

1-2019

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Recommended Citation

Townley, Brynne (2019) "Exploring Predictors of Women's Political Representation in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Sigma: Journal of Political and International Studies*: Vol. 36, Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sigma/vol36/iss1/8>

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Exploring Predictors of Women's Political Representation in Sub-Saharan Africa

Brynne Townley

Introduction: Sub-Saharan Africa—the Fertile Land of Female MPs

In October, Ethiopia elected its first female president, Sahle-Work Zewde (Campbell 2018). Zewde is currently the only female head of state in Africa; however, women are making gains in ministerial positions across Africa. In fact, women have become increasingly visible in African politics over the past few decades. Rwanda has the highest percentage of women in its national parliament, and Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Uganda are other sub-Saharan African countries that are in the top twenty-five countries with the highest levels of female representation (Bauer and Britton 2006, 2). Despite Western claims of gender equality and women's empowerment, sub-Saharan Africa is beating many industrialized global superpowers, including the U.S., when it comes to women's political representation.

Women's political representation in sub-Saharan Africa presents an interesting area of study for multiple reasons. First, there is vast literature on how women's descriptive representation affects women's status and rights in a country. Thus, there are a variety of political, social, and economic implications for women in sub-Saharan Africa. Second, intense patriarchal norms, low levels of women's education and empowerment, and other factors appear to contradict the high levels of women's political representation. Traditionally, the Western world has viewed Africa as backward due to rigid gender divisions and subordination of women, yet these perceptions have not hindered women's political representation in the legislature. Third, despite the high levels of women's political representation in many sub-Saharan African countries, some countries are still behind. For example, Botswana, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo all have approximately 9 percent of the seats in their parliaments held by women, and Zambia has 18 percent of the seats held by women (IPU 2017). These

reasons form the beginnings of an intriguing puzzle: Why do sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries have such high levels of women's political representation in their national legislatures? And what accounts for the variation among SSA countries?

I argue that party quotas and conflict are the best predictors of women's political representation, and the diffusion of international norms of women's rights is a weaker predictor. Party quotas are important, since they are a concrete measure to ensure female representation. They are also voluntary, so parties that choose to institute them are also probably doing other things to encourage women's participation in politics. Internal conflict, often in the form of civil wars, break down social hierarchies and create opportunities for women's groups to advocate for their goals.

International norms of women's empowerment and rights are not as strong predictors of women's representation for multiple reasons. There are fewer formal avenues for these norms to travel down to national governments. Membership in regional bodies, like the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), can recommend that national governments implement measures that will increase women's representation; however, they are less effective at achieving concrete policies that do so. The influence of international bodies like the UN, in the form of worldwide conferences (i.e., the World Conferences on Women), also affect women's representation in national legislatures, although they are not very effective in creating concrete policies that increase women's participation.

There are important recent historical factors that are necessary in order to explain this puzzle. The 1980s and 1990s saw a surge in women's movements and mobilization across sub-Saharan Africa, as well as shifting international norms advocating for more progressive gender policies (Tripp et al. 2009, 2–5). Regime change and democratization occurred as a result of internal conflict for many African countries during this time and created gaps into which women's groups asserted their priorities. A transnational movement advocating for increased women's rights also began to emerge on the international level.

I selected sub-Saharan Africa as the scope of my paper for various reasons. It is an understudied and often overlooked part of the world, although its unique history and current status make it necessary to study as an entity rather than grouping it together with other regions. According to Freedom House, many sub-Saharan African countries are not free or are only partly free. This fragility at the state level has the potential to affect current theories about women's representation in other more stable countries. Sub-Saharan Africa also has implications for women's representation in other parts of the world, because many SSA countries employ some form of gender quota. This offers a unique case study of the effectiveness of quotas. In addition, although Africa has experienced multiple feminist movements (both national and transnational), these movements have differed from Western feminist movements in goals, organization, and results, thus, the area requires separate theories. Figure 1 demonstrates the variation in women's political representation across SSA countries, which also make it an intriguing area of study.

