

ABSTRACT

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UDEZULU, IFEYINWA E. UMERAH

B.A., KENNESAW STATE
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THE STATE AS CAPITALIST PATRIARCHY: WOMEN AND
POLITICS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Advisors: Dr. Hashim Gibrill
Dr. Patrice McDermott
Dr. William Boone

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This inquiry considers how class and gender concerns affect the emergence of women in developing countries as political leaders and how they fare in power. In the contemporary era, the Marxist and the Classical approaches have been used in explicating the state. While Marxism focuses on class conflict, its classical variant perceives the state as a neutral arbiter acting in protection of its national interest.

The theoretical inadequacies in the above assumptions stem from the fact that gender is not central to the state-centered models. Women as a group compose a vital segment of the global population and should not be merely described as interests and classes.

My attempt is to establish a woman-centered framework in evaluating the state, while focusing on women in the contemporary era who have governed their countries.

This research centers on the Philippines, India, Pakistan and Nicaragua and involves an in-depth assessment of gender/class issues. The research postulates that the mutual alliance between gender and class had a direct bearing on the emergence and decline of women as policy makers in developing countries. The research question is: How did patriarchy reinforce capitalism so as to pave the way for women to rise and fall from power?

From the standpoint of methodology, the image of gender-biased state is the feminist starting point for developing hypotheses and theories about the differentiated inclusion of women and men into the state system. The case study approach was used in testing this hypothesis. The preliminary findings are that women's class affiliations affect their political advancement. While they are in office, the class and gender factors impact their performance leading to their subsequent downfall. Women, therefore, are not positioned equally with men in the state system. The state is patriarchal no matter who governs.

**THE STATE AS CAPITALIST PATRIARCHY: WOMEN AND POLITICS
IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

**A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
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**BY
IFEYINWA E. UDEZULU**

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CHAPTER ONE

THE STATE AND PROBLEMATIC RELATIONS OF GENDER AND CLASS IN POLICY MAKING

This paper seeks to develop an alternative interpretation of how some women in developing countries have managed to emerge as political leaders and how they have fared. In explicating the state, scholars have basically adopted two major frameworks - the Marxist and the classical (realist) approaches. For the Marxist analysis, conflict is basic in explicating the nation state. The state is seen as an instrument of the ruling class, which monopolizes the power structure at the expense of the proletarian majority whose labor power sustains the society. The workers are exploited through the use of their labor power to such an extent that they become destitute, while the elite or the capitalists get richer. Therefore, the gap between the worker and the owner of the means of production keeps widening to such an extent that the frustrated and exploited workers revolt. The opposing viewpoint, the classical view, holds that states as the unit level of

analysis are rational egoists. Although the state is neutral, it acts to protect its national interests as it mediates among divergent interests in the society.

Neither of these views takes gender differences between men and women into consideration. Theda Skocpol has called for "paradigmatic reorientation"¹ to address the fundamental problems existing in the state system, as modern scholars investigate the social, political and economic facets of the state. Such concerns, Skocpol argues, should explore how the state excludes women in all these sectors and how these problems should be resolved.

The theoretical inadequacies in the two major frameworks illustrate that gender is not seen as central to the state and is ignored by state-centered authors. The prevalent discourses are androcentric. One cannot successfully evaluate the state without taking into account the majority of the states' population, who are women. Women as a group comprise over 50% of the world's population. In light of this numeral, the place of women

¹Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back in: Strategies for Analysis in Current Research," in P.B. Evans, D. Rueschmeyer and T. Skocpol eds. Bringing The State Back In (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3; Kathleen Lyn, "Uncovering the Political Impacts of Gender: An Exploratory Study," Western Political Quarterly 42 (1989): 397-42.

in the system should be addressed and cannot be reduced merely to interests and classes. The presence of women in the state system includes these dimensions of interest and class, but also exceeds them, embracing gender and ethnic differences in the society. However, the conventional analyses hold that only class and interest are vital to state power.

Nancy Frazer's interpretation of the welfare state sheds more light on the inadequacies of the prevalent theories. She argues that power, as elucidated by power and class theorists, is deeply rooted in the citizens who are part of the diverse state institutions: economic, social and political.² She contends that the study of citizenship explains power distribution in the state system, and whichever group possesses economic, social, and political power controls the state. According to Frazer, such power is concentrated in the hands of males. Therefore, the state's power is male power. Women as a group are not positioned equally with men. The state is structured into two spheres, the private and the public. These sectors are intertwined and dependent on each other, and male supremacy is

²Nancy Frazer, "Women, Welfare and Politics of Need Interpretation," Hypatia 2 (1986): 102; Nancy Hartsock, "Masculinity, Citizenship, and the Making of War," Political Science Quarterly 17 (1984): 198-202.

apparent in both. The male is the head of household, and also the 'statesman.' Women are not positioned in relation to the state as are men. As a matter of fact, the contribution of women is devalued at the state level. Gender is central, therefore, in analyzing the nation state, especially the minimal engagement of women. Again, the state cannot merely be reduced to class and interests.

The socialist feminist perspective provides the most logical hypothesis to explain the relationship between the state and the women, and how, despite the apparent contradictions, a few women have managed to make headway as policy initiators. Insights on the problematic of gender and class on political behavior highlight the minimal participation of women as national leaders. In gaining an understanding of these gender differences, women can change their consciousness of themselves, as well as their positions in the state system. Therefore, a study on women as national leaders is both both timely and necessary.

This study focuses on several contemporary women who have officiated over the highest echelons of national decision-making positions. 1966 to 1994 saw unprecedented number of women governing their countries, and also women stepping down from national leadership.

Thirteen women emerged during this epoch as their nations' heads. These included, in no particular order of significance: Bangladesh's Khalida Zia (Mohammed Zia-ul-Hag's widow); Sri Lanka's Sirimavo Bandaranaike (Solomon Diaz Bandaranaike's widow); Chandrika Kumaratunga (Solomon Diaz Bandaranaike's daughter and Mr. Kumaratunga's widow)³; Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto (Ali Bhutto's daughter); the Philippines' Corazon Aquino (Benigno Aquino's widow); Violeta Dona Barrios de Chamorro (Cardinal Pedro Joaquin Chamorro's widow) in Nicaragua; Eugenia Mary Charles in the Dominica; Haiti's Ertha Pascal Trouillot; Isabel Peron of Argentina (the wife of President Peron); Indira Gandhi (Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter) in India; Golda Meir of Israel; Tansu Ciller of Turkey (as of June 1993); and Agathe Uwilingivi Mana, who like Trouillot in Haiti, was appointed interim Prime Minister, in this instance of Rwanda.⁴ The family affiliations noted are of importance and are expanded below.

This analysis will explore four of these national leaders, situated in South Asia and Latin America. The

³"Troubled Sri Lanka Turns to a Woman," U.S. News & World Report, 29 August/ 5 September 1994, 14.

⁴"Woman Chosen to Run Rwanda," Boston Globe, 17 July 1993, A3.

research on the Philippines, India, Pakistan and Nicaragua involves an in-depth assessment of gender/class issues under play. These regions provide examples of different forms of political development, ranging from the open and democratic (but not entirely perfect) systems of India and Sri Lanka to the frequently authoritarian governments of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the democratizing systems in the Philippines in Southwest Asia and Nicaragua in Central America. In addition, the wide range of political development examples in a compact area of South Asia permits comparison among these nations and other ones under inquiry.

In order to avoid repetition, I have chosen to omit Mrs. Bandaranaike because of similarity with India in terms of open and democratic (parliamentary) regime types, and for the closeness in time of the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi. Bandaranaike served Sri Lanka from 1960-1965, and 1970-1977. She lost power when the Jayawardena-led United National Party (UNP) government accused the former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandarnaike of abusing power while in office from 1970-77. In October 1980, her right to participate in politics was removed for a period of seven years. Following that development, Mrs. Bandaranaike did not pursue a

political career. Mrs. Gandhi's political quest commenced in 1966 and lasted until 1977, when she was voted out of power. However, she successfully re-emerged as a significant player on the Indian political scene in 1979, and ruled until her assassination in 1984. I have decided to examine India due to the dynastic politics between the descendants of Jawaharlal Nehru and the rest of the masses and because such politics affected the stability of the family, leading to the assassination of Indira Gandhi as well as her son Rajiv Gandhi. Such a hostile political environment is caused by India's diverse ethnic groups, whereas its southern neighbor Sri Lanka is more homogenous.

Khalida Zia's leadership in Bangladesh came about as a result of her husband's sudden death. Bangladesh is dominated by Moslems and Ziaur Rahma's (who led the country from 1975 until his assassination in 1981) constitution recognized this Moslem majority. It also made clear, however, the rights of minorities to practice their faith. The constitution thus established has become increasingly atypical of Muslim-majority nations, making the system less rigid to women's acceptance and competition in the multi-party system. This atmosphere, in addition to her family background, in turn paved the way for Mrs. Zia's rise to power.

Benazir Bhutto, on the other hand, faced tremendous challenges as a result of her predecessor Zia's Islamic reforms. Such reforms proved to be a stumbling block to Bhutto's success in office, as will be discussed elsewhere, and this was a major reason for evaluating her leadership as opposed to Khalida Zia's in Bangladesh.

Haiti for six months was temporarily headed by a woman, Justice Ertha Pascal Trouillot. Her term in office was too short to warrant any significant analysis. For this same reason Tansu Ciller of Turkey and Agathe Uwilingivi Mana of Rwanda were also excluded, as they both assumed power in the spring and summer of 1993. Lastly, the Dominica's present leader, Eugenia Mary Charles, came to power through a peaceful democratic process. She did not come to power following the death of a popular family member. Obtaining sufficient information to conduct a critical analysis of her regime also proved impossible. Moreover, due to unavailability of travelling and research funding, I have had to rely on sources accessible largely from the U.S. government documents, scholarly journals and popular newspaper editorials.

While most of the cases illustrate situations where wives head nations due to their husbands'

assassinations, Mrs. Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto exemplify rare circumstances where daughters lead their nations due to the loss of their fathers. Moreover, Benazir Bhutto was chosen due to her long involvement in Pakistan's political process and the resultant regime change following the death of her political enemy General Zia. Her emergence marked the first time, in the modern period, a woman had led a predominantly Moslem nation.

Aquino's unprecedented ascendance pointed to the Filipinos' frustration with the ills of Ferdinand Marcos' regime, highlighted by the murder of Benigno Aquino. It also revealed the extent of the Catholic Church's influence in the country. Chamorro's rise in Nicaragua, in Central America, is similar to that of Mrs. Aquino in the Philippines in the sense that both came to power as a result of their deceased husbands, neither of whom were heads of state or government. Nicaragua is crucial to this study due to Mrs. Chamorro's commitment to the formerly war-torn Nicaragua, as will be explained later, and the role she played to bring democracy to the nation. As did Aquino's, Chamorro's emergence brought an end to an authoritarian leadership, and paved the way for the nation's transition to democracy.

So far, since the Second World War, only twelve women, including Golda Meir of Israel, have emerged as heads of governments in developing nations, compared to over a hundred countries in this era where women have never ruled their nations. The number is very small, taking into consideration that men had governed in most of the countries, even though women constitute over half of the entire world's population. Various feminist theorists concur that women do not fare equally with men at the states level, hence they constantly challenge or reject exclusion of women in policy areas.

Women And The State As A Capitalist Patriarchy

Generally, in feminist thought, the concept of capitalist patriarchy is most frequently employed to denote a structure of masculine domination or a sexual system of power.⁵ Even though their conclusions may differ, there seems to be a consensus among feminist theorists that contemporary society, whether socialist or classist, is patriarchal.⁶ Carole Pateman argues that

⁵Sheila Rowbotham, Dreams and Dilemmas (London: Virago Press, 1983), 208-9; Lisa Disch, "Toward a Feminist Conception of Politics," Political Science and Politics 24 (1991): 501-04.

⁶Cheris Kramarae and Paula A. Treichler, A Feminist Dictionary (Boston: Pandora Press, 1985), 323-4; Timothy Bledsoe and Mary Herring, "Victims of Circumstances: Women

the concept of "patriarchy" best "captures the specificities of the subjection and oppression of women, and distinguishes this form from other forms of dominations."⁷ Such a concept has to be retained in any political philosophy of women, moreover, because it addresses the problem of sexual domination in the state system, whereas the individualist and class theorists fail to address such issues. The contemporary liberal state system has evolved from the traditional to the modern, a progression which Carole Pateman has summarized as a transformation from a paternal version of patriarchy to a new, specifically modern or fraternal form, which she calls "patriarchal civil society."⁸ The state at the primitive stage was patriarchal. With the onset of the industrial revolution, the state progressed from a simple to a more complex mode of political economy, still maintaining the patriarchal configuration

Circumstances: Women in Pursuit of Political Office," American Political Science Review 84 (1990): 213-23.

⁷Carole Pateman, The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 35; Rita J. Simon and Jean M. Landis, "Women's Place and Men's Attitudes About a Women's Place and Role," Public Opinion Quarterly 53 (1989): 265-76.

⁸Karen van Wagner and Cheryl Swanson, "From Machiavelli to Ms: Differences in Male-Female Power Styles," Public Administration Review 39 (1979): 66-72.

of the nation state. According to this view, the contemporary era is depicted by high technology and advanced capitalism. The state as the arbiter, has not yet significantly altered its patriarchal structure when compared to the earlier period. The actors in the state's arena are largely male.

While Pateman focuses on modern liberal civil society as a contract among men, Zillah Eisenstein argues that the contemporary liberal state system can best be classified as capitalist patriarchy on the basis of its transformation from feudal to capitalist modes of production.⁹ Her analytical focus centers on changes undergone by America and England in the mid-19th and 18th centuries, respectively. Eisenstein contends that these eras mirrored the interchange and metamorphosis of patriarchy and industrial capitalism: the modes of production developed from a single farm-unit system, to large-scale agriculture, and advanced to the complex industrial system. The current system, even if it appears to have division between public and private spheres, is actually a conglomeration of families and their modes of production and the politics emanating

⁹Zillah Eisenstein, ed., Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 23.

from such interactions. According to Eisenstein, patriarchy denotes a pattern of social interaction closely linked to hierarchical relations between men and women. This occurs in such a fashion that men benefit more than women in the system. Women are workers and reproducers. They sustain the system. Women are controlled at home and at work by men. In this sense, patriarchy (or the sex-gender system) is a system of male oppression of women. It is a system in which men control the labor of women and children in the family. In addition, under capitalism, men, extend the patriarchal techniques of hierarchical organization and control learned from the family structure to the economic sphere. This is manifested in the hierarchical sexual ordering in the work force: men dominate numerically in the work force and are better paid than women. As some women are unemployed or underemployed, women are viewed as the army of reserve labor, or women are found in the lowest rank of the labor pool. Commitment to patriarchal structures, the hierarchical relation of the work place, and capitalism also infiltrates the home on the most intimate levels. The domain of family and market structure each other, and subsequently filter through the political process. Because men are the prevalent actors in these sectors,

modern states uphold this type of sex-order division of labor and wage labor system in the nature of prevailing social, political and economic institutions. Therefore, capitalist patriarchy does describe this politico-economic gender ordering.

The concept of capitalist patriarchy, according to Eisenstein, supersedes the "division of class, sex, private and public spheres, domestic and wage labor, family and economy, personal and political, and ideology and material conditions."¹⁰ The woman is both a worker and mother - producer and reproducer. Capitalist patriarchy emphasizes the mutually reinforcing, dialectical relationship between capitalist class structures and hierarchical sexual structuring.¹¹ In a nutshell, the concept explains the gendered nature of the state. Women constitute a separate class from the men. The woman is the proletariat, whereas the man is the elite. The male who is the traditional head of household is also the chairman of General Motors, OPEC, United Nations' Secretary General and the president of the country. Understanding the interdependence of capitalism and patriarchy, therefore, is essential in

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid, 5.

feminist political analysis. The family and the state are interrelated; one cannot separate the two. Each reinforces the other, but in both sectors, male power is supreme.

Sandra Goldberg argues that capitalist patriarchy is universal if one defines the concept to mean any system of organization - political, economic, industrial, financial, religious or social - in which the overwhelming number of upper positions in the hierarchy are occupied by males.¹² If we adhere to Nancy Frazer's critique of the welfare state, she argues that capitalist patriarchy depicts an elaborate network at states' disposal, whereby citizens are subjects positioned as economic and political agents competing against one another. The consequence is one group (men) dominating the other (women). Women in this case become citizens with limited rights.¹³ The state in this regard has the responsibility to preserve life. The services provided by the state were supposed to reflect the interests of all its citizens, but women and men as citizens do not receive equal shares of the state's

¹²Sandra Goldberg, Male Dominance: The Inevitability of Patriarchy (London: Abacus, 1979), 10; Susan Tenebaum, "Women Through the Prism of Political Thought," Political Science Quarterly 15 (1982): 90-102.

¹³Nancy Frazer, 106.

resources. Rather, women are expected to become passive laborers and to be submissive, while men are active participants. Women, thus, have no political base because of the capitalist patriarchal structure.

Gender is necessary also to the conception of state in the developing nations. These states were parts of the imperialist system of the West and now exist as parts of the international capital exchange. Consequently, their modes of production do not differ from the advanced economies of the West. Most of the states are, in fact, highly permeable to both indigenous and international capitalist forces. The states in the Third World are shaped, moreover, by gender struggles.¹⁴ The states create special gender ideologies through time, which guide resource allocation and decisions in ways that affect gender relations. Ideologically, women are defined largely in terms of their affiliations with the family.¹⁵ For example, women are depicted as mothers, daughters, sisters and wives, and are therefore relegated to the processes, best described as the moral

¹⁴O' Neil Onora, "Justice, Gender, and International Boundaries," British Journal of Political Science 20 (1990): 439-59.

¹⁵Jane Lewis, "The Debate on Sex and Class," New Left Review 149 (January /February 1985): 106.

economy of kinship, which regulate women and their work.¹⁶ The legal and material effects that emerge from these ideologies are used as tactics by the states to encourage the mobilization of certain groups and issues. This advancement often favors men rather than women. Catharine MacKinnon's perspective, even though aimed at the liberal capitalist state, reveals for instance, how the state enacts laws as a means of controlling women and as a result parenting gender-based opposition. She argues that "the state will appear most relentless in imposing the male point of view when it comes closest to achieving its highest formal criterion of distanced aperspectivity."¹⁷ That is to say, the state as an autonomous entity monopolizes decision making in such a way as to reinforce its masculine characteristics. It has adopted formal measures in conformity to this rule. The use of law to control women in the developing states manifests in such legislation as prohibition of abortion, regulation of property rights during divorce, or regulating and/or abolishing divorce (as will be discussed in detail in this study of predominantly

¹⁶Haley Afshar, ed., Women, Work and Ideology in the Third World (New York: Tavistock, 1985), xiv.

¹⁷Catharine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Toward a Feminist Jurisprudence," Signs 8 (Summer 1983): 658.

Islamic and Catholic nations). Even though divorce is a central tenet in Koranic family law of love and marriage, the laws monitoring such process often favor men. The state also passes voting laws which further restrict women's ballot powers.

Other analysts maintain that the connection between states and gender manifests at three basic stages: the upper class, who make decisions which reinforce the state's positions; statutes and their impact on gender division; and the conglomeration of guidelines, regulations, ideologies, and mechanisms that pattern policy outcomes of the states.¹⁸ In terms of gender difference, women occupy state positions in minute numbers, women's interests are rarely represented in the state and they are seen as primarily, if not purely, familial. Therefore, Charlton *et. al.* argue, women are not central to state power. The ruling elites are males in these states.¹⁹ The states, as sovereign powers, claim to give social meaning and equal worth to the formal juridical and political rights of all citizens; yet women are incorporated into the states

¹⁸Sue E. Charlton, Jana Everett, and Kathleen Staudt, eds., Women State and Development (New York: State University of New York, 1989), 12.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

differently from men. Women are not equally represented in the policy arena as either policy makers or interested parties.

Accessible information justifies my claim of minuscule participation of women at the national level. For instance, in 1969, there were only four women in cabinet level positions in the whole of Latin America. In March 1986, the President of Peru, Nerves, had no woman in the cabinet. President Sarney's Brazilian cabinet in February 1986 was exclusively male. Only Colombia and Chile had successfully elected two women, both serving as Ministers of Education.²⁰ Only one woman officiates in the current Chilean government, heading the Department of Women's Affairs.²¹ In Africa, women constitute only two percent of national cabinet or equivalent posts.²² Even when women do hold such posts, they preside over non-strategic positions such as community development, education, and women's affairs.

²⁰In 1979, three out of the twelve government members were women in Costa Rica. Therefore, Costa Rica was an exception to this rule. See the Europa Year World Book, 1987, 57.

²¹This comment was made by Ricardo Israel, Instituto de Ciencia Politica, Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile in 1993.

²²Jane L. Parpart and Kathleen Staudt, Women and the State in Africa (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989), 5.

Over half of African states have no women in the cabinet. Agathe Uwilingiyi Mana made history in the summer of 1993 when she became an interim Prime Minister of Rwanda, but the position was only temporary and did not change the nature of the state in the post-colonial Africa. The situation is rather different in Asia, where women have made slight progress towards occupying state positions. Apart from Mrs. Gandhi, India had only one woman minister between 1952 and 1975. It was reported that eleven others were ministers in the union government and two were chief ministers in the state government.²³ During the first era, only one woman was elected into Mrs. Gandhi's cabinet. However, women did not preside over the cabinet in Mrs. Gandhi's 1980 appointments. When Rajiv Gandhi succeeded his mother following her assassination in 1984, he nominated only Mrs. Moshina Kidwa in his 14-member cabinet. He later included two other women as cabinet members. According to Kearney, there were only four women ministers in Mrs. Bandaranaike's regime.²⁴ Women have not been completely excluded from the highest level, however. Despite all

²³Vicky Randall, Women and Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 111.

²⁴R. N. Kearney, "Women and Politics in Sri Lanka," Asian Survey 20 (1981): 205.

the constraints stated earlier, a few women have managed to emerge as policy makers in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Nicaragua, the Dominica, Haiti, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Argentina, Rwanda, and Israel. In spite of this presence, it is widely recognized that women form a tiny minority within the political elites. India, in order to ensure women's incorporation at least in the local government and the state levels, has established a quota for women.

In terms of state actions to integrate women in the system, Charlton, Everett, and Staudt argue that the lack of representation has a direct bearing on gender struggles, because policies accruing from this angle benefit (as well as serve as detriments to) women.²⁵ Even though the state can support women's advancement in economic sectors and help women in subsistence and employment, in efforts to develop, states generally do not have cohesive plan to equally incorporate women into the system. John Humphrey's analysis of the Brazilian economy, on the other hand, asserts that women are not integrated into the economy. Such an assertion points to my main contention, that due to lack of economic power women are excluded from the political arena. He claims

²⁵Charlton, Everett and Staudt, 14.

that between 1950 and 1970s women found jobs in service sectors and were working in schools and hospitals, or as domestic workers employed as house help. In the industrial sector, women made up one-third of all employees in the manufacturing sector.²⁶ Despite this claim, women in actuality were found clustered at the bottom of the system in low-paying jobs. The linkage to the political arena is explicit because these women's lack of economic mobility directly impacted their political progress. They make up one-third of the labor sector, yet are deprived of economic and political power. These analyses support the argument that women are not incorporated into the economy in the same manner as men. Humphrey's explanation helped reinforce the feminists' view that women are laborers and producers and are never central to the state's politics. As economics is linked to politics,²⁷ economic power therefore commands political influence. Women possess neither economic nor political influence, and are thus excluded from the policy arena.

Hilary Standing contends that women are heavily

²⁶John Humphrey, "Gender, Pay and Skill in Brazil," in Haleh Afshar, ed., Women, Work and Ideology in the Third World (New York: Tavistock, 1985), 214.

²⁷Joan Edelman Spero, The Politics of International Economic Relations (New York: St. Martin Press, 1985), 1.

concentrated in informal sectors or home-based types of work. Women are disadvantaged in the public sector where they occupy positions as school-teachers and clerical workers. They work in small units in manufacturing divisions, and occupy governmental positions in minute proportion to men.²⁸ In most developing nations, the number of women in informal wage employment has increased in the past 20 years, but the proportion still remains low in comparison to men. Women are found in such light industries as textiles, clothing, and electronics for export, but the type of work accessible to women in this area remains unskilled in comparison to men.²⁹ While the women in these low-paying jobs are often more educated than many men, they do not have access to state positions.

Critics charge that states' educational systems also do not correspond to the needs of women. The education system is either too specialized and women

²⁸Hilary Standing, "Women's Employment in Urban Bengali," in Afshar, ed., 237-9; Kathleen Staudt, "Class and Sex in the Politics of Women Farmers," Journal of Politics 41 (1979): 478-91; Barbara Callaway, "Women and Political Participation in Kano City," Comparative Politics 19 (1987): 379-93.

²⁹F. Froebel, J. Heinrich and O. Kreye, eds., The New International Division of Labor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) 48; Jonath Tompkins, "Comparative Worth and Job Evaluation Validity," Public Administration Review 47 (1987): 254-58.

have to compete in a limited job environment, or it is too generalized and women are educated to receive the lowest paying jobs. In this way, the existing educational system of capitalist patriarchy has failed women. Women are educated to promote the status quo, but are not supplied with the devices to comprehend and evaluate systems that adversely impact them.³⁰

The peripheral relationship of women to state interests and policies can also be seen in the area of family planning and nutrition, where much of the information is provided by men. Reproduction information and services made available to women are mainly male-established and controlled. Moreover, the contraceptive devices permitted are not necessarily suited to the lifestyles and bodies of the women receiving them. Governments as diverse as China, India, Nigeria, and many others have initiated policies in favor of birth control. In China, women do not have a choice as to the number of children they may have; such initiatives remain in the hands of the state. In spite of the known dangers of some current contraceptives, women are not

³⁰Kumari Jayawardena, Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1986), 140-6, and 234-36; See also, Anita Anand, "Rethinking Women and Development," Convergence 24 (1982): 21; Susan Joeekes, "Working for Lipstick?" in Afshar, 196-8.

properly informed of these dangers but are persuaded to use these devices.

The source of contradictory policies for women can be found in the way the state establishes goals in order to maintain stability, while simultaneously fostering female dependency on the system. Women's control over their own fertility has been affected by many policies established by the state regulating marriage, child bearing, and property ownership. Because the state is largely male, the interests of the male override those of the female. In Latin America, there is an established Roman Catholic presence which has legal ramifications as the states adopt certain laws to protect the Church's interests. For instance, some states such as Nicaragua and El Salvador manipulate the Church's doctrines and use them as tactics to foster national interests. These two countries prohibit abortion as a way of encouraging population growth in war-torn areas. As a result, abortion was driven underground as women reverted to dangerous measures to terminate unwanted pregnancies. Evidence suggests that illegal abortions became rampant as states strove to regulate abortions. In Brazil, it is estimated that one-third of all pregnancies end in abortion. Following such reports, the government introduced studies and policy reorientation resulting in

efforts to liberalize abortion in Brazil. Mexico had also adopted a similar policy stance. Similar steps were taken in Chile in 1973 and in Bolivia in 1977.³¹ Brazil and Argentina currently have successful networks of family planning centers.

Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria, developed comparable networks overwhelmed by high annual birthrates estimated at 3.3 per cent. Syria and Iraq (prior to the 1990 war with the West) adopted the same procedures to reduce what they perceived as a galloping birth rate of 3.6.³² In India, the state has long legalized abortion. However, due to high fertility rates, many women were subjected to extreme pressure to be sterilized under the state's oppressive campaign, which resulted in the Emergency Rule of 1975-1977.³³

Moreover, the state sanctioned birth control devices supplied by foreign nations are mostly developed by men who do not experience first-hand the issues of

³¹C. Francome, Abortion Freedom: A Worldwide Movement (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), 28.

³²J. Mincez, The House of Obedience: Women in Arab Society (London: Zed Press, 1982), 11.

³³Miranda Davies, ed., Third World-Second Sex (London: Zed Books, 1985), 32.

fertility;³⁴ women-centered scholars argue that the recipient nations are not aware of the controversies surrounding them.³⁵ These constraints are not restricted to the state level. While some women welcome these methods, they may face considerable resistance from their husbands. Reports indicate that women may conceal from their husbands the fact that they are using birth control. When their husbands do find out, these women are sent back to the hospital to have such devices removed. All these examples show that the state may make policies to guarantee its control over women, even their sexuality; that capitalist patriarchy affects every aspect of women's being, in both the private and the public sphere; and, specifically, every stage of women's life is controlled by males at home and outside. This does not come as a surprise to feminist scholars who see the state as male. Indeed, Shulamith Firestone identifies the causes of patriarchy in relation to reproduction, arguing that patriarchy will prevail

³⁴Carol Lopate, Women in Medicine (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 7; See also, Janet Shibley Hyde and Marcia C. Linn, eds., The Psychology of Gender (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 43.

³⁵M. Savara, "Report of a Workshop on Women's Health and Reproduction," in Davies, 223.

unless there are changes in reproductive technology.³⁶

According to Charlton et. al. "the state defines the parameters of politics both through its institutions and through ideology. The state is typically the chief promoter of the accepted political reality; it also fosters certain relations of production that reinforce that reality."³⁷ Relations that divide the means of production on the basis of gender perpetuate sexual ordering. The kind of policies emerging from this one-sided environment discourage women as active participants in the state system. Yet women are perceived as citizens of these states. The former United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim reported that while women represent over half of the global head count and one-third of the paid labor force, women receive only one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one percent of its property. Women are also responsible for two-thirds of all working hours.³⁸ Their labor power sustains the status quo but the state does not adequately represent women's interests. Women, as an

³⁶Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectics of Sex (London: Paladin, 1970), 50.

³⁷Sue Charlton, et. al., 15.

³⁸Kurt Waldheim, United Nations Secretary General, "Report to the U.N. Committee on the Status of Women," MS Magazine, April 1981, 18.

exploited class form a free labor pool for the developing states. Yet, women do not participate greatly in the state's apparatus, although some women in these areas have challenged the state's position towards their gender.

The theoretical contributions by the feminists evaluating the conditions of women in the developing countries are summed up below. They argue that women's situations in these areas have deteriorated, despite claims by some nations to have upgraded the trend.³⁹ These past decades (1970s to 1990s) are earmarked by the United Nations as the "Developmental Decades."⁴⁰ The UN has sought ways to improve the situation of women and has established strategies to combat problems in the developing countries. Such positions remain to be actualized, as very little has been accomplished in the attempt to coordinate a cohesive network in which women

³⁹Anita Anand, "Rethinking Women and Development: The Case for Feminism," Convergence XV (1982): 17; Sharifa Begum, "Population Birth, Death Growth Rate in Bangladesh: Census Estimate," The Bangladesh Development Studies XVIII (June 1990): 63; John Cleland and W. Parker Mauldin, "The Promotion of Family Planning by Financial Payment: The Case of Bangladesh," Studies in Family Planning 22 (January/February 1991): 118-25.

⁴⁰Margaret E. Galey, "The Nairobi Conference: The Powerless Majority," Political Science and Politics 19 (1986): 255-65; See her article titled: "Gender Roles and UN Reform," Political Science and Politics 22 (1989): 813-20.

would advance in the state systems. The major debates have centered on the following: electing women into decision -making positions, establishing financial network to fund women's projects, and introducing laws that would create more opportunities for women. Despite these assertions by the UN to upgrade women's status, women in the developing nations still face serious challenges.⁴¹ Many women remain uneducated: their incomes relatively low; women's health and nutrition needs remain unmet; family planning programs developed by men continue to be below standard; and, lastly, very few women have progressed as policy makers.

Writing in the World Health Magazine, Benazir Bhutto reiterates the importance of including women in world affairs.⁴² She explains that problems such as illiteracy, adverse economic conditions, regional biases against women, and substandard health care systems all operate in alignment against women's opportunities to progress in the state systems. Accordingly, Benazir Bhutto urges these countries to redirect their strategy to resolve effectively these challenges. Paying close attention to the lack of women's progress in developing

⁴¹Anita Annand, 21; Galey, 1989, 20.

⁴²Benazir Bhutto, "Women and Health," World Health (April/May 1990): 3.

countries, women-centered authors have concluded that women's subordination in developing areas would be reduced only when these issues are fully addressed.⁴³

I have firmly established that the state is an arena of unequal association of conflictual social forces in which women have emerged as the victims of at least two of those powers capitalism and patriarchy. Presently, class categories are primarily male-defined, and women are assigned to an economic or a political class on the basis of their husbands' relation to the means of production. Therefore, women are not perceived as autonomous beings but affiliates (not full citizens). Out of this misconception and inconsistency, women have been denied access to the strategic areas of decision making and their contributions have been undervalued. Hence, there exists a contradictory relationship between the devaluer (men) and the devalued (woman). The fact of the political elite being largely male provides a telling account of the underlying motives of the state and its subsequent policy interests. Out of the utmost

⁴³Miranda Davies, "Women in Struggle: An Overview," Third World Quarterly 5 (October 1983): 413; See also, her work titled Third World Second Sex (London: Zed Books, 1985), 30; Nadia Youssef, "Women in the Muslim World," in Inglitzin and Ross, eds., (1976), 54; and Kumari Jayawardena, Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1986), 13.

desire to preserve the family on the part of the ruling class, which is also a commitment to a division of labor on the basis of profit accumulation and sexual hierarchy, a few women have risen and fallen as policy makers in the developing nations.

Women Heads Of State And The State

Women's economic and political typings are generally formed on the basis of their fathers' or husbands' relation to the means of production. A woman's status in the society is defined basically by the status of her male kin (father, husband, and brother). It is chiefly on this basis that women become politically involved or uninvolved at the national level. Hence, the hierarchical economic ordering simultaneously trickles down into the sexual political differentiation. The woman with prominent male kin automatically belongs to a higher political class than a woman whose male kin belongs to a lower economic and political class; therefore, women with prominent male kin are not positioned equally with the majority of women who are at the bottom of the political ladder. Class differences between women in general and women possessing 'superior family' backgrounds (who, due to their family names have emerged as heads of governments) further complicate

gender/class analysis. For instance, Fatton insists that "women have a contradictory insertion into the social structure. While women as a group suffer from the effects of patriarchy, they do not experience equally the ravages of class domination."⁴⁴ Their status in terms of class affiliation is accorded in terms of patriarchal relation to the means of production. This is to say that special material and social circumstances surrounding women's classification in the state system are to a greater extent influenced by women's family backgrounds.⁴⁵ Class division in the state system originates from the exploitative relationship between the owners of the means of production and the workers. Such a relationship structures male wage labor, which consequently affects social ordering in terms of power structures and, of course, class and gender divisions. The capitalist class or the elite group acquire resources, power and privilege in the society. Their status is passed down to their kin. Generally, women as

⁴⁴Robert Fatton, "Gender, Class and State in Africa," in Parpart and Staudt, 50.

⁴⁵Rosalind Petchesky, "Dissolving the Hyphen: A Report on Marxist-Feminist Group," in Zillah Eisenstein, 378; Kathleen Howard-Mariam, "Egypt's Other Political Elite," Western Political Quarterly 34 (1981): 174-87; JoAnne F. Aviel, "Political Participation of Women in Latin America," Western Political Quarterly 34 (1981): 156-73.

part of the capitalist patriarchy acquire the socio-economic status of their fathers, husbands or brothers.⁴⁶ There are, however, ones who have achieved a different socio-economic status other than that inherited from their kins but this number has remained marginal. It is on the grounds of the contradiction that women emerge as policy makers in the Third World. Some of these women rise to power due to their family backgrounds and for the fact of their gender. Class and gender differences complement each other, creating avenues for these women's emergence. But while they are in power, these differences create problem for them. The women under consideration in this work -- Aquino, Bhutto, Chamorro, and Indira Gandhi -- are, according to class affiliation, different from the majority of women in their countries. Their linkage to the capitalist patriarchy, however, enlists them in a different class from the women they represent and this linkage paves the way for their ascendance and their decline. This claim is substantiated by Eisenstein's analysis of the ruling class. She insists that the:

ruling class desire to preserve the family reflects its commitment to a division of labor that not only secures it the greatest profit but also hierarchical sex ordering of the society

⁴⁶Zillah Eisenstein, 31.

culturally and politically.⁴⁷

Therefore, these women's presence in the political arena in the cases studied here help reinforce the patriarchal structure, a structure threatened by instability as a result of assassination and national conflict.

According to Keohane, Rosaldo, and Gelpi, capitalist state systems treasure women's contribution according to male criterion, especially when women's presence satisfies the "needs of emergency, women then become men's equal, only to regress when the urgency recedes."⁴⁸ In order to stabilize the system due to turmoil precipitated in these states by the sudden departure (assassination) of their fathers or husbands, these women were elected into office to reinforce the interests of the ruling class. While they were in power, the gender difference constantly affected their performance as national leaders. Their presence does not suggest that the state is neutral; rather, it supports the capitalist patriarchal nature of the state.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Nannerl O. Keohane, Michele Z. Rosaldo and Barbara C. Gelpi, Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 8-9; Linda Reif, "Women in Latin American Guerrilla Movement: A Comparative Perspectives," Comparative Politics 18 (1986): 147-69.

Hypothesis

The mutual relationship between patriarchy and capitalism (gender and class) had a direct bearing on the emergence and decline of women as policy makers in the developing nations.

In conducting the research, family ties and class are used as key variables in exploring how these women emerged as policy makers. Other variables are: gender and lifestyles; and political crisis; and the sudden deaths of family members are considered.

Research Questions

-- How did patriarchy reinforce capitalism in such a fashion as to establish the opportunity for women to rise to and fall from power?

-- To what extent did gender and class divisions affect these women's leaderships?

Research Method And Technique

From the standpoint of methodology, the image of gendered-biased state is a feminist assumption, not a non-methodological description of the actual world. Assumption, it is argued, should be viewed not in terms of descriptive insights or valid generalizations about the state system. From this point of analysis,

assumptions are neither true nor false. Rather, they are more or less useful in helping the theorists derive testable propositions or hypotheses⁴⁹ about the state relations. Once hypotheses are developed, they are tested against the real world. In this regard, the image of a gendered state is the starting point for developing the feminist theory of the state, but not a concluding statement. From this standpoint, theorists use such simplifying assumptions as aids to developing hypotheses and theories about the differentiated inclusion of women and men into the state system. Such postulation may include: male kin status and impact on gender integration; economic and political advantage vis-a-vis political advancement; and the influence (if any) of sexism over political performance in the state system.

A case study approach is employed. Many options accrue from this technique. Two of the benefits of this approach are: its utility provides the researcher with the opportunity to conduct an in-depth study of the four leaderships in question; and, it facilitates comparative analysis on the issues, especially in analyzing whether gender and/or class are salient to these women's distinction. Furthermore, this approach allows

⁴⁹Kenneth D. Bailey, Methods of Social Research (New York: Macmillan Publisher, 1982), 8.

investigation to be conducted on a longitudinal basis, commencing with the onset of Mrs. Gandhi's leadership in 1965 to emergence of Mrs. Chamorro in 1990. Although this research is constrained by lack of research funding for travel to the nations under consideration, this method permits research on subjects to which the researcher does not have physical access. Although documents vary in quality, many documents - such as government documents, scholarly journals, and newspaper columns- are written by skilled researchers, superseding, for instance, poorly written responses to mailed questionnaires. The disadvantage of this procedure is the lack of availability of documentation on certain subject areas. There are many areas of study for which no documents are available, or in some cases, the needed information was never recorded, or has been destroyed, or is classified.

Efforts have been made to contact some consuls of these states, such as the Consul Generals of the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Nicaragua, all in Washington, D.C., for informational purposes. In addition, information has been extracted from governmental documents, autobiographies, books and journals, popular news journals and newspapers such as the New York Times, US News and World Report, Times

(London), U.S. Congressional Bulletin, as well as data sources such as the United Nation Statistical Year Book, the Europa Year World Book, Encyclopedia Britannica Annual Data Sources, and many others, for records on these leaderships. Statistical analysis of data will be employed where it applies to the policy analysis of these regimes as compared with those of their male counterparts.

Feminist Standpoint And The Critique Of The State

An ongoing struggle by feminist theorists has been to eliminate bias from theory (philosophy, science and social sciences alike) and practice, by establishing a common voice for women.⁵⁰ As Alison Jaggar has noted in her work, however, there are many concerns raised in relation to women's situation in the state system. These political philosophical voices are rooted in theories of human nature and have differing policy outcomes.⁵¹ The opinions are delineated by Jaggar. Each of these distinctive views - liberal, radical, and socialist

⁵⁰Janet Hannigan, "Feminism and Political Theory," Political Science Quarterly 12 (1979): 691-96; Susan Tenebaum, 90.

⁵¹Alison Jaggar, "Political Philosophies of Women's Liberation," in Sharon Bishop and Majorie Weinzweig, eds., Philosophy and Women (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1977), 42.

feminist positions - is deeply rooted in a theory of human nature with particular epistemological precepts.⁵² Drawing from the socialist feminist premise of the clash among the state, class and gender, I hope to furnish solid grounds for the necessity for a particular feminist standpoint. A feminist standpoint, according to Kramarae and Treichler, is a vital epistemological device for combatting all types of dominance in the state system.⁵³

Kathy Ferguson notes that current thought on the subject of politics typifies "the bounded agent of rational self-reflection and autonomous action,"⁵⁴ which feminist theorists have exposed as reflecting masculine experience rather than a universal analysis of human nature. Since the prevailing knowledge is androcentric, it then becomes imperative to establish its opposite, i.e., androperipheral view, which supersedes the biased opinion dominating contemporary scholars. The question,

⁵²Alison M. Jaggar, Feminism and Human Nature (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Inc., 1988), 10-13; Jennifer Ring, "Toward a Feminist Epistemology," American Journal of Political Science 31 (n.d.): 753-72. Each of these three distinctive opinions are further elaborated in the Literature Review.

⁵³Kramarae and Treichler, 162-316.

⁵⁴Kathy E. Ferguson, "Knowledge, Politics and Persons in Feminist Theory," Political Theory 17 (May 1989): 302.

thus, is focused on woman's 'lot in life.' Such 'lot' is a premise capable of establishing the androperipheral view and must supply a blueprint from which "women must theorize, strategize, and ultimately mobilize force," according to Terry Winnant.⁵⁵ A common voice, therefore, must embrace a woman-centered notion on the basis of shared experiences (that is, activities that women generally engage in as a result of their gender). Nancy Hartsock essentially paraphrases class consciousness in discussing the commonality among women as the basis for establishing a feminist unmasking of the status quo. She analogizes the commonality of women and experience to the class experience of the worker and purports that:

women and workers inhabit a world in which the emphasis is on change rather than static, a world marked by interaction with natural substances rather than separation from nature, a world in which quality is more important than quantity, a world in which the unification of mind and body is inherent in the activities performed.⁵⁶

There are, however, some important differences. One cannot overlook, for example, the extent of male labor.

⁵⁵Terry Winnant, "The Feminist Standpoint: A Matter of Language," Hypatia 2 (Winter 1987): 124-126; Nancy Hirschman, "Freedom, Recognition and Obligation: A Feminist Approach to Political Theory," American Political Science Review 83 (1989): 1227-44.

⁵⁶Nancy Hartsock, Money Sex and Power: Toward A Feminist Historical Materialism (New York: Longman, 1983), 234.

The proletarian, if male, is engaged in labor process only when he is working for the capitalist. For the woman, her experience goes deeper. In the private sphere, the situation of the woman transcends the class explanation of Marx to include the patriarchal relations governing her existence. In this context, the woman is the worker, the wife, and the mother. In order to meet the basic demands of day to day activity, women as mothers and wives are engulfed in the realm of physical labor and in tedious house work. A woman's work is never done.⁵⁷ This sexual division of labor indicates that women, as their gender suggests, are institutionally expected and are responsible for producing goods and human beings. In their work as reproducers women exist within what is best classified as a 'complex relational nexus,' one in which, according to Hartsock, "the boundaries between self and other are blurred and the capacity for empathy is built into their primary sense of themselves."⁵⁸ Parenting as a sexual division of

⁵⁷Nancy Chodrow, Mothering: Psychoanalysis and Sociology of Gender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 75; See also, Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrogant and Human Malaise (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 122; Also, Zillah Eisenstein, The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism (New York: Longman, 1981), 201-203.

⁵⁸Nancy Hartsock, 234-38.

labor goes beyond the fact that mothers produce daughters who become mothers themselves and men do not. Tradition holds that men are essential in social and family arrangements and such dogma originates in the parapsychological make-up of individuals. Male dominance in general is reinforced, especially through the unequal prestige enjoyed in the domestic and non-domestic spheres. This is so because the male child at adulthood learns to differentiate himself completely from his mother's world view. He eventually grows up to become "a man" who has been inculcated to become achievement-oriented and well groomed to work both inside and outside the home. A girl grows up to become a woman whose psyche (mental orientation) is patterned into subjecting to emotional work in both spheres.⁵⁹ In a nutshell, women's exclusion from the public sphere, even though rarely absolute, is a result of childhood association which is reinforced by societal expectations on women's role. Women are brought up to be mothers and wives, while males are reared to become heads of families, corporations and presidents; hence their access to the public sphere.

As long as modern states exclude the interests of

⁵⁹Ibid, 38.

women, establishing women standpoint is an epistemic device for reclaiming women's importance in the state system. Women's contributions to the states' structure as mothers and workers would then be acknowledged, not written off. The standpoint emanates from shared experiences and knowledge which are sociopolitically derived. Women's role as reproducers, mothers and wives has been used to justify treatment of them as second class citizens based on their domestic obligation, a task which should have provided them with privilege and dignity. The gender-based division extends to women's activity in the public sphere. Because this gap, women emerge late in the political and economic sectors. Due to their late advent in the political and economic spheres, women constitute an exploited class. Women are underpaid, and unpaid as homemakers, and they are not fairly represented in the state positions because the political arena is dominated by males. Consequently, women's interests are crippled by the state due to its patriarchal environment. For this purpose, my research purports that there are structural differences between genders and that, as a result of such disparity, women have become victims of their environment. To put it another way, the nature of sexual inequality in the state system is one where women are poorly represented

and their interests overlooked. Too, this palpable neglect lays the groundwork from which women as a group must struggle. The assumption here implies that the material world is structured into two spheres, masculine and feminine, which are essentially conflictual on the basis of an acquired tradition that presumes one gender's domination over another. The preeminence of men fosters the subjugation of women; hence the predetermined practice of hierarchy.

Moreover, the dominant group exploits and subjects the less viable one and imposes its world view on the latter. As a result, there are two worldviews: one, as perceived by the dominant group, which Nancy Hartsock dubs 'surface appearance;' and the other, as perceived by the subordinate group, which she calls 'deeper essence.'⁶⁰ The deeper essence reflects the ways in which women work as producers and reproducers and the awareness that emerges from their experience as part of material reality, and their perception of being closely linked to nature. Women have been exploited as workers but are also conscious of their values as women, as well as of the incomplete but prevailing male supremacy; hence the duality which allows a sort of

⁶⁰Alison Jaggar, 277-8.

