

Fall 12-14-2022

## Feminism and Women's Representation in Argentina

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# **Feminism and Women's Representation in Argentina**

By

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Political Science

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
In the HTC Honors College at  
Coastal Carolina University

Fall 2022

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## Introduction

Imagine living under a government where you have no representation and no say in who makes legislative decisions, yet you have no choice but to comply. This is hard to imagine, especially for those that only must picture this concept, and never lived through this. For centuries, this was not hypothetical for the women of Argentina, this was life. Up until 1947, the women of Argentina had no official representation in political life. Only in 1947 did they receive the right to vote after facing the struggles of a patriarchal society for hundreds of years. However, despite earning their suffrage, Argentine women would still face many challenges before they would be viewed as equals in society, let alone hold political office.

Prominent throughout history, patriarchy and "machismo" was how society functioned, as well as being the dominant belief that was strongly held by most people living in this society. The wave of feminist political thought sought to redefine not only this type of thinking but also sought to change the structures of the institutions that were informed by this belief. Only with the influence of feminist theory that sparked women's rights movements were they able to achieve the elevated level of female representation they have today.

This paper seeks to assess how feminist theory influenced the representation of women in Argentine society. This leads to the question regarding the importance of feminist theory. It is important to use this question to guide the research that supports the changes in the oppressive system that existed for an extended period in Argentina. This question asks, "How has feminist theory impacted women's legislation and women's movements, which has reflected change in the representation of women in politics and leadership roles in Argentina?" It will demonstrate and attempt to answer this question by addressing feminist theory and the relation it has to women's movements, and then analyzing the changes that have occurred because of this.

When exploring the impacts of political theory and movements, especially ones that may be unfamiliar, it is important to first understand the meaning of the most essential elements of these movements and theories. The main idea that guides this research is the idea of feminism. Feminism can be defined as “An interdisciplinary approach to issues of equality and equity based on gender, gender expression, gender identity, sex, and sexuality as understood through social theories and political activism” (Day). This definition is important because it provides an understanding of how feminism is used to study gender roles, and how that is used to inform the ideas of feminist theory. In looking at the impact on Argentina, this is paramount to understand because Argentina had an unbalanced gender system that favored men for many decades until an important wave of feminism swept the region and redefined this system.

Now it is important to understand ideas that were a part of the feminist movements that transformed Argentina. One crucial phrase that became a defining aspect of these movements is the Spanish phrase "poner el cuerpo". This phrase translates to "to put the body". The phrase “poner el cuerpo” originated from the idea of feminism and how the material of a body could also be used to change and impact society. It helps to represent the physical harm that the body has gone through such as torture and other types of wounds within the political landscape. It became a part of the constant Argentine vocabulary and took root to represent the struggles of women fighting for their political rights (Sutton, 130). This phrase is used to describe the commitment to a social cause. In the Argentine case, it also meant the willingness to assume any risks associated with the cause as well as the determination to put in the work and the demands for the social movement’s cause (Sutton, 130). The phrase describes the political resistance of many women.

Another Spanish word that dominated many of these movements is “Encuentros.” This word translates to “meeting.” These were outlets in Latin America that held gatherings and forums where participants could share experiences, they were also used to measure the progress of the country regarding women’s representation (Sternbach, et al, 396). The height of these movements occurred during the 1970s and 1980s but they have also continued through to the present day. These meetings were influential in feminism because they created a grassroots movement that pushed most of the feminist movements and prominent figures forward. Finally, it is important to understand the definition of patriarchy, as this is the motivating factor for many feminist movements. Patriarchy can be defined as "a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it" (Merriam- Webster). By defining this, it demonstrates the system that Argentina was under for many years, and how the male-dominated society impacted women’s representation in politics. After defining patriarchy, it is essential to understand the additional term that prevails over the institutional structure of sexist beliefs that exist in Argentine society. This is referred to as “machismo,” which can be defined as “exaggerated masculinity” (Leiter). This concept promotes the idea that men are stronger, and that women are weaker which promotes prejudice against women (Leiter).

### **Research and Analysis**

Beginning in the 1970s and continuing through the 1980s, feminist political thought struck Argentina which spurred the women’s movements that would eventually lead to increased representation for women. This was a period in which feminism was becoming popular around the world, but it began to dominate Latin America. To understand how feminist theory sparked a series of reconstruction and significant changes it is important to understand a brief history of

what was happening within the Argentine government when feminism began to take a prominent hold.

