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***'Supermadres' in Puerto Rico***  
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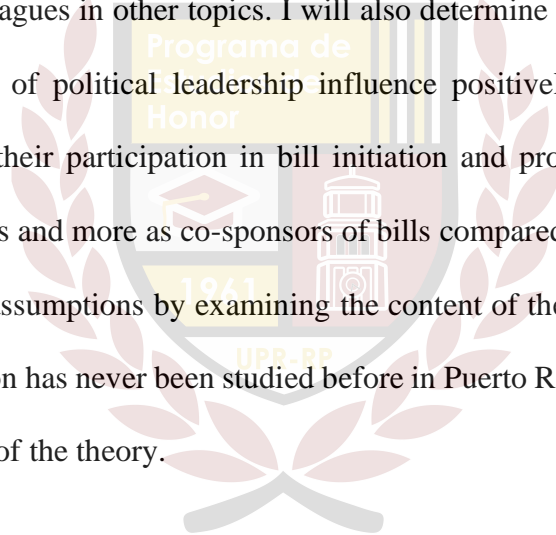
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## Abstract

This research will evaluate how gender affects national politics, specifically legislation. Based on the “supermadre” theory from Latin America, this investigation will compare the differences in bill initiation between men and women legislators in Puerto Rico’s House of Representatives in the first year of each 4yr. terms between 1997 through 2015. The argument is that, because of the evolution of the “supermadre” in politics, women legislators will initiate more bills related to the feminine and maternal characteristics of women, in topics such as women’s issues, family, children, and welfare. On the other hand, women will introduce the same number of bills as their male colleagues in other topics. I will also determine how in this particular study case women in positions of political leadership influence positively the behavior of women legislators by increasing their participation in bill initiation and prove how women legislators participate less as sponsors and more as co-sponsors of bills compared to their male counterparts. This research tests these assumptions by examining the content of the bills initiated in the lower chamber. This phenomenon has never been studied before in Puerto Rico and will help strengthen and validate the accuracy of the theory.



## Introduction

Research in gender politics has made important contributions to topics ranging from women's underrepresentation in politics and their lack of access to gender quotas and women's behavior in state and international politics. Women are essential in the formation of society and, therefore, its politics. In the 2018 midterm elections, US voters elected a record of 102 women representatives, comprising an all-time high 23.4% of the 435 members of the House of Representatives (Washington Post). In Puerto Rico, the latest statistics from the 2010 census showed that 51.9% of the total population of Puerto Rico were women. However, currently only 14 of the 78 members of the island's legislature are women. The fact that women occupy 17.9% of legislative posts, while being more than half of the total island's population, shows a significant underrepresentation in the legislative body. Based on these facts, Puerto Rico is below of the average percentage of elected women legislators in Latin America, Canada, and the United States which approximates to 25% (Schwindt-Bayer 2014).

Women legislators in Latin America have been extensively studied because of the progress they have made entering the political sphere. A phenomenon denominated "supermadres" was proposed in late 1970s to explain Latin American women's behavior in national politics. Specifically, the term refers to women who occupy public posts and pursue issues directly related to women, such as women's issues, children, family, and welfare, (Chaney 2014). They are called "supermadres" because they extrapolate their behavior as mothers in their homes to being mothers of their constituents and, therefore, they tend their nation as they would their own home (2014, 21). It has been shown that in different countries of the continent, women engage in similar areas.

This research will be analyzing the "supermadre" phenomenon in Puerto Rico in the House of Representatives of the Legislative Assembly. The main question is if the "supermadre"

phenomenon manifests itself in Puerto Rico and, if so, how. To answer these questions, the investigation will examine the differences in bill initiation between men and women to establish a pattern of the areas of emphasis of women and men legislators. It will also inquire into the differences, if any, between men and women legislators in bill sponsorship and co-sponsorships. Lastly, this research will evaluate if the rise of women in important political posts, such as governor and Speaker of the House, has influenced positively women's bill initiation, increasing them and incorporating other topics. Even though, the lack of women's descriptive representation has been denounced in the Puerto Rican government, the substantive representation and legislator's behavior has not been yet examined. The difference in policy-making between men and women in public posts has been examined outside of Latin America. Therefore, the literary review about this topic is extensive, but it has not been yet analyzed in the context of Puerto Rico.

## **Review of Literature**

### Feminism and Politics

Analyzing the participation in elective public office of men and women is a recurring theme in current political research. With the current focus in feminist issues, this type of research has increased in numbers, focusing on explaining the origin and establishing a pattern of women's presence in the government and participation in the making of public policy. These works include analysis about gender theory, representation theory and comparisons of the behavior of men and women in public political posts, at both national and comparative level.

Research has tried to explain the biological and social similarities and differences between men and women in diverse forms, which has enabled the development of diverse perspectives about gender. Gender theory establishes an essential distinction between the gender and the sex of

the individual. Sex usually refers to the biological characteristics of the person, while the concept of gender refers to the attributed characteristics to determined sex by society in a defined time and space (Beckham and D'Amico 1994; Lagarde 1996). In other words, sex is a biological category and gender is perceived as the given role to a certain sex by social norms. Beckham and D'Amico (1994) explained that “the biological thesis thus claims that there are certain, essential, natural characteristics of males and females that at least pressure them to think and believe in different ways” (3). This argument is debatable, and some authors of more progressive views like Judith Butler claim that even sex is a social construction (1990, 7). Gender, by itself, intersects with the multiple identities of the person like race, ethnic group, social class, and sexual orientation, characteristics that should not be overlooked. According to Lagarde, gender perspective is a scientific, analytic, and political point of view, created from feminism to analyze and understand the similitudes and differences between men and women (1996).

The feminist proposal is to ameliorate the quality of life of men and women, based on the concepts of equity and equality. Essentially, it is to make women visible in areas where they were continuously ignored before (Randall and Waylen 2002, 188). Through history, women's tasks have been consistently not taken into account, relegating them mainly as minimum help or minor chores. In the political sphere, differences have been found even in the way of political participation and activity between men and women, basically because of the time factor and resources needed (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010). Gender perspective wants to leave behind “the assumption that women should not be part of institutional, economic, and political efforts, that development and democracy are male affairs” (Lagarde 1996, 23). Gradually, women have been able to increase their political participation and insert themselves in the creation public policies that have women at the center.

Gender perspective is typically associated with the feminist movement. There are three principal feminist perspectives in political science, applied to the domestic and foreign scene. They are Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism and Post-Modernist Feminism. Liberal Feminism has as its prime objective to incorporate women in the present-day society and pursues the inclusion of women in political areas where they were not involved. Liberal feminists strived for the recognition of women's intellectual equality to men. According to Sandra Whitworth, "Liberal Feminism accepts the power structures as legitimate" (1994, 77). It only identifies as a problem the exclusion of women in the national and international sphere and does not consider the origins of the problem, such as inaccessibility and discrimination. Liberal feminists fought for women's participation in typically male dominated areas. In simple words, the primary goal of Liberal Feminism is that women have access to the same opportunities as men in the private and public sphere. A clear example of liberal feminists is the women's organized movement that fought for and achieved women's suffrage during the late 1800s and the early 1900s.

