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*The (Lack of) Gender Dynamics of Gubernatorial Executive Orders**

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ABSTRACT

How do governors utilize state executive orders to effect policy changes? Are there differences between male and female governors? Though various works have examined the dynamics of presidential executive orders, few have examined how governors employ executive orders at the state level. We present results of a pilot study on how gender influences use of gubernatorial executive orders. Contrary to much of the literature on gender dynamics, we find minimal differences in the ways that female and male governors use gubernatorial executive orders. Female governors do not appear to rely more or less on unilateral orders than do their male colleagues. Although we do find some evidence that female governors are less likely to issue cultural and economic executive orders than social-issue and public-health executive orders, the difference between female and male governors across most issue areas is minimal. These results have important implications on studies of gender dynamics, the unilateral executive, and gubernatorial behavior.

KEY WORDS Gender Dynamics; Executive Orders; Gubernatorial Decision Making

Despite recent advances in electing female candidates at the federal and state levels, the number of states led by female governors remains small. As of April 2017, only four states had governors who were female: New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Rhode Island. Overall, a total of 37 women have served as governors in 27 states. By comparison, Congress had a total of 104 female members in 2017, with 21 in the U.S.

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Senate and 83 in the U.S. House of Representatives. Surprisingly, although multiple works examine how gender affects elite behavior across a variety of contexts (Anzia and Berry 2011; Dolan 2000; Dolan 2011; Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003), scant attention has been given to the differences between male and female governors. (For an exception, see Heidbreder and Scheurer 2012.) To help address this gap in the literature, we will report the results of a pilot project on how gender affects the dynamics of gubernatorial executive orders.

A better understanding of how governors employ unilateral actions at the state level is important. A review of gubernatorial actions suggests that uses of state executive orders are expansive. Governors have issued executive orders to address a variety of issue areas, including healthcare policies (Gakh, Vernick, and Rutkow 2013; Schneider 1989), consensus building and dispute resolution (Carlson 2000), antidiscrimination policies in the workplace (Colvin 2000), gay rights (Klawitter and Flatt 1998), and policies that affect state agencies (Ryan 1978; Woods 2004). Moreover, various studies suggest not only that female governors prioritize certain policy areas more so than do male governors (see, for instance, Heidbreder and Scheurer 2012; Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003) but also that females tend to be more collaborative and to sponsor and cosponsor significantly more legislation than do their male colleagues (Anzia and Berry 2011).

To determine whether gender influences gubernatorial behaviors, we examine executive orders across seven states, limiting the period to 1959–2017 because of data constraints. Contrary to existing literature on gender differences, our findings suggest that even after controlling for situational, political, and economic factors, female governors are not more or less prone to unilateral activity than their male colleagues. Moreover, although we do find some evidence that female governors are less likely to issue cultural and economic executive orders than social-issue and public-health executive orders, the difference between female and male governors across most issue areas is minimal.

GENDER AND THE GOVERNORSHIP

Our main goal in this article is to examine whether female governors use executive orders differently than do their fellow male governors. Though most studies on executive orders and unilateral actions have focused on U.S. presidents (see, for instance, Bolton and Thrower 2016; Howell 2003; Ouyang and Waterman 2015; Warber 2006), a small number of works on gubernatorial executive orders has begun to accumulate. For example, McLaughlin et al. (2010) reported a massive data-collection effort to create a comprehensive public-policy database for the State of Pennsylvania, which includes state executive orders since 1979. Similarly, Rivera and Wagner (2010) examined the tendency of New Jersey governors to use executive orders as policy instruments. Although insightful, these studies remain limited in that they speak to only a single state's propensity for executive orders.

Taking a more comprehensive approach to the study of governors and state executive orders, Ferguson and Bowling (2008) provided an initial examination of executive orders across 49 states from 2004 and 2005. Although they did not subject the data to rigorous empirical tests, Ferguson and Bowling nonetheless found that executive

orders are frequently used by governors for a variety of policy areas. More recently, Barber, Bolton, and Thrower (2016) proposed a theory of executive unilateral policy-making that highlights inter- and intra-branch ideological conflicts. Their work suggests that while ideological disagreements between the executive and legislative branches can constrain unilateral actions, this constraint is contingent on low levels of legislative polarization and a party's ability to overcome supermajority barriers.

