

Running from the Periphery: An Exploratory Analysis of Women Presidential
Candidates in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Utility of Minor Parties

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ABSTRACT

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia is the only woman in Africa that has ever been voted into presidential office. Uncovering the dynamics perpetuating men's continued dominance in presidential office-holding in this region requires a deeper understanding of presidential candidacies particularly as they relate to gendered patterns of major party support that often occur due to party gatekeeping. As such, this thesis poses the following questions: How prevalent are women candidates in sub-Saharan African presidential elections? To what extent do women run for major party labels versus minor party labels or as independent candidates? What factors explain those patterns of party representation for women presidential candidates in the region? I hypothesize that women are altogether less likely than men to run for president. When women do run, I posit that they forge minor party candidacies as opposed to major party or independent candidacies. While minor parties may signal legitimacy, consolidate policy platforms, and provide resources for women candidates who face gatekeeping from major parties, they will ultimately be unlikely to propel them into viable candidacies let alone presidencies. Using a mixed methodological approach, this thesis aims to assess ways party representation differs between men and women presidential candidates in 26 sub-Saharan African countries that were considered "free" or "partly free" as of their 2020 elections (Freedom House). As the role of women in democratization continues to be in question, this research is vital to understanding how women are incorporated into the politics of new democracies.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia is the only woman in Africa that has ever been voted into presidential office, likely because women face disadvantages in gaining political party support. While major parties have significant dominance over minor parties, minor parties may be more likely to support women due to discrimination from major parties. As such, this thesis poses the following questions: How prevalent are women candidates in sub-Saharan African presidential elections? To what extent do women run for major party labels versus minor party labels or as independent candidates? What factors explain those patterns of party representation for women presidential candidates? I hypothesize that women are altogether less likely than men to run for president. When women do run, I posit that they forge minor party candidacies as opposed to major party or independent candidacies. Minor party representation may have important benefits that independent candidacies do not have due to lack of party support. Party representation, even from minor parties, can signal candidate legitimacy, present a clear policy agenda, and provide resources, but minor parties will ultimately be unlikely to propel women into presidencies. This thesis aims to assess ways party representation differs between men and women presidential candidates in 26 sub-Saharan African countries that were considered “free” or “partly free” as of their 2020 elections, denoting their statuses as democracies or at least semi-democracies (Freedom House). I further substantiate the quantitative evidence with evidence from interviews, surveys, and historical context. As the role of women in democracy-building continues to be in question, this research is vital to understanding how women are incorporated into the politics of new democracies.

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List of Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
U.S.	United States
WVS	World Values Survey

Introduction

The lack of women placed at the highest levels of politics offers a bleak outlook for full democracy in sub-Saharan Africa. Some countries in the region have been praised for women's representation in parliaments in the region, largely due to the employment of gender quotas instituted during the formative years of democratization. While gender quotas in legislatures are viewed as a pipeline for women to take on increasingly powerful political roles, their implementation in the region has not resulted in an increase in popularly-elected women presidents (Murray, 2010; Jalalzai, 2013; Montecinos, 2017). In 2021, nine presidential elections were held in sub-Saharan Africa, five of which did not have any women candidates (ElectionGuide). Only one of the elections had more than one woman running, and none of the women candidates garnered above one percent of the vote. This is potentially due to party gatekeeping that prevents them from becoming viable candidates. Emerging or new democracies may face clashes between democratic institutions and patriarchal cultural norms, and this is evident in sub-Saharan Africa. As women aim to exercise their legal rights as members of new democracies, they still confront the lingering effects of patriarchal cultures that result in party gatekeeping from major parties. It is this push and pull between the institutional and the cultural that is at the center of women's attempts for presidencies in the region

According to Montecinos (2017, p. 2), "the interaction between institutional and cultural factors is viewed as central to gendered executive politics." This pattern highlights the paradoxical nature of democratization, in which democratic institutions are imposed but the effects of patriarchal, autocratic cultures linger, making it difficult for women actors to navigate their new political landscapes. Though early conceptions of democracy did not include women,

the third wave of democracy has coincided with the international push to improve the status of women: “today, representative democracy present as an *ideal* includes women” (Tremblay, 2007, p. 534). Additionally, political transitions bring new openings in governance and society at large, which women’s organizations can use to their advantage. As such, many believed democracy would bring new opportunities for female political hopefuls and that the rates of women in politics would increase. In sub-Saharan Africa, women’s organizations successfully lobbied for the implementation of legislative gender quotas across the region. Even with institutional changes being made toward democracy, democratization does not tend to change the social and economic inequality rampant in African countries; thus, women continue to be left out of the political sphere. Yoon (2001) finds that multiparty elections immediately following the implementation of democracy in African countries actually have fewer women in the legislature. Lindberg (2004), on the other hand, found that women’s representation in the legislature did not significantly increase with more elections as Yoon had previously posed. While this finding diverges from Yoon’s, both show that the implementation of democratic institutions does not result in wider cultural changes leading to the acceptance of women leaders.

More recently, Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna (2012) substantiated Yoon’s finding, concluding that democratization processes following 1975 actually had curvilinear effects on the presence of women in legislatures with their representation dropping following democratization but eventually rising as more elections take place. They postulate that while women’s movements often increase their mobilization efforts during democratization, democracy ultimately empowers parties not movements; thus, women continue to be left out as they typically do not have prior experience with party politics. This suggests that, like democratization, women’s socialization into politics is also a process (Yoon, 2001; Fallon,

Swiss, & Viterna, 2012). Women must learn about governance, gain experience, and devise strategies to run effective campaigns and gain the approval of their constituents. Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna also point to the influence of international organizations in the role of pressuring countries to encourage women's political representation. The variable for CEDAW was a statistically significant mediator for women's legislative representation (Fallon, Swiss, & Viterna, 2012). The variable was coded into two groups: one for countries that did not ratify CEDAW or ratified it with "significant reservations" and one for those that did ratify CEDAW more openly (Fallon, Swiss, & Viterna, 2012, p. 399). In this way, they used the ratification of CEDAW as a proxy for cultural views of women, showing that countries that were more hesitant or refused to improve women's status had lower rates of women's legislative representation. In addition, they found that countries with higher rates of women in secondary education had higher representation of women. While Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna use this to reflect women's socioeconomic status, women's education may also be a cultural proxy like the ratification of CEDAW, showing how cultural mediators remain relevant even when analyzed with democracy.

While democratization focuses on democratic *processes*, it can fall short in supporting the adoption of democratic *values*: "One serious impediment to democratization is the absence or weakness of real commitment to democratic values among political leaders in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East" (Huntington, 1991, p. 22). While the international push for women's empowerment has resulted in the replacement of policies that harmed women, the effects of masculine, authoritarian governance continue to taint the cultures, creating obstacles for women politicians (Montecinos, 2017). As a result, Tremblay (2007, p. 534) calls for an examination of the "quality of democratic life," which refers to the extent to which countries' *cultures* are democratic. Tremblay's (2007, p. 535) definition of culture is one commonly used: "Culture

refers to the values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes that underpin a society and its institutions and which animate the population's ways of being, talking, and doing." She develops a variable to reflect the cultural and socioeconomic conditions for women, which includes measures for education and literacy rates, income, fertility rates, and gender empowerment, among others. In countries that have been democratic for longer periods of time, cultural and, secondarily, socioeconomic factors have a statistically significant influence on women's presence in the legislature. These findings echo earlier findings that civil liberties, which are more connected to culture than political rights, are vital in improving women's political representation (Paxton, Hughes, & Painter, 2010). Though democratic institutions are a vital first step in democratization, wider cultural changes must take place in order to empower women in politics.

