Do women vote for women? Evidence from the Argentine National Congress

Brittany Spaccarotella

April 25, 2013

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of Honors in International Political Economy, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Spring 2013.
Abstract:
Whether or not female representation has an impact in legislative bodies across the world has been hotly debated. Much of the research indicates that female representatives have more interest in women, children, and familial issues, which become apparent in voting behavior and bill proposition. Swers (1998) finds in the U.S. that women representatives are more likely to vote for women’s issue bills as opposed to their male colleagues. Jones (1997) finds that Argentine female representatives propose more bills concerning women, children, and familial issues. However, this paper attempts to use recently released roll call voting data in Argentina to show women representatives will (or more likely?) vote for women. I find results consistent with previous literature that gender becomes more significant in bills directly concerning women, but the variable is overwhelmed by party and constituency characteristics in other bills. Women will vote for women more so than their male counterparts.
I. Introduction

There is considerable debate as to whether descriptive representation leads to substantive representation. If the representative composition reflects accurate population characteristics, does that mean legislators will vote on behalf of their identity group, such as women or minorities? This paper attempts to explore the impact that women’s political representation has on legislative policies about reproductive rights in Argentina. I attempt to show that female representatives in Argentine legislature do lead to substantive representation; women will vote for women.

The reproductive rights situation in Latin America has yet to been characterized as progressive. The combination of a highly Catholic population and history of dictatorships that believe that populating is a national duty created a fairly hostile environment toward birth control and other means of contraception. In fact, no Latin American country has liberalized its laws on abortion since the 1940s. Argentina is no exception. Until 1985 the sale and use of contraception was prohibited and many politicians-believed “to rule is to populate.” Since then reproductive rights have failed to progress rapidly. In 1999 President Menem declared a national “Day of the Unborn Child.” Not until 2002 did certain contraceptives became accessible through the public health care system with the passing of the National Law on Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation. As a result, the public health sector now works to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, provide contraceptives at public hospitals, offer family planning services, and promote sex education. The passing of this reformist sexual health law, however, does not necessitate that contraceptives are easier to obtain. Prejudices and false assumptions about

contraceptives still exist among health care providers and among the population. Doctors disseminate misleading information about the effects of contraceptives and government aid is not effectively reaching the poorest population who cannot afford contraception on their own.\(^6\) Additionally, abortion remains illegal in Argentina. Needless to say, the female reproductive rights situation in Argentina is lacking for a country considered relatively developed.

The lack of progress on reproductive rights can be understood in light of the large Catholic population and recently deposed dictatorships. However, a perplexing situation arises upon knowing that Argentina has a large number of female representatives. Argentina was the first country in Latin America to institute a quota law requiring political parties to present at least thirty percent women as candidates for seats they were likely to win.\(^7\) As of elections in 2011, 38% of Argentina’s Congress is female.\(^8\) The combination of the lack of advancement in female reproductive rights, yet increasing female political momentum, begs the question of whether female politicians are effective in providing substantive representation. It is important to note that it is not within the scope of this paper to determine the effectiveness of the quota law, but the quota law ensures that there is a critical mass of female individuals in the national legislature and a large enough sample size to draw presentable results on the question: do women vote for women?

There has been substantial amount of research to examine the voting preferences of male and female representatives in developed countries like the United States (Swers 1998) or in India where randomized villages have established mandatory gender representation (Pande 2004; Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004), but this paper focuses on the paradoxical case of Argentina. This paper will attempt to demonstrate that despite the limited progress in terms of female

\(^7\) Ibid, 2.
\(^8\) “Inter-Parliamentary Union,” last modified February 1, 2013, [http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm).
reproductive rights and the corresponding hostile abortion environment, women still vote for
women. Female representatives in the Argentine National Congress are more likely to vote for
measures that improve female reproductive rights over their male counterparts, even when
controlled by party affiliation and provincial characteristics. The reason being that in bills
congering the condition of women, female representatives pose more personal experience with
such topics and will form preferences that align with a more liberal view on women’s issues,
regardless of her party’s major ideological stance. This paper utilizes simple logit regressions to
find results consistent in demonstrating the significance in gender when voting for bills directly
affecting women and less so with other bills. These results suggest that the identity of the
representative is critical in voting behavior and that females in the Argentine national legislature
are contributing to substantive representation.