The 1970s through the 1980s is the period in which many Latin American countries were ruled by dictators, which created an authoritarian regime in many countries, including Argentina (Sternbach et al, 397). These regimes often exploited their people and committed countless human rights violations. Argentina was no exception. Jorge Rafael Videla, a career military officer was Argentina's president from 1976 to 1981. He became president after overthrowing the prior ruler, Isabel Peron. He faced a government of corruption, collapsing economy, and attacks by guerillas. Upon taking power he imposed countless restrictions on political parties, Congress, and legislation. His time in office became strongly associated with what is known as the "Dirty War," where many left-wing political opponents were killed or "disappeared" never to be heard from again. Argentina became a military-controlled state, and many-faced oppression, and thousands died (Britannica).

Also, during this time, cultural ideas played a critical part in informing the beliefs of people in Argentine society. A significant part of these beliefs stems from the idea of "machismo" that informed the institution that contributed to the patriarchy. Women were seen as inferior to men, and their role, as well as the role of their bodies, would represent the existence of the inequalities. Although one can argue that "machismo" culture exists in other places, even the United States, for example, the Argentine brand of "machismo" is much different. It is different in that it is more aggressive with a different meaning. An example of "machismo" would be catcalling. Catcalling in the streets of Argentina is extremely prominent and it is almost impossible for a woman to go anywhere without being shouted at (Affairs n.d.) It is used to make women feel unsafe and express the idea that men remain dominant over women.

According to Sutton in "Poner el Cuerpo", there are many gender roles and norms that are often subscribed to, that naturally are more oppressive to women than they are to men. "In Argentina, prevailing norms of femininity construct the female body as a "body for others, particularly for children and men" (Sutton, 135). This belief has contributed to the "machismo" society that reinforces the patriarchy and promotes gender inequality at varying levels and creates many exclusions for women. This eventually contributed to the idea that women's bodies are meant to be sacrificed for the community and others, despite the personal risks associated with this. Women are designed to be "maternal" and provide for the needs of society. "Women are expected to dedicate their bodily energy and resources to family and by extension community, even if that means sacrificing their own bodily needs or health" (Sutton, 135). This type of ideology became known as "sacrificial motherhood" and was spread rapidly across Argentina. The impact of this ideology sparked activism among many Argentine women.

In looking at the governmental history of this country's society, and how women were oppressed, the connection between history and the flourishing of feminist political thought can be made. The feminist theory took root because of the patriarchal structure that prevailed. This patriarchal structure was influenced by the cultural norms that existed in Argentina's society. This is heavily played out in gender stereotypes. This is typically seen in an example in which it is frowned upon for women to be encouraged to work out or go to the gym because they should not be seen as muscular (Affair, n.d.).

Feminist theory provided an outlet for women to begin to use their voices to advance themselves in society to gain equal ground. Despite having received suffrage in 1947, their struggles did not stop there. These newly established theories would serve as the groundwork that would eventually begin to dismantle the patriarchy and the thinking that created the

patriarchal standards. The eminence of this theory took hold among many, but specific individuals led the charge in spreading these theories. One such individual is Alicia Moreau de Justo.

Alicia Moreau de Justo was a native-born Argentine physician that used the idea of feminism to bring ideas that would change the traditional perspective of women in this society. She lived from 1885-1986, so she was able to observe the early stages of feminism, as well as some of its advancements. She used feminism and her role as a physician to socially free women from the associations of what their bodies were created for. “A large part of emancipating women, though, was freeing the female body from a traditional culture in which women's biology, much less sexuality, was rarely discussed” (Red Informativa de Mujeres de Argentina). She was deemed a “social higienista” and took on the role of educating young women about their bodies, as well as helping them to make informed decisions that would help them both socially and medically. This is best demonstrated by the education that she provided especially to young women. Her goal was to educate them on the economic hardships of single motherhood, but also the medical consequences of venereal diseases (Red Informativa de Mujeres de Argentina).

