>11</sup> It proved more difficult to organize women to defend their own interests than to demonstrate against military rule. Nonetheless, there have been significant constitutional and institutional changes, a sustained drive to increase women's political representation, and a widespread political agreement that women's movements have become "political actors," with definable interests and legitimate claims. The test will be whether women can stay organized and sufficiently united to maintain and transform the political space they gained during the transitions.

### TRANSITIONS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The cases from Central and Eastern Europe suggest a very different trajectory. Women participated in dissident and opposition groups during the transi-

tions, but rarely as women or as feminists. Far from being symbolic of the new, as was the case in Latin America, women's claims to equal rights were associated with the Communist past and thus suspect. In the euphoria about democracy and markets, it was difficult for women to anticipate how or whether they would be affected differentially by economic and political restructuring. With no recent tradition of independent organizing in the region, there were no established women's movements to participate in the transition or to carry gender issues into the new democracies.

Instead, many women appeared to reject the "premature emancipation" they had experienced under Communism. In reaction to the Communist state's appropriation of the goal of gender equality and the burden which the uneven pattern of gender role change created for women, many initially expressed a desire not to be pressured to participate in the labor force and in politics.

There are some important exceptions to this generalization, and most women continue to work outside the home. When conservative, Catholic legislators threatened to pass severe restrictions on women's access to abortion, women in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary mobilized in protest. In Central and Eastern Europe, the single most important types of new organizations women formed were made up of women entrepreneurs, in contrast to the feminist and livelihood groups that characterized women's organizing in Latin America. Older women, who identified more closely with the social benefits they had worked for under Communism, pressured governments to retain their retirement payments and even to lower the age at which they could receive support. Women parliamentarians in Poland organized to form a women's lobby, and small groups of women have organized in all countries to deal with women's immediate needs and to take up the slack caused by decreases in social services and spending on social welfare. But by and large, women did not organize as women and did not enter the democratic era with new agendas for women.

There are several reasons why activist women in Central and Eastern Europe experienced the transition and the post-transition period quite differently. Women's relative lack of involvement in organizing cannot be explained by arguing that there was no objective need for them to do so. Communism had not resolved the "Woman Question," and the turn to the market and the economic "shocks" prescribed to bring the Central and Eastern European countries into the global economy had negative implications for women's employment and educational opportunities.<sup>12</sup> Structural adjustment meant cuts in government spending and thus in government programs including health and child care. Women were also in a relatively poor position to compete to guarantee their property rights under plans to privatize state-held assets.<sup>13</sup>

The chapters in this book suggest at least three important reasons why women in Central and Eastern Europe did not mobilize around gender issues. The most powerful explanation is that issues of gender egalitarianism—demands for policies to bring equal rights and full participation for women—were associated with the discredited Communist regimes and not with women's understanding of their own interests. By contrast, in Latin America, women's rights were a new issue, and bringing women's values to bear on politics was one means of differentiating civil society from the hierarchical forms and socially conservative content of repressive military rule. This contrast reinforces Joyce Gelb's observation that successful feminist politics are highly dependent on the broader political context.<sup>14</sup> In Latin America, women's issues were congruent with and symbolic of a larger political transformation, but in Central and Eastern Europe, those few women who did see the transitions in feminist terms were opposed not only by men but by most women as well.

A second barrier to Central and Eastern European women was their lack of experience in organizing combined with their view that there was no need to do so. As Dobrinka Kostova observes in her chapter, women were accustomed to relying on the state. They were aware of the costs of the transition but did not see that women were being singled out.<sup>15</sup> Reka Pignicki has reflected that, as policies changed incrementally, women did not recognize the threat:

It is indeed difficult to react politically to small steps taken backward; it is difficult to rally around seemingly insignificant negative changes (first slight restrictions in reproductive rights, a chipping away of the family leave subsidies, changes in educational policy that preserve the traditional status of women in certain professions, etc.).<sup>16</sup>