The remainder of this paper is organized as followed: section II will be a literature review
of the topic, section III will delineate the theory, section IV will provide a description of
variables, section V will display the model, section VI will present the results, and lastly section
VI will constitute a sensitivity analysis.

II. Literature Review

There is extensive literature exploring the role of women in politics and its effect on policy
choices. Most recent literature finds female representation has an impact on the politics of a
country. Researchers are determining whether descriptive representation leads to substantive
representation. In The Concept of Representation (1967), Pitkin defines the difference between
substantive and descriptive representation. Descriptive representation refers to the symbolic
representation or ensuring that social characteristics of a population, such a race, class, or sex,
are reflected in the composition of legislators. In contrast, substantive representation implies that
minority representatives actually vote on behalf of their identifiable group.\textsuperscript{9} The election of more representatives that belong to certain minority groups should theoretically lead to the better representation of their interests.

In terms of gender, many studies find that the presence of women can make differences in legislative choices. Some scholars argue, however, that identity should be irrelevant to the interests that representatives pursue. Childs and Krook (2005) argue that if the literature were to find no correlation between gender and voting behavior, it can often be attributed to the fact their sample size contains a limited number of women in elected legislature bodies. If women do not constitute a critical mass, such that women in a legislative bodies do not reach a threshold number, they will not have a significant impact on legislation produced and usually will remain token individuals.

\textbf{Developed Countries}

Most studies look for evidence in developed countries with higher rates of women politicians. Dodson and Carroll (1991) find that women are more likely than men to list their top priorities as women’s rights, children and families, and health. Men are more likely than women to list their top priority as budget and taxes. In “Women’s Political Representation and Welfare State Spending in 12 Capitalist Democracies,” Bolzendal and Brooks found that women’s political representation positively affects social spending more than constitutional structures and women’s labor force participation.\textsuperscript{10} Social spending increases with the presence of female representation because the welfare state is largely produced and consumed by women.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, when given the opportunity to participate in government policy women are more likely to

\textsuperscript{9} Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, \textit{The Concept of Representation} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, 1510.
support welfare spending legislature. Williamson and Carnes (2012) look at the determinants of parental leave policy in the U.S. and find that women legislators show positive support for longer parental leave protections.

**Developing Countries**

Limited literature on female political representation does exist for developing countries. In “Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India” Chattopadhyah and Duflo find that leaders invest more in infrastructure that is directly relevant to the needs of their own genders.\(^\text{12}\) For example, women leaders are more likely to make investments in drinking water and roads reserved for women than men leaders.\(^\text{13}\) And in “Can Mandated Political Representation Increase Policy Influence for Disadvantaged Minorities? Theory and Evidence from India,” Pande found that mandated political representation reservation does increase transfers to groups which benefit from the mandate.\(^\text{14}\)

**Comparing Male and Female Representatives**

Specifically important to this study is the article, *Are Women More Likely to Vote for Women’s Issue Bills than Their Male Colleagues?* (Swers 1998), which analyzes voting records for the U.S. Congress on bills concerning women’s issues. Swers finds that men and women do have a difference in voting behavior on issues that directly affect women, when controlling for other major influences such as constituency factors, personal characteristics, and ideology. For example, gender of the representative was most significant on votes about abortion and women’s health, but less so on votes that are not directly related to women like education. Swers also finds


\(^{13}\) Ibid, 1411.

that Republican women are more likely to vote liberally on women’s issues, particularly reproductive issues, than republican men. Swers employs the use of logit regressions on certain bills in the 103d congress and an OLS regression on a composite score of women’s issues vote. I will be using a model similar to Swers (1998) looking at the role of women representatives in reproductive rights laws and expect to have similar results in the case of Argentina, a country with even more female representatives but an extremely hostile abortion environment.

Also important to the understanding of this paper is existing research on the topic from Latin America. These studies find that female representatives in Latin America place higher priority and initiate more bills on women and children/family issues than do men (Schwint-Bayer 2007; Jones 1997; Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003). Schwint-Bayer (2007) and Jones (1997) both look at Argentina as an example to extract evidence about identity representation and its effect on policy choices. Schwint-Bayer (2007) uses data based on survey questions and bill sponsorship from women representatives. Jones (1997) uses data on bill introduction in the early 1990s in Argentina to determine priorities of female representatives, but this paper will be looking at data on nominal votes on different bills concerning female rights from 2006. Accessible data on nominal votes in Argentina before 2004 is limited and thus, this paper will be taking advantage of this newly available data on nominal voting records. This paper attempts to add to the existing literature by asking similar questions posed about descriptive and substantive representation, but looking specifically at the case of Argentina using newly acquired nominal voting record data.