In comparison, countries that have been democratic for shorter periods of time may have high rates of women in their legislatures, but cultural variables have no effect on their presence; instead, institutional variables, including the voting system and level of proportionality, have a significant effect in these cases. As such, Tremblay (2007) refers to these countries, such as Mozambique, Tanzania, and Rwanda, as having a low-quality democratic life. Similarly, Tripp (2022) shows, contrary to popular belief, women are often in politics at higher rates in semi-authoritarian and authoritarian regimes. Such regimes use women's representation as a means of legitimacy, signaling to constituents as well as the international stage that they (allegedly) prioritize gender equality (Tripp, 2022). The women politicians in these regimes do not typically have any actual power or influence and are instead only symbolic in their presence (Fallon, Swiss, & Viterna, 2012). Such problems occur within the wider context of regime types and the status of elections. While democracy is associated with elections, scholars warn that "democracy should not be equated with elections" (Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2014, p. 1). These warnings

exemplify an important lesson that has oftentimes failed to be considered in democratic processes: democratic culture is a fundamental component of democracy. Focusing on African politics, findings indicate that elections in the region have not resulted in the promotion of democracy at large but instead countries have had various outcomes as they grapple with democratic processes (Bogaards, 2007a; Bogaards, 2014). Many sub-Saharan African countries are not committed to democratic values that encourage women's political participation and instead merely go through the motions of playing democracy, exemplifying the gap between culture and institutions that I posit is a foundational obstacle for women presidential candidates.

While women have made considerable gains in the political sphere, they continue to be held back by patriarchal cultures, which, in turn, facilitate patriarchal political spheres. Due to party gatekeeping, women especially face discrimination in attempts to enter politics as viable candidates (Caul, 1999). While studies focus largely on Western countries have shown that voters overall approve of women party leaders, the lack of party leadership demand for female candidates on the side of the political parties shows a disconnect with the citizenry (Kosiara-Pedersen & Hansen, 2015; Bridgewater & Nagel, 2020). Further analysis of this disconnect must be considered within the realm of sub-Saharan African politics, where patriarchal gender expectations continue to have a stronghold. In the pursuit of this research, I theorize that women politicians utilize minor parties in order to run for president. Though minor parties remain understudied in the field of political science, they may be important indicators of who is included in mainstream politics and who is not. Furthermore, as I aim to show in the cases of women, minor parties may also represent additional policy agendas not included in the mainstream (Herzog, 1987). Without analyzing minor parties or independent candidates, we would fail to recognize nearly all women presidential candidates in sub-Saharan African countries.

As such, I ask the following questions: How prevalent are women candidates in sub-Saharan African presidential elections? To what extent do women run for major party labels versus minor party labels or as independent candidates? What factors explain those patterns of party representation for women presidential candidates in the region? I hypothesize the following:

H1: Women presidential candidates face gatekeeping due to patriarchal cultures that remain in place even with the regions' attempts at legal measures improving women's statuses.

H2: Women in sub-Saharan African countries run for president less often than men.

H3: Women are less likely to run as independent candidates than men.

H4: Women are more likely to run as candidates from minor parties than men.

Describing the scholarly work that pinpoints these questions and hypothesis, in the first chapter I examine the current literature on two strands of scholarship: women politicians and party politics, especially as they relate to the sub-Saharan African region. Then, based on the literature, I develop my theory regarding women presidential candidates in sub-Saharan African countries, explaining why they are more likely to run from minor parties. In the second chapter, I discuss my first hypothesis, substantiating my theory with qualitative evidence, such as the historical context of political parties in Africa, the effects of colonization on gender roles, and analysis of interview and survey data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In the third chapter, I address my second, third, and fourth hypotheses. To do so, I construct an exploratory quantitative analysis of the hypotheses underpinning my theory in which I create definitions to delineate the difference between major and minor parties and run regression tests for the relationship between those

variables and candidate gender. I also provide further cultural background based on data from the World Values Survey. Finally, I end my thesis with a summary of the findings, possibilities for future research based on the limitations of this research, and a brief discussion on how we can think about overcoming gender equality as it relates to women's political status.

The inability of women's presidential candidates to be successful contenders reflects multiple concerns in politics today. Getting to the root of this problem with my question regarding the factors holding women presidential candidates back, I hope to bring light to the current concerns so that they may be addressed effectively. As the state of democracy declines around the world (Luo & Przeworski, 2021), including in sub-Saharan Africa, we must contend with the problematics of democratization and how women are both affected by and affect its processes. Existing research describes the complicated relationship women have with democratization, showing how it can help but also hurt women's involvement in politics. Though the representation of all demographics is important to democratic ideologies, women in particular struggle to push through their governments' traditional party politics or may feel that no party represents their interests altogether. Due to such marginalization, minor parties may act as a vehicle for women to take advantage of their new rights while still facing discrimination from mainstream political parties. The lack of women candidates from major parties also has material consequences as discussed in the current literature of the next section, such as fewer women role models and less support for policies related to women's issues. With that at the forefront, understanding the experiences of women in new democracies is fundamental to furthering the goals of women in politics and, more broadly, democratization.

Chapter One

Literature Review and Theory

1.1 Women at the Executive Level

Broad explanations for women executives' pathways to power continue to face problems including regional variation, everchanging contexts of women executives, and, most simply, the sheer lack of women executives from which to draw a sample. Such obstacles have made it difficult to draw overarching conclusions about the experiences of women executive candidates. Scholars such as Farida Jalalzai (2013) have made important gains in describing women's presences in the executive, noting the effects of political institutions, structural influence, and personal backgrounds. Comparing women executives to their men counterparts internationally, Jalalzai (2013) shows that women executives tend to be as educated, if not slightly more educated than men. The majority of both men and women executives come with prior political experience, though women are slightly less likely to have a vast political background, possibly due to the fact that they tend to be in appointed positions more often than empowered through popular vote. In the African context, men and women executives use experience in cabinet positions as the pipeline to the executive, whereas legislative experience alone is not a popular pipeline to the executive. Women who have held cabinet experience positions related to economics and security, for example, are especially likely to become executives, possibly because the executive itself is strongly associated with those issues (Jalalzai, 2013). Experiences as activists in political parties or movements, especially related to independence and democratization, can also provide relevant experience for women executives, while the military route benefits men executives. Many women executives also have familial ties to politics, being

wives or daughters of previous executives for example; the “family path” to executive leadership has been used by women almost exclusively in South and Southeast Asia and Latin America.

As Jalalzai (2013) finds, the rise of women executives is also influenced by political institutions and structural factors. At the executive level, there are more female prime ministers than female presidents, “which can be anticipated given that prime ministers generally have less autonomy and security from dismissal, and are appointed to positions rather than popularly elected” (Jalalzai, 2008, p. 215). In addition, most women executives split power with another executive as they act in dual executive systems, with very few women executives with full powers being popularly elected (Jalalzai, 2008). This ultimately means women executives tend to have less extensive powers than men executives. Multiparty systems are more likely to have women executives than two-party systems as are governments with higher rates of women in the legislatures and with a history of women executives (Jalalzai, 2013). Often to the detriment of women politicians, parties may be particularly important for them. While Murray (2010) points out that women may benefit from being political outsiders, they can also be hurt by it as women often need additional legitimation in their runs for office which parties can provide. Given the phenomenon that more women are prime ministers than presidents, parties may play a crucial role in legitimizing women candidates and invalidating sexist gender norms as emphasis is often placed on the parties in parliamentary elections (Murray, 2010). In comparison, greater emphasis is placed on the individual running for office in presidential elections, allowing more space for sexist remarks in discussions of women’s campaigns.