This paper will begin by addressing current theories in the literature that are considered important predictors of women's representation. I will then explain my theory which unites many predictors that are often found in case studies in the literature. I will then describe the methodology I used to test my theory and examine the various results. I will explain additional insights that can be gleaned from my theory and study. I will then conclude by synthesizing my theory and results and by addressing possible research extensions and implications.

Important Predictors of Women's Representation

Scholars have been examining important predictors of women's parliamentary representation; however, they have primarily focused on industrialized countries. Women's participation in the workforce, proportional electoral systems, women's college graduation rates, and culture are predictors that researchers have found are statistically significant in these countries (Yoon 2004, 448). Fewer scholars have looked at representation in sub-Saharan Africa, yet the differences between sub-Saharan African countries and other industrialized nations invalidate an assumption that these predictors would be the same. Sub-Saharan African countries have higher rates of poverty, lower rates of gender equality, and a history of imperialism and colonialism that set them apart from other industrialized nations. Thus, research on the specific region of sub-Saharan Africa requires alternate theories.

Researchers have discovered that quotas are an important predictor of women's representation in SSA. Yoon (2004) measured the effect of both minor quotas (less than 15 percent of seats reserved for women) and substantial quotas (more than 15 percent of seats reserved for women) on representation, and both variables were statistically significant (457). She pointed out that many scholars claim quotas are "the surest way to improve female representation" (450). In the introduction to her seminal work *Women, Quotas, and Politics*, Drude Dahlerup distinguishes the "fast track" and the "incremental track" concerning equal representation of men and women (Dahlerup 2006, 6). She claimed that electoral gender quotas are part of this fast track movement that seeks equality as a result (Dahlerup 2006, 9). Tripp, Konate, and Lowe-Morna claimed that quotas in Uganda gave "women the exposure, political experience, and confidence to run on their own in open electoral races" (129). Increasing numbers of women have run in each consecutive election since the introduction of quotas (129). Bauer and Britton (2006) also argued that quotas are a major predictor of women's high levels of representation in SSA. Quotas are thus an important predictor of women's political representation.

Electoral systems are another variable of interest that has been found to facilitate higher levels of women's representation. Yoon (2004) divides electoral systems into three groups: majority-plurality, proportional representation (PR), and mixed systems, and she found that proportional representation was a statistically significant predictor (457). PR systems may lead to increases in women's representation due to women being allowed to enter as second rank on party lists and gain a seat if the party wins enough seats rather than just campaigning to win a single candidacy (Lindberg 2004, 34).

Lindberg's (2004) research found evidence that the electoral systems which were more proportional had higher levels of female representation in parliament (35). Hughes (2009) identified proportional representation systems as an important predictor affecting demand of women in parliaments (176). Additionally, Tripp, Konate, and Lowe-Morna asserted that PR systems facilitate high levels of women in representation (130).

Recent research has identified internal conflict as another important predictor of women's representation. Hughes and Tripp (2015) found that the ending of armed conflict led to a four to five percentage point boost in women in parliaments (1,531). They also discovered that quotas have greater impact in post-conflict societies (1,531). Hughes (2009) argued that conflict breaks down social barriers and creates new opportunities and spaces for women in the political arena (175). Conflict also creates flows of international aid into countries that could encourage them to adopt policies in line with women's rights (179). The end of a conflict can often lead to constitution building, and women's groups will lobby for provisions of women's rights and women's representations to be included (Tripp et al. 2009, 119). Eight of the twelve African countries with the highest rates of female representation have recently emerged out of civil war or internal conflict (119).

