

MOVING INTO POWER

Table of contents

I. Introduction	1
II. Women's Representation in Leadership	2
1. Government	2
a. Presidents and Vice Presidents	2
b. Cabinet Ministers	4
c. National Legislatures	7
d. Local and State Government	7
e. Trends	9
2. Political Parties	10
3. Unions	11
4. Business	12
5. Women's Machineries	13
6. Women's Movements and NGOs	13
III. Explaining the Lack of Women Leaders	14
1. Structural	14
a. Economic Activity Rates	14
b. Education	14
c. Occupational Segregation	16
e. Wage Discrepancies	16
2. Women's Gender Roles	17
3. Discrimination	18
IV. What Can be Done?	20
1. Gender Preferences	20
a. "Pool-Enlarging" Strategies	20
b. Gender Preferences	21
c. Leadership Quotas	22
d. The Quota Debate	22
2. Policies to Help Women Exercise Effective Leadership	24
3. Child-Centered Policies	26
4. Summary of Obstacles and Policies	28

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Women in Government Worldwide, 1994	2
Table 2. Women Ministers in Latin America and the Caribbean	3
Table 3. Seats Held by Women in LAC Senates	4
Table 4. Percentage of Seats Held by Women in Unicameral Parliament or Lower House of Representatives, circa 1994	6
Table 5. Women in Local Government	8
Table 6. Managerial and Administrative Jobs Held by Women	12
Table 7. Women's Field of Study at the Tertiary Level	15
Table 8. Women in the Leadership of Costa Rica's Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN)	21
Table 9. Women's Representation in Northern Europe, 1994	22
Figure 1. Change in Women's Legislative Representation in the Caribbean (Lower House)	5
Figure 2. Change in Women's Legislative Representation in Latin America (Lower House)	5
Figure 3. Women in the Argentine House of Representatives	6

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AD	Acción Democrática
CFEMEA	Centro Feminista de Estudios e Assesorias
CNDM	National Council of Women's Rights
CUT	Central Unica dos Trabalhadores
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAN	National Action Party
PC	Partido Colorado
PPD	Partido por la Democracia
PRD	Party of the Democratic Revolution
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party
PS	Partido Socialista
PT	Partido Trabalhadores
SERNAM	Servicio Nacional de la Mujer
UN	United Nations
URC	Radical Party

I. Introduction

The Declaration of Principles adopted by this hemisphere's heads of state during the December 1994 Summit of the Americas called on member countries to promote the participation of women in the decision making process in all spheres of political, social, and economic life. The Platform of Action endorsed by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 committed United Nations member states to take positive action to build a critical mass of women leaders, executives and managers in strategic decision-making positions. Participants of both conferences argued that promoting more women to leadership is a necessary part of sustainable economic development as well as the consolidation of democracy over the long-term.

The purpose of this paper is to provide background for consideration of strategies to promote women's leadership. It analyzes the state of women's leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), identifies the central obstacles to women accessing greater power, and concludes with a discussion of pertinent policy issues. The study is based on bibliographic research performed in the United States and was conducted within a short period of time, which has imposed regrettable, yet inevitable, limitations on the study's scope and depth. Information on some countries or time periods is missing because data were not readily available.

Data presented here indicate that in general, women exercise little power in political, economic, and social institutions in LAC. Women are woefully underrepresented in leadership positions relative to their participation at the middle and bottom of organizations. On the positive side, however, the status of women's leadership has improved gradually over time. Women leaders are more numerous today than they were a few decades ago. Governments and private organizations within the region have taken measures to increase women's participation in decisionmaking. Women's lack of power is increasingly seen as a problem to be overcome.

II. Women's Representation in Leadership

In all LAC countries, the number of women in leadership positions is small when compared to women's participation in the economy, society, and polity.

1. Government

Although women comprise about half of the electorate in most countries of the world, their representation in government and elected office rarely exceeds 10 percent. LAC mirrors global trends. Worldwide, women constitute 10 percent of the members of national parliaments, and 6 percent of ministerial positions. The LAC averages are 10 percent and 8 percent, respectively (UNDP 1995). LAC compares favorably with other regions of the developing world, but women's representation lags that of industrialized countries, particularly Nordic countries (see table 1).

Table 1. Women in Government Worldwide, 1994

Region	Women in Parliament (%)	Women Ministers (%)
LAC	10	8
East Asia	19	6
South Asia	5	3
SE Asia and Pacific	9	3
Sub-Saharan Africa	8	6
Arab States	4	1
European Union	14	16
Nordic countries	35	31
OECD	13	15

Source: United Nations Development Program. 1995. *Human Development Report 1995*. New York: Oxford University Press.

a. Presidents and Vice Presidents. In 1996 there was only one female head of state in LAC: President Violeta Chamorro of Nicaragua. Only one other woman in the region has been elected to her country's top post: former Prime Minister Eugenia Charles of Dominica. Three other women have served as heads of state without being elected: Isabel Perón of Argentina (1974-76), Lidia Gueiler of Bolivia (1979-80), and Ertha Pascal-Trouillot of Haiti (1991). In Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua, women have served as Vice Presidents in the 1990s. Nicaragua has simultaneously had both a woman President (elected in 1990) and a woman Vice President (elected in 1995), an unprecedented occurrence in LAC.

b. Cabinet Ministers. There is significant variation among LAC countries in terms of the number of women in top government positions (see table 2). Women's representation at the ministerial level of government is highest in the Bahamas (3 out of 13), Trinidad and Tobago (5

out of 27), Guatemala (3 out of 16), and Haiti (3 out of 18). In Haiti, the Foreign Affairs and Finance Ministries are headed by women.

Table 2. Women Ministers in Latin America and the Caribbean

	Total Ministers 1994	No. of Women 1994	Total 1994 (%)	Total 1987 (%)
Antigua and Barbuda	11	0	0	0
Argentina	10	0	0	0
Bahamas	13	3	23	0
Barbados	12	3	25	0
Belize	16	1	6	0
Bolivia	14	0	0	0
Brazil	22	1	5	3
Chile	23	3	13	0
Colombia	18	2	11	7
Costa Rica	21	2	10	0
Cuba	23	0	0	3
Dominica	11	1	9	22
Dominican Republic	24	1	4	0
Ecuador	18	1	6	0
El Salvador	20	2	10	0
Grenada	10	1	10	0
Guatemala	16	3	19	14
Guyana	26	3	12	7
Haiti ⁽¹⁾	18	3	17	0
Honduras	19	2	11	0
Jamaica	20	1	5	0
Mexico	20	1	5	0
Nicaragua	20	2	10	5
Panama	15	2	13	0
Paraguay	14	0	0	0
Peru	18	1	6	0
St. Lucia	12	1	8	0
St. Vincent and Grenadines	9	0	0	0
Suriname	20	0	0	0
Trinidad and Tobago	27	5	19	10
Uruguay	16	0	0	13
Venezuela	28	3	11	0

Source: United Nations. 1995. *The World's Women*. New York: United Nations.

(1) Source: "Composition of the Cabinet." 1995. Haitian Embassy to the United States, August.

Since 1987, the number of women ministers has increased substantially in most LAC countries, with some notable exceptions. In Dominica and Uruguay, women's ministerial representation declined between 1987 and 1994. In Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Paraguay, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname, there were no women ministers in 1987 nor in 1994.¹

c. National Legislatures. Women's representation in national legislatures is also variable (see tables 3 and 4). Although women's presence in legislative assemblies remains low relative to women's share of the electorate and political party membership, their numbers have increased in most countries (see figures 1 and 2).