Aside from the influence of personal backgrounds and political institutions, the country-level contexts are also important when analyzing women’s pathways to power, though often in surprising ways. Women executives have been empowered in countries that have some of the

lowest statuses of women, such as in Latin America, South and Southeast Asia, and Africa, challenging popular beliefs that higher statuses of women results in more women in politics, especially at the executive level. In reality, there are no clear correlations between women's involvement in the executive, whether empowered through popular vote or appointment, and variables such as states' religious or socioeconomic statuses (Bauer, 2011). Other scholars reiterate this, finding that the presence of liberal democracy, feminist movements, and women in the pipeline lead to women's equal representation in the executive (Jaquette, 2017). Jaquette suggests that timing or the geopolitical positions of countries may be more important explanations. Though Jaquette also does not find any significance between the presence of a country crisis and the empowerment of women at the executive, this is an often-discussed factor of women politicians in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond, where many women executives have come to power in countries experiencing political or economic crisis (Murray, 2010; Jalalzai & Krook, 2010).

Post-transitional regimes, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, are often defined by new political openings coupled with less institutionalized democratic standards, which can result in both prospects and obstacles for women reaching for executive office and their abilities to promote pro-women agendas (Schwindt-Bayer & Reyes-Housholder, 2017). In a comparative analysis of women's political representation in Liberia and Rwanda, Bauer (2011) holds that the strongest explanation for women's political representation is the shared experience of recent conflict. According to Bauer (2021, p. 365),

Conflict and war may help weaken patriarchal structures and shift gender roles, while post-conflict transitional governments draft new constitutions and establish new laws and institutions, often with input from mobilized national women's movements.

Conflict makes new spaces for the mobilization of women, who can use the skills gained from new roles taken on during crisis to fight for more political involvement in spaces such as women's organizations (Adams, 2008). Furthermore, the fluctuation of gender roles during times of conflict and subsequently in post-transitional regimes can give women the opening to pursue feminist agendas (Schwindt-Bayer & Reyes-Housholder, 2017). Women politicians may perform particularly well in these contexts when they are seen as a break from the past, able to be the change in the right direction the country needs (Murray, 2010). In such cases, being political outsiders may be beneficial, especially if previous political regimes are known for being ineffective, corrupt, or brutal (Murry, 2010). Furthermore, constitutional reforms regarding the promotion of women's rights tend to happen at critical junctures, including political openings in the 1990s and following civil conflicts (Paulson-Smith & Tripp, 2021). This is exemplified in Rwanda, where civil war necessitated a political overhaul leading to increased women in the legislature, while stable Botswana is marked by low levels of women's representation in government (Bauer & Burnet, 2013).

1.2 Party Systems and Party Types: Sub-Saharan Africa and Beyond

Though African women politicians tend to be equal in many ways to their male counterparts and may benefit from the post-conflict setting of a majority of the regions' countries, they continue to face setbacks in achieving presidential power, largely a result of party gatekeeping. Parties act as both administrative and ideational resources for candidates. Though parties may provide less financial support in sub-Saharan African countries, they are also large sources of funding for many candidates. A study on parliamentary candidates in Zambia reiterates the necessity of party association, showing that candidates often switch to parties that

give them more access to research and funding (Arriola et al., 2022). In this case, funding also influences who party leaders choose as candidates, making them more likely to choose candidates who have access to their own funding. Ideational resources include outlining platforms and agendas to attract voters to the party's purpose, though party ideation is often lacking in African countries with party loyalty having roots in clientelism or ethnicity (Basedau, Erdmann, & Mehler, 2007). A strong pattern of focusing on valence issues, or those issues that everyone can agree on, has developed in the region, which is "reinforced by the newness of the electoral systems, the inexperience of parties, and the resulting uncertainty facing individual politicians" (Bleck & Van de Walle, 2012, p. 1398). Parties face uncertainty in whether they will be able to actually fulfill stances on positional issues, leading many to focus on valence issues of democracy and development, both topics that appeal to voters and consolidate broad agreement. In comparison, oppositional parties were more likely to discuss positional issues, likely because they have less to lose than incumbents and have to set themselves apart from the mainstream in order to garner attention.

Finally, political parties can act as a signal of legitimacy and viability for candidates. Voters within sub-Saharan African countries are increasingly placing trust in political parties, including incumbent parties and oppositional parties, though to a slightly lesser extent. In deciding who to vote for, constituents from Uganda use cues, such as party labels and symbols and candidate photos (Conroy-Krutz, Moehler, & Aguilar, 2016). Even in new democracies, partisan cues tend to benefit major party candidates while hurting independent candidates (Conroy-Krutz, Moehler, & Aguilar, 2016). The authors theorize that partisan cues help to indicate the viability of candidates and thus whether voting for them is worth it. In addition, independent candidates are less likely to run in elections that are characterized by strong

incumbent or ethnic party presences in ethnically polarized regions (Ishiyama, Batta, & Sortor, 2011). This indicates that independent candidates may understand their own lack of viability among voters and bolsters incumbency advantages in the region. These findings exemplify that voters in sub-Saharan African countries increasingly legitimize party systems, utilizing party cues and favoring candidates that are associated with political parties. This pattern of favoring candidates associated with parties and the aforementioned utilities of parties helps to explain why women may prefer to run from minor parties rather than as independents.

1.2.1 *Major vs. Minor Parties*

While the literature on women executives demonstrates it is possible for women to make it to the executive, the rates of women running in sub-Saharan Africa only to garner less than one percent of the vote tells a story of significant obstacles. As already discussed, patriarchal cultures continue to be a significant obstacle for women candidates. Also essential to this story is the role of institutions, especially political parties. I posit that women presidential candidates in the region are more likely to run from minor parties, greatly hindering their abilities to be viable candidates. Important to this research is not only the role of minor parties but also what they are and why they exist. There continues to be lasting debate on party typologies, including the classification of major and minor parties which is at the core of my research. In 1982, Pedersen postulated that political parties are ultimately defined by their lifespans, with minor parties having the shortest lifespans. Later, Norris (2004) says that “major” and “minor” are terms that characterize parties based on size, while Gerring (2005, p. 83) states that “*Major* parties are defined as the two parties gaining the most seats in the lower house in a given election. All other parties are considered *minor*.”

A majority of research on party politics focuses on major parties under the assumption that they are the main actors within party systems. In reality, minor parties can influence their political systems, especially their agendas (Herzog, 1987). Similarly, Norris (2004) argues that the motivation for the creation of political parties often ties back to the desire to express internalized beliefs in a more politicized capacity. Exemplifying this, Yoon (2006) describes how women formed the small *Parti de la Majorite* for the 2005 election in Mauritius to tackle the lack of representation of women in politics. Success with such endeavors is low, with research showing that new political parties that break away from major parties but remain centered in traditional values performed better than parties that form around new ideologies (Zubrova, 2015). In addition, Herzog (1987) claims that minor parties may be an institutionally legitimate route for protest in which citizens hope to be heard in environments with few other options for airing frustrations. In line with this, Kunovich and Paxton (2005) note Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) surveys, where one woman describes how she left a major party to run as an independent due to grievances she endured in the major party. Other respondents echo this, commenting that women party members were unable to affect party culture or increase support for women candidates due to the lack of women's party participation and women party elites. Possibly another explanation for women's lack of party influence, women who are more loyal to their parties are less likely to place women's rights as an important priority and instead prioritize the party's interests (Clayton & Zetterberg, 2021).

