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Women World Leaders: Comparative Analysis and Gender Experiences

By Robert P. Watson¹, Alicia Jencik², and Judith A. Selzer³

Abstract

Research suggests that executive political office poses additional and different political challenges for women than legislative office. Yet, a few dozen women have attained their nations' highest executive office. Surprisingly little research has been devoted to the experiences of these women world leaders. This study builds profiles of the women world leaders in the modern era and analyzes their backgrounds and political experiences in an effort to both identify commonalities among the women leaders and assess the challenges they faced on account of their sex.

Keywords: Women leaders, world leaders, gender and politics

History

Over time countless women have led governments, empires, tribes, and even armies. They have started and ended wars, governed nobly as well as savagely, and, as has been the case with male leaders, some female leaders have been successful while others were not so successful. Some women leaders from history remain largely unknown and debate continues as to whether or not they actually lived or whether they were the product of myth and legend. Yet, feats of female rulers and heads of government date to the dawn of recorded history and are chronicled on all habitable continents, and in numerous cultures and countries. (Jackson 1998; Liswood 1996) At the same time, it must be said that women rulers have been the exception both in terms of humanity's collective experience with governance and our widespread perceptions about leadership, governance, and gender, which have always favored men and have been pervasive across time and cultures.

A study of women leaders might begin in Ancient Egypt, which dominated the continent for a period of time unparalleled in recorded history. From possibly the first recorded evidence of a woman ruler Meryet-Nit in the thirty-first century B.C. to the reign of the Cleopatras in the second century B.C., women in Egypt occupied positions of influence and a few governed. (Chauveau, 1997) Queens in ancient Egypt were typically revered as wives of God and these wives of pharaohs not only had esteem and influence but some governed in the capacity of official woman or Avice ruler. (Chauveau 2000) The impact on Egyptian culture of some of these women leaders was considerable, such as was the case for Ahhotep, Queen of Thebes in the fifteenth century B.C., who both ruled and bore three future Egyptian rulers, one of whom, Ahmose-Nofretari, was a daughter. Elsewhere on the continent, in sub-Saharan Africa, rulers' spouses as well as their queen mothers often shared a sort of joint rule in previous centuries. Historically, many tribes and kingdoms in eastern and

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eastern and central Africa were matrilineal, and an occasional woman governed. (Jackson 1998)

The same history of women rulers is found on other continents. Although the practice of Islam in the Middle East has generally oppressed women, history notes the existence of Arabian queens who governed. (Jackson 1998) Similarly, even though women were second-class citizens in ancient China, in Confucian times records speak of both unofficial rule by concubines of emperors and a few women who were legitimate rulers. We find further examples in Europe, where women not only ruled but fought in the Crusades, governed in place of husbands who were off at the Crusades, and contributed to the Renaissance. Catherine the Great, for example, led a life full of accomplishments and remains as one of the longest reigning and most celebrated leaders of Russian, European, and even world history. (Alexander 1989) Although no written record exists, oral history tells of women rulers in Polynesia and the Americas.

At present, numerous women occupy thrones across the world, including Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of Britain, who has an impressive tenure as ruler dating to 1952, Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, and the Maori Queen Kuini. This study does not, however, include queens, empresses, or monarchs, because in modern times they do not *govern* in the contemporary sense of the term. Nor are female leaders of tribes, provinces, or principalities included; only heads of nation-states. This paper examines elected leaders of nation-states in the modern era, which we define as the period since the end of World War II.

Women and Leadership

Even though it is not widely discussed in textbooks, there is a long and rich history of women and leadership, leadership that has existed beyond the vestiges of official power. Joan of Arc and Marie Antoinette were impressive leaders, but did not head a government, as has been the case for so many women leaders of social movements, revolutions, and political causes. (Devries 1999) Women were the foot-soldiers in numerous political campaigns, from children's rights and anti-hunger efforts to human rights and the peace movement. Women were instrumental in the abolition of slavery in the United States, the provision of universal healthcare in much of Europe, and women have always borne the lion-share of agricultural production as well as family nutrition and healthcare.

Historically, just about the only avenue of political influence open to women was spousehood. (Watson 2000) Indeed, taking nothing away from Eleanor Roosevelt's truly remarkable life and career, the basis of her influence—which permitted her to promote an aggressive and progressive agenda of justice, civil rights, social welfare, and more—was her marriage to the thirty-second president of the United States. Many women in the United States and around the world gained office through what was derogatorily known as the *Widow's mandate*, whereby a wife of a deceased leader would be appointed to fill her late husband's term in office. (Watson 2000) To that end, direct family ties to positions of leadership have long benefited men, and the same has been true to a far lesser extent for women. Several women leaders, including the first female president in the modern era Isabel Peron of Argentina gained power through her husband. Currently, in the United States, both Elizabeth Dole and Hillary Rodham Clinton serve in the U.S. Senate and have been considered as front-runners for the American presidency; in 1996 both women were the spouses of presidential candidates. Heading governments has been but one avenue of political influence open to women and, in many nations, an option open to women only recently with

recently with the passage of voting rights for women and election reforms in many nations that date only to the twentieth century.

A study by Felder (1996) attempted to identify the 100 most influential women of all time. While such rankings are always open to criticism (1), and many would probably take issue with Felder's exact rankings, such lists are instructive in bringing attention to the sheer number of women who have made significant contributions—demonstrating that female influence has extended across time, culture, and profession – and highlighting the many ways in which women have influenced the world. Felder's list, for instance, includes a wide array of women two Nobel laureates, scientists, writers, social reformers, and even the late American actor Lucille Ball. Topping the list in positions one, two, and three are, respectively, Eleanor Roosevelt, Marie Curie, and Margaret Sanger. Included in Felder's top 100 were many political leaders, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as well as nine women who headed governments. These women world leaders are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. World Leaders Among the “100 Most Influential Women” List

Rank	Name	Years
#16	Queen Elizabeth I	1533 – 1603
#21	Queen Isabella	1451 – 1504
#36	Golda Meir	1898 – 1978
#38	Queen Victoria	1819 – 1901
#46	Catherine the Great	1729 – 1796
#56	Indira Gandhi	1917 – 1984
#68	Margaret Thatcher	1926 – present
#84	Cleopatra	69 BC – 30 BC
#89	Wu Chao	625 - 705