Moreau's impacts continued in many other ways as she broke down barriers not only in education but in job fields as well. During this era, the medical field was monopolized by men, and allowing women like Moreau into this field itself was the slow start to some of the barriers that women faced to dissolve. Not only did Moreau transform the healthcare system using feminism to further educate women, but she would contribute to an innovative approach to motherhood which is known as "scientific motherhood" (Red Informativa de Mujeres de Argentina). This idea would allow mothers to be more educated in certain fields that would



provide them with further knowledge to better inform their motherhood. “Thus, Moreau and others promoted female education in physiology, chemistry, and hygiene so that mothers would be able to act as medical experts within the family and have the wisdom” (Red Informativa de Mujeres de Argentina). Moreau and others would attend the First International Feminine Congress in Buenos Aires in 1910, which would begin to spread the new concept of motherhood around the world. Moreau's work would reign in influence, which would be the start of many women's movements here that would continue to oppose the traditional “machismo” society, and fight for women to hold more equal places.

It was the small contributions in protesting made by women like Moreau that would spark widespread women’s movements that protested for their rights and begin to create a new society under which women would eventually progress and have more essential roles in government. In Argentina, recent feminist movements served as a way for women to first earn most of their political rights, but also to transform the construction of the system that would lead them to earn representation and hold positions of political power. There have been many movements that dominated both Latin America and Argentina, and each aims to advance and improve a particular aspect of women’s lives. For our research purposes, the focus will be on the movements that most advance women’s influence in the political atmosphere.

One of the most prominent beginning movements that started with minor change is known as “Madres de Plaza de Mayo” (Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo). It is a movement that is native to Argentina and was founded in 1977, in response to Videla’s dictatorship. This movement began as an opposition response to his authoritarian style and the violence that was occurring under his regime. The focus of this organization was to combat not only the oppressive

regime but also the long-entrenched, cruel standards and beliefs that surrounded women during this time.

The organization “Madres de Plaza de Mayo” was founded by a group of women activists, most of whom were also mothers. The creation of this group came about to oppose the ideas of sacrificial motherhood. They used this idea of motherhood to play to their advantage, advocating for the children that disappeared during the "Dirty War". Despite being viewed as bad mothers, their advocacy for children was viewed as an appropriate action on behalf of their children. They used this to their political advantage. “Yet speaking on behalf of their children is generally viewed as an appropriate feminine behavior, a perspective that helped the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo to maneuver politically at a dangerous time” (Sutton, 136). Their activism continued a feminist perspective that was being used to rebel against the masculine control in politics, as well as the patriarchal structure that dominates the Argentine society.

A large part of this movement was to take the typical role assigned to women as mothers and to use that to an advantage in their advocacy. “This approach animates other women’s political participation in contemporary Argentina as they struggle for the economic survival of their families and protest neoliberal economic policies that keep their children sick and hungry” (Sutton, 139). This concept allows the group to use what is typically seen as a disadvantage to their advantage to advance themselves politically. At first, despite this organization not having a profound impact on society through its use of peaceful protests, the creation of a women’s movement during this time was an accomplishment in and of itself. This would pave the way for additional movements to gain important ground and have more influence over critical issues in the future.

Another important movement that played an influential role in championing the political rights of women in Argentina was the “Encuentros” or meetings that occurred for feminist supporters to meet to discuss how they could politically advance themselves. These meetings became an essential factor that took meetings and ideas and transformed the notions of theory, to applying them in practice. "Encuentros then stems from the belief, shared by many feminists, in Latin America, that these regional meetings have been crucial to the development of Latin American theory and practice” (Sternbach et al, 396). Encuentros is a novel example to demonstrate theoretical ideas of feminism and how they were circulated into society. This is seen because the meetings are places that allow women to make connections and discuss feminist ideas. The information from these meetings provided them with the information and ideas about equality provided them with what was needed to advance their stance on women’s rights.

The Encuentros not only served as important meetings that provided ideas, but they eventually also helped aid in the development of specific policy campaigns and advocacy that would allow women to be more represented and gain more equal opportunities in having representation in the political arena. The growing of the feminist perspective from these meetings strengthened and created support not only in Argentina but across Latin America as a whole. "The feminist movement and the movimientos de mujeres... reinforced, strengthened, and supported each other" (Sternbach et al, 432-433). This formation has led to organizations such as the Central American Women’s Permanent Assembly for Peace, with the goal “to begin to articulate and aggressively push for an explicitly feminist perspective” (Sternbach et al, 433). Specifically in Argentina, the feminist approach continues to influence many women. Starting in 1990, many feminists belonging to movimientos de mujeres began their campaign to legalize

abortion in the country (Sternbach, 433). Several decades later, in 2021, abortion would finally be legal in Argentina.

