

The Reactive Left: Gender Equality and the Latin American Pink Tide

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This introduction assesses the effects of Latin America's pink tide on gender equality in the region. We find that left governments and left competition provide an opportunity for advancing gender equality. However, the dominant pattern during Latin America's pink tide was one of a *reactive left*. Pink tide governments typically did not have clearly articulated gender equality initiatives on their immediate policy agendas. Instead, left governments mostly reacted to pressures from domestic gender equality activists. In addition to left ideology and feminist mobilization, left party type and policy type explain progress and setbacks in gender equality across six outcome areas.

Introduction

We know a great deal about the platforms—and policies—of left and right governments on socioeconomic issues. Although we also know the broad contours of how left and right tend to differ on gender equality policies, the specific dynamics remain under-studied outside Western Europe, the United States and Canada, and the Antipodes. In this special issue, we examine gender equality policies during Latin America's "Pink Tide," the shift to the left that took place around the turn of the millennium. The tide now appears to be receding, but during the first fifteen years of the new century, left presidents governed more than half of Latin America, usually with majority or plurality support in legislatures. Their parties largely offered social democratic rather than communist visions, though some leftist leaders, such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, adopted radical stances. (The emphasis on social democracy rather than communism explains why the tide is "pink" rather than "red.") Their progressive platforms had widespread appeal: even in countries that remained led by right or center parties, the left was more electorally competitive than it

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had been in decades. The period thus provides an excellent opportunity to examine whether, how, and why left governments—as opposed to non-left governments—address women’s wellbeing and gender equality in a Global South region.

Much of the extant research on gender equality and the left has focused on the rich democracies in Western Europe, North America, and the Antipodes. Many of these Global North countries enjoy well-developed welfare states, contexts in which social democratic left parties have played pivotal roles in advancing gender equality (Mazur 2002; Stetson and Mazur 1995). Indeed, left parties in these countries are more likely to have feminist and secular party platforms and are more likely to advance these interests once in office, whereas right parties historically value traditional gender roles (Beckwith 2000; Beckwith and Cowell-Meyers 2007; Lovenduski and Norris 1993). Studies examining the relationship between the left and gender equality outside Western Europe and the Anglo-American democracies have looked to contexts fundamentally different from that of Latin America. For instance, authoritarian or one-party communist regimes in post-World War II Europe and Asia (and also in Cuba) promoted gender equality as part of an overarching goal of class equality, focusing on women’s labor-market participation while leaving traditional family roles intact (Pascall and Kwak 2005; Zheng 1997). The collapse of communism and socialism in Central and Eastern Europe has meant the reduction of state support for working women, leaving gender equality outcomes uncertain (Galligan, Clavero, and Calloni 2007; Pascall and Kwak 2005).

How have gender equality outcomes evolved in other comparative contexts where the left has come to power? An assessment of gender equality progress during Latin America’s pink tide allows scholars to assess whether the conventional wisdom about the left holds true in a different global region—one with consolidating multiparty democracies, presidents as chief executives, low state capacity, and high levels of income inequality. Existing scholarship on gender and Latin America’s left turn was written either during the pink tide or focused on a single country (Ewig 2012; Friedman 2009; Heumann 2014; Kampwirth 2008; Lind 2012; Lind and Keating 2013). Our collection of cross-national comparative studies written at the close of the pink tide adds a retrospective assessment across countries and policy areas.

The contributions to this special issue are united by this common research agenda. To ensure a broad assessment of gender equality during the pink tide, each article explores the relationship between the Latin American left and progress in one of six outcome areas: women’s economic autonomy, women’s political representation, the political empowerment of indigenous women, effective gender policy machineries, reform of abortion laws, and combating violence against women (VAW).¹ Each contribution considers the role of public policy, though in some articles policy is the outcome (i.e., the passage of anti-VAW legislation) whereas in other articles policies shape the outcome (i.e., quota laws for female candidates affect women’s political representation).

The authors trace progress and setbacks in these outcome areas comparatively and across time, though the exact causal relationships studied—and thus the methodologies used—vary depending on the outcome area. Some contributions use quantitative data from all eighteen democratic countries whereas others use qualitative data to compare critical cases. All examine variation before and during the pink tide, with some adding cross-sectional analyses that compare among left governments or between left and right governments. Differences in the scope of each piece notwithstanding, the contributions collectively provide a lens into whether and how the pink tide moved gender equality forward or backward in Latin America.

This introduction draws these insights together. Left governments and left competition *do* provide more propitious environments for advancing gender equality than right parties and right presidents. The region witnessed overall gender equality gains during the pink tide, though variation appears within each outcome area. For instance, women's access to their own income—a key measure of economic autonomy—improved across the region, but that progress was uneven among women of different income levels, particularly if they were mothers of young children. On the issue of abortion, we see variation across countries: the left liberalized national abortion laws in Uruguay and Chile while the left supported total prohibition in Nicaragua. This variation supports our conclusion that the Latin American left does not promote gender equality simply by virtue of being leftist. Rather, the Latin American left *reacts* to fortuitous combinations of several causal factors. Together, our contributions highlight those factors. In addition to ideology (whether the governing party is left or not), our contributions underscore how progress or setbacks in each outcome area is shaped by feminist mobilization and feminist issue networks; type of left party (institutionalized, movement, traditional populist, or machine populist); and policy type (the social structures and vested interests affected by policymaking in the outcome area).

