

Asian women's paths to office: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis approach

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Abstract:

This paper evaluates existing theories on women's participation in top government positions, applying those theories to Asia through a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). In doing so, this paper aims to identify which conditions have been necessary and/or sufficient for women to break the political glass ceiling in Asia. Overall, the results show how political parties in democratic or hybrid regimes support different types of female candidates depending on the party's ideology and political scenario. More specifically, there are three alternative pathways for a party to be successful when selecting a female candidate in Asia. Conditions that were previously necessary in the region, such as family ties to political dynasties or contexts of instability or transition, are no longer necessary. New opportunities in specific socio-political contexts are arising for women who want to reach the highest office in the country but do not belong to political dynasties.

Keywords: Asia; Women; Leaders; QCA; Political Parties

Introduction

Asia is home to the biggest female population in the world, the world's first female Prime Minister (Sri Lanka 1960), and the first female president of a communist state, albeit for just a few weeks (Vietnam 2018). To date, there have been 19 female prime ministers and presidents in the region. However, in spite of the comparatively high number of women at the highest level of executive power, Asia performs much worse when it comes to women's descriptive representation in countries' legislatures. In fact, the average percentage of women in national parliaments is close to 20%, far lower than that in Europe, the Americas, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018). Thus, are the conditions that favour the presence of women in legislative arenas different from those that favour women achieving the top political offices of executive power? And, if this is the case, which conditions are necessary and/or sufficient for women to achieve the highest political office in the country?

Unfortunately, such questions are difficult to answer, in no small part due to the conflicting and sometimes disconnected scholarly evidence about the supply and demand factors for women in politics (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Studies focusing on women in national legislatures highlight the importance of economic conditions and institutional settings related to the electoral system (Eto, 2010; Norris & Inglehart, 2008; Paxton, Hughes, & Green, 2006; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). Regarding women in executive power, many studies stress the relevance of ties to political dynasties as opposed to socio-economic conditions (Jalalzai, 2008), as well as the importance of critical political junctures or contexts of political instability (Bruckmüller, Ryan, Rink, & Haslam, 2014; Ryan, Haslam, & Kulich, 2010). However, other studies suggest that family ties are not as important as they used to be (Jalalzai & Dos Santos, 2015; Thomas, 2011), and that the likelihood of being selected as a candidate in a moment of

political instability is mediated by the political party's gender stereotypes on candidate evaluations (K. Dolan, 2014; Holman, Merolla, & Zechmeister, 2016).

This article claims that such conflicting evidence can be resolved by using a configurational approach, based on a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Indeed, applying a QCA approach might help to solve the problems of casual complexity (Ragin, 2006), including conjunctural causation, equifinality and asymmetry (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). For example, a QCA has already been applied to evaluate previous theories on the participation of women in politics, notably the intersection of many different conditions necessary and/or sufficient for women to reach political offices in Asian national legislatures (Prihatini 2018). However, to my knowledge, this approach has never been applied to women in the top of executive power.

Building upon the different sets of literature mentioned above, I argue that the ideology of a political party plays an intermediary and necessary role in helping women obtain top positions in the government by choosing different types of female candidates depending on various political junctures. As rational actors, political parties evaluate the benefits and potential costs of choosing a woman who belongs to a political dynasty based not only on their own ideology but also what they perceived as the risks of the office and the demands of the electorate in different scenarios.

In the following sections, I develop this argument by identifying the main conditions that have been singled out by the academic literature when explaining the presence of women in political offices. First, I analyse which women have become Prime Ministers (PMs) or Presidents of Republics (PRs) in Asian countries throughout two different decades (from 1998 to 2017). Second, using the two-step QCA approach, which allows us to differentiate between structural and juncture conditions (Schneider & Wagemann, 2006; Schneider, 2018), I establish which conditions have been

necessary for getting women to the top of the government. Finally, I identify which configurations (combination of conditions) are sufficient for women to reach the top of the executive office.

In summary, this paper seeks to build upon previous attempts to explain the presence of women at the highest levels of executive power. By evaluating previous theories through a QCA approach that allows us to identify the necessary conditions and sufficient configurations in Asia, this paper offers a more nuanced explanation of the different paths a woman can (successfully) take to the top of the government, depending on her background and the political scenario. Overall, the results show that some degree of political freedom is a necessary condition for women to reach the top of executive power. No woman has ever ruled a totalitarian regime in Asia. However, conditions that were previously necessary in the region, such as family ties to political dynasties or contexts of instability or transition, are no longer necessary, but they still permit some women to obtain political office in combination with other conditions. Women who have no family ties to political dynasties are now reaching the highest political offices within the government as a result of specific personal and political junctures.

Moreover, political parties are crucial in acting as gate-keepers for women to break the glass ceiling since they support different types of female candidates depending on their ideology and the political context. These findings suggest that parties that want to be successful need to select female candidates with different backgrounds depending on three diverse scenarios. Alternatively, women who want to reach the highest office in the country need to convince one of the main political parties that their specific background is the best fit for a particular political juncture.