"triangulation."⁶¹ Triangulation in this context stems from the two world views created by the divergence and allows the development of a third worldview, which is what feminists are purporting. Feminist scholars perceive the contemporary state system to be shadowed by gender inequality, and partial as a result. They claim that their androcentric opponents fail to realize such division. Therefore, the basic task of a feminist standpoint is systemic uncovering, the rejection of the common masculine assessment of existence as authoritative. Drawing an analogy to political economy, we can see women as workers who are underpaid and exploited, and whose labor as mothers is undervalued. The proletariat (women in this regard), are impartial. They recognize these dual levels of reality where one gender dominates the other. Therefore, such a viewpoint can be used to explain the misrepresentation of the human world that originated from inaccurate material-based interactions which distort the political economy. The socialist feminist theorists, recognizing this disparity, call for a united voice among women on the basis of commonality of experience in order to refute

⁶¹Anne Ferguson, "Women as a Revolutionary Class," in Pat Walker, ed., Between Labor and Capital (Boston: South End Press, 1979), 279-312.

discrimination across class, race and gender. This research clearly focuses on gender differences and women's ability to participate as citizens in the state system.

Developing Consciousness As Women

Socialist feminism has made a genuine contribution to political theory by articulating the need for a "political psychology which is historical, materialist and nondeterministic and is motivated by feminist politics".⁶² It is historical in the sense that these theorists took extra care to document how women have been excluded from the public sphere over history and across cultures. It is materialist in the sense that women are seen as producers comprising a pool of underpaid laborers. It is an unmasking of exploitation and domination among classes and across gender lines because women, realizing their plight, began calling for change. The feminist struggle originated from the commonality deriving from the particular roles women

⁶²Nancy Hartsock, "A Feminist Standpoint: Developing The Ground for A Specially Feminist Historical Materialism," in Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, eds., Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspective on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and Philosophy of Science (Boston: D. Reidell Publishing Company, 1983), 285-8.

share in the system.⁶³ Women's roles are deeply rooted in daily struggles in production, reproduction, and consumption. Women are being squeezed both at home and on the job, working in the labor force for less than men and still responsible for duties at home. This is the basis from which consciousness can develop. Although there are real differences among women's daily experiences, there are also points of contact that provide a commonality for cross-class organizing.⁶⁴ Even though women do not equally experience the ravages of class, women are generally affected by class conflict.

Lorrenne Clark and Debra Lewis write that what women learn in order to become housewives and mothers is a product of their environment. This imagery is a blurred vision due to the dualism between the seeming state of existence and the actuality.⁶⁵ The prevalent perception underemphasizes the distinction between male centered consciousness (the social definition of what a

⁶³Barbara Rowland-Serdar and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, "Empowering Women: Self, Autonomy, and Responsibility," Western Political Quarterly 44 (1991): 605-24.

⁶⁴Alison Jaggar, 371-376.

⁶⁵Lorrenne N. G. Clark and Debra Lewis. Rape: The Price of Coercive Sexuality (Toronto: Women's Press, 1977), 12.

woman is) and what is true about a woman.⁶⁶ Socially, femaleness means femininity, that is, men's perception of women. One becomes a woman, acquires and identifies with the status of the female, not so much through physical maturation or inculcation into appropriate role behavior as through the experience of sexuality.

Evaluating women's position in the state system, woman-centered theorists became aware of sexual inequality. For instance, Kate Millet defines sexuality as a complex unity of "physicality, emotionality, identity, and status affirmation."⁶⁷ One of the major issues here is men's influence on woman's sexuality.⁶⁸ Such treatment was subversive and had helped in awakening some women to combat oppression against women in the state system. The feminists' apprehension of the environment on the basis of gender differences helps to expose inequality and oppression; they see the

⁶⁶Janet Shibley Hyde and Marcia C. Linn eds., The Psychology of Gender (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press 1993), 8; Patricia Gurin, "Women's Gender and Consciousness," Public Opinion Quarterly 49 (1985): 143-63.

⁶⁷Kate Millet, Sexual Politics (New York: Avon Books, 1971), 32.

⁶⁸Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Barbara C. Gelpi, Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 17.

needs. This apprehension exposes a sense of rights and obligations that would aid in male/female enhancing relations. Therefore, female consciousness centers on social concerns, survival, and how to upgrade women's situations. Those with female consciousness challenge the gender system of their society. Indeed, such awareness emerges from the division of labor by sex, in which women are physiologically endowed with the obligation to preserve life, on the basis of social contract.⁶⁹ In accepting this challenge (that is, the duty of nurturing and sustaining life, cooking, gardening and child care), women with female consciousness demand the rights surrounding this duty. The collective drive to secure those rights that result from the division of labor sometimes has revolutionary consequences in so far as it politicizes the network of everyday life.⁷⁰ Women have seen that the consequences created by differences between women and men are not pre-socially endowed, but are socially discerned and, therefore, socially transformable.

Jaggar contends that recognition of the reality of female consciousness necessitates reorientation of

⁶⁹Nancy Chodrow, 239.

⁷⁰Kate Millet, 35.

political theory. Placing human needs above other social and political requirements and human consciousness creates the vision of a society that has not yet appeared.⁷¹ Social cohesion arises from individual rights over reproduction and access to institutional power. Thus, female consciousness has political implications, as women's collective action has shown. It seems to me that the motivation for this collective action should stem from the way the society is structured and the consequences of the unfair distribution of resources in the state system. The state, having been awakened to pay attention to the consciousness (a standpoint) of women, would establish a new mode of analysis/production where citizens' interests are equitably addressed and any form of prejudice across gender, class and racial lines eliminated.

Literature Review

Feminism can be classified as a diverse and changing movement, seeking in various ways to raise women's social status. According to Alison Jaggar, feminism is a mode of analysis, a method of approaching

⁷¹Alison Jaggar, 332-40.

life and politics, a way of asking questions and searching for answers.⁷²

Up to the 1960's and the resurgence of feminism, political science had very little to say about women. A primary reason for this neglect was the intellectual character of the discipline; that is, androcentrism.⁷³ Moreover, according to Lovenduski, a renowned state-centric scholar, a harmful split developed and became particularly pronounced in the immediate postwar years between 'scientific empiricism on the one hand, and overtly normative political theory on the other.'⁷⁴ Worse still, from women's point of view, empiricism emerged as the dominant paradigm. Given the limited observable role of women in the political arena, women were unlikely to be selected for study, except for studying voting behavior;⁷⁵ i.e., studies have focused on why and how women vote in elections, or similar issues. Also, taking into consideration the androcentric

⁷²Alison Jaggar, 5-13.

⁷³Mark Kan, 1983, 1.

⁷⁴Joni Lovenduski, "Toward Emasculation of Political Science," in D. Spencer, ed., Men's Study Modified (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), 36.

⁷⁵Joni Lovenduski, 36.

issues. Also, taking into consideration the androcentric nature of the discipline and the need to maintain a consistent voice, women's issues were not central to the statist writers.⁷⁶ Based on Jaggar's analysis, this might mean that these philosophers completely took for granted the essential difference between men and women, i.e., women's roles as workers and reproducers, and men's roles as fathers and controllers in both private and public spheres.⁷⁷ Such benign neglect caused many women's concerns to be sidetracked. Therefore, feminism has encouraged political science to pay greater and more careful attention to women. Feminism also helps in understanding both an individual political system and women's exclusion from it.⁷⁸ Too, this framework asserts that women, as citizens of the state, should be positioned equally to men.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Mary O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1981), 24.

⁷⁷Alison Jaggar, 21.

⁷⁸Helene Silverberg, "What Happened to Feminist Revolution in Political Science?" Western Political Quarterly 43 (1990): 887-903; Joyce Mitchell, "The Women's Caucus for Political Science: A View of the Founding," Political Science and Politics 23 (1990): 204-07.

⁷⁹Nancy Frazer, "Welfare State and Politics of Need Interpretation," Hypatia 2 (1987), 102.

Schools Of Feminist Thought: Overview

According to Alison Jaggar, many women and men who define themselves as feminists do not agree on common theoretical orientations to feminism but are feminists in their beliefs that women should be freed from subordination.⁸⁰ She identifies major theoretical positions among feminists: liberal, orthodox Marxist, radical and socialist feminism. As Jaggar notes, however, any presentation of these views on women's issues must recognize the degree of diversity among them.⁸¹ The most significant subjects are their opinions on human nature, or on the nature of social order, and the nature of inequality (factors perpetuating sex inequality). Of importance, too, are their variant assessments of the good society, strategies for actualizing that goal, and, finally, their prescriptions for sex role changes.⁸²

The basic objective of liberal feminism is to apply liberal principles equitably to all sexes. The underlying principle is that men and women are basically

⁸⁰Alison Jaggar, Feminism and Human Nature, 5.

⁸¹Ibid, 10-13.

⁸²These topics comprised the divergent issues analyzed by different theorists. Due to space, my presentation sums up significant points pertaining to the research.

the same and each has the ability to reason. According to this premise, there is no such thing as separate male and female natures but one human nature, with no distinct gender.⁸³ Furthermore, this view holds that men have been given special powers at the expense of women, creating divergent interests. Because liberals perceive the state as the 'neutral arbiter' having as its primary task the neutralization of conflicting interests in society, liberal feminists challenge the laws that accord special privileges to men, or ones that discriminate against women.⁸⁴ Instead of arguing for a complete transformation of the existing political system, the liberal feminists see their solution in a political process in which the federal government would increase its role integrating women into the state

⁸³Richard Sinopoli, "Feminism and Liberal Theory," American Political Science Review 85 (1991): 225-35.

⁸⁴See M. Shandly and C. Pateman, "Feminist Interpretation and Political Theory," British Journal of Political Science (October, 1989): 149. They criticized Hobbes's approval of men's patriarchal right in civil society; Mary Astell's critique of the so-called male's freedom and female subjections in Some Reflections Upon Marriage (New York: Source Book Press, 1970), 107; Teresa Brennan and Carole Pateman, "Mere Auxiliaries to the Commonwealth: Women and Origins of Liberalism," Political Studies 27 (1979): 183-200. They discussed Hobb's view on the family; Carolyn W. Korsmeyer, "Reasons and Morals in the Early Feminist Movement: Mary Wollstonecraft," The Philosophical Forum 5 (Fall-Winter 1973-1974): 199-221.

system.⁸⁵ They, therefore, fight for legislation in support of equal considerations in areas such as education, access to professional job training and to educational opportunities. Of interest, too, are "separate" women's issues such as childcare, maternity leaves and benefits for women. The liberal feminists have striven for many years to have the state favorably resolve these issues.⁸⁶ While the liberal feminists desire to use laws to resolve the discriminating practices, they do not view the oppression of women as a structural feature of the capitalist system. Women's freedom, according to this school, would be brought about by the state itself, as limited legal reforms are directed at upgrading women's status.

The radical feminists, as the name suggests, adopt a different approach to settle the lack of integration of women into the system. They argue that the operation of the capitalist system makes it impossible for the genuine establishment of liberal political values and allows only their empty forms. This ideology contends that capitalism supports values of individual

⁸⁵Anne N. Costain, Inviting Women's Rebellion (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 23.

⁸⁶Nancy Hirschmann, "Feminism and Liberal Theory," American Political Science Review 85 (1991): 225-33; Jaggar, 37.

competition which are inconsistent with the feminist values of interdependence and nurturance.

Radical feminism is a modern occurrence, originally sparked by the particular encounters of a small cluster of mostly white, middle-class educated American women around the latter part of the 1960s. A good number of them had vital concerns relating to issues as diverse as civil rights, American involvement in Vietnam, as well as men's domination in the associations established to achieve peace and justice in the system. Radical feminism's fundamental aim is the exposing and combatting of the mainspring determination of women's subjugation in the system. As they do not adhere to any distinct political theory, this group portrays a grassroot crusade addressing such divergent issues as women's environmental interests, literature, music, spirituality, health, sexuality, employment, technology, and so on.⁸⁷

The basic assumption of radical feminism is rooted in the liberal belief that sex-roles stem from individual freedom of choice. Individuals possess the power to actualize themselves apart from societal

⁸⁷Alison Jaggar, 83-85.

conscription.⁸⁸ Some radical feminists further embrace or subscribe to the concept of androgyny as a way of overriding sex-roles. In this state of consciousness, even though individuals are physiologically gendered, people are no longer to be socially or psychologically defined as feminine or masculine.⁸⁹ As the concepts of sex-roles and androgyny were abandoned, some of these writers began to appeal to biology as the basis of women's oppression. For instance, Shulamith Firestone notes that the sexual division of labor is deeply rooted in biology. Women are essentially inferior to men due to their reproductive capacity, and women and children must depend on their male head of household for survival. Men's economic power gives them control of the state and allows them to use it to perpetuate the subordination of women in the society as a whole. The election of a few women to policy-making positions does not alleviate this problem, as men still retain economic and political power. Firestone also gives a provocative analysis of ways in which male dominance is manifested, as well as

⁸⁸See Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine, and Anita Rapone, eds., Radical Feminism (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973) for variety of radical feminist thoughts and their differences--lesbianism, black feminism, etc.

⁸⁹Kate Millet, "Sexual Politics," in Koedt et. al., 366-67.

reinforced, in the present-day thoughts on love and romance. Racism is also interpreted as a form of male dominance.⁹⁰

Some French radical feminists, such as Monique Wittig, deny that a women's body is biologically given, arguing instead that such is socially ascribed. Women are brainwashed into having children,⁹¹ a claim supported by Andrea Dworkin, an American radical feminist.⁹² Because women are depicted as being under sexual slavery, and as being forced into motherhood, and because men are seen as having total control over women's bodies, women's liberation can be accomplished only by separate and autonomous women's organizations. Women as a class must unite to overhaul the status quo, because women's oppression engenders hate.⁹³ This analysis calls for the revolutionary demise of the existing order, an instrument of patriarchy, and the

⁹⁰Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectics of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution (New York: William Morrow, 1970), 9-11 and 206.

⁹¹Monique Wittig, Les Guerilleres (New York: Avon, 1971), 35; Also, The Lesbian Body (New York: Avon, 1973), 11.

⁹²Andrea Dworkin, Woman Hating (New York: Dutton, 1974), 175.

⁹³Monique Wittig, Les Guerilleres, 116.

reconstruction in its place of a gender-free society. Even though there has been an agreement on the need to restructure the state, the means of accomplishing that end differ. The radical overhaul of the system is an extreme measure which would only be detrimental to humanity in general. Violent overthrow of the status quo reinforces disorder, a deviation which constantly plagued humankind for many generations and have not accomplished stability. However, the change of consciousness fosters avenues for a stable relation between gender in the state system. This is where socialist feminism comes into play. This framework purports an alternative means other than violent demise of the existing system.

Emerging in the 1970s, socialist feminism has as its basic objective the development of an eclectic political theory capable of synthesizing the most substantial contributions of radical feminism and traditional Marxism. Jaggar argues that this framework holds a promise of establishing a unique advancement of political theory and practice for women's emancipation.⁹⁴ Like radical feminists, their socialist counterparts are addressing issues as varied as

⁹⁴Alison Jaggar, 123.

sexuality, reproduction (including mothering), and the ways politics and economics affect people. Rather than adopting a universal or biological perspective, however, the socialist feminists elucidate the traditional Marxist historical materialist approach in such a way that it pertains to the insights of radical feminism. For instance, traditional Marxism posits that the struggle for feminism corresponds strongly to class conflict.⁹⁵ Radical feminism asserts that women's liberation must be primary to any other type of injustice in the system. Socialist feminism dismisses this as confusion. It does not purport to substitute socialism for feminism, or vice versa. Rather, it juxtaposes these issues. For example, these theorists see capitalism, male dominance, racism and imperialism as inseparable. Any effort to address an aspect of this problem is incomplete unless such an attempt seeks to eradicate all forms of oppression in the system. They further acknowledge diversity by sex, age, class, nationality, racial and ethnic origins not only as part of modern day phenomena, but deeply intertwined with historical materialism.

⁹⁵Kate Millet, "Sexual Politics: A Manifesto for Revolution," in Anne Koedt, Ellen and Anita Rapone, eds., Radical Feminism (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973), 12.

In order to best explicate the historical materialist theory of the sexual division of labor, these thinkers concentrate on the different activities undertaken by women and men. They conclude that the dialectic relationship between sex and society centers around gender norms. Gender is socially derived along with biology, they argue. They place, therefore, emphasis upon psychological differences among the sexes in terms of abstract masculinity and femininity. These theorists charge that the ways we perceive our inner lives, our bodies and behavior are structured by our environment. Such structuring takes place in early childhood and affects the pattern of masculine and feminine character and hence the arrangement of male domination.⁹⁶

According to socialist feminism, traditional Marxism depicts men's worldview, completely disregarding women outside the market, and neglecting the gender-specific nature of women's contribution to the public sphere. Such benign neglect conceals the organized pattern of men's subjugation of women in the system. No matter the mode of production of a particular state, women's relations to the system are determined by who

⁹⁶Alison Jaggar, 124-6.

dominates the ruling class. Women's "essence" is theorized on the basis of men's interpretation. Some men perceive women as sexual objects, and this manifests in their approval of, or carefree attitude toward, 'rape, prostitution and their sexual double standard,' when some women engage in illicit sexual activities to earn a living.⁹⁷ Women are both producers and reproducers, their work as mothers, housewives, sisters and daughters are underemphasized, and men of all ages accept women's exploitation in the home. Outside the home, men set the standards for women's employment; consequently women as a group are found clustered in the lowest stage of the job market. Taking all these factors into account, it is no wonder socialist feminism condemns Marxist oversight of male dominance in the political economy.⁹⁸

⁹⁷Sandra L. Bartky, "On Psychological Oppression," in Sharon Bishop and Majorie Weinzweig, eds., Philosophy and Women (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1979), 33-41; Linda Phelps, "Death in the Spectacle: Female Sexual Alienation," Liberation (May 1971): 50.

⁹⁸These writers include the following: Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism (New York: Vintage, 1975), 5; Nancy Chodrow, Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 18; Zillah Eisenstein, Capitalist Patriarchy; Sheila Rowbotham, "The Women's Movement and Organizing for Socialism," in Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright, Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism (London: Merlin, 1979), 41; Alison Jaggar, and Paula Rothenberg Struhl, eds., Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations

The state, according to socialist feminism, is not a neutral arbiter between conflicting groups, but rather the condensation of a balance of forces. The strongest of these is male dominance. They recognize that the differences between women and men are not pre-socially given, but, are socially fabricated and therefore socially modifiable. The abolition of capitalism and male dominance must be precursory to the attainment of freedom and equality in the state system. They argue that the absence of women in the state's executive positions is a perfect example of alienation. They therefore call for a society where all the members are able to freely and fully participate in every aspect of the state's apparatus. The feminist framework seeks a society where masculinity and femininity no longer exist. The vitality of this theory is in raising questions for other political traditions⁹⁹ which fully attract my attention. They call for an ultimate democracy, a process in which all people's needs will be

York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 17.

⁹⁹Maria Lugones, and E. V. Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Woman's Voice," paper presented to the Tenth Anniversary Conference of the Eastern Division of the Society for Women in Philosophy, Northampton, Massachusetts (October 1982), 7-22.

equitably addressed, and seek a society where people can integrate their capacities for mental and manual labor, for rationality and for emotional connection, for work, for sexuality, for art and for play, until those categories no longer describe and separate human activities. The weakness of this perspective stems from its failure to state exactly how valid democratic procedures can be initiated to abolish all social ills including racism, sexism, and capitalism.¹⁰⁰

There is a consensus among variant aspects of feminism that women's interests are not fairly articulated in the state system. The major difference is that these groups diverge as to the extent of women's alienation and how the state could better address women's concerns. My research extends this discourse to the developing economies and further explores how the gender and class issues raised by the socialist feminists directly affect the leaderships of the women under study.

Feminist Theory And The State

The majority of the work on theory of the state in regard to developing nations is deficient. The

¹⁰⁰Alison Jaggar, 344.

prevailing accounts center invariably on other frameworks such as Marxism, realism, modernization, and dependency. In all these theories women are not central to their claims. Women as a dominant group in terms of demographics and part of the state system should not be written off, neither should their quintessence be overlooked. In terms of a body of literature linking the feminist theory of the state with women as national leaders, there is virtually none.

In a recent work by Michael Genovese, an effort to establish a cross cultural assessment of women as heads of states centered on countries such as Britain, Israel, Argentina, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Nicaragua.¹⁰¹ This work detailed the political, social, and economic changes undergone in these countries at the time when women lead these countries and how these experiences affected these leaders' performances. While this work offers general explanations of these phenomena, my research seeks to explore in detail how gender and class conflict created avenues for women's rise to power and how these conflicts affected their performances in office. Nevertheless, this work provides additional background information to my research.

¹⁰¹Michael A. Genovese, ed., Women as National Leaders (California: Sage Publication, 1993), 1-11.

The following reviews, however, offer general insights on the paucity of research on women-centered ideas in relation to the state. In addition, these works illustrate the nature of current research conducted on the subject. The following represents a brief summary of the discourse: the lack of a cohesive women-centered theory and its impact on the standpoint theory and practice; male control of the purportedly neutral states (welfare states) and its effects on gender discourse; the state's use of laws as a ploy to control and women; the essence of the neutral state as sovereign power as challenged by some feminists theorists; the developing countries and their patriarchal control; and the role of religion in these areas and its impact on the political.

The lack of a woman-centered theory has been a major stumbling block for the advancement of the women's movements. As stated earlier, Theda Skocpol has pointed out the need for a concise women's standpoint among the major debates about the state.¹⁰² Alison Jaggar also has noted lack of consensus among writers arguing for an androperipheral position, arguing for a gender neutral analytical focus.¹⁰³ Catharine MacKinnon, therefore,

¹⁰²Theda Skocpol, 3-4.

¹⁰³Alison Jaggar, 1988, 5 and 22.

argues for consistency among researchers in developing a woman-centered theory of the state, stating that 'feminism has no theory of the state.'¹⁰⁴ Most works, she argues, are attempts to establish such a theory. MacKinnon examines how the struggle between the sexes impacts perception and politics in the society. She attempts to address this issue by adopting the concept of sexual discourse to establish a theory. She focuses primarily on how the liberal state uses law as a tactic to control women. The author argues that the state is a relatively autonomous entity and a kind of first among equals. Since men dominate the state, however, all the institutions formed by the state reflect men's efforts to control women: "the liberal state is male dominated, while pretending to neutrality. Through coercion and authority, it constitutes a social order that is in the interest of men. The laws, the jurisprudence and even the constitution are male-oriented." She further explained that they have not created 'de novo,' a situation where the power is shared, but have legitimized the gap between the sexes. In substantiation

¹⁰⁴Catherine A. MacKinnon, Toward A Feminist Theory of The State (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 157.

of this point, she argues that women are kept poor, access to abortion remains in the hands of men, and the laws on sexual equality remain evasive.¹⁰⁵ MacKinnon offers special analysis of U.S. jurisprudence in relation to rape, abortion, pornography and concludes that the system, an inherently androcentric one, is one in which rapists go free and women are second class citizens. Legal reforms have fallen directly into the hands of men (husbands, lawyers, and fathers). Constitutions, laws and regulations were all written by men long before women were accorded voting rights, and it is widely recognized, according to MacKinnon that individual rights as affirmed in the law are on the basis of male power.¹⁰⁶ Although critics have held that MacKinnon's work is U.S.-centric,¹⁰⁷ her work reveals how a capitalist state reinforces the elite rule and neglects women. It also exposes how law treats women, and her argument about the state being non-neutral backs

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 158.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 161-249.

¹⁰⁷Marie Andree Bertrand, "Feminism and Sexuality: A Review of Towards A Feminist Theory of The State," Social Justice 17 (1990): 221-34.

this argument. Critics challenging MacKinnon's stance have also maintained that legal analysis does not clearly evaluate class and race differences and how the law affects these differences. Furthermore, they have argued the laws originating from the economically advanced countries are exclusively male-oriented.¹⁰⁸

Many of these analysts have focused on welfare states, such as the U.S., Italy, France, Britain, Norway, and Denmark. These analyses affirm MacKinnon's theme about the extent of state's control over women's lives. Harvey Mansfield has argued for a reassessment of not only the executive power in general, but also the character of modern republicanism (modern politics) to include rather than exclude all citizens of the welfare states.¹⁰⁹

Anne Sassoon and the other authors of Women and the State: The Shifting Boundaries of Public and Private urge that more study is necessary to evaluate women's situations in the state system. They evaluate women's

¹⁰⁸Kathleen Daly, "Theoretical Perspectives: Reflections on Feminist Legal Thought," Social Justice 17 (1991): 10; Peggie Smith, "Separate Identities: Black Women, Work and Title VII," Unpublished Manuscript, Department of African and African-American Studies, Yale University, (1990), 4.

¹⁰⁹Harvey C. Mansfield jr., Taming the Prince (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 4.

place in public and private sectors and contend that women's lives are more dependent and determined by state policies than men's. The state, according to these analyses, regulates women's lives at home and at work. Since the state is male, according to Sassoon's study, women do not possess the organizational buffer to articulate and defend their interests. The state is perceived as the oppressor in support of the male heads of households and of the labor market where women's interests do not receive attention. Although society is dynamic, with women incorporated into the labor force, both these women and those under welfare have become less dependent on husbands but more dependent on the state.¹¹⁰ Even though the authors' analyses center on western societies, their emphasis on how inequality exists between the sexes as a result of the structure of the welfare state (in favor of men as opposed to women) relates to the states in the developing region. Generally, the state is andro-centric. This point of view clearly validates the feminists' position about the androcentric nature of the welfare state in general.

¹¹⁰ Anne Showstack Sasson, ed., Women and The State: The Shifting Boundaries of Public and Private (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 1-10.

Their focus on the state and women's employment not only aids in the evaluation of the nations under study, but supports the discourse that the welfare state uses laws, such as labor regulations, to control women.

The state not only controls women's employment, it makes stringent rules on how women fare in the system. The following argument denounces patriarchy in a welfare society. The major emphasis among the writers center on women's role both in mothering and as workers and the state's role in these relations. The study by Harriet Holder, ed. Patriarchy in a Welfare Society, acknowledges the highly developed social insurance network from which women benefit, from a Scandinavian perspective. Such establishment has succeeded, however, in making women more dependent on the Scandinavian state, which is largely male. For instance, they further explained that developmental projects have been planned and executed by male-controlled establishments. As a result of this association, corporatism was instituted. Such a network served as a mode of interest intermediation, redistribution and policy formation orchestrated by a male world of civil servants, organizational and professional experts which influence public interests. Of all the channels of access to the political decision making, the corporative is the least

instituted. Such a network served as a mode of interest intermediation, redistribution and policy formation orchestrated by a male world of civil servants, organizational and professional experts which influence public interests. Of all the channels of access to the political decision making, the corporative is the least participative, the most hierarchical and oligarchical, and most elitist.¹¹¹ Such a system reinforces the capitalist patriarchal alignment of the state. The authors' work confirms the elitist nature of strategic sectors of state's apparatus as well as the relatedness of women's experience even though the degree varies. Men being cardinal to the state's apparatus, women in general are excluded from these strategic positions in the state.

While the above scholars explored the use of laws, employment opportunities, and establishment of social networks by the state to downgrade women, others try to articulate the motives surrounding the state's actions. The main issue is that sexism and classism are precursory to the state's exclusionary behavior. Such a standpoint acknowledges, however, that the state is

¹¹¹Harriet Holter, ed., Patriarchy In A Welfare Society (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 31.

to advance economic welfare. Here, states pursue goals that mostly affect women through employment and population policies. Such a stance helps the state in securing its international status and in balancing domestic affairs, a policy orientation which adversely impacts women. The state needs and supports the family as a way of stabilizing the society.¹¹² Randall's work offers an immense contribution to my research. Not only did it evaluate the industrial states, but the analyses of some developing states such as Sri Lanka, India, and the Philippines are also included. The assessment of why women exercise insignificant clout in the decision-making arena was particularly helpful. Other analyses, such as the one on politics and women's status in Britain, examine the effect of state's action on six aspects of women's status: marriage; women's control over their own bodies; women's role as mothers; income; education; employment. The conclusion of the survey is that although British policies towards women's traditional role as mothers and housewives need to be improved so as to enhance women's conditions in that

¹¹²Vicky Randall, Women And Politics: An International Perspective (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 114.

state, some policies have made possible some widening of women's life options in the twentieth century and, indeed, may have played some part in the emergence of the women's liberation movement.¹¹³ This sort of analysis illuminates the woman-centered notion that the state is male oriented and that women do not receive treatment equal to men. The state-supported programs only serve to make women more dependent rather than advance them. Such a standpoint in itself justifies women's demands for change.

According to Mary MacIntosh, the scale against which the effect of state policies is measured is based on such goals as independence for women and women's control over their own bodies, including their work situation, and the self-realization and dignity which precipitate women's rights movements. The state's policies toward the family and women in the labor market are evaluated in order to ascertain the nature and extent of such oppression. These analyses as found in Anette Kuhn and Annmarie Wolpe eds., Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production conclude that the state indirectly plays a part in the oppression of women, by supporting a specific form of household where

¹¹³Ibid., 114.

men are the traditional heads of the family and women are homemakers.¹¹⁴

While most western states have established policies such as welfare programs, (un)employment equality policies, equal pay acts, equal opportunities laws, and affirmative action programs, my research attempts to evaluate the four developing countries' specific actions in these areas and how women leaders have sought to resolve such gender based issues. That is, are these women leaders able to enact policies to address women's situations? These women's presence indicate that women have not just existed as clients, employees, consumers and citizens in relation to the state, but as statespersons, and on lower level of the hierarchy as teachers, lower level civil servants, lawyers, doctors, engineers, nurses, social workers, daycare workers, etc. Even though some women occupy these positions, the proportion of women's integration into the system is very minimal compared to that of men. A contrasting position insisted that the main concern should not relate to the differences between the sexes,

¹¹⁴Mary McIntosh, "The State and Oppression of Women," in Anette Kuhn, and Annmarie Wolpe, eds., Feminism and Materialism: Women And Modes of Production (London: Keagan and Paul, 1989), 66.

but should focus on how such dissimilarities penetrate to foster discrimination.¹¹⁵ To counteract this latter opinion, MacKinnon explained that our focus should be on gender division since women constitute an exploited class both in the private and the public sectors.¹¹⁶ Women have been for many years subjugated as second class citizens. Even though there has been change, the state still has not fully integrated women into the state system. As long as this position holds, patriarchy controls all aspects of women's lives.

Analyses Of Elitist And Patriarchal Discourses

Focusing on the patriarchal control, some scholars such as Rosaldo and Lamphere contend that the present and historical prevalence of patriarchy is overwhelming. Their study notes that in most cases women are excluded from certain economic or political activities. In addition, women's roles as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than are the roles of men. They conclude that all contemporary societies are to some extent male-dominated, although

¹¹⁵Christine Littleton, "Reconstructing Sexual Equality," California Law Review 75 (1987): 1296.

¹¹⁶Catharine Mackinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward a Feminist Jurisprudence," Sign 8 (1982): 635-658.

the degree and expression of female subordination vary greatly. Sexual asymmetry is presently a universal fact of human social life.¹¹⁷ Teun A. Van Dijk adopts a multi-regional stance in evaluating the influence of the elite on politics in relation to one group's domination over another in areas as diverse as North America, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.¹¹⁸ Though race-oriented, this research supports the feminist perspective that the elite power wielders are mostly men. Male elites use their extensive influence to manipulate the decision making process. The lack of power among the governed is a consequence of the elitist discourse in politics, corporations, academics, and the media. These findings warn of the task before women, which is the responsibility of keeping before us the goals of feminism that move beyond injustice against women and deal with oppression and inequality in all areas of human life. This point argued that instead of

¹¹⁷Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, Women, Culture, And Society (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 3.

¹¹⁸Teun A. Van Dijk, Elite Discourse and Racism (California: Sage Publican Incorporation, 1993), 29; Roderic A. Camp, "Women and Political Leadership in Mexico: A Comparative Study of Female and Male Political Elites," Journal of Politics 41 (1979): 941-55; O' Neil Onora, 439-59.

only detailing inequity in the state system, feminist theorists should provide new ways of linking the particulars of women's lives, activities, and goals to inequalities wherever they exist.¹¹⁹ Such a theme directs us to pay close attention to particulars of women's lives, activities, and goals. My task is to apply these 'particulars' to the states under study.

Building on this notion is the argument relating to the strategic position of the state's power. The state, according to this observation, condenses the relations of power in society.¹²⁰ Furthermore, the state condenses power relations through interest articulation and creates the environment whereby those interests converge. Power is located in and acts through multiple sites. These sites, according to this viewpoint, exist in relation to a state, which helps to establish the multiple discourses about power: liberal and Marxist discourses are the most important concerning this point

¹¹⁹Michelle Z. Rosaldo, "The Use of Anthropology: Reflections On Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding," Signs 5 (Spring 1980): 389-417.

¹²⁰Zillah Eisenstein, Feminism And Sexual Equality: Crisis In Liberal America (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 90.

because they locate and center power in the state.¹²¹ Further explanation logically extends the concepts of capitalism and patriarchy on the basis of the dialectics of historical materialism to refer to the state's power. Zillah Eisenstein adopts the term "capitalist patriarchy" as an analytical tool linking the divisions of "class and sex, private and public spheres, domestic and wage labor, family and economy, personal and political, and ideology and materialism."¹²² As stated earlier, the state promotes the unequal relationship between genders. The male is the head of household, as well as the executive leader of the Chrysler Corporation and the president of the country. An opposing opinion, articulated by Carol Gilligan (In a Different Voice) and Joan W. Scot, ("Deconstructing Equality -versus- Difference"), maintains that giant corporations such as Sears had demonstrated that some female workers intentionally made decisions not to occupy certain positions associated with men, such as serving as sales'

¹²¹Zillah Eisenstein, The Female Body And Law (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 20.

¹²²Zillah Eisenstein, Capitalist Patriarchy, 23.

clerks in hardware sections.¹²³ Joan William writes off the preceding argument, citing that such comments stem from some feminists aspiring to "reclaim the compliments of the Victorian gender ideology while rejecting its insults."¹²⁴ On further exploring this theme, a study was conducted on men employed in the so-called "women professions," such as teaching, secretarial work, caregiving, etc. These authors offer the following vantage points: while one view supports the gender based assumptions arguing that men do not receive equal treatments and salaries as their female co-workers; the other analysis was gender-neutral altercating that in some cases men progress better than their female counterparts due to special attention extended to them.¹²⁵ Other works concentrated on men as single parents. The authors recognized the widely accepted notion that as the traditional heads of households, men do less work at home. They emphasized, however, that in the 1990s, men's attitudes toward the family and work

¹²³Carol Gilligan, In A Different Voice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 8; Joan W. Scot, "Deconstructing Equality-versus-Difference," Feminist Studies 14 (Spring 1988): 323-50.

¹²⁴Joan William, "Deconstructing Gender," Michigan Law Review (1989): 797-845, esp. at 807.

¹²⁵Christine L. Williams, ed. Doing Women's Work (California: Sage Press 1993); Jonath Tompkins, 254-58.

vary from group to group.¹²⁶ For instance, in single father households, men automatically assume the role of providers as well as nurturers. Kris Kissman and Jo Anne Allen recommended that the state adopt a gender neutral policy to meet the demands of an increasing number of single parent households in the decade of 1990s.¹²⁷ Comparing the proportion of men and women heading such homes, these authors concluded that more women are single parents than men. They further argued for inclusive policies to enable groups to progress in the state system.

Another phenomenon in the 1990s is the emergence of dual career spouses, or what is currently classified as the "Hilary Question," in which some married couples occupy professional positions. This development, according to some feminists, holds the promise of gender equality because women are more career oriented in the 1990s than ever before.¹²⁸ For the woman, upon marrying a man with equal or better career, the family as well as the society at large benefit (in President Clinton's

¹²⁶Jane C. Hood, ed., In Men Work and Family (California: Sage Publication, 1993), 4.

¹²⁷Kris Kissman and Jo Anne Allen, Single Parent Families (California: Sage Publication, 1993), 15.

¹²⁸Lucia Albino Gilbert, Two Career Family/ One Family (California: Sage Publisher, 1993), 1-15.

phraseology during a campaign speech, one gets "two for the price of one"). Both spouses' labor power helps to enrich the state system as opposed to a situation where only the male spouse is career-oriented. However, the percentage of women falling into the dual career category remains low due to institutional capitalist patriarchy.

With the majority of this discussion evaluating the unequal gender relations in the state system, I, therefore, characterize the state as an embodiment of capitalist patriarchy. Because the state generates the environment where all these relations exist, sexual hierarchical typings prevail in the political, economic and social spheres. I then proceed to define the state as male considering the state's actions, such as laws and ideologies to be used as tactics to protect the state's masculine interests. All the points raised by theorists such as Zillah Eisenstein and Teun Van Dijk help to substantiate my research claims. They also validate the uniformity of state's actions in association with the women's interests.

The discourse lays solid grounds for this research. For instance, the contention that the different power interests are represented by the state is extended to my research assumptions. Moreover, the

notion that the state tends to tilt toward a certain group at the expense of another, as it tries to balance the needs of the population in general against these special needs, supports my research claims. Therefore, I perceive the state as part of the struggle. Because the state is actively involved in protecting the hierarchical structuring of society, the state is gendered.

As this view continues, the conflict between class and gender arises due to the state's structure. For instance, the private and public spheres are structured in a hierarchical pattern. Furthermore, the autonomous nature of the state contributes to the problem: the state acts as the only decision maker, rendering policies which could only be reformed by the representatives who are men. The argument affirms, accordingly, that the state is established in such a way that it has an economic class, sexual class, and a racial division of labor which foster the interests of the capitalist patriarchy.¹²⁹ The state, according to Eisenstein, however:

¹²⁹Zillah Eisenstein, The Radical Future Of Liberal Feminism (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 226.

does not merely reflect the interests of the capitalist class or patriarchy. Because there are conflicts within the capitalist class and between the actual needs of capitalism and patriarchy, the state cannot merely be an instrument of one or the other. This is because there are conflicting and unsolvable conflicts that the state first had to mediate, within capitalism, within patriarchy, and between the two systems.¹³⁰

This notion of conflictual interests between capitalism and patriarchy sums up my thesis. My premise is that these women state leaders come to and out of power due to these struggles.¹³¹ Eisenstein's analysis of the two systems is that they come into conflict with each other as they try to meet each other's needs. In my own account, in terms of these women's rise to power, the demands of patriarchy become temporarily preeminent. These women rose to power as a direct result of the crisis precipitated by the death of their popular male kin. To preserve their family names and maintain the capitalist stability, it became necessary for them to govern.

An important critique of feminist analyses is that

¹³⁰For further discussion see my theoretical framework on the preceding pages.

¹³¹Jane L. Parpart and Kathleen Staudt, 1-8.

the writers consider the impact of race or ethnicity on power structures.¹³² A few women across race and ethnic groups have governed diverse nations, including the attempt in 1993 (even though an interim government) by Rwanda. However, feminist scholars maintain that the number is minimal.¹³³ Angela Davis' study focuses on how the state's laws are race, class and gender based.¹³⁴ Teun Van Dijk points out that domination, whether gender-based or race-related, is a consequence of the elite's discourse in all sectors of life.¹³⁵ But the fact remains that women are victims in all these sectors. In the long run, however, the interests of gender take precedence, precipitating the fall of these

¹³²Kathleen Daly, 17.

¹³³Jean Blondel, Political Leadership: Toward a General Analysis (London: Sage, 1987), 25; Wilma Rule, "Electoral Systems, Contextual Factors and Women's Opportunity for Election to Parliament in Twenty Three Democracies," Western Political Quarterly 40 (1987): 477-98; Susan G. Mezey, "Does Sex Make a Difference? A Case Study of Women in Politics," Western Political Quarterly 31 (1978): 492-501.

¹³⁴Angela Davis, Women, Culture and Politics (New York: Random House, 1989), 23; Carolyn Clark, "Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality," Social Justice 17 (1991): 195; Shannon C. Stokes and Wayne A. Schutjer, "A Cautionary Note on Public Policies in Conflict: Land Reform and Human Fertility in Rural Egypt," Comparative Politics 16 (1983): 97-104.

¹³⁵Teun A. Van Dijk, 29; Susan Carrol, "Political Elites and Sex Differences in Political Ambition," Journal of Politics 47 (1985): 1231-43.

women. This occurrence is dynamic, because capitalism needs the system of social patriarchy and in so doing must galvanize assistance for the patriarchal structuring of the state.

Feminist Theory And The State In Developing Countries

While the above scholars offer a universal analysis of the exclusionary tendency of the nation states, the following authors adopt a regional stance focusing specifically on the developing countries. Foremost among these opinions is the position adopted by the feminist theorists in the developing nations. Theorists studying African politics contend that women are not central to the state in Africa.¹³⁶ They have little or no access to the state. Women represent the state in marginal numbers, that is, only two percent of women are elected to the national cabinet, and half of these states have no woman in the cabinet at all. Apart from Agathe Uwilingiyi Mana, who was appointed an interim Prime Minister of Rwanda in 1993, there is no female head of the government on the continent. Africa,

¹³⁶Miranda Davies, "Women in Struggle: An Overview," Third World Quarterly 5 (October 1983): 874-914; O'Neil Onora, 439-59.

compared to Asia and Latin America, is found wanting in this case. Parpart and Staudt share the opinion that women's absence at the top is due in part to their restricted avenue to education and wage employment. However, uneducated men have occupied state power: Idi Amin in Uganda, Zaire's Mobutu, and many other military heads of states. Such occurrences reaffirm the feminist assertions that the state represents male interests. Even though a few countries in Asia and South America have placed women as national leaders, these women heads of states constitute less than 1% of the global population. As stated before, women make up over 50% of the entire world's population. Women are governed by men who are the minority in terms of the world's head count. At the national level, which is the center of this analytical focus, women are not represented. In Africa, no woman has ever led any contemporary African country, apart from Rwanda's interim head of government.

Not only are women not integrated into the African states' national governments, but in Latin America and Asia, women are also excluded. Building on this notion of the exclusion of women at the national level, many authors such as Davies, Parpart, Onora and many others have argued that due to the lack of a coherent policy to enhance women conditions, women suffer from the ravages

of class domination. For example, women in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East are characterized by wide-spread poverty and exploitation. Women suffer from violent and repressive governments on a daily basis, in addition to their low wages, unemployment, malnutrition, and population control policies, and so on.¹³⁷ It is on the basis of shared suffering that women ought to organize in order to remove the political and economic inequity. Lack of economic power, as explained earlier, results in the loss of political power. Beverly Linsay, in Comparative Perspectives of Third World Women: The Impact of Race, Class and Sex details how many states in these continents have repressed women and how women are trying to resist such efforts.¹³⁸ Davies' account of women in India also aids my analysis of the situation of women in the area. It documents how the state is dominated by men and how policies emanating from such an environment precipitate gender division. Such works substantiate the claim that women are not central to the

¹³⁷Miranda Davies, Third World Second Sex (London: Zed Books, 1985), 1-21.

¹³⁸Beverly Linsay, Comparative Perspectives Of Third World Women: The Impact of Race, Class And Sex (New York: Praeger, 1980), 1-22.

state in the Third World.

Besides the argument that posits a commonality of women's experience, there have been works detailing the common features and the variations among women in developing countries. The latter maintains that women's situations vary from country to country.¹³⁹ The findings indicate that women are linked by various economic, socio-cultural and political features that affect women's position in the state system - patriarchy and capitalism. The Third World women were compared with those of the West and it was indicated that there was a gap on the level of economic and political achievement on the basis of development. However, on the basis of gender differentiation and political inclusion, women in general face the same predicament: the state excludes

¹³⁹Marc Howard Ross and Veena Thadani, "Participation, Sex, and Social Class: Some Unexpected Results from an African City," Comparative Politics 12 (1980): 323-34; Kathleen Staudt, "Sex, Ethnic and Class Consciousness in Western Kenya," Comparative Politics 14 (1982): 149-67; Linda Reif, "Women in Latin American Guerrilla Movement: A Comparative Perspective," Comparative Politics 18 (1986): 147-69; Barbara Callaway, "Women and Political Participation in Kano City," Comparative Politics 19 (1987): 379-93; Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, "Women of the World: Report from Mexico City," Foreign Affairs 54 (1975): 173-81; Lloyd I. Rudolph and Sasanne Hoerber, "India's Election: Backing into the Future," Foreign Affairs 55 (1977): 836-53; Roderic A. Camp, "Women in Political Leadership in Mexico: A Comparative Study of Male Political Elites," Journal of Politics 41 (1979): 417-41.

women.¹⁴⁰ It is on the basis of commonality and differences that my research seeks to explore especially the policy choices of these women presidents and how they affect women in general.

While the above research focused on general issues such as the economic, sociocultural and political factors affecting women's progression in general, the following study highlights specific political challenges. The study by Sian Reynolds (ed., Women, State, and Revolution) argues that the relations between women and politics (the state) and the world of public power has been problematic. This linkage challenges some feminist viewpoints. According to this discourse, it is unsophisticated to "maintain a coherent critique of the state and masculine power when the state takes a step toward them, or when women apparently reach the corridors of powers."¹⁴¹ Thus, the modern women's movement recognizes that when women got the vote it effectively demobilized the formidable energies that had been devoted to gaining suffrage, and served to mask the reality that women continued to be excluded from power.

¹⁴⁰Berverly Linsay, 20.

¹⁴¹Sian Reynolds, ed., Women, State and Revolution (Amherst University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), iv-vii.

The state with the advent of Margaret Thatcher, the Britain's first woman Prime Minister, had no time for women's issues, presents a challenge to feminism. Critics remark that feminists have been notably reluctant to write about Margaret Thatcher's case. This comment raises a vital concern; namely, are there situations that would restrict these women leaders from making changes to help women in the system? Is the state male despite the occupant of the decision-making positions? This research seeks to address such issues.

Scholars centering on the problem of opportunity structures specify that inequality does exist and still creates vicious cycles in the limitations of choices and opportunities for women. However, Janet A. Nes and Peter Iadicola "Toward A Definition of Feminism" maintain that there were vast measures adopted by various nations trying to improve the status of women, and these have enabled some to rise to the presidential positions in the first place. At the same time, there are more covert methods of discrimination which are insidious, blocking women's access to the so-called male occupations. Out of these constraints there are some prevalent support systems enabling women to come out of the 'closet' and compete for leadership with their male counterparts. The authors affirm that for an individual to break through

personal and structural barriers that limit choices and opportunities, she must have a variety of supports ranging from family and friendship circles to professional networks and institutional assistance.¹⁴² Their research exposes the capitalist patriarchal nature of the state and women's stake in it. For women to overcome the structural roadblocks to political advancement they must have established networks such as the family in order to make headway in politics. In most cases, however, some women come to power as a result of their deceased male relatives. This sort of analytical focus looks into the precise circumstances and structures that enable these leaders to emerge and fare as policy makers. To what extent did family background contribute to each woman's rise to power? A response to this question attracts a specific examination of individual nations under study.