Table 3. Seats Held by Women in LAC Senates

	Year	Total Seats	No. of Women	Seats Held by Women (%)
Argentina	1993	48	2	4
Barbados	1996	21	6	29
Bolivia	1993	27	1	4
Brazil	1995	81	5	6
Chile	1994	47	3	6
Colombia	1994	102	5	5
Dominican Republic	1990	30	0	0
Mexico	1994	127	15	12
Paraguay	1993	45	5	11
Peru	1990	60	4	7
Uruguay	1994	31	2	6
Venezuela	1993	49	3	6

Source: FLACSO. 1995. *Latin American Women. Compared Figures*. Santiago: FLACSO.

The steep rise in women's representation in the Argentine House of Representatives (as illustrated in figure 3) is the result of the 1991 Quota Law, which requires that 30 percent of the candidates on party lists be women, and that they be placed in electable positions. Argentine women mobilized extensively in support of the Law, originally a project of women senators and deputies from the Radical Party (Beltrán 1992). The support of President Menem, who wanted to increase women's support for the Peronist Party, was the decisive factor insuring eventual congressional approval of the Quota Law. In the early morning before the vote, the majority of congressional deputies remained against the quotas. Menem's last minute intervention, which

¹ Women have served as ministers in a few countries between 1987 and 1994, however. In Argentina, a woman was appointed Foreign Minister in 1989; in Paraguay, a woman was appointed Minister of Public Health and Social Welfare in 1989. See: FLACSO. 1995. *Latin American Women. Compared Figures* (Santiago: FLACSO).

took the form of a speech by the Minister of Interior, unified the Peronist party caucus and convinced recalcitrant male legislators to support the quotas. Durrieu and Jones (1995) write: The transcripts of the session clearly demonstrate that, in spite of the pressure from women, the Law would not have been approved without presidential intervention.

Table 4. Percentage of Seats Held by Women in Unicameral Parliament or Lower House of Parliament, circa 1994

Argentina ⁽¹⁾	28	Paraguay	3
Bolivia	8	Peru	6
Brazil	7	Uruguay	7
Chile	8	Venezuela	7
Colombia	12		
Costa Rica	16	Antigua and Barbuda	6
Cuba	23	Bahamas	8
Dominican Republic	12	Barbados	11
Ecuador	6	Belize	4
El Salvador	11	Dominica	13
Guatemala	8	Grenada	13
Honduras	7	Guyana	20
Mexico	14	Haiti	4
Nicaragua	19	Jamaica	12
Panama	9	Trinidad and Tobago	14

Sources: FLACSO. 1995. *Latin American Women. Compared Figures*. Santiago: FLACSO (for Latin America). United Nations. 1995. *The World's Women*. New York: United Nations (for the Caribbean).

(1) Source: Mark P. Jones. 1996. Increasing Women's Representation via Gender Quotas: The Argentine Ley de Cupos. *Women and Politics* (December).

Following passage of the Law, women's presence in the House of Representatives increased from 5 percent to 21 percent from the 1991 to 1993 elections, and then to 28 percent following elections held in 1995. Interestingly, women's representation in the Argentine House in the 1950s was also above 20 percent because of the women's quota adopted by the Peronist Party.

In 1995, the Brazilian Congress issued new electoral rules stipulating that 20 percent of the candidates fielded by political parties for the October 1996 municipal elections be women. In 1996, the Mexican state of Sonora approved an electoral law requiring that women occupy 20 percent of candidate positions on party slates for municipal elections (Grupo Plural 1996). Proposals to modify electoral laws to allow for a women's quota are currently being considered by national legislatures in Costa Rica and Paraguay. Some of the policy issues raised by women's leadership quotas will be discussed in greater depth in the final section of this paper.

d. Local and State Government. Women comprise 4 percent of mayors in the LAC region, and 10 percent of city council members (as of 1994). These figures are slightly lower than the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) averages of 6 percent for

mayors and 16 percent for city councilors. However, LAC lags far behind the Nordic countries, where women's representation among mayors averages 17 percent, and in city councils, 29 percent (see table 5) (UNDP 1995). Women's representation among mayors in 10 LAC countries exceeds the OECD average of 6 percent. In only two LAC countries is women's presence in city councils higher than the OECD average of 16 percent.

Women's representation among state and provincial governors is very low, with the exception of Costa Rica, where 5 out of 7 provincial governors were women in 1994. Other countries where women's representation in governors offices is above average include Chile (5 out of 51) and the Dominican Republic (7 out of 25) (FLACSO 1995).

e. Trends. Figures on women's representation in government show that: *women's opportunities to exercise leadership tend to be greatest outside of the main power centers*. The proportion of women in leadership roles is greater at lower levels of the organizational hierarchy, outside of capital city areas, and in relatively less powerful government agencies. For example, according to 1988 figures, women in Colombia occupied merely 14 percent of posts within the executive branch considered to be at the director level. However, women occupied 36 percent of the advisor positions at the second tier of authority, and 31 percent of the executive posts at the third tier (FLACSO 1993b). Similarly, women's presence in the judicial branch of government in LAC also follows this pattern. Although women represent 45 percent of trial court judges in LAC, their presence shrinks to 20 percent at the appellate court level, and is virtually zero at the level of the Supreme Court (FLACSO 1995).

Women's political representation is higher in rural than in urban areas. According to a survey of 133 Latin American women parliamentarians published in 1993, 64 percent come from outside of capital cities. This statistic may seem counterintuitive at first if one assumes that modern, capital city environments are more favorable to women's participation in politics. Nevertheless, capital cities are also power centers with high levels of political competition. Women may find it easier to rise to power on their own merits in areas where competition is less intense (River-Cara 1993).

Table 5. Women in Local Government

	Year	Mayors (%)	Year	City Councilors (%)
Argentina	1992	4		
Bolivia	1993	10	1993	8
Brazil	1996	3 ⁽¹⁾	1996	3 ⁽²⁾
Chile	1994	7	1992	12
Colombia	1992	6	1992	5
Costa Rica	1994	0	1994	14
Cuba	1993	5	1993	14
Dominican Republic	1990	5	1990	10
Ecuador	1992	3	1992	5
El Salvador	1994	11	1994	15
Guatemala	1992	1		
Guyana	1994	17	1994	22
Honduras	1994	8		
Jamaica ⁽³⁾	1994	25	1994	13
Mexico ⁽⁴⁾	1995	5		
Nicaragua	1994	10	1990	13
Panama	1994	9	1994	10
Paraguay	1993	5	1993	10
Peru	1993	6	1993	8 ⁽⁵⁾
Trinidad and Tobago ⁽⁶⁾	1994	14	1994	21
Uruguay	1992	16	1990	10
Venezuela	1992	6	1992	16

Source: FLACSO. 1995. *Latin American Women. Compared Figures*. Santiago: FLACSO. Unless otherwise indicated.

(1) Source: *Fêmea* V. 1996. No. 40 (May). Figures refer to mayors elected in 1992.

(2) Source: Lena Lavinás and Hildete Pereira. 1996. *Mulheres Sem Medo do Poder: Chegou a Nossa Vez. Cartilha para Mulheres Candidatas a Vereadoras 1996*. Rio de Janeiro: DIPES - IPEA.

(3) and (6) Source: UNDP. 1995. *Human Development Report 1995*. New York: Oxford University Press.

(4) Source: *La Mujer Mexicana: Un Balance Estadístico al Final del Siglo XX*. 1995. Mexico City: INEGI.

(5) Figures are from Lima only.