The work done by women's organizations has also contributed to historic high levels of women in parliaments. Tripp et al. (2009) claimed that "autonomous women's movements are one of the most important determinants of the new gender-based policies adopted after 1990 in much of Africa" (xiv). They outline three mechanisms that are important in understanding this claim: 1) international influences and the diffusion of human rights norms, 2) changes in resource bases allowing women to have greater access to the necessary resources, and 3) democratization facilitating the opening up of spaces for women's groups to advocate (62). Women's groups have been instrumental in the introduction of quotas and other policies that have helped women gain ground in national legislatures. For example, women's groups in Rwanda stepped up to fill the vacuum after the brutal genocide and helped with the reconstruction and reconciliation process (Hughes 2009, 191). When asked about the success of the women's organizations, one Rwandan woman said, "We got almost everything we asked for, including the 30 percent quota for women" (Hughes 2009, 191). Thus, the work done by women's organizations both facilitates, complements, and enhances the previously mentioned predictors, such as quotas and the ending of conflict.

International norms have also influenced women's representation, although this predictor has been less emphasized in the literature. Tripp, Konate, and Lowe-Morna (2009) emphasized the pivotal role of "international influences and the diffusion of ideas and tactics across Africa with respect to women's rights" on women's political representation (62). They also highlighted transnational diffusion influences, including UN Conferences on Women and initiatives on the regional level (113). Additionally, they claimed that transnational women's movements influenced the trajectory and goals of smaller regional organizations, as well as national women's organizations that began

to frame women's struggles in a global context of gender equality (63). Hughes (2009) examined the effect of international linkages on women's representation in developing countries, but she did not limit her analysis to SSA. Case studies have also found that women's organizations were inspired and helped by international movements led by the UN (Bauer and Britton 2006; Hughes 2009).

The influence of some factors on women's representation is contested among scholars. Yoon (2001) measured the effect of democratization and found that it lowered women's political representation, although this effect was not statistically significant (177). Lindberg (2004) found that women's legislative representation actually increased with each election cycle after the initial election (45). Hughes and Tripp (2015) recognized the contradictory findings on the role democratization; however, they think the research on its role in Africa (rather than Latin America or Eastern Europe) is too sparse for meaningful conclusions (1,516). Instead, they argued that democratization is a potentially important mechanism that links the ending of a conflict with increases in women's representation (1,515). Additional contested predictors include women's access to education, women's participation in the formal workforce, and cultural factors.

A Convergence of Multiple Factors: Supply and Demand

My theory unites some of the existing predictors of women's representation while also recognizing that some predictors do not have as strong an effect as the literature suggests. The literature argued that the implementation of quotas is a strong predictor, which I also argue. However, I specify that voluntary party quotas are more effective than other forms of quotas. The implementation of voluntary party quotas (which indicate that a nation has high commitment to encouraging women's active political participation) and a history of internal conflict (which breaks down social barriers and creates space and opportunities for local and national women's groups to advocate for their causes) are the core of my theory of why some SSA countries have higher levels of women's political representation in their national legislatures than other countries. I also argue that indicators, such as norm diffusion of transnational women's rights norms, are not as important as have been previously argued, since they merely encourage countries to do better concerning women's rights and lack a strong mechanism.

Despite the multiple theories explaining women's representation that have been addressed so far, an important gap in the literature emerges connecting the various predictors. My theory rests on the concept of supply and demand in women's representation. Supply refers to women having the motivation, training, and resources to run for office, and demand refers to peoples' willingness to support female candidates (Karpowitz, Monson, and Preece 2017, 928–29). I argue that conflict helps increase the supply of women by breaking down barriers about women's political participation, and quotas, especially voluntary party quotas, are integral in the demand side since the political parties are actively supporting women's participation. I also look at international norms as a predictor, which is a less explored variable in the existing literature.