III. Theory

This analysis attempts to confirm previously found results in the United States that female representatives vote differently than their male counterparts on issues concerning female
reproductive rights, but in Argentina. I hypothesize that gender of the representative will be significant only when comparing voting records for bills that focus on reproductive rights and women’s issues. Gender will still remain significant when controlling for other contributing factors for policy preferences such as party and provincial characteristics. Gender will not be significant on non-feminist issues, but rather other factors such as party affiliation will overcome most of the influence of gender on such issues.

There are a few causal mechanisms at play in determining why women vote for women. Primarily, women have experiences as active participants of the gender binary system in Argentina. These experiences particular to females make for different views on societal priorities, relationships, and responsibilities. These experiences ensure that female representatives’ preferences will most likely align with the needs of their own genders. For example, female politicians see the need for more liberal reproductive laws because they themselves have witnessed or experienced first hand such need. It is important to make the distinction that is not necessarily true that women are more responsive to their female constituents as opposed to their male constituents. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) find that the female Pradhan, or village leaders, are not more responsive to the requests of the needs of women and men in their communities. “Rather, it is because their own preferences are more aligned to the preferences of women that they end up serving them better.” Additionally, women are more likely than men to see themselves as having a special responsibility to speak for women’s interests. These casual mechanisms imply that gender is important and remains significant even when controlling for party affiliation and constituency needs.

---

This analysis will not be exploring which specific mechanism is true or false in determining female substantive representation. Most likely it is a combination of the provided reasons: largely due to the fact that female representatives reflect common gendered priorities, but also a liberal tendency of female representatives in general and an intrinsic understanding that female representatives have a special connection or responsibility to their constituent female voices. This analysis will merely look at whether controlling for certain other characteristics, such as party, ideology, provincial statistics, whether gender is still significant in whether representatives in the Argentine national legislature vote in favor of bills that improve reproductive rights in their country. The results will not prove a casual mechanism, but will demonstrate if substantive representation still exists in Argentina in recent years.

IV. Data and Descriptive Statistics

I will be looking specifically at four different types of legislation from the Argentine Senate and Chamber of Deputies in 2006. The data on roll call votes is collected from the Asociación por los Derechos Civiles. The ADC has attempted to provide information on nominal votes by the Argentine National Congress so as to raise awareness of its performance and increase accountability of elected representatives. The ADC displays the data online to all citizens, but specifically targets school-aged students in their civic education. However, roll call voting is rare in the Latin American country and usually taken only on controversial issues. The ADC does not contain data prior to the early 2000s, but roll call voting is increasing and being provided more consistently to the citizens of Argentina through the ADC.

It was the original intent of this study to look at nominal voting records for the transformative 2002 National Law on Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation. While roll call

---


voting data for the bill is available through special libraries, there is limited other comparable legislation from that particular congress featuring women’s issues in the case that roll call voting was implemented. Instead, this analysis will only utilize data from 2006. The Argentine Congress of 2006 passed pertinent legislation on women’s issues and will provide sufficient amount of data for reliable results. Additionally, the containment of data to one year allows for accurate comparison across all bills with the consistency of the political environment, the legislators, parties, and coalitions. Parties and their affiliates change frequently in Argentine politics, particularly smaller parties. Table 1 refers to the four different legislative bills that will be used for analysis. All of these bills passed the legislature and effectively became law.