Finally, women in the two regions had very different responses to international feminist currents. For Latin American women, the United Nations Decade for Women, which held its first meeting in Mexico City in 1975, legitimated women's issues and disarmed opponents, particularly on the left, who argued that feminism was a North American or European import not suited to Latin American realities. The timing was significant, as 1975 was the beginning of the process of political opening in Brazil and Peru. The Decade conferences required governments to study and report on the status of women in their countries, which in turn provided the statistical basis for women's claims to resources and egalitarian legislation and involved government agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the ongoing task of monitoring women's progress. Meetings to discuss women's status were allowed by the military regimes and became im-

portant though self-censored arenas for political discussion with broader implications for the advancement of civil society.

In Central and Eastern Europe, however, international influences have not been supportive of gender politics, and some of the most outspoken women in the region have complained of heavy-handed attempts on the part of Western feminists to pressure women in the region to conform to their views.<sup>17</sup> Jirina Vrabkova and others have argued that, for Central and Eastern European women, feminism is "just another 'ism'"—and there is little tolerance for any position that is perceived as ideological.<sup>18</sup> In both regions, some of the most visible and active feminist groups have received outside support from private foundations and foreign assistance agencies, which has made them vulnerable to criticism and raises questions about their long-term viability.

### FROM DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION TO DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

The return to democratic politics altered the terms under which women's groups in Latin America engaged in political activity.<sup>19</sup> The success of the prodemocracy effort and the return to party politics reduced the sense of crisis and removed many of the incentives for cross-party collaboration. The women's movement lost momentum, and strategies that had worked well during the transitions did not fit the new political environment of electoral politics and party competition.<sup>20</sup>

Women's movements have tried three main strategies for gaining power under the democratic rules of the game: electoral, bureaucratic, and interest group politics. In Latin America, the electoral strategy has proved slow and frustrating, which is not surprising given the low levels of female representation in the United States and Great Britain, which are mature democracies with well-established feminist movements. In our Latin American cases, the percentage of women elected to the upper and lower houses in the new democracies failed to reach historic highs, and in Uruguay, the country with the longest democratic tradition and a highly educated population, there were no women in the legislature in the first post-transition election. Women's efforts to run as feminist candidates failed in Brazil and Peru,<sup>21</sup> and in her chapter María Elena Valenzuela cites Chilean data showing that more men than women approve of women in public office. Many women elected since democracy was restored have been from conservative parties and have not supported feminist initiatives in the areas of reproductive rights and the family.

Bureaucratic strategies have focused on capturing a part of the state—establishing offices or ministries to identify needs and develop policies for women. The Brazilian councils referred to earlier were established at the state and eventually the national level and were initially very successful. The national council played a critical role in bringing women's issues into Brazil's new constitution, and Chile's women's ministry (SERNAM) launched an ambitious plan to reach out to women at all levels of society and to take the lead in developing new legislation in areas such as family law and violence against women.

What these chapters show, however, is that such institutions cannot operate in a political vacuum. Without ongoing support from well-organized groups outside the government, they are usually dependent upon the support of the president or the ruling party, and that support has proved unreliable, as the cases of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile clearly demonstrate. This situation suggests the need for permanently organized groups that are capable of mobilizing political resources to maintain existing gains and push new agendas, but it is precisely at this level that the loss of momentum and divisions among those who remain active take their toll.