There is a rich literature base on women in politics. Numerous studies assess, for example, the challenges facing women in politics, be they sexism, raising money, lack of mentoring and party support, or otherwise. So too has research explored women's voting behavior, positions on the issues (compared to men), and party identification. (2) Profiles of women in political office have been developed and compared to those of men. These studies generally find women holding political office to be better educated, of higher social standing, and perhaps more ambitious than other women, and somewhat similar in profile to men, except for the fact that they tend to start their careers later and are less inclined to pursue a higher office but are often better educated. (Watson and Parsons 1998) However, far less research has been done on women in executive office. (Genovese 1993; Watson 2003) While there are studies on gender and leadership, insufficient attention has been paid to the uniqueness of women world leaders. Executive office is, after all, typically the most gendered of all political offices. (Clift and Brazaitis 2000; Gordon and Miller 2003; Han 2003) Leadership studies have focused on the upbringing and traits of leaders, decision making, psychology of leaders, and so on, but less work has been devoted to the impact and consequence of gender on leadership. (Barber 1992; George and George 1997; Greenstein 2004, 1987)

Other political leadership studies examine the socialization of men and women,

finding that gender stereotypes do come into play, with men being more politically aware, more encouraged to follow politics, and being socialized with traits more conducive to existing notions of leadership. (Verba and Nie 1972) The National Election Study, the leading assessment of political attitudes in the United States, routinely shows women are less interested in and less knowledgeable of politics than men. (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1992) The numbers are improving in all these areas but remain a barrier for women. One bright spot besides the slow but gradual progress being made is political efficacy indications of an individual's belief in her/his ability to effect a change in politics has closed to the point where there is no difference in the United States and parts of Europe. (3)

Studies of the barriers to women getting elected tend to break down into five basic types: 1) gender stereotypes; 2) career choice and preparation; 3) family demands; 4) sex discrimination; and 5) the political system, which includes such important matters as the need for money/fund raising, party organization and support, the advantage of incumbency, and particular nuances of the electoral system. (McGlen et al. 2002) Equality in the political arena has come slowly and much remains to be done. It was not until the early part of the twentieth century that many western nations extended the right to vote to women and, at the close of the twentieth century, nearly every study of every political office, state, or nation showed that women trailed men in electoral success and representation. Polls done in the United States and elsewhere have consistently revealed that a considerable percentage of the population admits to "an unwillingness to vote for a woman." (4) Although the numbers have gradually been improving for prospective women leaders, even the most optimistic recent polls show anywhere from 6-20 percent of the public admitting to an unwillingness to vote for a woman simply on account of her sex. Likewise, polls measuring whether men are better suited to politics and leadership have also demonstrated progress. Of course, a percentage of the public remains opposed to women serving in politics for a variety of reasons. (McGlen et al. 2002)

Executive office and especially the presidency/prime ministership is the most gendered office in politics and thus imposes further challenges on women. (Clift and Brazaitis, 2000; Watson 2003) Society's perception of the maleness of high office raises questions about a female leader's toughness, ability to make difficult decisions, clout as commander-in-chief, and understanding of economics. This presents another barrier for women. Polls show that only about 90 percent of the public in the year 2000 believed a woman was as capable as men on economic policy. On this issue and others of most importance for voters for the presidency (or equivalent leadership) (5), the numbers are even more troublesome for women, with 80 percent believing women are as capable as men on matters of diplomacy and 85 percent on a woman's ability to lead the military. (6)

It is clear that women still face many barriers to political office in the United States and worldwide and that no office is as elusive for women as the presidency or prime ministership. Yet, women have succeeded in attaining such offices in modern times, as is evident in Table 2, and further study is needed to understand the experiences of women world leaders.

Table 2. Women World Leaders

Name	Country	Office	Years
Sirimavo Bandarnaike	Ceylon (Sri Lanka)	PM	1960-65, 70-77, 94-2000
Indira Gandhi	India	PM	1966-77, 80-84
Golda Meir	Israel	PM	1969-74
Isabel Peron	Argentina	President	1974-76
Elizabeth Domitien	Central African Rep	PM	1975-76
Marie de Lourdes Pintasilgo	Portugal	PM	1979-80
Lidia Gueiler	Bolivia	President	1979-80
Margaret Thatcher	Britain	PM	1979-90
Mary Eugenia Charles	Dominica	PM	1980-95
Vigdís Finnbogadóttir	Iceland	President	1980-96
Gro Brundtland	Norway	PM	1981,86-89, 90-96
Agatha Barbara	Malta	President	1982-86
Milka Planinc	Yugoslavia	President	1982-86
Maria Liberia Peres	Nicaragua	President	1984-85
Maarie Liveria-Peters	Nether. Antilles	PM	1984-86, 88-94
Corazon Aquino	Philippines	President	1986-92
Benazir Bhutto	Pakistan	PM	1988-90, 93-97
Violeta Chomorro	Nicaragua	President	1990-96
Ertha Pascal-Trouillot	Haiti	President	1990-91
Kazimiera Prunskiene	Lithuania	PM	1990-91
Mary Robinson	Iceland	President	1990-97
Edith Cresson	France	PM	1991-92
Begum Khaleda Zia	Bangladesh	PM	1991-96, 2001-present
Hanna Suchocka	Poland	PM	1992-93
Susanne Camelia-Romer	Nether. Antilles	PM	1993, 98-99
Kim Campbell	Canada	PM	1993
Sylvie Kinigi	Burundi	PM	1993-94
Marita Peterson	Faroe Islands	PM	1993-94
Agathe Uwilingiyimana	Rwanda	PM	1993-94
Tansu Ciller	Turkey	PM	1993-96
Chandrika Kumaratunga	Sri Lanka	President	1994-present
Claudette Werleigh	Haiti	PM	1995-96
Sheikh Hasina Wazed	Bangladesh	PM	1996-2001
Ruth Perry	Liberia	President	1996-present
Pamela Gordon	Bermuda	Premier	1997-98
Janet Jagan	Guyana	President	1997-99

Jenny Shipley	New Zealand	PM	1997-99
Mary McAleese	Ireland	President	1997-present
Ruth Dreifuss	Switzerland	President	1998-99
Jennifer Smith	Bermuda	Premier	1998-2003
Helen Clark	New Zealand	PM	1999-present
Mireya Moscoso	Panama	President	1999-2003
Vaira Vike-Freiberga	Latvia	President	1999-present
Tarja Halonen	Finland	President	2000-present
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	Philippines	President	2001-present
Megawati Sukarnoputri	Indonesia	President	2001-present
Maria Das Neves	Sao Tome	PM	2002-present
Beatriz Merino	Peru	PM	2003
Luisa Dias Diogo	Mozambique	PM	2004-present
Natasa Micić	Serbia	President	2002-2004
Nino Burjanadze	Georgia	President	2003
Barbara Prammer	Austria	President	2004