The Left and Gender Equality in Latin America

The election of Hugo Chávez as president of Venezuela in December 1998 marked the start of Latin America's pink tide. Eleven of the eighteen democratic Latin American countries elected left-wing governments to power, in the context of a commodity boom that buoyed economies across the region. Much scholarship focused on explaining the rise of left Latin American governments. Scholars sought to categorize the types of left governments and their economic and social policies, as well as to document and understand their effects (Cameron and Hershberg 2010; Castañeda 2006; Filgueira et al. 2011; Levitsky and Roberts 2011a; Weyland 2009; Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010). One of the most celebrated outcomes of the pink tide is that, for the

first time in history, socioeconomic inequalities declined in a region famous for having the highest inequalities in the world (López-Calva and Lustig 2010).

The pink tide also coincided with an unprecedented rise in the number of women elected and appointed to political office, including three left-wing women presidents in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, and one center-right woman president in Costa Rica. The presence of women in the region's lower or unicameral houses rose from 9 percent in 1990, to 13 percent in 2000, to 18 percent in 2010 (Htun and Piscopo 2014). As of September 2017, women held nearly 27 percent of seats in Latin America's lower or single chambers.² Research on the Global North shows a link between women's numerical representation and many feminist policy outcomes (Bratton 2005; Bratton and Ray 2002; Celis 2009; Celis and Childs 2008; Kittilson 2008; Koch and Fulton 2011; Swers 2005, 2013). The presence of women in elected office provided further reason for optimism about potential gains in gender equality during the pink tide. Indeed, in Latin America, female legislators are more likely than male legislators to introduce bills promoting women's rights and wellbeing, and female lawmakers frequently collaborate across party lines to pass such policies (Barnes 2016; Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Htun, Lacalle, and Micozzi 2013; Schwindt-Bayer 2010).

Despite these advances, the empirical data provided in this issue's six thematic articles suggest that Latin America's left shift had mixed effects on gender equality overall. First, progress appears uneven across outcome areas (for example, we see clear improvement in women's political representation, but mixed results on indigenous women's political empowerment). Second, progress unfolds differently even in the same outcome areas, whether among different groups of women or among left countries (as in our previous examples of economic autonomy and abortion, respectively). The lack of uniform progress for gender equality in these six outcome areas is consistent with previous analyses of gender equality during the pink tide (Ewig 2012; Friedman 2009), as well as research on specific outcomes, such as labor rights for domestic workers (Blofield 2012), LGBTQ equality (Díez 2015; Lind and Keating 2013; Strickler 2017), and work–family policies (Blofield and Martínez Franzoni 2015). However, whereas previous analyses have noted mixed results, they have not identified a broader logic that explains variation both across and within policy areas.

Together, the contributions in this issue show that the dominant pattern with regard to advancing gender equality during the pink tide was one of a *reactive left*. Left parties in Latin America—those that actually governed and those whose popularity made for a competitive electoral environment—did not deepen gender equality simply by virtue of being leftist. These parties articulated clear agendas on classic left issues, such as resource redistribution, and in some instances, on new left issues, such as ethnic recognition. However, they had no clear agenda on gender equality issues. Recent work finds that some left party platforms did include feminist statements, whereas

other left party platforms—like some centrist and some right party platforms—addressed women in their traditional roles; however, across parties of all ideologies, both feminist and traditional conceptions of women's issues received no priority when compared to other policy concerns (Morgan and Hinojosa 2018). Since left parties largely did not enter government with gender equality on the agenda, they needed to be pushed and other conditions needed to be in place. Together, our contributions highlight the different variables that in addition to ideology influence governments' likelihood to react: strength of feminist mobilization; type of left (whether an institutionalized partisan left, movement left, populist machine left, or traditional populist left); and the type of gender policy (whether the policy targets religious doctrines or class interests).

To begin, left governments—but also some right governments—take steps toward gender equality when women mobilize as women. The strengthening of the Latin American left opened or deepened the incentives and possibilities for social mobilization on a range of gender equality issues. Feminists in the region have long organized around issues such as VAW, gendered inequalities in access to political power, and laws that regulate sexuality and reproduction (Blofield 2006; Ewig 2006; Haas 2010; Jaquette 1994; Piscopo 2014). During the pink tide, activism in these policy areas unfolded in both broad-based women's or feminist movements as well as within professionalized issue networks—groups of activists, journalists, academics, and politicians, many from within the movement themselves, working on reform in one particular area (Jaquette 2009). International organizations supportive of women's rights and gender equality often directed their financial support to these lobbying and advocacy efforts.

Our contributions highlight how feminist issue networks leaned on governments of all ideologies to liberalize abortion, improve gender policy machineries, and pass anti-VAW legislation. Governments also felt pressure from the activation of new political actors, such as indigenous women (who may not consider themselves part of broader feminist issue networks). But women's mobilization is not always essential to all types of outcomes. For example, improvements in women's economic autonomy were largely a result of structural changes to the labor market as well as policies focused on economic inequality. Latin America's flagship policies for income redistribution, conditional cash transfers (CCTs), have not commonly appeared on women's or feminist movements' agendas. Moreover, mobilization alone is not enough—governments must perceive that addressing activists' or actors' concerns is advantageous. For instance, movement left president Evo Morales of Bolivia saw indigenous women's political empowerment as politically advantageous given his party's indigenous base, while populist left president Rafael Correa of Ecuador likely viewed indigenous women's empowerment as a threat to his authority.