Conflict and Quotas: Supply and Demand

A country's recent experience with conflict is a predictor of women's political representation, because conflict breaks down social, economic, and political barriers. Hughes and Tripp (2015) examined the influence of the ending of civil wars on women's political representation, considering they facilitate changes in political institutions (1,515). These changes then create gaps for women's organizations to emerge and advocate for their goals. Since the system is going through a process of change, it is then easier for women's groups to benefit from these shifting political and constitutional institutions. Not only does the ending of conflict facilitate change, it does so rapidly. Social norms that are traditionally in place often break down as order and chaos ensue and conflict erupts. Some of the social norms that break down are gender divisions, since women are often just as involved in the conflict as men. They may fight side by side, and they become targets of violence just as men do, as evidenced by the Rwandan Civil War (Hughes 2009, 190). The breakdown of social norms creates a greater supply of women to be involved in politics; therefore, more women feel motivated and prepared to become involved. This is largely because there are less social and political barriers that could hinder them. Quotas are an important predictor of the demand for women in government. When political parties or governments implement quotas, they are actively seeking for more women to be involved. This is important in that without demand for more women in government, there would be no need for the supply of women to increase. The supply and demand must work together. There are two main types of quotas: legislated quotas and voluntary party quotas (Dahlerup 2006, 21). Legislated quotas are mandated by the constitution or the electoral rules of a government, and party quotas are voluntary measures that individual political parties can choose to implement (Dahlerup 2006, 21). One major concern with quotas is that it will facilitate the election of unqualified women who then become tokens of the system (Tripp et al. 2006, 124). This fear has been proven to be unfounded in PR electoral systems (Ibid.). In addition, quotas have led to an influx of women in politics, and this visibility has helped shape "popular perceptions of the acceptability of women being active in politics" (Tripp et al. 2006, 129).

The Diffusion of Quotas and Regional Membership

The 1985 UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya, was the start of a movement that would infiltrate many African countries and catalyze the emergence of numerous autonomous national and regional women's movements and organizations. More than half of the 13,504 registered participants came from the global South, particularly Africa (Tripp et al. 2009, 63). Fatma Alloo, the leader of the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), said the following when reacting to the conference:

The conference emphasized the importance of women's mobilization in addressing the source of women's subjugation to patriarchal norms and in working toward transformation on this front. TAMWA came into existence through our own histories

of pain, and the realization that unless we got together and did something, nothing would change in a patriarchal system. (Tripp et al. 2009, 63)

The diffusion of gender equality norms that encourage women's participation in political, social, and economic spheres influenced the high levels of women in national parliaments in two key ways. First, it gave African women the tools they needed to start their own movements and organizations at the national level by educating them about policies that would encourage gender equality and inspiring them to work toward implementation. In her quote, Fatma Alloo mentioned mobilization, and the diffusion of these norms certainly facilitated mass mobilization on the national and local levels. Second, this norm diffusion occurred through the work of regional bodies that established policy goals for their member countries.

Norms of gender equality and women's empowerment were outlined in documents like CEDAW and reiterated at subsequent World Conferences on Women. In 1995, the conference in Beijing proposed a Platform for Action that addressed women in power and decision-making roles. An excerpt of the platform states:

Women in politics and decision-making positions in governments and legislative bodies contribute to redefining political priorities, placing new items on the political agenda that reflect and address women's gender-specific concerns, values, and experiences, and providing new perspectives on mainstream political issues. (UN Women 1995)

Tripp (2009) claimed "the Beijing conference legitimized key elements of feminist discourse in African NGOs, parties, states, international development agencies, and other fora" (64). This legitimization of feminist discourse from a powerful and influential international actor was tinder for the growing flame within national women's groups in Africa to push for equality in political representation. It also coincided with many African nations emerging out of conflict, which opened up space for these women's groups to advocate for their goals. In fact, most of the gender quotas were introduced in African countries after the 1995 Beijing conference (Tripp, Konate, and Lowe-Morna 2006, 112). Gender quotas were a result of international influences and serve as an important intermediary variable in my argument. They also affected the high percentages of women in national parliaments.

Regional bodies in Africa facilitated the diffusion of norms of gender equality and women's empowerment in the form of quotas. In my analysis, I examine the effect of membership in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in view of these organizations being mentioned most frequently in the literature. Regional organizations, like the SADC, helped facilitate the diffusion of international norms by setting specific and concrete goals and timelines for women's empowerment for each of its member states and putting pressure on governments to include the voices of women's organizations in the decision-making processes. This is one major way regional organizations