This manuscript is structured as follows: The first section presents the theories on women's participation in politics and more specifically in executive power. The

following section describes why a QCA approach is particularly appropriate for studying a phenomena subjected to causal complexity. The remaining sections present and discuss the three pathways for women to reach the top of the government before a conclusions section closes the article.

Theoretical background

Studies on how the glass ceiling affects women in business, organizations and political arenas have multiplied over the past two decades. The first studies of the glass ceiling in politics were mainly based on North American and European national legislatures and highlighted the importance of the electoral system, party organization and socio-cultural norms (Palmer & Simon, 2001; Reynolds, 1999), prejudices against and stereotypes of women in power (K. Dolan, 1997; Gordon & Miller, 2001), and career opportunities within public administration (J. Dolan, 2001). Since then, researchers focusing on (or including) other regions and other political arenas have added more possible causes to the puzzle.

Some researchers have highlighted socio-economic factors such as development, industrialization (Paxton et al., 2006) and economic and education inequality between men and women (Norris & Inglehart, 2008; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). However, the effects of development and industrialization on the participation of women in the highest political circles are ambiguous. Indeed some studies have shown that especially in developing countries, socioeconomic inequality between genders does not translate into greater difficulties for women seeking access to the highest levels of executive power, especially when those women belong to political dynasties (Jalalzai, 2008). Just to be clear, being a member of a political dynasty can be perceived as an asset both for men and women, especially in settings characterized by weak institutions (such as hybrid regimes or regimes in transition), strong factionalism or the sudden

disappearance of a former national leader (Thompson, 2012). What seems to be specific for women in the top of the government is that in countries where there are no strong supply or demand factors for women in politics, women who belong to a political dynasty still achieve the top executive office.

Another strain of research has focused on political and institutional factors, such as the form of government (Jalalzai, 2008); the political regime (Tremblay, 2007); the electoral system; and the ideology of the political parties since left-wing parties are more eager to introduce voluntary party quotas for women (Norris, 2006; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). In fact, the relationship between democracy and the presence of women in legislative power is complex. Tremblay (2007) found that the duration of the democratic regime is crucial since in well established democracies, the presence of women in parliament is explained by cultural factors, while in newly established democracies, the electoral system is what matters the most. The presence of women in the legislative power is also highly determined by the ideology of the regime, as seen in undemocratic communist regimes that have, since the first half of the twentieth century, encouraged the presence of women in parliament (Norris & Inglehart, 2008; Paxton et al., 2006).

During the last two decades, scholars have turned to the attitudes of the population towards the presence of women in the public sphere and specifically in decision-making positions (Inglehart, Norris, & Welzel, 2002; Norris & Inglehart, 2008)¹. Indeed, the literature considers certain cultural variables that in interaction with unstable political contexts can encourage or discourage the presence of women in the

¹ Most studies use the World Value Survey, especially the question asking about the respondent's degree of agreement with the statement "in general, men make better political leaders than women". All studies agree that this indicator best explains the presence of women in politics when comparing across countries. However, this indicator is not available for many countries of interest in the present paper.

political arena. Particularly, some scholars have argued that certain culturally informed stereotypes of women as docile, peaceful and favourable to consensus, in combination with moments of national crisis, transition or armed conflict (Thompson, 2002), can indeed facilitate the access of women to power, especially when a woman's position of power is seen as temporary (Jalalzai 2008). Indeed, certain scholars, through the metaphor of the 'glass cliff,' have shown how women are specifically selected for positions that are risky and precarious (Bruckmüller et al., 2014; Ryan et al., 2010). However, the literature is highly inconclusive on this issue. Some researchers have found that gender stereotypes do not play a role in candidate evaluations (C. Dolan, 2014), while others argue that potential public insecurity such as terrorist threats, influence the effect of gender stereotypes on candidate evaluations depending on politician partisanship (Holman et al., 2016).

While the influence of parties in selecting female candidates has been well explored in national parliaments (Fox & Lawless, 2011; Hayes, 2011; Krook, 2010; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Norris & Inglehart, 2008; Norris, 2006; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Sanbonmatsu, 2006; Stockemer, 2013), there is a vacuum on how political parties act as gatekeepers for women in executive positions. There are notable exceptions with regard to cabinet positions (Annesley, Beckwith, & Franceschet, 2019; Annesley & Franceschet, 2015; Claveria, 2014), which stresses the importance of left-wing parties or voluntary gender quotas in increasing the presence of women in ministerial offices. However, there is still a vacuum as it relates to women in top national executive positions such as PRs or PMs. The first comparative studies on this last topic appeared ten years ago. Scholars focusing on Asian and Latin American experiences highlighted the importance of other push factors, such as political dynasties, the importance of political careers within specific political systems (whether socialist or liberal republics),

and the distinction between powerful and ceremonial positions and regime stability (Jalalzai, 2008; Jensen, 2008). However, these studies fail to analyse how the factors interact with the support of big national political parties.