Exploring the position of women in India in light of the interplay between sex, class, and political involvement, the study by Tonia K. Devon ("Up From the Harem? The Effects of Class and Sex on Political Life")

¹⁴²Janet A. Nes, and Peter Iadicola, "Towards A Definition of Feminism," Social Work (January 1989): 16.

highlights the conflictual nature of class and gender in India's political process. The examination concludes that while media affect women's political opinion and participation, family and work environment perpetuate patriarchy. Devon reaffirms the popular contention that the women who made it to the state apparatus in developing nations did so as a result of their family backgrounds, rather than on the basis of merit and issues of equality.¹⁴³ Another view, put forth in different studies by Virginia Shapiro and J. Stoessinger maintains that sexism impacts women's performances in office, causing friends and foes to readjust their behaviors. The behavioral changes in most cases adversely impact the leaders' outlook toward politics, causing them to become, very aggressive.¹⁴⁴ This dissertation explores in detail how class (family) and gender (sex) interplay to pave the way for women to participate in the politics, even in predominantly Islamic societies such as Pakistan and Bangladesh.

¹⁴³Tonia K. Devon, "Up From the Harem? The Effects of Class and Sex on Political Life," in Linsay (1980), 123-138.

¹⁴⁴Virginia Shapiro, The Political Integration of Women (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 32; J. Stoessinger, Why Nations Go to War (New York: St. Martin Press, 1990), 135.

The first evidence of female modernism in the Moslem society, according to Asghar Ali Engineer, ("Islam and Polity: Contradictions in the State Building of Pakistan,") is due not to a feminist movement but to economic and political transition.¹⁴⁵ Further analysis also maintains that Sharia law promotes patriarchy and polygamy, denying sexual equality within the home.¹⁴⁶ Until recently, women activists did not conceive of their struggle as being against the rigid patriarchal system. In not doing so, these women have practically and conceptually restricted themselves to demanding greater rights and concessions from the very system that excluded them.¹⁴⁷ Such analysis illustrates the nature of problems these women leaders would face. If some women do not see the state as gender biased, it will be hard to counteract obstacles from the fundamentalist Islamic male counterparts. To face

¹⁴⁵Asghar Ali Engineer, "Islam and Polity: Contradictions in the State Building of Pakistan," in Pandav Nayak, ed., Pakistan Society and Politics (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1985), 1-3.

¹⁴⁶Fazur Rahman, "The Status of Women in Islam: A Modernist Interpretation," in Hanna Papanek and Gail Minault, Separate Worlds (Delhi: Chanakya), 290-309.

¹⁴⁷Nadia Youssef, "Women In The Muslim World," in Lynne B. Inglitzin, and Ruth Ross, eds., Women In The World (Santa Barbara: Clio Book, 1976), 375-389.

trying to represent presents a dilemma, the recent development in Pakistan politics where Benazir Bhutto, once again, became the Prime Minister, having won the 1993 parliamentary election, but was asked by her mother, Nusrat Bhutto, to step down for her brother because of her gender, goes to show how deeply entrenched the patriarchal tradition had become in Pakistan, even affecting how some women perceive their roles in the society. I will try to evaluate the validity of the contradictory claims in Pakistan under Bhutto's and Zia's leaderships.

One study centering on the Pakistan Islamization process of 1979 under President Zia-ul-Haq points that these measures are causing women to question the system. While the androcentric position claims that the policy is to enhance the role of women in the state, the androperipheral view suggests that it enables women to become aware of and to question the patriarchal nature of the society. The authors, questioning the 'filter-down' concept, remark that some women forgot to query how many of these rights achieved on paper or enjoyed by the upper class women actually filtered down to the majority of Pakistani women. They hint at the contradiction surrounding women and capitalist patriarchy.

Due to their class, a few women are able to enjoy a temporary name recognition on the basis of their families, but in general Pakistani women never took any step forward, so that the current moves have left women overall at the same starting point. In other words, those Pakistani women who succeeded in taking two steps forward due to their class, and who now feel that they are being forced to step back, are only moving a step toward the rest of the women. Perhaps they now can fight as a unit against the political structure that has dominated them for so long.¹⁴⁸ The authors' standpoint agrees with the feminist claim on women's position in state system. The women under study came to power due to their family backgrounds. There were concerns that the gender factor was one of the major reasons causing their demise from power. Analysts maintain that any research on women's emergence as leaders must include difficulties they faced, as well as how they tried to solve the problems.¹⁴⁹ Obstacles encountered by women in office include class, ethnic, and religious or parochial

¹⁴⁸Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheeds, eds., Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back? (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1987), 82-90.

¹⁴⁹F. P. Leveness and J. P. Sweeney, Women Leaders in Contemporary U.S. Politics (Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 1987), 41.

women leaders perform in office. These kind of conflictual interests between gender and class plague nation states today.

According to Kearny "Women's and Politics in Sri Lanka," when Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the prime minister of Sri Lanka, it was interpreted both within and outside of the country that the role and position of women in that nation had improved.¹⁵⁰ For instance, it was argued that even in the earlier periods, women in that nation did not have to suffer from many social evils faced by women of neighboring countries, such as "sati" (widow burning), purdah, child marriage and the ban on widow remarriage. In the contemporary society, this view continued, women in Sri Lanka enjoyed a higher standard of living than the rest of Asia. For example, the literacy rate of these women is above 83%, life expectancy is 67 years, and mortality rates stands at 1.2%. Jayawardena argues that a closer look at the position of women in the country reveals that in spite of conditions that appear favorable to women, they have existed and continued to exist in a situation of patriarchal control and domination. According to traditional ideology, women are required to submit to

¹⁵⁰R. N. Kearny, "Women and Politics in Sri Lanka," Asian Survey 20 (1981): 203-45.

their male heads of households even though this does not exonerate them from seclusion. Upper class women, as in any other system, have more privilege than the majority. However, women in general are not subjected to harsh and overt forms of oppression, and therefore did not develop a movement for women's emancipation that went beyond the existing social parameters. It is precisely this background that enabled Sri Lanka to produce a woman prime minister, and to have many women in the professions. Nevertheless, the general patterns of subordination of women still persist in the country.¹⁵¹ Even though my research does not evaluate Bandaranaike's rise and how she fared in power, this information is useful in exploring other leaderships. For instance, this study evaluates why Benazir Bhutto's successor, Nawaz Sharif, imposed an ordinance restricting her from contesting in the presidential elections, or even engaging in any political activity prior to expiration of her probation.

The Islamic religion has shaped the policy outcomes of such fundamentalist Islamic states as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, marginalizing the

¹⁵¹Kumari Jayawardena, Feminism And Nationalism In The Third World (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1986), 31.

Western concept of the separation of the church and the state, but Christianity, specifically Catholicism, has influenced policy choices in the Philippines and Nicaragua. Analysts have argued that due to a longterm role played by the Catholic Church in these areas, people have integrated the religious values with political ones in such a way that it was difficult to classify people as either religious or political. Moreover, both typings have become interchangeable as a result of outstanding religious traditions.¹⁵² The Church has influenced the state policies especially in laws regulating family planning and divorce.¹⁵³ The Church, according to research has been involved in the politics of these states influencing presidential electoral outcomes and protesting against human rights violations.¹⁵⁴ Being voted into office, the new leaders upheld the Church's principles in areas of family laws. When some of these principles are sidetracked by the

¹⁵²Denis Lynn Daly-Heyck, Life and Stories of the Nicaraguan Revolution (New York: Routledge, 1990), 33.

¹⁵³David Wurfel, Filipino Politics: Development and Decay (New York: Camel, 1988), 4-20.

¹⁵⁴People's Mind, "A Report on Voters' Turnout in the June 16, 1981 Presidential Election," (Manila, n.d.), 2-3; Erano Manalo, "One Creed, One Voice, One Vote," Sunday Times Magazine, 9 August 1964, 5; Bryan Johnson, Four Days of Courage: The Untold Story of the Fall of Marcos (Toronto: McClellan & Steward, 1987), 12.

elected official, the Church adopts a conflictual stance towards the reformer. The assumption here is that the Church is also patriarchal. This claim, nevertheless, does not override the conflict between the Church and the state. For instance, the Church withdrew its support from Aquino when she became involved in the population control differently from how the Church allowed. The conflict between the political leaders and Church reinforces the patriarchal nature of the state, and no doubt helps in the evaluation of Corazon Aquino of the Philippines and Violeta Chamorro's presidencies.

Apart from the South Asian examples, the experiences of women in the Caribbean have been included in the debate. The basic contention is that race, sex and class foster discrimination, 'the triple jeopardy' permeating the lives of women in the Caribbean. The scrutiny zeroes in on women from several islands in the region. For instance, it was reported that few women have acquired advanced socio-economic positions.¹⁵⁵ This information gives more insight on the backgrounds of the few women that made it as heads of governments and ones that barely made it, more specifically Eugenia Charles

¹⁵⁵Gloria Josephs, "Women In Caribbean," in Linsay (1980), 130-40.

of the Dominica and Ertha Pascal-Trouillot of Haiti, and the four women under study: Corazon Aquino, Benazir Bhutto, Violeta Chamorro and Indira Gandhi.

Focusing on Latin America in general, the women-centered perspectives simply posit that sociopolitical and economic changes do not enhance the status of women. Wieser underlines that repressive and stagnant social conditions generally prevail in Latin America. She argues that eradication of oppressive economic conditions would improve conditions for women. However, the current class distinctions within this group debar the affluent ones from identifying with others, mostly peasants and poor women.¹⁵⁶ Being classified as capitalist patriarchy, the state integrated women differently from men. Men are at the highest level of sexual political ordering, whereas women are found at the bottom of this pyramid. Women are never central to the state. In Latin America, Isabel Peron, Violeta Chamorro, Ertha Troquillot, and Eugenia Charles are the only women who have succeeded in becoming national leaders. The research will focus on the issues that enabled Mrs. Chamorro to rise to power and the

¹⁵⁶Nora Jazquez Weiser, "Ancient Song, New Melody," in Lindsay, 42-47; Roderic A. Camp, 941-50; JoAnne F. Aviel, 156-70.

challenges she encounters being a stateswoman.

The above literature reviews clearly illustrate the nature of work done on the Third World states, and the use of class analysis to explicate the state and women in general. The existing work demonstrates that the state is androcentric and uses laws as tactics to control women. The purportedly welfare states limit women's upward mobility. The states in developing areas are no exceptions to this rule. Women are not equally integrated into the system. Furthermore, the conflicts between gender and class are not basically restricted to women's political careers but affects men's status even though the degree varies.¹⁵⁷ Critics argue that more emphasis should be laid on the impact of race and ethnicity and how these factors affect political performance. However, as the number of women heads of governments is minimal, research centering on the impact on gender and class in relation to political careers becomes imperative. No work has been done linking the feminists' state theory with women as heads of governments.

This research will use the concept of class and

¹⁵⁷Professors Williams Boone and Hashim Gibrill's comments on the gender and class discourse (Summer 1993); Barbara Hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 4-31.

gender to analyze the states where women have emerged as national leaders of their countries. I will seek to prove the following: that the Third World state is male; that women are not central to state power; that it was the conflict between capitalism and patriarchy that paved the way for these women to rise, and also brought about their fall as state leaders.

Plan of Presentation

The research is structured into three parts and presented in the following manner:

Part I includes:

-Chapter One centers on, theory and literature review

Part II includes presentation of data -Chapter 2-5:

-Chapter Two explores Indira Gandhi's India;

-Chapter Three discusses Benazir Bhutto and Pakistan;

-Chapter Four examines Corazon Aquino and the Philippines;

-Chapter Five surveys Violeta Chamorro's Nicaragua

Part III is data analysis

-Chapter Six is discussion and conclusion of the research premise with data.

CHAPTER TWO

INDIRA GANDHI AND INDIA

Introduction

In order to understand the power structure of nation states, it is vital to comprehend how people are positioned in the state system. A vast array of state-centered theorists have been dedicated to analyzing the problems of development in the Third World.¹ While many writers have adopted specific terminology such as "modernization" and "development" in explicating the obstacles to political development, my analysis delineates gender and class concerns as central to the political advancement of these countries. The women-centered theorists have argued that the modernization and developmental theories sidetracked gender and class issues which had impacted political development. Women

¹Dankwarq A. Rostow, and Robert E. Ward, eds., Political Modernization: Japan and Turkey (Princeton University Press, 1964), 1; P.K. Sharma, The Politics of Development and Modernization (Ashishi: Delhi, 1980), 3; Charles K. Wilber ed., The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment (New York: Random House, 1988), 5; Harry Magdoff, Imperialism: From Colonial Age to the Present (New York: Monthly Review, 1978), 3; Marshall D. Shulman, ed., East-West Tensions in the Third World (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), 21.

compose a major component of the world's population and are not integrated into the state system. If such neglect persists, it follows that the state only relies on less than half of its potential, whereas women's power in combination with that of men would benefit the state at large.

In the feminists' opinion, the state is gender-biased or male-oriented, women are yet to be positioned equally with men. Consequently, women lack access to the decision-making arena. The major problem stems from the fact that class is generally male defined. Women as part of the capitalist patriarchy acquire economic or political class on the basis of their male kin's means of production. On this grounds also, some women become active in politics. Women with prominent male kin automatically belong to a higher political class than ones whose male relatives belong to a lower economic class. Therefore, women with outstanding male kin are not positioned equally with the rest of women clustered at the bottom of the political pyramid.

Directly intertwined with the above theory is the notion that nation states are constantly plagued with

crisis. During an emergency situation where a renowned political figure suddenly dies, his female kin is then asked to temporarily assume power in order to provide stability. Women in this case, are used as balancers whether on the basis of equality or inequality. They are there to carry out an exclusive task.

The women under study, Corazon Aquino, Benazir Bhutto, Violeta Chamorro, and Indira Gandhi, based on their class affiliation, are different from those of the majority of women in their countries. Their special ties to the capitalist patriarchy enlist them in a different class from the rest of the women whom they represent. This unique liaison with the system paved the way for their rise to power.

This section, comprising chapters two to five, is dedicated to investigating India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Nicaragua, where women have officiated as heads of states. My task here is to evaluate how these women came to power, how they fared, and the nature of problems they faced as a result of each of them being the first woman to occupy such a position in their respective countries in the contemporary era.

Indira Gandhi's Rise to Power

Indira Gandhi's rise to power was attributed first to her class because of her family background, the daughter of a very powerful and respected political leader. Secondly, her ascendance was due to her gender. The Congress Party had allocated some seats to women and Indira Gandhi, as will be explored later, used this opportunity to become known. Moreover, the syndicates at the time of her appointment were looking for someone whom they could easily influence. In this case, a woman, the daughter of Nehru matched the profile, and simultaneously filled the political vacuum created by her father's death.

Born on November 19, 1917, Indira Gandhi inherited the legacy of her family. She was born into a prominent nationalist family. Not only did her father Jawaharlal Nehru govern India from independence in 1947 until his death in 1964, her grandfather, Motilal Nehru contributed immensely to the country's struggle for and subsequent attainment of the status of statehood. This alone suggested that the Nehru family were among India's political elite.

From childhood, her privileged life-style enabled her to do things which children her age did not. Indira Gandhi participated in her nation's political affairs. At three years of age, she accompanied her grandfather to a congressional gathering held in their mansion at Allahabad. At age twelve she became active in the nationalist struggle for independence when she formed a children's association, the Monkey Brigade, spying on the British and taking care of the freedom fighters.² In 1933, she participated in picketing shops and took part in processions and rallies against the British Crown.³ In 1939, at 22 years of age, she addressed a group of rich Indian merchants in South Africa and blamed them for their reluctance to help India during her struggle for independence.⁴ In 1942, she was imprisoned by the British for political activism. Such actions and consequences brought her close to her people. It suggested that her family background did not exclude her from experiences associated with freedom fighting. Her

²Dr. P. Sood, Indira Gandhi and The Constitution: Modernization and Development (New Delhi: Marwah Publication, 1985), 42-3.

³Dom Moraes, Indira Gandhi (Boston: Little Brown, 1980), 66.

⁴Ibid., 74.

class enabled her to perform this function. Even though Indira Nehru was active in this period, she was mainly associated with her family background and nothing more. People basically identified her as the daughter of the famous leader.⁵

At independence in 1947, she worked for her father, who became prime minister in August of that year. She had become his hostess following her mother Kamala's death in February 1936.⁶ In this way she met many statesmen and their families.⁷ She met Mrs. Roosevelt during her state visit to India in 1952, and President Chou En Lai when he visited India in 1954. Later that year, she received Premier Khrushchev, as well as Russia's President Bulganin.⁸ Accompanying her father abroad, she witnessed numerous diplomatic interchanges between her father and foreign dignitaries, most notably

⁵Ibid., 81-88.

⁶Due to a special desire to live by example on the part of Nehru, he had a modest lifestyle. As a result he did not rely on servants to carry out his immediate domestic needs. This task fell on Indira following her mother's death.

⁷Many people often confused Indira Gandhi as Mahatma Gandhi's daughter, or think that her husband, Feroze Gandhi, was related to Mahatma. Neither views hold true. Feroze Gandhi was a Parshi and Indira Gandhi a Hindu from Kashmiri. They were married on March 26, 1942, following Feroze's long friendship with the family.

⁸Sood, 44.

Queen Elizabeth II.⁹

On the home front, the Congress Party had as one of its basic purposes establishing a conducive atmosphere for women's progress in the system. Realizing that women were not well represented in the government, Nehru allotted a special seat in the Congress Party for this purpose. In this way women were encouraged to become members and have their own agenda. Indira utilized this special break to become politically involved. In February 1959, she assumed the Congress Party presidency, following U.N. Dhebar's resignation, despite Jawaharlal Nehru's mixed feeling regarding his daughter's involvement.¹⁰

As the president of the Congress Party in 1959-1960, Indira Gandhi was active in mediating disputes between the parties and coordinating party affairs.¹¹ This position enabled her to defuse ethnic rivalries between the Marathi and Gujarati peoples which led to the partition of Bombay in 1960. She also advised the federal government to interfere in the Kerela dispute by

⁹Ibid., 44.

¹⁰Nayantara Sahgal, Indira Gandhi: Her Road to Power (New York: Frederick Ungar Publication, 1982), 1.

¹¹Sood, 45.

calling for an election.¹²

In 1960, she retreated from politics because of the death of her husband in September, but she became active again in 1961.¹³ Mrs. Gandhi was very sad because of her husband's death. Even though her marriage was unhappy mainly because of her position in the society, she nonetheless had her husband as a friend with whom she discussed important concerns. She therefore felt lonely without him. According to Mrs. Gandhi, the reason she experienced some distress in her marriage was due to her active role in the public sphere and the patriarchal implication for a woman:

When I went into public life and became successful, he would like it and he didn't like it. Other people, friends, relatives were worst. They would say, 'How does it feel, being so-and-so's husband?' He would get upset, and it would take me weeks to win him over.¹⁴

From the above statement, it is obvious that the patriarchal structure created a barrier as to women's

¹²Sahgal, 3.

¹³Even though she had an unhappy marriage, Indira Gandhi described how she felt when her husband passed on: "up till now I had somebody to whom I could pour out my thoughts even if there was a lack of attention and sympathy and with the removal of that outlet, I have to look outward," Dorothy Norman, Indira Gandhi: Letters to an American Friend 1950 to 1984 (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1985), 28, and 78.

¹⁴K. N. Hutheesing, Dear to Behold: An Intimate Portrait of Indira Gandhi (London: Macmillan, 1969), 137.

role in the system. Being from a noble family, it still did not make any difference to her ability to become involved in politics. What really mattered was that she was a woman (a wife and mother) and behaved according to the patriarchal arrangement. Even though her involvement in the public sphere created problems for her at home, Mrs. Gandhi took refuge in politics. With the death of her husband, she ultimately had more opportunity herself after mourning the loss of her husband.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was committed to the organizational wing of the Congress Party. She worked in the Women's Department, a branch of the committee. Consequently, Mrs. Gandhi was nominated as a member to the Congress working committee, because of her family background. In January 1961, she for the first time contested for election as the president of that body and won. Although her class background had a direct impact on her initial nomination, she was elected to the party's central committee on the basis of her record. By the same token, were it not for her family popularity she would most probably not have made headway in the first place.

As a member of the Congress election committee in the 1962 general election, she laboriously pushed for

the party¹⁵ and acted decisively when China attacked India. Nehru's policy towards that nation had been benevolent. He believed that the two big nations would bring peace and progress to the whole of Asia.¹⁶ China, on the other hand, was not as fraternal as he thought, and had launched an offensive against India. Mrs. Gandhi took a decisive stance and quickly made a trip to Tezpur and advised the Indian military to be on their guard and India prevailed.¹⁷

In 1964 Indira Gandhi was appointed the Minister of Information and Broadcasting in Lal Bal Shastri's cabinet, following Nehru's death on May 27 and Shastri's election as the Prime Minister. He had a special reason for choosing Mrs. Gandhi to occupy this position, the fourth ranking post in the country. According to Mrs. Gandhi, Shastri insisted that "he must have a Nehru in the Cabinet to maintain stability."¹⁸ As the daughter of a famous leader she was sought in order to replace the political void created by her father's departure.

¹⁵Sood, op cit.

¹⁶Moraes, 102-4.

¹⁷R. P. Aiyar, "Indira is India," Free Press Journal, 19 November 1971, 24.

¹⁸Indira Gandhi, My Truth (New York: Grove Press, 1980), 101.

Shastri's statement attested to the feminist contention that women are used as stabilizers in times of difficulty and are asked to recede in peace times. Nehru, having governed India since the country's independence was very popular for having paved the way not only of India's self-government but many other countries' as well. He was revered. For his daughter to assume a political position seemed to reaffirm the continuation of Nehru's legacy. Nevertheless, such appointment never occurred without some objections. Indira Gandhi received criticism as to her gender, family background and the lack of experience to head such a post.¹⁹ She was nonetheless confirmed.

As a government official, Mrs. Gandhi's competency was acknowledged when riots broke out in the South due to Shastri's initiative to make Hindi the official language.²⁰ Mrs. Gandhi used her family influence to persuade the people. Mrs. Gandhi was no stranger to these people and had visited several parts of the nation addressing the people, especially during crisis. Consequently, she was able to convince the Madrassi

¹⁹Link, 4 October 1964, 9.

²⁰Following independence, English language was India's official language, even though Hindi was widely spoken in the north and south of India.

people that a national language was essential for all India.

Her family background again made a difference in 1965, when several thousand Pakistani troops flooded the Indian border. Mrs. Gandhi alerted the military and the villagers and advised Shastri to take a firm stand against the aggressor. When Pakistan attacked from the west, India was ready and defeated the enemy.²¹ Her efforts to resolve these problems won her the title of "the only man in the cabinet of old women."²² That suggested that despite being a woman in an entirely male-dominated policy making area, Mrs. Gandhi's role in India's preparedness was acknowledged. She was an agent of change. This notion would trouble her when she actually began governing India.

A search for a new Prime Minister was initiated following Shastri's death in January 1966.²³ Prior to Nehru's death on May 27, 1964, there existed a group in Kamaraji known as the syndicates. They were composed of the powerful party bosses, including the chief ministers from the south, N. Sanjiva Reddy of Andhra and S.

²¹Moraes, 122-25.

²²Zareer Masani, Indira Gandhi: A Biography (London: Hamish Hamilton Press, 1976), 136.

²³Masani, 136.

Najalingappa of Mysore, and S.K. Patil of Bombay in the east. Due to their political clout in conjunction with their constituencies and wealth, these men had the final say as to who would become the prime minister.

With Shastri's death and the position of prime minister vacant, the syndicates' main objective was to select someone whom they could easily influence, avoiding their mistake in choosing Shastri. They had assumed that they could manipulate him as they pleased. However, the syndicates found him unmalleable in power, and were disappointed. Shri Kamaraji and his colleagues concluded that a woman would be an ideal tool for them. Singled out was Nehru's daughter: these men observed that Mrs. Gandhi possessed all the feminine qualities which to them signified weakness. According to them she was "gentle, sedate, and obedient to her father, and very polite to her elders." Moreover, her family background would influence the public sentiment.²⁴ Her family was very exalted in India, mainly for the popularity of Nehru. Mrs. Gandhi, being always in close touch with the people, seemed a suitable candidate. The crucial reason among these so called kingmakers was their conspiracy to make Mrs. Gandhi a puppet the minute

²⁴Moraes, 123.

she assumed command.²⁵ Being a woman, they thought that she would always answer to them.

To execute their plan, a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party was held on January 19, 1966, in which a search was initiated. An opposition leader, Moraji Desai, aspired to become the new Prime Minister, and was determined to fight. He argued that a woman could not lead India, and that Mrs. Gandhi did not have enough experience to govern. The syndicates did not trust Desai, however, and saw him as too individualistic to accept their control. As a result, Desai forced a test, because as a "macho" individual, he opposed stepping aside "for this mere chokri" (slip of a girl).²⁶ To Desai, womanness symbolizes an underwear, that is, someone to be hidden or restricted to the home. However, when the election results were tabulated, Desai lost to Mrs. Gandhi.²⁷

On January 24, 1966, she was sworn in as the third Prime Minister of India. She was the first woman to ever head India, and the third chief stateswoman in the post colonial world, following the precedence of Golda Meir

²⁵Ibid, 127.

²⁶Masani, 139.

²⁷C. S. Pandit, End of An Era: The Rise and Fall of Indira Gandhi (New Delhi, 1977), 21.

of Israel and Mrs. Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka. At the announcement of her succession, the crowds cheered: "Long live Indira, Long live Jawaharlal."²⁸ Such greetings reinforce the feminist argument about the family background and women's linkage to the popular male kin as the prevalent way through which women can come to power in the developing countries. Her father had risen and governed successfully, India and because of his fame, his daughter was asked to fill his political space. Gender and class factors in combination, therefore led to Indira Gandhi's rise to power. Her family position created an avenue for her to be recognized, but her gender played a crucial role in the syndicates' decision to have a woman whom they could control. In this case, that woman coincidentally happened to be a Nehru. Therefore, these two key elements (gender and class) converged and she was placed in power.

Governing India, Problems And Prospects

The women-centered analysts contend that some women who climb the political ladder are governed by the capitalist patriarchal conditions that place them in

²⁸Moraes, 127.

power in the first place. Indira Gandhi came to power as result of her family legacy and from the aspiration on the part of the syndicates to place a woman in power whom they might control. She was the first woman ever to govern the country following its independence. Although she had succeeded in becoming one of India's political elite, according to the women-centered perspectives, Mrs. Gandhi still had not transcended the patriarchal boundaries in the political system. Our research question is to determine how gender and class issues affected her leadership.

Having ascended the "gaddi" (throne), as the head of India's government in January 1966, a crucial gender and class consideration arose when Mrs. Gandhi took the initiative to stabilize the factions within the party, specifically the clash between Moraji Desai and the party officials who had supported her during the election. The congressional president, K. Kamaraji, was asked to undertake the arbitration. Even though Desai was compensated with the post of the Deputy Prime Minister, being a conservative he teamed up with the economic elites who sought to protect their individual

interests,²⁹ including the syndicates. The latter lost their confidence in Mrs. Gandhi when they saw that she could not be manipulated as they had expected. They then, challenged her leadership. She was harassed in meetings of the party organizations and parliament, where she was nicknamed the "Dumb Doll."³⁰ The mockery was gender motivated. This derogatory name-calling revealed the perceptions of those who had opposed her. It suggests that being a woman, she was looked upon as unintelligent and therefore incapable. These harsh criticisms and false rumors expose the gravity of the gender factor and how this affects women as political leaders.

Most of the opposition she would face during her career stemmed from this sort of covert irrationality and would flare up following her policy pronouncements. In reviewing the conditions under which women govern, Jana Everett affirms the popular women-centered opinion, that women come to power under severe political factions in which they are placed as unifiers; but,

²⁹Aaron S. Klieman, "Indira's India: Democracy and Crisis Government," Political Science Quarterly 96 (1981): 241-59.

³⁰I. Malhotra, India Gandhi: A Personal and Political Biography (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), 93.

similarly, due to their sex had been adversely apprehended by their opponents due to their own insecurity.³¹ These predicaments impacted how these leaders govern. At the time of Mrs. Gandhi's leadership, India was infested with numerous economic, political, and social problems.

The following examples, though class-based, had some gender overtones challenging the validity of Mrs. Gandhi's decisions. The north-south dichotomy in relation to adoption of Hindi as the national language had not completely disappeared. The Sikh community, even under Nehru and Shastri, had for a long time been agitating for a linguistic division of the prevailing bilingual Punjab, and the establishment of a Punjabi state in which the Sikhs would become the majority.³² Nehru had objected to such a split, as had Shastri. This demand for secession was made by the Alkali Dal.³³ It became more threatening under Mrs. Gandhi's leadership. As violence erupted in that state, the Prime Minister

³¹Jana Everett, "Indira Gandhi and the Exercise of Power," in Michael A. Genovese ed., Women as National Leaders (California: Sage Publishing Inc., 1993): 112; Deborah L. Rhode, "Gender Difference and Gender Disadvantage," Women and Politics 10 (1990): 121-35.

³²Sood, 49.

³³The Alkali Dal was a party of the militant nationalist group.

met with the extremist party leaders of the Sikhs. She quickly established a new state with the agreement that the new Punjabi state would remain a part of the union. This step provoked criticism from her opponents.³⁴ They charged that she was forced into signing the document, because of her inexperience. Two panels, one headed by Kamaraji and another by Nanda, vehemently opposed the decision. They called for Mrs. Gandhi's resignation. Desai blamed the party bosses for supporting Indira Gandhi's candidacy. Her support, henceforth, plummeted.

Another attack against Mrs. Gandhi surfaced when the rupee was devalued in June 1966 as a way of correcting the country's economic backwardness by attracting foreign investments. According to Mrs. Gandhi, this step was taken in order to liberalize India's economy and up-grade conditions.³⁵ The syndicates condemned the step, claiming that as a woman she was bound to run the country into more serious turmoil. As a result of that criticism, and due to the Home Minister's inability to prevent riots among the Sadhu, Kamaraji was fired by Mrs. Gandhi. As a response

³⁴Sood, 49.

³⁵S. Tharoor, Reasons of the State: Political Development and India's Foreign Policy under Indira Gandhi 1966-1977 (New Delhi: Vikas, 1982), 88.

to her critics, she asserted that "We should boldly adopt whatever far reaching changes in the administration which we find necessary."³⁶ Due to numerous problems facing the country, as well as challenges to Mrs. Gandhi's ability to govern India, she lacked close relations with other political leaders. This was caused by her own past experiences and made worse by the fact that she was a woman. According to Carras, a woman could not be too intimate with male politicians.³⁷ She was isolated and as a result would not trust her colleagues for fear of their motives. Furthermore, according to Jana Everett, she was inclined to view "policy failures and opposition as tactics by her enemies to oust her from power."³⁸ To counteract these obstacles, Mrs. Gandhi would use force to subdue opposition.

³⁶Indira Gandhi, India: The Speeches and Reminiscences of Indira Gandhi (Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), 52 and 127.

³⁷Mary Carras, Indira Gandhi in the Crucible Leadership: A Political Biography (Boston: Beacon, 1979), 50; Timothy Bledsoe and Mary Herring, "Victims of Circumstances: Women in Pursuit of Political Office," American Political Science Review 84 (1990): 213-23.

³⁸Jana Everett, 114.

Policy Initiatives And Impact On Her Regime

Having the responsibility of overseeing the general welfare of the country, most of Mrs. Gandhi's policy choices were class based with the exception of her policies on family planning and women. Her goal was to enhance the situation of the poor. Confronted by serious socio-economic problems, with the majority of India's electorate being impoverished and illiterate, the Gandhi government embarked on drastic social and economic reforms in order to uplift the people's conditions.³⁹ It was, as critics held, in the spirit of adventurous pragmatism that the new economic programs were initiated. Indira Gandhi stated that she believed in setting high goals for the country, even when such objectives were unattainable.⁴⁰ The Prime Minister was not an economist and she was aware of her limitations, so she followed the advice of her economic experts.⁴¹

³⁹Francine R. Frankel, "Compulsion and Social Change: Is Authoritarianism the Solution to India's Economic Development?" in Atul Kohli, ed., A World Politics Reader: The State and Development in the Third World (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 145.

⁴⁰Kuldip Nayar, The Critical Years (Delhi: Vikas, 1971), 107.

⁴¹All these men had held similar positions in the previous administration (Shastri's), with the exception of Mehta, who was the Vice Chairman of Planning Commission under Shastri.

These appointees did not have viable political clout in Congress, however, as they were Mrs Gandhi's appointments; nor were they sympathetic to the party's ideology as they, like Mrs. Gandhi, were agents of change. Consequently, their formula was essentially conflictual with the party's advisers, who from the outset resisted Indira Gandhi's leadership. Hence, these officials in turn set out to challenge the economic policies.

Nationalization Of Banks

Mrs. Gandhi's decision to nationalize some banks was targeted at up-grading the general welfare of the masses. The banking system in India was very rigid and did not do business with the poor. In order to open up the system and as a way of boosting the economy, in July 1969, Mrs. Gandhi's Congress established an economic program which called for the immediate nationalization of some big banks, implementation of land reforms, imposition of a ceiling on land-holdings and restrictions of the feudal lords and their monopoly on their districts.⁴² This announcement threatened the economic elites and thus received serious dissent.

⁴²Asian Recorder, 20-26 August 1969, 9087-88.

Moraji Desai, then Finance Minister, vehemently opposed these options. He felt intimidated. He was a conservative politician who was opposed to change, and voiced his concerns against complying with alterations made by a "woman whom he had known when she was a child."⁴³ He teamed up with the syndicates and the economic elites who, due to their economic interests, were threatened by these reforms.⁴⁴ He challenged these adjustments by resigning as Finance Minister and resolved to gather as much support as possible to defeat the bill.⁴⁵ However, after an emergency meeting of the cabinet, a decree was issued by the government nationalizing the fourteen major commercial banks of India.⁴⁶ Desai and the syndicates addressed this case

⁴³Moraes, 1980, 107.

⁴⁴Francine R. Frankel, India Political Economy 1947-77: The Gradual Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 414-425; Aaron Klieman, 241; Linda Richter, "Exploring Theories of Female Leadership in South and Southeast Asia," Pacific Affairs 63 (1990-91): 524-40.

⁴⁵For details on the interchange, see correspondence between Mrs. Gandhi and Desai, Statesman, 22 July 1969, 1.

⁴⁶Fourteen Banks were nationalized: Central Bank of India, Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, United Commercial Bank, Canara Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, United Bank of India, Dena Bank, Syndicate Bank, Union Bank, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, and Allahabad Bank.

in the Supreme Court on July 21, 1969. The Court on the following day presided over the writ petitions filed by opposition challenging the constitutional validity of the nationalization. Such concerns caused delay in the execution of the bill.⁴⁷ In February 1970 the Supreme Court, by a majority of ten to one, struck down and declared illegal the bank statute on the grounds that the Act was discriminatory.⁴⁸ In essence, the Court nullified the attempt of one of the three branches of government to stimulate growth, acting on the basis of the interests of the very few. While upholding the interest of the minority, the Court failed to recognize the need to satisfy the demands of the masses in an effort to help India diversify.

Following the Court's decision, the Jana Sangh's president, A.B. Vaiyayee, demanded the dissolution of Mrs. Gandhi's government. The Prime Minister was bent on taking measures to counteract the Court's ruling. With public backing, she persuaded President V.V. Giri, who was her boss to act. An ordinance was drafted and it

⁴⁷The Statesman, 21 July 1969, 1.

⁴⁸These banks deposits exceeded 50 crores. For details, see R.C. Cooper vs. The Union of India (A.I.R. S.C., 1970), 564.

became law in March 1970.⁴⁹ Government by ordinance became a permanent feature in Mrs. Gandhi's resistance against elitism. She would employ this device to pass bills which ordinarily would not have passed for lack of majority in the Congress.⁵⁰ This style also uncovered the essence of presidential power during crisis periods. Mrs. Gandhi was able to get Mr. Giri to introduce legislation which facilitated the passage of the bill, thereby circumventing the deadlock imposed by the opposition. The challenges encountered in the nationalization of the banks, as analyzed from the gender and class perspectives, depict the class conflict between the very few who were struggling to control the means of production, and the masses who were the proletariat. The Prime Minister, whose interest was to equitably represent the population by diversifying the economy, had to pass legislation to actualize that purpose. The opposition, being mostly influenced by their class interest, also challenged Mrs. Gandhi because of her gender. Even though such resistance was sometimes voiced by these men, as was earlier mentioned, most of the time, the rationale behind the resistance

⁴⁹Sahgal, 59.

⁵⁰Ibid.

was covert and not expressly stated, as will be discussed further.

Abolition Of Feudalism

The elimination of the feudal strongholds by Mrs. Gandhi was another case illustrating class conflict versus the Prime Minister's interest in effecting change. In September 1970 Mrs. Gandhi, faced by opposition, had to rely once again on a presidential order to destabilize the feudal citadel. The government of India during independence agreed to annex several small states under India's sovereignty. In return, the central government would grant these 268 leaders the "zamindari or Jagiridari" which was a full and final compensation for the loss of their kingdoms, and their subsequent consolidation of these regions into the Indian Union. On the other hand, 284 princes agreed to "privy purses:" monetary benefits in concession for their losses of their empires. Their reimbursements were calculated on the basis of size and revenue derived from specific areas. The amount would be paid at the discretion of the government and was strictly limited to life term and consequently not to their successors. By 1950 the government was expending a huge sum of money for this purpose. In 1967, there was a further reduction

of the amount as these payments continued to take a heavy toll on India.⁵¹

As the public pressure increased for the abolition of these privileges to the princes,⁵² the Congress resolved to terminate privy purses despite opposition from the syndicates, the economic elites, and Mr. Desai.⁵³ The Lok Sabha (House) debated the bill for two days in September 1970. The Prime Minister, appealed to the members of Parliament by recalling the day of freedom struggle.⁵⁴ Mrs. Gandhi characterized the Bill as a momentous step in the democratization of Indian social and political life.⁵⁵ The opposition to the bill, specifically Moraji Desai and his followers, challenged the abolition, accusing the government of resorting to measures for winning cheap popularity, having failed to

⁵¹The highest payment was made to the Ruler of Mysore while the Ruler of Katodia in Sourashtra received the lowest.

⁵²The Sawarajya, 3 August 1968, 2.

⁵³The Hindu, 27 December 1969, 1.

⁵⁴India; Lok Sabha Debates (L.S.D.) (18 May 1990), 273; Also, L.S.D., (1 September 1970), 262.

⁵⁵Ibid., 263.

usher in socialism.⁵⁶ It marked the first instance in the Indian Parliament that a constitutional amendment bill failed by a slight margin of a vote.

Despite its failure in Parliament, the government was bent on passing the bill and evoked the executive privilege. President Giri issued a Presidential Order on September 6, 1970, under Article 366 (22) of the Constitution. He claimed that the decision to denounce the princes was a political one, and that it was in line with the provision of Article 363 of the Constitution. Prime Minister Gandhi, on December 27, 1970, advised the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha Congress (R) where she was very popular. Consequently, she ordered a midterm election. The faction in the Congress strengthened her position. She then appealed to the people to join hands in fighting poverty.⁵⁷

As a member of the Nehru family, Mrs. Gandhi entertained a special affinity with the populace. Realizing that her family was revered, she could

⁵⁶Congress Party split into two groups soon after the defeat of the official candidate for Presidency N. Sanjiva Reddy by V.V. Giri. The Young Turks or Congress Y was led by Mrs. Gandhi, while Congress O was led by Desai.

⁵⁷"Mrs. Gandhi's Broadcast," The Hindu, 28 December 1970, 1; "Congress Party Manifesto for Mid-Term Election 1971," The Hindu, 25 January 1971, 2.

confidently approach the people with problems and they would, in return, honor her request. In this instance she informed the people that her desire was to abolish feudalism and to establish in its place equality and justice. The people obviously listened.

Mrs. Gandhi also capitalized on her gender to push her way through problems. She would often assume the role of mother to all Indians, as the following statement suggested: "My burden is manifold because scores of my family members are poverty stricken and I have to look after them."⁵⁸ She would welcome elders from the rural areas to her residence to discuss their problems. One writer gave an account on how she saluted the crowds from her balcony in Cochin in 1978:

She jammed a torch between her knees, directing the beam upwards to light her face and arms. She rotated the arms as if perfecting the dance of Lakshimi, Goddess of Wealth... 'You 've no idea how tiring it is to be a goddess.'⁵⁹

Such displays helped to bring her closer to her people and she would most often rely on this type of approach to bring diverse issues to the public.

The masses responded overwhelmingly during the midterm Congressional election. The Congress Party

⁵⁸Malhotra, 104.

⁵⁹B. Chatwin, "On the Road with Mrs. Gandhi" Granata 26 (Spring 1989): 119.

gained the majority seats in the Lok Sabha, by 350 out of 515 seats, giving the new government the two-thirds votes necessary for approving the Bill. That event finally concluded the reign of feudalism in India. The abolition of feudalism typified the clash between gender and class and how the gender role was sometimes used to stabilize divergence. Mr. Desai and other elites were in opposition to the measures established to abolish feudalism. Such opposition was on the basis of class interest, the rich desiring to preserve the status quo in which the masses constantly toiled for less. However, Mrs. Gandhi, even though a part of the political elites and a Nehru whose personality was even deified to the status of a goddess, capitalized on her family's prowess and as a goddess to get the people to vote in favor of the bill. Although Mrs. Gandhi seemed to have momentarily succeeded with the issue, the same case would surface once more during the Desai administration. Mrs. Gandhi's opponent Desai and his alliance with the conservative elements would constantly create challenges for Mrs. Gandhi's leadership. Still faced with a stagnant economy and no immediate relief, Mrs. Gandhi would have to exploit new avenues to stabilize the economy. In order to accomplish this, it became essential to address the soaring population growth.

Family Planning

This section exemplifies how any adverse gender-based measures placed by a government, even though headed by a woman, serve to undermine that leadership. The program dealing with reproduction seemed to have some gender footing but was also class oriented because it was targeted at the very poor. The result of this sort of policy affected Mrs. Gandhi's leadership.

Many governments in the developing economies support some forms of family planning: some subsidize contraceptive supplies, others give tax relief to smaller families, but everywhere such resources fall far short of demand and millions of women have no family-planning support. Funding commitments are a good indicator of actual government support. However, a government's involvement in family planning is not always beneficial. Some governments enact population-control policies with little regard for women's rights or health. Coercive sterilization, especially of poorer women and women from ethnic minority groups, is sometimes used to effect a quick reduction in population growth. India was the first among the developing nations to formally make family planning a matter of national policy. It introduced with much publicity a nationwide sterilization campaign and influenced the United States

and other Western donors to contribute more than three billion dollars into the population control programs between the years of 1957 and 1977. The annual increase of over 2.1% in the population problem presented an insurmountable challenge to the government. The largest number of babies born were in the rural areas, where 70% of India's population resided. Moreover, improved health conditions had lowered the death rate in the nation in conjunction with a higher life expectancy that rose from 32 years in 1947, to 54 years in 1984.⁶⁰

Therefore, in order to ensure that India's population did not go beyond a billion by the year 2000, the government mandated that family planning devices be extended to at least 60% of married people, if they were to be successful in combating the problem.⁶¹ In the rural areas, by tradition, the idea of family planning is unacceptable because of the need for a free labor pool mostly supplied by the peasants.⁶²

⁶⁰Pranay Gupte, Vengeance: India after the Assassination of Indira Gandhi (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.), 220.

⁶¹Pranay Gupte, 220.

⁶²The rural people are basically Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs. In urban areas, a large number are Christians and Roman Catholic and oppose family planning.

Dating as far back as the creation of India as a nation state, the country has been plagued by its surging population. An attempt at population control was initiated in 1949 without any success. The problem stems from the people's lack of acceptance of the policy stance. In the 1950s, the government embarked on a widespread crusade aimed at luring people to family planning for 2 or 3 children per family.⁶³ Despite all the publicity, the Nehru administration did not establish viable measures for combating this problem and substantial funds provided by the West were misappropriated. Thus, the result was negligible.

In the 1970s, the Indian population was estimated at around 550 million. The study suggested an annual rise of between 12-13 million people.⁶⁴ For a period of time, the officials depended on the condom, IUD, and pill to handle the population explosion, but were

⁶³They used propaganda posters with a family planning symbol of an inverted triangle to lure the masses. This symbol supposedly denoted fertility. Such propaganda tactics were ineffective as the people's custom contradicted the policy.

⁶⁴In absence of proper census figures, since the statistics in rural areas were not reliable, the population figure may have been more.

unsuccessful.⁶⁵ The Prime Minister had indicated that family planning should top all other priorities in the governmental scheme in 1968. She addressed women in northern India about the necessity for it, but did not initiate strong follow-up programs to back that up.⁶⁶ As the problem grew, the government therefore vowed to train more workers, set up teams to furnish and distribute instruments, and allow the use of mass media to effectuate the scheme.⁶⁷ But it was not until the "Emergency" of 1975-77 that Indira Gandhi's Government acted decisively on the issue.

Sanjay Gandhi, the Prime Minister's son, masterminded the sterilization programs. Desiring to bring down India's birthrate overnight, he issued a four-point program, of which planned parenthood and slum clearance topped the chart.⁶⁸ Many truck-loads of young

⁶⁵Husbands were not pleased with the condom, neither did they support their wives' use of the IUD on the grounds of infidelity. Nor were their wives adequately informed as to their "safe periods;" hence the population explosion.

⁶⁷Indira Gandhi, 79-80.

⁶⁶Indira Gandhi, 78.

⁶⁸Moraes, 227.

men were sterilized, attracted by cash incentives and work-relief. However, these efforts created a backlash as zealots took the law into their hands, forcefully moving people off the streets to be sterilized. These victims included the very young and old who were not reproductive.⁶⁹ The slum dwellers, Harijans, were the victims of Sanjay's four-point slum clearance programs. The government had resolved to destroy the slum and relocate the dwellers. About 700,000 people were evicted and their homes were destroyed. Due to lack of space for resettlement, they had to be moved to an undeveloped area called Khichripur. The new community was very unpopular due to its segregation and unhealthy surroundings. As a result, people suffered and many of them died of communicable diseases contracted from the vicinity due to improper sanitation in the slum.⁷⁰ Mrs. Gandhi's defeat in the 1977 election was partly attributed to public sentiment over the excesses of the program which called for slum clearance.⁷¹ She was held

⁶⁹Moraes, 230. These techniques (vasectomy, and tubectomy) were extended to people of all ages; Ved Mehta, The New India (New York: Viking Press, 1978), 120.