Surprisingly, while gubernatorial executive orders have received greater interest in the literature, to our knowledge, no study has examined the degree to which female governors employ unilateral authority differently than male governors. As the chief executive of her state, a female governor is in a unique position to advance policies for her female constituents, acting as an advocate. Moreover, by strategically using executive orders when possible, female governors are able to overcome the many legislative barriers that often limit policy-making. The question, however, is do they?

Scholars have devoted considerable energy to the study of gender across a mix of contexts. The ability to take on such executive positions comes at a cost. First and foremost, women face unique challenges in the workplace. Such women, especially those in executive positions, are much more likely to sacrifice their personal lives in order to maintain such positions. Compared to men in high positions, female executives are more likely to forsake having children and are less likely to sustain personal relationships, despite their desire to have such (Hewlett 2002). In addition, in high executive marketing positions, females have been proven to have higher levels of ethical judgment than their male counterparts (Akaah 1989). This possibly limits female growth within companies, depending on their individual morality.

Second, various studies indicate that women behave differently than men. For example, female legislators tend to prioritize different policies than do male legislators. They tend to place higher priority on women's rights issues, depending on their representation in the legislature, but not on legislation that is central to the benefit of children and families (Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003). Men and women have different leadership styles, and when they go against stereotypical gender-related leadership strategies, they are ineffective as leaders (Eagly and Johannsen-Schmidt 2001). Women suffer some disadvantages from prejudicial evaluations of their competence as leaders, especially in masculine organizational contexts if they are unable to produce masculine traits on policies that are perceived as male-dominated. Women do have some advantages in typical leadership style, however; for example, they are more likely to communicate and understand as well as to provide a strong sense of community for those who are their subordinates (Eagly and Carli 2003).

Why might female legislators emphasize different issue priorities than their male counterparts? Works in the psychology of gender differences suggest that one reason may be the varying level of empathy expressed by females, compared to males. In their study of adolescents, Van der Graaff et al. (2014) found that girls are consistently more empathetic than boys throughout their life-spans. Boys' empathy levels, however, fluctuate as they develop from childhood into adolescence.

Behavioral science literature also suggests further differences between females and males. According to Juvrud and Rennels (2017), two stereotypical pathways

influence help-seeking behavior among both men and women: the attitudinal pathway and the personally endorsed pathway. The attitudinal pathway is the idea that an individual's beliefs about others influence that person's own gender identity. The personally endorsed pathway represents the notion that an individual experiences interest in a person, object, or event before the individual's gender identity is set in stone. Results indicate that the personally endorsed gender stereotype predicts the extent to which women seek help, whereas both attitudinal and personally endorsed gender stereotypes predict male help-seeking behaviors.

Perhaps reflecting the innate differences between genders, the public—via the media—perceive important gender differences between men and women. For one, gender gap is especially prominent in the media coverage of female candidates: Women are more likely to receive more gender-related coverage, especially when running for high offices (Meeks 2012). This indicates that female politicians running for high office have less salient issue-dominated media coverage, because the media focuses on their gender; however, women gain a strategic advantage when they run “as women,” stressing issues that voters associate favorably with female candidates and targeting female voters (Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes 2003).

Gender perceptions also affect both peer and self-evaluations of female managers. Men rate themselves as more effective than women rate themselves (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, and Woehr 2014). Women and older managers are less inclined to define career success in terms of hierarchical and financial progression, as they are more likely to have individual value-based ideas about what success in a career amounts to (Sturges 1999). Ratings by subordinates within various companies indicate that female and male executives engaged in greater amounts of leader behavior valued by top management than by the typical employee. Female middle managers and executives were rated higher when compared to their male counterparts in interpersonal, goal-driven, and task-oriented leadership styles (Bartol, Martin, and Kromkowski, 2003).

Gender stereotypes affect how voters search for information of female and male candidates for office. Voters seek more competence-based information about female candidates than they do for male candidates, in addition to seeking increased information related to “compassion issues.” Statistical analysis provides evidence that female candidates are disadvantaged in the Democratic Party; Republican women are still at a disadvantage in elections, however. Overall, voters seek out more competency-based information on female candidates, especially Republicans (Ditonto, Hamilton, and Redlawsk 2014).

Although many studies indicate that females behave differently than their male counterparts, some suggest otherwise. Using analyzed speeches, Herrera and Shafer (2011) have found evidence that there is no difference in policy agenda between male and female governors, although their study did find that male governors are slightly more likely than females to address education in speeches. They also found that male governors were covered more by the media in social and welfare issues than were female governors. In contrast, Ferrara (2012) found that there is no difference in the policy agenda of male and female governors. This may imply that the greater the office, the less divergent the agendas because of institutional restraints.