On the other hand, Radical Feminism argues "that relations of subordination and domination between men and women constitute one of the most fundamental forms of oppression" (Whitworth 1994, 78), which exists in all the structures of the patriarchal society. Its advocates argue that social science methodology cannot be value neutral, so they propose instead that all scholars be explicit in their work about their own biases (Whitworth 1994, 79). Radical feminism takes for granted the attributed characteristics to each gender but seeks to abolish the patriarchy to establish the equality between both sexes. They accept the idea of adding a "feminine perspective" to politics which contributes the "nurturing, virtuous, and natural" characteristics of women and those of men who are viewed as "aggressive, power seeking, and arrogant". The world political order follows these perspectives and favors that of men. This vision reproduces the stereotype

established by the same patriarchy radical feminism rejects. This branch of Feminism was mostly active during the 1970s. They influenced the present notion of consent and that women should have control over their own bodies. Radical feminism proposes the challenging of social and cultural norms by challenging gender roles.

Finally, Postmodernist Feminism tries to deconstruct all the social institutions and structures because they are biased by the patriarchal views of society. Essentially, it wants to dismantle what has been established as being a man or a woman (81). Postmodernist feminists believe the previous approaches to sex and gender are all social notions constructed through language (Butler 1990). They reject the distinction between sex (being associated with the biological aspect of the person) and gender (being a social construction), arguing instead that sex itself is influenced by social constructions. Postmodernist Feminism has been criticized for being too academic and not applicable to the everyday life. Also, and contrary to other ramifications of Feminism, it does not offer any clear path or alternative to follow.

Through these diverse perspectives of Feminism, the behavior of women in public posts has been publicly analyzed. This work does not have a liberal approach as it assumes women have been able to insert themselves, albeit with little success, in male dominated political spaces. In fact, it has a feminist approach closer to radical feminism theory because it presumes the established stereotypical characteristics of men and women while evaluating how their different perspectives influence their bill initiation. It also challenges gender roles by analyzing and questioning women's interests as legislators directly related to their female traits.

### Gender and Political Representation

The concept of representation is important to understand the political participation of citizens in any country. There is no established consensus about the definition or what entails



political representation in literature. Anthony H. Birch identified three debates around this concept: who should be represented, how are they elected, and how they should behave (2007, 133). Hanna Pitkin clarified the concept by describing four types of representation: formalistic, symbolic, descriptive, and substantive (1967).

Formalistic representation are the institutional structures that precede representation. Pitkin differentiates two dimensions within this type of representation: authorization and accountability. Authorization is the means by which a representative is allowed to obtain their status and act on behalf of others, while accountability is the ability that the constituents have to punish an inadequate, or lack of, responsiveness of the representative. For a democracy, an election is the criteria which grants authority to the elected officials (Pitkin 1967, 43).

Symbolic representation is how representatives symbolize their constituency. It is defined as the dimension that is the representation of a group, nation or state through an object to which a certain representative meaning is attributed. For example, in Great Britain the queen is symbolic figure for the nation. Pitkin claimed: “Symbolic representation suggests the role of irrational belief, which is neglected by the formalistic view, and the importance of pleasing one’s constituents” (111). Descriptive representation is the extent to which a representative resembles those who are being represented. Therefore, representing depends on being something rather than doing something. In Pitkin’s words, “The representative does not act for others; he “stands for” them, a resemblance or reflection” (61). The principle in this type of representation is to attempt to have an assembly or legislative body with characteristics proportional to those of the electorate, for example having a lower chamber whose representatives are diverse in race, gender, and ethnic group in the same proportion as the whole nation. Finally, substantive representation depicts the activity of representatives, that is, the behavior of the representative as a stand-in for his or her

constituents. The representative acts as a substitute for the constituent and performs in favor of those he represents. For example, the substantive representation of a candidate openly elected because of his religious affiliation would be measured by his advocacy and sponsorship of legislation that benefits that particular religious group. In a democracy, substantive representation implies that elected legislators advocate in behalf of the groups that elected them.

Pitkin emphasized that “the represented must be somehow logically prior; the representative must be responsive to him rather than the other way around” (140). To ensure a complete definition of political representation, the four previous views of representation must be considered. Some authors approach each category individually, while others insist that for a complete and reliable analysis of political participation an integrated model is necessary that encompasses the four types of representation previously mentioned (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). The analysis of political presence of women in public posts are principally linked to descriptive and substantive representation because academics have mainly been concerned by which and how women enter the political sphere and their behavior once they achieve it. Similarly, this will be the focus in this research, especially substantive representation.

Previous studies about women’s presence in government, especially legislatures and parliaments, and their behaviors in public posts have produced diverse results. Poggione found that there is a significant difference between male and female legislators’ policy preferences about welfare in the lower chamber of twenty-four state legislatures in the United States. This finding can be generalized to other policy areas, thus proving how the difference in the preferences of legislators directly affect decision-making and legislative representation (2004). Another research had similar results when investigating men and women’s behavior when they gained access to strategic positions of power (Swers 2005). The generalized conclusion is that in developed

countries women tend to focus on public policy areas related to women's issues, children and welfare. A comparative analysis between the chambers of United States and Argentine found that in both countries the priorities of men and women in legislation were different in the areas of women's rights, children and, family because a higher percentage of women submitted bills in these areas compared to their male colleagues (Jones 1997, 632).

An analysis done in 2009 in the British Chamber of Commons found that women in the Chamber of Commons had more participation in the debates about health and very little participation in the debates about finance compared to men (Catalano 2009, 65). Taylor-Robinson and Heath extrapolated these findings to a developing nation, taking Honduras as case study. The authors found that, in both developed and developing countries, women legislators emphasized bills related to women's rights. However, compared to their male counterparts, they did not promote more bills in areas typically related to women, such as children or family. Even though, there are similitudes in the cabinets of men and women in Latin America, presidents tend to relegate women in their cabinets only to feminine, family, and social welfare issues and to include them very little in cabinets on fiscal and economic matters. Also, research has proved that, to be appointed, women in cabinets needed to have equal or better work credentials compared to men (Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson 2009, 695). Moreover, researchers agree that women have little to no participation in economic, finance or foreign affairs bills (Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, Taylor-Robinson 2005, 432). In contrast, a study analyzing this occurrence in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies found little evidence that women legislators are marginalized because of their gender, assessing incumbency as a more important factor (Kerevel and Atkenson, 2013).