⁷⁰Moraes, 231-33.

⁷¹Ibid.

accountable for the policy outcomes of her administration. Between April and September 1976, two million people were sterilized, whereas, sixteen million went through the same procedure in the previous three decades.⁷²

It was obvious that family planning was poorly planned and executed. It succeeded in alienating the very people it meant to help. While most women were expected to exercise some control over the number of children they gave birth to, what seemed to be a personal choice of contraceptive methods was strongly influenced by many factors over which women had little control: the national population policies, international contraceptive-aid policies, religious taboos, the dominant role of men in family decision-making, and the economics of the production and distribution of contraceptives: all in alliance affected women's health.

The Indian situation illustrated that the government's involvement in family planning was not always beneficial. It also suggested that such poorly planned policies affected Mrs. Gandhi's leadership. India's population-control policies, exercised with little respect to the rights of women or health, show

⁷²Ved Mehta, 122.

the extent to which the state would go to accomplish its objectives. Nearly 2000 fatalities were documented and there were widespread abuses to reach the target of 7.5 million vasectomies.⁷³ The policy choice focusing on fertility was gender aligned, but due to the fact that it was centered on the impoverished, it had class overtones. Another aspect of class discourse showed the adverse impact of class (family) on public policy. Mrs. Gandhi's choice of her son Sanjay Gandhi to execute her policy was familial and had proven that such dependence did not necessarily produce the right policy. Though targeted at reducing population overgrowth, the method adopted to actualize this policy option was badly orchestrated. Poor men and women suffered in return. It did not give consideration to the majority of the people it meant to help, nor did the government take time to educate them about the option. This initiative also reinforces the feminist contention that the state is reluctant to address women's interest even when women head the governments. Thus, Mrs. Gandhi's family planning policy was a failure. Further avenues pursued by Mrs. Gandhi in order to find new ways to upgrade the

⁷³R. L. Hardgrave and S. A. Kochanek, India Government and Politics in a Developing Nation (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1986), 49.

standard of living of the masses were through agrarian reforms.

Agrarian Policy, The Rural Poor And
Constitutional Reform

The agrarian reform, though class-oriented, was a device by Mrs. Gandhi's government to improve the condition of the masses. During its formative years, the Congress Party was committed to socio-economic reforms. For instance, in 1929 Congress avowed in its yearly session at Bombay that the great poverty and misery of the Indian people were attributable to the economic structure of society. Consequently, in order to resolve the problem of population growth, it became vital to adopt radical measures to distribute equitably the resources.⁷⁴ From this standpoint, the Congress resolved to enhance the status of the common people by alleviating poverty so as to eliminate the exploitation of the masses. If successful, the program would obliterate the political and economic problems confronting the country.⁷⁵ It then became imperative to

⁷⁴Sood, 4.

⁷⁵For the text on the Resolution of the Fundamental Rights and Economic Program, see, Indian National Congress: 1930-34 (Allahabad 1935), 66-68.

restructure the system, especially in key policy areas such as the land tenure and revenue systems, so as to accommodate change and give relief to the small peasants. This then compelled the state to control the strategic industries and mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of transportation. Congress would proceed by resolving to sustain the "Fundamental Rights" and establish appropriate economic policy to actualize these objectives.⁷⁶

During the freedom movement Nehru stated to the masses that India's immediate goal was to end all class privileges and the vested interests.⁷⁷ From this vantage point Congress embarked upon such radical economic programs such as the "All Indian Agrarian Program" for each province, and the 1936 "Faizpur Congressional" initiative, in which they launched a thirteen-point

⁷⁶Frankel, 551-556.

⁷⁷Jawaharlal Nehru, India and the World (London, 1938), 39.

program⁷⁸ for upgrading the situation of the peasants. The main point here is that Congress had for a long period articulated bringing about agrarian reforms and abolishing the Zamindari system (absentee landlordism).⁷⁹ However, issues like land ownership, absentee landlordism and cultivation rights to the actual tiller continuously challenged the validity of India's national constitution, as well as imposed constraints on the Parliamentary authority (in this instance, Mrs. Gandhi's ability) to effectuate change. Furthermore, the position taken by Desai and his allies in the Supreme Court revealed the extent of the judiciary coalition with the opposition directed by Desai, in order to counteract Mrs. Gandhi's policy options which were exploring avenues for change. The Zamindari provision was abolished, which forced some of the local chiefs into relinquishing their control of many acres of land and 20 million tenants became

⁷⁸Report of the 49th Session of the Indian National Congress (Lucknow, April 1936), 96; Subhash Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle: 1920-42 (Bombay 1964), 100-101.

⁷⁹It is worth mentioning here that Indian economy is agrarian based, and any change in the socioeconomic condition mandates a complete renovation of the status quo.

landlords via constitutional amendments.⁸⁰ On the other hand, Mrs. Gandhi faced more opposition, but was finally successful with the Forty-Second Amendment on December 18, 1976, after several years of struggle with the Judiciary.

The implementation of the land reform and the abolition of the Zamindari were consistent with the class and gender discourse. In fact, it showed how the interest of an economic class was threatened in the face of laws that extended certain privileges to the poor and how such a class had struggled to regain control. The opposition was exacerbated by the opposition's perception that these changes were instituted by Mrs. Gandhi, a woman whom they had nicknamed the "Dumb Doll," even though the bill was later passed.

Mrs. Gandhi And The Women

This discussion, being gender-focused, explores how the personality of a leader (in this case a woman) affected women's aspirations to better themselves in a political system and consequently influenced their support of Mrs. Gandhi's leadership. Addressing the class aspect, this section confirms the women-centered

⁸⁰Sood, 75.

opinion that women are found at the bottom of the ladder due to the patriarchal arrangement. It also elucidates how policy outcomes impact women's integration into the economic sphere and as a result, improve their perception of the leadership.

Following the series of squabbles between the Court and Central Government, most specifically in relation to the agrarian reform and Zamindari, the ground was cleared for the creation of a new women's group in New Delhi. Mrs. Gandhi's success in the political arena helped to enhance the position of women in the country, especially how women perceived themselves. They began to organize themselves in order to pressure the government into protecting their interests. As Ela Bhatt, the leader of the Self-Employed Women's Association explains:

Consciously or unconsciously, every woman, I think, feels that if Indira Gandhi could be a Prime Minister of this country, then we all have opportunities.⁸¹

The statement suggested that if a woman could rise from the domestic realm and excel in the public realm that she could emulate this example. Women were inspired to struggle as a unit.

The Self-Employed Women's Association, an offshoot of the women's movement has had relative success in

⁸¹E. Bumiller, May You be the Mother of a Hundred Sons (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1990), 151.

publishing and bringing women to the notice of lawmakers' and the government.⁸² These women most benefitted from Mrs. Gandhi's nationalization of the banking system, the abolition of the Zamindari, and the land reform, because such efforts opened up the system. Such measures originated from the desired goal of extending services to the poor. These policy options removed the rigid standards imposed by the banking system in which the poor and the women were unable to obtain loans. Abolished absentee landlordism meant that more wealth was accumulated by the poor. Through the land reforms, some peasants had opportunities to acquire their own land. In this way, the rigid system was, at last, relaxed. Some women seized this opportunity to progress in the system. They began to establish their own networks instead of going through intermediaries. Such networks demonstrated to these women that if a woman could successfully govern India, women could in similar fashion become entrepreneurs. Mrs. Gandhi's presence as a political leader was a motivating factor for these women to aspire for self empowerment in the system. The Self Employed Women's Association made

⁸²Urvashi Butalia, "Indian Women and the Movement," Women Studies International Forum 8 (1985): 131.

progress in the system. They began to establish their own networks instead of going through intermediaries. Such networks demonstrated to these women that if a woman could successfully govern India, women could in similar fashion become entrepreneurs. Mrs. Gandhi's presence as a political leader was a motivating factor for these women to aspire for self empowerment in the system. The Self Employed Women's Association (S.E.W.A.) of Ahamedabad, Working Women's Forum (W.W.F.) of Madras, and the Annapurna Mahila Mandal (a Khannawalli women's association named after the goddess of food) of Bombay, innovated strategies to address the banking needs of lower class women.⁸³ The most notable strategy within these bodies was the loan group, a group of women borrowers acting as guarantors to other women obtaining loans and as a support group for each other. Among the major functions of the group leaders was to assist its members in loan collection, as the restrictive measures of the banks to grant loans to the poor had been relaxed. The establishment also helped to scrutinize

⁸³This information was derived from the following sources: Jain Devaki, Women's Quest For Power (Bombay; Vikes 1980), 36; Jennefer Sebstad, Struggle and Development Among Self Employed; A Women's Report on the Self-Employed Association, Ahamedabad, India (Washington, D.C., U.S. A.I.D.: Office of Urban Development, 1982), 10.

prospective members and conducted organizational meetings.

These associations were effective and as a result membership increased rapidly. They were successful in obtaining loans for a majority of borrowers and the rates by which these women paid off their loans were impressive at the rate of 94% to 98%. Other activities conducted by these groups included providing women's shelters, insurance, child care centers, and offered job training programs, etc. These women's associations have been active in promoting policy changes in favor of women and most of them were even affiliated with different political parties, but collaborated to foster their interests.⁸⁴ The Indian women in the rural areas were also included in the scheme which embraced eighty-four villages and included the Student Youth Struggle Movement.⁸⁵ These various groups were from time to time addressed by the Prime Minister in her rallies.

⁸⁴Mira Savara and Sujatha Gothokar, "An Assertion of Women- Power", in Madhu Kishwar and Ruth Vanita, eds., In Search of Answers: Indian Women and Voices From Manushi (London; Zed Books ltd., 1984), 134-48.

⁸⁵Burnad Fatima, "Despite Heavy Odds; Organizing Harijan Women in Tamil Nadu Villages," Manushi 4 (1983): 33-6; Institute of Social studies, Reaching Poorest Women in India (New Delhi: Swedish International Development Authority, 1981), 127-8.

As stated earlier, her tactic of taking town meetings increased her fame. The masses identified with her, which caused her to be envied by some of her colleagues due to their own political ambitions. She was committed to helping the poor, and some women who sought to empower themselves received blessings from Mrs. Gandhi's resolve to open up the system. Mrs. Gandhi's was dedicated to the common people and she struggled to bring needed change to India. She sometimes met with opposition, but she was very determined.⁸⁶

Mrs. Gandhi, The Forty-Second Amendment
And The 1977 Election

Even though as a stateswoman Mrs. Gandhi did not leave any stone unturned when it had to do with the needs of the masses, the disagreements with the Courts would periodically hamper progress. According to Sahagal, the Forty-Second Amendment Act, which was eventually passed in December 1976, took away the power of judicial review from the Court and was Mrs. Gandhi's gift to India, especially to the poor. It constituted a major channel through which the Central Government could

⁸⁶Nayantara Sahagal, 54.

have made a significant progress. According to Sahagal, the Forty-Second Amendment Act, which was eventually passed in December 1976, took away the power of judicial review from the Court and was Mrs. Gandhi's gift to India, especially to the poor. It constituted a major channel through which the Central Government could overcome the judicial roadblocks to modernization and development of India. Mrs. Gandhi's opponents Desai, the syndicates and the representatives of the Courts were actually advanced in age and, though conservative, had political ambitions. Resisting change, it was obvious that these men did not represent the interests of the masses, whereas Mrs. Gandhi's policy clarified the nature of the Indian polity, by making the Constitution conform with transformation of India.⁸⁷ It abolished the Court's absolute authority over the Parliament over conflict rooted in the interpretation of fundamental rights. However, this major success in approving the 42nd Amendment suffered another setback when Mrs. Gandhi lost the election following gender and political differentiation.

All the analyses on nationalization of the banks,

⁸⁷P. Sood, Politics of Socioeconomic Change in India (New Delhi, 1979), 157.

wall and left me with no other option."⁸⁸ This statement explained why she had maintained a very tough stance against her opponents. She was aware that these people wanted her to fail and she naturally had to ward off such moves.

Moraji Desai, who vehemently opposed Mrs Gandhi's leadership due to his own political ambition, constantly employed gender based opinions in order to attract support from the conservatives. According to an Indian diplomat, the whole region of Asia is deeply entrenched in the patriarchal beliefs which had been subversive to women. Alluding to an old Asian adage which said that "the birth of a girl is granted elsewhere, whereas the birth of a boy is granted here," she implied that boys are preferred over girls and that girls are a burden.⁸⁹ Surveying such an environment where strong emphasis is placed on gender, it should not come as a surprise why some opposition employing sexist comments have had wide audiences. During the election campaign, Mr. Desai promised to repeal the 42nd Amendment, giving the Constitution back its original glory. The legislation was passed in December 1976 and Mrs. Gandhi called

⁸⁸Malhotra, 120.

⁸⁹"China's Lonely Youngmen," News & Record, 28 August 1994, F3.

general elections on January 18, 1977. The election was untimely and occurred at the time of a great crisis when a State of Emergency was declared in 1977. In justification of her action, she gave a radio address to the country:

I am sure you are conscious of the deep and widespread conspiracy which has been brewing ever since I began to introduce certain progressive measures of benefit to the common man and woman of India.⁹⁰

Her opponents seized the opportunity (due to the prevailing sentiment among the people precipitated by the unpopular family planning program, slum clearance, arbitrary arrests, and a numbers of events unfolding during this crisis) to build successfully a case against Mrs. Gandhi.⁹¹ While she campaigned with the slogan, "Garibi hatao" ("Remove poverty") her enemies, on the contrary demanded: "Indira Hatao" ("Remove Indira"). Mrs. Gandhi did not prevail in the election. She lost the Prime Ministership to Moraji Desai.

To show the extent of grievances against Mrs. Gandhi, Kaviraj underscored the congressional attitude of that period. He argued that the era revealed how much Mrs. Gandhi's presence affected the Congress. He

⁹⁰Hardgrave and Kochanek, 214.

⁹¹Moraes, 124.

criticized such adverse reaction to Mrs. Gandhi, arguing that:

Much of the three years in power, the Janata government spent in debating what to do with Indira Gandhi rather than what to do for the country.⁹²

On becoming India's fifth Prime Minister, Mr. Desai proceeded with the task of the new Prime Minister. He repealed the Forty-Second Amendment Act in October 1977. His efforts ensured the protection of the rights of the minority and that preserving the Fundamental Rights precedes over the former Congressional agenda.⁹³

The Desai Government lasted twenty eight months.

Critics claimed that massive corruption and embezzlement occurred in the administration which created problems and led to his downfall.⁹⁴ This proved that there are no quick

⁹²S. Kaviraj, "Indira Gandhi and Indian Politics," Economics and Political Weekly 21 (1986): 1697-1708.

⁹³H. M. Jain, "Forty-Fourth Amendment and the Property," Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies (New Delhi, XIII January-March 1979), 25.

⁹⁴P.N. Mehta, India: The Crowded Decade (New Delhi, 1980), 422.

fixes' in any political regime, and that a government headed by a man is not necessarily better than one led by the opposite sex. In addition, it justified Mrs. Gandhi's tireless efforts to accomplish change in the patriarchal system. According to Mrs. Gandhi, a government led by a woman could also promote stability.⁹⁵ She reassumed the office of Prime Minister of India on January 14, 1980, 33 months and 21 days after her defeat. Following this resurgence, Mrs. Gandhi initiated the Forty-Fifth Amendment Bill which secured her own upgraded version of the Forty-Second Amendment in January 1980, and passed the Forty-Eighth Amendment.

Mrs. Gandhi's had struggled to diversify the political and economic arrangements of India to include the interests of the common people and in so doing impacted how the government addressed the situation. The Forty-Second Amendment was challenged by her opposition and was nullified by Mr. Desai following Mrs. Gandhi's loss of the 1977 election. With the Desai government being ineffective in dealing with major issues of national concerns, Mrs. Gandhi once again was empowered to act decisively on diverse questions, hence her policy stance such as the Forty-Fifth Amendment and the Social

⁹⁵Hardgrave and Kochanek, 223-227.

Welfare programs which included providing education, health care and limited family planning for the people⁹⁶. Her success in these areas in no way suggested that she overcame the patriarchal structure, for lurking in the background was serious political turmoil which resulted in her death and threatened the survival of the Nehru dynasty.

The Assassination Of Indira Gandhi

The women-centered opinion argues that the state is gendered and women have a contradictory insertion into the state system. Women in the developing countries could only come to power to assume the political banners once carried by their male kin and their downfall are also determined by the politics surrounding their rise to power. Two factors were responsible for Mrs. Gandhi rise to power: class and gender. She was the daughter of a very famous leader who had governed India for over seventeen years. When he died, India had lost a special son and there was a void created. Although his immediate relative was not immediately appointed to replace him, when Shastri came to power he argued that he must have a

⁹⁶Praynay Gupte, Vengeance: India after the Assassination of Indira Gandhi (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.), 16 and 320.

Nehru in the cabinet to maintain stability. Following his death after one year in office, Mrs. Gandhi was placed in power because of her family background and sex. The syndicates were looking for someone whom they could influence, and when they saw that she was not easily swayed, they began to oppose vehemently all her actions. Even though thwarted, such challenges ranged in serious debates on what to do about Mrs. Gandhi, how to oppose her policy choices. The predominant concern of the opposition was to safeguard the status quo, an environment where women fared best in their homes. Therefore, class and gender factors reinforced the patriarchal conditions governing India as a nation state. Those circumstances were also responsible for her fall as a political leader.

Mrs. Gandhi's leadership flaws were obvious, and as a 'Machiavellian' her tendency to surround herself with non-threatening accomplices proved critical, although it was argued earlier that the hostile patriarchal environment left her no other choice but to evoke the goddess imagery, a symbolism which was juxtaposed with her position as a stateswoman.

Given India's political crisis, conglomeration of events, wars with Pakistan and China, ethnic disputes, riots, lack of cooperation with key members of the Court

and Congress, overpopulation and poverty, Indira Gandhi was constantly challenged. However, one of the most critical conflicts was one posed by her gender as her political opponents did not approve of her leadership. Her leadership was thus constricted by the division between class and gender in the state system. Even though the daughter of Nehru, who was much revered nationwide, it is very important to note that she was the first woman ever to hold such position after the country's independence.

It is vital to point out that India was dominated by 80% of Hindus, who were divided into castes.⁹⁷ A woman, even though a direct descendant of a popular male, still received different treatment from men of similar background. According to Manushi's analysis of Indian politics, "women are there on men's terms and for their survival they forget that they are women, and as women they are unequal."⁹⁸ According to Mary Carras, Mrs. Gandhi was secluded from her associates, due to this cultural diversity affecting gender relations. As far as the culture was concerned, she could not mingle

⁹⁷Hardgrave and Kochanek, 9.

⁹⁸Manushi Collection, "Our Alarming Silence: Women, Politics and the Recent Elections," Manushi 4, 2-6, 76, (1979-1980): 5.

with these men and did not trust them."⁹⁹ Consequently, these men sought to and in some cases did successfully block her policies. Such sentiment was widespread among some of the Indian politicians who were opposed to a woman governing them; and such a view was not restricted to India.

Pakistan President Yahaya Khan's complaint during his nation's crisis with Bangladesh was extremely sexist. He complained that "if that woman thinks she is going to cow me down, I refuse to take it"¹⁰⁰ Such gender-based criticisms extended to writers such as Salman Rushdie, who labeled her as "the widow" in one of his works.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, in 1980 Rushdie characterized Indira Gandhi as a "goddess in her most terrible aspect... and schizophrenic."¹⁰²

Discounting gender issues that challenge Mrs. Gandhi's leadership, some writers either do not see sexism as playing a crucial role in her leadership, or are reluctant to classify her under such a context. For

⁹⁹Mary Carras, 50.

¹⁰⁰Malhotra, 137, and 190.

¹⁰¹Salman Rushdie, "Introduction," in T. Ali, An Indian Dynasty: The Story of the Nehru-Gandhi Family (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1985), xi-xv and 522.

¹⁰²Salman Rushdie, Midnight's Children (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 522.

example, Bobb portrays Indira Gandhi in such a generic style:

Dictator or democrat? Saint or tyrant?
Consolidator or destroyer? Peacemaker or
warmonger? She was all of these yet none of
them. To the final tragic end, Indira's enigma
remained intact.¹⁰³

Such analysis did not carefully evaluate the underlying motives behind some of her actions. Constantly confronting such scornful remarks and treatments from her own people, it was no wonder Mrs. Gandhi was very assertive. Moreover, as a national leader she had to confront diverse concerns, which included issues of war and peace. Manushi contends:

To survive, [women political leaders] must, on the one hand, make themselves like the stereotyped male -aggressive, competitive, ruthless, authoritarian and on the other, continue to play the good woman role.¹⁰⁴

Because of the cultural isolationism of women, she relied on her family members and a series of personal advisers whom she continuously replaced when they proved disloyal. Not being a newcomer to Indian politics, she utilized her family status as a bargaining chip with the masses. She was honored as the Hindu goddess Durga and revered as the incarnation of Shakti, an imagery

¹⁰³D. Bobb, "The Indira Gandhi Enigma," India Today, 30 November 1984, 94-103.

¹⁰⁴Manushi Collective, 3.

which she employed as the need arose.

Delegating strategic duties to an immediate family member who turned out to be incapable of fulfilling these tasks also proved to be detrimental to her leadership. Her worst policy stance was population control, which she assigned to her son Sanjay Gandhi, to execute. Due to the lack of proper planning, population control cost Mrs. Gandhi an election. This suggested that patriarchal control of the nation state is not always beneficial. She had to find out the hard way by losing the election, that adverse involvement in family planning is not always advantageous even to the government.

Mrs. Gandhi may have preferred to place emphasis on politics over economics, even though both are interrelated. She had emerged as a political elite and long strove to persuade the opposition, mostly the economic elites (who used her gender as tactic to oust her), to accommodate her policy guidelines. As a result, privatization of banking and abolition of feudalism in the country were enforced. Apart from the population policy, most of her major political decisions received public approval. When she made a decision, it was backed with an overwhelming show of commitment. The war between Pakistan and Bangladesh is a case in point. At her

discretion, Indian troops were committed and victory became a reality. She then became deified as "Joan of Arc," according to Moraes. She had convinced her followers that a woman commander in chief was as good as a man, if not better.

Hindus were urging the government to suppress the Sikh acts of terrorism. On the surface it seemed that Mrs. Gandhi was passive, but she was in actuality giving the Sikhs a long rope. When violence escalated and negotiation was at a deadend, she ordered the army into the Golden Temple in Amristar in June 1984.¹⁰⁵ At her command, the army flushed out the Sikhs terrorists who had held up the Temple, causing many casualties. From that bloody interchange on, it appeared that Mrs. Gandhi would make her ultimate sacrifice for India. It was a matter of time before she was savagely executed by the Sikh avengers.

Still maintaining her duty to serve the country despite series of death threats, she wrote in her will:

No hate is dark enough to overshadow the extent of my love for my people and my country; no force is strong enough to divert me from my

¹⁰⁵Even though Mrs. Gandhi was criticized by the Sikhs for failing to grant concessions to them, they worked hard as most ethnic groups in India and had achieved political and economic standing in the country: See Moraes, 189; and Klieman, 150.

endeavor to take this country forward.¹⁰⁶

She was gunned down by two young Sikhs at 9:17 A.M., on October 31, 1984, exactly one month short of her sixty-eighth birthday. She was laid to rest a few days afterwards, marking the end of her leadership.

Conclusion

The gap between gender and class contributed to Mrs. Gandhi's emergence and downfall. She came to power due to the possibility of stability promised by her family background as the daughter of a popular leader, but her gender constantly created problems for those who did not believe in a woman's ability to govern. The conflictual interests in the system which she was unable to resolve cost her her life. In fact, her assassins vowed to terminate the Nehru legacy and they kept this pledge when her son was killed after his succession to power.

The Nehru era marked a period of charismatic leaders whose style and character were earmarked by the freedom struggle against the British and preeminence of the political elite. Mrs. Gandhi inherited her father's legacy. She was selected due to her father's fame and

¹⁰⁶Malhotra, 307-308.

for the fact that she was a woman whom the syndicates thought could easily be influenced. Therefore, her class and gender brought her to power. While in power, the conflictual relation between class and gender created a series of challenges for her leadership. On one hand, she was thought incapable of governing and was classified as a "Dumb Doll." On the other hand, being aggressive due to the hostility of her male counterparts, she was called a tyrant. The opposition she encountered while in power was fueled by an enemy who was politically motivated and employed gender-based opinions to convince his supporters of her weakness. As a result, her major policy options, such as nationalization of banks, abolition of feudalism and Zamindari (though class based), were opposed by these men. Family planning (though basically gender-defined) was a failure due to lack of a blueprint to orchestrate the scheme. Reliance on close relatives to actualize her policies revealed the extent of lack of confidence among her colleagues. When one of her sons was asked why he was interested in politics, he responded "someone has to help Mommy." Lasting in power for many years showed that she became acclimatized to her environment. Her death signaled another era, one where leaders from the Nehru family would fall prey to the assassins' bullets. This

leadership emphasized the importance of classism on political leadership.

Her son Rajiv Gandhi, despite his political inexperience, succeeded his mother. The Sikhs, having sworn revenge against the family, would soon slaughter another Gandhi. With this development, his wife rejected the offer to become the next Prime Minister of India. On a deeper level, it portrayed the dualism of gender relations. Women could only come to power on the basis of the clash between class and gender. As a relative of a famous leader, Indira Gandhi was just there to fill the void created by the absence of her popular male kin. Being a woman, her presence contradicted the capitalist patriarchal configuration of the state; hence the numerous challenges, from those opposed to change. Her inability to satisfy divergent interests embedded in the class and gender struggle, played out at different fronts, compounded by ethnic nationalism brought about her death. Not only did she die, that same conflict threatened the survival of the Nehru dynasty.

CHAPTER THREE

PAKISTAN AND THE LEADERSHIP OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

Emergence As A Political Player

According to the feminist critique, most governments are governments of men. Nowhere have women established a long tradition of succession, especially in the most important posts: the heads of their governments. In developing countries, most women come to power as a result of a political crisis created by the sudden death of their male kin. Left with no other choice of a suitable male to assume control, these women are asked to uphold their family legacies. The fact that these women have the right to participate in government does not mean they exercise much power. The gender division in government is most pronounced at the peak of the echelon. It is in part, their gender, as well as their political and economic classes, that enable these women to emerge as political leaders. The purpose of this section is to explore how class and gender concerns mentioned have helped Benazir Bhutto to rise as a

political leader.

Indira Gandhi, became involved in politics due to her father's popularity and outstanding contribution to India's politics. Likewise, Benazir Bhutto rose to power because of her family background. She was the daughter of Ali Bhutto, the Prime Minister of Pakistan who was subsequently assassinated. She became involved in politics as a protest to the way her father met his untimely death. Coming from a predominantly Moslem country where women are restricted to the private sphere, the abrupt death of her popular male kin broke the boundary and enlisted her into the public realm.

To start with, Benazir Bhutto had an exclusive family background. She was born on June 21, 1953, the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who ruled Pakistan from 1971 to 1977.¹ Her father was a member of one of Pakistan's wealthiest landowning families and ultimately became the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Her mother, Nusrat Ispahani, was the daughter of an Iranian

¹Katherine M. Doherty and Craig A. Doherty, Benazir Bhutto: An Impact Biography (New York: Franklin Watts, 1990), 27.

businessman.² Both parents were Muslims and Benazir Bhutto and the rest of the children were brought up as Sunni Muslims. Despite the Islamic tradition of bringing up women in seclusion, significant events occurred in this family that would alter that expectation and the rest of Benazir Bhutto's life. In July 1977 Ali Bhutto's leadership was overthrown in a military coup by Mohammed Zia and he was executed. Benazir Bhutto, starting from the period when her father was imprisoned to the moment he was killed, publicly opposed the savagery of Zia's government. Such opposition enlisted her as a vital participant in Pakistan's political scene.

Preceding the tragedy that befell the family, Benazir Bhutto was exposed to politics at an early age. Her privileged background enabled her to associate with political elites even at the international level. She had from an early age accompanied her father on State visits abroad. The Bhutto children were often encouraged to meet with foreign dignitaries visiting Pakistan, or even joined their father on official tours to foreign countries. Benazir Bhutto, being the oldest child, had the privilege of joining her father more often than the rest of the siblings. For instance, she met George Bush

²Ibid., 28.

in 1971, when he was President Nixon's Ambassador to the United Nations. She also visited the Nixon White House and accompanied her father to China.

Moreover, on June 28, 1972, at 18 years of age, she met Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, when she went with her father to India on a diplomatic visit necessary to settle the Pakistan-India dispute.³ In India, she experienced first-hand the patriarchal spirit among some Pakistani diplomats: her father's assistants would employ passwords such as 'it's a boy,' when issues proceeded in their favor, and 'it's a girl' when negotiations took a turn for the worse. Such representations suggested that femaleness denoted deadlock or lack of progress in the minds of these diplomats. These misconceptions, therefore, support the feminist position that women are not considered equal to men in the state system. Benazir Bhutto complained that such a stance was very "...chauvinistic."⁴ Both nations eventually had to reach a compromise. This kind of

³Benazir wrote that she was very disturbed with the meeting, especially with Mrs. Gandhi's behavior, and wondered, "Was she seeing herself in me, a daughter of another statesman?" Benazir Bhutto Daughter of Destiny: An Autobiography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 72.

⁴Ibid., 74.

her father's preeminence and spilled over into Benazir's career choice. It is vital to point out that such exposure could not have been possible if she were not affiliated with the political elites. To substantiate this claim, a closer look at her educational background becomes necessary.

Benazir Bhutto was provided with the best education available in the area. In 1968, while she was preparing for O-Levels (School Leaving Certification), her father was arrested and imprisoned. Her father was so proud of her academic advancement that he wrote to her from the prison that he was very pleased to:

have a daughter who is so bright that she is doing O-levels at the age of 15, three years before I did them. At this rate, you might become the president.⁵

That letter indicated that Ali Bhutto was encouraging her to develop her maximum potential irrespective of her gender. As Ali Bhutto's immediate concern was her education, Benazir had to be transferred. In April 1969, she was admitted to Radcliffe College, a sister institution of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was the first of the Bhutto women to attend college in the West, at the age of sixteen.

⁵Ibid., 52.

At Radcliffe, Benazir Bhutto took part in the anti-Vietnam war protest, and she also became involved with the nascent women's rights movement in America, and was pleased to be associated with the sort of women not restricted by gender. Referring to that experience, she explicitly stated: "My fledgling confidence soared and I got over the shyness that had plagued my earlier years."⁶

Following Benazir Bhutto's graduation from Radcliffe in 1973, she moved to England to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford. She joined the renowned Oxford Union Debating Society,⁷ a training ground for future politicians, and became its president in 1976. The election outcome was notable: she was the third woman ever to hold such position, the first Asian woman, and the second Pakistani following her father's footsteps.⁸ As president, Benazir Bhutto took pride in selecting controversial debating topics such as "this

⁶Ibid., 60.

⁷Ibid., 81.

⁸Her father was the first Asian to hold that distinguished position at Oxford.

house likes domineering women."⁹ After receiving a second bachelor's degree from Oxford, Benazir Bhutto spent another year there studying International Law and Diplomacy. Soon after graduation, she returned home to take a job in the office of her father, then the Prime Minister.¹⁰ Alluding to that period she wrote that her father had planned to expose her to international politics at the United Nations and United States, after which she would be on her own.¹¹ Prior to her return to Pakistan, her father had already made arrangements to help her to adjust to Pakistan.¹² Benazir Bhutto's special family background enlisted her to certain privileges which an ordinary Pakistani woman did not have at her disposal. Nevertheless, shortly after her return on June 25, 1977, subsequent events occurred that forever changed her life.

One milestone that ensued came about as a result

⁹C. Hall, "The April of her Freedom," Washington Post, 4 April 1984, B11.

¹⁰Benazir Bhutto had written in her memoir, that her father's motive in getting his children well educated was to ensure that they were well qualified for any position they might occupy in future as to avoid any unnecessary criticism. Benazir Bhutto, 85.

¹¹Ibid., 98.

¹²Ibid.

of a political crisis in Pakistan.¹³ The crisis escalated when the opposition rejected the results of the 1977 elections.¹⁴ The opposition did not accept the 1973 Constitution, which liberalized the system. It was argued that the fundamentalist Moslems felt estranged by the measures established by Ali Bhutto to enhance the position of Pakistani women, which among others, included a quota for women in Congress.¹⁵

Consequently, on July 5, 1977, Ali Bhutto's Defense Minister, General Zia ul-Haq, a fundamentalist Moslem, toppled the government in a bloodless coup and declared a State of Emergency. The events that followed completely altered Benazir Bhutto's political aspirations.

Ali Bhutto was imprisoned.¹⁶ He spent ten days in jail and was released and re-arrested on September 17,

¹³The Pakistan Peoples Party had won 154 of 200 seats in Parliament and as a result, there emanated an agitation and unrest from the PNA. They were malcontent with the election results, on the grounds that it might have been rigged.

¹⁴Benazir Bhutto, 99.

¹⁵Nancy Anderson, "Benazir Bhutto and Dynastic Politics," in Michael A. Genovese, ed. Women as National Leaders (California: Sage Publication 1993), 43.

¹⁶Christopher Hitchens, "The Zia's Legacy," New Statesman and Society, 25 November 1988, 20.

1977, along with thousands of PPP members. While in prison, Ali Bhutto sanctioned Benazir Bhutto and her mother Nusrat to carry on with the campaign. Moreover, Ali Bhutto warned his sons studying abroad not to visit Pakistan, explaining that Zia might feel threatened by their presence, as opposed to his daughter's. He therefore authorized Benazir Bhutto to oversee all his affairs. Consequently, she became the family representative, receiving traditional visits from the villagers and resolving disagreements among them. This role was normally carried out by male kin,¹⁷ but, confident in his daughter's ability, Ali Bhutto requested that she carry out his mission should anything happen to him.¹⁸ It was at this moment that the special privileges granted Benazir Bhutto began paying off. One of these was her experience at the Oxford Union. Her public speeches in defense of her father were well articulated. Her eloquence and charisma got her into trouble, as she became a perceived threat to Zia's political system. Benazir Bhutto was arrested on September 29, 1977, soon after her third speech.

¹⁷Benazir Bhutto, 149.

¹⁸Benazir Bhutto, The Way Out: Interviews, Impressions, Statements and Message (Karachi: Mahmood 1988), 62.

Zia continued to push his regime along the hard lines of Islamic fundamentalism, establishing and interpreting laws on the basis of Islamic fundamentalism.¹⁹ He sought to enact laws which would restrict women's integration into the male-dominated system. He also suspended the 1973 Constitution which had provided for the civil rights and in its place imposed martial law.²⁰ Ali Bhutto's enemies argued that his regime was oppressive,²¹ arguing that he prohibited and suppressed organizations conducting subversive activities against his government.²²

As Bhutto's supporters were increased Zia became very disturbed. He tried to implicate Ali Bhutto in several murder charges, including that of Ahmed Raza Kasuri, a political opponent. Bhutto was also charged with misappropriation of funds and corruption.²³ On

¹⁹Rosa Laver, "Toward an Islamic State: Pakistan," Maclean, 18 January 1988, 20-2.

²⁰Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 106.

²¹"Coming to Terms with a Flawed Father," Far East Economic Review, 1 December 1988, 11; Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 107.

²²"Coming to Terms," 12.

²³Ibid., 12.

October 24, 1977, the five month trial of Ali Bhutto started. Benazir Bhutto and her mother Nusrat, released after spending several days in detention, focused their efforts to ensure that Ali Bhutto at least had a fair trial. But they tried in vain to get the Supreme Court to condemn the coup, or to free Bhutto.²⁴

On December 16, 1977, Benazir Bhutto and her mother were arrested and detained. December 23, 1978 marked the end of Ali Bhutto's trial. On February 6, 1979, the Supreme Court upheld the death sentence previously handed down by the kangaroo court.²⁵ Consequently, on April 4, 1979, Ali Bhutto was hanged. Benazir Bhutto and Nusrat Bhutto were released from the prison seven weeks after the execution. While Nusrat retired to mourn her husband, Benazir's role in the future would be more compelling.

The death of Ali Bhutto caused his daughter to become involved in the politics of her country. Following her father's execution, Benazir Bhutto was

²⁴Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, *ibid.*

²⁵Various heads of states like the United States' Jimmy Carter, India's Indira Gandhi, and many others, converged in condemning the death sentence against Ali Bhutto, as well as the way the trial was conducted. Ali Bhutto was not allowed to testify nor was evidence that would exonerate him permitted in the Court.

recognized as the Pakistan's Peoples Party's chief, even though she was a figurehead. In one of her addresses to the PPP, she revealed her political intentions: "Your sister hopes to play a role in the redemption of the lost rights of the people."²⁶ She had to coordinate this task with overseeing the family estates - a task normally considered the male's sphere of influence under Islamic tradition. As the daughter of the deceased Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir was welcomed into this domain to replace the absent male kin.

As the PPP won the September local elections, Zia canceled the national election and all political activities. Subsequently, Benazir Bhutto and her mother were rearrested and imprisoned for the next six months.

As Zia's popularity waned in the face of his reign of terror, some of his followers were forced out, while others, began seeking alliances specifically with the PPP. In 1981, Benazir Bhutto moved quickly to enlarge her power base with the approval of the party leaders of the PPP, and PPP was merged with the Pakistan National Alliance and eight other parties.²⁷ As a result, the

²⁶Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 65.

²⁷Husain Haqqani, "Campaign of Confusion: Shifting Alliances Cause Havoc among Candidates," Far Eastern Economic Review, 20 October 1988, 42; See also, "Putting Aside Differences: Benazir Bhutto Joins Opposition

Movement to Restore Democracy was born. Benazir Bhutto, along with many others, was once again arrested and she was held under detention at the Karachi Central Jail, the worst prison in the country.²⁸ Zia's intention was to isolate Benazir Bhutto from any outside contact and to monitor closely her moves. She had to rely on newspapers smuggled into the jail by some of her followers. In spite of her ordeal in the prison, which included developing a severe illness and being constantly harassed, Benazir Bhutto did not give in to the will of her oppressor. In early September, she was given two days to attend her sister's wedding and when the occasion was over, she was immediately shuttled back to prison.²⁹ She was later placed under house arrest. However, she was able to obtain a visa to travel abroad for medical treatment in 1984, following a severe illness in the prison. Such opportunity ended the five and a half years of torment from Zia's government.

While in exile, her family influence enabled her to garner support on a global scale against Zia's human

Alliance to Campaign Against Zia," Far Eastern Economic Review, 28 July 1988, 32.

²⁸Christopher Hitchens, 20.

²⁹Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 118.

rights violation in Pakistan. In 1985, she appeared before various European and American agencies to mount pressure for democratic reform in Pakistan.³⁰ Moreover, she successfully published and circulated worldwide a magazine, the Amal, which sought to reach fellow Pakistanis abroad and expose the atrocities of the regime.

Mostly because of her class background, in conjunction with her own experience under Zia's administration, Benazir Bhutto was officially chosen to head PPP. Being an independent woman, she was frustrated by the divisions and diverse interests among her colleagues.³¹ Those associates in turn questioned her position as a leader. They had difficulty accepting her leadership for the mere fact that they had known her from an early age, and because of her sex.³² As with the syndicates in relation to Indira Gandhi's nomination, the PPP officials hoped to make Benazir Bhutto a puppet. Acknowledging the patriarchal cleavage in Pakistan and comparing her situation with Mrs. Gandhi, she argued

³⁰S. R. Weisman, "A Daughter to Pakistan to Cry for Victory," New York Times, 11 April 1986a, 2.

³¹Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 273.

³²Sanni Gupta, "Interview with Benazir Bhutto," India Today, 15 May 1986, 14-15.

that the Congress Party had nicknamed Indira Gandhi "Dumb Doll behind her back. But this silk-and-steel woman had out-maneuvered them all."³³ According to an associate, the officials regarded Benazir Bhutto as a "little punk girl."³⁴ Being conscious of the gender-based discrimination against Mrs. Gandhi and herself, Benazir Bhutto made efforts to counteract at least some of these stumbling blocks. She took steps to displace the assistants whom she had called "uncle" from party positions and replaced them with those loyal to her. The use of the word "uncle" suggested a generation gap between these men and Benazir Bhutto and the age difference affected their perception of her. In terms of other male Bhuttos challenging her position, there were no such rivalries in that era. Her brothers did not have similar political interests to their sister.³⁵ Besides, before his death Ali Bhutto had advised her brothers not to return to the country for fear of their safety. Consequently, the boys had carried on their own struggle by engaging in an anti-Zia terrorist organization, the

³³Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 72.

³⁴S. R. Weisman, "The Return of Benazir Bhutto: Struggle in Pakistan," New York Times Magazine, 21 September 1986b, 48.

³⁵I. Jack, "The Destiny of Benazir Bhutto: Interview," Vanity Fair, May 1986, 84.

Al-Zulfikar. In 1981, the organization hijacked one of the Pakistani International Airplanes.³⁶

On July 18, 1985, Benazir Bhutto's brother, Shah Nawaz was found dead in his apartment in France. The autopsy result confirmed that he was murdered by poison. In August 1985, she escorted her brother's corpse back to Pakistan and after the funeral was immediately placed under house arrest for nearly four months.³⁷ Following her release, she returned to France and remained there until a significant change took place in Pakistan.

Zia lifted the martial law on December 30, 1985.³⁸ He publicly acknowledged that the upcoming election be held in 1990. Benazir Bhutto, on the other hand (even from outside the country), the PPP, and members of the Movement to Restore Democracy challenged Zia on the issue. They desired to expedite the election and allow the people the option of selecting their own leaders.

Prior to returning to Pakistan³⁹ after the court

³⁶Jack, 84.

³⁷Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 128.

³⁸Salamat Ali, "Constitutional Bind," Far Eastern Economic Review, 7 September 1989, 39.

³⁹"The Return of the Prodigal Daughter: Benazir Bhutto," The Economist, 23 September 1989, 36.

hearing on her brother's death, Bhutto visited Washington D.C., Moscow at the invitation of the Women's Movement, and made a pilgrimage to Mecca. These trips were intended to be a diplomatic stratagem designed for her to gain support. For instance, her journey to Mecca demonstrated her faith in Islam, consolidating her support from the liberal Pakistani Muslims.⁴⁰ Nor were the media left out of Benazir Bhutto's appeal. She appeared in many television news programs in Europe and America to champion her cause. She made effective use of the people's comparison of her situation with Corazon Aquino of the Philippines, and how Ferdinand Marcos lost power due to the assassination of Aquino's husband. According to one of the critics, 1986 was indeed a "bad year for dictators."⁴¹

These efforts on the part of Benazir Bhutto triggered more hostility on the part of Zia's government. She received numerous death threats and some of her administrators were savagely murdered. However, nothing would hinder Bhutto's determination to go back

⁴⁰Mahnaz Ishpahani, "Guns or Bhutto: Pakistan's Democratic Choice," The New Republic, 26 December 1988, 60-2.

⁴¹S. R. Weisman, "The Return of Benazir Bhutto: Struggle in Pakistan," New York Times, 11 April 1986, 2.

to her homeland. She stated: "I have willingly taken the path of thorns and stepped into the valley of death."⁴² Therefore, on April 11, 1986, she arrived in Pakistan and was welcomed by millions of people. In her speeches at the Minari-i-Pakistan⁴³ at Lahore and Peshwar, she called for free elections and a lift on the ban of political parties.

Benazir Bhutto's eminence and her fame with the masses was so immense that she became the authentic party head.⁴⁴ The more efforts she made to improve the conditions of the party, the more threatened the PPP old guard became. They sought ways to discredit her, calling her an American puppet and as a woman unfit to govern. As result, she replaced them with younger members who were loyal to her. With all the attempts to silence her, Benazir Bhutto struggled for ways to consolidate her stand with the electorate. She therefore took an extraordinary step to bring herself closer to the people. She decided to get married.

⁴²Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 329.

⁴³Minari-i-Pakistan was a monument installed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as a symbol of democracy.

⁴⁴Ali Salmat, "Political Deadline: Bhutto comes under Pressure from Zia's Legacy," Far Eastern Economic Review, 15 March 1990, 18-20; Shahid Javed Burki, "Pakistan Under Zia 1977-88," Asian Survey (October 1988): 1082-1101.

Coming from a predominantly Islamic nation, marriage would validate her status in the society. Having a male spouse would legitimize her standing in the patriarchal system. Being a single woman proved to be a political liability for Benazir Bhutto. According to one analyst, "at the back of everyone's mind is her single status, which to most men brought up in a feudal culture, is an embarrassment."⁴⁵ She questioned the unequal treatment given men and women in Pakistan. Furthermore, Benazir Bhutto recounts:

People think I am weak because I am a woman. Do they not know that I am a Muslim woman, and that Moslem women have a heritage to be proud of?⁴⁶

Prior to her marriage she clung steadfastly to her family background, and she argued: "People didn't think of me as a woman. If anything, they thought of me as a sister."⁴⁷ Addressing a crowd, she expressed: "I am the daughter of martyr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the sister of martyr Shah Nawaz Khan Bhutto, and I am your sister as well."⁴⁸ To validate her womanhood, she sought more

⁴⁵Ali Rashid, "A Feudal Singhi and his Political Wife," Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 December 1987b, 52.

⁴⁶Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 332.

⁴⁷C. Hall, "The April of Her Freedom," Washington Post, 4 April 1984, B11.

⁴⁸Benazir Bhutto, 1989, 333.

security in marriage. The people might take her more seriously, as opposed to when she was unmarried.

Benazir Bhutto became engaged to Asif Zardiri, a member of the elite group in the country, educated at Harvard and Oxford.⁴⁹ They got married on December 19, 1987.⁵⁰ Her followers displayed a giant flag that said, "Congratulations to the daughter of Pakistan from the people of Pakistan."⁵¹ This saying suggested that her action to get married was well received. Her status had been elevated as a married woman, but she still did not have equal rights with the male Pakistanis, although she is a citizen of Pakistan.

The government, seeking to intimidate her, announced afterward that since she was married, she would devote her life to the traditional role expected of her and abandon politics.⁵² In reality, the marriage

⁴⁹Even though the marriage was arranged according to Islamic culture, Asif Zardiri had commented that he fell in love with Benazir many years prior to the union and had announced his intentions to his family.

⁵⁰Anne Fadiman, "Behind the Veil: Benazir Bhutto Agrees to an Arranged Marriage," Life, February 1988, 58.

⁵¹K. Thapar, "Taking Stock," India Today, 15 January 1988, 68.