Analysis controlling for gender and political party again found that female Democratic governors prioritize some policy areas differently than their male counterparts do but that in other areas, their policy agendas are identical; however, there were no identifiable policy differences based on gender among Republican governors (Shafer and Herrera 2010). Female governors in general perceived a double standard applied to their leadership: They received less support from their colleagues within their political parties, as well as more criticism and inequitable coverage from media. All women in another study reported an inability to discuss gender-related leadership issues for fear of handicapping their administrations and being perceived as lesser leaders (Havens 2012).

Debate on whether, and the extent to which, gender differences exist also extends to work in psychological sciences. In neuropsychology and cognitive development, for instance, scholars remain conflicted about whether a gender gap exists. According to Ardila et al. (2011), only minimal, statistically insignificant, gender differences exist during cognitive development. These cognitive differences that result from gender show up in only a small number of tests and account for a low percentage of score variance. In comparison, Yeo et al. (2016) suggest that women display higher verbal ability, which entails understanding commands, language expression, and language comprehension; meanwhile, men have a higher spatial ability, which entails being able to comprehend verbal-spatial terms, such as directions, and recognizing objects at various angles. These results overall are statistically insignificant, however, meaning that there is little psychological difference.

Taken together, it is not immediately clear whether female governors will utilize unilateral actions differently than men will. Although scholars note that female governors have different policy interests and emphasize policy agendas in their State of the State addresses (Heidbreder and Scheurer 2012), there is evidence that women in executive leadership positions tend to govern and behave similarly to men in the same positions. To this point, a statement by Bev Perdue, North Carolina's first female governor, is illustrative: "Although I will go down in history as North Carolina's first female governor, I want to make history as a governor who faced the challenges and made the right decisions to position North Carolina for a competitive global future" (Quoted in Heidbreder and Scheurer 2012). As Governor Perdue's statement makes clear, although she recognizes the importance of being the state's first female governor, she intends to govern as the chief executive first and as a female second. The important question here is whether these sentiments are unique to Governor Perdue or are common among other female executives. Specifically, we ask, "Are female governors more active unilaterally than male governors? Do they prioritize different policies unilaterally?" In the following sections, we explore these questions.

DATA AND METHODS

To explore the differences, if any, between male and female governors and their uses of unilateral authority at the state level, we collected data on gubernatorial executive orders for Arizona (Jan. 1965–Jan. 2017), New Hampshire (Jan. 1991–Dec. 2016), New Mexico

(Jan. 2011–Dec. 2016), Oklahoma (Nov. 1959–Nov. 2016), Oregon (Feb. 2003–ept. 2016), Rhode Island (Jan. 1973–Jan. 2017), and South Carolina (Mar. 1973–Oct. 2016). The appendix provides greater details on the states and governors within the data set. Although these seven states represent only a small portion of all gubernatorial executive orders in the 50 states, they were selected to maximize variations in state contexts.

First, in all seven states, a female either was the sitting governor or had recently served as governor at the time of the study. Currently, four states have female governors: Rhode Island (Gina Raimondo–D), New Mexico (Susana Martinez–R), Oregon (Kate Brown–D), and Oklahoma (Mary Fallin–R). Margaret “Maggie” Hassan–D (New Hampshire) left the governor’s office to become a U.S. senator, and Nikki Haley–R (South Carolina) was appointed by President Trump to the post of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

Second, authorization for executive orders differs across states. Although governors in all 50 states are authorized to issue executive orders, the basis for those gubernatorial orders may vary. For instance, based on an October 2015 survey of governors’ offices by the Council of State Government (Council of State Government 2016), whereas governors of Arizona and Oregon are authorized to issue executive orders based on implied powers, the governors of New Hampshire and South Carolina have statutory authorizations for executive orders. The governor of New Mexico can issue orders on the basis of the state constitution and state statutes. Oklahoma governors are granted the authority by the state constitution to issue executive orders, and Rhode Island governors can issue executive orders based on state statutes, implied powers, and case laws.