The first two bills, Surgical Contraception and Sexual Education, expand reproductive rights in the country. The bill approving CEDAW intently focuses on women’s situation and forms of discrimination in Argentina and on global terms. Finally, the National Education Act works to improve the education system in the country. According to my hypothesis, Surgical Contraception, Sexual Education, and CEDAW, bills that directly affect women, will see a positive and significant coefficient on the gender variable. CEDAW is the least controversial of the legislation or in other words is the least risky vote for representatives who know their nominal voting will be recorded. The CEDAW bill also is the most directly related to women of the four presented legislations. The National Education law will not see gender as significant because other factors, such as party affiliation, will be more imperative in determining voting decisions.
Table 1: 2006 Argentine Laws of Interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Date of Adoption</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26.130 – Surgical Contraception <em>Regimen del Derecho Personalismo sobre el Propio Cuerpo, Interv. Quirurgicas Conception-Procreación</em></td>
<td>SCY</td>
<td>8/28/2006</td>
<td>Established a personal right over person’s individual bodies in relation to surgical contraceptives. Legalized methods of surgical contraceptives, such as tubal ligation and vasectomy, available to the population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dependent variable will be a dichotomous variable measuring whether or not each legislator, in both the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, voted yes for adoption of each bill. Yes votes for each bill are coded as 1 and all other responses are coded as 0. The ADC records nominal votes by the following responses: yes, no, absent, or abstain. The dependent variable in this study will only focus on whether the representative voted yes; therefore those representatives marked absent effectively will be considered a no vote. Although an absence does not necessarily translate into a negative assessment of the bill, an absence vote still demonstrates a lack of interest by the representative. There are a combined 329 seats in the Argentine National Congress and thus, the number of observations included in this national level analysis. However,
in four cases the representatives do not remain consistent throughout the entire year. Those seats are removed from the data compilation to ensure consistency in comparisons across all pieces of legislation.

Table 2 provides a list of independent variables that will be used in the logit model. Those factors include personal characteristics, partisan ideology, and provincial characteristics. Table 3 provides the corresponding descriptive characteristics.

**Personal Characteristics**

For this analysis, the most important personal characteristic open to examination is gender. Gender of each Argentine national representative will be coded with Female = 1 and Male = 0. The gender indicator is the primary variable of interest. I hypothesize that the female variable should be positive and statistically significant when dealing with legislature that directly deals with women.

Other personal characteristics, such as religion or belonging to the Catholic Church, impacts a legislators views on reproductive laws. In the case of Argentina the country is overwhelmingly Catholic, in fact 92% claim to be Catholic even if less than 20% are practicing. This study does not include a dummy variable for Catholic legislators because the representatives overwhelming claim to be Catholic and individual data is not available. If every legislator claims to be nominally Catholic, its inclusion will produce negligible effects. A variable that measures degree of religiosity, or the commitment of each legislator to religious doctrine would produce more varied results. Proyecto Êlites Latinoamericanas (PELA), from the University of Salamanca that created ideological values for Argentine parties, has established a party grade of religious belief in recent years, but unfortunately did not produce such a value in their 2003-2007 survey study.

20 “CIA World Factbook”
Table 2: Independent Variable with Source of Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender: female or male binary variable</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>ADC Cada Voto con su Nombre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party ideology: a surveyed average of party position within an ideological spectrum between 1(left) to 10(right)</td>
<td>ideology</td>
<td>Proyecto Êlites Latinoamericanas (PELA), from the University of Salamanca – ideological classification of parties as determined by a survey of Argentine legislators conducted between 2003 and 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Monthly Salary: medium monthly salary in pesos for a constituent in each province</td>
<td>salary</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INDEC), 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noroeste: dummy variable for those legislators that reside in the Northwest portion of the country</td>
<td>noroeste</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INDEC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noreste: dummy variable for those legislators that reside in the Northeast portion of the country</td>
<td>noreste</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INDEC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Mortality: percentage of deaths during birth per province</td>
<td>maternalmortality</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INDEC), 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>.3692308</td>
<td>.4833407</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party ideology</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>6.564</td>
<td>1.018243</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>8.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Monthly Salary</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>1341.689</td>
<td>378.7944</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>2646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noroeste</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>.1692308</td>
<td>.3755338</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noreste</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.3254626</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Mortality</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>.04712</td>
<td>.0181406</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partisan Ideology

The party ideology variable measures the perception of leftist or rightist policies from a scale of 1-10, with 1 as the most liberal and 10 as the most conservative. The perception is determined by opinions of Argentine legislators themselves. PELA then averaged these individual surveys to create a numerical value of conservative or liberal tendency for each major
political party. The more conservative the party, the less likely its participating representatives will vote in favor of feminist issues. Therefore, I hypothesize that the ideology variable will be negative and significant in my model. Women are elected within the structure of political parties and will need to maintain their partisan bases for reelection.\textsuperscript{21} Ideology should be a significant contributing factor in whether a legislator votes in favor or against certain legislation. However, it is important to note that the PELA party ideology survey only delivers information on main Argentine political parties. Provincial parties were given an arbitrary conservative average for all of them. Information is obviously lost by combining all provincial parties in one category, but should still be sufficient for this study.