Methodology

Data was collected for all elected world leaders (see Table 2 above) in the modern era (post-WWII) who happened to be women. The *first step* in a three-part analysis of women world leaders was to develop profiles of women world leaders, profiles that are informed by the literature. There are many findings from the literature on women in politics worth considering as possibly relevant to a study of women world leaders. However, three general research findings appear to be particularly useful for this study: 1) the upbringing and formative years of women politicians; 2) challenges and gendered characteristics of family life; and 3) challenges unique to being female encountered during her political career. In addition to these three factors, the authors added a fourth factor unique to being a president/PM. As such, the four factors included in the profiles are: 1) *upbringing* (including their parents' social status, father's occupation, number of siblings, formal education, religion, etc.); 2) *family life* (including age at marriage, husband's occupation, number of children, role as wife and mother, etc.); 3) *political career* (including occupation, political positions held, age at first political office, political party affiliation, gender discrimination, etc.); and 4) *political leadership* (including their age upon becoming prime minister/president, their platform, tenure in office, etc.).

The *second step* in the analysis was to construct a model from the findings which identifies commonalities shared by many of the leaders in an effort to help us to better understand women world leaders in the modern era. Interestingly, a number of shared experiences exist for women world leaders for all four factors included in the profile. As some of the facts available for some women world leaders are unclear, not all leaders potentially sharing a common trait are included in the model. Rather, the authors only selected those for which firm evidence existed to support placing them in the model. The

final or *third step* involved analyzing the political challenges facing and political accomplishments of women world leaders from the perspective of what the literature tells us about leadership and gender.

Profiles

Profiles were constructed for all 52 women world leaders in the modern era (listed in Table 2 above). Four factors were used to compose the profiles: 1) upbringing; 2) family life; 3) political career; 4) political leadership. Given the limits of page length, profiles for ten sample yet representative women leaders are listed below to provide the reader some relevant background.

Factor 1. Upbringing

Corazon Aquino (Philippines)

X 6th of 8 children

X Western educated (Mount Saint Vincent in NY); degree from Far Eastern University (Philippines)

X From a long line of prominent politicians (father was a congressman, both grandfathers were senators, one was a vice presidential candidate)

X Wealthy/prominent family

X Catholic

Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan)

X 3 siblings

X Western educated (Degrees from Harvard=s Radcliffe College and Oxford University)

X Father was western-educated prime minister of Pakistan

X Wealthy/prominent family

X Muslim

Violeta Chamorro (Nicaragua)

X First born of 7 children

X Western educated (Blackstone College in Virginia); but only completed one year due to father's death

X Wealthy/prominent family

X Catholic

Ertha Pascal-Trouillot (Haiti)

X Wealthy (part of the mulatto professional elite who dominated Haitian politics)

X Catholic

X Law degree

Kazimiera Prunskiene (Lithuania)

X Youngest of 3

X Father died when she was 1 year old; raised by her mother

X Catholic

X Degree in Economics from University of Vilnius, Doctorate from University of J.W. Goethe

Mary Robinson (Ireland)

- X Wealthy/prominent family; both parents were physicians; several relatives were in politics
- X Catholic
- X Degrees from Trinity College (Dublin) and Harvard Law
- X 4 brothers

Edith Cresson (France)

- X 1st of 3 children
- X Father worked in government, wealthy family
- X Degree in business and a doctorate; educated at Haute Ecole Commerciale
- X Catholic

Begum Khaleda Zia (Bangladesh)

- X 3rd of 5 children
- X Father was a businessman; mother was a social worker
- X Middle class status
- X Surendranath College
- X Muslim

Hanna Suchocka (Poland)

- X Parents ran a pharmacy
- X Wealthy family; involved in politics (grandmother was a government minister in 1919)
- X Catholic

Tansu Ciller (Turkey)

- X Father was provincial governor
- X Wealthy/prominent family
- X Western educated; degrees in economics from Bosphorus College, University of New Hampshire, University of Connecticut (doctorate), and post-graduate work at Yale University
- X Sunni Muslim

Factor 2. Family Life

Corazon Aquino (Philippines)

- X Married a wealthy/noted journalist/politician at age 21
- X Husband was opposition leader; assassinated by regime
- X 5 children

Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan)

- X Married (arranged) a wealthy businessman at age 34
- X 3 children
- X Became prime minister while pregnant and with a young child; had a third child (daughter) while in office

Violetta Chamorro (Nicaragua)

- X Married wealthy/prominent newspaper editor at age 21
- X 5 children (1 died)
- X Husband was assassinated by political opponents

Ertha Pascal-Trouillot (Haiti)

- X Married prominent attorney
- X 1 child

Kazimiera Prunskiene (Lithuania)

- X Married; later divorced husband and remarried while in the People=s Congress (only 1 year before her prime ministership)
- X 3 children

Mary Robinson (Ireland)

- X Married middle class solicitor at age 25 (he was Protestant, she was Catholic)
- X 3 children

Edith Cresson (France)

- X Married an auto executive at age 25
- X 2 children

Begum Khaleda Zia (Bangladesh)

- X Married at age 15 to army captain and a leader in fight for independence
- X Husband was a founder of nationalist party and was assassinated
- X 2 children

Hanna Suchocka (Poland)

- X Single, no children

Tansu Ciller (Turkey)

- X Married businessman and engineer at age 17
- X 2 children

Factor 3. Political Career

Corazon Aquino (Philippines)

- X Age 50 on assuming first political office
- X Career path involved rising from housewife to widowed opposition leader to president
- X Party: Democrat (Unido Party)

Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan)

- X Career path involved rising to opposition leader after her prime minister father was assassinated by regime in power
- X Served in National Assembly between prime ministerial terms
- X Party: People's Party (progressives)

Violetta Chamorro (Nicaragua)

- X Career path involved rising from housewife to opposition political prominence after husband's assassination
- X Age 61 on assuming first political office
- X Party: United Nicaraguan Opposition Party (UNO, a coalition of 14 parties united against the Sandinistas)

Ertha Pascal-Trouillot (Haiti)