In Mexico, where in the early 1990s there were a total of seventy-four women mayors among a total of 2,392 municipalities in the country (3 percent), women had been elected mayors only in rural towns and small urban centers: merely 14 out of the 73 women mayors commanded towns with more than 30,000 residents (Massolo 1995). Currently in Mexico, women constitute about 5 percent of the country's mayors, although there is tremendous variation among the states. The percentage of mayors who are women is as high as 25 percent in Baja California and 20 percent in Colima. Still, the majority of women mayors have been elected in small towns (*La mujer Mexicana* 1995).

Women public sector leaders tend to be clustered in less prestigious agencies dealing with social issues, such as ministries of culture, education, youth, and social welfare. Women's representation is lower in those areas of government recognized to be the power centers of the state, such as finance and foreign affairs. Most of the women cabinet ministers in LAC have been responsible for education, labor, social welfare, and health (FLACSO 1995). The same is true of women parliamentarians as their participation in congressional commissions has primarily been in education, health, family, children, and culture (River-Cara 1993).

A recent survey of executive positions in governments around the world, disaggregated by sex, found that women hold 4 percent of posts in state bureaucracies dealing with economic, political, and legal affairs, and 10 percent of the posts in social affairs. In the LAC region, women occupy 17 percent of the leadership positions in social affairs, and 6 percent of the posts in the other agencies (DAW 1992).

Historically, family connections have facilitated women's rise to leadership positions in government. Frequently, women who have achieved power in government are relatives of male politicians. In a study based on interviews of eleven Latin American women parliamentarians, fully eight declared that family connections had facilitated their entry to Congress (River-Cara 1993). In the 1994 Brazilian elections, the majority of the twelve women gubernatorial candidates were relatives of prominent politicians. Of the four women candidates who went into the second round of voting, three were wives of former governors, and one was the daughter of a former President (Pinto 1994).

2. Political Parties

In most major Latin American political parties, women's representation at the leadership level is low relative to their party participation. In Argentina, women constitute 48 percent of total political party membership. In the Radical Party (UCR), women comprise 49 percent of the members nationwide, and within the city of Buenos Aires, women are 53 percent of members (Beltrán 1992). Yet, in 1990, no woman served on the UCR's national board, and only one woman on the Buenos Aires board (FLACSO 1993a).

In Brazil's Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), according to 1991 figures, women comprised 39 percent of the party's affiliates in São Paulo and 43 percent in Rio de Janeiro. Yet, women accounted for only 6 percent (5 out of 82) of the national board members elected in 1990 (Godinho 1996). In Chile, women were 45 percent of registered political party members in the early 1990s, but the average representation of women on national boards of Chilean political parties was a mere 16 percent (River-Cara 1993; FLACSO 1992).

In recent years, many political parties, at the urging of women members, have debated about how to improve women's access to decisionmaking positions and to high places on party lists. The outcome of such debates has been varied. Several parties have incorporated language into official documents expressing a commitment to promote more women into powerful posts.

Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), for example, issued a statement following its 1990 National Congress which declared the party's intention to increase women's representation and to end sex discrimination within the party. However, the PRI failed to establish specific mechanisms to achieve these (Martínez 1996).

In other cases, the internal debates have led to the establishment of leadership quotas for women on national party boards. Brazil's PT approved a 30 percent leadership quota at its party congress in 1991. Following the renewal of the national party leadership in 1993, the number of women in the PT's governing body climbed to 25 out of a total of 84 (30 percent), and in 1995 to 25 out of 83 (30 percent) (Godinho 1996). Other parties with women's quotas include: Mexico's Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) (20 percent); Chile's Partido Socialista (PS) and Partido por la Democracia (PPD) (20 percent); Venezuela's Acción Democrática (AD) (20 percent); Nicaragua's Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) (30 percent); and Paraguay's Partido Colorado (PC) (20 percent).

A detailed analysis of quota debates in political parties would be necessary to specify the factors favorable to the adoption of women's leadership quotas. However, two general points can be made. First, in the vast majority of cases, parties with quotas have a Left or Center-Left political orientation. Second, quotas were adopted only in parties where women members had achieved a consensus on the desirability of quotas. This was not the case for Mexico's PRI nor the National Action Party (PAN) (Martínez 1996).

3. Unions

Women's representation among union leaders is low compared to the proportion of union members who are women. In Paraguay, women represented 31 percent of the members of urban labor unions in 1992, but only 12 percent of the leaders (FLACSO 1995). In Brazil, in 1988, 26 percent of the nine million workers affiliated to unions were women, but women accounted for only 14 percent of union leaders nationwide (CUT 1993).

Within Brazil's biggest union federation, the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT), there had been, until 1993, a significant disparity between women's participation in national congresses and their presence on national executive boards. At the third congress in 1988, women were 25 percent of delegates, but only 5 percent of the executive board; at the fourth congress in 1991, women were 18 percent of delegates, but only 6 percent of executive board members (Ibid).

Following the example of Brazil's PT, the CUT approved a 30 percent minimum quota for women on leadership boards at the national, state, and regional levels in 1993. From the 1991 to 1994 union elections, the number of women in the national executive board climbed from 2 to 8 out of 25 (Delgado 1996).

Conditions within the CUT were favorable to the adoption of a quota rule. First, the federation had a history of association with women's movements dating from the struggle against Brazil's military regime in the 1970s and early 1980s, and included among its members many of the

women activists from that period. Thus, the political orientation of the CUT has since its formation in 1983 incorporated a concern for women's issues. Second, the quota requirement in the CUT had the full support of women active within the federation. The quota proposal which was accepted by the national CUT congress in 1993 had been debated and approved at a 1991 meeting of women workers (Ibid).

4. Business

Data on women business leaders are difficult to find. This is a priority area for future research. What data do exist suggest the same pattern of female representation evident in government, as shown by the following examples:

According to 1989 data from the Chilean insurance industry, 7 out of 251 director generals were women (3 percent), and 1 out of 44 managers (2 percent). No company president was female. Within businesses affiliated to Chilean banks, there were no women presidents, and 1 woman out of 33 general managers. Out of a total of sixty-five leadership positions surveyed, less than 2 percent were occupied by women (Hola and Todaro 1992).

In the National Bank of Cuba, 44 percent of bank officials were women in 1985. Most were clustered at lower or middle levels of the Bank. Out of twenty-nine bank presidents, vice presidents, or directors, there was only one woman, a well-known revolutionary heroine (Smith and Padula 1996).

In Argentine industrial companies surveyed for a 1994 publication, women represented 2 out of a total of 83 company presidents and 23 out of 291 director generals. In the financial sector, women held only 1 presidency out of a total of 42, 1 vice presidency out of 59, and 3 directorate generals out of 164 (Consejo Nacional de la Mujer 1994).

In Brazil, according to 1991 data, 3 percent of executive posts in the country's three hundred largest private sector companies were occupied by women. Among the forty largest state-owned companies, women occupied less than 1 percent of the highest positions. The representation of women at the top of the forty main foreign companies was less than 0.5 percent (Puppim 1994).

Data on occupational structure offer a rough indication of the size of the pool out of which women executives come; data also show that women have achieved a substantial presence in management in many Latin American countries (see table 6). This suggests that the pool of potential women leaders is growing.

Table 6. Managerial and Administrative Jobs Held by Women

Country	Year	% of mgr./admin.
Argentina	1992	33
Bolivia	1992	24
Chile	1989	23
Colombia	1989	24
Costa Rica	1992	24
Dominican Republic	1991	32
Ecuador	1990	26
Mexico	1991	16
Peru	1991	37

Sources: FLACSO. *Mujeres Latinoamericanas en Cifras* (individual country reports).