Several countries have established quotas in their parliaments or House of Representatives to raise the presence of women and minorities. Researchers have concluded that these

implementation of gender quotas have had positive and negative effects. Gender quotas have enabled women access to legislate. In France, comparative analysis done between men and women parliamentarians after the implementation of the parity law in 2000 demonstrated that men and women did not differ in their activity once they are elected and that “sex is a barrier to entry, but not performance” (Murray 2010). Hence, gender quotas helped to overcome this barrier.

In Latin America, on the other hand, quotas encourage the participation of women in public policy making, but they also limit the topics of the bills women pursue because they reinforce the negative notions of women’s political capacities (Franceschet & Piscopo 2008; Hughes 2011). In her study of 13 Latin American countries, Zetterberg found no positive impact of gender quotas in women’s political attitudes and behavior and argued that scholars were too quick to highlight the success of gender quotas (2009). However, Kerevel and Atkinson found some evidence that reinforced the negative notion of implementing gender quotas when studying the Mexican Chamber (2013). Similar results were obtained by Tripp and Kang who argued that gender quotas, together with the electoral system, have allowed women to overcome restraints on women’s representation in a cross-national global study (2008). Positive or negative, gender quotas have represented a “fast track” for women to occupy legislative seats in several Latin American countries. In Puerto Rico, there are no gender quotas implemented in the chambers. Because female representatives are a small percentage in the legislature when compared to the percentage of women in the population, quotas could be an option to fill that gap.

### Supermadres

In 1979, Elsa M. Chaney (2014) employed the term “supermadres” to denote the different priority areas men and women in public service had in Latin American governments. In her research she focused on female officials in Chile and Peru. Chaney found that women in public

posts tended to extrapolate their maternal capacities and qualities of their households to their fields. She determined this was a constant throughout Latin America especially because of the strong patriarchal culture that these societies had since its colonial beginnings. Updating Chaney's research, Schwindt-Bayer (2006) evaluated the attitudes and bill initiation behavior of women legislators in Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica. She found women did prioritize women, children and family's issues, but were interested in other areas similar to men, such as the economy, education, health, employment, and agriculture. Furthermore, she argued women in Latin America were still "supermadres" not because they wanted to, but because they were marginalized by their male peers. Additional research has established that even though women now had developed diverse responses to maternalism, structural constraints and cultural narratives still shape their access to public office (Franceschet, Piscopo and Thomas 2015). Another study argued that the "supermadre" subjectivity is still very present in the heteronormativity and government mentality of Post-Water Wars Bolivia. Even though Bolivian women have become active political actors and fighters, they concurrently reaffirm their maternal role (Frisch 2014, 4). The theory of the phenomenon of women politicians as "supermadres" will be the base of this investigation and will be further discussed in the theoretical framework.

Even though the "supermadres" concept has not been studied in Puerto Rico, multiple articles have been published about women's political participation and representation in the island. A thorough study of women's suffrage from 1896 to 1936 found that the early male supporters of women's education in Puerto Rico did not want to encourage women to become active political actors but wanted to use them as a shaping tool in their roles of "woman-mother-educator". Barceló stated that women were expected to be "transmitters of values, but not participants of the elaboration of them" (1997, 42). In the same way, the author highlighted the struggles of Puerto

Rican women in favor of social causes associated with their gender role, such as the founding of orphanages, the eradication of analphabetism and charity work (Barceló 1997). Other research about women's political participation in the island has established that to successfully cope with the challenges women face as underrepresented political actors in the island they need to organize a diverse, autonomous feminist movement that is capable of bringing together women of different races, classes, and political persuasions (Mergal 1994, 139). Another article, published just before the 2000 elections, stated that: "The political representation of women in the electoral candidacies does not keep proportion with its electoral strength which points to the continuation of an asymmetry in the distribution of political power by gender in the partisan structures and in the government dome" (Acevedo 2000, 48). The author argued that "the beginning of the twenty-first [century] stands out as a period of parity in the representation of the spaces of political power in the country" (2000, 48). Supporting her statement, Puerto Ricans elected Sila M. Calderón as the first woman governor in that election. The paper also discussed the different approaches to women candidacies for elective office between the two main parties of the island and the support to women legislators inside them. While in the Popular Democratic Party, the women have reached positions of president of the party and candidacies for resident commissioners, in the New Progressive Party they have focused more on the candidacy for legislative elections. Although women are still underrepresented, gender seems to be a major variable (2000, 50). That is to say, women in politics have not been able to achieve a proportional representation to that of the reality of the population of the island, but they are strong political contenders and a major factor during elections.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The term "supermadres" originated in 1971 devised by Elsa M. Chaney who introduced it to explain the social and political phenomenon in Latin America. She argued that: "a woman

official most often defines herself as a kind of supermadre, tending the needs of her big family in the larger *casa [house]* of the municipality or even the nation” (2014, 21). In other words, the supermadres were women whose jobs in government and politics emphasized their stereotypical attributes of women as mothers in a larger scale than the family environment. This tendency left them dealing with work related to education, children, family, and welfare. The term “supermadres” seemed to fit well the studies of women who served as government officials at the time in Chile and Peru. It was essentially how Latin women saw themselves in public posts. She found the cultural aspect essential to this view of women in politics. According to Chaney, Eva Perón illustrated accurately how women performed their public roles in terms of their feminine tasks when she said:

In this great house of the Motherland, I am just like any other woman in any other of the innumerable houses of my people. Just like all of them I rise early thinking about my husband and about my children...and I go about all my day thinking about them and a good part of the night....When I go to bed, tired out, then instead of dreams, marvelous projects occur to me and I try to sleep before I burst....It's that I so truly feel myself the mother of my people [1951; 313-314]. (Chaney 2014, 21)

Chaney argued that gender stereotypes were very strong in Latin America because of the prevailing patriarchal views. In these countries, since their colonization and development, the “machismo”, the strong and aggressive masculine pride, had dominated all the social structures. The perception of strong men and weak women influenced the relegation of women’s contribution to society to their maternal role.

Seeing that Puerto Rico shares its culture’s origins with the rest of Latin America, it is expected that this social construction of men and women’s roles in a “machista” society will also



affect women in politics. However, some scholars (Schwindt-Bayer, Paxton & Hughes) argue that the supermadres term has evolved today and, perhaps, has lost some of its original connotations. At the beginning, women were “supermadres” by their own choice. In her research, Chaney found women wanted to engage in women’s issues because no one else was doing it. It was mainly a response to a lack of descriptive and substantive representation. Meanwhile, men used to focus on what they considered more relevant issues, like the economy and finances, because they did not have to deal with any lack of representation. Today researchers argue that the concept has evolved gradually. According to Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer, women today are more ambitious, competitive, and confident. They are not only motivated by an interest to promote women’s issues, but also, they worry about the society as a collective and its welfare (2006). Therefore, they do not want to be only concentrated in issues concerning women.