⁵²Ibid.

consolidated her stance with her people as it demonstrated that she agreed with and respected some of the Islamic customs, in spite of her Western education.⁵³ She also was aware that she could not circumvent the patriarchal tradition. According to the London Times:

The metamorphosis of Benazir Bhutto, impassioned sari-wearing leader of the PPP, into demure fiancée of Asif Zardiri... is to Western eyes, one of the most impressive transformations in a career already full of contradiction.⁵⁴

Responding to those Western friends disappointed with her arranged marriage, she rebutted: "For me as leader of a Muslim party, it would just not do to marry for love ...it would be detrimental to my image."⁵⁵ By observing custom, she was more dignified in her country and Moslem women could relate to her. She might have more bargaining power in the eyes of her observers than if she had remained an unmarried woman. Benazir Bhutto, recognizing the limitation of being single in Pakistan, explained that being married she had a man "protector," which implied that being married she had a man to

⁵³Op. Cit.

⁵⁴C. Bennet, "Ideal Arrangement?" Times, July 1987, 17.

⁵⁵Ibid.

safeguard her interests. Besides, to "intrude into a married woman's personal life is still not looked upon favorably, even by the intelligence service."⁵⁶

The marriage did not restrict Benazir Bhutto Zardiri, nor confine her only to the domestic sphere. She remained politically involved. She retained her family name as a symbolic gesture of unity for those seeking change and continued to guide the party. Her intention was to get her party in a position to beat Prime Minister Junejo and President Zia in the 1990 elections. She campaigned as hard as she could. She tried to register as many voters as possible, especially people from the opposite camp.⁵⁷ She went a step further, petitioning the Supreme Court about registering more voters; the Court eventually approved her petition. Benazir Bhutto was gaining some recognition.

Consequently, in May 1988, General Zia embarked on a last minute effort to consolidate his power by dissolving the National Assembly and firing all members of his cabinet.⁵⁸ In mid-June, he made an attempt to

⁵⁶Ali Rashid, 52.

⁵⁷Husain Haggani, "Putting aside Differences: Bhutto joins Opposition Alliance to Campaign against Zia," Far Eastern Economic Review, 28 July 1988, 38.

⁵⁸Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 104.

block Benazir Bhutto from participating as a candidate for election by scheduling the local election to correspond with Benazir Bhutto's wedding. Similarly, he planned the election to coincide with the month when Benazir Bhutto's baby was due. According to Singh, the "first election was timed for gynecological consideration."⁵⁹ Zia had the exigency of child-bearing as a tactic to affect an election outcome where his major political opponent was a woman.

He also announced changes in the fundamental laws of the country. He sought to turn Pakistan into an Islamic state. If such a move were successful, the Sharia code⁶⁰ would have been adopted, which disapproved of women being in the public realm. An opposition to this move mounted, including the women's national movement calling for their liberation and addressing ways to enhance women's status in a male-dominated arena. These women did not favor the rigid measures adopted against women in general during Zia's

⁵⁹R. Singh and A. Sheikh, "A Bloodless Coup," India Today, 30 June 1988, 45.

⁶⁰Rosa Laver, "Toward an Islamic state: Pakistan," Maclean's, 18 January 1988, 20-2; Farida Shaheed and Khawar Mumtaz, "Veil of Tears: Bhutto Inherits Laws which Restrict the Right of Women," Far East Economic Review, September 1988, 128.

leadership.

In spite of these developments, Benazir Bhutto and her party began preparing for the scheduled November 16, 1988 elections.⁶¹ On August 17, 1988, Zia was killed in a plane crash along with 30 others, including his top military advisers.⁶² Benazir Bhutto seemed relieved with the incident: "I can't regret Zia's death... People think it's too good to be true."⁶³ Benazir Bhutto, though pregnant, worked actively to meet the demands of both her family and the PPP. Her unborn child suffered from fetal stress and was born early, on September 21, 1988, through a Cesarian section. As soon as she was rested, she went back to work.

On November 16, 1988, it became obvious that Benazir Bhutto's eleven year struggle to bring democracy back to Pakistan was coming to fruition. The PPP won 92

⁶¹Lucy Komisar, "Benazir Bhutto is Running Hard: Bhutto Wants to Become the Leader of Pakistan," The Nation, 23 January 1988, 87.

⁶²Andrew Bilski, "The Search for a New Leader in Pakistan," Maclean, 29 August 1988, 30-2; Lally Waymouth, "Death of a Friend; Mohammed Zia ul-Hag," National Review 40 (September 1988): 22; "Pakistan President Zia, US Ambassador died in Plane Crash," Department of State Bulletin 88 (October 1988): 69-71.

⁶³S. Gupta, "Pakistan after Zia," India Today, 15 September 1988, 10-24.

seats out of 217 in the National Assembly, while the Islamic Democratic Alliance, the second largest party, received 55 seats. When the twenty seats specifically allotted for women were selected, the PPP had gained 105 seats,⁶⁴ thus dominating in the National Assembly.

During Ali Bhutto's administration, provision was made to grant 20 special seats to women in the Assembly in order to have fair representation. As a result of this balance, President Ishag Khan on December 1, 1988, chose Benazir Bhutto as the next Prime Minister of Pakistan.⁶⁵ He had for two weeks deliberately postponed recognizing Benazir Bhutto as the Prime Minister. This delay was a ploy to search for a substitute other than a woman. Since the president could not find a replacement, Benazir Bhutto was officially confirmed.

Benazir Bhutto's rise to power justifies the women-centered explanation that some women ascend to

⁶⁴Mahnaz Ishpahani, "Guns or Bhutto: Pakistan's Democratic Choice," The New Republic, 19 December 1988, 11-14.

⁶⁵Emily Macfarguhar, "The Daughter also Rises: Benazir Bhutto, Claimed her Legacy by Winning the Week's Poll," U.S. News & World Report, 28 November 1988, 46-9; "A Victress in Chains: Benazir Bhutto," The Economist, 3 December 1988, 37-9; Nancy Cooper and Ron Moreau, "The Dawn of Democracy for Pakistan: the First Free Election in 11 Years," Newsweek, 14 November 1988, 35.

power due to their special link with the ruling class and that the crisis in the nation state caused by the void created by the death of their popular male kin paved the way for them to rise to power. Again, women in this case are used as balancers mostly on the basis of inequality. Benazir Bhutto was there to momentarily perform a special role, which was to fulfill Ali Bhutto's legacy.

How Benazir Bhutto Fared In Power

The women-centered theorists have argued that the reason that women came to power was due to the patriarchal arrangement and as political leaders, these theorists still remained pessimistic as to how these women perform in office. They argued, therefore, that women who rose to power were challenged by the capitalist patriarchal conditions that caused them to govern in the first instance.

Benazir Bhutto was the first woman in the twentieth century to govern an Islamic nation. She commenced the awesome task at the age of 35, the youngest woman to ever head a nation. The complex set of circumstances which caused her to come to power would create problems for her leadership that led to her fall.

To discourage women's prominence in the public

realm her predecessor Zia established laws which upheld fundamental Islamic tradition and ensured that women remain in the domestic realm rather than being in the forefront of the state's affairs. Therefore, occupying a leadership position in the nation, coupled with the normal obligation of overseeing the general welfare of a nation, was very challenging to Benazir Bhutto.

Sworn in on December 2, 1988, Prime Minister Bhutto faced a number of severe problems.⁶⁶ As Prime Minister Bhutto addressed the nation for the first time, she refused to take any responsibility for the eleven years of Zia's misrule. She announced a number of policy options:

We will provide employment for the unemployed. We will eradicate hunger and poverty. We will provide shelter for the homeless. We will eradicate illiteracy.⁶⁷

She acknowledged that women would be fully integrated into the system.⁶⁸ Acting on the women's issue, she

⁶⁶"The Morning After: Bhutto faces Mounting Problems," Far Eastern Economic Review, 15 December 1988, 14.

⁶⁷Doherty and Doherty, 128.

⁶⁸Farida Shaheed and Khawar Mumtaz, "Veil of Tears: Bhutto Inherits Laws which Restrict the Rights of Women," Far Eastern Economic Review, 28 September 1989, 128-30; "A Victress in Chains: Benazir Bhutto," Economist, 3 December 1988, 37-39; Benazir Bhutto, "Women and Health," World Health (April-May 1990): 3.

immediately pardoned all women prisoners except those convicted of murder. For those under this category, she promised that their files would be reviewed to evaluate whether their sentences were commensurate with their crimes. She petitioned the President to reduce all death sentences to life imprisonment without parole possibility. To other prisoners, she extended benevolence. For instance, with regards to the 300 political prisoners, most of whom were members of the PPP, she requested that their files be re-evaluated.⁶⁹

On forming the cabinet, she made the crucial mistake of retaining three ministers from the previous administration. Yaqub Khan, the most notable, had served under Zia as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This continued appointment might be necessary to maintain coherence in foreign policy toward Afghanistan and other nations, but Benazir Bhutto was constrained by Ishaq Khan's stipulations prior to her assuming power. She was made to concede not cutting the military appropriation or meddling in the Afghan affairs.⁷⁰ Ghulam Ishaq Khan,

⁶⁹Anita Weiss, "Benazir Bhutto and the Future of Women in Pakistan," Asian Survey 30 (May 1990): 435.

⁷⁰A. Rashid, "Keeping the Generals Happy," Far Eastern Economic Review, 8 December 1988, 13-14; William L. Richter, "Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto," Current History (December 1989): 449-451.

Zia's Economic and Finance Minister, was assigned the office of the presidency. Bhutto, moreover, selected five of her ministerial advisers from her father's administration. Overall, however, the majority of her ministers were mostly 'de novo,' with virtually no political experience.

This new democratic regime was in no way a replica of the previous Bhutto administration. Benazir Bhutto was consigned at the onset to an explosive political and economic situation, including substantial domestic opposition, at a rate her father had not encountered. Pakistan for the first time had a free press as a result of Benazir Bhutto's abolition of the National Press Trust, which in the previous system had overseen the federal media and had supported Zia's dictatorial leadership.⁷¹ For the first time in eleven years, people could openly discuss public affairs without suffering any retribution. The opposition leaders had the chance to air their views. In this newfound political climate, Benazir Bhutto's struggle to stabilize her government, especially the divergent political factions, was a tremendous challenge. Her inability to silence these critics was perceived as a sign of weakness. The most

⁷¹Shaheed and Mumtaz, 129.

persistent problems of all were religious and political disturbances in the Punjab. The religious fundamentalists and the provincial government of the Punjab's leaders, Nawaz Sharif and the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA), declared a religious war against Benazir Bhutto. In other words, these men were affirming the patriarchal tradition and were opposed to change. Nawaz Sharif for the most part vociferously condemned Benazir Bhutto with the charge that Pakistan was an Islamic nation and under Islamic law women were unsuitable to govern the nation. The fundamentalists called for an immediate overthrow of her government. Nawaz Sharif, a Zia loyalist, was the elected leader of the Punjab, the most populous and wealthiest section of Pakistan. That province was also the home of Zia, the military, and the conservative religious leaders. Since the province had control of the army, was perceived as a stronghold of the fundamentalists, and was Zia's homeland, it was no wonder that Benazir Bhutto received such a tremendous challenge. Such opposition clearly would not hold promise for any woman's leadership and did eventually weaken Benazir Bhutto's ability to govern effectively the Islamic state.

In meeting this outcry, she declared that Islam was a religion, not a government; therefore, as a leader,

although a woman, she had the power to rule Pakistan, as she had come to power through a democratic process in which multiple parties competed.

Furthermore, it became her topmost priority to elevate the women's role in her society. She asserted that she would do all within her means to see that women were well-integrated into the system. Originating from a predominantly Islamic society, the position of women had been for many years neglected.⁷² For instance, after Ali Bhutto's efforts to reserve seats for women in the Parliament, there were no other moves to integrate women into the system. Women were denied access to the public sphere. For Benazir Bhutto to adopt publicly such a change-oriented stance was a call to recognition. Many Pakistanis were relieved by her secularism (separation of the religious dogma from the government). Strongly opposing Benazir Bhutto's standpoint, many fundamentalist Muslims rejected the social change manifesting in her regime and formed a formidable opposition against Benazir Bhutto's leadership.⁷³

Referring to her enemies who did not welcome her role as a woman leader, she stated:

⁷²Z. Hussain, "Pakistan Religious Rows," India Today, 31 March 1989, 66.

⁷³Ibid.

I am a democratic leader, and expect democratic norms to be observed. I am not a military dictator, my government is not going to turn a blind eye to the thuggery in Punjab ... Punjab is not the personal fiefdom of anybody."⁷⁴

However, the Prime Minister tried to placate the situation as to maintain control. She attempted to reassign another responsibility to Nawaz Sharif, the chief secretary of Punjab, to defuse the opposition; however, Sharif and his party continued with their political pressure on Benazir Bhutto's government.⁷⁵

Other fundamentalist Muslims remained committed to opposing Benazir Bhutto. For instance, the Awami National Party (the NWFP) was challenging the national leadership. Led by Begum Naseem Wali Khan and Wali Khan, ardent Islamic observers who did not believe in the rights of women to govern, they teamed up with some members of the PPP sharing a similar viewpoint. The latter disaffiliated themselves from the PPP and Benazir Bhutto-led government. The desire of these opposition leaders was basically to weaken the PPP central

⁷⁴"The Morning After," 14-15; Makhdoom Ali Khan, "Constitutionally Speaking," The Herald, 20 September 1989, 64-70; Zaffar Abbas, "Who's in Charge?" The Herald, 20 September 1989, 53-61.

⁷⁵Zaffar Abbas, 61.

government, and thus, remove Benazir Bhutto.⁷⁶ Facing numerous challenges, Bhutto strove to entrench herself in the government.

The major policy objective of Bhutto was an attempt to invalidate the infamous Eighth Amendment to the Constitution. Legislated by Zia, the bill granted the president extensive power over the prime minister. Such extraordinary authority exceeded the boundary of a parliamentary democracy. President Ishaq, required by the Constitution to be impartial, had from the onset opposed Benazir Bhutto's policy options. In order to reinstall the parliamentary democracy, Benazir Bhutto sought to restore her privilege as prime minister, but her appeal to the Supreme Court to nullify the legislation was ineffective.⁷⁷ Her political enemies, being men, had more clout than Benazir Bhutto on the court system.

Benazir Bhutto's ability to govern Pakistan effectively was further hampered by the specifications made by Ishaq Khan and the military. As a way of appeasing the military, she had agreed not to reduce the

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Makhadoom Ali Khan, "Constitutionally Speaking," 55.

military spending nor interfere in the Afghan affair. Another problem emerged when she evoked her power to remove, as she was unable to nullify the Eight Amendment. When she announced the retirement of Admiral Iftikhar Ahmed Sirohey, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, President Ishaq intervened. He publicly proclaimed such removals to be under his jurisdiction. Although consensus was reached in Benazir Bhutto's favor, there seemed to be disagreement as to who was actually in control and critics argued that this kind of dispute signaled her lack of authority.⁷⁸

Her inability to overturn the Eight Amendment and the jurisdictional problem with Ishaq were interpreted as signs of weakness. Viewed differently, Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto was undergoing a political metamorphosis where change was forced by a woman on a political system where women had never played a dominant role. The question might be if the people were ready for the change? The immediate problems facing the country, apart from the jurisdictional controversy between the Prime Minister and the President, were the poor economic conditions and the Prime Minister's inability to effectuate change. Benazir Bhutto's proficiency to

⁷⁸Zaffar Abbas, 61.

manage these situations would have a direct bearing on her popularity with the masses.

Benazir Bhutto And The Economic Policy

Having been challenged on many fronts, Benazir Bhutto, unlike Mrs. Gandhi, did not pursue controversial class-based reforms such as land reforms or nationalization policies. She focused, rather, on avenues to attract foreign revenues to Pakistan, such as relying on the IMF and U.S. foreign aid, and attracting outside investors, as well as encouraging Pakistanis abroad to reinvest in Pakistan. The administration also introduced a major reform of the political party. Unlike with Mrs. Gandhi, there was no major opposition to these economic reforms because they did not directly threaten the status quo, but we must note that she did not last long enough in power to permit these policies to take shape.

Benazir Bhutto had inherited a very poor economy. It was one which, according to unofficial evaluation, had virtually no foreign exchange reserve, and the inflation rate was soaring at the annual rate of 15%.⁷⁹ Without a substantial foreign exchange sector, Pakistan

⁷⁹Nancy F. Anderson, "Benazir Bhutto and Dynastic Politics," in Michael Genovese, ed., 61.

had to rely on its citizens in foreign countries. Pakistan also had depended on aid from countries such as the United States and the former Soviet Union. Over the decade of the 1980's, foreign aid to Pakistan had reached the nation in form of war-related agreements. For instance, since 1982 the United States had donated around U.S. \$5 billion.⁸⁰ In June 1989, Bhutto paid a visit to Washington and lobbied Washington to extend military and developmental aid to her country.⁸¹ As a result, the aid package for Pakistan increased from 1.5 million to 7.2 million dollars, which were targeted at combating drug trafficking and the war problem.⁸² Pakistan continued to struggle to enhance its poor economy by trying to meet the conditions set by the IMF prior to granting Pakistan a \$1 billion dollar aid package.⁸³

The only possibility of relief stemmed from the

⁸⁰William L. Richter, 436.

⁸¹Benazir Bhutto, "The Policies of Pakistan," Vital Speeches (15 October 1988-1 October 1989): 551-553.

⁸²Doherty and Doherty, 133.

⁸³Ihteshamul Haque, "Balancing the Act," The Herald, 20 July 1989, 91.

private sector. Her administration approved RS 43 billion (U.S. \$201 million) for private industrial research and developmental purposes. This initiative caused an increase of 22% in home remittances by nonresident Pakistanis, which in turn generated 22% growth in the industrial output.⁸⁴

With no major opposition, Benazir Bhutto's administration also adopted legislation to privatize many state-owned companies. These included the Habib Bank, Pakistan International Airlines and Pakistan Standard Oil.⁸⁵ The government offered incentives such as bank loans, tax concessions and grant approval for collaborations with foreign personnel, and a source of foreign exchange through the foreign loans contracts.⁸⁶

Benazir Bhutto's dedication to reestablishing democracy and civil rights helped to foster parliamentary government, following many years of military autocracy. While committing itself to making

⁸⁴Salamat Ali Islamabad, "Reform at the Roots: Bhutto Lays Foundation for Economic Comeback," Far East Economic Review, 21 December 1989, 58.

⁸⁵Far Eastern Economic Review, 5 October 1989, 43.

⁸⁶Salamat Ali Islamabad, "Bhutto's Helping Hand: Pakistan Aims to Revive it's Long-Suffering Private Sector," Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 October 1989, 45.

Pakistan a "developed nation, free of exploitation, poverty and injustice,"⁸⁷ the PPP certainly avoided the policy choices of either land reform or nationalization of industries. Benazir Bhutto had reassured Pakistanis and foreign investors by encouraging private investments through better incentives and security of capital, but none of these policy choices materialized due to the opposition's initiative to terminate Benazir Bhutto. She was tried on corruption charges, misuse of authority, and incompetency.

Even though the discharge of Benazir Bhutto was legitimate according to Zia's amendment of the 1973 Constitution, one analyst complained that such an extemporaneous method "still smelt like a coup."⁸⁸ The PPP old guards, the IDA, the mullahs and fundamental Muslims strongly resisted the social changes introduced by the woman. These were the basis of their action to overthrow her regime.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, for the two years in office, Benazir Bhutto was able to able to secure loans from the United States and IMF, (even though that was used against her by her enemies, who classified her

⁸⁷Salamat Ali Islamabad, "Bhutto's Helping Hand," 45.

⁸⁸"Coup in Mufti," Economist, 11 August 1990, 35.

⁸⁹Z. Hussain, "Pakistan's Religious Row," 66.

as an American puppet); privatized a number of state owned industries; and restructured the Pakistan People's Party from being a coalition of left wingers, feudals, and intelligentsia into a democratic party.

Benazir Bhutto And The Women Of Pakistan

This section specifically deals with how gender differentiation manifesting in laws and customs impacts specifically on a woman's ability to govern. During Zia's rule, many social issues were in contention, most specifically the place of women in the Islamic fundamentalist nation. General Zia ul-Haq had successfully attempted to reestablished the Islamic fundamentalist role of women, where women literally would remain veiled and within the confines of their homes (chador).

The origin of this perception was derived from a recent development in Islamic society. The Quran makes specific provisions empowering women through certain duties and privileges.⁹⁰ In fact women and men were formerly accorded equal rights, but later interpretations would diverge from this view. The veil,

⁹⁰Gail Minault, "Sayyid Mumtaz Ali and Hugug un-Nisan: An Advocate of Women's Rights in Islam in the late Nineteenth Century," Modern Asian Studies 24 (1990): 160.

once a symbol of adornment and affluence, would later signify women's powerlessness.⁹¹ This contradiction, targeted at restricting his woman political enemy, resurfaced under the dictator's radical perspective of women.

Such a view is conflictual because women in ancient days performed major tasks.⁹² In the contemporary era, women assume the major role of mothers and homemakers, which should have empowered them. These roles, however, are used to downgrade women, not on the basis of Islamic provision but on the interpretations of the so-called religious leaders. According to these 'self appointed seers,' as wives are owned by their husbands, these women have to cover their faces with veils and are not allowed to uncover their faces in the public. On evaluating her own country, Benazir Bhutto maintained that:

Pakistan is a patriarchal society to the point of caricature. It is men who define the terms of women's existence, reinforce a self-image of helplessness and subordination, whether they are treated as mere cattle or as precious wards.⁹³

⁹¹F. Rahmah, "The Status of Women in Islam: A Modernist Interpretation," in H. Papanek and G. Minault, eds., Separate Worlds: Studies of Purdah in South Asia (Delhi: Chanakya, 1982), 285-310.

⁹²Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of Destiny, 44.

⁹³Benazir Bhutto, "The Way Out," 257.

In order to undermine any political progress that might be sought by Benazir Bhutto or any other woman, Zia centered his policy choices on regulations that checked the women's movement in the society. He enacted laws, notably the Nineteenth Amendment and the Shariat Bill, to achieve his purpose. For the first time, the resultant codes regarded women and men as having different rights. Under the penal code, punishments for similar offence were doled out in a gender-based manner. The Hudood provisions punished offenses as adultery and rape. On presenting evidence for such an infraction, four women must bear witness to a woman's charge of rape. The law mandated that the evidence of a single female witness "shall be admissible in cases pertaining to birth, virginity," and other women-exclusive issues (see Draft Ordinance, Chapter 7, mentioned in the next footnote). Without witnesses, a woman pressing rape charges would incur penalty. Women were also convicted of pre- or extra- marital sex, but their male participants were not. In other words, a woman was punished and her accomplice went free for participating in the same crime; and yet the modern state claims to contract equal rights for all its citizens. If this position holds, then everyone should suffer equally for the consequences of their actions.

The Qisas (retaliation) ordinance, the Diyat (blood money that would have been paid to the family of a murdered woman by the male perpetrator) all amounted to only half of the amount, whereas it was doubled if a woman killed a man.⁹⁴ These laws seem redolent of women's experiences in the dark ages. The political environment was repressive to women. Due to these extreme measures against women, the so-called customary expectation or model of the perfect Islamic women reemerged. Women employed by public agencies were compelled to wear head wraps or be relieved of their duties. The head-to-toe fundamental Islamic women's attire became the norm.⁹⁵ During the 1984 Olympics held at Seoul, Pakistani women could not compete due to this regulation. Critics charged that women swimmers doing the 'flip-turns' were blocked out of Pakistan's national

⁹⁴Anita M. Weiss, ed., Islamic Reassertion in Pakistan: The Application of Islamic Laws in a Modern State (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 94; Council of Islamic Ideology, Draft Ordinance, Islamic Law of Evidence 1982 (Islamabad Printing Corporation of Pakistan, 1984), vii-ix, chapter 3.

⁹⁵K. Schork, "Bhutto's Fall, Like Her Rise, Won't Change Much for Women," Washington Post National Weekly, 27 August-2 September 1990, 25.

television.⁹⁶ All these cases pointed to the fact that Pakistan is patriarchal and women are not positioned equally with men in the country. Even though teachers were required to wear veils to school, women's education was ranked last under Zia's agenda. There were no major efforts made to upgrade women's predicament in this sector. In order to implement his fundamentalist approach, Zia mandated a separatist approach to education. Consequently, institutions were differentiated on the basis of gender.

According to the 1981 Pakistan Population Census, the national literacy for Pakistanis 10 years and older was at 26%, making the country rank one of the lowest in the world.⁹⁷ Pakistani women suffered more in relation to education as a result of the profound gender differentiation.⁹⁸ When Benazir Bhutto assumed leadership, fertility among women with no education was

⁹⁶M. W. Walsh, "Pakistan Women Look to Bhutto to Improve a Harsh Existence," Wall Street Journal, 3 May 1989, A1.

⁹⁷Population Census of Pakistan 1981, 4.

⁹⁸Population Reference Bureau, World Population Data Sheet 1990 (Washington D.C., April 1991), 26.

at 6.8%, as opposed to 5.1% for the educated ones.⁹⁹

The state policy under General Zia was somewhat contradictory. His policy stance contradicted the doctrine of separation of state and religion. He relied heavily on an Islamic-based policy, which enacted and interpreted laws based on a special concept of Islam. This in turn, triggered all kinds of conflicts among the various ethnic groups which had in the past relied on Islam as a source of unity. The source of conflict stemmed on variable interpretations of Islam to either include or exclude certain interest groups. Examples of these are the Shi'a-Sunni problem, ethnic rivalry in Karachi among the Pathans and Muhajirs (migrants from India), hostility toward Ahmediyyas, and the resurgence of the Punjab-Sindhi distress. Upon this social upheaval, the state under Zia had attempted to dictate a specific ideal image of women that was largely antithetical to that existing in popular sentiment and in everyday life.¹⁰⁰ He paid lip service to the Islamic

⁹⁹Tom Rogers, "Population Growth and Movement in Pakistan: A Case Study," Asian Survey 30 (May 1990): 452.

¹⁰⁰Council of Islamic Ideology, Draft Ordinance: Law of Evidence, 1982 (Islamabad: Printing Corporation of Pakistan Press, 1984), vii.

administration and further enhance his ties with the Islamic world.¹⁰¹ It could be viewed as a policy designed to provide an Islamic justification for the continuation of military autocracy, which continued to undermine women's interests in the state.

While Zia had used Islam as a ploy to validate his dictatorship, Benazir Bhutto, being democratically elected, strove to guarantee equal rights for all citizens. Asserting that she came to power through democracy, and condemning the religious fundamentalists who opposed her leadership, Bhutto was isolated by these same people, including the military. Over the years, Benazir Bhutto pushed for the repeal of the 9th Amendment that authorized the Federal Shariah Court to preside over all cases challenging the validity of Islamic laws. The women's group in support of change also challenged the amendment due to its constraint on the rights of women;¹⁰² but they did not have enough power to effectuate change? This kind of problem supports the argument that women in the state system lacked political base. Benazir Bhutto vowed to overturn

¹⁰¹Kharwar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed, eds., Women of Pakiastan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back? (London: Zed Books, 1987), 123-41; The Qanoon-i-Shahadat Order, 1984 (October 1984), 50.

¹⁰²Ibid., 40.

lacked political base. Benazir Bhutto vowed to overturn the amendment, including the Hudood Ordinance and the Law of Evidence. She publicly acknowledged that such laws represented "all cruel and inhumane laws that degrade women and make us second-class citizens."¹⁰³

During her campaign the Prime Minister¹⁰⁴ Benazir Bhutto declared her stance against the Hudood ordinance (the singular version of the word, hadd, signified crimes with expressly sanctioned evidentiary requirement and subsequent punishments). Her critique was reported by the media, particularly the Muslim on February 12, 1988. She charged that the Hudood laws were "anti-democratic, reactionary, barbaric, anti-female, and propped up by an illegal regime."¹⁰⁵ Benazir Bhutto campaigned strenuously against Zia's Nizam-i-Mustapha both prior to and following Zia's accidental death. Reforms, particularly those pertaining to the status of women in Islam, became the most visible planks of the National Assembly campaign platform in 1988. Her

¹⁰³M. Jaffe, "A Day in the Life of Benazir Bhutto," Sunday Times Magazine, 4 January 1989, 58.

¹⁰⁴Salamat Ali, "Reform at the Roots," 58.

¹⁰⁵Abbas Nasir, "Benazir Demands End to Hudood Law," Muslim, 12 February 1988, 1.

successful management of the issue can be partly credited with providing her with the margin of victory in the election.¹⁰⁶ The PPP derived its plurality over the IJI from electoral success among women, the illiterate, and Sindhi voters. Each of these groups highly resented Zia's Islamic reforms, but did not possess the political clout to realize significant change. In power, the neophyte Benazir Bhutto's administration was unable to revoke neither the Federal Shariat Court, which was established in 1980 by Zia,¹⁰⁷ nor the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court. Neither was she able to overturn the Hudood ordinances, nor to challenge the implementation of the Ramazan Ordinance (which encourages the Chador -modest dress by Muslim women). However, Benazir Bhutto's administration was able to stop the execution of the 9th Amendment, which would have formally made Islam the national law.

Benazir Bhutto had to deal with formidable challenges, including the unprecedented situation of

¹⁰⁶Gallup Pakistan, Pakistan at the Polls: Gallup Political Report, November 1988 (Islambad: Gallup Pakistan Publication, 1988), 21-34.

¹⁰⁷Established in 1980, the Federal Shariat Court (FSC) carried out most of the Zia's Islamic Reforms, along with the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court.

political opposition. Even though she did not secure a majority of the seats in the 1988 election,¹⁰⁸ she was able to maintain PPP government at the national level and in two of the four provinces. Her staunch political opponent Nawaz Sharif controlled the other provinces, the strongholds of the fundamentalists and the military.

Giving careful consideration to the impediments to change such as the 8th Amendment (which grants presidential discretion over the Prime Minister), and constant challenges introduced by her opponents, one critic confirmed that "the problems she confronted were so formidable that it is difficult to imagine how any leader could have governed successfully."¹⁰⁹ Benazir Bhutto could not nullify the 8th Amendment which legitimized Zia's actions during the Martial Law of 1977-85.¹¹⁰ Consequently, she lodged her attacks on other issue areas.

To legitimize her stance as a true Moslem, and as the Prime Minister, one of her first moves was to perform the "umrah" (pilgrimage). Upon her return, she

¹⁰⁸Salamat Ali, "Constitutional Bind," Far Eastern Economic Review, 7 September 1989, 38.

¹⁰⁹Nancy Anderson, 60.

¹¹⁰Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Section II, 238.

perform the "umrah" (pilgrimage). Upon her return, she upheld the governmental ban on Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verse, publicly condemning the book following the Islamabad disturbances in January 1989, a result of that publication.¹¹¹ In 1983, Salman Rushdie had mocked Benazir Bhutto, denoting her as a "Virgin Ironpant."¹¹² This derogatory comment suggested that a woman had crossed the boundary into the so-called all male zone. As her critics called her an American puppet, she took the above steps to show that she was not brainwashed by the West and thus was a strong supporter and defender of the true Islamic doctrine.

Working closely with her advisers, Benazir Bhutto sought to moderate her position in order to retain her supporters by compromise. She was aware that direct challenge on the reform would entail considerable political cost to her administration. Moreover, the possibility of repealing existing laws was problematic, due to restrictions created by the Eighth Amendment. In other words, Benazir Bhutto as a confined political leader could not overrule certain laws for fear of

¹¹¹Pakistan Profile, 10 March 1989, 16.

¹¹²Salman Rushdie, Shame (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983).

the results of the misdeeds of the previous administration. Neither Zia nor Ali Bhutto, being men, faced these contradictions. They were endowed with full authority to govern and even enacted laws to legitimize their options. But Benazir Bhutto had no such opportunities. If she passed laws challenging the gender-based laws, she would lose some of her supporters.

The gender issue is closely linked with the nation's developmental possibilities. According to the women-centered view, much of the economic and political stagnation experienced by some countries was created by the nation states' tapping only half of their potentials. If women were properly integrated, a great deal of the developmental problems would have been alleviated. Even the Benazir Bhutto regime was not excluded from this criticism.

Initially, Benazir Bhutto's administration was challenged by the country's advocates of women's rights for providing only a limited ticket for women to support in the 1988 election, and for achieving very little for women. Only one other woman, apart from her mother Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto, contested for seats in the National Assembly. Few women were accorded provincial assembly ballots. At first, none of the

provincial assembly ballots. At first, none of the Pakistani women were granted ministerial portfolio. This pattern was counterbalanced in March 23, 1989, following her initiative to update the number of the federal cabinet officers. Nusrat Bhutto was the only female minister (without portfolio) out of the 24 federal ministers. At the state level, four women were selected out of the 19 ministers; Begum Shahnaz Wazir Ali, State Education Minister; Begum Rehana Sarwar, formerly appointed by Bhutto to the State Bureau of Women Affairs became the Minister for Women Development as that department was upgraded; Dr. Mahamooda Shah, Minister of State for Special Education and Social Welfare; and Begum Khakwani Minister of State for Population Welfare. These women are nominated in fields traditionally associated with women and the posts did not carry as much prestige as ones normally occupied by men, such as Foreign Affairs and the Health Department.¹¹³ These women's suggestions were solicited exploring ways to embody women into the labor force and developing a consistent agenda for women's affairs.

While Benazir Bhutto had the agenda to enhance women's position, the constraints encroaching upon the

¹¹³Women's Division, GOP, Solidarity: SAARC Women's Journal (December 1988): 44.

administration hampered its ability to move beyond the confines of Zia's provisions in order to actually integrate women fully into the developmental agenda. She did attempt to fulfill these goals geared towards women integration.

Rahara Sarwar, Minister for Women's Development, established a Women's Jail Committee to look into circumstances surrounding women's convictions and subsequent imprisonment.¹¹⁴ A Women's Legal Rights Committee was also introduced. On another front, at the end of July 1989 100 million rupees were allocated by the government toward securing a Women's Bank.¹¹⁵ This effort left a foothold by the Bhutto's administration to enhance the role of women in the country and consequently reverse sex segregation.¹¹⁶ As Benazir Bhutto's regime was ousted, however, their major objectives remained to be actualized. Nevertheless, her leadership positively impacted on the lives of Pakistani women in general. Many women were freed from prison. Women received fair treatment during her time in office, as opposed to her predecessor's. Women who did not

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Zohra Yusuf, "A Women's Bank," Dawn Overseas Weekly, 20 July 1989, 16.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 16.

in the streets during Zia's term in office. The hostile environment was relaxed when Benazir Bhutto took over, and Pakistani women were "not afraid of being assaulted because their heads were uncovered."¹¹⁷ According to Walsh, the media even featured numerous women's rights issues and encouraged women to work outside their homes.¹¹⁸ Finally, Benazir Bhutto's contribution as Prime Minister was in providing a conducive atmosphere for women's freedom to flourish. They were even allowed to participate in several international sports' tournaments.¹¹⁹

With regards to education, the Ministry for Women's Development established women's studies programs at four universities nationwide and continued to seek avenues to establish a National Center for Research on Women. The task of increasing employment opportunities in poultry and dairy farming and sericulture was designed to embrace impoverished women in the rural areas and to elevate their position in the closed system.

Apart from seeking ways to integrate women into the economic sector, avenues to inculcate women's issues in

¹¹⁷Schork, 25.

¹¹⁸Walsh, A15.

¹¹⁹Weiss, 99.

various levels of learning were introduced. Efforts were made also to publicize and educate the public on the need of families to send their female children to school. Writing in the World Health Magazine, Benazir Bhutto argued that conditions such as "poor literacy, lack of economic opportunity, unhealthy social attitudes and inadequate health facilities" all have in the long run adversely impacted the economic development.¹²⁰ She vowed to continue the struggles at home to enhance the status of women in Pakistan. This pledge was short-lived due to political, social, and economic challenges that finally caused her demise as a policymaker. Even though some Pakistani women had criticized Benazir Bhutto for not realizing goals to enhance the role of women in the system, many male-oriented personalities charged that she had transcended all boundaries. Despite Bhutto's attempts at pleasing several factions, the army, the mullahs and some over-zealous Muslims were bent on not having a woman represent them and eventually succeeded in removing the woman from the office. This section supported the women-centered perspective that in order to safeguard its interests the ruling class must ensure gender-based conflict. As a result the problems

¹²⁰Benazir Bhutto, "Women and Health," 3.

confronting Benazir Bhutto as a political leader were brought about by the traditional patriarchal conditions governing the state system.

The Fall Of Benazir Bhutto (1990)

Based on the theoretical concerns presented throughout this paper, women in developing countries come to power as a result of the death of their male kin. The patriarchal conditions that brought about their rise continually challenge their leadership and are responsible for their downfall.

Despite the PPP's Manifesto calling for equality among the sexes, the administration confronted strong constraints erected by the mullahs and their conservative Islamic followers. The patriarchal tradition intensified by the Zia legacy continually haunted Benazir Bhutto to the extent of costing her the political office to which she had struggled for many years to gain.

It was an open secret in Pakistan that the "establishment" (that is, the military, the president, Islamic fundamentalists, and the higher civil servants), were not satisfied with Benazir Bhutto as the Prime Minister of the country. These anti-Ali Bhutto factions

were skeptical of his daughter's leadership style in office. They feared that she would adopt her father's policies directed at reforming Pakistan. They had initially accepted Benazir Bhutto as a result of her American connection, as well her willingness to compromise with these groups on key issues. The PPP allowed President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to complete his term in office and her administration also agreed to retain the foreign minister Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan; the foreign policy option, especially Afghanistan, as requested remained the same as under Zia; and, finally, she agreed not to meddle with the internal affairs of the military.¹²¹ However, the establishment did not keep their own promises.

As a democratic leader Benazir Bhutto was willing to negotiate and arrived at compromises as well as challenging her opponents on key areas affecting her interests as a national leader; but Zia's Eighth Amendment remained untouched due to her lack of support base. That bill equipped the president with extraordinary power, even to the extent of affecting the status of the Prime Minister (Article 58 clause 2b). The

¹²¹Herald, December 1988, 46; December 1989, 42; and November-December 1990, 31-32.

influence of PPP's opposition party, the IJI, of which the president Ghulam Ishaq was a member;¹²² the threat posed by Benazir Bhutto, daughter of Ali Bhutto, who strove to assert herself on the peculiar political scene; and the mere fact of her being a woman in a predominantly male-oriented environment.¹²³

There was also jurisdictional dispute. The president did not even consider that the PPP allowed him to complete his term. Rather, efforts made by Benazir Bhutto were interpreted by President Ishaq as violating his sphere of influence. She had previously clashed with the president on many other issues. She challenged his authority to select judges for the Supreme Courts and lower courts, as well as his authority to choose or remove military executives, and his power to make decisions which normally would be considered the duty of the Prime Minister under parliamentary democracy.

In an effort to establish a power base in the army, Bhutto in July 1990 delayed the retirement of Lieutenant General Alam Jan Mahsud and promoted him to full general. This would make him the Army Chief soon after Beg's retirement from the service. The military

¹²²Rashid, "War of Nerves," 14.

¹²³Hussain, "Pakistan's Religious Row," 66.

perceived this as a divide-and-conquer strategy on the part of Benazir Bhutto, but they kept a low profile while carefully calculating their plans to take over.

Having made a commitment with the "establishment" to maintain a steady foreign policy stance, the PPP did not make major changes in that area. They inherited the Afghanistan dispute, the stalemated relations with India, and the controversial nuclear program. As she normalized relations with India, with the help of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), she was accused of being too "soft on India."¹²⁴ Such a feminine term hinted on how they perceived policy decisions originating from a female leader. Benazir Bhutto's policy preferences with regard to Afghanistan and India were not well received by the military. While she favored a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan, the army and the ISI preferred an armed conflict in order to place the Mujahadeen in power, ousting the Kabul regime. Benazir Bhutto desired to moderate her administration's support for the insurgency in Kashmir, but the army, confident in their ability to challenge India in a militarized dispute, wanted to

¹²⁴Nancy Anderson, 64.

escalate the conflict. She was perceived as powerless and unproductive. Such misconceptions readily corresponded with the probability of her downfall as a woman head of a nation.¹²⁵ They would create an avenue for the army to seize power.¹²⁶

Another challenge to her leadership was her government's inability to control ethnic violence between the Sindhis and the Muhajirs. That conflict occurred mostly in the Sindh province and negatively impacted on the military's confidence in Bhutto's ability to tackle problems. With the permission of the Prime Minister, the military were committed to patrol the Sind province,¹²⁷ but they were told not to become involved, only to maintain a permanent presence in the area. Such policy measures caused some dissidents in the PPP to defect to the IJI party. They considered the military presence a threat, and as a sign "of things getting out of hand."¹²⁸ In order to further destabilize

¹²⁵Salamat Ali, "A Showdown Looms," Far Eastern Economic Review, 5 October 1989, 40.

¹²⁶Talat Aslam, "The Year of Living Dangerously," Herald, December 1989, 31-42; Brigadier A.R. Siddiqi's column in the Nation, 26 November 1990, 17, analyzing Bhutto's performance from the military standpoint.

¹²⁷Lawrence Ziring, "Pakistan in 1989: the Politics of Stalemate," Asian Survey 30 (February 1990), 138.

¹²⁸Ibid.

the administration, Mr. G. M. Syed went public, calling for creation of new Sindhu Desh. This call was followed by many others.

Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab chief minister was more than willing to cash in on the chaotic situation. Along with ANP's Wali Khan, Sharif publicly condemned Benazir Bhutto's policy stance toward Afghanistan, and further encouraged his party, MQM, to become more hostile and terrorize the PPP constituents.¹²⁹ The opposition agitated for a new province, causing great civil unrest. The administration attempted to suppress these disturbances, but lacked the manpower and the commitment on the part of the establishment to combat the problem. By the spring of 1990, the violence in the Sind became so alarming that the army was fully authorized to control it. But the army was not satisfied with merely patrolling the streets and dispersing crowds; they preferred all-out confrontation, including arresting and trying the dissidents in the military courts.

Bhutto, concerned that the "establishment" would seize the opportunity to destabilize the PPP's strongholds in the Sind province, refused the suggestion by the army to interfere. The army again deciphered

¹²⁹Ibid.

gross partisanship from her reluctance, calling her a Sindhi nationalist.¹³⁰

To protect her party's support base, Benazir Bhutto established a federally funded People's Works program. Nawaz Sharif, foremost in the pursuit to oust Benazir Bhutto, down-played her efforts and promised that his supporters would provide social welfare programs for his constituents. Furthermore, Sharif advised and threatened the Punjab police and civil servants into not accepting anything from the PPP officials, nor carrying out their propositions.¹³¹ Benazir Bhutto's administration did not react in spite of these challenges; on the contrary, Ishaq pressed charges against Benazir Bhutto in the Lahore High court. The federal authority did not castigate President Ishaq's actions, thereby making the administration lose face, which in turn suggested its powerlessness and a conspiracy.¹³²

¹³⁰See Abbas Nasir's report in the Herald, July 1990, 26-35.

¹³¹Herald, December 1989, 37-38.

¹³²For these and other details in relation to the IJI "dirty" campaign against Benazir Bhutto, see Viewpoint, 25 October 1990, 29.

The next step would be to undo Benazir Bhutto officially through the power of ballot. The president announced that new elections would be held on October 24, 1990. Benazir Bhutto was due to deliver her second baby. This was another instance where a gynecological factor was employed as a tactic to impact a political outcome.¹³³ She thus condemned this announcement, questioning its validity in a parliamentary democracy. She challenged the presidential discretion to call for such election in the Court, but the Court upheld the validity of the presidential initiative. Taking into consideration all that had transpired, it was obvious that the president was not acting alone. He actually had the blessings of the armed forces.¹³⁴

With the election in sight, the president heightened the negative campaign strategy, crying corruption and other malfeasance against the administration. The IJI circulated these charges in public gatherings, calling Benazir Bhutto a traitor and a friend of Salman Rushdie. They labelled her as an American puppet and accused her of conspiracy with the Americans to suspend aid to Pakistan. They also charged

¹³³Nancy Anderson, 65.

¹³⁴viewpoint, 29.

that she had engaged in espionage activities, which included passing Pakistan's military secrets to India. The opposition also alleged that she had encouraged India's aggression along the border. As explicated by an evaluator: "Pakistanis were not accustomed to such unrestrained criticism of their government, so it was commonly interpreted that she was weak and had lost."¹³⁵

The negative campaign prevailed and Benazir Bhutto was placed on the defensive. Having combatted Zia for several years and won, she was determined to resist these men. It was obvious that her gender was precursory to the difficulty she was having. She explained that her persistence was to encourage any Muslim woman leader to persevere under any kind of turmoil.¹³⁶ Instead of concentrating on her campaign, she made efforts to ward off the attacks. The PPP's banner portrayed her as a helpless victim rather than as a tough and determined leader who meant to transform the country into a contemporary nation.¹³⁷

¹³⁵Nancy Anderson, 62.

¹³⁶S. Gupta, "They've Crossed Limits even Zia Didn't: Interview with Benazir Bhutto," India Today, 15 September 1991, 23.

¹³⁷The PPP devised the slogan, "Ya Allah, ya Rasool, Benazir Bekasoor," (O God, O Prophet, bear witness that Benazir is innocent), and another said, "Sazishon men ghir gayee bint-e-arz-e-Asia," (Surrounded by conspiracies, is

Another problem that contributed to Benazir Bhutto's political eclipse was the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in April 1990. Pakistan had close relations with the Gulf dynasties and relied on that region for foreign exchange amounting to \$2 billion. The military were not content with leaving matters in the hands of a woman deemed incompetent.¹³⁸ To them, an Islamic woman cannot effectively carry out such a task due to their tradition.¹³⁹ President Ishaq, therefore, declared a State of Emergency so as to stabilize the country. His action was a tactic to depose Bhutto, for a woman like Indira Gandhi had fought major wars, even though she was belittled.

Faced with multiple legal proceedings and numerous controversies against Benazir Bhutto, the administration was at a disadvantage in winning the election. The election took place as scheduled. On October 24, the people lost confidence in the regime. Nawaz Sharif,

¹³⁸"A Coup in Mufti," 35.

¹³⁹M. Jaffe, "A Day in the Life of Benazir Bhutto," 58.

therefore, was called to form the government on November 5, 1990. As the prime minister, he lifted the state of emergency (which President Ishaq had imposed as a device to take control of the government), and assured the public of his intention to run a fair government on the basis of cooperation and compromise. That is, he intended to run a government which had full support of the military and fundamentalist Muslims, a situation where women's place is at home, not in the political realm.

The decision to remove Benazir Bhutto from office was carefully timed. Her opponents were aware that she was well-liked in Washington and that her absence from power was going to be very controversial. Therefore, the 'establishment' proceeded cautiously. They were incremental in dislodging her grip on the power structure to the extent of illegally bribing some of her constituents to defect and openly degrade her leadership by calling her disparaging names.¹⁴⁰ The climax came with the transformation of the world political scene.

Pakistan had a large stake in the new balance of power in the area. With the Afghanistan civil war, the

¹⁴⁰Viewpoint, 29.