The main dependent variable in this study is the number of executive orders issued monthly. In addition to gender (our main variable of interest), we also account for a number of factors that may affect the level of unilateral activities at the state level. First, we include a set of variables to account for differences across governors and the transitions across administrations. Studies in executive unilateralism at the federal level have long recognized that Democratic and Republican presidents utilize executive orders differently (see, for instance, Howell and Lewis 2002; Ouyang and Waterman 2015). We thus include a dummy variable for whether a Democratic governor is currently in office. We also add dummy variables for whether the governor is in the first six and the last six months of her term, as transition periods and the first several months of a new administration mark critical junctures as the state transitions from one administration to another (Sherwood and Chackerian 1988).

The extent to which governors use executive orders may depend on political contexts. In his formal treatment of executive orders, Howell (2003) suggests that presidents are more likely to act unilaterally when seeking to preempt legislature actions or when Congress is poised to enact policies that diverge considerably from the presidents’ preferences. Scholars find similar results at the state level. For instance, Clarke (1998) finds that divided government and polarization affect budgetary conflicts between governors and legislatures. Thus, we include variables for party polarization in the lower (house) and upper (senate) chambers of the state legislature, divided government, and the percentage of legislators within the governor’s party.

Third, we account for the extent to which state economic conditions may affect unilateral actions by governors. Studies on vote intentions indicate that voters may employ a retrospective evaluation of the state's economic conditions when casting votes for the governor's office (Partin 1995). To the extent that governors recognize the importance of the economy on vote choice during election time, they may be apt to employ unilateral strategies during economic downturns. To account for such possibility, we include controls for gross state product and state unemployment rate. Last, we control for total state population to account for variations in size of the states.

STATISTICAL FINDINGS

Table 1 presents the results of random effects negative binomial regression models, which account for the hierarchical structure and over dispersion in the data. The dependent variable in each case is the number of executive orders issued monthly. Each model contains a binary variable for gender, as well as the lagged total number of executive orders to account for autocorrelations. In addition, each model also includes fixed indicators for states to account for further state variations not included in the model. The Governors Model (Model 1) is the simplest model and includes variables to indicate whether a Democratic governor is currently in office, the last six months of the governor's administration, the first six months of the administration, and the total months that the governor has served in office. The Political Model (Model 2) adds controls for political divisions and polarization in state legislatures. The State Model (Model 3) adds controls to account for state economic conditions. Finally, the Full Model (Model 4) combines all variables from Models 1–3.

Overall, we find no differences in the use of gubernatorial executive orders by female vs. male governors (Model 4). Our main variable (a binary indicator for female) is statistically significant in only the Governors Model. Controlling solely for whether a Democratic governor is currently in office, for their first and last six months office, and for how long the governor has been in office, we find that female governors issue a greater number of executive orders than their male counterparts; however, this relationship between gender and the level of executive orders disappears when we include additional controls for state political and economic contexts.

Use of executive orders also relates to the timing of an administration. Governors are especially active during the beginning of administrations, issuing about four times as many executive orders during the first six months, compared to all other moments of their administrations. This is consistent with studies in the unilateral presidency, which suggests that presidents may issue a greater number of executive orders during the first and last years of their administrations as they seek to undo and change actions by their predecessors (for incoming presidents) or to further solidify their policy agendas before leaving office (for outgoing administrations). Although we find evidence that governors are more active unilaterally during the beginning months of their administrations, we find no evidence that governors make last-ditch attempts at unilateral behavior as they prepare to leave office.

Table 1. Models for “Female Governors Do Not Issue a Greater Number of Executive Orders”

	Governors (1)	Political (2)	State (3)	Full (4)
Female	.37*** (.06)	-.05 (.16)	.09 (.10)	.05 (.17)
Democratic governor	-.13* (.05)	.28* (.11)	.05 (.05)	.27* (.13)
Last 6 months	.14+ (.08)	.12 (.13)	.16+ (.09)	.12 (.13)
First 6 months	1.43*** (.09)	1.48*** (.12)	1.44*** (.09)	1.40*** (.12)
Months in office	-.03*** (0.00)	-.03*** (0.00)	-.03*** (0.00)	-.03*** (0.00)
Party polarization (house)		-1.05** (.41)		-.61 (.55)
Party polarization (senate)		.84* (.34)		.88* (.39)
Divided government		-.26+ (.15)		-.12 (.15)
% of legislators in governor’s party		-.01 (.01)		0.00 (.01)
State population (log)			-.75** (.27)	-4.43** (1.64)
Gross state product (log)			.47*** (.07)	.88* (.38)
% state unemployment			-.01 (.01)	.04+ (.02)
New Hampshire	.47 (.45)	-1.08+ (.61)	-.28 (.57)	-6.01** (2.00)
New Mexico	-.51+ (.30)	.82 (.70)	-1.03* (.41)	-3.01+ (1.58)
Oklahoma	-2.17*** (.20)	-2.84*** (.45)	-2.46*** (.23)	-3.78*** (.54)

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Table 1. Models for “Female Governors Do Not Issue a Greater Number of Executive Orders,” concl.