**Provincial Characteristics**

Provincial characteristics are important for demonstrating the environment in which representatives come from and establish a proxy for constituents’ probable preferences. There are twenty-three provinces and one autonomous city for the Ciudad Buenos Aires in Argentina. All of these control variables are presented on the provincial party as opposed to smaller district data.

Median monthly salary is included because class distinction is a large cleavage in Argentine politics. The variable is defined as the medium monthly salary of the province in which the legislator resides. Htun (2003) argues different income levels alter access to private contraceptives and illegal abortion clinics, therefore middle and upper-class women may not see reason to liberalize reproductive laws.\textsuperscript{22} It follows that poorer women will need to favor more liberalized reproductive laws. Therefore, I hypothesize that the salary variable will be negative


\textsuperscript{22} Htun, *Sex and the State*, 6.
with higher incomes in a province, but most likely with limited effect. Such a causal mechanism will be difficult to capture in a simple median monthly salary variable.

Two regional dummies are included: Northeast and Northwest regions. These two regions in the North include provinces that are overwhelming rural, poor, and have large indigenous populations. The dummy variables for these regions are included to control for particular regional differences that can influence decision-making.

Lastly, the measure of maternal mortality is meant to be a proxy of overall women’s standing in individual provinces. The maternal mortality rate will be used as a numerical value for provincial preference to women’s overall standing in local communities and women’s health importance. Legislators hailing from provinces with higher maternal mortality rates will probably vote against legislation expanding reproductive rights or feminist issues. Preferences to liberalize women’s issues will most likely not occur in regions where there are high maternal mortality rates.

V. Model
A logit model is required for the dichotomous dependent variable. The specification of the logit model used is as follows:

\[
Legislation\ yes\ vote = \beta_{female} + \beta_{ideology} + \beta_{salary} + \beta_{noreste} + \beta_{noroeste} + \beta_{maternalmortality}
\]

The results of this logit model are presented to demonstrate significance of each of the variables and sign of the coefficient. However, in order to interpret the coefficient in a feasible and understandable way, I utilize the maximum-likelihood (MLE) estimation program, Clarify by King, Tomz, and Wittenberg (2000), to create predicted values for this binary logit model’s parameters. Predicted probabilities are to be evaluated as the probability that legislators
dependent on their gender will vote yes for each the bills given that the other independent continuous variables are held at their mean and other dichotomous variables are held at the median. Additionally, predicted probabilities are also found when ideology is listed at the 75th quartile on the liberal vs. conservative scale so that the results of gender can be isolated among representatives affiliated with very conservative political parties.

VI. Results

Logit Regressions

Table 4 demonstrates the logit regressions for each piece of legislation. The results are consistent with the general hypothesis and demonstrate that gender of the legislator is significant when voting for bills directly affecting women. In fact, while I thought reproductive rights would foster the most gender significance, it was the passing of the CEDAW in which gender proved to be most significant. The gender variable was significant at a .01 level only for the CEDAW legislation. CEDAW is most certainly the most connected with the female population, even including women in the title. CEDAW is specifically aimed at improving the situation of women in the country whereas with reproductive rights, the direct effect on women is slightly muted and impacts the entire demographic. Gender is still significant for the reproductive rights bills showing the importance of such legislation to the female population and female representatives.

Gender becomes insignificant on the National Education bill. This too is to be expected and is consistent with the hypothesis that gender is only significant on issues that primarily affect women. In voting on other types of legislation, party or provincial characteristics overwhelm the impact of gender. However, while the level of significance changes over these four bills, all four demonstrate a positive coefficient on the female variable. Therefore, while gender is insignificant on voting in favor of the National Education bill, it was still positively related. Women are still
more inclined to favor education laws for its obvious relationship to children, though party and provincial characteristics are more likely to predict whether a legislator will vote in favor of such bills. The following paragraphs will examine each logit regression carefully and the section will culminate in overall interpretations for such results.