India/Pakistan dispute, and later the Persian Gulf crisis, the Pakistan establishment was not content to leave matters in the hands of a young woman whom it had perceived as incompetent.¹⁴¹ In addition, the nature of crisis in the area warranted making personal contacts with these Gulf leaders. In the minds of these men, an Islamic woman cannot effectively carry out such a task due to the traditional expectations of her.¹⁴²

When martial law was imposed, Benazir Bhutto's confidants and supporters were targeted by the police. These people were detained on charges of conducting unlawful operations. Consequently, PPP became the centerpiece of an extensive investigation. Previously, on September 1, Benazir Bhutto was accused of engaging in illicit activity. On September 24, a special court forced her to stand trial. Consequently, Benazir's 20 months in office came under critical judicial scrutiny.¹⁴³

The new President's desire to take vengeance on the daughter of Ali Bhutto came into full force. To taunt

¹⁴¹"A Coup in Mufti," 35.

¹⁴²M. Jaffe, "A Day in the Life of Benazir Bhutto," 58.

¹⁴³Salamat Ali, "Critics in Glass Houses," Far Eastern Economic Review, 16 August 1990, 8.

Benazir Bhutto, he invoked old laws such as the Prevention of Misconduct Act (Parliament and Provincial Assemblies Acts) enacted by Ali Bhutto in the 1973 Constitution. Zia had amended these laws to increase his own personal powers and Ishaq later took advantage of such amendments. On this basis, he set up a Special Court for Speedy Trial Ordinance. That ordinance was meant to penalize the country's traitor, Benazir Bhutto.

She was charged with corruption¹⁴⁴ and her husband was indicted on a similar charges, including kidnapping.¹⁴⁵ He was accused of cashing in on his wife's prominence and amassing vast wealth. Benazir Bhutto was accused of negligence in relation to her husband's offenses. Based on the contradictory insertion of women in the androcentric system, a critic wrote that:

the sins of a husband tarnish a wife, who is still seen as in his shadow, even if she be prime minister, much more than the sins of a

¹⁴⁴Emily MacFaquhar, "Born to Rule: Bred to Lose," U.S. News and World Report, November 1990, 40-42.

¹⁴⁵He was accused of kidnapping a British citizen (though Pakistani born) Murtaza Hassain Bukhari and exhorting an amount of \$800,000 from him. Ahmed Rashid, "Bhutto: Back to the Drawing Room," Herald, November -December 1990, 57; Afab Mahmood, "Assif in Plunderland," Herald, 15 August 1990, 37-8.

wife affect the reputation of her husband.¹⁴⁶ Benazir Bhutto got married in order to have a "protector," but when the man was accused of any wrongdoing, his wife consequently paid for it. With all these controversies in the atmosphere, it was apparent that the PPP had lost power.

On October 13, the IJI issued its electoral manifesto reiterating its commitment to establishing the Supremacy of Quran and Sunnah "in every sphere of life." In so doing, it indirectly justified its actions in ousting a woman on the basis of the Islamic tradition. The following day, the Lahore High Court ruled that the government had failed on several counts, including failure to conduct substantial legislative work, failure to protect the province of Sind against internal disturbances and failure to call a meeting of the Council of Common Interests pertaining to various provincial officials. The Court upheld that ruling and the decision was final.

Conclusion

Momentarily, Benazir Bhutto and the PPP are out of the political scene. Facing an uncertain and dangerous

¹⁴⁶Nancy Anderson, 65.

Conclusion

future, Benazir Bhutto told the press: "We're young. We have time. But does Pakistan?"¹⁴⁷ Her statement suggested a melancholy of injustice experienced by a woman leader who had so much to offer the country, but was rejected by those whom she wanted to serve because of her gender. She had helped to restructure the nation's political system, which led to her rise to power, but due to the sharp division of class and gender, she was stripped of the power to govern two years after she assumed office. Originating from a politically famous family where her father and grandfather had led as prime ministers,¹⁴⁸ Benazir Bhutto was welcomed to carry the family legacy. She came to power due to a set of circumstances surrounding her father's death. At that period, she took over the affairs of the deceased father and successfully challenged the military autocracy that deposed Ali Bhutto. While in power, she confronted the dilemma in Pakistan's governing process. As a woman leader in a nation whose citizens are over 95% Moslem, her ability to govern was constantly challenged. She was perceived

¹⁴⁷Emily MacFaquhar, 40.

¹⁴⁸Salamat Ali, "Scare Tactics," Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 September 1990, 20.

as weak and incompetent and therefore was expected to fail. The mullahs, the fundamental Moslems, and the military (all male establishment) were determined to remove her from power. Circumstances such as provincial disturbances instigated by these dissidents, compounded by the Gulf crisis, were used as ploys by the army to seize power and subsequently dismiss her from office. She subsequently was charged with treason, corruption, and incompetency. Placed under house arrest, she was temporarily suspended from participating in any political activity.

Nevertheless, Benazir Bhutto's presence in Pakistan advanced parliamentary democracy, where freedom and civil rights prevailed. This reform enhanced women's status and reversed the adverse restrictions imposed on women by Zia. Women walked on the streets dressed as they wanted, not fearing any caution. As a young woman commented, "the PPP must have won. The announcer is not wearing a dupatta." Her preeminence on the national scene, though for a limited time, demonstrated that a woman could rule a predominantly Islamic state. Making public her desire to return to power, she said:

I know the people of Pakistan are with me. I know in a free election the people of Pakistan would vote for me. But I know there are powerful elements who oppose what I stand for, and they will go out of their way to prevent the people of

Pakistan from having me as prime minister.¹⁴⁹

Masked by the fundamental religious belief on the basis of one group's superiority over another, a woman legally empowered to rule her nation was not given the opportunity to actualize the goal.

The retrenchment of Benazir Bhutto by her male counterparts reinforced the contention that the state is male-dominated and women in general are excluded. However, Benazir Bhutto was reelected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan and was confirmed in office in October 19, 1993, three years following her removal. Like Indira Gandhi, she is more experienced to govern the country the second time around; also, like India, not much has changed in Pakistan's patriarchal civic culture. A few months following her return to power, her own mother generated another front against her, asking her to step down for her brother, who according to her is the right heir to the throne. Indeed, Pakistan is a patriarchal state. The same set of patriarchal circumstances which brought Benazir Bhutto to power dictated how she fared in power and were responsible for her demise as political leader in her first term; and

¹⁴⁹Farhan Bokhari, "Pakistan's Bhutto is Poised for a Political Comeback," Christian Science Monitor, 11 May 1993, 7.

these rigid conditions will affect how she governs the second time around.

CHAPTER FOUR

CORAZON AQUINO AND THE PHILIPPINES

Ascendance On The Political Scene

Like other women in this study, Mrs. Aquino, based on her class affiliation is distinct from other Filipinas. Her special relations to the capitalist patriarchy enlist her in a separate political class from other Filipinas. This distinctive connection with the Philippines political system paved the way for her rise to power.

Moreover, linked to the discussion relating to her special ties with the patriarchal state is the argument that nation-states are continuously plagued with crisis. During an exigency where a popular political figure was abruptly assassinated, his female kin is then asked to impermanently assume power in order to provide stability. Women, in this case, are used as balancers, whether on the basis of equality or inequality. They are there to carry out a restricted role.

Corazon (Cora) Aquino's family have been among the

politically powerful for many years in the Philippines, but Corazon Aquino's emergence in the country's political environment was somewhat different from Indira Gandhi's ascendance and that of Benazir Bhutto. Those two path-breakers, were gradually introduced into their nation's politics by their fathers. Like these other women, however, Corazon Aquino's emergence came about as a result of the death of her popular male kin. Also analogous to her female counterparts was the gender issue: the death of a popular male kin, coupled with her gender, were salient to her rise in power.

Corazon's father, Jose Cajuangco, her brother, and uncles served as congressmen and senators, but none ever rose to the position of state leadership held by Jawaharl Nehru and Ali Bhutto. Corazon Aquino's maternal grandfather, serving as senator, had contested as a vice presidential candidate.¹ Even though she came from a politically active family, Corazon Aquino did not become involved in politics until a great tragedy befell her family.

Born on January 25, 1933, Maria Corazon Cojuangco was the sixth of eight children. Her father Jose and his

¹Emile U. Lepthien, Corazon Aquino; The President of the Philippines (Chicago: Children Press, 1987), 5.

three brothers inherited their father's extensive sugar plantation in Tarlac Province on Luzon, north of Manila.² Jose later became a president of the Philippines' Bank of Commerce, as well as a Congressman for the Philippines National Assembly.³ With his special background, Cojuangco was committed to his children being well educated.

Corazon Aquino and her sisters Josephine, Teresita, and Pacita attended St. Scholastica College. She graduated first in her class as valedictorian and temporarily studied at the Assumption Convent in Manila,⁴ and was transferred in 1946 to the United States, where she completed part of her high school requirements at Notre Dame Convent School in Manhattan. Upon graduation, she studied Mathematics at the College of Mount St. Vincent in New York City. Following her graduation, she returned to Manila in 1953, and pursued a law degree at Far Eastern University's Law School. She did not complete her degree due to marital commitment.

Corazon Aquino met and married Benigno "Ninoy"

²Lucy Komisar, Corazon Aquino: The Story of a Revolution (New York: George Braziller, 1987), 13.

³Emily Lepthien, 5.

⁴Ibid.

Aquino, on October 11, 1959.⁵ They were both 21 years old. Corazon Aquino chose to become a homemaker as her husband progressed with his own career. Throughout his political career, Mr. Aquino received strong support from his wife. While her husband was in the limelight, Corazon Aquino behind the scene was advising and sometimes publicly campaigning for her husband.⁶ At the time of their marriage, Mr. Aquino was a journalist and a law student from Tarlac Province. The Aquinos, like the Cojuangcos, were prominent, having in their possession extensive land holdings and political engagements.⁷ Not long after their marriage, Ninoy became active in politics. He served as a mayor at the tender age of 22, and later became the vice governor of Tarlac in 1959.

In 1963, Benigno was the youngest governor ever to be elected⁸ and became, in 1967, the only Liberal Party candidate to be elected to the Senate. The Liberal Party wanted to gain more representation in the National

⁵Lucy Komisar, 16.

⁶I. T. Cory: Profile of a President (Manila: J. Kriz, 1986), 14.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Lepthien, 8.

Assembly so as to effectuate change in the Marcos administration.

The Ferdinand Marcos government was infamous for its corrupt bureaucracy. It was alleged that the Marcos regime did not strive to support freedom and democracy; rather the country was governed by military dictatorship. The officials personally enriched themselves with the national wealth.⁹ With this lack of foresight and effective planning for the general welfare, the administration was further criticized for its adverse economic orientation.¹⁰ Upon ascendance to the presidency, Marcos did virtually nothing to advance his country economically, whereas his neighbors like Taiwan and Korea became industrialized.¹¹

Concerned with the advancement of the general welfare, Senator Aquino became involved in probing the administrative malfeasance. Aquino brought pressure to bear on the Congress to ensure development for the benefit of the whole country. While he was becoming more popular with the people, he was also becoming a threat

⁹D. Wurfel, Filipino Politics: Development and Decay (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988), 4.

¹⁰"The Philippines: A Question of Faith," Economist, 7 May 1988, 34.

¹¹Ibid.

to Mr. Marcos.

During the 1971 elections, Ninoy's efforts paid off by creating more variety in the government when the Liberal Party won more seats in the National Assembly. Ninoy's success was becoming an unbearable threat to the regime.¹² It was mostly feared that he was going to be successful in the upcoming presidential election, following the expiration of Marcos' term in 1973.¹³

In September 1973, Marcos imposed martial law¹⁴ as a political strategy to stabilize the country and combat the communist insurgency. As a result, on September 23 many of the Marcos political opponents were rounded up and imprisoned.¹⁵ The list included Benigno Aquino, who then began his seven and a half years of solitary confinement. The media was heavily censored and demonstrations, rallies, strikes and possession of

¹²Lucy Komisar, 34.

¹³1973 was the final year of Marcos' second term in office.

¹⁴Martial law is a temporary rule by the military to control citizens' unrest, after which power would be presumably be returned to the civilians.

¹⁵"The Philippines," 33.

firearms were prohibited.¹⁶

While her husband was imprisoned, Corazon Aquino assumed her husband's responsibilities. During her frequent visits to her husband in prison, Corazon Aquino briefed him on the political issues at hand. Ninoy Aquino from prison made plans to rally public opinion for his plight. In January 1973, one such meeting resulted in secret letters being sent to various foreign presses, exposing human rights violation in the country. Consequently, the Bangkok Post featured a special edition exposing the brutality of the Marcos administration which made headlines in various world presses.¹⁷ As a result, Ninoy Aquino was secluded for forty-one days.

Carozon Aquino began coordinating her husband's intelligence network and strenuously campaigned for him in 1978, and enlisted her young children, especially her seven year old son Kristian, to campaign for their father. Their slogan "Help My Daddy Come Home"¹⁸ carried

¹⁶Lucy Komisar, 37.

¹⁷Sandra Burton, The Impossible Dream: the Marcoses, the Aquinos, and the Unfinished Revolution (New York: Warner Books, 1989), 101.

¹⁸Sandra Burton, 102.

such weight that Marcos retaliated by accusing Aquino of being a double agent; a Communist and a C.I.A. agent. Marcos complained that Mrs. Aquino was brainwashing her children by turning them against his regime. He argued that a good mother would not allow her children to take such steps. Mrs. Aquino responded that the children would stop campaigning as soon as their father was home; but Ninoy was not released and neither did he win the election.

World opinion was gradually turning against the Marcos regime. Foreign governments, including the Vatican, mounted pressure on the administration. Pope John Paul made plans to visit Ninoy in the prison during his state visit to the Philippines. Before the Papal visit, Aquino suffered a heart attack and was flown to the U.S. in May 1980, where he had triple by-pass surgery.¹⁹ Following his recovery, Senator Aquino stayed on in the United States where he continued his struggle against the Marcos regime.²⁰

On January 15, 1981, Ferdinand Marcos lifted the martial law; Aquino, therefore, had to change his

¹⁹Jeanne Marie Col, "Managing Softly in Turbulent Times: Corazon Aquino, the President of Philippines," in Michael Genovese, ed., 24.

²⁰Sandra Burton, 107-9.

tactics.²¹ Having rejected violence as a political strategy for eliminating the Marcos authoritarianism, he then decided to beat the president through the election. He announced on February 3, 1983, to the dismay of well-wishers, that he was returning to the Philippines.²² Ninoy Aquino was assassinated the minute he set foot on Philippine soil, on August 21, 1983.²³ Several days later, Mrs. Aquino returned to the Philippines. During Aquino's burial, two million people marched in the procession.²⁴ After his burial, there were prayer rallies held in protest of the assassination, and urges for the release of other political prisoners and the return of democracy to the Philippines. Local politicians, teachers, lawyers, students, workers, peasants, slum dwellers, and many other groups supported Mrs. Aquino. The struggle later enlisted the conservative clergy and the middle class who demanded Marcos' resignation.²⁵

²¹Jeanne Marie Col, 24.

²²Lucy Komisar, 6.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Sandra Burton, 124.

²⁵Ibid., 139.

On November 27, the day that would have marked Ninoy's fifty-first birthday, tens of thousands of people demonstrated at the Rizal Memorial Park, with Corazon Aquino as the keynote speaker. These kinds of mass rallies became popularly known as the "parliament of the streets" and continued to prevail in the many years that followed until Marcos was ousted.²⁶

In December, 1983 meeting, Corazon Aquino presented her husband's 1977 statement during his trial the military tribune.²⁷ Following the gathering, her supporters recommended that she contest in the May 1984 election, "as a form of struggle the Filipinos can accept."²⁸ In August 1984, Corazon Aquino addressed a 5,000 member congregation in the Church and Cardinal Sin, along with 200 other priests, called for a national reconciliation between the government and its opposition.²⁹ But as the government crackdown of the opposition persisted, Cardinal Sin condemned the Marcos administration's onslaught and urged the president to

²⁶M. Gonzales-Zap, The Making of Cory (Quezon City: New Day, 1987), 78.

²⁷Lucy Komisar, 56.

²⁸Ibid, 56.

²⁹"The Philippines", 34.

control the violence. He told the middle class to unite with the students and workers and fight against excessive brutality.³⁰

The majority of Marcos' enemies were awaiting the crumbling of his empire. Many candidates were awaiting opportunities to enhance their political careers. There were numerous sessions of informal talks in November, 1984. These groups excluding the Marcos' presidential faction, converged to set up a "Convenor Group." These people were not supposed to be candidates but representatives of the process. The "convenors" were businessmen and many notables, including Jaime "Jimmy" Ongpin, former senator and civil liberties leader Lorenzo Tanadd, and Mrs. Aquino.³¹ The meetings were conducted in search of a suitable candidate to challenge Marcos. About eleven potential candidates signed the declaration of unity, with the exception of Doy Laurel, heading the Unido, and Eva Estrada Kalawi, leader of the Liberal Party and Ninoy's cousin. The abstainers thought that the union would hinder their chances of making headway as candidates. Following much discussion, people

³⁰Belinda Aquino, ed., Cronies and Enemies? The Current Philippines Scene (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Center of Asian and Pacific Studies, 1989), 20.

³¹Sandra Burton, 134.

in the opposition came to believe that the only true way to realize change was to have Mrs. Aquino head the party. Consequently, they continued to pressure her to run.³²

Corazon Aquino set forth two conditions prior to committing herself: first, the drive for one million signatures be completed; the second and major condition was that Marcos call for a "snap" election. Those challenges were met when Marcos announced on American television, during an interview with David Brinkley of NBC, a call for the election.³³ Mrs. Aquino began to seriously consider running as a presidential candidate. She revealed her fears to Dona Aurora, her mother-in-law: "I do not think Marcos will let us win. We will try. This is a challenge. I cannot run away from him anymore."³⁴

On November 13, she pressured Doy Laurel to team up with her as a family friend.³⁵ At the same time she

³²Gonzales-Zap, 99.

³³Lucy Komisar, 68.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

preferred to run on a clean slate,³⁶ and further stated that "we must present someone who has been a victim of the regime. I may not be the worst, but I am best known."³⁷ On November 25th, the drive for one million signatures was successfully completed. A few days afterwards she officially accepted the signatures. She then proceeded to consolidate her strongholds.

She had to confront the first opposition on the basis of her gender. On November 30, in a meeting with Laurel, she faced him: "I know that it is very difficult for you to accept my candidacy because I am a woman. But it seems that the public perception is that I can generate more votes than you." In a way she was confirming the feminists' stance that women act as stabilizers in crisis times. In this time when the national security was threatened because of the loss of a popular male kin, it became plausible to unite behind that widow to provide a temporary measure of stability.

At the church the following day, she presented the one million signatures for the priest to bless and thanked the supporters, saying: "If I were a traditional politician, I would be happy standing before you

³⁶E. C. Lallana, Rethinking the February Revolution (Quezon City: Kalitaran, 1993), 50.

³⁷Lucy Komisar, 68.

tonight. But I am not and am so very nervous when I think of the difficult days that lie ahead."³⁸

When the Court found Mr. Aquino's murderers not guilty, another demonstration was staged by Mrs. Aquino's supporters.³⁹ Corazon Aquino announced at a press conference that Marcos was the actual culprit. Marcos announced on the same day that the election would be held on February 7, and Mrs. Aquino publicly declared herself as a presidential candidate.⁴⁰

Apart from Marcos' objection to Mrs. Aquino's candidacy, Doy Laurel also was reluctant to accept the position of vice president on Mrs. Aquino's ticket. With many questions arising as to the legitimacy of her candidacy, Mrs. Aquino visited Cardinal Sin, who advised her to make concessions and establish formal political machinery that would enable her to compete. Assuring her of the Church's approval of her candidacy, Cardinal told her: "Kneel down. And I will bless you. You are going to be the president. You are Joan of Arc."

By recognizing Mrs. Aquino's predicament, the Church played a crucial role in supporting her

³⁸Ibid., 68.

³⁹"The Philippines," 34.

⁴⁰Lucy Komisar, 82.

candidacy. Cardinal Sin, along with many of the Church representatives, met with Laurel and urged him to accept Mrs. Aquino's position. Cardinal Sin stated:

First of all, she is a victim of injustice. The sympathy of the people will go to her. Join with her, and you will win...⁴¹

Having been convinced that Mrs. Aquino's experience would serve as a gesture of unity for all the oppressed, Laurel reached a compromise and arranged to run on a joint ticket with Mrs. Aquino as the presidential and Laurel the vice-presidential candidates.

The Church's role in Mrs. Aquino's rise merits analysis. The leader of the Roman Catholic Church in the region, Cardinal Sin, played a crucial part during the campaign. The Church here was an agent of peace. In a predominantly Catholic country, Sin's position as a spiritual leader was a good incentive to convince people to vote for Corazon Aquino. He had seen in a woman the capacity to counteract the corruption and injustice of the Marcos administration. Consequently, Cardinal Sin issued a pastoral letter warning of a "sinister plot," including giving hush money to teachers and campaign managers to purchase votes. Cardinal Sin, aware that these people were poor, advised them to take the money,

⁴¹Ibid., 76.

but to use their consciences when voting, for a better leadership would likely be provided by a woman.⁴²

Not only was the Cardinal in support of Mrs. Aquino, the bishops, reverend fathers, and consequently the congregations extended their assistance.⁴³ According to one analyst, there was a remarkable divergence between the 1972 and 1983 elections, as follows: the Roman Catholic Church was no longer neutral as it had positioned itself in 1972.⁴⁴ The Church helped to bring about the people's support of Aquino. Besides, the Aquino family had maintained close relations with the Church. After the assassination, the Church was Mrs. Aquino's mainstay. They comforted her during the mourning, and constantly advised her on what to do. With the Church's influence, in conjunction with the tragedy that befell the Aquino's family, the masses were very supportive. When things seemed to get out of hand with the Marcos regime against the Aquinos, in relation to

⁴²Ibid., 92.

⁴³The Church's support of Aquino helped her to emerge victorious.

⁴⁴Robert Youngblood, "Church and State in the Philippines", in Carl H. Lande ed., Rebuilding a Nation (Washington D.C.: Washington Institute Press, 1987), 351-64.

the election, the Church's support and statements proved a potent weapon. Not only was the Church behind Aquino, the masses also identified with her as her problems were voiced through the Church.

Furthermore, the people's support of Mrs. Aquino suggested the impasse of Marcos' politics.⁴⁵ The administration was not effective in its economic policies. The private financial community had lost all confidence that Marcos would resurrect the economy. They saw the condition as the regime's inability to restore the equilibrium which it had rigidly claimed to achieve when martial law was declared.⁴⁶ Some bankers had recorded an alarming increase in the nation's capital flight following Ninoy's assassination. As a result, the Philippines had lost over \$500 million in the process. This expropriation pointed to the uncertainty economic success and overall stability of the nation.

Supporting Mrs. Aquino were some members of the military. A group of young officers, the Reformed Armed Forces Movement (R.A.M.) pledged their support to Corazon Aquino and offered her protection to and trained her bodyguards. The extension of assistance by some army

⁴⁵Gonzales-Zap, 198.

⁴⁶Lucy Komisar, 51.

personnel revealed the desire for change among a broad spectrum of the population.

Another turning point for Mrs. Aquino was the loss of confidence of U.S. officials in the Philippines in Marcos' capability asserting control. Due to numerous uprisings in the country, Washington's trust was wavered especially in relation to the U.S. strategic interests in the region.⁴⁷ The White House accepted martial law as a way to maintain control, but in 1983 the dominant issues were economic and political reforms. They were sure that Marcos was losing ground in his country. Washington, therefore, sought to confirm its status in relation to the air and naval leases.⁴⁸ Once this agreement was secured, the U.S. embassy resumed its efforts in pressuring the Marcos government to ensure that the election be "clean and honest."

The campaign on the side of Corazon Aquino was from the heart. It was a campaign of the 'old style,' where the professional politicians and their beneficiaries held sway. Hers was also a new style in which civic

⁴⁷Hal Hill, "The Philippines Economy Under Marcos: A Balance Sheet," Australian Outlook 36 (1982): 32-9.

⁴⁸John F. Maisto, "United States-Philippines Relations in the 1980's," in Lande, ed., 529-537, Sandra Burton, 153.

leaders, women's clubs, business and local organizations teamed up to show their support⁴⁹. These groups of people were touched by her sincerity, honesty, and simplicity and financed her campaign.⁵⁰

On her agenda, Corazon Aquino vowed to dissolve the monopolies practiced by Marcos and his friends. She pledged to free political prisoners; force Marcos to return the stolen riches; live modestly; restructure the economy; establish democracy; and extend the American air and naval leases until 1991.⁵¹

Marcos, disturbed by Corazon Aquino's progress, began to engage in name-calling. He charged that she was inexperienced and naive, that her leadership would precipitate huge political and economic turmoil. Mrs. Aquino rebutted his attack, declaring:

I am very different from Marcos. I am not a politician. I don't know how to tell a lie, or

⁴⁹J. R. Cruz, "People's Power, Kuno", in W. V. Villacorta, et. al., (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1989), 246.

⁵⁰L. G. Tancango, "Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines," Philippines Journal of Public Administration 34 (1990): 345.

⁵¹Guy J. Pauker, "President Corazon Aquino: A Political and Personal Assessment," in Carl Lande, ed., 291-309.

take advantage of others. I'm not a dictator.⁵² Her sincerity, as well as her misfortune, was helping her to make headway and she would always communicate her dilemma to the people.

Wherever Corazon Aquino went, her audience poured out in thousands.⁵³ By the time the campaign came to a close after 57 days, Mrs. Aquino had addressed over a thousand rallies, and her last meeting attracted over a million people. The overall attendance record showed that Mrs. Aquino visited 68 out of the 73 provinces.⁵⁴ Her ability to hold talks in many provinces helped to bring her case closer to the people.

In comparison, her major opponent, incumbent Ferdinand Marcos, attended only 34 gatherings, hosted in 22 provinces. The turn-out rates were very low, about less than 10% of Corazon Aquino's total. His wife Imelda Marcos often campaigned for him. Her analysis of Mrs. Aquino was class-based: "Our opponent does not wear make-up. She does not have her fingernails manicured..." She did not give a convincing reason why Mrs. Aquino did

⁵²Lucy Komisar, 78-83.

⁵³Ibid., 77.

⁵⁴Ibid., 77-92.

not deserve the people's vote. Since Marcos controlled the media, he utilized that channel to the best of his ability to thwart Mrs. Aquino's progress. He labelled her a communist and intimated that Mrs. Aquino was so inexperienced that it was "kind of embarrassing to be running against a woman." Furthermore, he maintained that Filipino women should restrict their sermons to "inside the bedroom."⁵⁵ These statements exposed Mr. Marcos's perception of his political opponent. Being a woman, Mrs. Aquino was thought to be incompetent as an opponent. A woman, according to his view, was only fit to be a reproducer, being relegated to the issues of domesticity rather than being an important part of public affairs; but it was obvious that the masses did not share the Marcos perspective.

As his chauvinistic remarks did not hinder Mrs. Aquino, Marcos resorted to propaganda techniques.⁵⁶ He declared that an Aquino's triumph "would mean a bloody confrontation."⁵⁷ Mrs. Aquino persevered, and urged the

⁵⁵Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephen Roskamm Shalom, eds., The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Dictatorship, And Resistance (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 333; Lucy Kosimar, 83 and 90.

⁵⁶"The Philippines", 34.

⁵⁷Lucy Komisar, 88.

citizens not to be afraid of Marcos' terrorism, stating that:

If the votes are clearly in my favor and the president tries to frustrate the people's will, I will then call for the people to demonstrate peacefully in the streets, and I will even lead those demonstrations.⁵⁸

Mrs. Aquino rebutted the Marcos accusation that she was a Communist, when she stated: "For there is no God in Communism," challenging Mr. Marcos to "stand up like a woman and answer to charges of his cowardice with truth...if he dares."⁵⁹

The election was held on Friday, February 7, 1984, and a number of groups were present supervising the election: the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL);⁶⁰ the government Commission on Elections (COMELEC);⁶¹ and many foreign representatives, including U.S. government officials and the world media. Irrespective of the publicity, electoral fraud was reported, implicating Marcos special command, the Regional Unified Command. These men openly solicited for

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., 90.

⁶⁰Linda K. Richter, "Report on the Discussion: Government and Politics from Marcos to Aquino," in Carl Lande ed., 391.

⁶¹Gonzales-Zap, 114.

votes and terrorized some of the precincts.⁶²

With the secret ballot count showing that she won 8,000,000 out of the 14.9 million counted, Mrs. Aquino declared her victory via a radio address. The final result showed that Corazon Aquino won by a margin of three million votes. When Mr. Marcos also declared himself a winner, Mrs. Aquino classified his speech as the "lies of desperate men." Mrs. Aquino, dressed in yellow, attended a thanksgiving service.⁶³

As the deadlock continued, the Reagan administration urged both parties to ensure an honest election outcome. He called on Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon Aquino to "work together to form a viable government" and "to work to implement reforms."⁶⁴ Mrs. Aquino refusing to step aside, requested that the U.S. government conduct an investigation. She confidently stated:

No Filipino president has ever received the overwhelming returns from the polls that I have been given. I would wonder at the motives of a friend of democracy who chooses to conspire with

⁶²"The Philippines", 34.

⁶³The color is a symbol projected by Aquino and Laurel as proof of "peoples power" and "a collective expression of solidarity."

⁶⁴Schirmer and Shalom, 334-5.

Mr. Marcos to cheat the Filipino people of their liberation.⁶⁵

She took the following steps: appeal to the military; had a meeting with 350 leaders; appeal to the Catholic Church; and Papal Nuncio made a public speech condemning the fraudulent nature of the election.⁶⁶

Corazon Aquino kept her promise of staging peaceful demonstrations, and nearly two million people including the priests protested in the rally.⁶⁷ Thereafter, she began communicating with the European and Japanese embassies, persuading them not to recognize the fraudulent regime. As a result, the Twelve-Nation European Parliament the next day condemned the Marcos administration. She was also able to convince a segment of the army to back her, especially the Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Lieutenant General Fidel Ramos and their men.⁶⁸ When Mr. Marcos ordered his army to open fire on millions of protesters, he was unsuccessful.

⁶⁵Lucy Kosimar, 98.

⁶⁶Ibid., 98.

⁶⁷Gustar Ranis, "Marcos's Economic Legacy: Problem, Policies and Prospects," in Lande, ed. 111-113; Lucy Kosimar, 103.

⁶⁸William M. Wise, "The Philippines Military After Marcos," in Lande, 438.

Washington intervened by issuing a statement about the Marcos' regime's inability to sustain itself and told him to "cut and cut cleanly." But Marcos diffidence only resulted in two presidential inaugurations on February 25, 1986. Corazon Aquino held hers at the Club Filipino, which she described as a neutral corner.⁶⁹ Moreover, she saw herself as a civilian president and did not want to create an impression that she had toppled another regime.⁷⁰ Corazon Aquino's mother-in-law, held the Bible and she was sworn in as the seventh president of the Republic of the Philippines.

Following the ceremony, Corazon Aquino moved quickly to unite the whole country: "I would like to appeal to everybody to work for a national reconciliation, which is what Ninoy came home for." In addition, she named Laurel the Prime Minister and

⁶⁹The place had a historical significance, because early Philippines nationalists, and more recently anti-Marcos activists held meetings at the center. Peter Gareth, The Politics of Counterinsurgency in the Philippines: The Military and Non-Military Options (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Occasional Paper 6, 1987), 13.

⁷⁰Mercadona Monia, ed., People Power: The Philippine Revolution of 1986 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 13.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Enrile Minister of National Defense, and Ramos Chief of Staff of the New Armed Forces of the Philippines, with a promotion to general.⁷¹ This diversity in her administration affected her rule.

On the other hand, Ferdinand Marcos was also inaugurated on the same day. The ceremony was conducted exclusively. Arturo Tolentina, Marcos' vice president, his diplomatic corp and the press were absent. Soon after the event, Marcos, with the help of the U.S., went into exile in Hawaii, taking with him the remnant of the country's treasure.⁷² His exit marked the beginning of a regime headed by a woman.

Gender and class were crucial factors contributing to Mrs. Aquino's rise to power. Her class had a bearing because of her husband's sudden death which enlisted her into politics, a public sphere which Mrs. Aquino had been excluded. Her gender played an important role because of her widowhood, a woman with an untainted past, juxtaposed by her simplicity, honesty, and

⁷¹Schirmer and Shalom, 340; Albinasles, P.N. "The Post-Marcos Regime, the Non-Bourgeois Opposition, and the Prospects of a Philippine October," Kasarinlan 1 (2nd quarter 1986): 3-10.

⁷²Lucy Komisar, 123.

motherhood. Moreover, she symbolized oppression and change, the characteristics which her opposition did not possess.

How She Fared In Power

According to the women-centered opinion, the Philippines as a political structure is patriarchal. The capitalist patriarchal situations that created the opportunity for Mrs. Aquino's rise to power, also determined how she fared as a political leader. The main thrust here is that the class interests between political segments such as the military and civilian leadership, and social groups such as the Catholic Church and the peasantry, complicated by Mrs. Aquino's gender restricted how she governed.

On February 25, 1986, history was made in the Philippines. Corazon Aquino was sworn in as the Philippines' first female president. She also was the fourth woman leader in the developing nations.⁷³ Her predecessor, Ferdinand Marcos, did not peacefully hand over power to Mrs. Aquino. As a matter of fact, he left the country under complex circumstances which created

⁷³Other female leaders in this context include Indira Gandhi, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, and Golda Meir.

many problems for the Aquino administration.⁷⁴ Foremost was the uneasy interaction between civilians and the military with the new leadership. Such relations easily created mutual suspicions which on numerous occasions flared into coup attempts throughout Mrs. Aquino's leadership.

Mrs. Aquino as a political leader, commenced with meeting her campaign pledges, freeing four hundred political prisoners (many of the top communist leadership included), and restoring the writ of habeas corpus, actions that did not please the new military establishment.⁷⁵ She also established a panel delegated with retrieving the stolen Philippines treasure as well as establishing essential programs to improve conditions, such as massive unemployment and 70% of the entire population living in poverty.⁷⁶ Another problem included resolving communist insurgency and ethnic

⁷⁴Most Filipinos referred to the circumstances which brought Aquino to power as revolution, or the changing of the repressive old order, replacing it with a moderate counterpart.

⁷⁵"Proclamation Number 2, President Aquino," in Schirmer and Shalom, eds., 366-72.

⁷⁶"The Political Economy of the Philippines: Critical Perspectives, a Review Article," Pacific Affairs 57 (Fall 1984): 468.

rivalry.⁷⁷ But the greatest legacy left by Mrs. Aquino was the constitutional reform.

The New Constitution And Aquino's Presidency

This section shows how a presidential initiative helped to diversify the Philippines. The constitutional reform sought to bridge the gap between classes and also included women as active participants in establishing the charter. President Aquino's major contribution her to the political system was in introducing a new constitutional convention. Discussing the need for the provision, she maintained that: "It is for our children. So that they can live in freedom, that we shall never have another dictator."⁷⁸ Her decision to introduce such reforms, coupled with her selection of delegates to the 1986 constitutional convention, left a lasting impact. Six women were chosen of the forty-six delegates. Even though this number was small, the Constitution had 'foremothers' and 'forefathers.' These women were responsible in structuring the document to reflect sexual equality and to have many gender neutral

⁷⁷Jeanne-Marie Col, 30.

⁷⁸Emile Lepthien, 29.

phrases.⁷⁹ Their presence was also vital because of Mrs. Aquino's intense commitment to change. At the same time, however, the reform did not fully address all the issues geared to women's liberation in their entirety.⁸⁰

The document did not cover all aspects of women's condition in the society. For instance, it did not introduce change on laws regulating abortion, birth control, and divorce. To bring stability to the family, the Church prohibits divorce. It prohibits abortion in protection of the life of the unborn, without giving consideration to various circumstances that might affect a woman during pregnancy.⁸¹ I have argued in the previous chapter that many factors, including religious proscription, affect family planning devices. The constitution was in line with the Church stance towards the family. When Mrs. Aquino's administration later changed its stance in relation to family planning, the Catholic Church's support for her administration was withdrawn.

⁷⁹Linda K. Richter, "The Constitutional Rights of Women in the Post-Marcos Philippines," Pilipinas 2 (1988): 33-48.

⁸⁰R. L. Youngblood, "The Corazon Aquino Miracle and the Philippines' Churches," Asian Survey 27 (1987): 1240-55.

⁸¹Ibid.

Nevertheless, the new constitution ensures a U.S. type of democratic form of government, including a Bill of Rights, places checks on the authoritarian rule, and safeguards other aspects of freedom. It installed a presidential system with a bicameral legislature and protected the U.S. military bases in the Philippines. The Constitution granted the president a six year term, with Mrs. Aquino's ending in 1992. Having restored habeas corpus, the president was prohibited from honoring secret extension of jail sentences, and/or detention. Moreover, it restricted the president's relatives from holding offices, even in government-controlled companies.

The military were not excluded from these laws. Some members of the active military were excluded from holding civilian positions in the government, or in public companies. It further made provisions for land reforms, but entrusted to Congress the power to accomplish that.⁸² The constitution was very essential because it abolished dictatorship and guaranteed free speech. Even though the document was designed to protect the interests of the masses, Mrs. Aquino's policy choices received severe criticisms from friends and foes

⁸²See the 1986 Philippines Constitution.

as a result of this openness.

President Aquino And The Bureaucracy

Mrs. Aquino's appointments constituted another policy area that created challenges for her administration. She chose many people she knew and trusted, especially ones that contributed to the struggle that paved the way for her rise.⁸³ But Mrs. Aquino's efforts to place trustworthy people in office caused problems. Very few people had such clean records and, subsequently, she had to use some people from the previous administration. These appointees were members of the middle class, and she was criticized for that. The opposition group, championed by the deposed president's followers, accused her of establishing a new dictatorship which might lead to civil disobedience. Some members of her party, the Unido, complained that she never consulted her party prior to making any major decision. Some threatened to team up with the Marcos faction in challenging her administration.⁸⁴

President Aquino came to power through a fragile coalition government. She tried to compensate some of

⁸³Ross Marlay, "The Political Legacy of Marcos; The Political Inheritance of Aquino," in Lande, ed., 316.

⁸⁴Sandra Burton, 313.

these groups, but could not place every supporter in office. One consolation through the resultant dispute was that she was not beholden to the radical left, and they were not in her government. "Thank God, they did not help," she exclaimed "now I do not owe them anything."⁸⁵

Another crisis emerged when she tried to replace Marcos' appointees. Facing resistance from these people, Corazon Aquino created a panel, the 'Officers in Charge.' This resulted in the large-scale discharge of many officials.⁸⁶ The opposition had thought that Mrs. Aquino, due to her gender, could not withstand division, but she put forth a strong front. Confronting some of her critics, Mrs. Aquino remarked: "...the question you all really want to ask is; Can she hack it? Isn't she weak?"⁸⁷ As a result, the factions sought avenues to destabilize her government. In some cases, especially where people refused to relinquish authority, the military were asked to restore order, and succeeded in persuading them to give up their posts. It was complained that the placement of the Officers in Charge

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Lucy Komisar, 132.

⁸⁷J. Clad, "Cory Comes out Fighting," Far Eastern Economic Review, 5 November 1987, 22.

(OICS) was done hurriedly so as to safeguard vital documents. They were not aware that the vacant slots could not be filled. When this was realized, some of these displacements were asked to return to duty.

When complaints relating to displacement surmounted, Corazon Aquino organized a task force to oversee the problem.⁸⁸ But this special task force did not actualize the objectives due to diverse interests. President Aquino intervened by advising the officials, and in some cases removed many of the conspirators. She maintained:

I am the one who makes the decisions ... I've had it, I just have to remind you I'm the president, and if you cannot respect me, there's no way we can work together.⁸⁹

Consequently, 24 KBL mayors in Ilocos Sur, even though it was Marcos' domain, were reinstated. But such treatments were not consistent. She demanded that the Supreme Court Justices resign but had promised not to embark on a large scale removal of these judges and other civil servants, but she was unable to find suitable replacements. This sort of inconsistency created problems, and many people were offended.

On other occasions she would defend actions taken

⁸⁸"The Philippines," 34.

⁸⁹Lucy Komisar, 129-130.

by the "OIC." When they were criticized for their inexperience, Mrs. Aquino shifted the blame to the Marcos administration for creating corruption in the bureaucracy. Referring to her own background, she argued that her inexperienced and clean records enabled her to rise to power as a revolutionary leader.⁹⁰ Confronting her critics who challenged her capability as a woman, Corazon Aquino stated:

These are the questions that were asked by all those who have openly challenged my power, authority and resolve, and who have suffered for it. I speak of the shame-faced officers who have abandoned their followers... and failed politicians who made the last places in the last elections and now trying to find a back door to power... Well, they can forget it. Although I am a woman and physically small, I have blocked all doors to power except elections in 1992.⁹¹

As Corazon Aquino's leadership was scorned from all corners, her aide Saguisag observed that she was being condemned right from the start for her courage and imposition as a woman striving to meet her objective. She complained:

You released all detainees (which the military and many businessmen did not approve of), you're too harsh. You abolish Congress, you are too harsh. You can't win. People in a macho society

⁹⁰Ibid., 134.

⁹¹"The Philippines," 34.

can't accept a woman really leading them.⁹²

In essence, the president's aide was implying that had the position been occupied by a male, things might be different.

When division emerged in the cabinet, Mrs. Aquino was further faulted for not taking charge due to her weakness as a woman, characterized by drifting and indecision.⁹³ This, according to her critics, rendered her regime paralyzed. An analyst suggested these ministers had problems relating to her power and her leadership style. The problem was compounded by her distrust of some of her colleagues and her dependence on reliable relatives for advice.⁹⁴ Facing all these challenges, President Aquino decided to consult other heads of government abroad. Having considered the counsel of these leaders, she prioritized policies and delegated others to her ministers.

Aquino And The Military

By April of 1986, serious strains between the Aquino regime and the military technocrats became

⁹²Lucy Komisar, 137.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Jeanne Marie Col, 34.

apparent. Enrile, in one of his public proclamations, urged the civilian administration to "continue the revolution,"⁹⁵ aimed at quelling communist uprisings. This warning clearly conflicted with Aquino's standpoint of reconciliation and achieving peace among all Filipinos.⁹⁶ Following her rise to power, she had appealed to the military for support. They recognized Mrs. Aquino's success, describing the election as "a significant victory in the Filipino people's struggle for genuine democracy, and national independence."⁹⁷ But Aquino was warned that Enrile and Ramos were opportunists and were seeking influence in her regime. As time progressed, sharp differences became salient between some member of the army and Mrs. Aquino.

Enrile's speech at Cebu City warned President Aquino against consequences of having a cease-fire accord with the communist insurrectionists. At a private conversation with a journalist, Enrile complained that President Aquino was ignorant of the problems posed by

⁹⁵Sandra Burton, 416.

⁹⁶Gareth Porter, "Counterinsurgency in the Philippines: Aquino was Right," SAIS Review (1987): 93.

⁹⁷Lucy Komisar, 140.

the Communist rebels. He also condemned her for using two popular leftist speech-writers. He concluded, "poor girl, she might not know what words they are putting in her mouth."⁹⁸ In other words, as a woman unable to make sound policies, Mrs. Aquino was being influenced by the rebels.

Similarly, most of her reforms such as the nullification of Marcos National Assembly and the abolition of the constitution received stern criticism from some military officials. They believed that Aquino's was influenced by the communist dissidents. Captain Robles complained that many of her resolutions were made without the input of the "defense establishment." The young officers demonstrated, claiming that her conduct was not any different from the Marcos policy in its relation to promotions, hirings, and firings. They also resented the leftist advisors for having more influence than themselves, especially in issues relating to national safety.⁹⁹ Captain Robles

⁹⁸Richard D. Fisher, "The Communist Threat to Reviving Democracy in the Philippines," in Daniel Schirmer and Stephen R. Shalom, The Philippines Reader (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 396-7; Sandra Burton, 416.

⁹⁹This segment of the army disliked Aquino's delegation of authority to her executive secretary, Joker Arroyo, a human rights lawyer.

queried: "If she is just a figurehead, why shouldn't she be a figurehead of the right rather than of the left?"

The differences between the two power spectrums manifested during the Manila Hotel coup of July 6, 1986, precipitating from election fraud. Marcos and his vice president had tried to establish an alternative government. Arroyo and some of Aquino's closest advisers criticized Enrile for failing to prevent the coup. Shortly after Aquino assumed the presidency, Enrile began condemning the mentors and some cabinet officials for lack of experience.¹⁰⁰ Enrile's familiars constantly taunted the civilian regime for inadequacy and claimed that many unsuccessful coups attempts against Mrs. Aquino were designed to oust her. But Mrs. Aquino did not yield to this pressure. Used to Marcos' repression, many people perceived Aquino's lack of extreme disciplinary actions against her enemies as a sign of weakness. The major impact as the military officials continued with their propaganda was that potential foreign investors were scared stiff and were reluctant to invest. This sort of psychological warfare further drove the economy to devastation.

On November 10, 1986 President Aquino issued a

¹⁰⁰Lucy Komisar, 193-195.

warning to the so-called coup plotters announcing that: "I shall oppose any attempt from any quarter to interfere with or dictate to my government."¹⁰¹ She further forewarned these men that she would summon her supporters to a second display of "people's power." This response from Mrs. Aquino came after Enrile's statement that the administration interrupted attempts to achieve a cease-fire agreement with the New People's Army.

General Ramos, the Army Chief of Staff, played a decisive role to resolving this problem. He encouraged the officers to present a written request of their demands to Aquino, giving her time to react. Aquino responded cautiously and ordered a meeting with top service commanders to appraise the situation. With Ramos advice, she produced a blueprint to appease the military, hoping to achieve a consensus.

On November 22, Ramos launched his offensive. He pretended that Enrile and other pro-Marcos dissidents were about to stage a coup and took action. The following day, November 23, President Aquino issued her mandate and fired Enrile along with four other

¹⁰¹Sandra Burton, 1987, 529.

ministers.¹⁰² Rafael Ilete then became the new Defense Minister and Enrile, estranged, was free to engage in an open conflict against the administration. He made speeches in which he lodged verbal assault on Aquino, calling her a naive woman who was easily manipulated by the leftists.¹⁰³

Mrs. Aquino gained recognition at home and abroad¹⁰⁴ for her handling of the Enrile affair. Her stance portrayed her as a shrewd politician, not taking chances but by the same token she had the wisdom and the capability to make choices. It also illustrated the extent of the military grip on the status quo. Having control over the weaponry, the army easily influenced the civilian government. Fortunately for Mrs. Aquino, the military were divided, which proved advantageous for her.

Colonel Gringo Hoasan and some 1,200 associates and civilians launched another unsuccessful coup on August 28, 1987. The majority of the military, loyal to

¹⁰²Rigoberto Tiglao, "Enrile's Conglomerate: Aquino's Fiercest Critic has Quietly Assembled an Empire," Far Eastern Economic Review, October 1989, 44.