often articulated goals in line with the goals of transnational feminist movements that were emphasized at world conferences held by the UN. In 1997, representatives from member states' governments and NGOs attended a workshop planned by the SADC to address the creation of a gendered policy framework (Tripp et al. 2009, 113). This document became known as the "Declaration on Gender and Development" and was approved by all SADC heads of government. One of the provisions in the document called for women's representation in national legislatures to be 30 percent by 2005. As a result of this document, the SADC established a Gender Unit to oversee the efforts at implementing these goals. Although not all the SADC member states reached the goal of 30 percent women in the national legislatures, a new goal of women making up 50 percent of the national legislatures was proposed and accepted (Geisler 2004, 214). The SADC also established the SADC Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus in 2002 to help bring together female members of parliament across party lines to address areas of common interest (Tripp et al. 2009, 159). These concrete policy goals and plans for implementation represent the diffusion of international norms.

The influence of regional bodies in promoting women's empowerment and facilitating norm diffusion from multilateral, international bodies, such as the UN, legitimizes and increases the pressure being put on national governments by local or national women's organizations. This pressure increases the likelihood that national governments will see the advocacy work being done by women's organizations as legitimate and worthy of consideration. It has also removed the stigma that advancing women's rights is a Western cause that will be detrimental to African society (Tripp et al. 2009, 165). However, these bodies also have limited influence in ensuring that governments will implement certain policies. If the governments do not decide to adopt these measures, then the goals of the regional organizations are little more than an empty vision. Because of this, I believe norm diffusion of international women's rights norms through regional bodies will be less of a predictor than quotas and conflict.

Methodology

I chose to run a series of ordinary least square (OLS) regressions to test my hypotheses and measure the effect of multiple independent variables and predictors on women's representation. I selected this type of statistical analysis, considering it enables me to understand broad effects of predictors on women's representation across all SSA countries rather than country-specific effects, which are usually explored in case studies. Currently, much of the literature includes case studies, which makes it difficult to generalize across countries. In addition, the OLS regression method allows me to control for variables that have been important in the literature.

Dependent Variable

My dependent variable is the percentage of women in national legislatures in SSA countries. I retrieved my data from the World Bank Data Indicators and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Independent Variables

I have operationalized norm diffusion of the transnational women's movement by using two measures. First, I examined norm diffusion through the influence of regional membership on women's representation. I used a simple binary variable to indicate membership in the various regional organizations and to test this relationship. The two organizations I chose to focus on are the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), since these organizations are widely mentioned in the literature. To operationalize the norm diffusion of transnational women's rights movements spurred by the UN, I am examining the accession and ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the CEDAW protocol, and the Maputo protocol. The UN General Assembly adopted the text of the CEDAW in 1979, and this document would become the preeminent international document outlining the goals, standards, and policies in line with women's rights. Along with the provisions included in CEDAW, the UN held various conferences discussing women's rights and women's political, legal, social, and economic empowerment, and some scholars theorized that these conferences helped encourage countries to implement measures to further women's rights, especially their opportunities in the political sphere. I chose these variables because they indicate the openness of a country to the transnational women's movements that advocated for empowerment. The CEDAW protocol followed the passage of the original CEDAW document and expands on women's rights that should be protected in a country's laws. The Maputo Protocol is a document specific to Africa that outlines specific measures governments can take to increase the status of women. I theorized that countries which have ratified CEDAW and the subsequent protocols would have adopted measures (either policies or programs) that would facilitate rising levels of women's representation. I also theorized that countries that are members of regional bodies would experience pressure from these organizations to pass measures to improve women's political representation.

I include a binary quota variable to indicate the presence of quotas in a country. I theorized that the presence of quotas will be a strong predictor of women's political representation. Quotas are a concrete policy option that have been proven in the literature to facilitate women's representation. In addition, I break down the quota variable into types of quotas to run in some of the models. The two types I look at are voluntary party quotas and legislated quotas (such as reserved seats). I theorized that voluntary party quotas will be more effective than legislated quotas, since political parties that choose to implement them will also be implementing other programs or initiatives to increase women's representation. Legislated quotas are often top-down approaches that lack other substantial measures to address the barriers to women's representation.