	Governors (1)	Political (2)	State (3)	Full (4)
Oregon	.73* (.34)	.30 (.52)	.26 (.42)	-1.22+ (.69)
Rhode Island	.28 (.20)	-.07 (.61)	-.36 (.36)	-4.95** (1.88)
South Carolina	-.26 (.18)	.13 (.37)	-.27 (.19)	-.28 (.39)
# of EOs issued (lag 1)	.13*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	.12*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)
Constant	-2.41*** (.15)	-.54 (.77)	.68 (3.06)	49.88* (19.85)
<hr/>				
ln(<i>r</i>)				
Constant	1.20* (.58)	1.68* (.72)	1.22* (.60)	1.65* (.73)
<hr/>				
ln(<i>s</i>)				
Constant	1.23* (.60)	1.33+ (.71)	1.17+ (.62)	1.29+ (.72)
<hr/>				
Obs.	2901	1089	2688	1089
# of Groups	7	7	7	7
Min. group obs.	71	11	47	11
Max. group obs.	684	228	612	228
Log-likelihood	-4081.07	-1615.14	-3690.21	-1608.89
AIC	8192.15	3268.29	7416.42	3261.78
BIC	8281.74	3363.16	7522.56	3371.63

Notes: Random effects negative binomial models fitted.

The dependent variable in all four models is the number of gubernatorial executive orders issued (monthly).

Standard errors in parentheses.

Arizona omitted.

AIC=Akaike information criterion; BIC=Bayesian information criterion; EO=executive order; obs.=observation.

+*p* < 0.1 **p* < 0.05 ***p* < 0.01 ****p* < 0.001

Consistent with results from study of the unilateral presidency (Ouyang and Waterman 2015), we find that the level of executive unilateralism is related to ideology. We find that Democratic governors issue more executive orders than do Republicans.

Controlling for variations in political and economic contexts, the Full Model indicates that, on average, Democratic governors issue nearly twice as many executive orders than do Republican governors.

We find only weak relations between political contexts and unilateral behavior. Results from the Full Model suggest that the presence of divided government is not related to the number of executive orders issued monthly. Although party polarization in the legislature is related to executive actions by the governor, it is limited to polarization in the senate, excluding the house. This is somewhat surprising, given that model-fit statistics indicate that the Political Model (not including controls for economic conditions) does nearly as good a job in predicting monthly executive orders activity as the Full Model does. Although fully assessing the relationship between political polarization and executive orders is beyond the scope of this article, recent evidence from other works suggest that the extent to which ideological polarization relates to exercise of executive order is more nuanced than presented here (Barber et al. 2016).

Regarding the effect of economic conditions influencing executive orders at the state level, there are mixed results. Based on studies of economic retrospective evaluations and vote intentions, we suspected that governors may attempt to use unilateral directives to act quickly during economic downturns in the face of legislative gridlocks. All else being equal, we find that governors issue a greater number of executive orders as the gross state product increases *and* as state unemployment rate raises, respectively. This is perplexing, as it suggests that governors issue more executive orders when economic conditions in the state improve *and* when the economy worsens.¹ Although we cannot fully ascertain why this is the case, we suspect that one possible explanation is the limited number of states included in our data set.

It may be the case that gender differences and executive orders become apparent only when we examine across policy areas. For instance, (Heidbreder and Scheurer (2012) find that female governors prioritize social-welfare policies in their State of the State speeches, compared to male governors. Using data on all Rhode Island executive orders from 1973 to 2017, we examine whether female governors use executive orders to emphasize certain issues areas more than others.

Rhode Island executive orders present a unique case suitable for assessing executive orders across policy areas. In addition to making all executive order publicly available via the Secretary of State's website, Rhode Island codes each executive order in relation to the policy it addresses. For our purpose, the original policy areas provided are too specific: Rhode Island provides coding for a total of 98 policy areas, with some policy areas containing only one or two executive orders. We recoded these 98 issues into seven more-manageable areas of policy focus: (1) state government and administration, (2) transportation and infrastructure, (3) environment and natural resources, (4) law and public safety, (5) economy, (6) social issues and public health, and (7) culture. For example, executive orders dealing with airports, boats, bridges, and highways were recoded into a single category that we denote as transportation and infrastructure.