Moreover, the scarce studies on female Presidents of Republic (PRs) and Prime Ministers (PMs) have relied on either statistical methods (Jalalzai, 2008, 2016) or small n comparative studies (Thomas & Adams, 2010) and single case studies (Jalalzai & Dos Santos, 2015). Jalalzai later highlighted the importance of studying women's access to the presidency in terms of paths to office (2010); however, she did not apply a causal configurational approach to systematically analyse which conditions or combinations of conditions are necessary or sufficient to reach office. To my knowledge, a configurational approach has only been applied three times in the study of women in politics, and all of these studies have focused on women in parliament but not in executive positions (Krook, 2010; Prihatini, 2018; Stockemer, 2013)². It is to this configurational trend that this paper contributes to by building upon the set of studies aiming to explain why some women break the glass ceiling of executive power. I argue that supply and demand factors explaining the presence of women in the highest government positions do not correlate with the outcome in a probabilistic fashion, but instead that this presence is better understood in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions.

Therefore, in addition to offering a general look at the situation of women at the top levels of Asian governments, I seek to answer a fundamental question: Are there alternative paths by which Asian women were able to shatter the political glass ceiling? Specifically, I am interested in which combinations of structural and juncture factors allow women to reach the top executive positions.

² Stockemer's study (2013) criticising the use of a QCA approach for analysing women in national parliaments was later replicated by Buche et al (2016).

Materials and methods

I rely upon a QCA because I expect that certain factors will be relevant in some contexts but not in others and a QCA is particularly suited for researching causal complexity (Ragin, 2006), including conjunctural causation, equifinality and asymmetry (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). Therefore, instead of measuring the specific weight of each independent variable in the outcome under a probabilistic logic, as Jalalzai did in her two systematic studies on factors determining the access of women to top executive positions (2008, 2016), the present study, based on set theory, will identify sufficient configurations of conditions that allow women to reach the highest executive offices. Therefore, I assume that there are alternative pathways – rather than only one combination of conditions – by which women can break the glass ceiling. Moreover, a QCA is particularly suited to exploratory research and area studies that use a limited number of cases (Ragin & Rihoux, 2004)³.

Although many conditions have been highlighted above, a QCA requires using a limited number of conditions for evaluation. An excessive number of conditions produces a problem of limited diversity. One way of overcoming this problem is to apply a two-step QCA approach that differentiates between remote and proximate conditions, while at the same time allows for ‘modelling the effect of contextual factors on the phenomenon of interest’ (Schneider, 2018, p. 1110). I consider remote (or stable) conditions those related to socioeconomic and institutional characteristics, while I consider proximate (juncture) conditions those related to the candidates’ background and the political scenario.

³ These authors state that the ideal N for a QCA is less than 50.

During the first step, remote conditions are tested to identify which conditions are necessary for women to reach a top governmental position. These conditions are as follows:

- (1) Minimum political freedom (regimes categorized as free or partially free by Freedom House);
- (2) Experience with communist or socialist rule;
- (3) High human development; and
- (4) High female to male labour force participation rate.

During the second step, 5 proximate conditions are added to the analysis in order to find sufficient causal configurations that enable women to reach the top of the government.

These conditions are:

- (5) power of the position,
- (6) member of a political dynasty,
- (7) support of the main left-wing party in the country,
- (8) presence of armed conflict and
- (9) presence of gender quotas.

The starting point in the analysis is 1998 based on data availability for most conditions.

Table 1 List of Asian female leaders from 1998 to 2008

Female leader	Year	Country	Office	Via	Reached office
Khaleda Zia	2001	Bangladesh	PM	General election	Yes
Sheikh Hasina Wazed	2009	Bangladesh	PM	General election	Yes
Sheikh Hasina Wazed	2014	Bangladesh	PM	General Election	Yes
Sonia Gandhi	2004	India	PM	Legislative election	No
Pratibha Patil	2007	India	PR	Presidential election	Yes
Jayaram Jayalalithaa	2014	India	PM	Legislative election	No
Meira Kumar	2017	India	PR	Presidential election	No
Megawati Sukarnoputri	2001	Indonesia	PR	Designation from vice president until 2004	Yes
Megawati Sukarnoputri	2004	Indonesia	PR	Presidential election	No
Megawati Sukarnoputri	2009	Indonesia	PR	Presidential election	No
Yuriko Koike	2017	Japan	PM	Legislative election	No
Roza Otunbayeva	2011	Kyrgyzstan	PR	Nomination by the opposition	Yes
Wan Azizah Wan Ismail	2008	Malaysia	PM	Legislative election	No
Aung San Suu Kyi	2016	Myanmar	PM	Legislative election	Yes
Bidhya Devi Bhandari	2015	Nepal	PR	Presidential election	Yes
Halimah Yacob	2017	Singapore	PR	Uncontested election	Yes
Han Myeong-sook	2006	South Korea	PM	Nomination by PR until 2007	Yes
Park Geun-hye	2012	South Korea	PR	Presidential election	Yes
Chandrika Kumaratunga	1999	Sri Lanka	PR	Presidential election	Yes
Tsai Ing-wen	2012	Taiwan	PR	Presidential election	No
Tsai Ing-wen	2016	Taiwan	PR	Presidential election	Yes
Yingluck Shinawatra	2011	Thailand	PM	General election	Yes
Gloria Macapagal Arroyo	2001	The Philippines	PR	Designation from vice president until 2004	Yes
Gloria Macapagal Arroyo	2004	The Philippines	PR	Presidential election	Yes
Grace Poe	2016	The Philippines	PR	Presidential election	Yes
Đặng Thị Ngọc Thịnh	2018	Vietnam	PR	Designation from vice president	Only for 32 days