Philippe Schmitter's chapter in this volume addresses issues of representation, arguing not only that some electoral systems (proportional representation and party lists as opposed to single-member district/winner-take-all rules) favor women's electoral success<sup>22</sup> but also that women have a stake in strong party systems that can carry forward a coherent policy agenda. This argument underlines the fact that women need male allies and party support to make new policies and implement them effectively. The chapters in this book reflect some of the frictions that have marked the relations between Latin American women's movements and political parties. The distance between the feminists and the political parties can be attributed not only to the fact that the parties still operate as male-dominated institutions; distance also must be seen as the result of deep divisions in public opinion which make the adoption of the more progressive planks of the feminist agenda politically costly. Taking their cue from successes in Western Europe, several parties in Latin America have adopted nomination quotas to ensure that women's representation will increase substantially over the next several years, and Argentina and Brazil have adopted quota laws that apply to all parties.<sup>23</sup>

In Central and Eastern Europe, women are often depicted as having lost political ground during the transitions. The level of women's participation in national legislatures fell precipitously when democratic elections were held, ranging from 20–30 percent in 1987 in our case studies to less than 10 percent in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in 1990. In Hungary, the percentage of women leg-

islators went from 32 percent to 21 percent.<sup>24</sup> As our case studies show, however, the reality is more complicated. Communist legislators did not represent constituencies, as is the case in functioning democracies, but were used by the leadership to legitimate its policies and to promote support for decisions made (by men) at the top. Women's representation brought international accolades during the Communist period, but it was largely window dressing; women were marginalized from the centers of power. The Communists' efforts to bring women into political roles are now portrayed as one more facet of the political hypocrisy of Communist rule, with negative implications for women's future democratic participation.

However, recent elections have seen some recovery. In 1995, women accounted for 10 percent of the legislators in the Czech Republic, 18 percent in Slovakia, 11 percent in Hungary, and 13 percent in both Poland and Bulgaria, even without quotas. These proportions are significantly higher than in our Latin American cases, which range from 5 percent in Brazil to 9 percent in Peru and 14 percent in Argentina, the last due to the early impact of the quota law. To put these numbers in a global context, the figures from Central and Eastern Europe also compare quite favorably with women's proportion of legislators in Great Britain, which was at 7 percent in 1995 (although the recent victory of the Labor Party, which adopted quotas, doubled women's representation to 16% in the House of Commons), and with the nearly 11 percent representation of women in the U.S. Congress, who were elected under a single-member district system and without quotas. However, women's representation in Central and Eastern Europe's legislatures is substantially lower than the proportions of women legislators in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, which ranged from 29 percent to 39 percent in 1995. If we compare local levels of representation (in city councils, for example), women appear to be doing better in Central and Eastern Europe (15%–20%) than in Latin America (4%–7%).<sup>25</sup>

The conclusion we draw from these data and from the detailed discussions of women's political roles in our case studies is that women's political roles in the two regions are likely to converge much more in the future than they have in the past. Although Central and Eastern Europeans have less experience with civic association, new groups are forming rapidly. There are now more than thirty thousand independent associations in Poland alone, and the number of women's groups is also on the rise. At the same time, women's groups in Latin America are both less mobilized and less effective than they were during the transitions, which narrows the organizational gap between the two regions.

Electoral data indicate that women in both regions are gaining or consolidating a visible presence in national legislatures. These women have the poten-

tial to work together to raise women's issues when there is a consensus (on social welfare issues and violence against women, for example) but will continue to be divided along party lines, which will restrain progress on issues that appear to undermine the family or promote an individualistic approach to women's reproductive rights. As politics increasingly reflects new realities and is less shaped by the desire to reject the Communist past, women in Central and Eastern Europe are becoming more aware of the stakes they have in the new economic order and the ways in which the new economic, social, and legal reforms affect them. They are increasingly voting their interests.

Considering possible strategies in this area, we think that the provocative proposal for state support of interest groups, which Philippe Schmitter discusses in his chapter, should be looked at more closely. Although it could be difficult to implement without creating incentives for state favoritism or new types of corruption, it does address the fact that women are among the sectors of society particularly disadvantaged by liberal interest group politics. Although some women's groups have a long organizational history in the established democracies, in general women have fewer economic resources to devote to maintaining their own representative organizations, and the more women work, the less they can make up this deficit by volunteer labor. Schmitter's "popular corporatism" might be particularly relevant to Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America, not only because organizations are weak in general but also because the political culture of pluralism is not well established either in the state or in society.