- X Age 41 at assuming first political office
- X Career path involved appeals court judgeship, 10 years on the Supreme Court (first

- woman to serve on Haiti=s high court)
- Kazimiera Prunskiene (Lithuania)
- X Age 46 at first political office
 - X Career includes seat in People=s Congress, member of Supreme Council
 - X Communist Party; abandoned old party for Sajudis Party (a unity/multi-party coalition)
- Mary Robinson (Ireland)
- X Age 25 at first political office
 - X Career included serving as the youngest member ever in the Seanad Eireann (Ireland's Upper House of Parliament)
 - X Labour Party
- Edith Cresson (France)
- X Age 43 at first political office
 - X Career included mayor, secretary of the party, member of the European Parliament, minister of agriculture, etc...
 - X Party: Socialist
- Begum Khaleda Zia (Bangladesh)
- X Age 39 at first political office
 - X Party: Nationalist Party
 - X Career included rise from widow of nationalist party leader to the party's leader
- Hanna Suchocka (Poland)
- X Age 34 at first political office
 - X Career includes member of parliament
 - X Party: Communist; later a member of Democratic Union Party (associated with old communist)
- Tansu Ciller (Turkey)
- X Age 45 at first political office
 - X Career includes member of parliament
 - X Party: True Path Party (DYP)

Factor 4. Political Leadership

Corazon Aquino (Philippines)

- X Age 53 on assuming presidency
- X First woman to lead the Philippines
- X Served 6 years

Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan)

- X Age 35 of assuming prime ministership
- X First women to lead Pakistan
- X Served 2 terms totaling 6 years; twice removed from office by opposition

Violetta Chamorro (Nicaragua)

- X Age 61 on assuming presidency
- X First woman to lead Nicaragua and first female elected president in Western hemisphere X Served 6 years

Ertha Pascal-Trouillot (Haiti)

- X Age 47 on assuming prime ministership
- X Served 1 year before coup overthrows her

Kazimiera Prunskiene (Lithuania)

- X Age 47 on assuming prime ministership (elected 6 days after Lithuanian Parliament voted for independence from Soviet Union)
- X Served 1 year
- X First woman to lead Lithuania

Mary Robinson (Ireland)

- X Age 46 on assuming prime ministership
- X First woman to lead Ireland
- X Served 7 years (just 4 months shy of full term)

Edith Cresson (France)

- X Age 57 on assuming prime ministership
- X First woman prime minister of France
- X Served 1 year

Begum Khaleda Zia (Bangladesh)

- X Age 46 on assuming prime ministership
- X Elected 3 times; serving non-consecutive terms (8+ years/currently in office)
- X First woman prime minister in Bangladesh

Hanna Suchocka (Poland)

- X Age 46 on assuming prime ministership
- X Served for 1 year

Tansu Ciller (Turkey)

- X Age 47 on assuming prime ministership
- X Served 4 years

Model

Several noteworthy conclusions can be drawn from the *upbringing* of women world leaders, demonstrating some common backgrounds and experiences of them. For instance, many were very well educated (especially relative to the educational experiences of other women in their countries). Regardless of the country where they were raised, numerous women world leaders received their education in the West, several of them at elite institutions such as Harvard and Oxford, and several others earning graduate including doctorate and law degrees. For instance, Prime Minister Brundtland earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Oslo and a Master of Public Health degree from Harvard, and President Vike-Freiberga earned degrees from the University of Toronto, McGill University, and the University of Quebec, including a doctorate, and she was a psychology professor at the University of Montreal. (7) Most came from wealthy families with ties to politics, several of them having well known political leaders in the family, a situation that would have improved their access to a political career. Those that did not come from great affluence and power were often daughters in large families of average or common social background and economic means who struggled to earn an education. Yet, many of these future world leaders were as impressively educated as were the daughters of elites. Not surprisingly, most women

elites. Not surprisingly, most women practiced the dominant religion of their countries, a fact that would not have hindered their later political careers. Examples of these identifiable commonalities in their backgrounds appear in Table 3.

Table 3. Common Upbringing of Selected Women World Leaders

Very Wealthy Parents	Powerful Political Families	Highly Educated
Aquino	Aquino	Aquino
Arroyo	Arroyo	Arroyo
Bandaranaike	Barbara	Bhutto
Bhutto	Bhutto	Brundtland
Brundtland	Brundtland	Campbell
Chamorro	Charles	Chamorro
Charles	Ciller	Charles
Ciller	Cresson	Ciller
Gandhi	Domitien	Clark
Jagan	Gandhi	Cresson
Kumaratunga	Gordon	Dreifuss
Pascal-Trouillot	Kumaratunga	Finnbogadottir
Robinson	Suchocka	Gandhi
Suharnoputri	Sukarnoputri	Gordon
Wazed	Wazed	Halonen
		Jagan
		Kinigi
		Kumaratunga
		McAlesee
		Pascal-Trouillot
		Perry
		Prunskiene
		Robinson
		Thatcher
		Uwingiyama
		Vike-Freiberga
		Wazed
		Werleigh

As was the case for the first factor under consideration, several interesting observations can be made about the *family life* of women world leaders, in that many of them shared common experiences. For example, many women leaders married affluent, successful husbands, tended to have small families (two or less children), entered politics at a relatively young age, and enjoyed support from their husbands and families. Not surprisingly, most did not marry young, unlike contemporaries in their home countries (Aquino, Chamorro, Shipley, Zia, and a few others did marry young). Rather, manyA married after age 21, and several

married after age 21, and several married in their latter twenties or thirties. The challenges facing women in politics, especially executive politics at the highest level, are daunting, as noted in the literature. Given restrictive existing social mores about gender and family, it is thus surprising that a few women world leaders were divorced or single. This includes, for instance, Campbell, Dreifuss, Finnbogadottir, Gandhi (separated), Meir (separated), Pintasilgo, Prunskiene, Suchocka, and Suharnoputri. Table 4 lists the shared family experiences of women world leaders.