We do find that the left is more amenable than the right to demands for gender equality, confirming extant research on this question from other regions of the world. Our contributors show, for example, that left legislators are more likely than right legislators to propose laws combating VAW, and that left governments are more likely than right governments to strengthen their women's policy machineries. No right government has proposed abortion liberalization in the region. And, among those countries with large indigenous populations, only those with left leadership have promoted indigenous women's political empowerment.

However, we also find that *type* of left party matters in Latin America. While some scholars of gender and Latin America's pink tide have asserted that type of left makes little difference for gender equality outcomes (Friedman 2009), others have noted inconsistencies or even negative outcomes under populist left governments when examining single cases (Fernandes 2007; Kampwirth 2010; Lind 2012). Based on the cross-national survey provided by this issue's contributions, we argue that left type is a key explanatory factor in several outcome areas. Most scholars have identified two kinds of lefts during Latin America's left turn, termed variously "right and wrong" (Castañeda 2006); "moderate and radical" (Weyland 2009); and "liberal and interventionist" (Madrid 2010), among others.³ Levitsky and Roberts develop a four-fold typology that distinguishes among an institutionalized partisan left; a movement left; a populist machine left; and a traditional populist left (2011a). We draw on this typology.

The institutionalized partisan lefts of Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil offer programmatic agendas. These parties have a well-established party organization and dispersed political authority, which together offer organized interests—including feminists—multiple channels through which to press their demands. These types of parties have been more likely to respond to women's mobilization, whether for stronger women's machineries or for the liberalization of abortion policy. Similarly, the movement left, which describes the early years of the Movement Toward Socialism party in Bolivia, is characterized by responsiveness to its social movement base (Anria 2016; Levitsky and Roberts 2011a). Regarding populist parties, the populist machine left (as in Argentina or Nicaragua) is differentiated from the traditional populist left (as in Venezuela and Ecuador) by its deeper organizational roots and patronage structure. However, both types of populist parties are characterized by a concentration of power in a charismatic leader who does not feel constrained by institutional rules or by the agendas of other party members. Populist left parties take anti-system stances. They offer fewer channels (whether within the party or outside the party, in the legislatures, courts, the media, or the streets) through which organized interests can press their demands. Our contributors outline how populist left parties of both types pose obstacles for gender equality: they design women's policy machineries that are participatory but not

necessarily feminist, display greater resistance to the incorporation of indigenous women, and backtrack in legal access to abortion.

Finally, the nature of the policy area itself influences both progress and setbacks. Scholars have highlighted how the palatability of certain gender policies over others is shaped by their relationship to social structures and vested interests (Blofield and Haas 2011; Htun and Weldon 2010; McBride and Mazur 2010). Policies that do not fundamentally challenge a polity's religious doctrine and/or its class interests are more easily adopted and implemented (Blofield and Haas 2011; Htun and Weldon 2010). Our findings largely confirm this literature. Results in five of our six outcome areas—women's economic autonomy, women's political representation, the evolution of gender policy machineries, abortion liberalization, and combating VAW—are influenced by policy type. Policies liberalizing abortion, for instance, challenge conservative religious doctrine. Policies that would help low-income women reconcile work and care require significant economic redistribution from higher-income households to lower-income households.⁴ Certain reforms generate consensus precisely because they do not challenge the economic status quo or religious doctrine: for instance, actors on the left and right agree on ending VAW or raising the profile of gender policy machineries (even if such changes prove hollow or limited in practice).

Our contributions suggest that progress in doctrinal and class-based issue areas especially requires the left to be in power, even if left governments do not push progressive changes in every case. Our focus on Latin America further allows us to identify another important social structure that shapes policy in this context: ethnicity. While highly correlated with class, empowerment and redistribution across ethnic lines is fraught in Latin America and has its own dynamic, making policies that empower indigenous peoples especially contested. We find that left governments are also more likely than right governments to address this challenge, but that party type matters; populist governments of any stripe are unlikely to empower potentially autonomous actors that can contest their authority.

Gender and the Structural and Political Underpinnings of the Pink Tide

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, a set of structural transformations that strongly undermined traditional patriarchal arrangements gained momentum in Latin America. These changes paralleled much of what had occurred somewhat earlier in the Anglo and European democracies, and included women's greater access to education and professional credentials, increased control of reproduction with later and lower fertility, later and more open patterns of conjugality, and increased incorporation into the labor market (UN Women 2017). The rise of the service economy and the shrinking

space for traditional factory work—an industry usually dominated by men—also changed the demand for female labor (Hite and Viterna 2005; Portes and Hoffman 2003). In the last two decades of the twentieth century, Latin America went from less than 35 percent of labor participation of women to 51 percent, reaching almost 60 percent when we consider women in their prime working ages (25–54 years) (CELADE 1999; CEPALSTAT 2017).