I also tested the effect of a history of internal conflict on women's representation. This is also a binary variable that is coded based on a country's recent experience with conflict. I coded countries as experiencing conflict if the episodes were violent

and occurred after 1975. Since women's representation in SSA countries began to increase in the 1990s, conflict before 1975 would not directly have affected the change in women's political representation. I theorized that countries which have experienced recent conflict will have higher levels of women in their national legislatures, since conflict breaks down traditional gender norms and makes room for women's groups to organize and demand rights. Conflict often leads to regime changes, which is another opportunity for women's groups and organizations to demand more rights.

Other Variables

I included a variety of other control variables based on the theories presented in the literature, including electoral system, and regime type. I expected that proportional representation will be statistically significant, since the literature claims that women have an easier time being elected in PR systems. I also include regime type, due to SSA countries having a lot of variation in regimes. Much of the literature up until this point has not controlled for regime type, which makes it difficult to confirm their evidence. Regime type could play an important role in women's representation, for the reason that more free societies often have more open societies that allow women's groups to form and advocate. On the other hand, authoritarian regimes sometimes encourage women's rights, because it creates a façade of extending personal freedoms to its citizens. I also included a control variable of GDP per capita to make sure I accounted for potential economic variables.

Discussion of Models

Model 1

The first model demonstrates the results of the basic quota variable, the conflict variable, and the regional organizations membership variables along with all the controls. Quotas and a PR electoral system are statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level. A history of conflict is statistically significant at the 95 percent level. Membership in ECOWAS and a mixed system are both statistically significant at the 90 percent level. It is interesting to note that membership in ECOWAS has a negative coefficient, indicating that membership in the organization has a negative impact on women's representation. Thus, if a country is a member of ECOWAS, it has a lower probability of having women in its national legislature. This model's R squared was 0.511, meaning that this model explains about 50 percent of the variation in women's political representation in SSA.

Model 2

The second model demonstrates the results of all the CEDAW variables, quotas, and conflict on women's representation. In this model, quotas, conflict, and a PR system are all statistically significant at various levels. None of the CEDAW variables are statistically significant; however, the coefficient for the ratification of CEDAW is negative, meaning that if it were significant, CEDAW ratification would lead to lower levels of women's representation.

Model 3

This model shows the results of the different types of quotas on women's representation. The other control variables with the conflict variable are also included in this model. PR systems, mixed systems, and conflict are all statistically significant. In addition, party quotas are significant while legislated quotas are not.

VARIABLES	(1) % Women in parliament	(2) % Women in parliament	(3) % Women in parliament
CEDAW		-1.367 (7.363)	
CEDAW Protocol		2.232 (4.305)	
Maputo Protocol		1.348 (3.602)	
Quota	7.447** (3.559)	7.562* (3.890)	
PR system	11.56*** (3.821)	9.056** (4.341)	10.73*** (3.938)
Mixed System	7.796* (4.245)	7.478 (4.674)	8.504* (4.810)
Partly Free	0.411 (4.638)	-1.207 (4.967)	-1.883 (4.838)
Not Free	-2.197 (5.553)	1.616 (5.240)	1.315 (5.014)
History of Conflict	7.471** (3.673)	8.443** (3.918)	8.316** (3.896)
Logged GDP	0.426 (1.800)	0.539 (2.177)	0.929 (1.918)
SADC Member	2.011 (4.764)		
ECOWAS member	-9.704* (5.467)		
Voluntary Party Quota			6.573* (3.799)
Legislated Quota			4.811 (3.777)
Constant	8.932 (15.68)	3.447 (20.23)	1.886 (16.22)
Observations	44	44	44
R-squared	0.511	0.456	0.445

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Discussion of Variables

Norm Diffusion from International Bodies

None of the CEDAW variables had statistically significant effects on women's representation, although the coefficients for ratification of the CEDAW Optional Protocol and Maputo Protocol were positive, indicating that they may have a slight influence in increasing women's representation. This leads to two important findings. First, CEDAW ratification may not be the best measure of norm diffusion from international bodies. It also seems that international bodies, such as the UN, can only do so much. They have the power to influence and encourage countries to change, but they cannot infringe on a country's sovereignty by forcing the implementation of certain policies. This finding illustrates that country-specific policies that meet the needs of the women in each country may be more effective at increasing women's representation than broad international recommendations.