In column (1), the logit analysis was done to conclude what factors impact a legislator’s choice in supporting the Surgical Contraception bill. The *female* variable was positively significant at the .05 level. *Maternalmortality* and *ideology* were significant at the .01 level. Those were the only other variables to be considered significant. *Ideology* had a negative coefficient that is to be expected as the higher scale on the ideology spectrum corresponds with more conservative values. Conservative parties were less inclined to support the Surgical Contraception bill. Additionally, *maternalmortality’s* negative coefficient was very large, thus demonstrating the powerful influence of provincial characteristics. A higher maternal mortality rate in a province, considered in this study as a proxy of the concern for women’s health in the region, is strongly negatively associated with its legislator voting in favor of Surgical Contraception. The regional dummies did not produce significant coefficients, but it is possible the *maternalmortality* variable captured most of its impact.

Column (2) was looking at the Sexual Education bill. *Female* was the only variable significant. The gender variable was less significant than that in the Surgical Contraception case, but still significant at the .1 level. The lack of significance of any other variables implies that the model may not be the best fit for the data for this case and presents a probable case of omitted variable bias. The sensitivity analysis portion will later discuss this issue.

Column (3), looking at the passing of the CEDAW in Argentina, displayed the most impact of gender on yes votes. Gender is significant at the .01 level. *Ideology* and *maternalmortality*
were also significant. Again, the \textit{maternalmortality} negative coefficient was large and very significant. The CEDAW bill demonstrates that the more direct a connection to women the greater support among women representatives, even when controlling for ideological and provincial characteristics.

Lastly, in column (4), examining legislator’s voting behavior on the National Education bill, gender becomes insignificant and ideology overwhelms the impact of gender. Yet, the \textit{female} coefficient still remains positive implying female representatives may still be slightly inclined to vote in favor of education bills, but gender is likely to be overwhelmed by party politics and provincial characteristics.

In regards to other independent variables, the \textit{salary} variable is insignificant in all regressions and hovers around a coefficient of zero. Class is a large political cleavage in Argentina and I argue it should still remain in the general model, but it appears to have no impact in this equation looking at these types of legislation. The \textit{salary} variable does not follow the intended hypothesis with a negative coefficient, but there was the potential that it would demonstrate very limited effect, if any. \textit{Maternalmortality} is negative for the logit models not concerning education practices. \textit{Maternalmortality} is very significant and negative for the Surgical Contraception and CEDAW bill. \textit{Maternalmortality} appears to fulfill its role as an indicator of the level of women’s health and highlights the importance of women’s rights in each of the provinces. It is surprising that \textit{maternalmortality} is not considered significant for education bills, nor does it produce a negative coefficient. However, education policies have less connection to adult women and their health concerns. The higher maternal mortality in a province, the less likely their representative will vote in favor of women’s issues of Surgical Contraception and CEDAW. Finally, \textit{ideology} was statistically significant in all votes except for
the Sexual Education bill. The conservative and liberal spectrum of each party is important to voting patterns, especially on controversial issues.

These results show that gender has an impact on the priorities and voting patterns in the Argentine National Congress. It is widely thought that women representatives are sympathetic toward women and children causes. This is seen in the fact that the gender coefficient is positive for all of the tested legislation panning from gender discrimination, reproductive rights, to public education. Gender is most significant in the passing of CEDAW and Surgical Contraceptive. CEDAW’s entire purpose is to promote women’s issues and end gender discrimination, thus according to the presented causal logic femininity of the representative will be most significant for this bill. The core focus of this paper is on sexual reproductive laws of Surgical Contraceptive and Sexual Education and both have an expansive effect on the whole population, not just women. Therefore, while gender is still significant, it is not as intrinsic to CEDAW law.

It is important to note that Swers argues that “the significance of gender is magnified when one considers that the bills on which gender has its most significant impact, reproductive issues, constitute the women’s issue legislation that is most salient to political activists.” These reproductive rights laws are more controversial in the hostile anti-abortion environment in Argentina, thus the associated nominal voting places each representative in the spotlight and increases political risk due to its mere controversial nature and political transparency. These significant results of gender should not be taken inconsequentiality.