Source: The author

Cases, outcome and conditions

For this study, the cases are top executive power positions, either PMs and/or

PRs, in all independent countries from Eastern Asia, South East Asia, Southern Asia

and Central Asia. To account for significant changes in political regimes, the presence of an armed conflict and/or the adoption of gender quotas, cases are broken down into two decades (1998-2007 and 2008-2017)⁴. Among monarchies, only PM positions were taken into account⁵. Therefore, presidential systems and constitutional monarchies are assigned one case per country and decade (PR or PM, respectively), and parliamentary republics and semi-presidential systems are assigned 2 cases per country and decade (one for PMs and one for PRs). Table 1 shows the relation of Asian women who were candidates for a PM or PR office and whether they were elected to that office.

Because the outcome (top executive positions in Asian countries in two different decades) is dichotomous, as are most of the remote and proximate conditions (see below), a crisp-set approach was selected. However, robustness checks with fuzzy sets were included in the online appendix (Table 7OA).

The outcome is whether since 1998, a top Asian position of executive power (either PM or PR) has ever been occupied by a woman for at least 3 months. Negative cases are positions not occupied by women for a period longer than 3 months, including cases where there were female candidates who did not win the position and positions where no women were running for office⁶. One case was excluded from the original dataset: India PM during the period from 1998-2007. In 2004, Sonia Gandhi ran for the PM office as the candidate from the Indian National Congress (INC). She won the election (the INC received 58% of the popular vote) and everybody expected her to become PM in the following months; however, before taking office, she decided to resign and recommended Mr. Manmohan Singh as her choice for PM. Since the

4 According to UNStats classification of geographical regions, countries from Western Asia were excluded to better ensure a minimum level of homogeneity between cases.

5 The positions of king in Cambodia, Bhutan, Japan, Malaysia and Thailand were also excluded.

6 Because some elections in multi-party systems have many candidates that run for office but do not have the same opportunities to win due to different levels of party support, female candidates were considered only if they were among the three candidates who received the most votes.

conditions that led to her resignation are different from those that lead women to office, it was decided that this case should be withdrawn from the dataset. However, robustness tests were performed including two alternative analyses: one considering this case as a positive case (if the inauguration had gone on as planned, she would have become PM with a comfortable majority in the Lok Sabha) and another considering it as a negative case (she actually never ruled, although for different reasons). Although the results (available in Table 7OA of the Online Appendix) of these analyses vary in terms of consistency and coverage, the solution term remains identical, and the consistency value of the solution remains above the 0.9 threshold.

In the first stage of the analysis, cases are independent countries in 2 different decades (1998-2007 and 2008-2017). Four remote conditions are tested to choose which of them, or combination of them, is necessary. Regarding minimum political freedom, regimes categorized as free or partially free at some point throughout the decade were codified as 1 and regimes consistently categorized as non-free throughout the decade were codified as 0. Regarding experience with communist rule, countries were assigned 1 if the state had or has a communist or socialist regime, and 0 if it has no experience with such a political regime. High human development over the decade was codified based on the Human Development Index (HDI) Data Series, and a value of 1 was assigned whenever a state had an HDI score higher than 0.8 at the beginning of the decade. The 0.8 threshold is based on both the categorization of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (where those above 0.8 are consistently considered high human development countries), and the distribution of cases in Asia for this condition. Female to male participation in the labour force was codified as 1 whenever the rate was equal to or above 0.7. Robustness checks were carried out for alternative thresholds for both the HDI and female to male participation in the labour force rate. In

all cases, the results for the first step of the necessity analysis remained the same both in terms of the conditions identified as necessary and the consistency and relevance of the necessity values.