Advances in birth control, including the day-after-pill, long-term contraceptives, and the abortion drug misoprostol, increased women's reproductive autonomy in practice, even if laws did not keep up. In the same time frame as their labor force participation increased, Latin American women also went from bearing 4.2 children on average to 2.6 (CELADE 2008; World Bank 2017). Between 2000 and 2010, the overall rate of male-headed households with children decreased from the already low 42 percent to 32 percent (Arriagada 1998; CEPALSTAT 2017; Ullmann, Maldonado Valer, and Nieves Rico 2014). By 2010, female-headed households accounted for 34 percent of all households with children (CEPALSTAT 2017). Adolescent pregnancy and the feminization of poverty remain serious concerns, although the overall picture shows women challenging the economic and social authority of men.

These changing gender dynamics also reshape women's policy demands. With more women in the labor force, VAW becomes more visible, because women who enter the public sphere are more vocal, have better exit options, and are less willing to tolerate such behavior in families or at work (Hernández 2015; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010; Iversen, McCall Rosenbluth, and Soskice 2005; Therborn 2004). Similarly, more educated women are more likely to value further education or work over adolescent or early adult childbearing, and will seek to avoid or terminate early or unintended pregnancies (Rodríguez Vignol 2014). Women who are in the labor market also increasingly seek forms of political activism and representation. Female labor force participation and more unstable conjugal relations reshape preferences over public policy and have been shown to create a new electoral cleavage in advanced industrial democracies (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010; Iversen, McCall Rosenbluth, and Soskice 2005).

At the same time that these structural changes influenced gender relations, democracy—however imperfect—became entrenched as the dominant regime type in much of Latin America (Smith 2012). Previous right-wing authoritarian regimes had offered principally reactionary responses to structural change, including encouraging women to stay out of the workforce and tightening access to contraception. Democratization altered the menu of possible policy responses, especially given democratic activists' emphasis on protecting human rights and building polities that were more inclusive, just, and fair (Craske and Molyneux 2002; Sieder 2002).

In this democratic context, feminists had the opportunity to mobilize and contest discrimination. Left movements and left parties appeared as

natural allies for feminists, especially given these movements' and parties' central roles in democratization itself. Nonetheless, the Latin American left's relationship with feminism has not been seamless. The left has been more willing than the right to question economic and social hierarchies, but feminists have long fought to bring gender inequality to the attention of left parties (Friedman 2009). Historically left parties in Latin America (as elsewhere) tended to consider class inequality a primary axis of oppression, resisting a focus on gender or relegating gender to a secondary axis of oppression (Vargas 1992). With democratization came the left's greater willingness to consider axes of inequality other than class, as well as its embrace of democracy, rather than Marxist revolution, as a means for change (Dagnino 1988). Thus, structural transformations and the priorities and goals associated with democratization opened up more avenues for feminists, women in left parties, and left movements to demand the inclusion of and attention to gender equality.

By the 1990s, the region seemed poised to undertake major gender-related policy changes. Even though non-left governments dominated Latin America for much of this period, pressure from feminists in civil society and in left parties—as well as the international community—helped move some policy changes forward. Left and non-left governments overturned centuries-old laws that had enshrined formal sex discrimination in civil, property, and family law (Deere and León 2001; Hallward-Driemeier, Hasan, and Boganda Rusus 2013); passed laws aiming to curtail domestic violence (Hawkins and Humes 2002); created gender state machineries, usually in the form of Women's Ministries or Women's Institutes (Rodríguez Gustá, Madera, and Caminotti 2017, this volume); and adopted the first gender quota laws for female legislative candidates (Piscopo 2016). Yet many of these changes were also criticized for being mostly symbolic initiatives, with little teeth and almost no allocation of the resources that would increase regulatory capacities, transfer goods, or actually protect women's rights in practice.

Then, the decline of conservative pro-market ideologies in the late 1990s created space for new political projects, and the pink tide swept the region (Filgueira et al. 2011; Levitsky and Roberts 2011a). Table 1 outlines the election of left governments in the region from 1998 to 2016. Altogether, in this period, Latin America elected or reelected left governments thirty-one times, in eleven out of the eighteen democratic countries. The left also constituted a formidable challenger in countries where it did not win; in Mexico, for instance, the left was competitive and thus influential even while the country remained under rightist or centrist rule. Some key Mexican states also shifted left in the 2000s, most notably, the state of Mexico City. The pink tide began receding in the mid-2010s, propelled, at least partly, by a region-wide economic slowdown and resulting citizen dissatisfaction (Campello and Zucco 2015). In 2015, Argentina elected the right-leaning President Mauricio Macri. In 2016, the Brazilian Congress impeached leftist President Dilma Rousseff

and replaced her with the conservative Michel Temer. And, in 2017 the Ecuadorian left faced a stiff right-wing challenge after three consecutive periods in office, winning by just 2 percentage points. The end of the pink tide offers a clear moment to study whether fifteen years of the left's electoral dominance in Latin America moved gender equality outcomes forward.