5. Women's Machineries

Almost all LAC countries have an agency within the executive branch of government charged with advising and proposing government policies to help women. Many women's offices also attempt to incorporate a gender perspective into policies of other government agencies. The resources, power, and composition of women's departments varies widely among different countries. According to a 1995 publication, the Jamaican Women's Department has access to the most money among the Anglophone Caribbean countries (around US\$ 60,000 per year), followed by Saint Lucia (US\$ 53,000). The Women's Desk in Antigua and Barbuda, however, receives only US\$ 2,700 per year (Mondesire and Dunn 1995). Most women's machineries in the region suffer from chronic underfunding.

Also variable is the extent to which the women who lead such organizations exercise wider authority and whether they are accountable to women's movements in society. In Chile, the national women's office, called the Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (SERNAM), enjoys ministerial rank (its director is a cabinet member), a budget, and branches in all parts of Chile. In Brazil, institutional support for the National Council of Women's Rights (CNDM), located within the Ministry of Justice, has been precarious. The CNDM virtually ceased to function during the Collor government, and was only reinvigorated under the Cardoso administration. However, the CNDM has been closely linked to the Brazilian women's movement (the President and many Council members were prominent feminists from the movement) and highly effective in promoting a feminist policy agenda within the state (Schumaker and Vargas 1993).

In general, women's machineries in LAC have been successful in pushing national governments to modify some laws and public policies that discriminate against women. This has helped to create more opportunities for women to attain leadership positions. However, the machineries have been less successful in convincing governments to make women's issues either a financial or strategic priority.

6. Women's Movements and NGOs

Women's participation in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in LAC, particularly human rights, community affairs, and feminist organizations, is high. By the late 1980s, NGOs concerned with women's issues, generally run and staffed by women, had multiplied throughout the region. According to data from FLACSO, Mexico alone had 177 organizations specifically dedicated to women's concerns in 1992, and another forty-three NGOs with women's programs. Paraguay, however, had only two specifically women's NGOs, and an additional thirteen NGOs with women's programming (FLACSO 1995).

NGO activity has improved the status of women's leadership in three ways. In the first place, NGOs, often in cooperation with women's machineries within the state, have succeeded in initiating legal and policy changes to benefit women. This has increased women's opportunities to achieve positions of power. Second, women's participation in NGOs helps them to develop the leadership and organizational skills necessary to compete in politics and business. NGOs serve as a training ground for women leaders. Finally, dozens of NGOs across the LAC region run specific projects intended to promote women's leadership at the national and community level. These include a debate school in El Salvador, a management training program for women owners of small businesses in Venezuela, and a lobbying and consulting group in Paraguay.²

² For examples of NGO initiatives in the area of women's leadership in LAC, see: Women in Development Unit, Inter-American Development Bank, "Program for the Support of Women's Leadership and Representation: Inventory of Programs and Organizations in the Field of Women's Leadership. Final Report." Washington, D.C., 1997.

III. Explaining the Lack of Women Leaders

There are three interlinked explanations for the small numbers of women in decisionmaking positions in LAC. The first is structural: women's unequal position relative to men in the labor market and society means that they have fewer opportunities than men to become leaders on their own merits. A second explanation considers the ways that women's gender roles inform their own choices about work and the judgments of their peers. Blatant discrimination against aspiring women leaders constitutes a third explanation.

1. Structural

Women's low representation in decisionmaking positions is attributable to their scarce presence in the power networks out of which leaders emerge and are recruited. It is difficult to measure leadership networks with statistics because they are often informal. In certain organizations such as political parties, women may be present at the elite level, but remain marginalized from unofficial sites of power.

Women's position in society and the labor market serves as a rough indication of women's opportunities to form part of leadership networks. This position will be examined in four areas: economic activity rates, education, occupational segregation, and wage differentials. The analysis indicates that although women continue to occupy a disadvantaged position relative to men, their situation is improving. This should translate into expanded opportunities for leadership over the long-term.

a. Economic Activity Rates. Region-wide figures show that women's rate of economic activity has increased in recent decades, from 18 percent in 1960 to 27 percent in 1990. Nevertheless, they continue to lag substantially behind men's rates of economic activity (78 percent in 1960, 70 percent in 1990). Even when women do work in the formal labor market, they are more likely than men to work part-time. In the LAC region as a whole, 37 percent of employed women stated that they worked less than thirty-nine hours per week, compared to 20 percent of men (FLACSO 1995).

Women's low rates of participation in the formal labor market does not mean that women are not working. Much of women's work is not counted in official statistics. For example, domestic workers, as well as women involved in informal sector activities or small business enterprises operating from the home, are considered economically inactive (Brushchini 1996). These working women are far removed from power networks.

b. Education. Women's participation in education in the LAC region has advanced in recent decades. Figures from 1990 show that 85 percent of women of primary level age were enrolled in school, 65 percent of secondary level age, and 26 percent of tertiary level age (comparable figures for OECD countries are 99, 80, and 41 percent, respectively) (Ibid). The percentage of

women enrolled in universities in the region has climbed steadily: in 1970, women were 35 percent of enrolled university students, in 1980, 43 percent, and in 1990, 48 percent. In Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Panama, Uruguay, and Venezuela, women outnumbered men in university enrollment in 1990 (FLACSO 1995). According to data published in 1995, there were 140 women enrolled in higher education for every 100 men in the Caribbean (UN 1995). Certain fields of study remain predominantly masculine or feminine (see table 7). Education is dominated by women, engineering by men. However, the numbers also show that business administration and law are becoming integrated, as is engineering in some countries.

Table 7. Women's Fields of Study at the Tertiary Level

Country	Field	Total Students	Women (%)
Argentina 1987	Education	19,000	71
	Med./Health	95,000	57
	Business	147,000	43
	Law	110,000	51
	Engineering	129,000	11
Brazil 1991	Education	209,000	80
	Med./Health	138,000	64
	Business	283,000	43
	Law	160,000	44
	Engineering	150,000	17
Chile 1985	Education	19,000	79
	Med./Health	15,000	56
	Business	36,000	40
	Law	2,000	28
	Engineering	4,000	29
Colombia 1989	Education	100,000	71
	Med./Health	49,000	62
	Business	120,000	53
	Law	33,000	48
	Engineering	104,000	29
Mexico 1990	Education	131,000	65
	Med./Health	108,000	51
	Business	272,000	50
	Law	124,000	40
	Engineering	283,000	16

Source: FLACSO. 1995. *Latin American Women. Compared Figures*. Santiago: FLACSO.

c. Occupational Segregation. Occupational segregation by gender is both horizontal – with women concentrated in certain industries – and vertical – with women concentrated in lower paying and lower status jobs. In Brazil, 50 percent of women work in occupations where one finds only 5 percent of the male labor force; equally, 50 percent of men work in areas where only 5 percent of the female labor force works. More than 80 percent of tailors, primary school teachers, secretaries, telephone or telegraph operators, nurses, and receptionists are women (Lavinias and Pereira 1996).

Evidence from Cuba and Mexico shows that women remain segregated even in fields that are dominated by women. In Cuba in 1989, women were 70 percent of workers in the Ministry of Public Health, but only 22 percent of managers. In the Ministry of Education, women were 66 percent of the workers, but only 31 percent of the managers (Smith and Padula 1996). In the Mexican Ministry of Education, only 13 percent of the leadership positions surveyed in a recent study were occupied by women (Hierro 1995).

d. Wage Discrepancies. In Latin America, women's average wages were between 20 and 40 percent lower than men's in 1992, although this gap was often not much worse than in the developed countries (ECLAC 1995). Much of the wage gap is a byproduct of occupational segregation since women are concentrated in lower paying jobs. However, in some cases wage differentials exist within specific occupations. According to 1980 census figures from Brazil, male engineers earned the equivalent of seventeen times the monthly minimum wage, but females only nine times the monthly minimum wage. Among teachers, where women are the majority, they earned, on average, two times the monthly minimum wage, but men earned five times the monthly minimum wage (Brushchini 1996).