Finally, we think it is significant that, in both regions, the debates on "affirmative" or "positive" action have revolved around the issue of party and electoral quotas and not equal access to educational or employment opportunities. This continues to be the case despite the fact that women are losing their privileged position in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe. And in Latin America, as is the pattern in the established industrialized democracies, although women have achieved virtually equal access to higher education (in Latin America, class, not gender, is the barrier), educational equity has not led to improved economic status.<sup>26</sup>

## ISSUES FOR FEMINIST THEORY AND PRACTICE

We would argue that feminist scholarship employs a model of contemporary women's political mobilization which has the following elements: women first become conscious of the effects of their political marginalization, most probably in the context of a larger political crisis, and they then organize to share their aware-

ness and develop political strategies and agendas. They take their issues into the political arena, acting not merely as "interest groups" but with the broader goals of changing both the substance and style of political activity. The explosion of women's movements and the development of a global feminist agenda in the twenty years since the first UN Conference on Women in 1975 have reinforced the view that this model holds and that women's pursuit of full political citizenship is a significant global phenomenon in the late twentieth century.

The experiences of Latin American women's groups in the transitions to democracy are often cited as examples of this trend: they organized independently, provided an arena for political debate in a period when military repression made other forms of public assembly virtually impossible, and brought feminist analysis to bear on larger issues of political transformation. Their experiences reinforce the feminist belief that women's access to power will make a difference, not only for women but for politics.

Further, as Western feminism became less fully committed to a liberal egalitarian agenda, and as many embraced "difference" feminisms, the Latin American experience was, if anything, even more relevant.<sup>27</sup> Latin American women showed that they could enter politics and gain power while defining themselves differently—as mothers, not as "abstract" (that is "male-defined" or "disembodied") citizens.<sup>28</sup> Most Latin American activists followed the example of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo of Argentina, framing their interests as mothers of families and not as individuals. Latin American women's movements seemed to be inventing a new kind of feminism, which was at the same time maternal and community-based. Although many women's organizations continued to avoid the term "feminist," which was associated with hostility to men and to the family, women were able to cooperate on some "strategic" gender issues and to oppose patriarchal power, for example, to confront violence against women and to change laws that gave men legal control over family decision making.<sup>29</sup> In making the case for electoral quotas, in general they have not appealed to the norm of gender equality but have argued that the nation and democracy will be better served if women's different voice is represented.

By contrast, the experience of women in Central and Eastern Europe, by appearing to abandon the goals of power and participation for women, challenges the assumption that women will continue to seek full citizenship, even if defined in "difference" terms. Central and Eastern European women seem to be questioning the core feminist tenet that women's confinement to the private sphere is oppressive and women's public involvement in the economy and the polity is liberating. Images of women wanting to return to the home, with their most articulate spokeswomen arguing that they had experienced "too much" equality in

work and in politics, challenged the feminist assumption that reversals in women's quest for full citizenship are caused by repression, not by women's free choice.

Although only time will tell, the sharp rejection of Western feminism and its egalitarian goals by Central and Eastern European women in the immediate postauthoritarian period may prove to be in large part a function of the rejection of Communism. Women are not leaving their jobs, and, as noted, women's political representation remains relatively high. The number of women's organizations is increasing rapidly, and women are becoming more engaged at all levels in defining and defending their interests in these rapidly transforming systems.

However, as was the case with Latin American women, the attitudes of Central and Eastern European women with regard to the family will continue to diverge from the Western feminist perspective, which, even at its most "maternal," remains deeply convinced that the family is an institution of patriarchal power. One reason the family is not seen as patriarchal is portrayed in Julia Szalai's chapter in this volume. Szalai describes the family in Hungary as a site of political resistance to Communism and as a much more authentic space for politics than the public sphere. "Home-based female strategies of adaptation" and "family-bound forms of women's self-protection" are still relevant, "despite the collapse of the political regime that inspired their evolution."<sup>30</sup> Szalai's position has been challenged by other scholars such as Joanna Goven, who observes that it was women's invisible work that "maintained the private realm as a functioning and habitable site" for opposition politics and who notes that men emerged from the family into the world of democratic politics carrying "a discourse of anti-feminism that blames women for social disorder."<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, it appears that, like their Latin American counterparts, women in Central and Eastern Europe are developing a sense of their interests that is compatible with the family, and motherhood, and even with femininity, which has been viewed in the West as a potent symbol of patriarchal power.