While all these smaller movements provided progress and outlets for women, they are all encompassed under the most important women's movement that significantly impacted the region and was driven by these feminist ideas. This movement would come to be known as "Movimiento Nacional de Mujeres," which translates to the National Women's Movement. This movement was created during the 1980s, which is no surprise as this is when feminism began to have a strong hold on the region. It was created to launch a revolution and act as the voice for many women to fight and advance their gender equality (Burbano, 39).

This women's movement shows the influence of feminist theory and demonstrates its theory in practice because the main goal of this movement was to promote gender equality. The founding of these movements relied upon the ideas of feminism to advance this in society. Because of the strong desire among women wishing to fuel a change in society, they used feminist theory to support these ideals, as well as using the creation of the movements to put the ideas of change into action.

The "Movimiento Nacional de Mujeres" began as a movement to advance the role of the feminine voice in society, but it also led to many important legislative reforms. This is also recognized by the UN's Human Right Report, which shows significance in how these types of movements have had impacts in increasing not only their representations but also creating legislation that is designed to help women and to protect their equality and place in society. "The movements functioned as actors to bring awareness to the profound effects the persistence of patriarchy has on all societies of the region. Moreover, their work further challenged social norms that eventually brought egalitarian legislation to Latin America" (Burbano, 47). In seeing

this, it is demonstrated that these women's movements have had a significant role in challenging the patriarchy of the society, and the beliefs that are held among the people that are living in this region.

From studying the theory of feminism, and then studying the women's movements that were a result of this theory, it can be demonstrated that these things have advanced the role of women both at the political level and their role in society in general. These two things coupled together have allowed for a significant dismantling of the patriarchy, as well as allowing women to have a more influential standing in society. The theory of feminism provides a powerful connection for the movements. The ideas that define feminist theory animate the principles that the movements use to advance their dispositions.

Specifically, in Argentina, feminist movements have led to a significant increase in women's political representation. This is seen by looking at the percentage of women elected to political power after the movements have taken place. This is from the increased advocacy for their political rights that these movements specifically advanced for this cause.

Feminist theory was not always prominent in Argentina and among its people. The theory was widely circulated in various forms throughout the state. One of the most popular ways to spread these ideas was through education and in looking at other places in the world in which feminism had relayed strong influence across those in society. One such place was the United States. Additionally, the theory circulated among the various Encuentro meetings that provided women with the support they needed to advance their main claims.

In recent years the percentage of women holding these types of roles has significantly increased since the influential roles of feminist theory and movements have taken place. Despite

having their first head of state in 1974, the influence, and popularity of women in these types of positions did not take a solid role in society until more modern times. In 2018, Argentina's legislature was 39.8 percent female (Infographic). This at one point would be unheard of in Argentine history. In fact, in 1997, only 28 percent of the legislature in Argentina was made up of women. The progress was slow and gradual over time. This is a representation of how the movements of feminism have had an impact on the percentage of women elected to political office. Additionally, this also shows that these movements have done what they set out to do and are showing progress toward their end goal.

Another aspect that is a meaningful result of these movements and campaigns is that not only have women earned their rights, and roles in this society but with the return to the democratic government in Argentine society, they are also being elected by their people to hold these offices. In the presidential election of 2007, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner became the first Argentine woman to be directly elected to serve as the head of state (Iowa State University). The important connection that can be made from this is that not only have the roles of women changed in this society but also the thinking pattern has changed as well. If 'machismo' is the typical thinking pattern among those, it is evident that this has begun to change if they have become willing as a society to elect women to roles of power. Once the women are elected and are officially in power, they continue to advance social policies and legislation to help fight for equality and make advancements for the bettering of the people in their society.

The progression and continuation of the movements and support for women can be demonstrated by looking at the specifics of Cristina Kirchner. Although a controversial figure in her region, she was re-elected as president to serve on behalf of the Argentines and made

incredibly significant advancements for her country, and continues to fight for women's equality, and bridging the inequality gap between women and men.