Research has also shown that women are purposefully run in elections they are unlikely to win. According to Thomas and Bodet (2013, p. 154), "candidates are defined as sacrificial lambs if they run in the stronghold of one of their competitors" and thus have no real chance of winning. Their study on Canadian elections found that a majority of women candidates ran as

sacrificial lambs, more often than men were sacrificial lambs. In line with the notion of the sacrificial lamb, research on elections in Mauritius has shown that the only female party leader in the 2001 election was from a party that would soon be disbanded, and other women candidates were often on ballots in regions they knew they would not win (Yoon, 2006; Yoon & Bunwaree, 2008). Astudillo and Paneque (2022) note that women perform better in internal elections to become party leaders when they are running in smaller parties, indicating that women are more welcomed in smaller, less powerful parties. Women candidates are not only placed in unwinnable elections, but also relegated to parties that have little to no power or that are not capable of winning at all. These studies not only portray the lack of viable women candidates but also reasons they are likely to grow frustrated within major parties.

Research on minor parties has tended to focus on case studies on individual countries, especially those in the West. In a case study on Canada, Small (2008) denotes four parties as the system's major parties, because they had received 97 percent of the vote in the previous election and held 95 percent of the seats in the House of Commons. Research on Ireland and England defines minor parties as those parties beyond the three major parties that have been most entrenched in the countries' political systems (Copus, et al., 2009; Barthelemy, 2018). In Australia, four parties are considered major in the House of Representatives and Senate because they were able to secure a vast majority of votes (Guaja, Sawyer, & Simms, 2020). A striking issue with the aforementioned case studies is their focus on Western countries that have well-entrenched democracies, much different from the newly-formed governments in sub-Saharan African countries. Within the region, Ghana has been the focus of research on minor parties, describing the country as having two major parties (Aidoo & Chamberlain, 2015; Kowfie & Bob-Millar, 2017). The other parties were labeled minor. They supported their identifications by

showing that Ghana's two major parties gained the vast majority of seats in parliament over the span of their studies. Each of these publications is a case study, limiting one's ability to draw cross-national conclusions about party types. Even so, cross-national research on party typing can add significantly to the literature, because regional similarities point to fundamental problems that countries are facing; in this case, it is the inability of women politicians to break through as presidential candidates in major parties, ultimately preventing them from becoming president.

Additionally, these studies focus on parliamentary elections, whereas I analyze presidential elections which operate very differently. While parliamentary elections are typically proportional, allowing for a higher likelihood of at least some party representation, presidential elections are winner-take-all; thus, it is likely that minor parties function differently within presidential elections. Sartori (1994) notes how to apply his framework to presidential systems. When analyzing presidential systems, he advises that:

the counting criteria must be reformulated and relaxed, for the parties that count are simply the ones that make a difference in helping (or obstructing) the president's election, and that determine his having (or not having) a majority support in the legislative assemblies. (Sartori, 1994, p. 34)

While minor parties are unlikely to win elections, their presence captures votes that could go to major parties, which does affect the outcome of the election. The United States is a key example of a two-party, majority presidential electoral system, though elections typically have the involvement of one or two minor parties. The country's 2000 presidential election is an often-discussed case of minor parties influencing the outcome of the election. Due to the closeness of the vote between the major parties, the presence of the two minor parties meant that they "stole" enough votes from the major parties to change the outcome of the election (Burden, 2001). Contrasting with the above studies on parliamentary elections, the U.S.'s 2000 presidential

election shows how it may not only be important to look at the raw percentage of votes a party received, but to also look at that percentage in relation to how close the election ultimately was in order to determine the significance of minor parties.

1.2.2 Ethnicity and Clientelism

Due to the presidents' overwhelming political presence, clientelism remains prevalent in party politics in the region (Adjangba, 1999; Basedau, Erdmann, & Mehler, 2007). While governments across the continent have outlawed parties explicitly founded on ethnicity (Bogaards, 2007b; Randall, 2007; Koter, 2020), the ethnicity of presidential candidates and presidents remains a salient feature of politics (Eifert, Miguel, & Posner, 2010; Green, 2021). These studies act as evidence to demonstrate the centralized power of the president and, ultimately, the prevalence of clientelism. While Lindberg (2004) did not find a significant link between clientelism and the lack of women in African legislatures, case studies show otherwise, as "ethnic traditions determine each gender's role and status," resulting in what Matthew Gichohi (2021, p. 120) terms "ethnicized gender." When women marry outside of their ethnic heritage, they take on transitional ethnic identities, no longer members of their birth ethnicities but not truly part of their husbands' ethnic groups (Gichohi, 2021). As a result, women are more likely than men to be left out of the benefits of ethnic politics, including political appointments, ethnic voting blocks, and funding from ethnic councils, exemplified by Martha Karua's 2011 run for president in Kenya. Her ethnic background as a Kikuyu woman problematized her bid for president, as Kikuyu women are expected to submit to men, leading the Kikuyu Council of Elders to reject her campaign and undermine her ability to be an ethnic patron (Gichohi, 2021).

This led many to question whether she had the funding necessary to fund clientelist networks, an unheard-of concern with male candidates.

Ethnic politics and its associated clientelism affects women politicians at other levels as well. Yoon and Bunwaree (2008) show that when women legislative candidates are run in districts with which their demographics, such as ethnicity, align, they are likely to be more successful at the polls. At the executive level, cabinet appointments are often prioritized for patrons of the president—those who helped him garner votes from certain ethnic groups. When this is the case, fewer women are appointed to cabinet positions as they are typically excluded from ethnic politics and have fewer ties to the important resources expected in patronage (Arriola & Johnson, 2014). Such effects also trickle into how women behave as members of parliament on behalf of their political parties. Women MPs in 17 African parliaments tend to be more loyal to their parties, as they do not have access to clientelism and other resources that would allow them to garner support on their own (Clayton & Zetterberg, 2021). In other words, they rely on political parties in order to attain public goods and social ties that are required to be successful politicians. Clayton and Zetterberg note that this may also be due to stereotypes that posit that women are more obedient than men. Important to note is that political parties, especially as they run under “godfathers” in Nigeria, and party loyalty can be dangerous if candidates do not obey their patrons (Makama, 2013). This may result in even more risks for women, who face gendered political violence.

1.3 Gender Stereotypes and Their Effects

Especially important to the influence of gender is the *perception* of gender differences, which affects women’s ability to get elected into politics and then their subsequent political

careers. The media plays a vital role in such perceptions, having significant consequences for women's successes (or failures) in the political arena. Based on notions of stereotypical femininity and masculinity, voters tend to see women politicians as more apt to handle social issues, whereas they see men politicians as able to take on issues of economics and national security (Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Bridgewater & Nagel, 2020). The media portrays women most frequently with feminine traits and taking on "women's issues," both of which are less tied to traditional notions of masculine political leadership and can make women candidates appear unfit for office, causing voters to be less likely to vote for them (Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008; Bauer, 2015). This finding is consistent in African states as well, as Wang and Yoon (2018) point out stereotypical media portrayals of women politicians in Tanzania and Uganda. In an analysis of women executives and executive candidates, Murray (2010) points out that though women candidates initially experience high ratings in the polls likely due to their novelty, they oftentimes end up losing their elections, possibly due to negative stereotyping by the media over the course of their campaigns. Based on studies of Hillary Clinton's unsuccessful campaigns, she further posits that stereotypes may benefit women politicians in less powerful positions but may be detrimental to women executives.