Membership in Regional Organizations

Membership in the SADC was statistically significant at the 90 percent level until the controls were added. SADC membership has a positive coefficient indicating that membership in this organization does positively affect women's representation despite the lack of significance. Membership in the ECOWAS is statistically significant. However, the relationship is negative, indicating that membership in the organization decreases women's representation in national legislatures. This opposing evidence is interesting, since membership in regional bodies appears to affect women's representation in different ways depending on the goals and priorities of the regional bodies. As my theory states, membership in regional bodies can facilitate norm diffusion of women's rights and help legitimize the policy goals of local or national women's organizations. The evidence demonstrates that regional bodies may act in different ways that can either have a positive effect on women's representation, such as in the case of the SADC, or a negative impact on women's representation.

As was previously mentioned, the SADC set targets of at least 30 percent of women in the national parliaments by 2005 and then a goal of equal representation of men and women by 2015 for its member states. Rather than setting concrete goals for women's representation, ECOWAS has created networks and implemented capacity-building programs to facilitate women's empowerment (ECOWAS). These differences appear insignificant; however, they may have affected the motivation of the member state governments in striving toward higher levels of women's representation.

Quotas

The implementation of quotas is statistically significant in all of the models, which corroborates the previous research that quotas increase women's representation. One interesting finding is the varied effects that different quota types have on women's representation. I analyzed the effect of voluntary party implemented quotas and legislated candidate or reserved seat quotas. When additional variables and controls were

added, party quotas were statistically significant at the 90 percent level, but legislated quotas lost their statistical significance. This finding has important implications for women's representation, and it demonstrates that some quotas are more effective than others. Voluntary party quotas may be more effective than legislated quotas, because parties that choose to implement them might also choose to initiate other policies or programs that train women to run for office or provide them with tools to be effective candidates. Legislated quotas may not have the same effect as party quotas, since they are not accompanied with other policies that encourage women to become politically involved. Much of the literature has looked at quotas as a whole rather than analyzing the effect of specific quotas, but these findings indicate that future research should consider the different types of quotas and their effects.

Post-Conflict

I included a binary variable for countries that had recently emerged out of civil war or internal conflict. As the literature predicted, this variable is statistically significant across all the models. Countries that have experienced civil war or internal conflict present an interesting dilemma since facilitating conflict is not a viable means of achieving high levels of women's representation. Instead, other changes must be enacted that can mimic the breakdown of rigid social barriers and give women access to greater political opportunities. Perhaps, this comes in the form of social movements. The #MeToo movement is an example of a current social movement that is sweeping across the globe and breaking down social barriers in relation to violence against women. These types of movements are nonviolent ways that social hierarchies can be deconstructed and changed.

Electoral Systems

I also included variables for proportional representation systems and mixed electoral systems. PR systems are statistically significant in all the models, which supports previous research findings. This finding has important implications for nations seeking to increase women's representation. Often, cultural barriers are presented as explanations for women's low representation in the political sphere; however, structural barriers, such as the electoral system, may be more instrumental in explaining barriers to women's representation. Mixed systems were also statistically significant in some of the models, which indicates that future research is needed to understand the effect of these systems on women's representation.

Evaluation of Hypotheses, Recognition of Limitations, and Omitted Variable Bias

Although the norm diffusion variables were not statistically significant, the importance of international and regional organizations in the diffusion process of human rights norms should not be overlooked. Many SADC countries have high levels of women's representation, and quotas (which are a significant predictor of women's representation) that were implemented after the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995—highlighting these norms' importance. In addition, I found other important variables to be statistically significant, including PR electoral systems.