There has been very little progress in either region in raising issues of men's equal responsibility in the family, yet gender relations in the family are unlikely to serve as a flash point for feminist consciousness in either region as they did in the West.<sup>32</sup> However, a substantial number of women in both regions seem committed to active lives as workers and citizens as well as mothers. As market economics brings further globalization and continued restriction of government budgets, it will be interesting to observe how the multiple pressures on women are analyzed and confronted by feminists in both regions.

It is not clear that there are off-the-shelf feminist remedies for these issues or that earlier alliances and assumptions will work. For example, Teresa Caldeira's chapter in this volume emphasizes that the initial congruence between women's

movements and the human rights movements in Brazil is being tested. When human rights claims were made for political prisoners and for the rule of law against military repression, they were widely hailed as legitimate. However, the efforts of human rights groups to defend ordinary prisoners and improve prison conditions have run up against a negative tide of public opinion that fears rising crime rates and wants to punish criminals, who are mostly poor. Caldeira asks how this lack of respect for individual human rights will affect women's rights and how women's difference discourse about bodies and rights may contribute to the deligitimation of human rights in general.

Maruja Barrig's chapter also raises interesting questions about rights discourse and feminism. Noting that Peruvians (like Brazilians) tend to reject notions of individual legal rights in favor of collective economic and social rights, she argues that democracy, even for women, requires individual decision making and thus requires acceptance of an individual concept of rights. She uses this perspective to explore the circumstances surrounding death of María Elena Moyano, the charismatic leader of the Glass of Milk movement in Peru, who was killed and then blown up in front of her children by members of Sendero Luminoso, Peru's Maoist guerrilla movement. In doing so she reveals and accepts the connections between feminism and individualism which are often glossed over by those who see women's politics as a communitarian alternative to male-defined politics.

## INTEGRATING GENDER INTO COMPARATIVE RESEARCH

The comparative literature on democratization has turned its attention from transitions to issues raised by the democratic consolidation.<sup>33</sup> This trend has produced a variety of typologies of consolidation, ranging from the minimal (two sets of elections have been held, and power has changed hands; there is no longer an imminent threat of democratic breakdown) through a spectrum that increasingly attempts to measure the quality of democratic life.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the relative lack of a gender gap between men's and women's votes has obscured the important fact that women constitute a large proportion of the votes in any country. Given that democratic breakdowns have historically been preceded by elections that threaten key interests or divide politics in ways that create coalition governments led by marginal but extreme leaders, it is surprising that so little attention has been paid to women's voting patterns or to gender differences in attitudes toward democracy in this region.<sup>34</sup> Sharon Wolchik's chapter in this volume documents important differ-



ences in the issues men and women see as the most critical in the Czech and Slovak Republics. However, there are to date few significant gender differences in citizens' evaluations of or support for democracy. Renata Siemieńska finds that women in Poland are less likely than men to vote for left-of-center parties, which also seems to be the case in Chile, as Valenzuela notes.

The gender gap has attracted more attention in Latin America. Surveys show gender differences on several issues. The 1988 plebiscite in Chile which rejected the military dictatorship of General Pinochet depended on the decisions of lower-middle-class women, who were the largest group of "undecideds" as the election date drew near. Survey data, also from Chile, shows that women are less likely than men to support women candidates. But the systematic collection and use of gender-specific data are still lacking, despite their potential importance. Of course, the more fundamental point is that governments cannot claim to be truly democratic if they continue to allow half of their populations to be grossly underrepresented.