As this paper discusses the paths to office, the emphasis will be on the second step, where countries are categorized based on country-decades-executive positions and 5 proximate conditions are incorporated for the sufficiency analysis: 1) the position's power (whether the position is symbolic/ceremonial or has strong executive powers); 2) membership in a political dynasty, 3) support from the main left-wing party in the country, 4) the presence of an armed conflict as defined by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, and 5) the adoption of gender quotas (either legislated quotas, reserved seats or voluntary party quotas⁷). The first proximate condition is whether the position concentrates most of the executive powers or if it is somehow subordinate to a higher executive position. Therefore, PM positions in parliamentary systems, PR positions in presidential and semi-presidential systems and PM positions in semi-parliamentary systems were coded as 1, while PT positions in parliamentary and semi-parliamentary systems and PM positions in semi-presidential systems were coded as 0. In relation to political dynasties, a position was coded as 1 whenever there was a female nominee or candidate for that position whose parents, grandparents, spouse or brothers had been a PM or PT in the past. Regarding party support, cases where a woman was supported by the main left-wing party in the country were coded as 1. The remaining cases (cases where women were supported by the main right-wing party, minority parties or there was no female candidate) were coded as 0. Regarding the presence of an armed conflict, cases were assigned a value of 1 whenever there were at least 100 casualties during the period of analysis as a result of an armed conflict, according to the Uppsala Conflict

⁷ In Asia, only the Philippines and Thailand have parties with voluntary party quotas.

Data Program⁸. Finally, in relation to gender quotas, cases were assigned a value of 1 if legislated quotas, reserved seats or voluntary party quotas were in place or adopted during the decade analysed. This information was based on the Gender Quota Database⁹.

The conditions of high human development, increased female to male participation in the labour force and severe armed conflicts are therefore calibrated following theoretical considerations and value distributions for Asia in order to ensure that cases belonging to the same set are similar to one another in the condition considered (Thiem & Dusa, 2012, p. 54). An extended description of the calibrated conditions and the data matrix for remote conditions are available in the Online Appendix (Tables 1OA, 2OA, 3OA, 4OA and 5OA).

Results

Country settings for breaking the glass ceiling: necessity analysis of remote conditions

As recently argued by Schneider (2018), during the first step of the two-step QCA approach, remote conditions (and combinations of remote conditions) should only be tested for necessity. Following the new protocol of the 2-step QCA approach (Schneider, 2018), Table 2 shows the necessity analysis of remote individual and SUIN conditions for reaching office.

⁸ The 100 deaths' threshold has been frequently used in the specialized literature (Balcells & Kalyvas, 2014; Lujala, 2009), although since the observation units are decades, robustness checks will be performed with a threshold of 1000 casualties.

⁹ International IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union and Stockholm University: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/>. Although Singapore is not included in the Global Gender Database, the ruling party (PAP) introduced a voluntary party quota in 2009 (Tan, 2015).

Table 2 Necessity analysis of remote conditions

	Consistency	Relevance of necessity	Coverage
Political Freedom	1.000	0.500	0.400
Political Freedom * ~Communist	0.929	0.558	0.406
~Communist	0.929	0.605	0.433

Source: Self-elaboration using the superSubset function in R.

Note: Consistency cut-off: 0.9, RoN cut-off: 0.5. ~: absence; *: logical operator 'AND'.

The analysis of the necessary conditions for the negation of the outcome showed no results with the combination of consistency and relevance of necessity. The exact same solution was obtained when moving the membership thresholds for the HDI to 0.78, 0.7 and 0.6, and the membership threshold of LABOUR to 0.5, 0.6 and 0.8.

According to the analysis of necessity in Table 2, there is one condition that is completely necessary for women to reach the top of the government: a minimum degree of political freedom (countries categorized as free or partially free by Freedom House). This condition has a consistency of 1, and the relevance of necessity (RoN) is above the threshold of 0.5 (Schneider and Wagemann 2012; Schneider 2018). It is understandable that the relevance of necessity is rather low, since the analysis is incomplete because proximate conditions have not been included yet.

Therefore, we can argue that women reach top government offices only where there is a minimum degree of political freedom in the form of either democratic or hybrid regimes (or free and partially free countries as defined by Freedom House). No totalitarian or closed authoritarian regime has ever chosen a woman to lead a country. Indeed, the recent Vietnamese experience is a very good example. After the death of President Trần Đại Quang in September 2018, Ms. Đặng Thị Ngọc Thịnh, who at the time was Vice President of the country, assumed the office as Acting President of Vietnam but only for a very short period of time (32 days). After a month, she was quickly replaced by a male President and she went back to the office of the Vice President.

However, there are no necessary conditions or combination of conditions that prevent women from reaching top government positions. Nevertheless, these results show how the ascent of women to top government positions is an asymmetrical process where the negation of necessary remote conditions for reaching the top do not explain why some women do not become PRs or PMs.

Paths to office: a sufficiency analysis of remote and proximate conditions

Before performing the sufficiency analysis of proximate conditions and according to the results of the necessity analysis of remote conditions, cases with no experience with democracy or hybrid regimes will be excluded. In addition, cases will be divided into country positions to distinguish whether women are reaching (or failing to reach) top government positions with more or less power.

Table 3 Necessity analysis of remote and proximate conditions

	Consistency	Relevance of necessity	Coverage
<u>Women in Office</u>			
Left-wing Party + Dynasty	0.929	0.955	0.867
<u>~Women in Office</u>			
~Dynasty	0.977	0.600	0.875
~Left-wing Party	0.953	0.750	0.911
~Dynasty * ~ Left-wing Party	0.953	0.938	0.976

Source: Self-elaboration using the superSubset function in R.