¹⁰³Lucy Komisar, 140..

¹⁰⁴Time Magazine named her "Woman of the Year".

the new constitution, once again acted on General Ramos' initiative in defending democracy. In the course of Aquino's presidency, there were over six documented coup attempts and many shams aimed at ousting the woman from office. These attempts even though unsuccessful, exposed the fact that Enrile, Honasan, and several others were bent on ousting the woman whom they perceived as a figurehead. It also demonstrated the vulnerability of the new regime to these disgruntled elements, both from the leftists and the mainstream Filipinos. But with the help of Ramos, Mrs. Aquino remained in office. As a result, she recognized Ramos as a viable force in her presidential career. Ramos became empowered to influence, if not veto, security-related policies and was responsible for Mrs. Aquino approval of a 60% pay increase for the military. Ramos later retired from the military and assumed the position of Secretary of National Defense.¹⁰⁵

Vice President Laurel, discontented with Ramos' influence and his own lack of contributions, resigned from his cabinet position as Foreign Minister and teamed up with the opposition. These problems with members of the army created concerns that Mrs. Aquino might not

¹⁰⁵Sandara Burton, 430.

last in power.¹⁰⁶ She proved them all wrong. Each successive experience helped to make her more determined.

Agrarian Reforms

In July 1987, the Aquino administration signed into law an incomplete land package which accorded the legislature the authority and sole responsibility to enforce the law. Corazon Aquino had promised during the 1986 presidential campaign to carry out major land reforms. She outlined the two major issue areas: high productivity and equitable distribution of proceeds and ownership.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, she pledged that the long-time settlers, landless peasants were to be incorporated into a sort of a cooperative farm system. She also affirmed the conservation of forests and other natural resources. All these campaign promotions seemed to bring

¹⁰⁶Even the Senate President Salonga was quoted as bemoaning the predicament surrounding the abortive coup. Being a proponent of land reform, he said that they "cannot have meaningful land reform in an atmosphere of such instability." A Ramos associate said that Cory "needs the military, and General Ramos is the only commander with the moral stature to hold the country together." See, Sandara Burton 1989.

¹⁰⁷Corazon Aquino, "Program of Social Reform", in Schirmer and Shalom, 339.

new hope for change among the masses.

She appointed Heherson Alvarez as the Minister of Agrarian Reform. In her new constitution she gave special emphasis to land reform affirming that the government should "undertake the just distribution of all agricultural lands,¹⁰⁸ but such reforms were left to Congress to implement.

During her first year in office, Mrs. Aquino found herself in an awkward position as to whether she would personally introduce a comprehensive land reform through the executive privilege, or rely on the Congress to pass a land reform law. She eventually yielded to the Congress. The result was a lack of genuine land reform. It was a ploy on the part of the Congress to placate the influential landlords. Led by the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) of the Philippines Peasant Movement, the peasants seized a total of 48,768 hectares. Such actions became widespread,¹⁰⁹ and several KMP peasants and sympathizers lost their lives during a

¹⁰⁸The Republic Of Philippines National Constitution, Section 4, Article xiii.

¹⁰⁹Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), Ulat Pampulitika Sa Taong 1986, (Mimeographed), 2. The KMP Chairman Jaime Tadeo was quoted as saying that a total of 70,500 hectares of land as of June 1988 have been occupied; Manila Chronicle, 23 June 1988, 2.

demonstration, as the government troopers raided the area near the Mendiola bridge on January 22, 1987. The incident, popularly known as the Mendiola Massacre, demonstrated the peasants' reaction to the inconsistencies of her leadership.

Consequently, the Cabinet Action Committee (CAC) on Agrarian Reform was established. It was entrusted with the task of administering the reform program. The initial draft, was devoted to redistributing 3.79 billion hectares to benefit the 2.81 million small peasants and landless agricultural workers.¹¹⁰ The draft received criticism from different sectors. The World Bank representatives classified the program as unworkable, causing it to be revised several times. Finally, Corazon Aquino signed Executive Order (EO) No. 299. It reiterated the constitutional provisions on the land reform but lacked specifics in condemning the peasants' occupations of the land. As a result, the Congress for People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR) rejected the order.¹¹¹ Lastly, due to several revisions by

¹¹⁰James F. Eder, "Agricultural Intensification and Labor Productivity: Evolution of Commercial Gardening as a Source of Livelihood in the Philippines," Human Organization 50 (Fall 1991): 245-6.

¹¹¹Manila Chronicle, 24 July 1987, 8; Amando Doronila, "A Twilight Zone In Our Political Growth," Manila Chronicle, 15 June 1989, 1.

Congress, the June 6, 1988 agrarian law was issued. Mrs. Aquino signed the Republic Act (RA) No. 6657, or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988 (CARL 1988).

Opponents challenged the on the grounds of Article VI, of the Constitution. That section allowed the people to reject or enact a law through signatures of 10% of the total registered voters. Moreover, Congress needed about \$16.6 million signatures to implement the decree, which was hard to achieve in the face of massive economic uncertainty. Aquino's land reform policy had sought to implement an actual land transfer from the landlords to the peasants.

This policy option, however, was negated by the CARL provisions. Critics cited that if Aquino were serious, she would have incorporated her family estate the 6,000 hectare Hacienda Luisita. Mrs. Aquino had considered doing just that, but was unable to accomplish that example due to family differences. The complexity surrounding the land reform highlighted the complexity of problems facing Mrs. Aquino. The lack of determination on the part of the Congress further crippled her ability to achieve a genuine agrarian reform. The reluctance of these people to work with Mrs.

Aquino demonstrated the deadlocks among interest groups in a democratic environment. Such an impasse posed a limitation to Mrs. Aquino's ability to effectuate change.

Aquino And The Filipinas

The Filipinas stand out in many ways among their Asian counterparts. The women are well educated and do not lack access to career opportunities universities, law schools, and medical schools. Notwithstanding the fact that women play a vital role in the country, the Filipinas, like the Pakistanis, do not have long tradition of women faring as political leaders. In spite of this fact, some Filipinas have risen to prominence in education, professions and business. They are well represented in the prestigious University of Philippines Law School, and the Dean of the School, Irene Cortes, is a woman. In the economic sphere (business) Filipinas are integrated, mostly financial advisers of corporations, but very few are corporate leaders (presidents or vice presidents).¹¹²

At the private level, the lower class women are engaged in petty trades while some of the of the upper

¹¹²Tancango, 326.

class Filipinas oversee their vast family resources, as did Mrs. Aquino with the Hacienda Luisita while her husband was in prison. Nevertheless, the working class women earn less than 60% of their male counterparts' wages. The Filipinas are found in such professions as teaching, nursing, secretarial, and domestic help. Household helpers compose 30% of all women working fulltime for wages or salaries.¹¹³

In the political sector, very few women compete with men for influence. A very limited number of women have occupied political positions, serving as governors, cabinet ministers, member of Congress and the National Assembly. In this arrangement, men monopolize the high ranking positions in the national government.

Even though women occupy about 10% of these ranks, which might be relatively high in comparison with many developing nations, it has been suggested that Philippines' ratio tallies with those of the Western nations.¹¹⁴ Yet that number is proportionately low, as women constitute over 50% of the country's population. As share numbers (majority opinion) make a lot of

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Linda K. Richter, "The Status of Women in the Philippines," in Schirmer and Shalom, 136.

difference about which candidate will be nominated in a democratic system, the Filipinas in this respect should have a strong political clout and as a result fair representation. Furthermore, one may suggest that women's high population should influence their voting power and affect policy issues especially ones directly affecting women.

The Philippines being a predominantly Catholic nation, the Church has greater control over sensitive issues than public officials. For instance, issues such as population control, abortion, and divorce have been legislated according to Church doctrine. Mrs. Aquino's close ties with the Church affected her policy choices on these issues.¹¹⁵ The absence of an effective population program complicates the problem of poverty, a dilemma that mere redistribution of wealth cannot resolve. There are limits on land and the capacity of government to service a surging boom in demography, as well as the capacity of a deteriorating environment to sustain too many lives.

Why was Aquino's regime unable to implement a population control program? The major reason is that the Filipinos are predominantly Catholic. That is, 85% of

¹¹⁵Ibid., 352.

the citizens¹¹⁶ belong to the Catholic denomination. The Church had demonstrated a significant function in bringing and maintaining Mrs. Aquino in power. While the support of the Catholic church was a marked asset for her, it also created yardsticks for her policy choices especially in social policy areas such as divorce, abortion, and family planning.¹¹⁷ Mrs. Aquino declared in the Constitution that abortion was prohibited for the sake of the children. Divorce was illegal and only one form of birth control was legal, the Church-sanctioned rhythm method, and this in turn contributed to the population growth. In the absence of the freedom to divorce from unhappy marriages, there was widespread infidelity.¹¹⁸

Another main concern was related to the vast proportions of unwanted pregnancies due to lack of proper birth control devices. As a result, the country was faced with one of the highest birth rates. With a population growth of 2.4% and the consequent 62.5 million people; according to the 1990 census, Aquino's

¹¹⁶"Running Wild: Philippines," The Economist, 15 February 1992, 38.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 353.

¹¹⁸Linda Richter, 136.

administration conceded to starting a \$200 million population control scheme. The Church, headed by Cardinal Sin, issued a strong statement opposing the program, calling it "anti-life."¹¹⁹

One other fact remains; the country was impoverished and women on the lower political and economic ladder had no viable means of survival. The unstable conditions had forced some Filipinas into prostitution in order to support themselves and their families.¹²⁰ A vast proportion of the problem occurred at the areas dedicated to tourism. During the Marcos regime, income from tourism provided the nation with a sizable source of foreign exchange and he did nothing to address the problem of prostitution.¹²¹ Rather, additional sites were built dedicated to facilitate tourism. These exhibitions, according to the women's group fighting against prostitution, exacerbated the

¹¹⁹"Too Many Babies," The Economist, 20 October 1990, 47.

¹²⁰A. Lin Neumann, "Tourism Promotion And Prostitution," in Schirmer and Shalom, 182; A. Neumann, "Scandal In Manila," MS Magazine, February 1984, 99-102.

¹²¹A. Neumann, *ibid.*

problem.¹²² Those involved in the act range from over 5,000 children (boys and girls as young as nine years of age) to young adults.

The problem of prostitution is so severe that the women's network became involved to resolve the problem. These women's efforts were coordinated with the Asian Women's Association based in Japan. Another group, Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women (TWMAEW),¹²³ established by a Filipina nun, Sister Soledad "Sol" with its religious and academic bases pressured the government to intervene in order to save these youngsters.

Moreover, the Asian Women's Liberation, a news journal for women's cause published articles as well as held conferences on how to combat the predicament. The government consistently denied the existence of the problem because of its revenue from tourism. In 1980, it was reported that the government earned \$344 million from tourism, and that figure later quadrupled.¹²⁴ It

¹²²Tancango, 329.

¹²³Other organizations embracing women from all spectrums, -professionals, youth, urban poor, peasant, and workers- include the PILINA, KALAYAAN, SAMAKNA, SAMAKA, MAKASAMA, KMK, BAGONG PILIPINAS, & GABRIELA.

¹²⁴Tancango, 329.

was on this basis that a women's group in 1985 met with Aquino in support of her candidacy.¹²⁵

In the controversy surrounding Benigno Aquino's murder, there was a new wave of women's movement. A new militant movement, Women for the Ouster of Marcos and Boycott (WOMB), was established against the Marcos regime. They formed coalitions which led to formation of the 1984 militant General Assembly Binding Women For Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action, GABRIELA.¹²⁶ Their main concern was how to oust Marcos, whose regime was cruel on the Filipinas, and how to establish avenues to pay tribute to those women martyrs, executed, detained, tortured, and raped because they protested against the ills of the regime.

Seeing the need for change especially where women were concerned, Senator Benigno S. Aquino had vehemently opposed the government on these lines. When he was savagely murdered, the women lodged a massive protest two months after his death. They were very supportive of

¹²⁵Ibid, 345.

¹²⁶Brenda J. Stoltzfus, "A Woman's Place is in the Struggle," in Schirner and Shalom, 309.

the Cory Crusaders, which was later known as the People's Power Movement. This group enlisted people and raised funds for Mrs. Aquino's campaign.¹²⁸ When Corazon Aquino came to power, she sought to modify certain issue areas, and included women as framers of the national constitution. Women also had access to the cabinet portfolios. For example, Patricia Santos Tomas, heading the Civil Service Commission, was entrusted with programs that sought to enhance women's status in the system. Her duty included recruiting women to jobs and resolving gender based controversies in relation to women.¹²⁹ Mrs. Aquino, in this regard, sought ways to prevent some women from engaging in prostitution or stop them from participating in the Filipina Maiden Diaspora. As a result, laws were passed prohibiting prostitution and restricting women under 35 years from going abroad in search of jobs as housekeepers.¹³⁰

The Filipinas played an important role in electing Mrs. Aquino into office. On becoming a woman political leader, she saw the need of integrating women into the

¹²⁸Tancango, 345.

¹²⁹Jeanne Marie Col, 38.

¹³⁰"A Maiden Diaspora: Filipina Maids under 35 Will not be Allowed to go Abroad," The Economist, 20 February 1988, 331.

political system and appointed women and men as framers of the constitution. Women were also elected into her cabinet. She initiated population control despite the Catholic Church's disapproval and condemned prostitution, steps that her predecessor did not take. Mrs. Aquino's attempts to address some of women's issues showed that women political leaders could still advance women's cause and simultaneously govern effectively.

How President Aquino Lost Power

Mrs. Aquino's rise to power was determined by her husband's sudden death. Therefore, according to women-centered argument, she came to power under a crisis condition. But as the emergency receded, there was an overriding concern for her to return to the traditional domain. The sequence of events patterned by the patriarchal cleavage over the policy arena ultimately precipitated the crisis which eventually cause the woman's downfall.

As discussed earlier, birth control was the most controversial bill supported by Aquino which conflicted with the Church's basic principles. The Church had been Aquino's principle support base. It brought her to power and supported her as long as she remained conservative. She seemed to part company with the Church when she

approved the \$200 million research fund dedicated to exploring more avenues for effective family planning through modern technology. This policy was adopted to help combat the surging population and was also, designed to elevate women's status in the society by educating them on issues affecting their lifestyles. Mrs. Aquino lost the Church's support based on the differences surrounding population control.

A number of other disagreements originated from those who saw her as a woman incapable of making sound policy choices in appointing officials, releasing political prisoners, instituting land reform, and changing the constitution. But the severest gender and class-based criticisms were posed by some army officials who believed that a woman could not make sound policies, nor was capable of being a Commander-in-Chief. Such standpoints led to a number of unsuccessful coups to oust her. Nevertheless, these experiences made her affirm repeatedly that she would not (and did not) contest in the May 1992 presidential election.¹³¹ Rather, she supported Fidel Ramos' candidacy and strenuously campaigned for him. Having served as Chief

¹³¹"Aquino's Choice: Philippines," The Economist, 1 February 1992, 15.

of Staff and later Defense Secretary, Fidel Ramos had protected Aquino from over six documented attempts against her regime.¹³²

Mrs. Aquino has obviously made her legacy. She ended the Marcos dictatorship, and established the constitution which restored a presidential system of government. The constitution contained a Bill of Rights which establishes a human rights commission and places checks on authoritarian rule. Establishing a participatory democracy, her advent opened doors for women to compete in the national office. As a result, two contested as presidential candidates in the 1992 elections and one of them came in second, with Fidel Ramos winning the election. It also sanctions U.S. military bases in operation until 1991. Unfortunately the U.S. pulled out of the Philippines following the devastating volcanic eruption at Mount Pinatubo.¹³³

¹³²"Cousin Against Cousin: Philippines," The Economist, 3 November 1990, 40; "The Iron Butterfly flies Home: Imelda Marcos," The Economist, 9 November 1991, 33.

¹³³Philippines: Don't Go Home," The Economist, 17 November 1990, 38.

Aquino succeeded in arranging a temporary cease-fire with the rebels while Ramos recently brought them to the negotiating table. Having been succeeded by the Ramos government, President Aquino would be remembered as a widow who singlehandedly fought an authoritarian regime and won. She was challenged on several grounds, being a woman leader. She was also noted for taking the needed steps to resolve population problems in the country despite the objections of the Church. The administration's stance on population control illustrated that the state would always protect its interests even in the face of major opposition. In relation to women's affairs, efforts were made to include women into the system. The administration passed laws combatting prostitution and the maiden diaspora. Her presence in the political system, including the establishment of a democratic environment made a number of women become involved in the political process.

Gender and class issues were central to her rise to power. She was Senator Aquino's widow who became involved in politics due to the sudden death of her husband. Her widowhood, motherhood, simplicity and honesty helped to win the support of the people and subsequently her election as political leader. In evaluating how she fared in power, gender and class

concerns certainly affected her leadership. She faced challenges relating to her establishment of a new constitution which abolished dictatorship and established freedom of speech and established a participatory democracy (which led to severe criticisms against her) Her inability to resolve problems created by her appointments, even though class-based, was attributed to her gender. Critics argued that being a woman she could not handle crisis decisions; one of the most damaging criticisms were launched by some army officers who saw her as a figurehead and publicly argued that her gender posed a barrier to her leadership. Consequently there were several coup attempts to oust her regime; with regards to the Filipinas, Mrs. Aquino's administration sought to integrate women into the system by selecting women as part of the framers, as well as placing a number of them in office, and abolished prostitution in the country. Nonetheless, Mrs. Aquino was in trouble the minute she adopted a program for family planning due to an opposing view from the Church on this issue. The Church withdrew its support from Mrs. Aquino making to reconsider contesting for another election; in relation to the land reform, the diverse interests in the congress caused a dead-lock in establishing a cohesive land reform program. These in

turn forced her to delegate authority to other people. By delegating authority to her colleagues, Mrs. Aquino cleverly sidetracked basic responsibilities which a Prime Minister like Indira Gandhi had tackled singlehandedly, and which also had created problems for her by her enemies, especially those men who were politically motivated. Compared to Benazir Bhutto who was ousted from power, and Indira Gandhi, who was assassinated, Corazon Aquino successfully completed a six-year term but refused to contest again for fear of opposition. She argued that she could make more progress through a non-governmental organization. Class and gender concerns affected how she relinquished power as a political leader.

CHAPTER FIVE

MRS. VIOLETA CHAMORRO AND NICARAGUA

Her Rise To The Office Of The Presidency

In order to establish how Violeta Barrios Chamorro came to power, how she fared and the circumstances that would lead to her fall, the feminist theory on the state in developing countries becomes a very vital segment of my analytical method. To start with, the women-centered perspective predicates that the state is gendered and structured into private and public spheres. Men and women according to this opinion, are inserted differently into the state system. As women lack access to the policy-making positions at the national and international levels, men are the heads of governments.

The class system, according to this opinion, is generally male-defined. Women, as part of the capitalist patriarchy, acquire their socioeconomic class on the basis of their male kin's means of production. It is on the basis of this grouping that some women in the developing countries participate in politics or become

inert. Women with prestigious male kin are involuntarily typed into an upper class as opposed to the ones whose male relatives are not renowned. Therefore, women with notable male kin are not grouped similarly with the majority of women who are found at the bottom of the socioeconomic ranking. Mrs. Chamorro and all the women in this study are different from most women in the developing countries because of their family backgrounds. Her special tie to the capitalist patriarchy enlists her in a different political class from the rest of the majority of women in her country. This unique alliance with the system paved the way for her rise to power.

Intertwined with the above analysis is the argument of the sudden death syndrome. A female kin is asked to temporarily assume power in order to provide stability to the state system following the sudden death of a political leader. Women in this case are used as balancers whether on the basis of equality or inequality. They are there to carry out an exclusive task.

Mrs. Chamorro became the Nicaraguan president elect on February 25, 1990. Like Mrs. Aquino of the Philippines and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, she became involved in the politics of her country due to the

sudden death of a popular male kin. She came into politics in opposition to the way the Nicaraguan government savagely murdered her husband. Also like her Philippine counterpart, she garnered much support from the masses which entitled her to become a presidential candidate. She came to power, then, to further her husband's aspiration of achieving peace in Nicaragua.

Her emergence marked the end of more than ten years of oppressive leadership by the Marxist Sandinista regime. Furthermore, her advent suggested the end of the eight-year-old civil war between the contras (supported by the United States), and the Sandinista government. The latter had emerged as a result of the citizens' resistance to Anastasio Somoza's repressive administration in the 1970s.

The Somoza family had for many decades ruled the country: General Anastasio Somoza Garcia in the 1930s, Luis Somoza Debayle in the 1960s, and Anastasio Somoza Debayle in the 1970s.¹ Their dictatorial rule, plus the virtual monopoly of the Nicaraguan economy and suppression of the majority of the national conscientious objectors, were seriously criticized by

¹H. Kantor, "Nicaragua: America's only Hereditary Dictatorship," in H. Kantor, Patterns of Political Systems in Latin America (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970), 159-184.

the people.² Chief among this opposition were the Chamorro family.

Dona Violeta Barrios de Chamorro married into a typical Nicaraguan political elite group. She had lived most of her life in the shadow of her husband, Pedro Chamorro. She was the widow of Cardinal Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, who was the director of his newspaper, La Prensa, since 1952. He inherited the newspaper from his father, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Zelaya. Cardinal Pedro Joaquin Chamorro used the journal as a personal frontline against the Somoza reign. His great-great-uncle, Fruto Chamorro, was the first president of Nicaragua, governing the nation from 1853 to 1855. Since then, three other Chamorros at four various occasions presided over the office: Pedro Joaquin (1875-1879), Emiliano (1917-21), Diego (1921-23), and Emiliano again in 1926.³ Although Cardinal Pedro Joaquin Chamorro had never held a political position, he had capitalized on the influence of his predecessors, and consequently wielded great

²P. J. L. Valaquez, Nicaragua: Sociedad Civil y Dictadura (Costa Rica: Libro Libre, 1986), 10.

³Bernard Diedrich, Somoza And The Legacy Of U.S. Involvement In Central America (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1981), 153.

influence over the Nicaraguan people.

The account of Pedro Chamorro is intricately related to his wife's ascendance to Nicaragua's president elect, for without him Violeta Chamorro would most likely have remained invisible in her country's politics. It was due to Pedro Chamorro's struggles to transform his country from the military autocracy into a democratic nation, that he was savagely murdered. This in turn persuaded his widow to fight for the realization of her husband's aspirations for democracy in war-torn Nicaragua.⁴

Pedro Chamorro became interested in journalism after studying in Mexico and was dedicated to resisting the oppressive Nicaragua regime.⁵ Upon returning home in 1948, Pedro joined his father in overseeing the family business, La Prensa. He used his foreign expertise for the betterment of the journal. Pedro Chamorro became the director in 1952, soon after his father's death. Shortly, La Prensa became the outstanding newspaper in the country, and was widely recognized in the Central American domain. The paper was dedicated to combatting

⁴La Prensa, Cincuentenario (Managua: La Presena, 1977), 130.

⁵H. Kantor, 180.

oppression. Presidential politics in the country were dominated by the military establishment. That is, the head of the nation had for many decades been a military figure.⁶ Therefore, whichever group emerged as the leader, mostly through military take-overs, that group commanded the national assets while the opposition lost everything. As a critic expressly asserts:

The historic error of this government is that the government ran the country for itself and its people and repressed its enemies with confiscations, jail, and exile...⁷

In opposition to the autocracy were the Chamorros. Like his predecessor, Pedro Chamorro used the paper as a tool to uncover the ills of the Somoza regime, even though he was given stiff sentences. His wife adopted the same stance following his sudden death.

Like Pedro Chamorro, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was raised in an upper-class environment. She was born on October 18, 1929 in Rivas, Nicaragua. She was one of the seven children of a wealthy landowner and cattle rancher.⁸ Raised in a comfortable upper-class

⁶O. R. Vargas, "Elections in Nicaragua: 1912-1974," Barricada International, 30 September 1989, 6-7.

⁷R. Boudreaux, "The Great Conciliator," Los Angeles Time Magazine, 6 January 1991, 3-13.

⁸Envio Collective, "Navigating the Electoral Map," Envio, 8 October 1989, 38-40.

environment, she and her siblings were educated abroad. She studied for two years at a Roman Catholic high school for girls in San Antonio, Texas. She spent one year at the Blackstone College in Southside, Virginia, where she took secretarial courses.⁹ She withdrew from college at age 19 (following her father's death) and returned to Rivas where she lived with her aristocratic family. She met and married Pedro Joaquin in 1950. As her husband was always in the limelight, Mrs. Chamorro was satisfied being a homemaker. According to Mrs. Chamorro, she lived to be Pedro's wife:

To take care of my children, take care of the house, accompany him on his trips, take food to him in prison, going to drop off the food, there and back, and nothing more.¹⁰

They had four children together: including Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Barrios (Quinto or the fifth), who worked with his father, and who later became the co-director of La Prensa after his father's death. In 1984, he lived in exile in Costa Rica, where he published Nicaragua Hoy, a counter-revolutionary newspaper supplement. Later, he became the contra-directorate. On the other hand, the second child, Claudia Chamorro Barrios de Joaquin,

⁹Associated Press, Dateline, 26 February 1990, 6.

¹⁰M. A. Uhlig, "Opposing Ortega," New York Times Magazine, 11 February 1990, 34-35.

served as a Sandinistan Nicaraguan consul in Havana and later as ambassador to Costa Rica.

Christina Chamorro Barrios de Lacayo, the third offspring, was a sub-director of La Prensa, and also served as Nicaragua's ambassador to Spain.¹¹ The youngest child was Carlos Fernando Chamorro Barrios, who later became the director of the Barricada, an official newspaper of the Sandinistas. Even though their father's journal took a contradictory stance against the Ortega regime, two of Pedro and Violeta Chamorro's children, Carlos and Claudia, worked with the Sandinistas. Such a division in the family would present a tremendous challenge to Mrs. Chamorro when she became the president of the country, and according to her critics, tilted her policy stance towards the left. It was argued that her success at unifying the family would be precursory to attaining unity in the whole country.

Violeta Barrios de Chamorro entered the public arena in 1978 after her husband was killed.¹² Her husband's assassination triggered a national

¹¹Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua Family Saga Continues: A War, A Wedding," New York Times, 22 September 1986, L2.

¹²P. T. Edmiston, Nicaragua Divided: La Prensa and the Chamorro (Florida: University of West Florida Press, 1990), 23.

insurrection against Somoza, and consequently 18 months of civil war were initiated in the country. In the 1970s, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro was regarded as a reasonable contender to Somoza, but as he was savagely killed in 1979, the resistance formed on his behalf elevated his personality to that of a national martyr.¹³ After the 1979 revolution, his wife was chosen as one of five persons picked to lead Nicaragua.¹⁴ Mrs. Chamorro was the first female member of the revolutionary junta. She donated about \$50,000 to a somewhat fragmented nationalist guerrilla army, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), that was devoted to overthrowing Somoza.

Committed to change, she then became a very important force in the crusade led by the Sandinistas that eventually precipitated Somoza's flight from Nicaragua in the following year, on July 17, 1979. The tiny nation of Nicaragua had waged a devastating war that led to the demolition of major industrial complexes, destruction of numerous livestock, and the looting of millions of dollars by Anastasio Somoza. She also accepted a post in the newly-formed

¹³Ibid., 41.

¹⁴Ibid.

Sandinista-dominated government. Mrs. Chamorro later resigned from that association due to political differences with the Sandinistas, in protest against the regime's increasingly Marxist orientation. In an effort to stabilize the nation immobilized by war, the new leadership declared a state of emergency, abolished strikes and demonstrations and nationalized privately owned land and businesses.

In place of that association, she became more involved with the family newspaper, which was then supervised by her brother-in-law, Jaime Chamorro, and Palo Antonio Cuadra. Later on, Mrs. Chamorro became one of the co-directors of La Prensa. While with La Prensa, she persuaded other directors to align their views with the same ideological stance that her husband had adopted since 1948. Pedro Chamorro, as mentioned earlier, used the paper as the voice of the people in condemnation of the regime's lack of interest in enhancing the standard of living of the population, and against the administration's brutal assault on political enemies.

As publisher of La Prensa throughout the 1980s, Mrs. Chamorro oversaw its aggressive campaign against the Sandinistas, and the newspaper again became the focal point of Nicaragua's growing discontent with a repressive government. She then became very vocal in

condemning all the atrocities perpetrated by the Sandinistas against the indigents.

Nicaraguans are predominantly Catholics, even though the country was colonized first by Spain, then Britain, and later America in the 20th century. From Spain, the Nicaraguans inherited a "patrimonial, corporatist political structure." Such tradition upheld a strong military state as well as a fundamental Catholic ethics.¹⁵ Mrs. Chamorro is a devout Catholic.¹⁶ She always wears about her neck a crucifix and a cross (gifts from her late husband) and a locket containing her husband's photograph. As a dedicated Catholic, Mrs. Chamorro faithfully committed herself to Christ, the Virgin Mary, Pope John Paul II, and her deceased husband following his assassination. She once stated that her husband's spirit was alive within her.¹⁷ She expounded: "I talk to Pedro all the time, and I know what he wants me to do."¹⁸ As will be discussed later, such a strong

¹⁵D. Close, Nicaragua, Economics, and Society (London: Frances Pinter, 1988), 7; S. Ramirez, "The Kid from Niquinhomo," Latin American Perspectives 16 (1989): 48-82.

¹⁶Denis Lynn Daly-Heyck, Life Stories of the Nicaraguan Revolution (New York: Routledge, 1990), 41.

¹⁷Ibid., 91.

¹⁸Time, 12 June 1989, 62.

commitment to religion would greatly influence her decisions on women's issues when she became a political leader.

At age fifty-three, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro was murdered by unknown gunmen on his way to work on January 10, 1978.¹⁹ Prior to his death, he had received several death threats, most recently two days before his assassination. The latter came as a result of a critical editorial against a Cuban-owned blood bank coordinated by the Nicaraguan government for the purpose of making profits. In the article, he complained against the government's illicit use of its people's blood to do business abroad at the expense of the masses. Moreover, he had reported subversive activities by the government, manifesting in numerous killings, kidnappings, plus many other heinous acts against the citizens of the nation. As a result, he was a perceived threat to the leadership and consequently met his sudden death.²⁰

The death of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro raised numerous questions as to who committed the offense, and why he

¹⁹Edmisten, 90.

²⁰Ibid.

was savagely killed.²¹ Mrs. Chamorro, his widow, along with many others, was dissatisfied with the chains of tragic events occurring in the country, including the death of her husband. Following that incident, Mrs. Chamorro began to bring pressure to bear on the regime. She was depicted as the grieving matriarch and a devout widow of a politically-correct martyr.

At the March 1978 conference of the Inter-American Press Association held in Salvador, Brazil, she launched her campaign against the administration. Talking to a group of two hundred journalists, and expounding against press censorship in Nicaragua, Mrs. Violeta Chamorro denounced the Sandinista regime.²² Since it continued with the founder's main thrust to expose human rights violations and other illicit activities conducted by the Nicaraguan administration, La Prensa was ordered to close on June 26, 1986. The injunction came a day after La Prensa criticized the U.S. Congress' approval of \$100 million in military and non-lethal aid for the

²¹John Padgett, "Who Killed Pedro Chamorro?" Soldier Of Fortune, March 1985, 52-57.

²²Jose Maria Mayrink, "Violeta Denuncia Censura Ao La Prensa," O Estado De Sao Paula, 5 March 1986, 7.

Nicaraguan anti-government guerrillas.²³

La Prensa editors called the decision a "black moment for the people of Nicaragua."²⁴ On July 29, 1986, in a letter to President Ortega, Violeta Chamorro condemned the administration for their actions against the masses, arguing that such steps were detrimental to the country's future.²⁵

In her article in Foreign Affairs in the Winter of 1986, Violeta Chamorro launched her campaign targeting the West and called for their assistance in bringing change to the country.²⁶ In addition, she detailed some of the main objectives of La Prensa, which she defined as providing support for the diplomatic efforts of the Contadora group of nations. She indicated its dissatisfaction with Mexico, Panama, Colombia, and

²³Linda Greenhouse, "House Votes 221-209 to aid Rebel Forces in Nicaragua: Major for Reagan," New York Times, 26 June 1986, A1 and A10; Paul Lewis, "World Court Supports Nicaragua after U.S. Rejected Judges' Role," New York Times, 27 June 1986, A11.

²⁴Steven Kinzer, "Salvadorians say Closed Newspaper Backed U.S.," New York Times, 28 June 1986, L4.

²⁵Violeta Chamorro, "Sounds of Silence Surround La Prensa," Times Of The Americas, 15 July 1987, 11.

²⁶Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, "The Death of La Prensa," Foreign Affairs (Winter 1986/87): 385.

Venezuela for their inability to "come forward with a proposal that offers acceptable and workable solutions to achieve internal democracy in Nicaragua."²⁷

Moreover, she explained why good journalism was a medium of peaceful negotiation between factions:

We believe the appropriate dialogue we have desired for so long, for which my husband was struggling up to the moment he gave his life, for which we all have struggled with profound conviction for sixty years past.²⁸

Various journalists abroad sympathized with Violeta Chamorro's predicament. She received numerous awards for struggle.²⁹

In an article published by Times of The Americas, Violeta Chamorro voiced her concerns in relation to the government's subsequent harassment of her family. She wrote that the Sandinistas, despite all the predicament against the Chamorro had "continued a series of aggressions against the newspaper, which I think the whole world should know about." She concluded the article by maintaining that La Prensa was "fighting against a deceitful, seductive, false ideology that can

²⁷Ibid., 385.

²⁸Ibid, 385-6.

²⁹Envio Collective, "Navigating the Electoral Map," Envio, 8 October 1989, 3-14.

trick exploited peoples."³⁰ In order to ensure the longevity of the paper, Mrs. Chamorro advised La Prensa employees to go into exile and join contra radio stations.³¹

On August 7, 1989, the five presidents of Central American nations signed an agreement in Tela, Honduras. This agreement set the stage a peaceful transition of power in Nicaragua by requesting for an immediate dismantling of the ten thousand Contra groups based in Honduras. It also approved the United Nations' monitoring of the voluntary surrender of arms in cooperation with the Organization of American States. This initiative paved the way for some changes to occur in Nicaragua. Daniel Ortega visited Mrs. Violeta Chamorro, and indicated that his government would allow La Prensa to reopen on the grounds that the journal adhere to the dictates of his administration. In the presence of some members of her family (her daughter Cristina, brother in-law Carlos Holman and Pedro Joaquin's sister Anita), Mrs. Chamorro rejected Mr.

³⁰Violeta Chamorro, 385.

³¹Paul Berman, "The Angry Peace, The Hopes and Fears of Nicaragua's Civil Opposition," Village Voice, 3 November 1987, 32.

Ortega's media censorship. She further requested that other newspapers and media centers besides the Catholic Radio Station, be extended the same offer. After an hour of deliberation, it was agreed that La Prensa would resume its duties.³² The high sales record showed the people's support for La Prensa and its controversial role in the struggle for liberty. The editor contended:

La Prensa reappears in the middle of the peace efforts that we welcome and endorse. Six and one-half years of war have carried this country to a state of prostration, and the people are paying with hunger and pain for the political mistakes and deviation of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).³³

In addition, La Prensa appealed to the government to pardon political prisoners, to establish communications with the Contras, accommodate them, and abolish the state of emergency. It continued as the voice of the people, stating that the masses never wanted a totalitarian dictatorship, having survived the forty-five years of struggles against the Somoza's dictatorial leadership, and another eight years of similar conflict

³²Stephen Kinzer, "Press Curbs Remains in Nicaragua Editor Charges," New York Times, 22 October 1987, A10.

³³Violeta Chamorro, "Sounds of Silence," 12.

with the Sandinistas.³⁴ Following many editorials, including reports of widespread violence in the nation, Ortega once again ordered the newspaper to close.³⁵

Dr. Emilo Alvarez Montalvan, a member of the editorial board of La Prensa yearning for peace, lamented the deplorable conditions in the country. He therefore stated:

We have no history of democracy, no experience of opposition here. There is the regime, and the rest are always bought out or squelched. It is the same now, despite the revolution.³⁶

Despite the unsettling atmosphere, ten thousand people engaged in a procession in January 10, 1988 (the tenth anniversary of Padre Joaquin Chamorro's assassination). This event was staged in opposition to the Sandinista regime.³⁷ It is worthy to note that the Contras were backed by La Prensa and were the major opposition challenging the Sandinistas.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua Orders U.S. Ambassador to Leave Country," New York Times, 12 July 1988, A10.

³⁶Flora Lewis, "Violeta And Corazon," New York Times, 12 February 1988, A35.

³⁷"Protesters: Communists Get Out," Pensacola News Journal, 11 January 1988, A4.

In 1989, the government called for an election, and this disclosure triggered formation of over thirty-three political parties.³⁸ Twenty-one of these became officially recognized. These groups competed for recognition and popularity. The Sandinistas controlling the media in 1989 strove to promote their interests in the media. It featured a series of television propaganda in support of the national government. Violeta Chamorro, Plablo Antonio Cuadara, and Jaime Chamorro were depicted as evil incarnate, in alliance with the U.S. to undermine peace and the general welfare of the country. Mrs. Chamorro's sufferings under the Sandinistas symbolized the general sentiments against the military leadership.

In the presence of a strong military control of the nation, it was apparent that a consolidated effort was necessary to effectuate change. Such an effort must manifest in a good leadership, acceptable to all factions. Such unity played a decisive role in July 1979, when the whole country rose in unison and successfully overthrew the dictatorial regime of Anastasio Somoza. A decade later, similar public outcry re-emerged and was backed by international pressure to

³⁸Jaime Chamorro, La Prensa: The Republic of Paper (New York: Freedom House, 1990), 109.

restructure the political system. There were discussions as to who should better direct the masses. Cardinal Obando y Bravo, successor of Cardinal Pedro after his assassination, was popular but lacked the basic characteristics required in order to rally against the regime. Such a candidate must possess such qualities as to appeal to the masses. Flora Lewis suggested that Violeta Chamorro might make a suitable choice, except for her frail health.³⁹

While visiting the U.S, Chamorro was constantly compared with Corazon Aquino.⁴⁰ She was also advised by Bernard Aronson (U.S. Undersecretary of State for Inter-American Affairs) to run as a presidential candidate. Later, Marlon Fitzwater confirmed the state of affairs: "She is our candidate, and the candidate of the opposition forces."⁴¹ Like Mrs. Aquino and Benazir Bhutto, the sudden death of a popular male kin and the subsequent punishment incurred from the government as a result of her struggle for justice made her a suitable candidate.

³⁹Flora Lewis, A35.

⁴⁰Dominquez Cortez, La Lucha por el Poder (Managua: Vanguardia, 1990), 223.

⁴¹Ibid.

According to Lewis, Violeta Chamorro "is known to be firm, non-partisan, non-vindictive, unsullied by the past, brave, honest, and reliable." Lewis further compared her with Corazon Aquino, and projected that people would easily identify with her since "they know her husband's murder galvanized the country."⁴² On the other hand, like Mrs. Aquino, Mrs. Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto, she received her share of derogatory comments. Some of her opponents portrayed her as a "political illiterate."⁴³ Some other commentaries classified her as the "flower" of the junta but lacking the ability to make solid decisions.⁴⁴ Even La Prensa seemed to depict her as not possessing the political know-how. She was described as "a beautiful and noble woman, without vanity, without ambition, a home-loving woman."⁴⁵ The news of her candidacy were received with a combination of emotions. Her own vice-presidential running partner

⁴²Flora Lewis, A35.

⁴³C. Taylor, "UNO: Throwbacks and Greenbacks," Barricada International, 11 November 1989, 12-13.

⁴⁴Envio Collective, "Navigating the Electoral Map," 14.

⁴⁵Dominquez Cortez, 207.

called her "a useless bag of bones."⁴⁶

On September 2, 1989, Violeta Chamorro was selected as the National Opposition Union candidate to run against Daniel Ortega during the February 25, 1990 elections. She said that she decided to run "after consulting with God and with my dead husband."⁴⁷ One of her campaign strategists succinctly stated that "Violeta wasn't chosen for her abilities as a president. Violeta was chosen to win."⁴⁸ A close relative to Mrs. Chamorro also responded:

We are not looking for someone to run the country. We are looking for someone who represents the ideals of democracy.⁴⁹

In defence of herself on the charges of lack of experience, she said:

There is no need to study how to govern a country. I have accepted the challenge to revive this country with love and peace, according to the dictates of my conscience.⁵⁰

She nevertheless stood out among eight other

⁴⁶La Prensa, Violeta Chamorro, " La Prensa, 4 September 1989, 7.

⁴⁷Barricada International, 30 September 1989, 7.

⁴⁸M. A. Uhlig, "Opposing Ortega," New York Times Magazine, 11 February 1990, 34-35.

⁴⁹R. Boudreaux, "The Great Conciliator," Los Angeles Times Magazine, 6 January 1991, 9-13.

⁵⁰Ibid, 13.

contenders. According to observers, Violeta Chamorro "is virtually the only opposition figure in Nicaragua whose stature and prestige rivals that of Ortega."⁵¹ Mrs. Chamorro was identified with the pro-U.S. group and the U.S. had secretly funded La Prensa and the Contras;⁵² therefore to vote for Mrs. Chamorro meant to appease the United States. President George Bush suggested that he might lift the embargo against Nicaragua if the UNO won the election.⁵³ Later the U.S. Congress granted \$9 million for the UNO campaign in October of 1990. They had earlier spent \$12.5 million just to promote democracy in Nicaragua. It was estimated that Washington disbursed about \$25 million just to get Mrs. Chamorro elected.⁵⁴

In her campaign platform, Mrs. Chamorro promised that if she were to succeed Ortega she would attempt to actualize the following goals: free all political prisoners; cancel the military draft; and devote her

⁵¹"Sandinista Foes Name Candidates," Milwaukee Journal, 3 September 1989, A16.

⁵²J. Sharkey, "Nicaragua: Anatomy of an Election. How US Money Affected the Outcome in Nicaragua," Common Cause (May/June 1990): 20-29.

⁵³Envio Collective, "A Thorn by any Other Name Pricks the Same," Envio, 9 January 1990, 6.

⁵⁴Sharkey, 22; New York Times, 27 April 1990, A11.

government to restoration of freedom and dignity destroyed by the previous regimes.⁵⁵ She said:

I am not a politician but I believe this is my destiny. I am doing this for Pedro and for my country.⁵⁶

As time progressed, various groups vied for the media coverage, solicited government funding, and had applied for access to regulate the election. During her campaign, Mrs. Chamorro was portrayed as mother of the country, Maria, white dove of peace.⁵⁷ At the UNO rallies, the crowds were even told that "Pedro and God were above watching."⁵⁸ According to a foreign observer, "she is not really a political figure, she is an emotional and visual figure, an icon."⁵⁹ According to a critic, Mrs. Chamorro's stance to run on her deceased husband's dream "reinforced the impression that she would have little else to offer."⁶⁰ Her enemy Daniel

⁵⁵Stephen Kinzer, "Anti-Sandinistas Choose Candidates," New York Times, 4 September 1989, Y1.

⁵⁶Boudreaux, 13.

⁵⁷T. O'Kane, "The New Order," NACLA Report on the Americas 24 (1990): 28-36.

⁵⁸Ibid., 29.

⁵⁹J. Preston, "Chamorro Faces the Task of Reconciling a Divided Nation," Washington Post, 27 February 1990, 4.

⁶⁰Uhlig, 62.

Ortega adopted an opposite stance toward his campaign. Running on the FSLN platform, he opposed prohibiting the military draft; he was anti-U.S. and pro-Nicaragua military. He was depicted as a patron with a campaign slogan full of promise: "Everything will be better."⁶¹

To ensure a fair electoral process, some outside observers were invited to closely supervise the election, namely the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations (UN), former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and many others. About 2,500 foreign observers and 1,500 members of the international media were on Nicaraguan soil, painstakingly monitoring the election.

Mrs. Chamorro ran on the National Opposition Union (UNO) ticket. This party was established as a result of an amalgamation of fourteen parties against the Sandinistas' FSLN. According to the twenty-nine polls taken a year after the election, only one half accurately depicted Violeta ahead of others. Such predictions occurred because the poll results were manipulated to favor certain candidates. According to Peter Miller, this suggested the gravity of the "poll

⁶¹Cortez, 344.

problem" in the country's 1990 election.⁶² The results indicated that masses were not successfully swayed and this played no decisive role in choosing their leader. On February 25, 1990, 80% of the registered Nicaraguans voted.

Violeta Barrios de Chamorro and her running mate Virgilo Godoy were elected by 54.7 percent of the vote. Daniel Ortega and Sergio Ramirez came out second with 40.8% of the votes. Less than 4% of the remainder of the votes were distributed among the other eight contenders.⁶³ In the National Assembly, the UNO won 51 of the 92 seats, while the FSLN won 39 seats.

The UNO won by a landslide, with the municipal councils gaining 102 of the 131 seats. At the same time, however, the FSLN continued to dominate the National Assembly. Even though UNO achieved an unpretentious majority in the legislature, it was unable to muster the required 60%, or 55 seats, to initiate a constitutional

⁶²Peter V. Miller, "The Polls, a Review: Which Side are You on? The 1990 Nicaraguan Poll Debacle," Public Opinion Quarterly 55 (1991): 281-301.

⁶³Ibid., 282.

amendment.⁶⁴ This imbalance constantly threatened the stability of Mrs. Chamorro's government.

On April 25, 1990, at 60 years of age, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was inaugurated the President of Nicaragua.⁶⁵ The inauguration took place at the national stadium, in the presence of eleven visiting presidents, including a U.S. representative, Vice President Quayle. Other foreign dignitaries were present, including the UNO and FSLN supporters. Her election marked the first time in the nation's 156-year history (aside from the 1928 U.S.-supervised election) that all the major parties participated in an election and honored the result.⁶⁶ In concluding this section, the women-centered theorists claim that the sudden death of a popular male kin enlisted his female kin to carry his political banner is supported; for without the sudden death of her husband, Mrs. Chamorro would not have engaged into a political struggle against Ortega's regime. Her dilemma symbolized oppression of the masses under the Ortega

⁶⁴Paul Oquist, "Dinamica Socio-Politica de las Elecciones Nicaraguenses 1990," Instituto de Estudios Nicaraguenses (27 October 1990): 6.

⁶⁵"Chamorro Takes Nicaragua Helm," Times, 26 April 1990, A1.

⁶⁶Ibid.

government. On this basis, she was recruited to contest in the presidential election and she emerged as a political leader.

The Presidency Of Violeta Chamorro

I have consistently maintained throughout this study the importance of the perspectives put forth by some women-centered writers on the state in developing countries. This position maintains that women who have succeeded in becoming heads of their governments were placed in power by the patriarchal political culture; and while in power, these women were still subjects to the dictates of capitalist patriarchy which brought them to power in the first place. These conditions are orchestrated because of the desire on the part of the ruling class to safeguard the family while bolstering its basic objective, which is to maintain the division of labor for profit maximization.