At the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Cristina Kirchner continued her fight for women's representation and equality not only for the country she represents but for the rest of the world. She gave a speech regarding the barriers that women face, not only to getting elected to politics but the continuation of these barriers once they hold office. These barriers were especially prevalent in Argentina. She says, "it is necessary to break cultural boundaries that have regarded women as an inferior or a less intelligent being, for centuries" (Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner). In saying this, she is describing the challenges that her own country has faced and has fought to break down for decades. Throughout her speech, she refers to the progress made by the people in her country, showing the success that women's movements have had in her own country's political advancement.

Argentina has enacted gender quota laws and a system of parity that ensures women a place in political society and in holding leadership roles. This requires that the seats in parliament alternate between men and women (Progress in the political autonomy of women in Argentina n.d.). "In our country women also exceed the mandatory participation in Parliament, as established by law" and "We have achieved in Argentina a high degree of equality" (Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner). Here she is describing the prominent levels of achievements that Argentina has reached in advancing the political rights and representation of women. Additionally, this explains that the women in the society exceed the number of seats that they are mandated to fill allowing them to further their success in parliament.

Since the beginning of feminist theory, and the progression of women's political rights through various movements and protests, Argentina has made steady progress for many decades.

Not only have this transformed thought and made holding political office a reality for many Argentine women they have also made legislative progress. This legislative progress has adjusted the cultural thinking of "machismo" and has ensured that women are legally equal. In 2019, Law 27533, served as an amendment to a previous law on the Comprehensive Protection of Women. This law continues the protection of women, with the goal that seeks to protect and ensure that their political rights are guaranteed. The law states, "sanction any behavior that weakens, prevents, or limits the participation of women in public affairs on an equal basis with men" (Library of Congress). It also states, "to establish that undermining, annulling, preventing, hampering, or restricting the political participation of women in violation of their right to engage in a political life free from violence and to participate in public and political affairs on equal terms with men constitutes political violence against women" (Library of Congress). The amendments to these laws are a representation of the commitments that the Argentine women have toward securing their rights as the idea of "poner el cuerpo" demonstrates. The laws also represent the progress and influence that the activist movements had over this society.

By observing the results achieved in the legislature, and by the number of women being elected into Argentine political office, it is demonstrated that the theory of feminism and the role of women's movements have shaped the change that has occurred in Argentina. The advancement of women's political rights has changed drastically in terms of representation and the protection of these rights.

### **New Challenges**

Without a doubt, feminism and women's movements have led to the increased representation of women in politics. Argentina has had several women presidents, and now has representation at legislative levels. This has been good and steady progress for the women of



Argentina. However, just because there has been this much progress, does not mean that women can stop with their political movements here. Just because most of the ideals of patriarchy have been dissolved when it comes to allowing women in power, it does not mean that this type of thinking has been eliminated in society. There is still much-needed progress to satisfy the goal of feminism. The goal that feminism seeks to achieve is to eliminate sexist thinking and to elevate women to the same social status as men without any oppression and discrimination (McAfee 2018). Now that women have broken down the barriers to earning representation, they face new ones now that they have positions of political power.

Cristina Kirchner describes these barriers as continued discrimination, which stems from the difficulty in completely removing the cultural thoughts behind gender inequality, still carrying the “machismo” ideals. In her speech, she explains that "However, a woman can be reelected President, and discrimination remains. Apart from political, economic, and social discrimination, it is cultural discrimination that persists strongly in all societies" (Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner). This demonstrates that despite making progress there is still progress that needs to be done before women are truly equal on all levels in Argentine society. The progress Kirchner refers to is the cultural assumptions that still exist within Argentina, not only at the political level but as a whole. This can again be associated with the catcalling that is ramped even in modern society (Affairs n.d).

It is because of these new challenges, and rapid changes in society that many of the women’s movements still hold meetings and seek continual progress for their region. “As the five Encuentros demonstrated, these debates have been repeatedly recast and are far from resolved” (Sternbach et al, 432). Many new challenges continue to rise, but with an unwavering commitment among women, their movements can continue to implement necessary changes to

combat new obstacles as they arise. “While some old debates have not yet been resolved, many of them are being reformulated” (Sternbach et al, 432). These women need to continue working toward their goals, and as times change so will the issues, but the movements they have created can adapt and rise to the new challenges.

Upon looking at the influences of theory, movements, and people that played key roles in advancing, and changing an entire institution, and systematic beliefs, it is critical to see how this research is essential to the field of political science, and the contributions that will be added from this in the real world.