Gender can also be emphasized in positive ways, and women politicians often find methods that allow them to use their gender to their advantage. Women politicians who concentrate on women's issues and have ties with women's and social organizations are more likely to be successful in campaigning (Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes, 2003). This was certainly a campaign tactic of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first and only popularly elected president from the African continent, who embraced her femininity to represent a change for the good (Skard, 2014). Women presidential candidates similarly embrace their femininity through the durations

of their campaigns in other parts of the world as well. In Chile and Brazil, women candidates often display consistent practices of meeting with women constituents in the initial stages of their presidential campaigns, eliciting gender identities, and assuring their pursuit of pro-women agendas (Reyes-Housholder, 2018). Men candidates mobilize women to a lesser extent, and when they do, they tend to delegate the task to their wives or other women politicians (Reyes-Housholder, 2018). In general, women presidential candidates seem to have a greater ability to mobilize women voters than the women surrogates men candidates attempt to use (Reyes-Housholder, 2019). In all, because executive power is masculine-coded yet women politicians are still expected to portray their femininity, women executives face a complex balancing act of femininity and masculinity known as the double-bind (Jamieson, 1995). As a result, they must show both their femininity, such as in their campaigning through connecting to women constituents, but also their masculinity in order to prove they can be effective leaders.

1.3.1 Party Gatekeeping

Women presidential candidates likely resort to running with support from minor parties due to party gatekeeping. Jalalzai (2013) points out that because parties ultimately nominate executive candidates, they are formative in the outcome of women executives. Political parties are referred to as “gatekeepers,” because they often hinder women politicians’ assimilation into the political sphere (Caul, 1999, p. 80). As Kunovich and Paxton (2005) note, the ways in which parties choose candidates typically vary from party to party, and it is not always known exactly how individuals are chosen. Some parties have elites that appoint candidates, while others hold elections within the parties to decide who will be party leaders. Electoral laws in Benin, for example, which are everchanging and often unenforced, act as another hurdle for women seeking

candidacies (Johnson, 2020). Within the framework of party politics, Norris and Lovenduski (1995) suggest a supply and demand mechanism of political recruitment which affects the abilities of minorities to enter the political sphere. In terms of demand, “selectors,” such as party leaders or members, must choose candidates based on their views of the candidates. Male party chairs tend to prefer characteristics that are stereotypically masculine in scouting potential political candidates, and male county party leaders were less likely than female county party leaders to choose female candidates (Niven, 1998; Crowder-Meyer, 2013). Similarly, the presence of women party leaders is likely to generate higher rates of female candidates in proportional representation systems (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005). Not only do party chairs favor men, but party members at large also seem to favor men when given the opportunity to vote for party leadership (Astudillo & Paneque, 2022). Exemplifying these findings, a candidate training program in Benin is framed as an initiative to prove to party leaders, not the women themselves, that women can be effective candidates (Piscopo, 2020).

Across many regions of the world, women have performed as successful candidates, indicating that party leaders are more concerned than they should be about placing women candidates in elections (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005). While Kosiara-Pedersen and Hansen (2015) found that though male voters were more likely to support male party leaders, male voters actually rated female party leaders better than male party leaders on an assessment of personality traits, including inspiring, trustworthy, personal charisma, and good leader. Another study found that people who implicitly preferred male leaders but explicitly stated they were in favor of gender equality preferred the more qualified leader regardless of their gender (Mo, 2015). Newer cross-national research has shown that, in general, both male and female voters rate women party leaders more positively than their male counterparts, with female voters being even more likely

to prefer women party leaders (Bridgewater & Nagel, 2020). An additional aspect at play in this relationship is that voters who identify with a particular party more closely tend to rate its party leaders more highly, signifying that party may ultimately be more important than candidate gender (Kosiara-Pedersen & Hansen, 2015; Bridgewater & Nagel, 2020).

The extent to which Bridgewater and Nagel's (2020) findings apply to sub-Saharan African countries remains unclear as their study includes only three elections from two African countries—Kenya and South Africa. Experimental research in Malawi has shown that voters slightly prefer women candidates when asked about candidates for local elections (Clayton et al., 2020). More broadly, they preferred candidates with higher education, more leadership experience, and those who are married with young children, applying these preferences to both male and female candidates; furthermore, the candidates were not punished based on their main policy focuses. Surprised by these findings, Clayton et al. (2020) theorize that though voters prefer female candidates on paper, few women actually live up to the ideals people hold for their politicians, and women are more likely to be the target of sexist campaigns that influence voters' perceptions. Similar to Mo (2015), Phillips (2022) finds that potential women candidates in Zambia are evaluated by party selectorates differently than potential male candidates, analyzed by their survey reactions to men and women candidates of various backgrounds. Selectorates with higher levels of sexism—be it men or women—are more likely to favor male candidates, whereas selectorates with lower levels of sexism are more likely to favor female candidates. In Nigeria, it has even been the case that women who have been able to gain political power have been “frustrated out of office or forced to step down” due to a lack of support from men in their parties (Makama, 2013, p. 124).

Though research often emphasizes the role of institutions in democracies, one study found that political culture had a greater effect on the number of women in American state legislatures (Hill, 1981). In particular, cultures that are more traditional have lower women's representation, while cultures that are more egalitarian, tend to have higher representation of women in parliament (Hill, 1981; Norris & Inglehart, 2001). This underpins the supply side of candidacy, which refers to the supply of individuals who hope to pursue political candidacy. The supply side of candidacy is mediated by factors including access to resources and political ambition, and women tend to have both fewer resources and less political ambition (Norris & Luvenduski, 1995). On average, women perceive themselves as having fewer skills that would be relevant to political leadership, making them less confident (Fox & Lawless, 2010). This belief is upheld by the finding that shows as women are involved in more professional careers there is an increase in the presence of women in the party bureau and leadership (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005). Access to resources may be even more burdensome for women in sub-Saharan African countries, where clientelist relationships with constituents are expected. Vote-buying is popular in Tanzania, with a majority of respondents saying that male politicians were more involved in vote-buying than female politicians, because women have less access to resources and fewer opportunities to be involved in the wheeling and dealing of politics due to cultural norms (Yoon, 2020). Similarly, campaign financing in Benin, which also includes vote-buying, is a monumental burden for women, constraining the effectiveness of candidate training programs (Johnson, 2020).

Deviating from the purely supply and demand mechanism, Krook (2010a) argues that the involvement of women in politics must be analyzed within cultural contexts, especially regarding gender relations. Piscopo (2020) points out that the very notion that low confidence among

women keeps them out of politics comes with U.S. bias, because a majority of countries require political candidates to be nominated by parties, while American candidates can self-nominate. Piscopo and Krook's assessments necessitate conversations about both cultural and institutional factors that may continue to hold women back beyond their lack of skills or confidence. While countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have taken steps to legally include women in their political spheres, cultural norms often override the laws. Wang and Yoon (2018) find that women politicians in Uganda and Tanzania are still systematically held back due to stereotypical representations of women in the media, lack of funding, election violence, and relegation to seats reserved through gender quotas. Women in political parties in Mauritius are often relegated to women's wings of parties, unable to attain wider leadership roles (Yoon, 2006). This is also the case in Nigeria, where women rarely have access to more powerful leadership roles within parties (Makama, 2013). In Benin, women have to take care of familial obligations as wives and mothers (Johnson, 2020). These examples underline the need for a focus on the wider cultural and institutional factors that often fail to accompany democratization.