Since the 1970s, income differentials between men and women have generally decreased, particularly in urban areas. The gap is smaller for younger than for older women. In 9 out of 12 countries surveyed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), women aged 25-34 earned between 80 and 90 percent of men's income in 1992 (ECLAC 1995).

In several of the region's largest economies, the wage gap compares favorably with that in industrialized countries. In Brazil, the average income of women employees in 1993 was 82 percent that of men (Lavinias and Pereira 1996). In Colombia in 1990, women's earnings were 76 percent of men's in the formal sector; women employees earned 74 percent of male wages in Argentina in 1989; and in Venezuela, 1989 data show that women's earnings amounted to 78 percent of men's (FLACSO 1993a and b; Winter 1992). In Chile, whereas women earned 46 percent of men's wages in 1960, by 1987 this had risen to 71 percent (FLACSO 1992). According to UN data published in 1994, women in Canada earned 63 percent of men's salaries; in Switzerland, 68 percent; in the United Kingdom, 70 percent; and in the United States and Germany, 75 percent (UNDP 1995).

Women are clearly disadvantaged relative to men. However, the disadvantage, at least among educated women who are already working, is not overwhelming. Structural trends suggest that

women probably have more access to leadership roles now than they did a few decades ago, and that access should increase into the future.

2. Women's Gender Roles

Gender roles assign women the primary responsibility for raising children, caring for the home, and looking after sick and elderly relatives. Expectations about women's roles affect their individual choices about family and career; the same expectations inform employer decisions and peer judgments which govern women's mobility in politics and the labor market. The choices made by women on the basis of their gender roles often steer them away from competition with men for leadership positions. Women's job choices are more influenced by age and maternal status than men's. Men's economic activity rates are seldom affected by marital status or fatherhood, and remain generally constant over their lifespan. Women's rates of economic activity, however, have historically decreased with childbearing.³ In general, women's economic activity peaks between the ages of 25 and 29, and then gradually declines (FLACSO 1995).

Yet, data imply that marriage is becoming less of an impediment to women working outside of the home. The number of households with two working spouses increased significantly in LAC between 1980 and 1992: in Argentina, the percentage of two parent households in which both spouses are economically active rose from 23 to 33 percent; in Colombia, from 29 to 43 percent; in Uruguay from 30 to 43 percent; and in Venezuela, from 23 to 35 percent (ECLAC 1995).

When women leave the labor market to bear children, they lose the training and experience that men who continue working at the same jobs receive. Furthermore, the need to reconcile work and family often induces women to pick jobs with particular characteristics, such as less-demanding hours or proximity to day care. This contributes to the segregation of women into less prestigious occupations that are farther removed from the ranks of leadership.

A statement made by former Communist Party Political Bureau member and President of the Cuban Academy of Sciences Rosa Elena Simeon illustrates the dilemmas faced by women who have achieved leadership. Simeon said: I have a wonderful husband. I would not want a better one. He heads a public health research center. He is friendly and loving but he does not clean up, do dishes, cook, nor run errands. He does not help me at all. Simeon added that reconciling her family and professional life at times requires that she bring laundry to wash in the bathroom near her office at the Academy of Sciences (Domínguez 1989).

³ In Brazil in 1980, for example, whereas the rate of economic participation for childless women was 39 percent, for mothers, it was 29 percent. See: Christina Bruschini. 1995. *Desigualdades de Gênero no Mercado de Trabalho Brasileiro: O Trabalho da Mulher no Brasil e nas Regiões Nordeste e Sudeste na Década de Oitenta*. In Malô Simões Lopes Ligocki, ed., *Discriminação o Positiva, Ações Afirmativas: Em Busca da Igualdade* (Brasília: CFEMEA), p. 93.

In LAC, one might expect that gender roles are less relevant to the careers of some upper class women who rely on domestic workers for most household tasks. Yet, such women are still judged by male peers according to gender role stereotypes. Interviews with Latin American congresswomen reveal that they are harassed by male colleagues for practicing politics and thereby neglecting their homes and families (River-Cara 1993).

Several features of women's position in the economy and society described in the previous section of this paper can be traced to their gender roles. Women register lower rates of economic activity than men because they tend to work within the home. Educational tracking and occupational segregation cluster women into fields such as social welfare, service industries, or communication and client-relations departments that often seem to be a logical extension of their roles as wives and mothers. And, employers justify paying women lower wages than men on the grounds that women's wages serve to complement a male breadwinner's earnings, rather than sustain a family on their own (Brushchini 1996).

However, there are important instances in LAC history where gender roles have motivated women's leadership. Groups such as the CoMadres of El Salvador, the CONAVIGUA widows of Guatemala, and the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo of Argentina organized as wives and mothers in defense of human rights in their respective countries. Conservative movements of women, such as those who supported military coups in Chile and Brazil, also politicized marriage and motherhood. In both circumstances, social expectations about gender lent women a moral authority that proved to be politically effective.⁴

Women's attitudes toward leadership may be affected by gender roles. Research indicates that women have different ways of reasoning about moral issues and relating to other human beings than men do, largely as a result of their socialization.⁵ The results of this research imply that women may be uncomfortable with competitive and hierarchical organizations, and thereby

⁴ See: Jennifer Schirmer. 1993. *The Seeking of Truth and the Gendering of Consciousness: The Comadres of El Salvador and the Conavigua Widows of Guatemala*. In Sallie Westwood and Sarah Radcliffe, eds., *Viva: Women and Popular Protest in Latin America* (London: Routledge.); Marysa Navarro. 1989. *The Personal is Political: Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*. In Susan Eckstein, ed. *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press); María de Los Angeles Crummett. 1977. *El Poder Feminino: The Mobilization of Women against Socialism in Chile*, *Latin American Perspectives* 4, no. 4 (Fall).

⁵ The classic works in this field are: Carol Gilligan. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press) and Nancy Chodorow. 1978. *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press). For analysis and critique of this literature, see: Seyla Benhabib. 1992. *The Debate over Women and Moral Theory Revisited*, and *The Generalized and Concrete Other: The Kohlberg-Gilligan Controversy and Moral Theory*, in *Situating the Self* (New York: Routledge) and Elizabeth Spelman. 1988. *Gender in the Context of Race and Class: Notes on Chodorow's Reproduction of Mothering*. In *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press).

hesitant to adopt positions of power. Some of the literature on women and politics in LAC suggests that women's absence from leadership roles partially stems from their aversion to the aggressive atmosphere of male power networks (Soto and Echaury 1993).

There are powerful cultural norms in LAC that discourage women from competing with men for leadership positions in business and politics. Moreover, gender-role socialization causes men, more than women, to develop many of the skills most useful in politics, such as rhetoric, toughness in negotiating, and charisma (Ibid). Traditional sex role stereotypes fuel discrimination against women, and expectations of female domesticity and irrationality are still pervasive in many contexts (Hola and Pischedda 1994). Yet, cultural and psychological obstacles to women's leadership are not immutable. Explanations for women's lack of power need to be wary of universal statements about women's motivations and attitudes. Generalizations discriminate against women who do not conform to gender stereotypes, and serve the interests of men who deploy stereotypes to justify excluding women from decisionmaking.

3. Discrimination

Sex discrimination still occurs with impunity in much of LAC and harms women in all contexts, but improvements are occurring. As mentioned earlier, direct discrimination is largely responsible for the wage gap between women and men. Discrimination also plays a major role in keeping women out of the informal power networks from which leaders are recruited.