Consistency cut-off: 0.9, RoN cut-off: 0.5. ~: absence; *: logical operator 'AND'.

After performing the necessity analysis of proximate conditions (see Table 3), there was no single necessary condition or combination of conditions for women to reach office. However, there is a disjunction that results in women being elected to office in more that 90% of the cases: cases of women belonging to a major left-wing party or belonging to a political dynasty. Conversely, there are no necessary conditions

for not reaching office. Nevertheless, women who do not belong to political dynasties or major left-wing parties are rarely elected to office.

The truth table in the Online Appendix (Table 6OA) shows all the possible configurations, their consistencies, the number of cases falling into each configuration and the treatment of the logical reminders. In this analysis, I chose the conservative solution term in order to avoid making assumptions about the logical reminders. The following table shows the enhanced standard analysis of the different paths to office for Asian women.

Table 4 Sufficiency analysis of proximate conditions (enhanced standard analysis)

Sufficient configurations	Consistency	Coverage solution	Unique coverage	Cases
Power*Dynasty*~Left-wing party*Quotas	1.000	0.214	0.214	South Korea08PR: Park G-H Philippines98PR: Gloria Macapagal Arroyo Bangladesh98PM: Khaleda Zia
Power*Dynasty*Left-wing party*Conflict	1.000	0.357	0.357	Indonesia98PR: Megawati Sukarnoputri Myanmar08PM: Aung San Suu Kyi Sri Lanka98PR: Chandrika Kumaratunga Bangladesh08PM: Sheikh Hasina Wazed Thailand08PM: Yingluck Shinawatra
~Dynasty*Left-wing party*~Conflict*Quotas	1.000	0.286	0.286	Taiwan08PR: Tsai Ing-wen Kyrgystan08PR: Roza Otunbayeva Nepal08PR: Bidhya Devi Bhandari South Korea98PM: Han Myeong-sook
Solution consistency	1.000			
Solution coverage	0.857			

Source: Self elaboration.

Note: Quine-McCluskey; Outcome: Women in Office; Consistency cut-off: 0.80, ~: absence; *: logical operator 'AND'

Table 4 shows that there are three different paths to office for women in Asian politics. The first possible pathway relates to women belonging to political dynasties and right-wing or conservative major parties reaching powerful offices in countries with either legislated or voluntary party quotas. This pathway refers to cases such as President Khaleda Zia in 1991 in Bangladesh, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in the Philippines in 2001 and President Park Geun-hye in South Korea in 2012. These three leaders had previous political experience albeit very different. Zia was a former first lady in Bangladesh and participated in the democratic opposition in her country. Han was the former leader of her political party, and Macapagal Arroyo served as Vice President of the Philippines before becoming PR.

The second pathway involves women who belong to both a political dynasty and the major left-wing party and who obtained a powerful office in countries with a severe armed conflict. Cases falling under this configuration include Chandrika Kumaratunga in Sri Lanka in 1999, Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesia in 2001, Sheikh Hasina Wazed in Bangladesh in 2009 and 2014, Yingluck Shinawatra in Thailand in 2011 and Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar in 2016. The careers of these women were somehow even more diverse: Hasina, Sukarnoputri and Suu Kyi were involved in the democratic opposition social movements in their respective countries; Hasina and Sukarnoputri served as legislators prior to becoming executive leaders; Sukarnoputri became President by designation after serving as Vice President; Kumaratunga was involved in several political parties and executive commissions and in the regional government in Sri Lanka's Western Province; whereas Shinawatra had no previous political experience before being elected PM.

The third pathway refers to women who had the support of one the major left-wing parties in the country and no links to political dynasties in states with no armed conflict or legislated quota. This pathway makes reference to President Roza Otunbayeva in Kirghizstan in 2010, President Tsai Ing-wen in Taiwan in 2016, President Bidhya Devi Bhandari in Nepal in 2015 and PM Han Myeong-sook in South Korea in 2006. These four leaders have had impressive political careers within civil society organizations and their own political parties as legislators and former ministers. Tsai, Otunbayeva and Yacob have also served as ministers in previous governments. Both PM Han and President Otunbayeva had been active in democratic movements: Han was a pro-democracy activist during the last years of the authoritarian rule in South Korea and Otunbayeva was one of the leaders of the democratic Tulip Revolution.