Other features of political parties and the electoral systems in which they operate can have additional implications on the successes of women politicians. Left-leaning parties tend to be more hospitable to women politicians, likely due to stereotypes of gender which portray women as being fit to handle social issues (Caul, 1999; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Krook, 2010b; Bridgewater & Nagel, 2020). Furthermore, left-leaning parties seem more likely to adopt gender quotas, which no doubt boosts the presence of women in politics, though, as discussed, have complicated roles in the region (Kittilson, 2006). While party ideology has long been held to signal whether it will be women-friendly, this may be changing as women around the world become the faces of increasingly-prevalent conservative movements. For example, Angela

Merkel is a well-known center-right prime minister from Germany. The lack of internal democracy and institutionalization of political parties also can have grave implications for countries, diminishing the efficacy of gender quotas. There is a pervasive issue of ignoring laws in the region or of laws being selectively followed, as in Nigeria (Abba & Babalola, 2017). Parties that are more highly institutionalized tend to be more supportive of women politicians because they have cohesive frameworks in place for their organization and, in turn, can more easily amend their organization to include women (Caul, 1999; Kittilson, 2006). While these variables are not tested in this research, they are important factors to keep in mind and could be avenues for future research.

1.3.2 Gender Quotas

To combat party gatekeeping, parties around the world have codified gender quotas, but gender quotas remain a precarious situation in sub-Saharan Africa. As democratic multiparty systems became embedded in the region, women's organizations made use of the momentum of democratization by insisting that parties include gender quotas to integrate women into politics (Caul, 1999; Krook, 2010b). Half of the countries on the African continent have gender quotas, with the majority adopting them in the last 25 years. Of the countries in my dataset, only four do *not* have any gender quotas: Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, and Sierra Leone, though Malawi, Mozambique, and Namibia do have voluntary political party quotas (International IDEA). As of 2022, parliaments in sub-Saharan Africa are, on average, composed of 26% women, a number that has been lauded by academics and political figures alike for being in third place behind only Europe and the Americas (IPU Parline, 2022). East Africa and Southern Africa, more

specifically, average above 30% women in their legislatures, making them even more competitive with countries in Europe and the Americas.

Research on quotas has shown that they increase the accountability of MPs to their constituencies, widen parliamentary discourse to include issues facing women, children, and families, pass more laws for the protection of women, and increase women's participation in the workforce (Burnett, 2011; Yoon, 2013; Dimitrova-Grajzl & Obasanjo, 2019). These studies indicate that an increase in women's representation can actually improve the quality of governance. Even as women's representation can improve governance, women politicians continue to face obstacles in their representation. Quotas also do not guarantee an increase in women politicians; countries such as Niger, Zimbabwe, Togo, Ghana, and Mauritania have adopted gender quotas yet still have low levels of leadership equity for women (Bawa & Sanyare, 2013; Arendt, 2018). In Tanzania, women MP's voices are often constrained, because agenda and policy decisions are ultimately made by the ruling party (Yoon, 2013). Furthermore, Edgell (2018) found that women are rarely more present in politics than the minimum quota requirements, leaving the open seats to be represented by mostly men. This is likely due to issues associated with switching from quota to open seats, including higher competition and thus more electoral violence and intimidation (Wang & Yoon, 2013). Women MPs also face issues with campaign funding and lack a voter base coming from reserved seats as they are seen as second-rate MPs (Yoon, 2013; Wang & Yoon, 2018).

1.3.3 The Importance of Descriptive Representation for Women

Though women have had difficult entrances into politics and continue to face obstacles once they become legislators or executives, their presence is important in representing women

both symbolically and descriptively. Generally, as more women enter politics, more women will be inspired to be politically active, highlighting the position of women politicians as role models (Wolbrecht & Campbell, 2007; Barnes & Burchard, 2012; Alexander & Jalalzai, 2018). Other studies show that these effects vary, hinging on different variables. Atkeson's (2003) earlier study posited *viable* women candidates are especially influential. Reingold and Harrell (2010) showed that women's increased interest in politics is driven by female candidates from the same parties with which women identify. Dassonneville and McAllister (2018) found that the gender gap in political knowledge for people 18 to 21 actually decreases with the increased presence of women in the legislature due to a decrease in men's political knowledge rather than an increase in women's political knowledge. Furthermore, Alexander (2012) found that as the presence of women in politics increases, women's belief that female politicians are effective also increases. Such work on the impact of symbolic representation of women has also taken place in the African context. Lindberg's (2004) study showed that women's presence in the legislature increased voter turnout, positing it occurred because women were more likely to vote for women. Barnes and Burchard (2012) find that as the percentage of women in legislatures increases, the political participation gap between men and women decreases. Looking at the executive level, Alexander and Jalalzai (2018) show that the symbolic representation of women executives provides positive effects on participation, government trust, and beliefs regarding women for both men and women. Bauer (2016) found that following women's increased presence in the legislature and other leadership roles, women's legitimacy as leaders increased, leading people to accept women chiefs, who play vital roles in local governance, seeing themselves as voices for women.

At the legislative level, women have shown a commitment to not only adding women's issues to the agenda but also passing policies to improve their lives (Burnett, 2011; Yoon, 2013; Dimitrova-Grajzl & Obasanjo, 2019). Similarly, topics women chiefs in African countries have undertaken include an increase in murder-suicides, domestic violence and assistance for vulnerable women, and empowerment of young girls (Bauer, 2016). At the executive level, Burns and Murdie (2018) found that women presidents and prime ministers act more nurturing of their domestic populations, which may be connected with women politicians' concerns for women and children. Case studies of Michelle Bachelet in Chile and Dilma Rousseff in Brazil show that Bachelet's connections to both core constituencies and elite constituencies led her to propose more pro-women's policies than Rousseff, though Rousseff also proposed pro-women policies (Reyes-Housholder, 2019). While women at all levels of government generally take an interest in improving the lives of fellow women, the extent to which women politicians can actually represent women through women's empowerment policies remains tied to a number of factors. Both political parties and governmental institutions as a whole hold important influence in the likelihood that women executives are able to pursue feminist policies (Schwindt-Bayer & Reyes-Housholder, 2017). Executives who have increased influence over the legislative branch can support the ability of women executives to not only pursue but also pass pro-women's policies. Appointment powers give women executives opportunities to empower more women politicians. Electoral accountability, given constituents are in favor of gender equality measures, can also bolster feminist agendas.

While there has been research on women in politics ranging from women in the legislature and gender quotas to media representation and voter assessments to women executives and policy agendas, there has been significantly less research on women presidential

candidates, especially cross-nationally and on the African continent. This research seeks to fill that gap. Because gender quotas and legislative experience may not be the pipeline scholars have thought they were, it is vital to look at the experiences of women attempting to gain executive power.

1.4 Theory

Women hold executive positions at staggeringly low levels. Even more, women are less likely to be popularly elected and instead are more likely to be appointed, which means women executives tend to hold less unilateral power than their men counterparts (Jalalzai, 2008). This pattern also stays true in sub-Saharan African countries, where only one woman president has been popularly elected, while the region has had several women appointed as interim presidents following the deaths or oustings of men presidents; there have also several woman prime ministers. The wider context of the region shows that sub-Saharan African countries have some of the highest rates of women in the legislatures, behind only Europe and the Americas, largely a result of the implementation of gender quotas that came with early processes of democratization. While the hope of gender quotas is to normalize women in politics and give women foundations for higher political positions, it seems they are doing no such things even decades into their implementation. In this way, the pipeline for women's entrance into politics is cut off, exemplified by the utter lack of women executives in the region. Due to this seemingly contradictory phenomenon between rates of women legislators and rates of women presidents, I ask: what are the patterns of party representation among women presidential candidates in sub-Saharan Africa? More specifically, I ask this in relation to whether women are more likely to run as presidential candidates from major or minor parties or as independent candidates. I argue that

the reason more women have not become presidents in the region is two-fold: first, on a cultural level, and second, on an institutional level. Countries in the region continue to be strongly patriarchal, which, in turn, influences the functions of political parties that continue gatekeeping of women politicians.