According to Schwindt-Bayer, “the “supermadre” label implies that women in politics will promote feminine issues while men focus on issues traditionally in men’s domains (2006, 572). Women legislators advocate for their women constituents because they serve as substitutes of their interests. The perception is that if they do not focus in feminine issues, no one will. This explanation was proposed by Chaney from the beginning. However, Schwindt-Bayer suggested an alternative: women today focus on feminine issues because they are marginalized by their male counterparts to do so. That is to say, the “supermadres” do not exist anymore by their own choice anymore, but because of the marginalization of male legislators. It is difficult to determine if this discrimination occurs as a conscious act or because of the patriarchal society structures. Researchers found in a case study about Mexico that to change gender stereotypes, there needs to be an increase in women’s political leadership (Kerevel and Atkenson 2013).



## Hypotheses

From this theoretical framework and the previously discussed literary review, the main hypothesis (H1) is that in Puerto Rico, as in other Latin American countries, women legislators will focus more in ‘typical female’ legislation, like women’s issues, family and children, and education compared to their male counterparts. In other topics, the hypothesis is that bill initiation will be similar between men and women.

The second hypothesis (H2) states that women legislators will sponsor more bills when a woman occupies a leadership position, such as governor or Speaker of the House.

## Methodology

The main objective of this research is to observe the patterns of women representatives in bill sponsorships: what type of bill they sponsor and how often, and if it has progressed through the years. This investigation will follow a similar model to that of Taylor-Robinson and Heath (2003) in the Honduran Congress, which followed Mark P. Jones’s methodology for his case study in Argentina (1998). The study focuses on the lower chamber of the Legislature because it is supposed to be more representative of the constituents. Also, previous research has focused on the lower chamber of legislatures and parliaments of other countries, so limiting the bills to this chamber will allow a better comparison between of these findings with other legislatures. This research will categorize the different policy priorities in bill initiation of the women and men of the Puerto Rico House of Representatives.

The data required for these analyses will be provided by the bills initiated by representatives from the first year of each term from 1997 to 2015. Following previous research (Jones 1998), each bill will be classified into policy or non-policy bills. Policy bills, public and

private, deal with domestic and foreign issues, usually through agencies and programs. Meanwhile, non-policy bills designate commemorative acts, private relief, etc., which could be referred as microlevel bills because of their small overall impact. The policy bills will be then classified into the following categories derived from the literature review (Jones 1998, Schwindt-Bayer 2006): women's issues, children and family, health, education, welfare or social security, environment, economy, employment, tax and legal. Another category designated 'others' was used to group the bills that did not fit into any of the previously mentioned ones. However, when this last group was analyzed, I noticed they were all about the same subject. Therefore, they were classified under a new 'government and judiciary' category. An example of each category is shown below:

1. Women's Issues – Act No. 88 of 2005, “to require the promulgation and implementation of a Protocol of Intervention with Victims / Survivors of Domestic Violence, require that this protocol be fully implemented by the agencies of the Executive Branch that intervene with victims and survivors of domestic violence, provide that the Office of the Women's Procurator will have the power and legal responsibility to ensure the faithful compliance with this Protocol and for other purposes.”

2. Children and Family – Act No. 185 of 2009, which added a subsection to Act No. 177 of 2003 “Law for the Welfare and Integral Protection of Children”, “with the purpose of including professionals of conduct or health contracted by the Family and Children Administration of the Department of the Family, [...] among people who may have access to reports and records related to protection cases; and for other related purposes”.

3. Health – Act No.129 of 1997, to amend “the "Law of the College of Surgeons of Puerto Rico", in order to eliminate the requirement of compulsory registration of physician-surgeons for it to be voluntary and establish an inseparability clause.”

4. Education – Act. No. 104 of 2005, “to create the “Puerto Rico Education System Inclusion Program Act,” attached to the Department of Education, to facilitate the effective integration of teachers and students of all school levels and of other members of the school community, with persons having special needs and other related purposes.”

5. Welfare and Social Security – Act No. 103 of 2009, “to amend Section 7.06 of Act No. 404 of September 11, 2000, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Weapons Act,” in order to extend the educational advertising campaign on the dangers posed by firing shots into the air from November 15 to January 7 of each year, to include in such educational campaign raising people’s awareness on the importance of reporting such actions as well as not to participate therein either actively or passively and/or being involved in such practice; and for other related purposes.”

6. Environmental and Agriculture – Act No. 149, “to amend [...] and add [...]; and amend [...] Act No. 9 of June 18, 1970, as amended, known as “Environmental Public Policy Act”, in order to authorize the Environmental Quality Board to enforce compliance of the Lead-based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992; implement a new permit and certification program in the area of lead-based paint removal; and establish penalties.”

7. Economy and Commerce – Act No. 1 of 2001, “to create the "Puerto Rico Special Communities Integral Development Act", in order to establish the public policy of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico regarding the integral development of the special communities of the Island; establish the guidelines to be taken into account to identify special communities; to create the Office of the General Coordinator for Socio-Economic Financing and Self-Management, the Office of the General Coordinator, the Special Communities Socio-Economic Development Fund and the Special Communities Council; and to appropriate resources for the organization of the Office and to initiate the Program.”

8. Employment – Act No. 120 of 2013, “to add subparagraphs [...] and amend subsection [...]; and add [...] and renumber [...] Section 9 of Act No. 74 of June 21, 1956, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Employment Security Act,” in order to conform it to Federal provisions regarding eligibility requirements for the payment of unemployment compensation and the overpayment of such compensation.”

9. Tax and Legal – Act No. 144 of 2001, “to amend subsection [...] of Section 1121 of Act No. 120 of October 31, 1994, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Internal Revenue Code,” in order to amend the definition of eligible person, carry out the conversion of local corporations and partnerships into stock companies, and promote the issue and acquisition of debt by stock companies; and for other purposes.”

10. Government and Judiciary – Act No. 162, “to amend Section 276 of Act No. 115 of July 22, 1974, as amended, known as the “Penal Code of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico”, in order to include a fine as a possible penalty for the crime of possession of counterfeiting tools. The non-policy bills, such as the ones to designate the names of public places or roads which are considered honorary bills, will be used to determine if women initiate more policy or non-policy bills.”

I will study the bills approved the first year of each four-year term from 1997 to 2015. For each year I use all the bills approved, thus I am working with a universe of bills and not a sample. Two important events occurred through these terms: in 1996 the whole government had an all-male leadership, then in 2000 the first woman governor was elected, and in 2009 the second woman Speaker of the House was chosen (**Table 1**).