Table 2. Variations in Unilateral Activism across Issue Areas

	Multinomial Logistic Regression						
	Social Issues & Public Health	Culture	Economy	Environment	Law & Order	Government Infrastructure	
	(5)						
	(6)						
Raimondo	0.05 -0.17	-13.65*** -1.35	-1.18*** -0.23	0.17 -0.14	-0.05 -0.3	0.07 -0.21	0.47 -0.37
Democratic governor	-0.09 -0.19	-0.84 -0.84	0.04 -0.22	0.07 -0.43	0.13 -0.34	0.11 -0.15	0.31 -0.31
Last 6 months	.48* -0.2	0.35 -0.44	-0.32 -0.4	-0.06 -0.58	-0.43** -0.17	-1.78* -0.73	-15.38*** -0.78
First 6 months	-0.34 -0.43	-14.57*** -0.92	0.12 -0.49	-0.40 -0.41	0.37 -0.54	1.04+ -0.6	0.34 -0.64
Constant	-0.79*** -0.17	-3.19*** -0.42	-0.71*** -0.21	-0.51 -0.36	-0.65* -0.33	-0.89*** -0.06	-2.03*** -0.23
N	811						
pseudo R ²	0.015						
AIC	999.36						
BIC	2749						
	2781.89						

Notes: Baseline category for the multinomial regression is social-issues and public-health executive orders. Standard errors in parentheses.

AIC=Akaike information criterion; BIC=Bayesian information criterion.

+ p < 0.1 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

Before discussing the results of our examination, we want to acknowledge one limitation of the data and results presented here. Although executive orders presented here span 1973–2017 and were issued by a mixture of both Democratic and Republican governors, only a single female governor, Gina Raimondo, is in the data set. In essence, then, we compare whether Governor Raimondo prioritized different policy areas in her executive orders in relation to her male predecessors. Although this limits our ability to generalize to other cases, we nonetheless find some evidence that female governors do prioritize some policy areas more than others.

Table 2 presents the results of two models assessing the gubernatorial executive orders across different policy areas, including social issues and public health, culture, economy, environment, law and order, government, and infrastructure.² The unit of analysis here is a single executive order. Model 5 reports the results of a logistic regression model. The dependent variable is coded 1 if the executive order relates to social issues and public health; otherwise, it is coded 0. Model 6 reports the results of a multinomial regression. The omitted baseline comparison category is social issues and public health.

Overall, we find that Governor Raimondo was not more likely to issue more social and public-health executive order than were her male counterparts (Model 5), though she was less likely to use her unilateral authority to address cultural and economic issues than on social issues. Contrary to existing works, we find no evidence that female governors are more likely to issue social-issue executive orders (Model 5). Although governors in general are more likely to issue social-issue executive orders during the last six months of their administrations (as they prepare to leave office), female governors overall are *not* more active in this policy area. Comparing our results to those indicating that female governors will devote more attention to social issues in their State of the State addresses (Heidbreder and Scheurer 2012), this suggests that political rhetoric does not necessarily translate into policy action.

Compared to social-issue executive orders and her male predecessors, however, we found that Governor Raimondo issued significantly fewer executive orders on cultural and economic issues. For instance, Governor Raimondo was three times *less* likely to issue an economic executive order than social and public-health executive orders. In sum, though we find some evidence that Raimondo prioritized certain issues less than social issues (cultural and economic), the results overall suggest minimal differences between Raimondo and fellow male governors when it comes to social policies.

CONCLUSION

Over past decades, the number of females holding the highest executive offices in states has steadily increased, and women are now regularly in contention for governors' mansions. This rise of females in the chief executive offices across states has not resulted in a similar increase in research on female governors, however. Furthermore, although existing studies point to how gender affects the behavior of female legislators, it is unclear whether gender affects governors and gubernatorial executive orders.

To fill this gap in literature about state politics and governors, our research addresses whether gender affects unilateral policy-making at the state level. Contrary to much of the existing work on gender dynamics, we find little to no evidence that female governors use their unilateral authority differently than do their male colleagues. Female governors do not issue more executive orders, nor do they seem to use executive orders for traditionally women's-rights issues.