1.4.1 The Cultural Context of Political Candidacies

Though the improvement of women's rights has come alongside democratization in many countries, women continue to struggle to realize and act upon their increased rights. This struggle reflects the complicated nature of democracy, where the presence of democratic institutions has not guaranteed the presence of democratic cultures, especially when implementation is absent. Political cultures lag behind, as focus tends to be given to institutions and elections, though they have been shown to be poor indicators of level of democracy (Bogaards, 2007a; Tremblay, 2007; Paxton, Hughes, & Painter, 2010; Bogaards, 2014; Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2014). The role of women's rights in democracies has been especially complicated with numerous studies finding that the institutionalization of women's rights does not immediately lead to the increased empowerment of women (Yoon, 2001; Fallon, Swiss, & Viterna, 2012). Such issues echo Huntington's (1991) concern that while politicians in the region appeared to be committed to democracy, their lack of implementation showed otherwise—the same goes for the realization of women's legal rights. Resistance to the improvement of women's status even in the presence of equal rights epitomizes feminist critiques of legal equality. According to Tamale (2020, p. 224), "The visionary constitutional aspirations of equality never translate into substantive equality on the ground." Rights outlined by constitutions can be ignored, and those rights certainly do not give people a reason to change their behavior or beliefs. It is meaningful change in the cultural

sphere that would be the greatest bolster to women's statuses. The case for sub-Saharan African countries is evidence of this, where their relatively new constitutions include provisions for gender equality, yet patriarchal ideals continue to define the region's cultures.

1.4.2 The Gendered Reality of Political Parties in Sub-Saharan Africa

I posit that there are gendered differences in the candidates that run as independent candidates, with women being less likely to run as independents. The reasons, as discussed in the literature review, include disparities in women's legitimacy as political candidates, access to funding, and policy interests and experiences. Even as many citizens are cynical of their current party systems, they favor multiparty democracies over past authoritarianism (Basedau, Erdmann, & Mehler, 2007). Because women may be perceived as less legitimate candidates due to patriarchal norms, women candidates can use party ties to increase the legitimacy of their campaigns. Politicians and voters alike continue to legitimize political parties in the region. While politicians have demonstrated this through the regular breaking-off from major parties and creation of new parties, voters have legitimized parties through their increasing trust in both ruling and opposition parties, more likely to favor candidates affiliated with parties than independent candidates (Basedau, Erdmann, & Mehler, 2007; Conroy-Krutz, Moehler, & Aguilar, 2016; Afrobarometer, 2018). As a result, independent candidates are less likely to run at all in the face of strong incumbent and ethnic parties (Ishiyama, Batta, & Sortor, 2011). With both voters and politicians supporting party systems, parties may provide a boost in legitimacy that women need in order to be seen as more viable candidates. In comparison, men are already seen as belonging in the political sphere and thus may not need the additional legitimacy that party ties may provide.

Political parties consolidate ideological platforms to connect their candidates with issues that reach voters, though this is often not the case in the region. Broadly, African political campaigns are marked by a lack of debate on real issues with party loyalty instead oftentimes tied to patronage and ethnicity (Basedau, Erdmann, & Mehler, 2007). When candidates do discuss political issues, they are more likely to use valence issues, such as education and development, at the centers of their platforms in attempts to draw wide approval from voters (Bleck & Van de Walle, 2012). In comparison, women politicians' track records suggest that they may be more likely to associate themselves with policy stances, especially regarding issues facing women and children. As MPs, women are at the forefront of policies to improve the lives of women in their countries (Burnett, 2011; Yoon, 2013; Dimitrova-Grajzl & Obasanjo, 2019). This is also occurring at the chief level, an important component of many African cultures, with women chiefs making it their duties to represent and empower women (Bauer, 2016). Women are carrying these practices to the executive level, where they are effective in mobilizing women and women's organizations, passing pro-women's policies, and nurturing the human rights of their own populations (Burns & Murdie, 2018; Reyes-Housholder, 2018; Reyes-Housholder, 2018). In this way, women oftentimes deviate from the valence issues that tend to be the center of African political campaigns. As such, women presidential candidates are likely to have unique policy interests for which they want to campaign, which may make them more likely to form their own parties and less likely to run as independent candidates.

Next, I theorize that women are more likely to run as minor party candidates than as major party candidates. The cultural obstacles of the countries further influence their institutional frameworks with patriarchal cultures reproduced within party politics, resulting in the discrimination of women from major parties. As a result, women have to run as presidential

candidates from minor parties, where they are able to be role models and proponents for women and girls but rarely win elections. Though not typically the primary question of preexisting research, findings on women legislative candidates indicate that women are more likely to have affiliations with smaller or failing parties (Yoon, 2006; Yoon & Bunwaree, 2008; Thomas & Bodet, 2013; Astudillo & Paneque, 2022). As these findings show, party gatekeeping continues to be a considerable issue affecting the ability of women to be successful as presidential candidates, largely a result of patriarchal cultures. While studies have shown voters are increasingly supportive of women politicians, party leaders continue to interfere with women's participation in politics due to sexist stereotypes (Niven, 1998; Caul, 1999; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Crowder-Meyer, 2013; Bridgewater & Nagel, 2020; Clayton et al., 2020). Because of ethnicity's role in party politics in sub-Saharan African countries, ethnic ties can also act as a gatekeeper, preventing women from being accepted in major parties but also making it financially and socially difficult for them to run at all (Ginochi, 2021). Women have precarious positions in their ethnic groups, and are often not accepted by ethnic patrons for flouting gender norms, making funding opportunities less available for women politicians.

While women may feel passionate about women's issues, they are also pushed into political arenas that relate to women's issues due to prevailing gender stereotypes as they are seen as more fit to handle social issues (Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Bridgewater & Nagel, 2020). This can work in women's favor though, as voters tend to approve women candidates who run on women's issues and align themselves with women's organizations (Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes, 2003). Once women understand they can be more successful and gain wider approval evoking women's issues, they will be more likely to continue to use their femininity to their advantage. Because women have learned to be successful leaning into gender stereotypes but continue to be

discriminated against in major parties, they are likely to start their own parties based on women's issues in order to run for president. Though women politicians tend to be highly qualified with extensive experience, the parties they start lack major support, struggling to even win seats in parliament. There are several factors that help explain why women's parties remain minor parties. Major parties, especially ruling parties, continue to have a strong presence in the region. Parties in sub-Saharan Africa that campaign on policy platforms have been largely unsuccessful (Basedau, Erdmann, & Mehler, 2007). As demonstrated by Zuborova's (2015) research, voters appear to be especially suspicious of parties that form based on new ideologies, as compared to parties that break off from preexisting parties. This may also be relevant for women's parties in sub-Saharan African countries, where their strong positions on women's issues are a glaring difference from typical parties in the region. Though minor parties are not a viable method for women to win presidential elections, it does give them the opportunity to run and, in doing so, normalize the notion of women as president, especially as it relates to their status as role models and proponents for women and girls.