Table 1

*Terms' information*

1997	All-male leadership
2001	First woman governor (Ms. Sila M. Calderón)
2005	All-male leadership
2009	Second woman Speaker of the House (Ms. Jennifer González)
2013	All-male leadership

The approach of this research is quantitative. A bivariate analysis will allow me to evaluate the frequency of the variables in the bills initiated, identify a pattern, and determine the difference between men and women legislators. The statistical analysis will include bivariate tables which will then be supplemented with equations. To do this I needed access to the bills that had been approved in the House of Representatives. Previously, my intention was to use the bills that had been submitted, including those which were not approved, but the difficulty of access and availability prevented it. However, approved bills are public and can be obtained online in the official websites of the Chamber of Representatives of Puerto Rico and in the Legislative Library and therefore, could be easily accessed. The scope of the investigation is correlational since it will relate the gender of the representatives with the themes of the bills approved. The main independent variable of the two proposed hypotheses is the representative's gender. The dependent variable of the first hypothesis is the category of the bill initiated, which includes the ten different classifications described before. In the second hypothesis, the dependent variable is the frequency of bills initiated. For both hypotheses, the number of bills initiated will be compared specifically between terms with a woman as political leader (2000 and 2008) and with men as political leaders (1996, 2004, 2012, and 2016).

## Analysis

A total of 558 of bills were analyzed from years 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009 and 2013. A number of cases evaluated (191) were part of the majority party platform and, therefore, were sponsored by the Speaker of the House and co-sponsored by all of the representatives from her political party. Because I wanted to study the bill sponsorship of representatives individually, these cases were not used for the analysis. This left 367 bills to be analyzed. One important aspect that must be taken into account is that women's presence as state legislators in the House of Representatives in Puerto Rico is very low, compared to that of men. As **Table 2** shows, 2009 was the year with the highest seat occupancy by women and, yet, they did not comprise more than one quarter of all the legislators.

Table 2  
*Women Representatives per Year*

	Year				
	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013
Women Representatives	9	7	8	13	6
Total of Reps.	55	51	51	55	55
Percentage (%)	16.3	13.7	15.7	23.6	10.9

In **Table 3**, the data shows that the number of female sponsored bills is considerably lower than the number of male sponsored bills every year, except in 2009. That year 51.5% of the passed bills were sponsored by a female legislator. This matches the year with the highest number of female representatives and a female Speaker of the House. The significance of a female Speaker will be further discussed later on this paper. With a percentage of 31.6%, there was also a considerable spike in the number of bills that were sponsored by female legislators in 2005, in comparison with other years. This is an intriguing find considering there was no woman occupying a position of power and there was not a substantial number of women in the House.

Table 3  
*Sponsor Gender by Year*

		Year					Total
		1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	
Sponsor Gender	Male	78 88.6%	31 96.9%	52 68.4%	46 45.5%	57 81.4%	264 71.9%
	Female	9 10.2%	1 3.1%	24 31.6%	52 51.5%	11 15.7%	97 26.4%
	Both	1 1.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 3.0%	2 2.9%	6 1.6%
Total		88 100.0%	32 100.0%	76 100.0%	101 100.0%	70 100.0%	367 100.0%

With the information given by **Tables 2 and 3**, an analysis of the average of approved bills submitted by male and female legislators by year was performed (shown in **Table 4**). Results show that in the years 2005 and 2009 the average female legislator in the House of Representatives sponsored and got approved more bills than the average male legislator. In 2013, both the average male and average female legislator sponsored a similar amount of bills.

Table 4  
*Average of approved bills by gender and year*

		Year				
		1997	2001	2005	2009	2013
Sponsor	Male	1.7	0.7	1.2	1.1	1.2
Gender	Female	1	0.1	3	4	1.2

Regarding the bill's themes, the categories were recoded into two main groups: Typically, Female Legislation (Female Issues) and Typically Male Legislation (Male Issues). This aggregation is based in previous research by Jones (1997) and Schwindt-Bayer (2006). This recoding was made to better test the second hypothesis. The first category included women's issues, family and children, health, and education. Meanwhile, the second group included the remaining subjects: welfare and social security, environment, economy and commerce, employment, tax and legal, and government and judiciary. The data (shown in **Table 5**)

demonstrated that more than half of all female-related issues bills were sponsored by male legislators (56.9% of all female-related bills). That is to say that the majority of typically female-related bills were sponsored by male legislators, not female. However, this only represented a 15.5% (41 out of 264 bills) of all the bills submitted by men. On the other hand, female legislators sponsored 40.3% of bills on typically women's subjects, but these represented 29.9% (29 out of 97 bills) of all the bills sponsored by women during the terms analyzed. Therefore, female representatives legislated almost twice as much on typically female subjects than their male counterparts (29.9% vs 15.5%). Still, women representatives on their own tend to legislate almost twice as much more about typically male issues than about typically female issues (60.8% to 29.9% of the bills sponsored by women). Thus, in Puerto Rico's House of Representatives women legislators as a whole legislate more about female-related issues than their male counterparts, but women also tend to legislate more about typically male issues. Also, the data showed most bills about typically female issues were sponsored by men. That is to say, women representatives during the years analyzed were not relegated to typically female legislation.

Table 5  
*Sponsor Gender by Legislation*

		Legislation			Total
		Female Issues	Male Issues	Non-Policy	
Sponsor's Gender	Male	41 56.9%	208 76.8%	15 62.5%	264 72%
	Female	29 40.3%	59 21.7%	9 37.5%	97 26%
	Both	2 2.8%	4 1.5%	0 0.0%	6 2%
Total		72 100.0%	271 100.0%	24 100.0%	367* 100.0%

\*Note: New total of bills when partisan platform bills were discarded.



In the matter of the political influence of having a woman in a position of power, **Table 2** shows that female representatives sponsored more bills in 2009 when a woman was Speaker, more than in any other year. In a similar way, **Table 6** proves that that same year saw the approval of the most typically female-related bills. The spike in figures in both analyses can be tied to the election of a woman as Speaker of the House for the second time in Puerto Rico’s history, Ms. Jennifer González.

Table 6  
*Bill Categorization by Year*

		Year					
		1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	Total
Legislation	Female Issues	12 13.6%	7 21.9%	17 22.4%	25 24.8%	11 15.7%	72 19.6%
	Male Issues	75 85.2%	23 71.9%	52 68.4%	69 68.3%	52 74.3%	271 73.8%
	Non-policy	1 1.1%	2 6.3%	7 9.2%	7 6.9%	7 10.0%	24 6.5%
Total		88 100.0%	32 100.0%	76 100.0%	101 100.0%	70 100.0%	367 100.0%

A logistic regression was performed to understand the individual impact of each variable. This equation helped calculate and explain the relationship between one dependent binary variable and each independent variable while holding all the others constant. In the first regression, the variables included were sponsor’s gender, governor’s gender, speaker’s gender, and the sponsor’s political party to explain the outcome of the bill’s category (dependent variable). The party variable (in this and the next equation) was treated as two dummies (PIP and PNP) using PPD as the reference category. This means that the impact of being PNP is in relation to being a PPD and the impact of being a PIP is in relation to being a PPD. The results of the logistic regression (**Table 7**) show that the bill categorization is influenced significantly by the sponsor’s gender, everything

else being equal, which means that there is a higher probability that the category of the bill is related to women-related issues if the sponsor is a female, while controlling for party, the governor's gender, and the speaker's gender. The other variables are not statistically significant.