Table 4. Common Family Experiences of Selected Women World Leaders

Married Prominent Spouse	Few Children (2 or less)
Aquino	Campbell
Bandaranaike	Chamorro
Bhutto	Ciller
Brundtland	Dreifuss
Chamorro	Finnbogadottir
Ciller	Gandhi
Cresson	Gordon
Jagan	Halonen
Kumaratunga	Jagan
McAlesee	Kumaratunga
Pascal-Trouillot	Meir
Peron	Moscoso
Perry	Pascal-Trouillot
Thatcher	Shiple
Wazed	Suchocka
	Thatcher
	Vike-Freiberga
	Wazed
	Zia

A number of noteworthy commonalities also exist for the *political careers* and experiences of women world leaders. For example, many eventual women world leaders came from political families where either their father or husband (and in a few instances their mother) were national leaders or leaders of opposition political movements. In the case of Chandrika Kumaratunga, both her father and mother were leaders. Tragically, in less developed countries, several of the fathers or husbands of women leaders were assassinated, including both Kumaratunga's parents and Sheikh Hasina Wazed's whole family.

Such family connections to the office exist for many women world leaders in both modern times and rulers from antiquity. The Russian Empress Alexandra, who ruled from 1915-1917, governed in her husband's absence when Nicholas II was away in battle, and was herself the daughter of Queen Victoria. In modern times, Benazir Bhutto, who twice headed Pakistan, a Muslim nation, was the daughter of the country's former leader. Educated at

Educated at Radcliffe and Oxford, she became the defacto leader of the political opposition after her father's assassination by General Zia ul-Haq. Similarly, Maria Corazon Aquino of the Philippines was the beneficiary of an elite western education, having attended schools in Philadelphia. When her husband, Benigno Aquino, opposed Filipino strongman Ferdinand Marcos he was imprisoned, exiled, and later assassinated upon his return to the Philippines. The widow Aquino was thrust into the role of opposition leader then campaigned successfully for the presidency. Megawati Sukarnoputri, who, at the time of this writing remains in power as president of Indonesia since 2001, is the daughter of Indonesia's first president. (Eklof, 1999)

In less developed countries, the women world leaders themselves often faced persecution, including Bhutto, Domitien, Peron, Gueiler, and others who were exiled or imprisoned. Prime Ministers Gandhi and Uwilingiyama were themselves assassinated, President Pascal-Trouillot survived attempts on her life by assassination squads, and President Aquino faced seven unsuccessful coup attempts. Many of these eventual leaders showed great courage after the persecution of their loved ones to stand as opposition leaders, some of them at a relatively young age, others with little political experience. In general, both as a result of the tragic and dangerous events preceding their own ascent to power and perhaps due to the presence of great social and political upheaval that marked the years prior to and during their tenures in office, many women world leaders challenged regimes as either opposition or alternative candidates. This was the case for Aquino, Bhutto, Charles, Charmorro, Prunskiene, Uwilingiyimana, Zia, and others.

Several women world leaders were young (less than 35) when they were elected to their first political office or became active in political movements, while several others were relatively politically inexperienced when they either began their careers or gained power. The latter group tended, not surprisingly, to be spouses or daughters of assassinated or deposed leaders who lacked the usual political qualifications for office. For example, Aquino, Bandaranaike, Bhutto, Chamorro, Peron, Vike-Freiberga, Uwilingiyama, and others had little or no political experience prior to assuming power. In general, there is little middle ground. Most of the women world leaders were either impressively credentialed B entering politics at a young age and enjoying distinguished careers B or were widows or daughters of assassinated or deposed leaders who rose to power through the tragic event and direct family ties to the office. Both of these types of future leaders, however, tended to share the experience of serving as leader of a political party or political movement prior to assuming power, often times an opposition party or movement. Table 5 lists selected examples of women world leaders who shared common political careers/experiences.

Table 5. Common Political Careers/Experiences of Selected Women World Leaders

Entered Politics Young Assassinated	Father/Husband Leader	Father/Husband
Bhutto	Aquino	Aquino
Brundtland	Arroyo	Bandaranaike
Campbell	Bhutto	Bhutto
Charles	Chamorro	Chamorro
Clark	Ciller	Domitien
Domitien	Gordon	Kumaratunga

Dreifuss	Kumaratunga	Uwilingiyama
Gandhi	Moscoso	Wazed
Halonen	Peron	Zia
Kumaratunga	Sukarnoputri	
Meir	Wazed	
Robinson	Zia	
Shipley		
Smith		
Suchocka		
Thatcher		
Wazed		

Social/Political Upheaval Leftists Led
Parties/Movemenets

Aquino	Bandaranaike	Aquino
Arroyo	Barbara	Bandaranaike
Bhutto	Brundtland	Brundtland
Chamorro	Clark	Charles
Charles	Cresson	Cresson
Ciller	Dreifuss	Gandhi
Domitien	Halonen	Gueiler
Gueiler	Jagan	Jagan
Kinigi	Kumaratunga	Meir
Meir	Pintasilgo	Moscovo
Pascal-Trouillot	Prunskiene	Smith
Peron	Suchocka	Thatcher
Perry	Werleigh	Wazed
Prunskiene		Zia
Suharnoputri		
Uwilingiyama		
Werleigh		
Zia		

In terms of the final factor *leadership* many women world leaders also share common experiences. Most were a youthful age 50 or younger when they became president or prime minister (one premier). Several women world leaders had very abbreviated political careers prior to serving as leader, with many rising from widowed spouse or opposition leader directly to the pinnacle of power. Also, several of them could be labeled as progressive reformers in office, supporting politically challenging social and political reforms.

Does gender matter in elected office or leadership? The literature suggests that, as is the case with existence of a gender gap in issue preference, women tend to pursue slightly different priorities than men: they support what has been termed women's issues such as

health care, education, social welfare, and other nurture issues more so than force issues. (8) For instance, studies have found that bills on women's issues are more likely to pass if the composition of the legislative body has more women in it. (Carroll 1993) Unfortunately for many of the women world leaders, their tenures in office were short (2 years or less), with many being forced from office not by the voters but by coup or opposition from within their party. For example, Isabel Peron was deposed in a military coup in 1976, placed under house arrest for five years, and was ultimately sent into exile in 1981. So, it is hard to tell if they would have made a difference as opposed to their male opponent. Perhaps because of the short tenure in office or challenge of being a woman in power, few women world leaders can be said to have left behind a legacy of any note, other than to have been the first woman to lead their country (which is a feat in and of itself). But, others such as Bandaranaike, Brundtland, Gandhi, Meir, and Thatcher are considered leaders among their nations' leaders, irrespective of their sex. Table 6 lists the shared experiences for selected leaders.