The solution term has a consistency of 1 meaning that 100% of the cases that fell under one of these pathways present the outcome (a woman at the top of the government). The solution coverage is 0.857, meaning that this solution term explains 85.7% of the positive cases in Asia. There are only 2 cases that are not explained by the solution term: President Halimah Yacob in Singapore and President Pratibha Patil in India. Both cases relate to ceremonial offices with very limited executive power and belong to what is called a contradictory row (a row or configuration that has both positive and negative cases) in the truth table. Hence, these cases relate respectively to two logical contradictions. The election of President Yacob was very unique since she won an uncontested election with the support of the ruling conservative party (People Action Party, PAP). Just one year earlier, the Singaporean Constitution was amended to include new candidate eligibility criteria that limited the pool of possible contestants (Osman & Waikar, 2019; Rodan, 2018). After significant vote share loses in previous elections, the PAP wanted to create a more modern, inclusive and democratic image in

order to appeal to young voters (Osman & Waikar, 2019; Tan, 2015) while at the same time controlling the outcome of the election. As a result of the uncontested and controlled presidential election, the powers of the office were undermined even more than before.

The other logical contradiction found in the truth table is ceremonial positions in countries with an armed conflict but not a significant proportion of women in parliament, where women who have no links to political dynasties were supported by one of the main parties in the country. These are the cases of two Indian women who ran for PR with the support of the INC: Pratibha Patil won the office in 2007 but Meira Kumar lost the election in 2017. Both of them had strong political careers: they served as legislators in the Lok Shaba and held cabinet positions. A key issue here is that Presidents in India are not elected by popular vote but by an electoral college composed of electors from the Lok Shaba (House), Rajya Shaba (Senate) and State Assemblies. When Patil ran for office, the INC and its allies had the majority of the votes, whereas when Kumar ran for office, the INC and its allies constituted a minority in the electoral college.

These results show how political parties are critical gatekeepers for women in power, and how they systematically support different types of female politicians depending on the political ideology of the party, the powers of the political office at stake, and the socio-political context. These conditions have no independent effects but instead can bring women into the top of the government in combination with other conditions. According to the results, left-wing parties are successful if they choose different types of female candidates based on the existence (or absence) of an armed conflict. When there is an armed conflict and the office at stake is powerful, left-wing parties are successful every time they choose a female candidate with family links to a

political dynasty. However, when there is no armed conflict and legislated gender quotas are in place, left-wing parties will be successful when supporting a female candidate who does not belong to a political dynasty, regardless of the powers of the office. Right-wing parties can be successful too when endorsing a female candidate, although under different conditions: powerful offices in countries with no armed conflict and some type of gender quota. The results have important implications in terms of the relevance of family links and gender quotas in different socio-political contexts and how political parties with different ideologies endorse different types of female candidates depending on the existence of an armed conflict. These issues will be addressed later in the discussion section.

Table 7OA of the Online Appendix shows the following robustness checks: 1) replicating the model with fuzzy sets (Model 2); 2) testing other thresholds for conflict (1 casualty and 1000 casualties) with both fuzzy sets and crisp sets (Model 3.1 to 4.) and 3) replicating all the previous analyses including the PM position in India for the period of 1998-2007, considering both as a positive case (Models 5.1 and 5.2) and as a negative case (Model 6.1 and 6.2). The summary of the robustness checks is as follows:

- (1) When performing the analysis with fuzzy sets instead of crisp sets and incorporating a threshold of 100 deaths a year for the conflict (Model 2 in Table 7OA), the results are identical in terms of the three pathways of the solution term. The solution consistency and coverage are almost the same (0.982 and 0.803, respectively).
- (2) When carrying out the fuzzy and crisp sets analyses with the 1000 deaths per decade threshold, the three pathways are identical to those in Models 1 and 2, although the consistency and coverage values are a little lower (see Models 4.1 and 4.2). With a threshold of 1 death per decade, the results are still consistent,

although the model can only explain women in powerful offices (Models 3.1 and 3.2).

- (3) When considering India's PM office in the period of 1998-2007 as a positive case, the results remain the same as in Model 1 and 2; however, the coverage is a little higher (see Models 5.1 and 5.2). When considering this case as a negative case, the solution term barely changes, although the coverage values are significantly lower (see Models 6.1 and 6.2).

Discussion

This paper proposes an innovative methodological approach to the study of political glass ceilings at the highest levels of executive power. In political science, this topic has been analysed with statistical or classical qualitative approaches. However, CsQCA has been proven very useful for addressing the issue of equifinality and asymmetry, especially when different socio-political contexts are taken into account.

The results presented in this paper suggest important implications derived from academia's approach to the study of the political glass ceiling at the highest levels of executive power. First, according to these results, in Asia, there are three alternative paths to office. This finding means that statistical approaches that assume associations between variables or symmetry in data, such as those employed by Jalalzai (2008, 2016), while important and pioneering in some ways, are missing important information regarding set relations of necessity and sufficiency between women reaching office and other socio-political and juncture conditions.

Such approaches can lead to incorrect and contradictory assumptions, stating that the more politically fragile regimes are, the more likely they are to have multiple women in executive positions (see, for example, Jalalzai 2016, 458). Indeed, based on these results and recent events, we should discard this assumption. India, Sri Lanka, and

Pakistan have not had a female elected ruler within the past decade, while in Bangladesh, women have been holding office since 2001. Indeed, the above-mentioned correlation hypothesis might not capture the causal complexity between these two conditions and the outcome.