Our analysis indicates the importance of additional work in this area. Given the amount of literature indicating that female political elites differ from their male colleagues in important ways, we are surprised that we find no gender differences. As females continue to become more competitive in elections for top executive positions in the states, it is essential that we better understand the extent to which gender influences gubernatorial policy-making.

Our pilot study is an important first step in understanding the nature of state-level executive orders and gender differences in the governor's office. Of course, as with many studies, our results also raise many questions. For example, why do we find that governors issue more executive orders both as the gross state product increases and as state unemployment rate increases? One possibility is that the static measures of economic performance that we used in the models are too general to pick the subtleties of the relationship between gubernatorial orders and the economy. A second potential explanation is that although both gross state product and state unemployment rate measure economic conditions, they are fundamentally different concepts. It is possible that governors utilize executive orders both to grow the state's economy during times of distress (unemployment rate) and to continue to invoke their executive authority to further expand the economy as conditions improve (gross state product). Although fully assessing this issue is beyond the scope of this article, we will explore these possibilities in future projects.

More intriguing is the null relationship that we find between gender and executive authority. In contrast to multiple studies showing that female political elites exhibit different policy preferences and behaviors compared to their male counterparts, we find little evidence suggesting that female governors employ executive authority differently than male governors do. One potential explanation is the limited number of female governors included in this study. Though we made a concerted effort to include governors (both female and males) from states with diverse political and economic conditions, our data set includes data from only seven states. In a follow-up study, we intend to expand our data set to include all 50 states.

An alternative explanation is that gender is not a meaningful explanation for how governors utilize executive orders—, our results from a limited sample of states is generalizable to gubernatorial executive power in general. Instead, the extent to which governors employ executive orders is a function of state-level variations in gubernatorial power. In a later project, leveraging new developments in measuring gubernatorial power (see Krupnikov and Shipan 2012), we plan to assess how the scope of the governor's formal power affects unilateral decision making at the statelevel.

ENDNOTES

1. It is possible that had we used dynamic measures of economic performance, such as the growth of the gross state product and of unemployment rate, rather than the static versions in the analyses, we would have found a stronger relationship between economic variables and the use of gubernatorial executive orders. As the effect of economic factors on unilateral executive behavior is not the main focus of this article, however, our static measures of the economy are sufficient for a pilot project such as this. In any case, we do elaborate on these possibilities and on our next steps in this research agenda in the conclusion section.
2. Because of data limitation, the analyses reported in this section contain executive orders only from Rhode Island. Also because of limited data, we cannot include any of the additional control variables shown in Table 1 here in the logistic and multinomial logistic models.

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Descriptions of Variables in Analyses

Variable Name	Description	Source
Female	Coded 1 if governor is female	Compiled by authors
Democratic governor	Coded 1 if governor is a Democrat	Compiled by authors
Last 6 months	Coded 1 for a governor's last 6 months in office	Compiled by authors
First 6 months	Coded 1 for a governor's first 6 months in office	Compiled by authors
Months in office	# of months a governor has been in office	Compiled by authors
Party polarization (house)	Ideological distance between party medians (lower chamber)	Shor and McCarty (2011)
Party polarization (senate)	Ideological distance between party medians (upper chamber)	Shor and McCarty (2011)
Divided government	Coded 1 if all three institutions of state government are not controlled by same party	Klarner (2013)
% of legislators in governor's party	Average percent of legislators across the two chambers of the legislature who are members of the governor's party	Klarner (2013)
State population (log)	Log of total state population	Klarner (2015)
Gross state product (log)	Log of gross state product (in thousands)	Klarner (2015)
% state unemployment	State unemployment rate	Klarner (2015)

Table A2. Arizona Governors in Date Range Covered (Apr. 1965–Jan. 2017)

Governor	Party	Female	Entered Office	Left Office
Samuel P. Goddard	Democrat	No	January 4, 1965	January 2, 1967
Jack R. Williams	Republican	No	January 2, 1967	January 6, 1975
Raul H. Castro	Democrat	No	January 6, 1975	October 20, 1977

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Table A2. Arizona Governors in Date Range Covered (Apr. 1965–Jan. 2017), concl.