The nature of discrimination is changing, however. Contemporary forms of discrimination are more likely to be indirect, such as the privileging of certain qualities historically associated with men in job searches (Cappellin 1995). Furthermore, many public and private organizations have accepted the principle of equal opportunities, at least verbally.

Changing norms about legitimate and illegitimate behavior are reflected in recent legal changes concerning women's equal rights. The vast majority of Latin American and Caribbean constitutions contain equal rights provisions for all citizens, and in at least six countries (Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Paraguay), constitutions explicitly recognize equality between men and women (FLACSO 1995). In most Latin American countries, discriminatory laws restricting the rights of married women have been reformed, and language which had established differential rights and responsibilities for men and women within marriage has been modified.

In the Anglophone Caribbean, Guyana and Antigua have laws explicitly forbidding gender discrimination in employment. In 1990, the Guyanese parliament passed an Equal Rights Act, under which citizens can sue for acts of discrimination. Other Anglophone Caribbean countries have general, yet substantively vague, rules against discrimination (*Women, Labour and the Law* 1995).

Anti-discrimination laws, rather than advancing women's status, reflect the progress that has already been made. It is not certain that the law serves as a deterrent, because most incidents of sex discrimination are not prosecuted. Subtler forms of discrimination, such as assumptions and judgments about women, are fueled by gender role stereotypes and will likely persist in spite of legal changes. Discriminatory behavior is closely related to women's structural position and the predicaments of gender roles described in the previous two sections. For this reason, legal change appears to be a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition to curb sex discrimination.

IV. What Can Be Done?

Women's lack of power stems from three interrelated phenomena: women's unequal position in the economy and society; the individual decisions and social expectations based on women's gender roles; and sex discrimination. Yet, these obstacles are not intractable. Affirmative action policies have the potential to reduce the barriers thwarting women's rise to the top and expand their opportunities to access power.

Broadly defined, affirmative action refers to any policy that, by favoring women in the short-term, aims to mitigate the inequalities between women and men in the long run. This final section of the paper considers three types of affirmative action policies: 1) gender preferences, including quotas; 2) programs to help women exercise effective leadership; and 3) child or family-centered policies intended to enable women to participate more fully in politics and business.

1. Gender Preferences

Gender preference policies target women who are already close to power networks, but excluded from leadership positions.

a. "Pool-Enlarging" Strategies. "Pool-enlarging" strategies have the objective of increasing the number of women able to compete for leadership positions. They are the least controversial type of gender preference policy because they do not seek to alter selection criteria. Pool-enlarging strategies at the macro-level, such as university scholarships or leadership internships for young women, will increase the number of potential women leaders of the next generation. Micro-level policies oriented at the current generation include: increasing the campaign funds available to women candidates; actively recruiting women for top posts; and expanding women's qualifications and confidence by providing leadership and professional training courses.

Although they may benefit women in other ways, it is not certain that pool-enlarging strategies get more women into powerful positions in the short-term. In Costa Rica, the "Law to Promote Women's Social Equality," passed in 1990, obliged political parties to adopt effective mechanisms to insure the representation of women in decisionmaking positions. To comply with this law, the Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN), introduced a requirement in 1991 that men and women be nominated in equal numbers for elected office within the party, and that their names alternate on ballots. This rule increased women's presence within the pool of potential party leaders to 50 percent. The party also reserves 10 percent of its budget for the political training of women party members (Granados, Povedano, and Madrigal 1996). Yet, the PLN's "pool-enlarging" policies have had little effect on the number of women at the top as evidenced by the lack of women's representation following the introduction of the 1991 reforms (see table 8).

Table 8. Women in the Leadership of Costa Rica's Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN)

	Total 1985-89	Women	%	Total 1993-97	Women	%
Exec. Comm.	3	0	0	3	0	0
Pol. Dir.	21	3	14	15	2	13
Expanded Pol. Dir.	136	20	15	147	25	17

Source: Elsa Moreno. 1995. *Mujeres y Política en Costa Rica*. San José: FLACSO.

The Costa Rican experience suggests that on their own, pool-enlarging measures may not be sufficient to increase women's access to power. Expanding women's presence in power networks may gradually change stereotypes, but does little to end sex discrimination in the short-term. Curbing discrimination in the present requires a change in the mechanisms of leadership selection, either through gender preferences or quotas.

b. Gender Preferences. Gender preference policies are a more controversial form of affirmative action because they intervene in leadership selection mechanisms, although not as drastically as quotas. To grant women preferential treatment, gender can be introduced as a criterion in employment and promotion decisions. This is the most common form of affirmative action practiced in private companies and universities in the United States. In this scenario, the sex of a candidate becomes an important factor, but remains one factor among others, to be taken into consideration. Alternatively, explicit gender preferences can be established, which implies that a woman's gender can serve to compensate for her lack of qualifications.

According to some observers, gender preferences already exist informally in public and private organizations in LAC.⁶ Many of the region's political parties have issued written commitments to give women some preferential treatment in participation and decisionmaking. However, there are few instances of organizations establishing numerical targets or benchmarks to evaluate the success of gender preferences.

The failure of pool-enlarging and gender preference policies to produce measurable results in the short-term has renewed women's demands for radical measures such as quotas. In Costa Rica in the late 1980s, a proposal for women's candidate quotas was dropped from inclusion in the "Law to Promote Women's Social Equality" due to the prediction of jurists that the Supreme Court

⁶ According to María de Los Angeles Moreno, former head of Mexico's PRI, there have always been unstated quotas for women in the party. See: *Women in Contemporary Mexican Politics II. Participation and Affirmative Action*. Memoria/Synthesis of the Bi-National Conference Held at The University of Texas at Austin, April 12-13, 1996.

would rule it unconstitutional (Saint-Germain and Morgan 1991). Instead of the quotas, the final text of the law obliged political parties to create “effective mechanisms” to “insure the appointment of a significant percentage of women” to leadership positions. Yet, many women perceive that such vague and gradualist measures have been ineffective. As a result, they have recently introduced proposals in the National Congress, as well as the PLN’s Plenary Assembly, to modify national electoral laws to establish a 40 percent quota for women in party leadership and on the ballots (Granados et al. 1996).

c. Leadership Quotas. Quotas are the subject of heated debate in LAC, with proponents claiming that they are the only feasible mechanism to improve women’s presence in decisionmaking in the short-term, and opponents arguing that they discriminate against men and that women can rise to leadership without artificial assistance. For the most part, organizations where women have a more than minimal presence in decisionmaking are those with quotas. Worldwide, the highest levels of female representation in the top ranks of government are found in Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, all countries with quotas (see table 9).

Table 9. Women’s Representation in Northern Europe, 1994

Country	% in Parliament	% of Cabinet
Denmark	33	29
Finland	39	39
Netherlands	29	31
Norway	39	35
Sweden	34	30
LAC	10	8
OECD	13	15

Source: UNDP. 1995. *Human Development Report 1995*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Candidate quotas can be established through national legislation, as was the case in Argentina in 1991 and Brazil in 1995. Quotas have also produced results when introduced at the level of political parties. The high level of women’s ministerial and parliamentary representation in Northern Europe is attributable to candidate quotas voluntarily adopted by parties. In LAC, political parties with internal leadership quotas, such as Mexico’s PRD and Brazil’s PT, send more women to national representative bodies than political parties without quotas.⁷

⁷ In Mexico’s PRD, which adopted a leadership quota in 1993, 32 percent of the federal deputies and 14 percent of the senators are women. Women’s representation in the PRD is higher than in Mexico’s other major parties. Brazil’s PT, which approved a 30 percent leadership quota at its first party congress in 1991, has the largest representation of women in the National Congress out of all Brazilian political parties (9 out of a total of 39 female senators and federal deputies).