Table 6. Common Leadership Experiences of Selected Women World Leaders

Young Leaders	Short Tenure	Brief Career*	Reformers	Forced From Office
Bandaranaike	Campbell	Aquino	Aquino	Bhutto
Bhutto	Cresson	Bandaranaike	Bandaranaike	Ciller
Brundtland	Dreifuss	Bhutto	Barbara	Cresson
Campbell	Domitien	Chamorro	Bhutto	Domitien
Ciller	Gordon	Kumaratunga	Campbell	Gandhi
Clark	Gueiler	Pascal-Trouillot	Chamorro	Gueiler
Domitien	Jagan	Peron	Charles	Pascal-Trouillot
Gandhi	Kinigi	Prunskiene	Clark	Peron
Gordon	Pascal-Trouillot	Vike-Freiberga	Dreifuss	Smith
Kinigi	Peres	Uwilingiyimana	Halonen	Uwilingiyimana
Kumarantunga	Peterson		Kinigi	Zia
McAleese	Pintasilgo		Kumaratunga	
Pascal-Trouillot	Shiple		McAleese	
Peron	Suchocka		Perry	
Perry	Uwilingiyimana		Pintasilgo	
Prunskiene	Werleigh		Robinson	
Robinson			Uwilingiyimana	
Shiple			Wazed	
Suchocka			Werleigh	
Uwilingiyimana			Zia	
Werleigh				
Zia				

*Prior to office

Gender-Based Challenges

Women world leaders face a bewildering array of challenges and obstacles on account

account of their sex, as the literature has suggested. An examination of the general experiences of the 52 women world leaders in the modern era finds that nearly all of them faced a number of shared challenges on account of their sex. Some of the challenges they faced match the categories of barriers facing women forwarded by the scholarly literature (gender stereotypes; career choice and preparation; family demands; sex discrimination; and the political system). But, in general, three are not as problematic as is otherwise the case for women pursuing office, which might be a product of the uniqueness of the highest executive office, the powerful political families and direct family links the women leaders had to the nation's highest offices, or other factors.

One barrier identified in the literature is *family demands*. While the demands of family very well might have delayed their entrance into politics some women leaders were elected after their children were grown (an empty nest syndrome), many of the women world leaders had small families or no family (husband and children). Family was not as much of a factor for those elected as prime minister or president. On the contrary, it was, after all, the family connection which benefited many of them. Family wealth, notoriety, and political connections assisted their successful careers. Likewise, barriers from *career choice and preparation* were not the obstacle one might expect. It is true that several women leaders were homemakers/mothers, and only entered politics after their husband or father was assassinated or deposed. But, despite restrictive social mores, many of the women world leaders were extremely well educated and had ample opportunities available to them on account of their family's wealth and prominence, opportunities that would not be available for most women in their countries. For instance, some women leaders pursued careers in law, medicine, academia, finance/economics, and diplomacy. Career barriers would be expected to seriously limit women's successful pursuit of the highest office, but did not seriously hinder the women world leaders in this study.

The *political system* would seem to have been a mixed situation for women world leaders. Clearly, the lack of women serving in elected office, the lack of political party support for women, and other traits of the political system worked against nearly every woman leader. More women have served as prime minister than as president (27 versus 23), and two were premiers. Perhaps this is, in part, because it is less difficult for a woman to be elected in a parliamentary system to a seat and then rise to the position of party leader than it is in a presidential system for her to win a nation-wide election. As such, barriers in the system might be more prevalent in presidential systems. The phenomenon might also suggest that, if there is a more coalition-building, compromising approach to leadership practiced by women, such might serve them better in a parliamentary system with a strong party system than in a presidential race.

However, the first category of barriers facing women—*gender stereotypes*—was indeed prevalent in the experiences of women world leaders. Many, such as Benazir Bhutto, who served in a Muslim country where women are systematically disenfranchised, faced a harshly critical press and public response on account of her sex. The French press focused on Edith Cresson's clothing and often showed revealing photos of her legs when she would get out of a car wearing a dress or skirt. One television show even featured two puppets, one sexy and the other clearly not attractive. The latter happened to resemble Prime Minister Cresson. Similarly, Prime Minister Suchocka was criticized in the Polish press for her choices of color and clothing and the Canadian media devoted excessive, unnecessary attention to Kim Campbell's appearance, hairstyle, and clothing.

Most women leaders experienced negative stereotypes associated with being a woman. Perhaps the most profound was that women could not lead the military. Many women leaders shared Corazon Aquino's difficulty in being taken seriously as a credible commander-in-chief. The public in the Philippines and throughout the world was unwilling to accept a woman in that role. Even Agathe Uwilingiyimana's background in science was something of a liability in that Rwandan society perceived this vocation inappropriate for a woman. Likewise, Uwilingiyimana had to move the date of her marriage up after she discovered she was pregnant out of wedlock for fear of reprisal from the strict social mores of her native country. The press and public had difficulty boxing several women world leaders into a preconceived image. This is evident in the *Boston Globe's* admission that Ireland's Robinson "is hard to label...She considers herself both a devout Roman Catholic... and a committed feminist." (9) Such instances of gender stereotypes have been a dominant part of the experiences of women leaders, at times blatant and at times subtle, as in the *Bermuda Sun's* description of Gordon as "... too emotionally attached to issues," a criticism that would most likely not have been used on a man or, in other circumstances, might be seen as an asset. (10)

The other barrier highlighted in the literature that proved to be true for women world leaders was *sex discrimination*. For example, Filipino strongman, Ferdinand Marcos, leveled gender-based attacks of "a woman's place is in the bedroom," a thinly veiled and degrading reference to the saying "a woman's place is in the home (or kitchen)." (11) Such comments reveal the reality of limited employment opportunities for women in much of the world. Likewise, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller regularly faced chants from her opponents of "Tansu, back to the kitchen," reflecting the second-class status women hold in Muslim nations such as Ciller's Turkey. (12) Women in both of these countries, and elsewhere, hold few positions of authority because of sex discrimination and the great inequality of condition and opportunity that exist in most of the world, thus criticisms that Ciller could not command majorities in the National Assembly reflected not only sexism but most likely the reality of leadership in such nations.