Before her election, Mrs. Chamorro ironically had announced that "under the Constitution, I'm going to be the one in charge. I will be the one who gives the orders."⁶⁷ Her conflictual insertion into the political arena would later dictate who was actually in control.

⁶⁷L. Hockstader, "Chamorro Assails Ortega," Washington Post, 1 March 1990, A3.

At her inaugural gathering on April 25, 1990, Mrs. Chamorro made a speech to honor her campaign pledge. She informed her audience of her intention to demilitarize the country and to abolish the compulsory draft. Included in this address was also an initiative to decrease the 70,000 members of the Sandinistan army through several budgetary reductions. Correspondingly, she announced that the military would "have to melt the arms and sell the metal to buy the machinery for the farms and factories."⁶⁸ This sounded like she actually was in charge, but as she explored ways to carry out her plans it was done in such a manner as not to offend the establishment. She stated:

This is an election, that will never have exiles, or political prisoners, or confiscation of property. Here, we have not victors or vanquished.⁶⁹

Mrs. Chamorro's efforts to reconcile with the Sandinistas confirmed Lewis' analysis about Mrs. Chamorro being non-vindictive. Others took it as a sign of weakness. The question remained as to what extent she would let people have their own way. The answer to this

⁶⁸"Chamorro takes Nicaragua," A1.

⁶⁹President Of Nicaragua Address (Office of the President, Managua, Nicaragua, 26 April 1990), 1.

seemed dissonant to one not conversant with the patrimonial politics of the country. In the politics of Nicaragua the masses do not possess any political power, but compromises were made with the Sandinistas,⁷⁰ who though out of direct political control, still remained very influential. According to an analyst, "Nicaraguans like strong governments. The temptation to punish the loser is in our blood."⁷¹ The new government was very vindictive not to the Sandinistas, but rather to the very party that placed it in power. Having no political base and not being affiliated with any political party, Mrs. Chamorro depended on close advisers and family members to lead the nation. To safeguard Mrs. Chamorro in office, Carlos Andre Perez, the Venezuelan president, sent some of his personal bodyguards to protect and advise Mrs. Chamorro.⁷² Her son-in-law Antonio Lacayo was her personal adviser from the start. Lacayo, who had masterminded the attacks against the Sandinistas, was a former Sandinista himself, and had a major say in the political decisions of the new administration. The

⁷⁰J. L. Valazquez, Nicaragua: Sociedad Civil y Dictadura (Costa Rica: Libro Libre, 1986), 54.

⁷¹Boudreaux, 10.

⁷²G. Selser, "Slated Justice," Barricada International, 16 June 1990, 7.

judgment to entrust the office of the Chief of the Army to Ortega, a position which he had occupied in the previous administration, was engineered by Lacayo. Mrs. Chamorro executed this plan despite the objections from some members of the UNO that the Sandinistas' involvement in the administration might jeopardize the new leadership.

Intertwined with the problem posed by the military was the presence of the Contra army. The awareness that Mrs. Chamorro did not in any way discipline the Sandinistas for their war crimes was the basis for the Contras' rejection of the president's requisition to disarm them. In the end, consensus was reached among the Contras, Chamorro's delegates, and the Sandinista officials in March and April of 1990. Under the agreement, the Contras agreed to move into an internationally supervised defense sector inside the country. They also surrendered about 20,000 weapons in their possession.⁷³

The Sandinistas on the other hand, at least on the paper, resolved to relinquish their control of the

⁷³S. Jonas and N. Stein, "The Construction of Democracy in Nicaragua," Latin American Perspectives 17 (1990): 10-37.

army and the police to the new government.⁷⁴ An agreement had been previously signed, the "Protocol of Transition," whereby Mrs. Chamorro had basically reduced her status as a president to a lame duck. She conceded maintaining the establishment in power, honoring the Sandinista Popular Army and the National Police. The document accorded a legal protection to those people who had seized property under the previous regime, without disarming them. In short, the agreement suggested that the new leadership was an extension of the previous, as there were no major changes in the government. The only step taken against the FSLN was to control the Supreme Court. Mrs. Chamorro diluted the power basis in the Court by orchestrating the reallocation of a number of these FSLN justices, replacing them with her own choices. She also raised the Supreme Court Justices count from seven to nine.⁷⁵ However, Mrs. Chamorro did not attempt to reduce the power of the Sandinistas in any other way, as she had promised in her campaign.

The Sandinista senior intelligence officers were promoted and honored with military ranks. The Sandinista

⁷⁴ "Chamorro Violeta," Current Biography 51 (June 1990): 113.

⁷⁵Envio Collective, "Polarization and Depolarization," Envio, 9 October 1990, 3-11.

State Security and intelligence apparatus were relocated from the Ministry of the Interior to the offices of the Sandinista Popular Army and some of the military officers were reassigned to other Sandinista paramilitary groups.⁷⁶

There were many other surprise announcements in relation to choice of cabinet members. These selections triggered another wave of objections. She named herself the Defense Minister and General Ortega was asked to remain as the Commander in-Chief. A reliable source disclosed that Daniel Ortega had vowed over Radio Sandino two days after the election that the Sandinistas would "rule from below,"⁷⁷ and this assertion proved not to be an empty boast. How could Mrs. Chamorro be an effective leader when the deposed regime still controlled the military? The fact that Sandinista officials worked to ensure that they remain in control over all the strategic positions did not seem to awaken

⁷⁶Charles Lane, "Government from Below? Sandinista on Strike: Nicaragua," Newsweek, 23 July 1990, 29; Linda Robinson, "A Long Sandinista Shadow: Even in Defeat they Still Control Nicaragua's Guns and Spies," US News And World Report, 2 July 1990, 31.

⁷⁷Paul Gray, "She Just Can't Get no Respect: Nicaragua's President Violeta Chamorro," Time, 20 August 1990, 17.

Mrs. Chamorro to stand on her guard. Or was this a conspiracy? She appointed her son-in-law Antonio Lacayo as the Minister of the Presidency (equivalent to that of U.S. White House Chief of Staff). It was confirmed that Lacayo and Daniel Ortega were friends, and such relations had an impact on Mrs. Chamorro's appointments and her ability to make sound policy choices. Furthermore, critics charged that she was very incompetent, lacking knowledge in the areas of domestic and foreign affairs. It was claimed that she had memory lapses, forgetting sometimes the name of a very important leader such as Ronald Reagan, and could not recall major world events.⁷⁸ Mrs. Chamorro's cabinet appointments and policy stance towards the police and the military clearly depicted a pro-Sandinista standpoint. It makes one wonder why she did nothing to elevate the position of the UNO officials that placed her in power in the first place.

The retention of Ortega as head of the army precipitated the initial conflict in the administration. Two of her cabinet ministers resigned in protest. The Contras similarly threatened to resist the April 18, 1990 demobilization agreement. To these critics, the

⁷⁸Heyck, 44.

Ortega family epitomized the Sandinista militarism, including all the atrocities which the masses had endured under their leadership. Mr. Ortega's prediction to keep his party in power was not far from being realized.⁷⁹

There were other controversial appointments: the portfolio for the Minister of Interior was conferred upon one of the Sandinista patrons, Tomas Borge. The Ministry of Government, whose task was to oversee the demilitarization, was entrusted to Carlos Hurtado. He had previously counseled the Contras and subsequently was forced into exile. However, Mrs. Chamorro made some appointments that did not reflect the patronage system that had dominated the nation's politics for many years.⁸⁰

One of the strongest allegations against Mrs. Chamorro was nepotism.⁸¹ According to critics, major assignments were given to members of her family and

⁷⁹"Chamorro's Nemesis: Sandinista Opposition to President Violeta Chamorro," Journal Of Commerce & Commercial 385 (21 September 1990): 1.

⁸⁰"Nicaragua's New President," Times, 26 April 1990, A8.

⁸¹"Chamorro Takes Nicaragua," A8.

acquaintances,⁸² instead of the UNO alliance group that brought her to power. The list seemed endless, but the following comprise the major ones: Carlos Jose Barrios, brother to the President, was chosen as the Ambassador to France; Alberto Barrios, Mrs. Chamorro's nephew, was made the President of Industrial People's Corporation; Ricardo Barrios, also her nephew, was nominated as the Vice President of Central Bank. Ricardo Elizondo, father-in-law to President Chamorro's son, was assigned to be the Ambassador to Guatemala; Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, one of Mrs. Chamorro's sons, was formerly designated as the Ambassador to Taiwan; Luis Cardinal, one of the President's cousins, was selected as Ambassador to El Salvador; Manuel Jose Torres Barrios, another cousin of hers, was nominated as Ambassador to Venezuela; Manuel Jose Torres Jr., another nephew of Mrs. Chamorro, was selected as the Deputy Commissioner of the Nicaraguan Embassy in Taiwan; Noel Vidaure, nephew of President Chamorro, served as Vice Minister of Economy; Filadelfo Chamorro, also a cousin, became Nicaragua's Ambassador to Spain; Alvaro Chamorro, Mrs. Chamorro's cousin, was made the Minister of Tourism.

⁸²Republican Staff Report, Committee on Foreign Relations, Nicaragua Today (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 4.

Eduardo Holman Chamorro, nephew of Mrs. Chamorro, was made the manager of a state-owned banana company; Clarisa Barrios, a niece of Chamorro, one of two women with higher positions, was the Private Secretary to the President; another woman, Maribel Urcuyo, sister-in-law of Mrs. Chamorro's son, was made the advisor to the Minister for Tourism; Gabriel Urcuyo, nephew of the President, was the Director of Expo, Seville. Other positions such as the Ambassador to Mexico, Supreme Electoral Council, Vice Chief of Staff, Sandinista Popular Army, went to the relatives of Antonio Lacayo, while the uncle of the Ortega brothers, Alfonso Ortega Urbina, became the Ambassador to Brazil.⁸³ With members of her family in key positions, and the Sandinistas maintaining the control of the military, the administration seemed to be upholding the traditional pattern of politics where patronage and repression of opposition were the norms.⁸⁴

Since Mrs. Chamorro assumed leadership, her policy stance has reflected a compromise and absolute agreement with the FSLN. The Sandinistas found a viable tactic to

⁸³Ibid., 5.

⁸⁴R. Boudreaux, "The Great Conciliator," Los Angeles Times Magazine, 6 January, 1991, 10.

pressure the administration by instigating strikes by the labor union.⁸⁵ While promising to respect the land titles of the peasants who benefitted from the Sandinista land reform, she vowed to review the seizure of other properties, but the failure to return tens of thousands of confiscated homes, businesses and chunks of lands presented a major challenge to the administration.⁸⁶ If Mrs. Chamorro purposefully placed the Sandinistas in charge of the military and placed her family members in key positions, how could she have chosen to establish an alternate policy stance from Daniel Ortega?

Policy failures were not restricted to the confiscation of properties; the government failed also to address human rights complaints filed against it. According to the U.S. Congressional report, over 25,000 Nicaraguans lost their lives in pursuit of freedom for Nicaragua. The new government, according to this source, did not fulfill its promise to address the predicament suffered by former members of the Nicaraguan resistance as the Contras. Rather, the source continued, it had allowed the Sandinistas to imprison and torture some of

⁸⁵Barricada, 7 July 1990, 4.

⁸⁶Republican Staff Report, 9-25.

these men. After the Contras were disbanded, an average of two a week were murdered. Mrs. Chamorro's government had not enforced any legislation to stop the killings. According to an Associated Press article printed on August 22, 1992, the Organization of American States received 1,400 complaints in 1991. Among the broken promises on the part of Mrs. Chamorro's administration was failure to integrate the Contras into the society.⁸⁷ The government did not comply with its promise to grant land titles to these groups and give them protection. Rather, they were disarmed, and many of them were killed by the Sandinistas.⁸⁸

One contradiction was that people like Ortega and many others who were supposed to suffer retribution for their human rights violation received round-the-clock protection from the regime. Hence, the Contras began putting pressure on the government to allow them to rearm, as they were endangered by the Sandinistas.⁸⁹

Other policy ventures attributed to Mrs. Chamorro

⁸⁷Envio Collective, "Rebellion in the Ranks: Challenge from the Right," Envio, January/February, 1991, 18-27.

⁸⁸Murray Kempton, "Good Housekeeping," The New York Review, 13 June 1991, 58-9.

⁸⁹Republican Staff Report, 21.

were very minor. These included Mrs. Chamorro's stance that the national educational system would be improved through establishing a state lottery.⁹⁰ In actuality, no such upgrading occurred. The major action taken in relation to education was the rejection of the primary school textbooks that had been used during the Sandinista administration. In their place, other texts were included in the curriculum which were funded with U.S. assistance.⁹¹ Other minor decrees were changing the national flag and the police uniforms.⁹²

On July 17, 1992, there was a press release featuring a series of corruption charges against the government.⁹³ Foremost among the accused was the Minister of the Presidency, Antonio Lacayo. According to the Comptroller General of Nicaragua's investigations, U.S. \$1 million had been stolen by Lacayo for his personal use and was used to bribe some members of the National Assembly. Due to his failure to cooperate, it was difficult to determine the extent of his involvement

⁹⁰Envio Collective, "From Military to Social Confrontation," Envio, July 1990, 5.

⁹¹M. Jimenez, "Neo-Liberation in the Classroom," Barricada International, May 1990, 8.

⁹²S. Cuadra, "There's More Politics than Meets the Eye," Barricada International, 19 May 1990, 6.

⁹³Republican Staff Report, 26.

in the bribery scheme. So far the U.S. had given Nicaragua up to \$728 million in bilateral aid, and threatened to withdraw such assistance if Nicaragua did not redefine its political structure.

Chamorro, The Economy, And Social Issues

When Mrs. Chamorro took over from Ortega, the major problem facing the new regime was how to end the civil war and demobilize the army, and how to revitalize the depressed economy. The economy was at its worse in many years. For example, the per capita income was at the 1950 level. The wages were relatively low, resembling one-fourth that of 1981 level. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was at a 17% shortage, whereas the inflation rate was at the monthly level of 43%.⁹⁴ With the blueprint established by Francisco Mayorga, the President of the Central Bank of Nicaragua, the government adopted a 100-day plan. The program, overly ambitious, was expected to curtail inflation and solve major economic problems in that given period.

The "100-day plan" predicted normalizing the

⁹⁴Republic of Nicaragua, "Document Presented by the Government of Nicaragua to Donors Conference in Rome," (June 1990, Rome, Italy); Central Bank of Nicaragua, "Economic and Social Concertacion: Presentation of the Economic Cabinet," (September-October 1990). 7-13.

economy, boosting the agricultural stratum in conjunction with its production for international trade. Moreover, the plan promised to privatize state-owned firms. The program fell short of establishing specific measures to achieve the results. As a result of that, the promised change was elusive, causing the disillusioned work force to demonstrate against the government. The industrial action was terminated when the administration agreed to address some of the problems such as adjusting wages according to inflation, and to abandon prohibiting civil servants from engaging in strikes.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, there was another strike in relation to FSLN (as mentioned earlier), which was brought to an end by a government promise to terminate the 10-90 Decree. It was speculated that these inconsistencies cost the government over \$900 million in 1990.⁹⁶ The failure of the Chamorro government to implement reforms was one of the major causes of strikes in the country.⁹⁷

Moreover, the report cited the extraordinary

⁹⁵Barricada, 11 May and 17 May 1990.

⁹⁶Barricada (17 May 1990), 4.

⁹⁷Envio Collective, "Playing with Fire," Envio, 9 June 1990, 3-13.

influence of the Sandinistas in the new Chamorro government.⁹⁸ This dominance was blamed on the weak structure of the government. On this basis alone, critics had begun to classify the government as divided into two parallel governments: the official one headed by Mrs. Chamorro, which was notably weak and ineffective, whereas the unofficial leadership controlled by the Ortegas was classified as strong and operative. The latter had always controlled the former. According to an analyst, Daniel Ortega vehemently opposed establishing normal relations with the Chamorro government. To him such an alliance "will simply breathe life into a government he believes has failed and needs to be replaced, though by what he isn't sure."⁹⁹

The majority of President Chamorro's policies reflected similar trends with the Ortega's regime. Why did she disregard her campaign platforms and overlook dreadful assaults on the nation and her family in particular, even after her husband was brutally murdered? The Washington Post argued that Mrs. Chamorro was not in control of her own government. She had given

⁹⁸The Republican Staff Report, 103-109.

⁹⁹David R. Dye, "Nicaragua's Crisis Takes New Twist," Christian Science Monitor, 24 November 1993, 4.

full authority to others, which in turn made her a figure-head. Antonio Lacayo and Daniel Ortega's brother, Humberto were the power-wielders in the country.¹⁰⁰ These two occupied the key positions and use their positions to influence policy outcomes.

The U.S. Senate Report documented a special relationship between the Ortegas and Lacayos, and secret deals initiated by them. The ensuing policy outcomes, that is, lack of reforms in the new administration, confirmed Ortega's vow "to rule from below." As discussed earlier, the documented attempt by Mrs. Chamorro to overturn Sandinista policies had led to two massive strikes during the first three months after she took over. Such events successfully checked her policy ventures. As conditions deteriorated, the U.S. purposefully withheld its assistance to Nicaragua so as to force the administration to change its position. As the economic and the political conditions grew worse, the masses began to believe that they were better off with the Sandinistas than with Mrs. Chamorro. The United States had also counselled Mrs. Chamorro to resign and

¹⁰⁰John M. Goshko, "Nicaragua Government Criticized," Washington Post, 1 September 1992, A11.

had recommended that Vice President Godoy replace her.¹⁰¹ She could not get along with Dr. Godoy. He had directed the major segment of the UNO alliance of parties, in which he would often challenge Mrs. Chamorro's authority to govern the country. He had been the Labor Minister for four years under the FSLN.

As a result of the conflict between the two, Dr. Godoy lost most of his privileges as Vice President. He was denied the power to govern the country in the absence of the President, and such authority was instead bestowed on Anthonio Lacayo. Godoy was not allowed to attend cabinet meetings, nor did he have access to the presidential building, nor a staff or an office. As a reporter bluntly questioned him: "Dr. Godoy, are you really in the government?"¹⁰² He was merely allowed to head the panel formed to revitalize the Central American parliament. Nevertheless, Godoy remained "a very embittered man who would do anything to get rid of the Sandinistas."¹⁰³ He successfully manipulated the ex-Contras to cause disturbances against the government,

¹⁰¹Envio Collective, "Polarization and Depolarization," Envio, October 1990, 6.

¹⁰²Envio Collective, "UNO Politics: Thunder on the Right," Envio, August/September, 1990, 23-27.

¹⁰³Envio Collective, "UNO's Balance of Power on a Tight-Rope," Envio, June 1990, 29.

which further threatened the stability of Chamorro's government.

On November 10, 1993, Nicaragua's Roman Catholic bishops (with many other groups) called for a constitutional reform to alleviate the country's chronic political and economic turbulence. Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo commended the notion asserting that such reform would be a solution to the deteriorating conditions in Nicaragua. The reform was also targeted at reducing Mrs. Chamorro's term in office. Mrs. Chamorro, on the other hand, condemned such an idea, warning that she would quit her position if any serious measure were adopted against her.¹⁰⁴

Nicaraguan Women And Chamorro's Legacy

This section showed the extent of patriarchal impact on Mrs. Chamorro's lifestyle, consequently affecting her policy choices on women's issues. The Nicaraguan women from the onset expected change from Mrs. Chamorro's regime. Since women's issues were on the backlist of the Sandinista agenda, the women's movement at that time was unable to challenge the government. Being involved in such activities related to women's

¹⁰⁴D. Dye, 4.

activism was looked down upon. Women engaging in such operations were accused of being vagrants, harlots, or bad mothers.¹⁰⁵ In the face of this attitude, the women's movement worked within the confines of the regime structures, such as the Central Sandinista de los Trabajadores (the blue-collar union or CST); the Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campos (the workers' union); CONAPRO (the professionals' union) and UNAG, the Union Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos (the small farmers' and cooperative union). The women's movements were to some extent vocal in condemning the policy shortcomings in relation to the Nicaraguan women by the Sandinista government. For instance, the Ministry of Health (MINSA) had denied some external donors of contraceptives with the excuse that these devices hamper the natural course of demography.¹⁰⁶ Their position was in consensus with a goal to repopulate the war-torn country in order to produce a larger labor force. Many leading FLSN politicians consequently supported the status quo, arguing that it was the woman's obligation

¹⁰⁵Beth Stephens, "Women in Nicaragua," Monthly Review 40 (September 1988): 5.

¹⁰⁶Betsy Hartman, Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control and Contraceptive Choice (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 290-91.

to reproduce. Therefore, President Ortega was constantly featured parading the streets with children. Many television advertisements encouraged breast feeding and immunizations. Children-related industries such as child-care centers progressed. The women's movement, even though it did not possess any political clout to contradict these policy options, had challenged them. They postulated that the country was dominated by machismo, the notion that male supremacy was the norm and as such was inculcated into the political sphere. Nevertheless, the Sandinistas seemed to have accomplished more for the Nicaraguan women than an administration headed by a woman. There were minor efforts made by the FSLN to address certain women-related issues, such as establishing child-care programs and according some women reproductive rights. The only group of women given birth control were ones classified as falling into a high-risk category.¹⁰⁷ This showed how the state sidetracked crucial healthcare issues relating to women and upheld instead self interest, which was to repopulate the country, as well as observe its religious

¹⁰⁷Masaya Hospital Report to Department of Maternal Child Health (Ministry of Health, Managua, Nicaragua, November 1990), 4; Ana Maria Jimenez, "Computamiento del Aboto Inducido Ilegalmente en el Hospital Bertha Calderon Roque, Ide Julio de 1985, al 31 de Agoste de 1988," (Managua, Nicaragua, 1988), 5.

convictions.¹⁰⁸

These steps were discredited by the Chamorro administration as being orchestrated by a reprehensible regime.¹⁰⁹ One might think that the Sandinista government did very little to address the major aspect of women's problems in the country, but Mrs. Chamorro's stance toward women appeared even more contradictory.

Once Mrs. Chamorro assumed leadership, it was expected that, being a woman, she would do much to enhance the situation of women. However, due to her religious background and the fact that major policy decisions were made by someone else, women's issues were last on Mrs. Chamorro's agenda. Mrs. Chamorro seemed to have accepted the male-oriented picture constantly presented to women in the state system. She seemed satisfied to operate within the patriarchal sphere in which she was raised and proceeded to outline her policies in similar fashion.

¹⁰⁸Ana Maria Jimenz, Ivania Flores, Marita Canales, "Seguimiento de Pacientes a las que Denego la Solitud en el Comite de Analisis e Interrupcion de Embarazo en el Hospital Bertha Calderon, enero-junio 1989," (Nicaragua, December 1990), 2.

¹⁰⁹Beth Stephens, 1-18; Paul V. Mankowski, "Feminist Pilgrim and Ortega's Nicaragua," Commentary 89 (June 1990): 48.

She did not have a special agenda for women except to participate further in restricting their rights. She outlawed the rights of women to wear mini-skirts, tight pants or shorts. Also, she ordered women to shave their armpits if they put on sleeveless outfits.¹¹⁰ Her lack of commitment was also compounded by the serious social, political, and economic turmoil which resulted in massive reductions of social and economic services. Cuts in the education budget hampered the educational advancement of children, whereas cuts in the healthcare affected the children and Nicaraguan women's health, and the privatization of state businesses impacted women in the labor force.¹¹¹ There were, moreover, high incidents of joblessness by male spouses, and a high number of single parents. Due to lack of funds, the government had to cancel many women's health and childcare programs.¹¹²

¹¹⁰S. Cuadra, 6.

¹¹¹"Cutting Universities?: Lack of Funds for Education in Nicaragua," World Press Review 38 (July 1991): 36; Paul R. McGinn, "Nicaragua: Caring for More with Less: Healthcare," American Medical News 33 (25 May 1990): 1-4; McGinn, "Poor Sanitation, Inadequate Housing Impede Health System Progress in Nicaragua," American Medical News 33 (25 May 1990): 26-8; Phyllida Brown, "Decline Health Takes its Toll in Nicaragua," New Scientist 130 (6 April 1991): 21-29.

¹¹²"Maternity Center: The Best Political Action, Newsletters from Around the Country," Social Policy 20 (Winter 1990): 76.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Chamorro's government was pro-family, devoutly Catholic, and had from the beginning maintained an anti-abortion stance. This position was facilitated by the help of U.S. pro-life organizations. For instance, the government featured a two-hour program on national television, "The Silent Scream," which featured various reasons the government had objected to birth control and abortion. That movie was followed by a publicized discussion on birth control headed by panels from some U.S. church officials and some Nicaraguan doctors. The debate mustered points condemning all forms of family planning except the rhythm technique. The Catholic Church, working with the government, showed a documentary in several churches in justification of their position. The Church publicly lectured about the disadvantages of premarital sex, birth control, and abortion. In order to maintain her alliance with the Church, as well as affirm her religious convictions, Mrs. Chamorro adopted a rigid policy stance toward women and the family. This position reinforces the woman-centered view about the patriarchal impact on policy making. It also supports the notion stated in Chapter One that a pro-natalist government generally would prefer to uphold reproduction as a means of increasing

its population growth, which in turn ensures adequate flow of military manpower. As a result of this desire, the state accomplishes this end by denying women family planning services.¹¹³

Mrs. Chamorro had laid the groundwork through which she established her agenda on women's issues. She constantly declared: "I'm not a feminist, nor do I want to be one. I am a woman dedicated to my home, as Pedro taught me." She acknowledged being hostile to the women's standpoint¹¹⁴ and endeavored to uphold the patriarchal environment in which she was raised. She did not sanction women being active in politics. She did very little to upgrade women's situation in Nicaragua. President Chamorro and her Education Minister Sofonias Cisneros introduced policy disapproving sex education in the schools. Accordingly, the administration abolished arrangements such as the national sex education committee, which was established by the Sandinista regime. The therapeutic abortion committee was abolished and with the help of a new director at the Bertha Calderon hospital, who ran advertisements that called

¹¹³Joni Seager and Ann Olson, Women in the World: An International Atlas (New York: Simmon and Schuster, 1990), 7.

¹¹⁴S, Cuadra, "A Vote for Equality," Barricada International, 20 January 1990, 11.

for fidelity in marriages: "be faithful to your partner." The government recognized sexual intercourse within marriage, but it failed to acknowledge such between unmarried couples and even minors. Mrs. Chamorro's negative stance on the family planning issue, as well as her noncommitment to women's issues, would trigger massive illegal abortions, which in turn would cost many lives, especially among the very poor and under-age children who could not afford better health care. Besides, it showed the extent of the influence of the Catholic Church on the state's policies.

The Downfall Of Mrs. Chamorro As
The President Of Nicaragua

Even though Mrs. Chamorro still governs Nicaragua at the time this study is done, the women-centered opinion also applies as to how she will relinquish her leadership. The state of Nicaragua is gendered and women do have a contradictory insertion into the system. Women as a group are found at the bottom of the political hierarchy. Likewise, women in Nicaragua have not established a long tradition of political leadership. Violeta Chamorro rose to power under crisis conditions and is temporarily empowered to assume the political banner once carried by her husband. But as the exigency

subsidies, there seems to be an overriding concern for her to return to her traditional domain. The chain of circumstances formulated by the patriarchal culture, ultimately will pave the way her fall.

Mrs. Chamorro became politically active following the assassination of her husband. Because of her ordeal under the Sandinista regime, she exemplified the ordeal experienced by the masses and was encouraged to run for office as a symbol of change. On her becoming the leader of Nicaragua, her enemies began their intimidation tactics indirectly forcing her into adopting the previous administration's policy options. By her not taking any decisive stance against the opposition, critics widely argue that she is incompetent and acted as a "stand in" and should not be allowed to continue governing. Critics maintained that Violeta Chamorro was a "political novice, acts essentially as a national mother figure, admonishing and cajoling, while leaving governance"¹¹⁵ to her son-in-law, Antonio Lacayo. Several complaints were lodged against Mr. Lacayo for the major policy shortcomings in Mrs. Chamorro government. For example, the decision to retain Humberto

¹¹⁵Douglas Farah, "Son-in-law's Advice to Chamorro is the Focus of Managua," Washington Post, 9 September 1992, A26.

Ortega as the army head was influenced by Lacayo. He is blamed for Mrs. Chamorro regime's indifference in returning stolen and/or confiscated property to the rightful owners. Lacayo also used his influence to place various relatives in executive positions. It is contended that 17 members of Chamorro and Lacayo families currently occupy such positions.

In defense of these charges, Lacayo stated in an interview that:

My chief duty is to help the country go forward, within the limits of my possibilities, and to see that Mrs. Chamorro is not a victim of the schemes, sometimes evil ones, of politicians who, far from thinking about Nicaragua, are only thinking of their personal or party ambitions, and are willing to do anything to reach those goals.¹¹⁶

To consolidate his firm grip on the government, he maintained that he would be in office for many years to come, until January 10, 1997, when President Chamorro officially completes her term.

To demonstrate her trust in Lacayo, the President declared in one of her public rebuttals to the charges implicating Lacayo in the Congressional vote-buying scandal that "the day I have to replace Mr. Lacayo, Violeta is gone. I am not replacing him."

¹¹⁶Ibid.

An insider to the Nicaraguan government, Ceasar, lodged a serious complaint against Lacayo. He charged the he "is the only one telling the President what she should do... The President signs what he tells her, and he is the one responsible."¹¹⁷ Failure to establish a distinct policy agenda favorable to all Nicaraguan citizens caused many riots among the dissidents, including by the Contras. The most recent of the riots occurred in the summer of 1993, when some of the top Nicaraguan officials were taken as hostages. During a series of negotiations with the Contras, the government promised to re-evaluate its policies so as to address the basic demands presented by the groups.

Evaluating these charges from sources as diverse as the U.S. Congress and the citizens of Nicaragua, one might begin to comprehend that Mrs. Chamorro's inability to adopt a policy pattern distinct from her predecessor and her failure to effectuate change in areas where women are concerned. Clearly, Mrs. Chamorro's administration is simply a poor leadership due to her determination not to carry out her task as chief executive. Whether her powerlessness is based on her religious background and the machismo environment is

¹¹⁷Ibid.

highly debatable, because, other women in this study originated from a patriarchal environment but endeavored to assert themselves as leaders, though with many obstacles.

Mrs. Chamorro came to power through the influence of her family, namely as a widow of Pedro Chamorro. In power, the gender/class division that put her in the position was very intrusive to leadership. She is unable to make an independent decision. The power struggle and/or alliance between the military and the civilians made her a figure-head. Decisions were made and executed on her behalf by her son-in-law and the so-called enemies she sought to replace as a result of this struggle. She completely changed from hard liner and a tough negotiator to ensure equality and justice to becoming very malleable. But could Mrs. Chamorro have behaved any differently under the patriarchal mandate which had placed her in office? In other words, had she become a replica Mrs. Gandhi or Benazir Bhutto by trying to assert herself in power, would she have lasted in office? The response to this question is negative. The fact of the matter is that nation states are patriarchal, but the degree of patriarchy varies from area to area; but on the overall, women are still governed by men's terms. If she were assertive and more

representative of women's rights, she still will receive criticisms but of a different kind and will most probably be asked to step down.

CHAPTER SIX

STATESWOMEN, THE STATE AS CAPITALIST PATRIARCHY:

CONCLUSION

This research has sought to demonstrate that due to the conflictual relationship between capitalism (class) and patriarchy (gender) few women in the contemporary era have risen and fallen as stateswomen. The assumption here is that capitalism presupposes a large market where women's labor is employed. Women compose over half of the world's population and form a labor pool for the state. Some women are unpaid in their work as housewives, and many are underpaid in comparison with their male counterparts in the labor force. Therefore, capitalism sanctions women's labor in both the domestic and public realms. Patriarchy, on the other hand, assumes that women should remain in the domestic realm. The public sphere, according to this assumption, should be exclusively male. The conflict arises when some women cross the boundary of the home and venture into the public realm, assuming the role of national leaders, positions traditionally reserved for men. These

women are often representing their deceased popular male kin by leading their countries. As women they have transcended their traditional domain, threatening the status quo which places certain barriers on women. Therefore, there is a clash of interest between the home and the public in relation to these women's insertion into the state system.¹ Capitalist patriarchy undermines social relations. The research purpose was, then, to prove the hypothetical statement delineating the conditions that brought these women to power, as well as exploring whether these issues are pertinent to how they fared and their subsequent declines as political leaders.

With regards to the first research question, the examination centered on the conditions that brought about these women's emergence as political leaders. The main issue was whether capitalist patriarchy, the class and gender system, served as a determinant factor in these women's ascendance to power. The main variables here are class and gender (capitalist patriarchy). Other variables linked to these appointments are the sudden death of a relative, the political situation, and female

¹Christine Delphy, Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 69; Zillah Eisenstein, Capitalist Patriarchy, 378.

lifestyles.

The second concern of this inquiry focused on how class/gender impacted how women fared in office and leading to their subsequent decline as stateswomen. The cases illustrated a clear pattern as to how most women came to power: as wives, mothers, or daughters of a famous male kin. This exemplar is not conscribed by history or political boundaries.

Historically, many women have emerged particularly because of their family backgrounds - as wives, mothers, or daughters of a famous male kin. Most notable of these were daughters of royalties, such as Elizabeth I of England, or their widows such as Catherine the Great of Russia, and their mothers, as in Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen of France. All of these came to power following the death of their influential male relatives.²

In the newly industrializing countries, the notion of nation-state still reflects its feudal predecessor. The idea of state in the developing economies closely relates to connotations and privileges of the feudal society where the heir-apparent inherits the throne from his or her deceased relatives. In the countries under study, rulers still trace their lineage to heads of

²Antonio Fraser, The Warriors' Queens (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1989), 10-24, and 203-213.

extended ethnic groups or large and affluent families (as opposed to the governments in the advanced economies, established by a long legacy of democratic traditions).

Politics in these newly emergent states are orchestrated by power struggles among groups. This modus operandi engenders ceaseless friction experienced for many centuries. If in this period a strong head of household is killed, that family's female representative assumes the task of fulfilling the group's aspirations.³ As an appendage of their background, these women are now empowered to bring stability and reestablish the status quo so as to ensure continuity in the governing process.

In the contemporary era, Indira Gandhi came to power and lasted 16 years in power due to her father Jawaharlal Nehru's influence. Mrs. Gandhi is considered the most successful female leader out of the four women leaders under study. Having worked under her father, she became attuned to the art of politics. Nehru paved the way for her succession by forcing some of the old guard to retire before his death. Even though Nehru scrupulously introduced his only child into politics, when he died another man, Lal Bahadur Shastri, replaced him,

³Ibid., 307-309.

but his reign lasted for only one year, and Indira Gandhi was chosen by the syndicates to replace Shastri. The syndicates wanted someone whom they could manipulate and a woman, in this case the daughter of Nehru was a suitable candidate. Therefore, class and gender factors, in combination were responsible for her rise to power.

How did class and gender factors affect Mrs. Gandhi's performance in office? When in power, her class background, in alliance with her gender, determined how she governed. The gender consideration arose when the syndicates saw that they could not easily manipulate Mrs. Gandhi. They consequently teamed up with the economic elites to oppose most of her policies and employed gender-based arguments as ploys to remove her from office. Nevertheless, her family background coupled with Asia's immense religious notion of motherhood contributed to the peoples's confidence in her. This conception in turn gave her enormous popularity and caused her to rule the country over a long period.

Most of Gandhi's policies, such as the nationalization of banks, abolition of zamindari and feudalism, were class-based. Mr. Desai, one of Mrs. Gandhi's political opponents, teamed up with the syndicates and economic elites to isolate and challenge these policies. The decision to nationalize the banks

was aimed at diversifying the economy and granting the people access to the system, but was condemned by these groups. Mrs. Gandhi, with great struggle, succeeded in passing the bill. The abolition of feudalism and zamindari were questioned by this group and Mrs. Gandhi used her imagery as a goddess and urged the people to vote for her, and she was successful.

Mrs. Gandhi's policy on family planning posed a major stumbling block in her administration. The policy adversely affected the common people who had backed her political career. When Desai capitalized on the unfavorable conditions, calling on the people to remove Mrs. Gandhi, he was successful. Mrs. Gandhi's contribution, nonetheless, out-weighed the negative. The initiative to nationalize the banks and implement land reforms paved the way for women's integration into the system and this, in turn, caused her to be revered.⁴ Her assassination was precipitated by the class question, and the inability to address the ethnic rivalries facing India, threatened the survival of the Nehru dynasty.

Following her assassination, the throne was passed to her heir apparent, her son Rajiv Gandhi. Her

⁴Howard C. Chua-Eoan and Sandra Burton, "All in the Family: Women Leaders in the Third World Owe their Rise More to Male Dynasties than to Militant Feminism," Time, Fall 1990, 33-34.

daughter-in-law, Maneka Rajiv's wife, was asked to bear the mantle in honor of the family tradition soon after her husband's murder. Due to security reasons, she rejected the offer. Despite this rendezvous with fate, Indira Gandhi was still revered many years after her death.⁵ In concluding how gender and class affected Mrs. Gandhi's leadership and her demise, one can argue that class and gender issues in combination influenced her leadership. While many of her policies were class based, gender-based arguments were used as tactics by her opponents to counteract her policies. Mrs. Gandhi, on the other hand, also invoked gender goddess imagery and was successful in getting the people to respond to her initiatives. Her death was class-based and was linked to the political crisis occurring in the nation that might cause the death of a political leader, causing the heir apparent to assume power. Therefore, class and gender issues affected how Mrs. Gandhi rose to power. She was the daughter of Nehru and a woman whom the syndicates thought they could manipulate. While in power the patriarchal dictates determined how she fared; she was isolated and her policies were contested. Her fall was linked to the discourse by of the women-centered

⁵Dom Moraes, 123; Mary Carass, 1-21.

theorists, that mutual relationship between class and gender paved the way for her rise and fall.

Benazir Bhutto, Corazon Aquino and Violeta Barrios de Chamorro fall into the same category. Unlike Britain's Margaret Thatcher or Israel's Golda Meir, these women claimed power not through proven political skills, but on the strength and symbolism of their family ties. Behind each of these women was a powerful man (an influential political dynasty). Aside from the role of their family background, extraordinary political circumstances added to the origin of these women's emergence. The sudden death of such a male figure threatened the stability of the status quo, and women in this sense, then adopted the task that was formerly administered by the deceased, in order to preserve the state system. This theory cuts across the public and private spheres and elucidates the conflictual operation of capitalist patriarchy.

In the private sphere women take care of daily activities of the deceased male relative to ensure continuity. In the public sphere, with which we are directly concerned, these women are commissioned to fill temporarily the political vacuum created by the untimely departure of the male head of household. Men in this special circumstance were either national leaders or

agents of change in the society. The instability caused by their departure is justification for these women's rise to power. The subsequent challenges which they encountered as policy makers were caused by their patriarchal insertion into the political system.

Mrs. Corazon Aquino's gender and class combined to place her in office. She was the widow of former Senator Benigno Aquino, and rose to power because of the crisis created by her husband's assassination. She was chosen to run against Marcos because of her widowhood, her motherhood and her simplicity. She stood in contradistinction to the Marcos leadership and symbolized all the inhumane experiences incurred under the Marcos government. On these grounds, Corazon Aquino contested and won the election.

While in power, gender and class concerns still troubled her leadership. Coming to power under a precarious circumstances, class interests in addition to the fact that she was a woman created problems for her leadership. The most turbulent was her relations with the military. The branch of the army in opposition to her leadership, perceiving her as too weak to govern, classified her as a figure-head, and rejected her role as a Commander-in-Chief. These men threatened the stability of her administration by instigating over six

coup attempts aimed at removing Mrs. Aquino from power. These confrontations prompted her to delegate power to others, which had its own shortcomings. The land reform package which she authorized the Congress to implement was unsuccessful due to diverse reasons. Her relationship with the bureaucracy, even though from the same class, was also problematic. Her appointments to and removal of people from office received serious criticisms, and her gender was employed as a strategy to explain her incompetence. Even though Mrs. Aquino's constitutional reform established a democratic system of government and abolished dictatorship, this openness brought diverse factions to publicly challenge her leadership. According to the women-centered perspective, these events were patterned by the patriarchal conditions surrounding the state system, and were responsible for the end of her political career. She was constantly threatened by the military, her policy options attracted opposition, particularly the family planning which was condemned by the Catholic Church. These kinds of disputes frustrated her, and discouraged her from contesting the next presidential election. The class and gender questions influenced her rise, her leadership, and decline as a president.

Benazir Bhutto's situation is similar to Mrs.

Aquino's but goes far beyond the assassination of a major male figure. Pakistan is a traditional Islamic state. In such a society women are restricted only to the domestic boundary and the public sphere is exclusively male. Benazir Bhutto being the first child, her Western-educated father believed in providing all his children (irrespective of gender) with the best available opportunity to enhance their competence in the system. Consequently, Benazir Bhutto attended one of the best schools in the West and constantly accompanied her father on numerous diplomatic visits. In this way, Ali Bhutto, like Nehru, specifically groomed his daughter for politics.

Like Aquino, it was not until the execution of Prime Minister Ali Bhutto by General Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq that Benazir Bhutto became involved in Pakistan's political process. Like Corazon Aquino, the lengthy protests of Benazir enlisted her in political activism. As the daughter of the former Prime Minister Ali Bhutto, only Benazir Bhutto had the charisma to overcome the puritanical onslaught launched by General Zia, because Zia's military dictatorship suppressed all opposition. Following Zia's accidental death in a plane crash, an election was initiated. Consequently, she was elected to lead the country. Her family background, was responsible

for her rise to power. While she was in power, those patriarchal conditions that created the opportunity for her rise also determined how she governed.

In evaluating how Benazir Bhutto governed Pakistan, gender and class variables are vital to any analysis. Her administration was troubled by the laws established by Zia. Due to the lack of power structure, created by her gender, she was unable to invalidate the Eighth Amendment that limited her power as Prime Minister. She also could not repeal the Nineteenth Amendment which restricted the role of women in the political realm. There were jurisdictional disputes between her and President Ishaq over the appointment and removal of political officials, conflicts interpreted as signs of weakness. Establishing a democratic form of government created avenues for opponents to publicly condemn her, never happened under Zia's dictatorship. Again, those events were perceived as indications of her weakness as a female political leader. The most challenging political confrontations were orchestrated by Islamic fundamentalists arising from the Punjab, which was Zia's province, and the military headquarters and stronghold of Islamic fundamentalism. The opposition stemming from these influential groups used her gender as an excuse to defy her and were certainly successful in ousting her.

According to an analyst, the problems she faced in office were overwhelming and deeply impacted her capability to govern the country.

The diverse interests among Benazir Bhutto, the military, some of her colleagues, and the Islamic fundamentalists cost her her political career. The most pronounced was the Iraqi and Kuwait war. The army used this development as a strategy to oust her, claiming that their Islamic background did not allow women to mediate such a crisis. Therefore, the President declared a state of emergency and Benazir Bhutto was tried and convicted of treason. This discussion of her decline pertains to the discourse that class and gender considerations affected her fall, because her gender was attributed to the decision to remove her during the Gulf crisis. Gender and class relations affected her rise, how she fared, and her fall as a political leader.

Mrs. Chamorro, like the other women under study, belongs to one of the most influential groups in her country. Her husband, Cardinal Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, was among the political elites of Nicaragua. Pedro Chamorro inherited La Prensa after his father's death and used it in condemning the ills of the Somoza legacy, and this position was instrumental in overthrowing the corrupt Somoza government. Pedro Joaquin Chamorro used

his newspaper La Prensa as an agent of transformation and the voice of the people in challenging the government. When Pedro Chamorro was assassinated his widow, who had lived under the shadow of her husband, assumed the responsibility of her deceased male relative. She became the co-editor of La Prensa and kept on with her husband's odyssey, fighting the ills of the Ortega leadership.

Violeta Barrios de Chamorro embodies the imagery of the pain and suffering experienced by the majority of Nicaraguans during the Somoza leadership and later under the Sandinistas. Nicaraguans perceived her as a symbol of the predicament overwhelming the war-torn nation. In carrying out her duty, Mrs. Chamorro persistently insinuated to the public that she was manifesting her deceased husband's political aspirations to establish democracy in Nicaragua. In the end, with the help of the United States in combination with public sentiment against Ortega's regime, she won the election and became a political leader. Her family background, the sudden death of her husband, and her motherhood helped her rise to power, because, she was chosen to win by the public.

The point raised by women-centered theorists that women as political leaders are subject to the dictates of the patriarchal political culture is pertinent to how

Mrs. Chamorro reigned. As she was sworn in, her political opponent Ortega vowed to govern from underground and this threat affected Mrs. Chamorro's government. Mrs. Chamorro made a very poor political judgment when she retained the Sandinistas in many key positions, especially the security-related offices. The Sandinistas retained full control of the police and the military, which resulted in no major change in policies. The Contras were disarmed, whereas the Sandinistas maintained control and were given full protection. The political appointments were full of favoritism with family and friends receiving top level placements. Policy failures, also, were reflected in her failure to address controversies associated with the confiscated properties, nor were the human rights complaints resolved. Critics argued that such policy failures were attributed to Mrs. Chamorro being a figure-head which was complicated by the fact that her son-in-law Antonio Lacayo, a former Sandinista, was made the executive head of the presidency. Policy options emanating from her administration, according to critics, were all initiated by Lacayo. As a result, pressure was mounted from many groups calling for her resignation.

Even though Mrs. Chamorro governs at the time of this analysis, she undoubtedly will not contest for the

position in the next election, because people are frustrated with the deadlocks in her regime. Her symbolism (such as widowhood and being a victim of oppression) has clearly faded and she is depicted as a very weak leader. She is contented being a figure-head and has succeeded in alienating the very people who placed her in power. Mrs. Chamorro's case presents an extreme version of capitalist patriarchy where some women do not perceive the state as patriarchal and operate to uphold the status quo. Gender and class questions in various degrees relate to Mrs. Chamorro's rise to power, her leadership and decline. The sudden death of her husband, in conjunction with her status as a mother, brought her to power. While in authority, she became a lame duck following the dictates of the Sandinistas and as a result, a very poor leader and such impositions definitely will lead to her demise.

Based on the above findings, women rise to power because of their class background, which is related to the sudden death of their male relative. Their gender is also necessary to their preeminence because of their special relationship to the state, as the wives and daughters of popular leaders. Their gender was also crucial, because they were perceived as weak and easily influenced. While in government, the class and gender

concerns that brought about their rise (though in various degrees) continued to plague their leadership and subsequently lead to their fall. Their pre-eminence does not suggest that they bridged the gap between men and women in the state system, but that they are temporarily providing stability for the state system, after which they have to return to their traditional domains. Research, then, does support the women-centered argument that the state is gendered and women are still largely excluded from the national arena.

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