Gender Equality Policies and the Reactive Left

This special issue examines gender equality policies during the left tide in six salient outcome areas. The first contribution focuses on women's economic autonomy, operationalized as women's access to their own income. Fernando Figueira and Juliana Martínez Franzoni trace women's labor force participation as well as the effects of policies such as CCTs and improved pension benefits, examining changes before and during the pink tide. They highlight how women's economic gains and losses are mediated by socioeconomic class and the related pressures of unpaid care work, discussing regional trends and making comparisons between countries. The second contribution also addresses a classic concern, political representation. Kendall D. Funk, Magda Hinojosa, and Jennifer M. Piscopo move beyond the well-researched question of when and why governments adopt quota laws for female candidates (a process that began before the pink tide). Examining data from thirty-three elections in eighteen countries, they ask which factors—left ideology, quotas, electoral competition, or citizens' satisfaction with economic and political performance—explain women's nomination and election.

The third contribution focuses on an area only recently placed on the political agenda: the political empowerment of ethnically marginalized women. Stéphanie Rousseau and Christina Ewig assess whether left or right governments promoted the political empowerment of indigenous women by comparing three South American countries with significant indigenous populations. The fourth contribution returns to a topic that preoccupied feminist scholars in the 1990s, but which has received less attention recently: women's policy machineries. Ana Laura Rodríguez Gustá, Nancy Madera, and Mariana Caminotti examine these institutions' design and strength, asking whether left or right governments were more likely to make gender policy machineries transformative, understood as agencies that both supported participation and implemented gender mainstreaming. The fifth contribution, by Merike Blofield and Christina Ewig, examines abortion law reforms, an area of reproductive politics long central to feminist agendas, but only recently addressed via policy change. Finally, the sixth article examines the classic area of VAW. Caroline Beer brings a subnational lens to the topic by examining Mexican states, asking whether left subnational governments pursue stronger VAW policies than non-left governments.

Table 1. Left governments in Latin America (1998–2016)^a

Country	Party	President	Year of election/re-election
Venezuela	Fifth Republic Movement/ United Socialist Party of Venezuela	Hugo Chávez Nicolás Maduro	1998, 2000, 2006, 2012 2013
Chile	Chilean Socialist Party	Ricardo Lagos Michelle Bachelet	2000 2006, 2014
Brazil	Workers' Party	Luiz Inácio Da Silva Dilma Rousseff	2002, 2006 2010, 2014
Argentina	Justicialista Party	Néstor Kirchner Cristina Fernández de Kirchner	2003 2007, 2011
Uruguay	Broad Front	Tabaré Vázquez José Mujica	2004, 2014 2009
Bolivia	Movement toward Socialism	Evo Morales	2005, 2009, 2014
Nicaragua	Sandinista National Liberation Front	Daniel Ortega	2006, 2011, 2016
Ecuador	Country Alliance	Rafael Correa	2006, 2009, 2013
Guatemala	National Unity of Hope	Álvaro Colom	2007
Paraguay	Patriotic Alliance for Change	Fernando Lugo	2008
El Salvador	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front	Mauricio Funes Salvador Sánchez Cerén	2009 2014

^aReflects presidents' positions during the period of their government, not the ideology espoused at the time of the election. For this reason, Ollanta Humala of Peru is not included.

In this manner, each contribution explains progress or setbacks in one outcome area. The causal relationship tested in each piece depends on the exact changes the authors explain. Some contributions examine policy change as the dependent variable, as in the cases of Rodríguez Gustá, Madera, and Caminotti's categorization of gender policy machineries' governance models, Blofield and Ewig's analysis of abortion reform, and Beer's explanation of VAW policy. Others examine how policy changes influenced progress or setbacks in the outcome area, as in Filguiera and Martínez Franzoni's discussion of women's access to jobs and welfare transfers, Funk, Hinojosa, and

Piscopo's analysis of whether gender quotas increased women's nomination and election, and Rousseau and Ewig's assessment of indigenous women's political power and influence. These differences in research design notwithstanding, the pieces together provide insight into whether and how gender equality moved forward during Latin America's pink tide.

Table 2 systematizes our contributions' conclusions, capturing the overall trend in each outcome area during the pink tide. The columns track the status of the outcome area before the pink tide (in the late 1990s), during the early pink tide (early-to-circa 2006) and in the late pink tide (circa 2007 and onwards). Though not every contribution covers all eighteen Latin American countries for this entire period, each article provides enough material to enable generalizations for the region as a whole. The table therefore reports the dominant pattern of change for all governments in this period, though the predominance of left governments means the left disproportionately influenced these trends. As with any generalizations at the regional level, some country-level divergence will occur. For example, in cases where the pink tide reached countries after 2005—as in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Uruguay—the “early pink tide” and “late pink tide” periodicity is shifted while the trend in each period remains the same.

We categorize each outcome area before the pink tide as either “incorporated” or “unincorporated,” meaning whether or not governments had previously made progress in this outcome area. We then categorize progress in the early pink tide and the late pink tide as one of the following: “no movement,” meaning no major changes occurred; “improvement,” indicating progressive change across many left (and in some cases non-left) countries; and “mixed results,” capturing how some countries saw progress, while others experienced no change or even backsliding. This categorization of trends does collapse some complexity, especially in outcome areas characterized by multiple policy problems (e.g., the myriad welfare policies that support women's economic autonomy or the multiple indicators of indigenous women's empowerment). Nevertheless, we capture the overall direction of change before, during, and at the end of two decades of left dominance.