### Approach To Political Science

When studying critical topics in political science, it is important to recognize the impacts that this research can have in the real world. The argument in this paper is extremely relevant today and helps us understand the role of women as well as how they have been shaping policy and changing the construction of societal norms. James Ceaser provides the best understanding of political science and the importance that it has in the real world.

To fully comprehend this type of understanding, one must recognize that there are multiple understandings of political science. For the understanding of this research, it is best to use the New Normativism approach and understanding of political science. Within the approach of New Normativism, there are also diverse types of understanding of how things should work within the realm of political science. The best understanding within this realm is known as critical theory. New Normativism can be explained as “Political science should concern itself with values- with instituting substantive justice, stimulating democratic participation, or freeing our consciousness from the grip of bourgeois capitalism” (Ceaser, 114). Although a critic of New

Normativism, Ceaser explains that this theory believes it to be best to adopt certain ideas of values and integrate them into our society and that this will be the best method for understanding what is best for a regime. This will create a standard that should be followed. More specifically, critical theory “aims to show how currently accepted meanings of central-value terms, such as liberty and property have been foisted on us by groups or classes in the past that had the advantage to gain from a particular definition” (Ceaser, 117). This definition understands that most values have been accepted because they are a part of the tradition and were never questioned and only followed.

Critical theory, and theorists, however, seek to dispel a new understanding of values in a society. Their goal is to “deconstruct central-value terms and reveal their hidden ideological biases, thereby decoupling these terms from their historically determined meanings and opening the way to their constructive redefinition” (Ceaser, 117). By this understanding, as a society, we can redefine our values, and enact changes that are necessary for reconstruction in society.

The specifics of critical theory among the New Normativism approach fits perfectly among the topic of feminist theory, the roles that it played in aiding political equality for Argentine women, and the understanding that is facilitated among both knowledge and leadership. This understanding is best demonstrated by looking at the changes that occurred in Argentina. As Ceaser explains, critical theory seeks to redefine historical definitions, that can aid in changing the values to be practiced in a society. This is demonstrated using feminist thought, and how it can begin to reshape ideas outside of the typical Argentine “machismo” culture. As these thoughts progressed, it is eventually seen that through women’s movements, there has been a shift from thought to practice. Decades after the women’s movements were most prominent,

women have been elected, and even legislation has been signed to protect a woman's political rights.

This research, therefore, provides a seamless application of how the critical theory of political science can be applied in the real world. The reshaping and dismantling of the Argentine patriarchal society exemplify how historical and traditional terms are redefined, and how thought becomes practice with the application of laws, which is described as one of the most common uses of this approach. "This tendency is especially evident in the study of jurisprudence and legal history, in which the critical legal studies movement has sought to deconstruct bourgeois legal ideas and reconstruct key terms to promote more egalitarian standards' (Ceaser, 117). The creation of Argentine laws and women in positions of power show the importance of this change, and how it is best demonstrated in the real world.

This approach offers the best understanding because it allows for the ideas and norms in society to change, and act accordingly to the times, which is essential for society. This is also important because as the needs in society change, the values that inform us must also change. This idea allowed the Argentine institutions to change, and shape to more egalitarian standards, by allowing women a more equal place in society.

In looking at this approach, the concept of allowing things to change in society becomes paramount, especially in Argentina. Women are still facing discrimination when they finally fulfill roles in politics. There are still often distinctions made based on her gender when elected to office despite many of the changes that have taken hold to allow women to stand on more equal footing. This view continues with its importance because as barriers change, and discrimination takes on new forms the goal of critical theory will always aim to create more equality. "For the most part, however, those who have taken upon themselves the of making up

the meaning of modern words have to this point been inclined toward egalitarian ends” (Ceaser, 117). Despite the discriminatory beliefs that may constantly be present in society, the goals of critical theorists and activists will typically advance toward equality which is important to maintaining legislation and equality for the women of Argentina.

## **Conclusion**

The theory of feminism has proved essential in the transformation of the patriarchal society in Argentina. Feminism paved the way for the emergence of various women’s movements, such as the Encuentros and Movimiento Nacional de Mujeres. These movements redefined the roles that women could play in society. It was because of this theory, and the movements, which made the theories a practice that advanced the political rights of Argentine women. Specific leaders such as Alicia Moreau de Justo and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner contributed to redefining standards and pushing for women to play larger roles in society. Is seen across time by looking at these two figures the dedication that women in Argentina must continue to advance their rights and ensure that future generations have these rights secured. In modern-day Argentina, women have been presidents, make up a portion of the state's legislature, and hold roles in the Parliament. There are also laws in place that protect a woman's political rights and hold that she is equal in society. In a prominent "machismo" society, this would never be a possibility. It is because of feminist political theory, women's movements, and dedicated activists that have made it a reality for Argentine women to be seen as equals among their male peers and can even hold positions of political power.