---

23 Schwindt-Bayer, “Female Legislators and the Promotion of Women, Children, and Family Policies in LA,” 2.
MLE

To interpret the coefficients of the logit models see Table 5. Given that the independent variables of ideology and provincial characteristics are at values that correspond with their means or medians, a female legislator has a probability of 63.3% of voting in favor of Surgical Contraceptives, 74% of voting in favor of Sexual Education, and 53.6% of voting in favor of CEDAW. These percentages are all higher than their male counterparts. All percentages show women representatives are more inclined than not to vote in favor of women’s issues. In particular, CEDAW results demonstrate the largest differences between men and women representatives voting in favor of the ending violence against women act. When examining nominal voting among conservative representatives instead of the general congressional body, women representatives are more likely to vote in favor of women’s issues than their male conservative counterparts.

Overall, these results are consistent with Jones (1997), Swers (1998), and Schwindt-Bayer (2007) who shows that the identity of representatives does have an effect on the preferences of legislators, especially in terms of gender. However, this analysis uses actual nominal votes of all members of Congress and not just data relating to the presentation of certain bills by female legislators. The nominal voting data allows for dissected examination of female representatives in conservative parties and using data not just from vocal representatives, but incorporates a large sample size. Female representatives are more likely to align with preferences for the liberalization of reproductive rights and other women’s issues. Women are more likely to vote in favor of women related bills as opposed to male representatives in the case of Argentina.
Table 4
Dependent Variable: Yes Votes (Logit)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) SCY</th>
<th>(2) SEY</th>
<th>(3) CEDAWY</th>
<th>(4) EDUY</th>
<th>(5) Combo OLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>0.6324**</td>
<td>0.4634*</td>
<td>0.8521***</td>
<td>0.1924</td>
<td>0.4123***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.2542)</td>
<td>(0.2570)</td>
<td>(0.2487)</td>
<td>(0.2399)</td>
<td>(0.1148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideology</td>
<td>-0.7573***</td>
<td>-0.1371</td>
<td>-0.6208***</td>
<td>0.2954**</td>
<td>-0.2873***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.1590)</td>
<td>(0.1254)</td>
<td>(0.1429)</td>
<td>(0.1161)</td>
<td>(0.0549)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salary</td>
<td>0.0004</td>
<td>0.0007</td>
<td>0.0006</td>
<td>-0.0001</td>
<td>0.0003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0004)</td>
<td>(0.0004)</td>
<td>(0.0004)</td>
<td>(0.0004)</td>
<td>(0.0002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noroeste</td>
<td>0.2069</td>
<td>0.1769</td>
<td>0.6780*</td>
<td>-0.3920</td>
<td>0.2402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.3792)</td>
<td>(0.3871)</td>
<td>(0.3831)</td>
<td>(0.3635)</td>
<td>(0.1784)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noreste</td>
<td>0.8611*</td>
<td>-0.0403</td>
<td>0.8270*</td>
<td>0.6947</td>
<td>0.3705*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.4688)</td>
<td>(0.4534)</td>
<td>(0.4583)</td>
<td>(0.4658)</td>
<td>(0.2114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maternalmortality</td>
<td>-14.0784**</td>
<td>1.0823</td>
<td>-12.4540**</td>
<td>0.3920</td>
<td>-5.5531**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.5866)</td>
<td>(5.5178)</td>
<td>(5.7575)</td>
<td>(5.3761)</td>
<td>(0.4631)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5: Probability that a Female Legislator with a Given Gender, Ideology, and Provincial Characteristics Will Vote for the Following Bills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bills</th>
<th>Female*</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Conservative Female</th>
<th>Conservative Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surgical Contraception</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Education</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Predicted probabilities are calculated with programming of Clarify by Tomz, Michael, Jason Wittenberg, and Gary King. 2001. CLARIFY: Software for Interpreting and Presenting Statistical Results. Version 2.0. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University. Available at <http://gking.harvard.edu>. To be evaluated as the probability that legislators will vote yes for the bills given the other independent continuous variables are held at their mean and other dichotomous variables are held at the median. Predicted probabilities are also found when ideology is listed at the 75th percentile on the liberal vs. conservative scale.
VII. Sensitivity Analysis

The inclusion of the CEDAW and the National Education bill was used for comparison purposes to determine which cases gender would matter. Based on empirical evidence, gender of the representative will only be significant in nominal votes on bills that directly affect women. Otherwise the gender of the representative is negligible and the representative is subject to party affiliation and district needs. Therefore, it can be argued that increasing women in congressional positions is important in providing transfers to women and promoting their needs in gender, but should not radically alter the legislature in other ways. Yet, the model presented in this analysis has certain limitations to include variable error and omitted variable bias. Additionally, this section will present alternative logit models that bolster and reaffirm empirical support for the results found in this study.