Improvement in certain areas early in the pink tide period might suggest the left prioritized that issue once coming to power. Yet no matter whether the policy was incorporated or unincorporated prior to the left turn, only three of our six policy areas showed movement (whether improvement or mixed results) in the early pink tide: women's economic autonomy, women's political representation, and women's policy machineries. Yet all three built on policy initiatives incorporated prior to the pink tide, and continued movement in the early pink tide in two areas was due to legacies that predated the pink tide.

Advances in women's economic autonomy, measured as the share of women with access to their own income, stemmed from neoliberal changes that began in the 1990s. By the 2000s, economic necessity continued to push

Table 2. Change in gender policy outcomes during the pink tide, all Latin American countries (1999–2016)

Policy area	Pre-pink tide (1990s)	Early pink tide ≈1999–2006	Late pink tide ≈2007–2015
Women's economic autonomy	Incorporated	Mixed results	Mixed results
Women's political representation	Incorporated	Improvement	Improvement
Indigenous women's political empowerment	Unincorporated	No movement	Mixed results
Gender policy machineries	Incorporated	Mixed results	Mixed results
Abortion liberalization	Unincorporated	No movement	Mixed results
Combating violence against women	Incorporated	No movement	Improvement

Note. Incorporated/unincorporated indicates whether or not improvements in gender equality outcomes previously existed; no movement/mixed results/improvement indicates the nature of progress during the pink tide.

women into the workforce, and governments of all ideologies had adopted CCTs in order to support the most poor and the most vulnerable. Pink tide governments expanded these programs, as they came to power with socioeconomic inequality—rather than gender inequality—on their agendas. Indeed, the CCTs were among several social policy innovations that pink tide governments targeted at the poor; others included Venezuela's *misiones* and Brazil's increase in the minimum wage (Levitsky and Roberts 2011b; Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010). These policies responded to the left's traditional base of working-class males from factories and trade unions, as well as their newly incorporated bases of the informal sectors and the poor (Luna and Filgueira 2009; Reygadas and Filgueira 2010). These policies indirectly supported women's economic autonomy, but governments did little to transform the division of household labor that hindered women's paid work. It is only later in the pink tide that certain policies, such as universal basic pensions, made women's economic wellbeing central to policies' objectives and designs.

Similarly, progress on women's political representation occurred as Latin American countries continued to strengthen quota laws that were adopted in the 1990s. These changes occurred as organized networks of political women pressed electoral institutions and high courts to regulate quota laws more effectively, meaning that gains in women's access to elected office occurred as both left and right governments found their hands forced by legal decisions (Piscopo 2015). The case of women's policy machineries, then, constitutes the only outcome area where some left governments reacted early in the pink tide. While the initial creation of women's policy machineries throughout Latin America dates back to the 1980s and the 1990s, improvements to these

machineries' participatory nature occurred during the pink tide. Progress was particularly notable in the institutionalized partisan left case of Brazil, where the government improved the agency's bureaucratic capacity as well as deepened social participation.

Consequently, [table 2](#) shows that most progress in our six gender equality outcome areas happens in the latter part of the pink tide: trends set earlier in the pink tide for economic autonomy, political representation, and gender policy machineries continued, and outcomes *unmoved* in the earlier era shifted as well. Indeed, progress on indigenous women's political empowerment, abortion liberalization, and combating VAW often required time. Feminists were mobilized on these issues, but they needed time to gain broader support and time to cultivate access to allies within the state—especially in policy areas where reform would prove more contentious.

Our contributions thus indicate that while gender equality outcomes advance more consistently under left governments, this progress occurs as left parties *react* to opportunities and circumstances. Moreover, this reactive left may not always move forward—it may, in fact, stall or move backwards. Left party type is one crucial factor underlying cross-national variation in the outcome areas of indigenous women's empowerment, the effectiveness of women's policy machineries, and abortion reform. Progress occurred under the institutionalized lefts of Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile and the movement left of Bolivia, but no movement or backsliding occurred under the populist lefts of Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

Policy type also explains mixed results. Gender equality policies that would go beyond basic income for the most poor or that would support women in balancing paid labor and care work threaten class interests, and face more entrenched opposition. Policies improving women's access to elected office generally face less opposition, though this trend does not necessarily apply to indigenous women: significant racism, the correlation of class with ethnicity and race, and gender discrimination within indigenous communities pose significant obstacles to indigenous women's political empowerment. In addition, policies that confront entrenched religious interests, such as abortion, provoke more opposition than policies that do not, such as those addressing VAW. Indeed, [table 2](#) shows improvement in the less-contentious outcome areas of political representation and VAW, and mixed results in the more-contentious areas of women's economic autonomy (especially that of poor women), indigenous women's political empowerment, and reform of abortion laws. These areas challenge Latin America's class system, ethnic stratification, and religious interests, respectively.

Trajectories of Policies Incorporated Pre-Pink Tide

Forward progress in four outcome areas predates the pink tide. As noted, women's economic autonomy, women's political representation, and gender

policy machineries were incorporated before the pink tide and showed movement early on; combating VAW was also incorporated before the pink tide, but did not show movement until the later period. Changes to women's economic autonomy occurred as a byproduct of structural economic changes, while in the other three areas progress occurred as feminist activism continued and policies became stronger. Granting women more access to elected office, opening channels for women within the state, and confronting VAW target neither class interests nor the doctrinal power of the Catholic Church. While these issues provoke controversy and disagreement, politicians of the left and right can, to some extent, find common ground on these areas. For this reason, progress in these areas continued over the pink tide, under both left and right governments.