Additionally, I have found that political fragility as a result of conflict is not an enhancing condition *per se* but could work either way depending on the ideology of the party supporting the female candidate, the powers of the office at stake and the existence of gender quotas in the country. The findings support previous research stating that partisanship matters when evaluating female candidates and that these evaluations are different in times of peace versus times of security crises (Holman et al., 2016). However, while Holman et al. found that female candidates belonging to a left-leaning party suffer more prejudices in times of crisis, the present research suggests that the mechanism is more nuanced. In Asia, left-wing parties and voters are keen to support a female candidate for a powerful office in times of conflict if this woman belongs to a political dynasty. However, when there is no conflict and legislated quotas have already been approved, left-leaning parties and voters will support women who do not belong to political dynasties. Right-wing parties on the contrary do not often support female candidates for powerful offices; however, when they do, they are successful when they back a women belonging to a political dynasty in countries with established gender quotas. The difference between Asia and other countries with powerful female leaders belonging to right-leaning parties, for example, Chancellor Angela Merkel (Mushaben, 2017), is that in Asian political dynasties are still relevant for this type of female candidate.

The present paper contributes to the existing literature by suggesting that ideologically dissimilar parties select different types of female candidates (with or

without links to political dynasties) depending on the risk associated with the office (either the presence or absence of a conflict or the powers of the office) and the previous adoption of gender quotas. Although quotas are not directly related or applied to the presence of women in cabinets, one might expect that they would promote a wider presence of women in executive positions, as the parties that approved them are more committed to gender equality (Claveria, 2014).

The relative importance of political dynasties in nurturing strong political careers has already been outlined in the past by Jalalzai and Krook (2010). However, the present study suggests that family ties to political dynasties can (or cannot) be perceived as an asset by political parties, depending on their ideology and the socio-political landscape. The party's mediating role has a crucial influence on the opportunities for women to become President or PM. As rational political actors and based on their analysis of the political scenario, parties select the candidate that better fit the demands of their electorate or the risks of the office. According to these results, and following previous research on women leaders from political dynasties (Jalalzai, 2008; Thomas, 2011), it seems that parties consider family links an asset for powerful offices in times of conflict or transition, but I find that this is especially true for left-leaning parties. In Asia, right-wing parties also rely on female candidates belonging to political dynasties for powerful offices regardless of the presence of an armed conflict. In fact, the key issue for female candidates belonging to political dynasties and right-wing parties is to run for a powerful office in countries with some type of gender quota (legislated, reserved seats, or voluntary party quotas). However, left-wing parties might look for women specifically with no links to political dynasties at the same juncture. One possible explanation is that in these societies, people and parties are more used to the involvement of women in politics and political careers are more valued than family

connections, or alternatively, that family connections can be seen as an underserving trait of female candidates that eclipses women's political careers and achievements.

In summary, there are three alternative pathways to office, and it seems that being a member of a political dynasty is no longer a sufficient condition. Furthermore, it is unclear if it will be a relevant condition in the future, especially in contexts of peace and where the participation of women in politics is normalized through legislated quotas. Therefore, we can only partially accept theories that stress the importance of ongoing conflicts, democracy and family ties to political dynasties.

Conclusion

By conducting a CsQCA, this paper aimed to provide information on alternative paths by which Asian women can break the highest political glass ceiling. Overall, I believe these findings have the potential to encourage fruitful debates on female leadership and the appropriateness of set methods to study causal complexity in this area of research.

First, I have observed equifinality and asymmetry in women's paths to office in Asia. Therefore, previous theories must be re-evaluated in light of recent events. Second, the set methods and two-step approach allow researchers to combine institutional and socio-political contexts with the personal assets of candidates and party characteristics to explain why women break glass ceilings in different decades and scenarios.

To summarize, I argue that the reality of this issue is constantly changing, as more and more women with very different backgrounds are reaching the highest positions of executive power. What was true and sufficient in 1998 is no longer necessary or sufficient in 2018. Moreover, what was true in 2008 is only partially supported by recent events. While this study builds upon previous work on women in

politics and provides some key pieces to the puzzle regarding the necessary and mediating role of political parties, some significant holes remain in the overall picture.

We conclude by highlighting three remaining questions as fruitful lines of future research. First, one might ask whether more direct and substantial evidence could be generated that captures how parties evaluate gender-related assets when selecting candidates. Although I found strong support for the gatekeeper nature of political parties, the focus of the article was not to establish the validity of gender stereotypes in candidate selection within parties, which is worthy of greater consideration. Second, further research should explore how intersectionality and different types of female leadership led to different policy choices. Previous research on female leaders in Europe (Beckwith, 2015; Davidson-Schmich, 2011; Von Wahl, 2011) has highlighted these issues, although more information on different female leadership styles and outcomes in Asia would be quite insightful. Third, under what conditions do women prematurely resign or are removed from office? In examining paths to office, it is startling how frequently women do not finish their term. Further studies on women stepping down from office would be most welcomed.

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