President Aquino felt the public's expectations for her were higher than for her male predecessors, therefore dealing her a two-sided challenge of higher expectations but lower respect. Most women leaders felt they were both being judged differently as leaders and treated differently during their careers on account of their sex. Campbell experienced this in a personal way when the strain of her successful career and political power proved too much for her husband, who divorced her. Dreifuss not only encountered challenges as a woman, but she was a non-traditional woman in many ways (she was unmarried and had no children) and she was the first Jewish president of Switzerland in a country where anti-Semitism is prevalent. Accordingly, she remained quiet on issues of religion and anti-Semitism in order to focus her political capital on gender equality. (13) On the other hand, Kumaratunga felt that the long history of women in politics in Sri Lanka limited the discrimination and opposition she faced. (14)

As to the question raised in the literature of whether gender matters, several women world leaders displayed what might conventionally be labeled a feminine approach to governing. Aquino's politeness and Bhutto's kindness were, however, seen as signs of weakness in high office. Prunskiene often remarked that her "female approach" to governing was an asset because women's respect for the legal process helped differentiate her from the pervasive "black market" problems in the old Soviet Union and its break-away republics

associated with men. Also, she believed that because she was a woman she was more flexible in dealing with problems and better able to understand other perspectives. (15) Other women leaders practiced what is generally labeled a feminine approach to governance. Prime Minister Werleigh attributed her preference for a more “horizontal” approach to governing rather than the country’s history with “top-down” autocracy to her sex, Aquino tried to lead a non-violent “people’s power” campaign, Prunskiene’s mantra was “unity” among competing parties, and Chamorro sought peace and reconciliation in ending the U.S.-backed Contra war, speaking not from prepared notes during her years as president but, she proudly noted, from her heart. (16)

President Perry even stated, in response to the bloodshed in her country, “We have tried the men for more than five years... The whole world is now convinced that the men have failed us.” (17) Prime Minister Clark recorded an historic first in New Zealand politics by appointing a diverse Cabinet composed of 11 women and four Maori. (18) Perhaps gender does matter.

As noted in the literature, there appears to be some support for a gender gap in policy agendas among women world leaders. Prime Minister Bhutto pushed such programs as food aid for the poor, health care, and literacy, and released women who had been wrongly imprisoned under a system that oppressed women, while Prime Minister Werleigh supported educational improvements and literacy, and Prime Minister Wazed’s agenda included a full array of programs from assistance for the poor, elderly, and widows to housing and anti-poverty programs for the poor to racial harmony to international disarmament. (19) Prime Minister Robinson promoted legislation recognizing divorce, abortion, gay rights, and contraception in a Catholic country, and fought for the rights of women and the disabled, equal treatment of children born outside of marriage, and environmental protection. She was also an advocate for peace in Northern Ireland. (20) Indira Gandhi took the risk of promoting family planning in India, Ertha Pascal-Trouillot fought unsuccessfully for reforms to provide rights for women in Haiti, Begum Kahleda Zia was a champion of anti-poverty programs and economic opportunity, while bravely fighting corruption in Bangladesh. (21)

Indeed, many women leaders pursued agendas in line with the gender gap. Some women leaders were bold progressives: Brundtland and Halonen vigorously supported labor, environmental, healthcare, and a number of other progressive initiatives, while others were open about their strong support of feminism and were affiliated with numerous feminist organizations; Barbara headed several women’s movements and organizations, Domitien led her country’s national women’s organization for independence, and Pintasilgo, author of numerous books on feminism, religion, and economics, was considered the leader of Portugal’s feminist movement. (22)

Conclusion

The profiles of women world leaders in the modern era reveal several interesting commonalities. Not all female leaders shared all of these commonalities, of course. But, a surprising number of them shared, for example, similar upbringings, socioeconomic status, and career paths to leadership. This was true for both women presidents and women prime ministers. Indeed, the finding of so many shared experiences defines much of this study. One would expect, however, a wider range of experiences in the future as women make further progress in gaining national office and as more nations enter the community of those governed by a woman. For instance, we predict that one will see more women rising to

power on their own merits and through more “traditional” paths to high office, as opposed to ascension because of tragic assassinations and direct family ties which was the case for several current and previous women world leaders.

There is a little variation in the experiences of women world leaders. As such, a lesson of this study is to caution against any assumption of a uniform or generic view of women world leaders. As was pointed out earlier, not all were from wealthy, prominent families. Some rose from meager means, others were conservatives and bucked the trend of supporting a progressive “women’s agenda.” Examples of the latter include Margaret Thatcher, who was a war-time leader who aligned herself closely to President Ronald Reagan, Jenny Shipley, who was a conservative tax-cutter who reduced social welfare programs and enjoyed the national joke that she was “the toughest man in the Cabinet,” and Mary Eugenia Charles was a free-market reformer who supported U.S. anti-communist policy in the Caribbean. (23) We would benefit from further research that explores the struggles unique to women world leaders from humble origins, comparing their struggles to those of male world leaders who came from modest means. Likewise, it would be of interest to examine the dynamic of political ideology in terms of any challenges faced by progressive women that might not have been experienced by conservative women leaders.

Although many women leaders appear to have benefited from direct family ties to the high office, there are several examples of tragic assassinations of a father or husband political leader that predated the women world leader’s rise to power. Also, several women served during a time of social and political strife, which appears to have facilitated their “opposition” or “alternative” campaign. Such factors are not meant to take anything away from the impressive accomplishments of some of the women world leaders. However, further research should examine whether women could have made as much progress had their not been a national tragedy or crisis. Relatedly, the very same conditions of instability that made possible their rise appear to have contributed to the short tenures and lack of substantive policy legacies of several of the women world leaders. Further research is needed on the specific political crises that impacted the matter, and we predict that more women will rise to power in “normal” times and under more conventional conditions.

On a less scholarly note, women interested in pursuing careers in public life should find inspiration from the stories of several of the women who headed their governments. Mary McAleese, one of the longest serving women ever to head a nation and, at the time of this writing, the president of Ireland since 1997, defeated not only her male rivals but a field of five female candidates to win office, doing so while the mother of three teenage children. McAleese rose from humble means, earned a law degree and taught as a professor at Trinity College in Dublin and journalist for the national broadcasting network prior to her remarkable political career. (24) Consider also Corazon Aquino, who was honored as *Time* magazine’s “Woman of the Year” and was the recipient of the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award, the UN Silver Medal, and the Canadian International Prize for Freedom. Benazir Bhutto received the Bruno Kreisky Human Rights Award and was named to *Time*’s “100 most Powerful Women” list and Violetta Chamorro, who inherited a war-torn, devastated country, revitalized its economy and became known as the “Mother of Nicaragua” and won the Path to Peace Award. Golda Meir saw her nation through numerous national security crises and for her courage became one of the most respected women in both Israel and the United States. At great risk to her personal security, Kazimiera Prunskiene assumed the helm of Lithuania’s fledgling government only six days after independence from the Soviet Union, and while

from the Soviet Union, and while Gorbachev and Soviet hardliners opposed the recognition of Lithuania's independence and did not rule out military force to quell the independence movement. Indira Gandhi acted boldly in order, she believed, to save her nation by declaring a state of emergency, cracking down on civil liberties and political opposition, all the while extending herself extraordinary powers.