This research is meaningful because it provides an understanding that is essential when looking at the history and political progress of women in the traditionally oppressed state of Argentina. The research has allowed us to see the connections between theory and practice in the application in the world by examining how feminist political thought informed the activist movements that would eventually lead to an increased representation of women in this society. It is also important to realize that despite all the progress that has been made, there is still room for improvement as there still is an existence of discrimination against women in politics.

The institutional changes that occurred because of feminism in Argentina can be used as a prime example of how critical theory plays a dominant role not only in political science but of how these ideas can be applied in the real world and how a society can politically advance itself. Additionally, additional research can be done to seek how Argentina will maintain these laws, and feminists ideas. It is also important to continue research into new obstacles that may arise in society, and what can be done to remedy these new challenges.

The role of feminism and movements in Argentina can be used to demonstrate to the world that change can take time, but the transformation of old institutional standards can be demolished to create a greater society, especially for women. The application of political science can be used to help inform other societies, from showing support that old ideas and traditions can be redefined, and that is essential for these things to change to foster a completely egalitarian society, like the one the Argentines are close to creating.

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## Appendix A

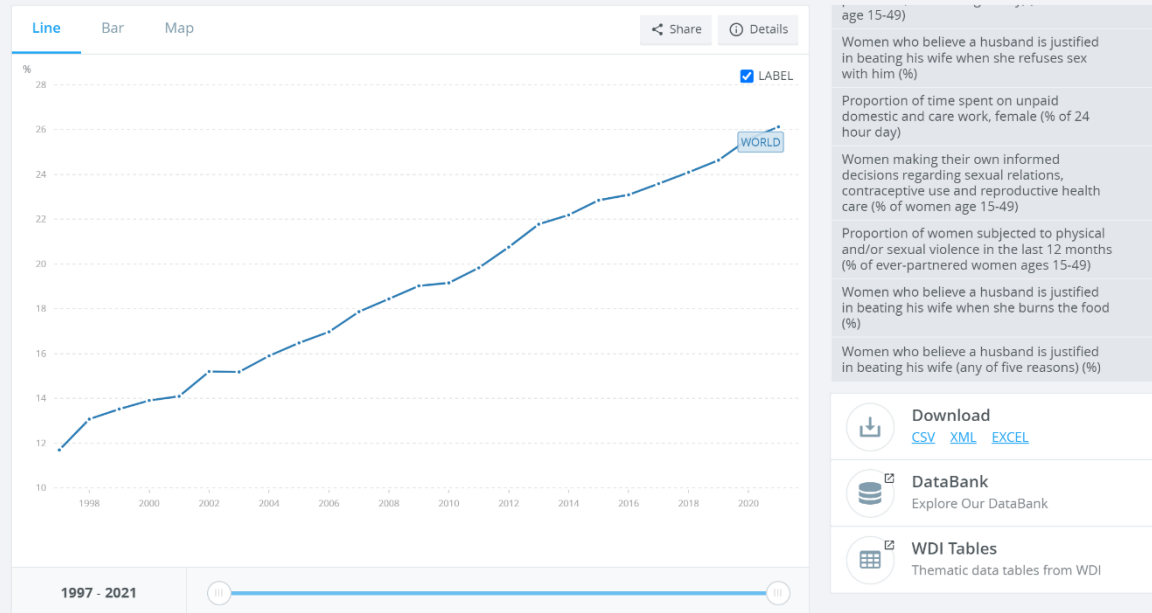


## Appendix B

### Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) ([ipu.org](http://ipu.org)). For the year of 1998, the data is as of August 10, 1998.

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- age 15-49)
- Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife when she refuses sex with him (%)
- Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, female (% of 24 hour day)
- Women making their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care (% of women age 15-49)
- Proportion of women subjected to physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months (% of ever-partnered women ages 15-49)
- Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife when she burns the food (%)
- Women who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (any of five reasons) (%)

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