Governor	Party	Female	Entered Office	Left Office
Wesley Bolin	Democrat	No	October 20, 1977	March 4, 1978
Bruce Babbitt	Democrat	No	March 4, 1978	January 5, 1987
Evan Mecham	Republican	No	January 5, 1987	April 4, 1988
Rose Mofford	Democrat	Yes	April 4, 1988	March 6, 1991
Fife Symington	Republican	No	March 6, 1991	September 5, 1997
Jane Dee Hull	Republican	Yes	September 5, 1997	January 6, 2003
Janet Napolitano	Democrat	Yes	January 6, 2003	January 21, 2009
Jane Brewer	Republican	Yes	January 21, 2009	January 5, 2015
Doug Ducey	Republican	No	January 5, 2015	<i>Incumbent</i>

Table A3. List of New Hampshire Governors in Date Range Covered (Jan. 1991–Dec. 2016)

Governor	Party	Female	Entered Office	Left Office
Judd Gregg	Republican	No	January 4, 1989	January 2, 1993
Ralph D. Hough	Republican	No	January 2, 1993	January 7, 1993
Stephen Merrill	Republican	No	January 7, 1993	January 9, 1997
Jeanne Shaheen	Democrat	Yes	January 9, 1997	January 9, 2003
Craig Benson	Republican	No	January 9, 2003	January 6, 2005
John Lynch	Democrat	No	January 6, 2005	January 3, 2013
Margaret Hassan	Democrat	Yes	January 3, 2013	January 2, 2017

Table A4. New Mexico Governors in Date Range Covered (Jan. 2011–Dec. 2016)

Governor	Party	Female	Entered Office	Left Office
Susana Martinez	Republican	Yes	January 1, 2011	<i>Incumbent</i>

Table A5. Oklahoma Governors in Date Range Covered (Nov. 1959–Nov. 2016)

Governor	Party	Female	Entered Office	Left Office
J. Howard Edmondson	Democrat	No	January 12, 1959	January 6, 1963
George Nigh	Democrat	No	January 6, 1963	January 14, 1963
Henry Bellmon	Republican	No	January 14, 1963	January 9, 1967
Dewey F. Bartlett	Republican	No	January 9, 1967	January 11, 1971
David Hall	Democrat	No	January 11, 1971	January 13, 1975
David L. Boren	Democrat	No	January 13, 1975	January 8, 1979
George Nigh	Democrat	No	January 8, 1979	January 12, 1987
Henry Bellmon	Republican	No	January 12, 1987	January 14, 1991
David Walters	Democrat	No	January 14, 1991	January 9, 1995
Frank Keating	Republican	No	January 9, 1995	January 13, 2003
Brad Henry	Democrat	No	January 13, 2003	January 10, 2011
Mary Fallin	Republican	Yes	January 10, 2011	<i>Incumbent</i>

Table A6. Oregon Governors in Date Range Covered (Feb. 2003–Sept. 2016)

Governor	Party	Female	Entered Office	Left Office
Ted Kulongoski	Democrat	No	January 13, 2003	January 10, 2011
John Kitzhaber	Democrat	No	January 10, 2011	February 18, 2015
Kate Brown	Democrat	Yes	February 18, 2015	<i>Incumbent</i>

Table A7. Rhode Island Governors in Date Range Covered (Jan. 1973–Jan. 2017)

Governor	Party	Female	Entered Office	Left Office
Philip W. Noel	Democrat	No	January 2, 1973	January 4, 1977
J. Joseph Garrahy	Democrat	No	January 4, 1977	January 1, 1985
Edward D. DiPrete	Republican	No	January 1, 1985	January 1, 1991
Bruce Sundlun	Democrat	No	January 1, 1991	January 3, 1995
Lincoln C. Almond	Republican	No	January 3, 1995	January 7, 2003
Donald Carcieri	Republican	No	January 7, 2003	January 4, 2011
Lincoln Chafee	Democrat	No	January 4, 2011	January 6, 2015
Gina Raimondo	Democrat	Yes	January 6, 2015	<i>Incumbent</i>

Table A8. South Carolina Governors in Date Range Covered (Mar. 1973–Oct. 2016)

Governor	Party	Female	Entered Office	Left Office
John West	Democrat	No	January 19, 1971	January 21, 1975
James Edwards	Republican	No	January 21, 1975	January 10, 1979
Richard Riley	Democrat	No	January 10, 1979	January 14, 1987
Carroll Campbell	Republican	No	January 14, 1987	January 11, 1995
David Beasley	Republican	No	January 11, 1995	January 13, 1999
Jim Hodges	Democrat	No	January 13, 1999	January 15, 2003
Mark Sanford	Republican	No	January 15, 2003	January 12, 2011
Nikki Haley	Republican	Yes	January 12, 2011	January 24, 2017