In the second equation (Table 8), the dependent variable was the sponsor's gender to establish how other variables increased or decreased the probability of a woman sponsoring a bill, while the independent variables which may influence sponsorship were the PNP and the POP political parties, governor's gender and speaker's gender. **Table 8** shows Gonzalez's role as Speaker of the House is a significant influence on gender of sponsorship, holding everything else constant. While she occupied this position, there was a spike in women representatives' bill sponsorship.

Table 7  
*Logistic Regression for Type of Legislation*

	B	Sig.
Gender: Female	0.844	0.006
PNP	0.153	0.698
PIP	-19.572	0.999
Female Governor	0.591	0.282
Female Speaker	0.129	0.697
Constant	-1.770	0.000

Table 8  
*Logistic regression for Gender of the Sponsor*

	B	Sig.
PNP	0.760	0.060
PIP	-19.020	0.999
Female Governor	-1.409	0.191
Female Speaker	1.292	0.000
Constant	-1.992	0.000

### **A further look into partisanship, gender, and legislation**

After the initial analysis, a pattern emerged where most of the female legislators who sponsored the non-stereotypically female bills were affiliated to the New Progressive Party, thus establishing a relationship between the party of the female legislators and the legislation that they sponsored. To further study this pattern I focused only on female-sponsored bills. In a way this is a side analysis and is not intended as an in-depth look at partisanship in the House of Representatives, but the findings are interesting and have direct implications to our research goals.

There are no published articles about the behavior of female politicians by partisanship on the island. However, more common subjects in academia have been women as an emerging strong electoral force and their increasing political participation. Also, the different paths to being elected to public office between men and women have been analyzed multiple times (Acevedo 2000, Acevedo 2013). However, some patterns inside the parties have been established. The PNP makes it easier for women affiliated with the party to be a part of their internal partisan leadership. Also, the female members of the PNP are more probable to run and be elected as candidates for public office posts than their PPD counterparts. The PNP revised their Rules of Procedure in 1984 to increase women representation in their partisan leadership and include more women in their party hierarchy and in their candidacies, which was very innovative at the time. These actions guaranteed a substantial rise in women participation in the PNP (Ostolaza 2010, 995-996). Meanwhile, the PPD has an affiliated women's organization that is considered to be inoperative "because it keeps women out of power structures" (Ostolaza 2010, 997).

Out of the five years studied, the House of Representatives was dominated three times by the PNP and two times by PPD. Table 9 shows that women legislators, in general, were significantly more active when the PNP was in the majority in the House than when the PPD was

in the majority (85 bills to 12 bills). In addition, when the PPD dominated the House, women legislators proportionally submitted more female-related bills than when the PNP was in power in the House. (50.0% to 27.1%). In fact, according to Ostolaza, the Popular Democratic Party has been the main political instrument to promote public policy in favor of women (2010, 1000). That is to say, historically this party has been the principal sponsor of legislation regarding women's rights and issues.

Table 9  
*Bill Categorization and Majority Party*

Legislation		Majority Party		Total
		PNP	PPD	
Legislation	Female issues	23 27.1%	6 50.0%	29 29.9%
	Male issues	54 63.5%	5 41.7%	59 60.8%
	Non-policy	8 9.4%	1 8.3%	9 9.3%
Total		85 100.0%	12 100.0%	97 100.0%

Similar results were obtained when analyzing the political affiliation of the female sponsors (**Table 10**). Female representatives affiliated with the PNP overall, were much more active and sponsored considerably more male-related bills during the studied period (87 bills to 10 bills sponsored by women affiliated with the PPD), while female representatives affiliated with the PPD, in comparison, sponsored more bills about women-related issues (50.0% of the PPD to 27.1% of the PNP).

Table 10  
*Bill categorization and Political Affiliation*

		Political Affiliation of Sponsor		
		PNP	PPD	Total
Legislation	Female Issues	24 27.6%	5 50.0%	29 29.9%
	Male Issues	55 63.2%	4 40.0%	59 60.8%
	Non-policy	8 9.2%	1 10.0%	9 9.3%
Total		87 100.0%	10 100.0%	97 100.0%

A possible explanation for these differences was that the change in the Rules of Procedure of the New Progressive Party in 1984 could have influenced the behavior of the women legislators affiliated with the party. Their political participation has been openly supported by their party for a long time, which could have given them the confidence and comfort to legislate about a wide range of topics, instead of just about typically female issues. In fact, a recent study about primary elections showed this support when it determined that women aspiring to occupy public office affiliated with the PNP were more likely to be elected than their counterparts of the PPD (Acevedo 2013, 299). Results might also be an indicator that the PPD is more traditional and its female representatives are more politically inclined to legislate about women related issues in comparison to their PNP counterparts. Similar evidence to these findings has already been published, the Popular Democratic Party in the Legislatures of 1997 and 2001 was more traditional in its social values when legislating, while the New Progressive Party was, indeed, more progressive (Cámara, 2010).

## Conclusion

The notion established in Hypothesis 1 that in Puerto Rico, as in other Latin American countries, women legislators will focus more in ‘typical female’ legislation, compared to their male counterparts, was partially validated. Indeed, the results showed that women representatives sponsored more typical female-related bills than their male counterparts. However, out of all the bills studied most typically female bills were sponsored by men, and women representatives legislated twice as much about male-related categories than female-related categories. As Lagarde (1996) stated, women are trying to leave behind the assumption that they cannot successfully be a part of economic and political efforts. Therefore, H1 was only partially proven.

The second hypothesis (H2) stated that women legislators would sponsor more bills when a woman occupied a leadership position. H2 was also partially confirmed. When a female was Speaker of the House, there was a significant spike in the number of bills sponsored by women. However, when a female governor was elected it had no impact in the women sponsorship of bills. On average, when there was a female Speaker of the House, a female representative sponsored and got approved three times more bills than when there was a female governor (see **Table 4**).