Women of the left and right tend to agree on adopting and strengthening quota laws, as improving women's access to political power benefits female politicians of all ideologies (Piscopo 2016). Thanks to the widespread use of quota laws, women's political representation trended upward throughout the pink tide period. However, as Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo demonstrate, the pink tide itself did not cause this trend. After controlling for confounding factors, the authors find that right and left parties do not differ significantly in their nomination and election of women. Party leaders' strategic calculations about the electoral environment—what Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo call the decision environment—in fact shape women's nomination and election more than party ideology. Gendered ideas that associate women with political renewal mean that women receive more nominations as citizens lose their trust in political parties, but gender stereotypes that construct economics as a male domain mean that women receive fewer nominations as citizens' dissatisfaction with economic performance increases. Women also receive fewer nominations as parties face more competitors, signaling that left and right parties prefer incumbent men as electoral uncertainty rises. As women's access to legislative office continues to improve, Funk, Hinojosa, and Piscopo's analysis indicates which electoral scenarios will favor women the most—and which will favor women the least.

Developments in laws combating VAW also do not vary by party ideology. Many early anti-VAW laws, adopted in the 1990s, resisted criminalizing domestic violence, prioritizing family reunification over women's safety (Macaulay 2006). A second generation of anti-VAW reform began in the latter half of the 2000s, as feminists pressured governments to adopt more progressive-minded reforms. As Beer points out, the right generally did not initiate these policies, but they did not oppose them either. Her qualitative and quantitative analyses trace this process at the national and subnational levels in Mexico, respectively. While center and left legislators tended to introduce these second-generation laws more than right legislators, such laws were passed under governments of all ideologies, and feminist mobilization mattered most for subnational laws' comprehensiveness and the quality of their implementation.

The left may have minimally influenced women's political representation and the strengthening of VAW laws, but these outcome areas showed improvement by the end of the pink tide. In the case of women's policy machineries, the left also played a minimal (though positive) role, but with mixed results. Rodríguez Gustá, Madera, and Caminotti show that the hierarchical status of the national gender machineries within governments did improve during the pink tide under left and right leaders. However, they conclude that left governments did not uniformly transform their gender policy machineries into more participatory institutions nor did they consistently develop the bureaucratic capacities necessary to implement gender mainstreaming. Party type, in interaction with other institutional and structural factors, played a key role: when agencies did become more bureaucratic and participatory, these changes occurred more under the institutionalized partisan left, as in Brazil, rather than the machine left, as in Argentina, or the populist left, as in Venezuela. In Argentina, the Peronist party created—and controlled—channels for women's demands, which meant that Argentine activists had neither the incentives nor the possibilities to push for an autonomous National Women's Council. Similarly, in Venezuela, mechanisms for women's participation in the machinery were tightly controlled by Chávez and his party.

In contrast to improving women's political representation, combating VAW, and redesigning gender policy machineries, Latin American countries pre-pink tide did not necessarily set out to deepen women's economic autonomy. Filgueira and Martínez Franzoni show that, in the 1990s, financial necessity as well as higher education and career aspirations drove women into the labor market. These trends continued to shape women's labor market participation during the pink tide. Left governments' attention to class inequality especially benefited poor women, who were targeted by CCT programs. As Filgueira and Martínez Franzoni demonstrate, women's advances in employment plateaued during the pink tide, as governments raised women's income without addressing their burden of unpaid care work. This burden proved particularly acute for poor women, who cannot purchase domestic services from the market—and who often work as domestic laborers themselves. This neglect has maintained the 30 percent regional gap in employment between low-income and high-income women. However, Filgueira and Martínez Franzoni's discussion of policy change does offer some reasons for optimism, as certain work–family policies were appearing on feminists' and government agendas toward the end of the pink tide (see also Blofield and Martínez Franzoni 2015; Blofield and Touchton 2017).

Trajectories of Policies Incorporated during the Pink Tide Period

Our key variables of feminist mobilization, left ideology, left party type, and policy type also shape the mixed results for the two policy areas

unincorporated prior to the pink tide. As Blofield and Ewig demonstrate, abortion liberalization provides the clearest illustration of these combined effects. Abortion policy is highly contested due to its religious and moral dimensions, and well-resourced conservative groups not only oppose liberalization but also often demand complete prohibition. Left governments only liberalize abortion when strong, mobilized feminist organizations can back them up in confrontations with opposed groups. Blofield and Ewig find that, once activists are mobilized, abortion liberalization is more likely to get on the political agenda and succeed when the institutionalized partisan left is in power, because these parties provide more channels for activist influence. At the same time, abortion liberalization under the institutionalized partisan left is also more likely to experience delay, as conservative movements take advantage of the veto points that governments with dispersed authority offer. By contrast, the personalist centralization of political authority under one leader in populist left governments typically blocks feminists' access. Moreover, the individual autonomy inherent in demands for abortion liberalization contradicts the collectivist project of populists. For these reasons, abortion liberalization succeeded, but slowly, under the institutionalized partisan lefts of Uruguay and Chile, but was rejected in populist Ecuador and even saw regression in the populist machine case of Nicaragua.