One striking characteristic of the consolidation literature is the shift of focus from negotiations and pacts between a small number of elites to concern for the development of a democratic political culture, without which elections and democratic institutions cannot function effectively.<sup>35</sup> Political culture depends on day-to-day habits and social norms that individuals acquire first in families and communities. In fact, a focus on the cultural bases of political and economic reform dominates much of the current literature, including analyses as diverse as Robert Putnam's study of democracy in Italy and Francis Fukuyama's analysis of family structures and economic growth in East Asia.<sup>36</sup> Yet despite the well-documented relationship between the political views of mothers and the socialization of children, there has been little interest in the family as a site of political and economic socialization, or in the way in which women's attitudes are transmitted to children and continue to shape their behavior as adults.<sup>37</sup>

Of the recent wave of books on consolidation, the most thorough effort to identify and relate the different variables and processes that must work together smoothly for consolidation is Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan's *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, which compares cases in southern Europe, South America, and post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>38</sup> There is not sufficient space here to discuss the gender implications of their work in detail, but we would like to make two points that show the ways in which mainstream analyses would be enriched by incorporating gender perspectives.

Linz and Stepan's initial proposition is that no democracy can be constructed without the prior existence of a state. They define democracy as "the result of a government that comes to power by the direct result of a free and

popular vote," but they emphasize that this government must have "the de facto power to generate new policies" and that the executive, legislative, and judicial bodies cannot share power with other bodies de jure.<sup>39</sup> The latter requirement precludes colonial status or the constitutional right of the military to intervene, and the former assumes that democracy cannot function unless issues of citizenship (the relationship between the "polis" and the "demos") are clearly understood and accepted. Thus Yugoslavia was not a state in their sense, and "stateness" has been enhanced for the Slovaks by the creation of an independent Slovakia. Their use of Benjamin Anderson's notion of the modern state as an "imagined community" further underlines the relationship between identity and stateness and, following Anderson, raises the question of how national identities are constructed and how they condition the prospects for democracy.<sup>40</sup>

Issues of identity and citizenship are politically gendered, with important consequences for women. Valentine Moghadam's work documents the degree to which identities are "found" in what are taken to be "traditional" gender roles and then constructed through the display of those roles to the "outside" world.<sup>41</sup> The radical version of gender identity politics today occurs most obviously in the Middle East, where veiling has become a potent symbol of rejection of the West and the reassertion of Islam. In gender identity politics, as Moghadam observes, "private" choices (of clothing, household management, or demeanor) become powerful public symbols of national character and must be politically as well as socially reinforced. Thus identity politics can severely restrict women's choices and deny them full citizenship, as is now painfully visible in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

A version of these dynamics has also been at work in Central and Eastern Europe, in conflicts between ethnic groups but also in the politics of competing value systems that are secular, urban, and internationally oriented on the one hand and inward-looking, religious, and rural on the other. Gendered identity politics contributed both to the use of rape as a weapon of war in the former Yugoslavia and to its emergence as a major human rights issue.<sup>42</sup>

Less dramatically, but perhaps as significantly in the long run, nationalist self-definitions that include "appropriate" gender roles limit women's choices in powerful but often subtle ways. These issues are relevant in Latin America as well in those cases in which indigenous groups contest the legitimacy of the state. From a feminist standpoint, indigenous groups are more likely to limit women's autonomous choices. Ironically perhaps, this allows Latin American governments to portray their concern for women's status as "modern," thus legitimating their claims to "stateness" against the "traditional" values of indigenous challengers.

A second point that is worth exploring in Linz and Stepan's analysis is their view that consolidation depends on the mutual interaction and learning be-

tween five different arenas within the nation-state, three of which they characterize as "societies." "Civil society" is differentiated from "political society" (politicians, parties, and the norms that regulate them), and the two, though separate, cannot be totally opposed to each other. These in turn interact within, develop, and maintain a rule of law "embedded in a spirit of constitutionalism" and supported by a state that is capable and "usable" by the democratically organized nation-state.<sup>43</sup> Finally, all of these arenas interact with "economic society," which mediates relations between the market and the state. This conceptualization offers a creative way to think about markets and states, a central issue for contemporary democracies undergoing economic as well as political transformation, and to assess possible futures for democratic consolidation.