Which political party is in majority has no effect in the categories of the bills submitted. However, female representatives’ behavior differed deeply between political parties. Therefore, political affiliation does influence bills sponsorship. The women representatives affiliated with the New Progressive Party (PNP) appear to conform less to gender roles and legislate more about male-related issues than female-related issues. On the other hand, the Popular Democratic Party’s (PPD) female representatives are more traditionalist and less active in bill sponsorship. Historically, there have been more women in the legislative branch for the PNP than for the PPD

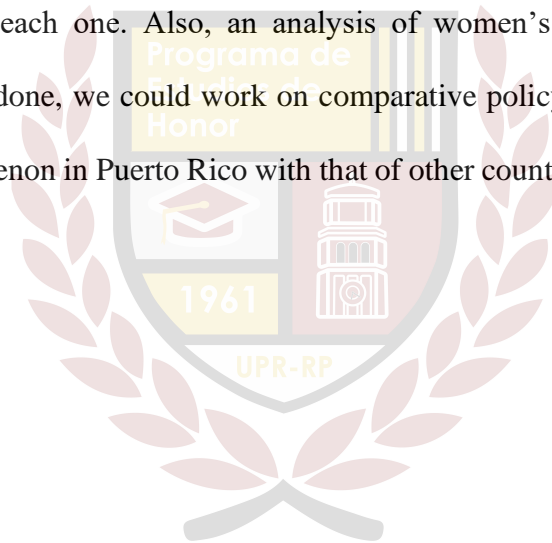
which can be an influencing factor in these results. Also, the New Progressist Party even has a quota established inside the party to ensure the active participation of women.

In Puerto Rico, more women legislators have been elected to the House of Representatives over each election. However, this increase has been at an extremely slow pace. When analyzing the numbers of women legislators in contrast with men's, female politicians are still at an early stage of successful political representation. The few women that are elected to the House indeed pursue their participation in areas women were not usually involved before, such as economy and development. Yet, they still do not question the established power structures that govern politics. This proves women legislators behave along the liberal feminism line of thought. They encounter more difficulties than men in the process of being elected to public office. However, once they are there, they conduct themselves closer to their male counterparts than women legislators in Latin America. In fact, their behavior contrasts with the findings in the island. Women representatives in Puerto Rico during the years analyzed were not relegated to typically female legislation. Previous studies in other Latin American countries, such as Costa Rica, Argentine, and Colombia (Schwindt-Bayer 2006) showed how women legislators in Latin America were more focused on women's, family and children's legislation.

This contrast in female representatives' behavior in legislation could be due to a number of factors. It may be that Puerto Rican women do not conform to gender roles as much as in other parts of Latin America. Everyday more families in the island are led by women. The political relationship with the United States could also be a factor, as there have been many notable political movements in the U.S. states empowering women and promoting female participation in state affairs that may have reflected on the island. Perhaps Puerto Rican legislators are now more open to expanding their areas of legislation and presenting individual projects. However, this research

also showed that there is a long way to go towards equality with respect to male colleagues. Politics, like many other professional areas, are still dominated by men, even with the population of women exceeding that of men. Therefore, it is necessary to achieve greater participation of women in politics.

Some initiatives are working to achieve this equality, such as Proyecto 85, a non-partisan non-profit organization that encourages and trains women to run for elective public office in Puerto Rico. This investigation opens the door to similar research on the political participation of women in the Legislature. Further studies could analyze more years and include the whole terms, instead of just the first year of each one. Also, an analysis of women's behavior in the Senate is encouraged. Once this is done, we could work on comparative policy research that analyzes the occurrence of the phenomenon in Puerto Rico with that of other countries in Latin America where it has been studied.





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## Appendix A: Classified Bills by Year

Table 11  
*Bill Category by Year*

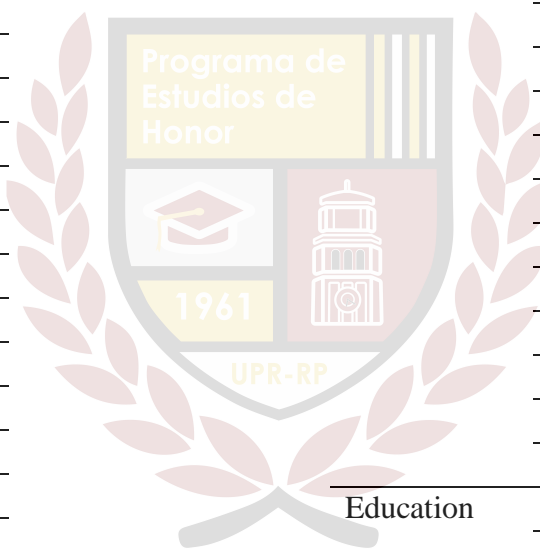
Category	Year					Total
	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	
Women's Issues	3 3.4%	0 0.0%	6 7.9%	6 5.9%	1 1.4%	16 4.4%
Children and Family	1 1.1%	1 3.1%	3 3.9%	6 5.9%	0 0.0%	11 3.0%
Health	2 2.3%	4 12.5%	4 5.3%	5 5.0%	4 5.7%	19 5.2%
Education	6 6.8%	2 6.3%	4 5.3%	8 7.9%	6 8.6%	26 7.1%
Social Security and Welfare	4 4.5%	3 9.4%	5 6.6%	9 8.9%	5 7.1%	26 7.1%
Environment and Agriculture	3 3.4%	3 9.4%	3 3.9%	6 5.9%	4 5.7%	19 5.2%
Economy and Development	12 13.6%	4 12.5%	16 21.1%	16 15.8%	15 21.4%	63 17.2%
Employment	0 0.0%	3 9.4%	2 2.6%	1 1.0%	2 2.9%	8 2.2%
Tax and Legal	8 9.1%	3 9.4%	8 10.5%	16 15.8%	11 15.7%	46 12.5%
Government and Judiciary	48 54.5%	7 21.9%	18 23.7%	21 20.8%	15 21.4%	109 29.7%
Honorary	1 1.1%	2 6.3%	7 9.2%	7 6.9%	7 10.0%	24 6.5%
Total	88 100.0%	32 100.0%	76 100.0%	101 100.0%	70 100.0%	367 100.0%