Variable Limitations

The constituency data used in the logit models in Table 4 are limited to the provincial level. If there were more accurate and localized data on provinces and the districts within the provinces, the results would be more reliable. Data on the particular districts within the provinces in which legislators from the Chamber of Deputies reside would produce more precise and drilled down results. Unfortunately, data within the country is not available on the district level or localized level.

Additionally, party structure changes rapidly in the Argentine political sphere. While the implication of gender may be significant among the legislature between 2003 and 2007, it cannot be sure that ideological concerns will not overwhelm gender in following years. The ideology variable may also include measurement error, especially considering provincially based parties. The provincially based parties were grouped together with one average, even if there is
widespread ideological spectrum among them. However, this is the best estimate with the current data and regularly shifting political parties particularly in the smaller, localized parties.

**Omitted Variable Bias/ Goodness of fit**

There are some questions about the suitability of the model especially with the Sexual Education bill. In regression (2), the only variable considered significant was gender at the .1 level. Furthermore, in chi\(^2\) estimate is above zero for regression (2), therefore the model is most likely not the best fit. In order for comparison, it is necessary to maintain the same model for each of the pieces of legislation even if they are very distinct. In the case of the Sexual Education law, it may present a case of omitted variable bias. The equation for this particular bill may require alternate variables to capture what most makes legislators vote the way they do such a number of young children in each district, teen pregnancy rates, level of religiosity of legislator, or district value surveys.

**Alternative Models**

**Table 4** shows a combination regression (5) for all female oriented legislation that includes Surgical Contraception, Sexual Education, and CEDAW as a cumulative measure of how female representatives vote towards women’s issues in the Argentine National Congress when compared to their male counterparts. The combination variable is a summation of the three votes with 3 indicating voting in favor of all three legislative pieces and 0 indicating that a legislator did not vote for any of the stated legislation. Gender, as in the logit analyses, is significant. This cumulative regression is used to show the distinct pattern arising with female Argentine legislators and can be interpreted as more evidence to the significance of gender in voting patterns in the form of an OLS regression.
VIII. Conclusion

In conclusion, the logit analyses of post voting records in the Argentine National Congress show that the gender of the representative does have a significant impact on women issue votes. In legislation not directly pertaining to the female population, the role of gender is overwhelmed by party affiliation, ideology, and provincial characteristics. The more direct women’s issues bills, the more likely the representative’s identification as a woman makes a substantial impact on their voting decision. While this study’s main focus was the passing of reproductive rights laws, I find that the legislation of CEDAW saw the most significance of gender in the logit analysis. CEDAW absolutely has a direct impact on women, more so than the laws progressing reproductive rights. The reproductive rights laws have a large implication on the lives of women and often become a rallying cry for women’s groups trying to improve the situation of their gender in a country. However, reproductive rights also have a considerable impact on the lives of men, thus muting the specific effect on women as compared to the CEDAW legislation. The slight distinction of the significance of gender between CEDAW legislation and reproductive rights legislation should not take away the importance of gender in voting behavior for reproductive rights laws. The results remain: female representatives are more likely than their male counterparts to vote in favor of women’s issues bills. The more directly a bill is affecting women, the more likely the role of gender is vital in predicting voting behavior of political representatives.

Further work can be done to create more accurate provincial characteristic variables and individual data on religiosity of members of the Argentine National Congress to make a more robust model. The inclusion of more recent legislation on reproductive rights would additionally bolster the evidence of the effect of gender on representatives.
Overall, Argentina presents an interesting case in which there is a gender quota that has been in effect since the early 1990s, but reproductive rights remain behind most countries of their developmental level. Yet the results I have found in Argentina are consistent with other parts of the world regarding female representative’s impact on legislation. Women will vote for women.
Bibliography