Like I predicted, quotas and conflicts were both statistically significant. I believe these predictors work in tandem to increase women's representation. Quotas are concrete policy goals that increase the demand for women in politics. Conflict breaks down social hierarchies that might have initially served as barriers to women's involvement in politics, thus increasing the supply of women. When there are less barriers that women face, there will be a natural increase in the number of women in politics. These two predictors are contingent upon each other to be effective predictors of women's political representation.

Further research could include different ways of operationalizing the diffusion of international norms by multilateral and regional organizations. Although the ratification of documents like CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol are helpful measures of international norm diffusion, perhaps there are more robust measures of this theory. In addition, the models could suffer from omitted variable bias. There are some variables that were left out of the model, which may be important predictors of women's political representation. My model did not have a variable that measured local or national women's organizations. These organizations certainly play a role in advocating for changes in government policy, and they would need to be included in the model to lessen the impact of omitted variable bias. I did not include a measure of women's organizations, because operationalizing this predictor is difficult and data is often hard to find. Future research should examine the role this variable plays in influencing women's political representation.

Conclusion

My theory argued that both quotas (especially party quotas) and a history of conflict are important predictors of women's political representation in SSA, as they increase both the supply and demand of women in politics. My theory initially claimed that norm diffusion of international women's rights norms and membership in regional bodies would also be predictors; however, these variables were much weaker predictors of women's political representation. Party quotas increase the demand for women in politics, since they serve as a concrete policy measure to increase women's representation. They are also symbolic of a political party's willingness to engage in other programs to train women for politics. Conflict is a variable that increases the supply of women, due to the breaking down of rigid hierarchies and creating opportunities for women to involve themselves in politics. I also found that membership in regional organizations and the diffusion of international organizations do not have a statistically significant effect on women's representation in national legislatures in SSA. In fact, membership in some regional bodies (e.g., ECOWAS) surprisingly present a negative effect on women's representation. Additionally, I found that a PR system is an important structural factor that increases women's representation.

There are both political and social implications in my research. The evidence questions the UN's effectiveness in encouraging women's rights and providing resources and goals for member states to follow. My findings also questioned the effectiveness of legis-

lated quotas, which lost their statistical significance after other variables were added; however, it asserted the power of voluntary party quotas, which did not lose significance. Further research is needed to look into the mechanisms that explain this effect. My study only looked at countries in sub-Saharan Africa, but these findings can be generalized to other countries, since many of the predictors are structural (e.g., electoral systems and quotas).

Further research concerning additional factors on women's representation in national legislatures is required to understand why sub-Saharan African countries are surpassing industrialized countries in women's political representation, despite the high levels of state fragility and low levels of other gender equality indicators.

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How to Get the Attention of Government Officials: A Test of the Effectiveness of Social Proof Treatments

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Introduction to General Problem Area

Social proof treatments—informing people about the behavior of their peers—have generally been shown effective in influencing subjects to engage in desired behavior due to a psychological desire to conform (Cialdini et al. 1990; Schultz et al. 2008; Shearman 2007). Social proofs are more effective when they describe what peers typically do rather than what peers generally approve of and when the social proof is more salient and closely related to the desired behavior (Cialdini 2004; Cialdini 1990). Subjects consistently underestimate the power of social proof, crediting changes in their behavior to other, irrelevant factors (Nolan et al. 2008).

However, while studies have shown social proof treatments to be effective in influencing the behavior of the general population, research to date has not yet assessed the impact of social proofs on government officials. In practice, social proof might motivate officials to take up new policy practices that benefit the citizens they serve. This is the hypothesis that motivated the present research. However, it is possible that staff members in government agencies—that are social elites and, therefore, likely outliers compared to normal citizens—may behave differently than the studies on normal subjects indicate. Other research shows that elites are not as easily influenced as their non-elite counterparts. Elites have been found significantly less likely to accept counsel from even intelligent and highly qualified research assistants (See 2011; Tost 2012). This lack of affinity for heeding the advice of others may also indicate that government officials would be less likely to be influenced by the actions of others; therefore, government officials may prove resistant to social proof treatments.

This randomized controlled experiment done in Peru explores the effects of social proof on government officials' interest in learning more about using evidence