Appendix B: Bill Classification Initiated by Category

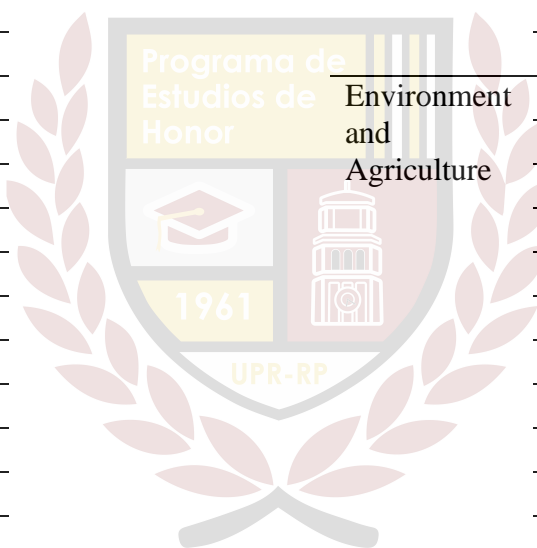
Table 12

*Bill Classification*

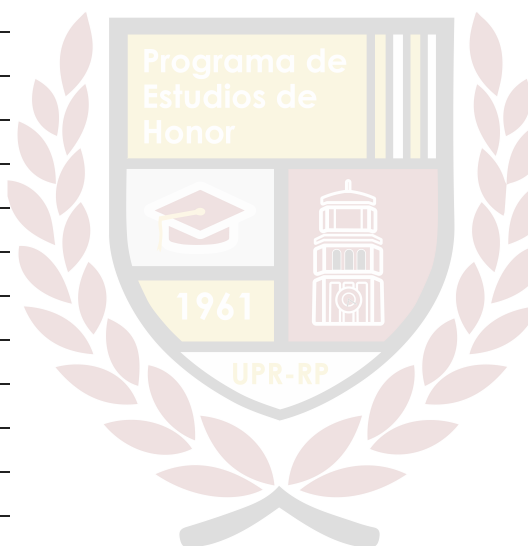
Category	ID number		
Women's Issues	PC0444	PC0391	
	PC1066	PC1316	
	PC0453	PC1317	
	PC0237	PC0637	
	PC0178	PC1146	
	PC0222	PC1475	
	PC1185	PC0577	
	PC0221	PC1272	
	PC0329	PC1464	
	PC0998	PC1641	
	PC0197	PC0167	
	PC0912	PC1744	
	PC0189	PC0016	
	PC1847	PC1192	
	PC1852	PC1400	
	PC0488	PC0999	
	Children and Family	PC0608	PC1044
		PC0495	PC1178
		PC0032	PC0826
		PC0174	PC0193
PC0203		PC1036	
PC0062		Education PC0301	
PC1369		PC0606	
PC0640		PC0254	
PC1999		PC0275	
PC1657		PC1075	
PC1372		PC1071	
Health		PC0691	PC1111
	PC1090	PC1304	
	PC0974	PC0337	
	PC1153	PC0890	
	PC0417	PC0943	
	PC0981	PC1719	
	PC0473	PC0228	
	PC0402		



	PC1443		PC0225
	PC0273		PC1362
	PC0872		PC0240
	PC0937		PC0584
	PC1553		PC0532
	PC1031		PC09036
	PC0230		PC1984
	PC1572		PC0234
	PC0727		PC0051
	PC1446		PC0355
	PC1444		PC0964
	PC1474		PC1559
	PC0499		PC0483
	PC0636		PC1525
	PC0927		PC1548
	PC0202	Programa de Estudios de Honor Environment and Agriculture	PC0100
	PC0553		PC0361
	PC0889		PC1292
	PC0633		PC0954
	PC0243		PC1290
	PC1490		PC0383
Welfare and Social Security	PC0269		PC0937
	PC1087		PC0423
	PC0787		PC1927
	PC1283		PC1344
	PC0471		PC0595
	PC0944		PC1232
	PC0946		PC0348
	PC0673		PC1648
	PC0027		PC0428
	PC1729		PC0159
	PC1057		PC0488
	PC0194		PC1639
	PC1088		PC0115
	PC0251		PC2013
	PC0576		PC1981
	PC2178		PC0637
	PC2149		PC0808
	PC0042		PC1151



	PC0479	PC1217
	PC1062	PC0331
Economy	PC0028	PC0881
and	PC0186	PC1184
Commerce	PC0871	PC1701
	PC0892	PC0127
	PC0888	PC1111
	PC0835	PC0906
	PC0257	PC0289
	PC0242	PC1225
	PC0020	PC2060
	PC0136	PC1996
	PC0119	PC1082
	PC0678	PC0019
	PC0939	PC1403
	PC0674	PC0779
	PC0882	PC0027
	PC0860	PC0731
	PC0909	PC1646
	PC0415	PC0037
	PC0577	PC1028
	PC0798	PC0377
	PC0891	PC1315
	PC0843	PC0066
	PC0844	PC0386
	PC0934	PC0476
	PC0940	PC1314
	PC0953	PC1660
	PC1212	PC1596
	PC0857	PC1649
	PC1661	PC2011
	PC1672	PC2205
	PC0488	PC1555
	PD0593	PC0599
	PC0021	PC0915
	PC1402	PC0938
	PC0668	PC1182
	PC0898	PC0004
	PC0842	PC0905





	PC0891	PC0464
	PC1068	PC0927
	PC0005	PC0729
	PC1008	PC0303
	PC0900	PC0679
	PC0774	PC0546
	PC0848	PC0945
	PC0766	PC0256
	PC0520	PC1002
	PC1419	PC1085
	PC1069	PC1291
	PC1448	PC1088
	PC0649	PC0993
Employment	PC0070	PC1307
	PC0850	PC0745
	PC0743	PC0888
	PC1219	PC0889
	PC1011	PC0918
	PC1837	PC0919
	PC0075	PC0920
	PC1577	PC1200
	PC0631	PC0860
	PC1440	PC0782
	PC0888	PC1311
	PC0899	PC0775
	PC1055	PC0776
	PC1045	PC0777
	PC1264	PC0778
	PC1359	PC1205
	PC1589	PC1206
	PC1595	PC1226
Tax and	PC0166	PC1329
Legal	PC0836	PC1300
	PC0877	PC1315
	PC0894	PC1493
	PC0741	PC1494
	PC0239	PC1496
	PC0905	PC1932
	PC0576	PC1665



PC1817  
PC1664  
PC1919  
PC0772  
PC1145  
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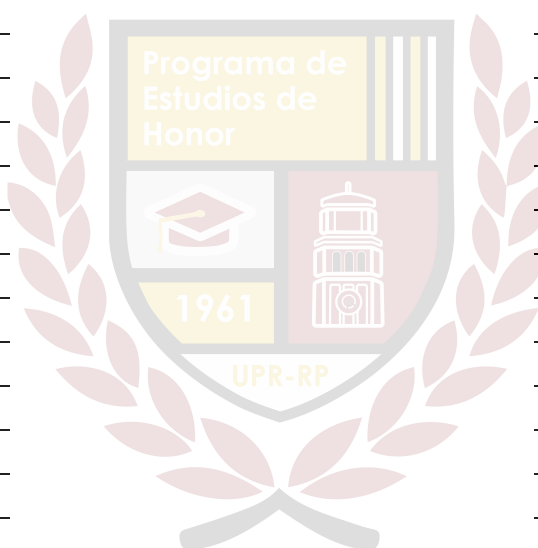
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12 de diciembre de 2019

Estudiantes egresados del PREH Segundo Semestre 2018-2019

  
Eunice Pérez-Medina, Ed.D.  
Directora

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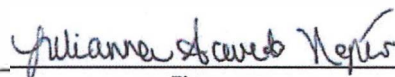
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