Yet, it is easier to enforce compliance with quotas if they have the status of national law. Male politicians in Argentina, who control the formation of party lists, were very reluctant to comply with the requirement that women be placed in electable positions, and in most cases only complied in a minimalist manner so as to get the lists approved.⁸ In Argentina at least, the threat of legal sanction was necessary to make quotas work. It is unlikely that political parties can provide a similarly powerful deterrent.

e. The Quota Debate. Quota advocates maintain that they are the best way to insure that legal equality is translated into *de facto* equality between men and women by guaranteeing women's representation in leadership in the immediate term. Women leaders are seen to better represent the interests of women citizens, to introduce women's perspectives into policy making and implementation, and to help to expand opportunities for women at all levels of society. Women leaders also function as role models for other women, and serve as evidence that society is inclusive and egalitarian (Bareiro and Soto 1992; Suplicy 1996).

The experience of Argentina supports some of these arguments. The 1991 Quota Law, applicable to elections for the national House of Representatives, has produced spillover effects to promote women's leadership in other areas. Quotas applied to the election of delegates to the 1994 Constituent Assembly charged with reforming the constitution. The presence of eighty women among the 305 delegates elected to the Assembly was critical to the passage of legal reforms improving the status of women in the country. As of late 1995, 19 of 23 Argentine provinces had introduced a quota requirement for elections to state legislatures, and most for municipal council elections. The Quota Law, moreover, has provoked national debate on affirmative action in other organizational contexts, including labor unions, the judiciary, and professional associations (Jones 1996b).

Argentine congresswomen are also more concerned with issues such as women's rights, children, and families than their male colleagues. A recent study shows that women were far more likely to sponsor pieces of legislation dealing with women's rights and families than were men. The presence of more women in the Argentine Congress has significantly affected the types of issues debated there. A similar pattern has been found in the Nordic countries (Jones 1996a).

The case for quotas centers on two themes. First, quotas are proven to be the most effective means of achieving gender parity in leadership in the short-term. Discrimination is so ingrained in organizational practices that more gradualist forms of affirmative action will produce results only in the long-term. Second, the presence of women in decisionmaking positions changes policy outcomes. Women leaders are more likely to represent women's interests and support policies beneficial to women than are men.

⁸ "Minimalist" refers to the practice of placing women as low as legally possible on the party list. Minimalist compliance with the Quota Law is the reason why the number of women elected is less than the 30 percent requirement. See: Jones, "Increasing Women's Representation via Gender Quotas."

Opponents of quotas, who include both men and women, argue that they are discriminatory, will elevate underqualified women to power, stigmatize beneficiaries, and, above all, are unnecessary. There are also fears that introduction of a women's quota will prompt other groups – ethnic minorities, homosexuals, farmers, etc. – to demand their own quota.

The argument that quotas are discriminatory deserves to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, the potential discrimination suffered by men on account of a quota needs to be weighed against the chronic discrimination which has excluded all but a few women from decisionmaking positions. Whether quotas constitute a form of legal discrimination depends on the individual country, although there are international precedents for the permissibility of quotas in the short-term. Within the texts of international conventions, temporary discriminatory measures intended to equalize gender opportunities are not considered to violate the principle of equal rights (Ligocki 1995). The second claim, that quotas will promote underqualified women may apply to some organizations. Yet, the fact that women have achieved parity with men in higher education and political participation in many countries indicates that there is an abundance of qualified women in the region.

The stigmatization of beneficiaries is a clear disadvantage of a quota policy. Because quota beneficiaries do not reach their position through mainstream competition, others may see them as tokens without real power. As one observer notes:

Quotas are patronizing and self-defeating. Appointing or selecting women on grounds other than ability will rebound, not just on those individuals but on women generally. To say it is merely wiping out a disadvantage is disingenuous. Women will be making progress by denying men an equal chance to compete. How can any woman politician claim to be taken seriously in such circumstances? (Phillips 1995)

Given that some stigmatization may be unavoidable, quota beneficiaries can act to disprove the view that they are tokens by serving as competent and effective leaders.

The final argument against quotas is that they are unnecessary because capable women already enjoy opportunities to access power. The vast majority of female leaders in LAC have not relied on quotas to get ahead, and there are other, less radical strategies to promote women's leadership besides quotas. This view would attribute the low presence of women in leadership positions to a lack of demand and a lack of eligible women. However, if equal opportunities existed, quotas would be pointless, as would any other mechanism of affirmative action. Most of the evidence presented in this paper suggests that women do not enjoy the same opportunities as men, although the situation is improving. Many qualified women are deliberately excluded from power. Yet quotas, which give women an opportunity to access power, do not guarantee much beyond that. For quotas to work, they must be accompanied by measures to enhance the efficacy and sustainability of women's leadership.

2. Policies to Help Women Exercise Effective Leadership

Promoting women's leadership requires two steps: getting more women into leadership roles, and helping women leaders exercise power effectively. Effective leaders can create opportunities for other women. Today, many of the women who hold power in LAC complain that they are isolated. Some claim to lack experience in the practice of politics, that is, in generating policy proposals and in negotiating confidently with their peers (Martínez and Schmukler 1995). Others have expressed insecurities and fears about assuming power, and regret the absence of a network among women leaders (Secretaría Nacional de Mulheres do PT 1993). Empowerment strategies to address these insecurities include the creation of networks among women leaders and the development of linkages between leaders and women's movements.

Non-partisan networks among women parliamentarians have succeeded in promoting gender-related legislation, particularly when these leadership networks are linked to women's movements and NGOs. For example, in the late 1980s the caucus of women within the Mexican Congress, together with the support of women's movements outside of the state, secured the passage of a series of penal code reforms concerning rape and other sex crimes (Martínez and Schmukler 1995).

Networks of leaders can also be international in nature. Two regional meetings of LAC women ministers have been held, the first in Chile in 1995 and the second in Nicaragua in August of 1996. In July of 1995 in São Paulo, "The Seminar of Parliamentary Women" from LAC was attended by federal parliamentarians from 15 countries (Suplicy 1996). In order to create a network of women leaders from both the public and private sectors, the Inter-American Dialogue and International Center for Research on Women will launch the "Women's Leadership Conference of the Americas" in the fall of 1996.

Leaders who are closely connected to women's social movements are better advocates of women's issues. The Brazilian feminist research and advisory center, Centro Feminista de Estudos e Assessoria (CFEMEA), is a strong example of how the state-society relationship may be institutionalized. Established in 1989 in Brasília, CFEMEA connects the organized women's movement to elected representatives in the Congress and Senate. Through its publications, newsletter, and frequent news releases, CFEMEA keeps women's organizations informed of the legislative process. The group also monitors the progress of gender-related legislation, and advises federal parliamentarians on women's issues (CFEMEA 1996).

The challenge in creating effective networks stems from partisan and ideological differences among women politicians and activists. In some cases, such as the aforementioned Mexican legislative initiative, partisan differences have been superseded for the purpose of achieving common goals. In other cases, ideological differences may serve as a barrier to any form of collective action. The Latin American feminist *Encuentros*, although having served an important networking function, have been plagued by serious disagreements among women participants (Sternbach et al. 1992).

In Mexico, two informal rules have served to moderate conflicts among women's networks: the establishment of an evolving consensus on all issues, and the autonomy of network activities from political parties, social movements, and the state (Martínez and Schmukler 1995). The consensus requirement allows for differences of opinion to be worked out, and the effort to separate women's issues from other political concerns aims to make a consensus easier to achieve. To function well, networks need some basic procedures for resolving conflicts so that political disagreements do not disable the advocacy of women's interests.