We agree that conceiving the economic, political, and civil arenas of power as "societies" is suggestive of the rich background of beliefs, norms and social sanctions, and supports that distinguish these groups from one another and yet imply internal and external dynamism—a welcome move away from institutional boundaries toward a concept of political viability that is social at its core. In that spirit we suggest that it is not only gender blind but empirically inadequate to exclude the family as a relevant arena for understanding democratic politics. Conceiving the family as a political arena of power linked closely to the state is justified by the fact that the state regulates marriage and family law, provides tax incentives and disincentives, may criminalize abortion, and sets welfare policies. The state intervenes politically in the family with significant consequences for "private" beliefs and behavior.

But families also influence what happens in the other arenas that Linz and Stepan identify. Families are the basic units of economic society as consumers and reproducers of the labor force. Gender roles are carriers of national identity and thus critical to stateness. Families socialize children, setting and reinforcing political values. And family values, like economic values, are socially constituted and reinforced. They are not "natural" but political. An advantage of the Linz and Stepan approach is that it moves beyond the division between public and private which has dominated feminist theorizing about politics; it could be developed to create a much more complex understanding of gender in political life. At the same time, attention to women's political roles in this broader sense could significantly aid our understanding of democratic consolidation and the many forms this process may take.

An approach to transition and consolidation politics which picks up on the earlier promise of social movements is suggested by Douglas Chalmers, Scott Martin, and Kerianne Piester, who argue that the transitions in Latin America opened up new possibilities for representation of popular sectors.<sup>44</sup> They differ-

entiate these "associative networks" from the corporatist and clientelist structures common in the past and from "interest groups" in the liberal pluralist sense. Associative networks are independent and decentralized; unlike markets they are based on social ties, not "faceless" interactions; unlike interest groups they "go beyond the strategic bargaining based on fixed interests" to "cognitive politics," a category that includes "perception, social learning and communication."

The approach of Chalmers, Martin, and Piester contrasts with Linz and Stepan's more mainstream institutional analysis in ways that are encouraging to women's participation. What is missing in their analysis, in our view, is the recognition that it was women's large-scale involvement in social movements and women's preferences for nonhierarchical, open, and symbolic forms of politics which were a major factor in their success. Women's ongoing commitment to the kind of social and constructivist politics that make associative networks distinctive will be critical to their evolution and survival.

## THE CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK

The chapters that follow are organized by region, beginning with the Latin American cases, as they are chronologically earlier and also provide the point of comparison from which we look at the Central and Eastern European cases. Similarities among the cases emerge clearly in each region, but so do the subtle differences between case studies. We end with Philippe Schmitter's discussion of women's representation, which grew out of his involvement in our effort to construct a framework for comparing the two regions.

María del Carmen Feijoó's chapter on Argentina sets the stage by putting women's participation in the transition into the historical context of changes in the 1960s. She examines the roles of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and of urban popular groups and takes a close look at the issue of whether women's mobilization as mothers can be a successful strategy for raising gender issues. She traces women's experiences with electoral politics through the development of the quota law that requires parties to nominate women to fill one-third of their candidate slots, and assesses its effects to date. She also discusses the weakness of the women's ministry and the vulnerability of bureaucratic strategies to presidential control.

María Elena Valenzuela traces the history of the Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (SERNAM), a woman's ministry that began with ambitious legislative and social goals but which has struggled with party conflicts and backlash against feminist agenda setting. Although Chilean feminists developed an effective critique of militarism as a result of the hierarchical traditions of Chilean families and society (hence the slogan "Democracy in the Country and the Home"), and