Like abortion liberalization, the rights of indigenous women were placed on the policy agenda for the first time during the pink tide. Rousseau and Ewig examine several indicators to assess the political empowerment of indigenous women: constitutional citizenship rights, political inclusion in national legislatures, and the state's creation of institutions that would address indigenous women's specific needs. Rousseau and Ewig find that indigenous women's political empowerment depends on left party type, as well as the overall strength of indigenous movements and indigenous women's space within these movements. These conditions were met in Bolivia, but not in Ecuador or Peru. Evo Morales' movement left government revised the constitution to address both gender equality and indigeneity together; brought significant numbers of indigenous women into government; and made some progress on creating responsive state machineries. However, the increasingly populist nature of Morales' government might undermine these advances, as trends elsewhere in Latin America indicate that populism has a poor track record of promoting gender equality.

Conclusion

Collectively, the contributions in this special issue encourage scholars to reconsider the conventional wisdom about the relationship between the left and gender equality, much of which comes from earlier research on rich democracies in Western Europe, the United States and Canada, and the Antipodes. As in the advanced industrialized countries, the commitment of

the Latin American left to gender equality policies has not been consistent. However, the variation during Latin America's pink tide—the period between 1999 and 2016 when the left remained electorally dominant in the region—is more extensive than the experience of rich democracies would lead us to expect. Rarely have left governments or parties championed gender equality without any pressure from feminist issue networks or mobilized indigenous women. Together, the articles in this special issue demonstrate that the Latin American left continued on a path that was forged by feminists and their allies under previous governments. The left was reactive during the pink tide, responding to demands and circumstances, but important progress nonetheless occurred. Many left governments did allow for new gender equality issues, such as abortion and indigenous women's rights, to enter onto political agendas, and they continued to strengthen previous initiatives that would increase women's political representation and confront VAW.

We have shown that feminist mobilization, party ideology, left party type, and policy type matter for explaining variation in gender equality progress during the pink tide. Policies that protect women from violence, promote women's political representation, or reform state policy agencies have been more acceptable to the left and also to the right. By contrast, policies that challenge religious doctrine, namely abortion, show mixed results across our case studies, as do policies that require redistributing economic resources to explicitly address the interactive effects of class, ethnic, and gender inequalities. Within the policy areas that are most contested or show mixed results, variation is often best explained by whether the left party in power is institutionalized and programmatic, on the one hand, or populist, on the other. Feminists have greater possibilities to exert influence within institutionalized partisan left governments.

As Latin America now appears to be turning right, what does this assessment of the pink tide tell us? We do not expect incoming right governments to be any more open than the left to gender issues. If anything, they will be more closed for ideological reasons, stymying feminists' efforts to access the state and influence its policy. Nonetheless, we expect that path dependency will matter in specific policy areas: the progress made under the left may well be continued under the right, but likely only in those outcome areas where the constitutive policies are broadly accepted (i.e., anti-VAW laws) and have created constituencies dependent on their benefits (i.e., CCTs). In Argentina and Chile, for instance, right-wing Presidents Sebastián Piñera (2010–2014) and Mauricio Macri (2015–) have so far largely maintained the more popular social policies of their predecessors (Niedzwiecki and Pribble 2017).

By contrast, we expect stalled progress or even reversion on those policies that challenge religious doctrine or require significant economic or political redistribution. Moreover, the more intersectional the effects of the policy (gender simultaneous with another form of inequality), the more vulnerable it is to backlash. Ethnically marginalized women are likely to be particularly

vulnerable. That said, the backlash could be even more sweeping or profound, targeting areas where prior consensus across left and right seemed to have existed, such as women's political representation. For instance, Brazilian President Michel Temer, ascending to power in the wake of Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in 2016, chose only white men for over thirty cabinet posts, the first time since the 1970s in a country where less than a quarter of the population is male and white. Brazil's quota law remains in place, but Temer's actions demonstrate a clear dismissal of representational diversity.

Just as the left required disaggregation in order to understand its varied impact during the pink tide, the right in Latin America also varies. Populism on the right raises many of the same issues as it does for the left. The absence of mechanisms to both channel the variety of opinions in a party as well as to constrain executives remains a serious concern in Latin America, as in other parts of the world. The Latin American right also presents a different axis of internal variation, with parties that emphasize neoliberal reforms but remain agnostic or even progressive on social issues, to parties that emphasize both economic neoliberalism and social conservatism, to parties that take religion, rather than the economy, as their starting point. The course of gender equality policy in Latin America may well depend on which of these rights comes to control governments in the region.

Notes

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1. Given our objective to build on existing research on gender and the left in advanced industrialized contexts, we limit our analysis to gender relations between women and men and to issues of women's equity in relation to men. Our analysis complements the important work of other scholars to understand developments in LGBTQ equality during this period (Diez 2015; Friedman 2009).
2. Data calculated from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliaments database, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm> (accessed October 1, 2017).
3. See also Cameron and Hershberg (2010), Flores-Macías (2010), Panizza (2005), and Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter (2010).
4. Some transfers can be direct, for example, enforcement of the labor rights of domestic workers, whose salaries are paid by higher-income families. However, many transfers would be indirect, in the form of increased tax revenue to assist lower-income households in managing their work-family obligations (i.e., early childcare provision).

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