Policies to help women exercise effective leadership, such as networks and constituency linkages, are a necessary complement to a policy of quotas. Quotas provide women with an opportunity to initiate change, but they do not guarantee it. Women must seize the leadership opportunities provided by a quota. A Brazilian project, "Mulheres Sem Medo do Poder" (Women Who Aren't Afraid of Power), is an example of an effort to make quotas work. The project is a massive initiative in leadership training for women candidates in the Brazilian municipal elections of October 1996, when a 20 percent women's candidate quota will be in effect. In addition to sponsoring seminars and conferences, the project, run by the congressional women's caucus and NGOs, is distributing a free booklet to female candidates containing a guide to conducting an effective political campaign, the history of women's movements in Brazil, and a portrait of gender inequalities in the country (Lavinás and Pereira 1996).

In Argentina, linkages between women politicians and women's movements were instrumental in making quotas work. The Argentine quota law requires that a minimum of 30 percent of the positions on every party list be occupied by women, and that these women be placed in electable positions (this means, effectively, that there must be at least one woman for every two men at all places on the list) (Jones 1994). This second element is critical because it precludes the possibility of placing women in ornamental positions far down on the party list. Due to the extremely high resistance of male politicians to quotas, particularly in the 1993 Congressional elections when they were first applied, lists were submitted in many provinces that failed to comply with the Law. Argentine women organized a nation-wide effort to challenge these lists in court and thereby guaranteed implementation of the Quota Law (Durrieu and Jones 1995).

Networks, which counter the isolation felt by so many women leaders, and linkages, which guarantee leaders' advocacy of women's interests, make women's leadership more effective. However, for women's leadership to be sustainable, something must be done to alleviate the work-family conflict that prevents so many women from accessing power.

3. Child-Centered Policies

The fact that women bear primary responsibility for child care, housework, and care of the sick and elderly stands in the way of their enjoying equal opportunities with men in politics and business. Child or family-centered policies, which include such measures as parental leave, subsidized child care, flex-time, and child allowances granted by the government, have the objective of enabling women to participate and compete equally with men in the labor market and in the institutions of political and civil society. In spite of their noble objectives, however, child-centered policies are costly, tend to subsidize better-off women, and may discourage employers from hiring women at all.

There are at least three types of family-centered policies: legislation making it obligatory that employers provide maternity leave, day care, and flex-time; government-subsidized child care; and financial incentives supplied by the state to private companies. Significant developments in the first category of family-centered policies have occurred in LAC. In most countries, women enjoy rights to paid maternity leave without interruption of seniority. It is also illegal to fire women employees when they become pregnant. In many cases, women are legally entitled to rest periods to breast feed their children, and several countries require companies of a certain size (varying between twenty and fifty workers) to provide day care services on the premises.⁹

Maternity-oriented legislation appears just and desirable from the point of view of gender equity. It would greatly alleviate the trade-offs between family and career faced by women, and therefore promote higher female participation in the labor market. Obliging employers to provide maternity leave or day care services, however, alters the pattern of incentives facing employers with regard to hiring, firing, and promotion. For example, because of the costs involved, many employers may be less willing to hire employees likely to take advantage of a generous maternity leave policy. Second, employers may be less willing to promote women to positions where a prolonged absence would interrupt the firm's business. Third, because industries employing greater numbers of women will be more affected by a maternity leave policy, their operating costs and prices will rise, adversely affecting industry competitiveness (Fuchs 1988). The prospect of paying high social benefits may also motivate employers to shift to higher capital- and less labor-intensive production, causing more general unemployment, particularly among women. Mandatory family policies, in short, give a financial incentive to discriminate against women.

In Brazil, many employers require periodic pregnancy tests or sterilization as a condition of employment. Such a practice, blatantly discriminatory and even cruel, demonstrates the unintended and potentially pernicious effects of family policies when employers are intent on reducing operating costs. In an effort to curb the practice, Brazil recently passed a law fixing

⁹ For a summary of maternity-related legislation in nineteen countries, see: FLACSO. *Latin American Women. Compared Figures*, pp. 153-4

finances and jail terms for employers who demand pregnancy tests or sterilization from female employees.¹⁰

A second means to alleviate women's domestic responsibilities is through government-subsidized child care. Sweden provides one example of a successful program in this respect. Until the early 1990s, central government subsidies were allocated to municipal governments who managed day care centers. In 1987, half of all Swedish children aged 0-6 had a place in the state day care system (Gustafsson 1994). Alternative schemes would allocate a child care subsidy allowance to working mothers, or subsidize employer-provided child care. Both measures are expensive, but, if funded through general tax revenue, do not place a disproportional burden on employers with consequences harmful to women.

A third strategy is for the state to encourage private businesses to implement child or family-centered policies by supplying them with financial incentives such as tax deductions. In the United States, for example, businesses can deduct their expenses on flex packages offered to women. A project currently making its way through the Brazilian Congress would allow firms to deduct 30 percent of their total outlay for the salaries and social provisions of female employees, up to a total of 15 percent of profits, provided they allocated 50 percent of the tax break to professional training of female employees, and had a labor force consisting of at least 30 percent women (Piscitelli 1995).¹¹ In order for this strategy to be effective, transaction costs experienced by a firm must be taken into account when designing financial incentives. Managing maternity leave, flex-time programs, child care, and professional training for women costs firms money in terms of bureaucratic paperwork, management time, and legal counsel.

Family-centered policies such as those discussed above are expensive and complex. Yet, the fact that women have to juggle household chores, families, children, and careers constitutes a major barrier to equality of opportunities. It is difficult to see how women's access to leadership can be equalized without family policies.

4. Summary of Obstacles and Policies

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¹⁰ Lei n 9.029. Mentioned in: *Carta de CEPIA I*. 1995. No. 3 (December).

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¹¹ Proposta de Substitutivo ao Projecto de Lei n 2.417/89, de 1994 (Dr. Rita Camata).

The three types of affirmative action policies discussed in this paper – quotas and preferences, leadership networks, and child-centered policies – aim to improve the status of women’s leadership. They each address different aspects of the obstacles preventing more women from accessing power.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Obstacles</u>
<u>Short-term</u>	Quotas/preferences	Discrimination
	Pool enlarging	Women’s Structural Position
<u>Long-term</u>	Child-Centered	Gender roles

Quotas and gender preferences are meant to circumvent the discrimination that prevents women from accessing power in the immediate term. Quotas create an opportunity for women leaders to use their power to initiate policy changes benefiting all women – some of which may be the pool-enlarging and child-centered policies discussed here. On their own, however, quotas are not enough. Network-building and the construction of linkages to women’s movements help to insure that the immediate results produced by the quota will translate into expanded opportunities for women at all levels.

Pool-enlarging policies aim to bring more women into power networks. Because of women’s unequal position in the economy and society, manifested in lower rates of economic activity, educational differences, occupational segregation, and the wage gap, they are farther from power than men. Policies to improve the position of younger women, particularly by influencing their educational and job choices, will change the composition of emerging power networks. Other policies – training, campaign financing, nominating more women – strengthen the position of older women in the competition for leadership. Expanding the pool of potential women leaders, combined with an effort to eradicate discrimination, will mean that more women will rise to power on their own merits.

Finally, the double or triple burden of work faced by women – at the office, in the home, for children, for relatives – is a major impediment to their full participation in politics and business. Family and child-centered policies are intended to reduce the constraints that gender roles impose on women’s opportunities to participate in public life. By making it easier for women to coordinate work and family, these policies alleviate the trade-off that frustrates many women’s leadership ambitions.