It is also clear that women's leadership is an international phenomenon. Numerous nations and all regions of the world are represented by women in high office, some more than others, including many less developed nations where women face inequalities due to their sex. Further research is needed on women world leaders. We believe it might be worthwhile to consider the oratory skills of women leaders, their charisma, and other personal and political traits associated with successful leadership. Relatedly, it would be beneficial to our understanding of women world leaders to further examine their relationship with their militaries, including those who governed during times of war and national security crises. Further attention should also be devoted to the short tenures in office and relative lack of substantive policy legacies by many of the women world leaders. We suggest exploring these occurrences not just as byproducts of sexism but within the context of the turmoil and crisis that generally corresponded to many of the women world leaders' rule. Moreover, it will be beneficial to compare these trailblazing experiences with the experiences of the second, third, and so on, women to serve as leader in a particular country, as the uniqueness of women's leadership becomes less of a defining characteristic.

This study highlighted the array of challenges that have faced women world leaders as well as the many shared political experiences, existing national turmoil, and family backgrounds that have defined women who have governed, suggesting that perhaps such advantages have helped women to attain office while overcoming the many sexist and structural barriers to women in high office. At the same time, the study highlighted the extraordinary accomplishments, both during their education, upbringing, and early careers as well as their tenures in high office, of several of the women who governed.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of ranking leaders, see a special issue of *White House Studies*, Volume 3, Number 1, 2003 guest edited by Meena Bose and Mark Landis which examines the practice in great detail.
2. For a further discussion, see Genovese, 1993 and Thomas and Wilcox, 1998.
3. See the Social Capital Benchmark Survey, The Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America, John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (2000), <<http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu>>
4. See, for instance, the many Gallup polls on the topic of women and leadership/presidency at www.gallup.com, The White House Project polls at www.womensleadershipfund.org or www.thewhitehouseproject.org.
5. "American opinion," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 22, 2000, p. A9.
6. The 2000 Virginia Slims/Roper Starch Worldwide Poll.
7. "Vaira Vike-Freiberga." *Current Leaders of Nations*. Gale Group, 1999. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich. The Gale Group, 2004. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/biorc>>; "Latvia Woman is President." *The New York Times*. 18 June 1999: p. A15.
8. See "The Gender Gap," Center for the American Woman and Politics Fact Sheet, Eagleton

Eagleton Institute at Rutgers University, July 1996.

9. Ibid.

10. "Bermuda Premier Survives Leadership Challenge." *CNN.com*. 3 November 2000. <<http://womenshistory.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site>> accessed 22 July 2004; McWilliam, Tony. "Gordon Becomes Bermuda's Premier." *The Bermuda Sun*, 27 March 1997. <<http://www.bermudasun.org/issues/mar27>97/newpremier.html>> accessed 8 July 2004; "Pamela Gordon." *Contemporary Black Biography*, Vol. 17. Gale Research, 1998. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: The Gale Group, 2004. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/biorc>>

11. Laura Liswood, *Women World Leaders*, p. 5.

12. Ibid.

13. "Ruth Dreifuss." *Current Leaders of Nations*. Gale Group, 1999. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale Group, 2004. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/biorc>>; "Ruth Dreifuss: President of Switzerland." *Women Leaders and Transformation in Developing Countries*, 2001. <<http://people.brandeis.edu/~dwilliam/profiles/dreifuss.htm>> accessed 2 August 2004.

14. "President Kumaratunga." The Official Website of the Government of Sri Lanka. 20 November 2003. <<http://www.priu.gov.lk/execpres/cbk.html>> accessed 12 July 2004; "Profile: Chandrika Kumaratunga." BBC News: UK Edition. 3 April 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3239821.stm> accessed 10 July 2004.

15. Lieven, Anatol. "No Russian Spoken Here." *The New York Times*. 16 July 1999: p. A19.

16. See "Interview with Claudette Werleigh." Haiti Briefing, Vol. 31, 11 pars., December 1998. <<http://haitisupport.gn.apc.org/31b.html#iw>> accessed 10 July 2004; see also AFemale Presidents.@ *Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership*. 7 July 2004. <<http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/president.htm>> accessed 23 July 2004; see *Current Leaders of Nations*. Gale Group, 1999. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale Group, 2004. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/biorc>>; see *Encyclopedia of World Biography Supplement*, Vol. 18. Gale Research, 1998. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich. The Gale Group, 2004. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/biorc>>

17. French, Howard W. "In Liberia, Life Returns to a Grim Normalcy." *The New York Times*, 21 August 1996: p. A8.; Ruth Perry. *Contemporary Black Biography*, Vol. 15. Gale Research, 1997. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: The Gale Group, 2004. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/biorc>>; "New Interim Leader is Chosen for Liberia." *The New York Times*. 19 August 1996: p. A4. Ruth Sando Perry. Leadership Bank. 22 July 2004. <<http://www.fasngo.org/en/presentation/leadbank/people/perry.htm>>

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21. See "Female Presidents." *Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership*. 7 July 2004. <<http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/president.htm>> accessed 23 July 2004; see *Current Leaders of Nations*. Gale Group, 1999. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale Group, 2004. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/biorc>>; see *Encyclopedia of World Biography Supplement*, Vol. 18. Gale Research, 1998. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich. The Gale Group, 2004. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/biorc>>; "World Leaders." IranDokht, 2002. <<http://www.irandokht.com/womenfactsheet/>> accessed 22 July 2004.
22. Ibid. and "Tarja Halonen." *Biography Resource Center Online*. Gale Group, 2000. Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: The Gale Group, 2004. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/biorc>>; "Halonen, Tarja Kaarina." <<http://www.tpk.fi/eng/persons/thcv.html>> accessed 7 July 2004; "The President of the Republic of Finland." Office of the President of Finland, 2002. <<http://www.presidentti.fi/english/>> accessed 11 July 2004.
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