My theory leads me to my four hypotheses:

H1: Women presidential candidates face gatekeeping due to patriarchal cultures that remain in place even with the regions' attempts at legal measures improving women's statuses.

H2: Women in sub-Saharan African countries run for president less often than men.

H3: Women are less likely to run as independent candidates than men.

H4: Women are more likely to run as candidates from minor parties than men.

In the following chapters, I will discuss each of the hypotheses, describing the context of *H1* using qualitative evidence from surveys, interviews, and academic sources in Chapter 2 and performing regression tests for *H2*, *H3*, and *H4* in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2

Qualitative Evidence

What factors explain the patterns of party representation for women presidential candidates in the region? More specifically, why are women more likely to run with representation from minor parties? In this section, I discuss my first hypothesis that women presidential candidates face gatekeeping due to patriarchal cultures that remain in place even with the regions' attempts at legal measures improving women's statuses. To substantiate this, I examine qualitative evidence due to constraints with my data set and, more specifically, the small number of women candidates. I draw from a myriad of sources, including scholarly research and interviews conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to describe the institutional and cultural contexts women politicians are up against in sub-Saharan African countries. The region is marked by a legacy of European colonization, which has had clear effects on both political institutions and gender relations in its countries. In this way, patriarchal ideologies do not just define sub-Saharan African cultures but also their politics, substantiated by women MP's experiences in legislatures. Though women politicians face significant obstacles in their presidential campaigns, evidence shows that they are passionate about improving the statuses of their fellow women, likely a driving factor in their decisions to run for president. So while women are unlikely to be represented by major parties in their campaigns due to sexist discrimination, they may utilize minor parties as opposed to independent candidacies in order to effectively consolidate their policy goals. Furthering this discussion, I also provide information on women executives from sub-Saharan African countries and women who have run for president there.

2.1 Political Parties in Africa: Institutions of (Il)legitimacy

The termination of colonial power left countries in the region with unstable political systems that struggled to gain legitimacy within the nation-states whose boundaries were drawn by the colonizers, who both grouped and split dozens of ethnic and tribal groups. Following decolonization, peoples indigenous to sub-Saharan African countries clung to their kinship and tribal associations, which had been exacerbated under colonial rule in order to prevent mass cooperation and uprisings (Coleman, 1960; Emerson, 1966). It is these kinship and tribal associations that gave birth to nationalist movements that were vocally anti-colonial and garnered mass support. Dominant parties often developed from nationalist movements, acting as unifying political actors for the masses (Coleman, 1960; Coleman & Rosberg, 1964; Wallerstein, 1966). In other cases, dominant parties were created in the final years of colonial rule under the direction of the colonizers and included Western-educated African elites (Coleman & Rosberg, 1964; Emerson, 1966). As political systems advanced, those dominant parties began being challenged by smaller ethnic or tribal opposition parties, or parties representing other cultural identities such as religion or class status (Coleman, 1960). Because parties were focused on representing the interests of various demographic identities, concern grew that democratization's implantation of party politics could further exacerbate tribalism, which continues to affect the political parties of many countries today (Coleman, 1960; Emerson, 1966).

As revolutionary momentum declined, parties deteriorated and a clear pattern of one-party systems emerged in the region (Wallerstein, 1966). This was met with coups, assassinations, and public rioting by those who felt their new rights, such as universal suffrage, were already being taken away by political elites. Following the initial phases of democratization

in the 1960s, all but one African country—Botswana—fell to authoritarian, often military, regimes (Huntington, 1991). By the 1970s, African countries showed that parties established by revolutionary leaders, liberation movements, and guerilla fighters were unlikely to uphold democratic norms and likely to use their positions as leaders to help themselves (Salih, 2003). There has been much debate regarding the role of traditional African culture, or culture prior to colonization, in democratic efforts, with some claiming that sub-Saharan African cultures are inherently un-democratic and others claiming they are democratic. Many have argued that the patrimonial tendencies of traditional African cultures can be at odds with democratic values (Coleman & Rosberg, 1964; Adjangba, 1999). The cultures of national liberation movements have been criticized as “authoritarian, impatient if not downright intolerant of political opposition and criticism,” supporting democracy only formally (Southall, 2019). Others posit that even under the guidance of a single leader, traditional African governments included extensive public discourses to come to popular agreements and even had checks on the power of the leader as they placed emphasis on the group over the individual (Coleman, 1960; Coleman & Rosberg, 1964). Wallerstein (1966) argued one-party systems allowed for national integration through a clear, legitimate hierarchy that laid the groundwork for the emergence of presidential systems in many countries in a way Africans had been accustomed to under colonial rule.

Regardless of whether traditional African cultures could be considered democratic, one-party systems continue to be common in sub-Saharan Africa, affecting the political cultures of the region’s countries. Many countries here have had presidents in power for several generations, greatly hindering democratic processes as viable oppositions are a crucial component of democratization (Van de Walle, 2002). With the push for democracy, “single-party systems have been replaced by dominant-party systems and two-party systems (whereby no one party could

win the necessary majority) under the guise of the multi-party system, which is the most prevalent system in Africa” (Salih, 2003). Overall, party system competition and the chances of party alternation are low, diminishing the effectiveness of parties (Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2014). Dominant one-party systems may be likely to form in the region due to the ruling parties’ press coverage and funding advantages, along with their increased likelihood of close connections with public groups (Salih, 2003). The mass media has had a particularly substantial effect in the region, resulting in a decrease in the importance of parties as a mobilization tool (Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2014). As such, personalism, marked by the emphasis on the personalities of leaders, has oftentimes overshadowed the influence of parties themselves (Basedau, Erdmann, & Mehler, 2007). Furthermore, many political parties developed alongside the entrenchment of the international financial world order. As a result, a number of these parties have made it their missions to reap the benefits of international finance institutions and donors as opposed to taking on policy agendas for the improvement of their countries (Bribena, 2017).

Even so, Sub-Saharan African parties seem to have a legitimation factor as they play an important role in politics for both voters and politicians. In analyzing the legitimacy of parties in sub-Saharan Africa, it can be argued that:

the repeated mushrooming of new political parties by spontaneous formations, splittings, and merging since the early 1990s indicates that most of Africa’s political elites regard parties as the most important vehicle to gain power. In this fundamental issue there is no major difference to elites in western democracies. The question is whether this understanding is shared by the population at large. If one looks at the electoral participation, it seems to be obvious that at least the electorate perceives the existing political parties in a similar way as the political leaders do. (Basedau, Erdmann, & Mehler, 2007, p. 38)

This position is also backed by popular surveys, where Africans continue to support democracy and party politics more specifically. According to Afrobarometer (2018), 63 percent of Africans support multiparty democracy, with higher levels in Sub-Saharan countries more specifically.

Even in the face of weak political parties, 56 percent of Africans responded that they feel close to a political party, an increase of 7 points from 2002. In terms of party type, 51 percent of Africans trust their ruling parties—up 4 points from 2002; 40 percent say they trust their opposition parties—up 18 points from 2002. The significant problems associated with parties in sub-Saharan Africa combined with the evidence that they are seen as increasingly legitimate pose a complex terrain for women presidential candidates. While parties are largely necessary to be elected, they also face discrimination from major parties. According to Adams (2008, p. 477), “strong incumbents, weak party systems, and the high number of candidates in these races partially explain women candidates’ low numbers,” in which they rarely garner over one percent of the vote. Such factors define the elections across sub-Saharan Africa and explain women’s institutional obstacles to becoming politicians, which is further complicated by the influence of patriarchal cultures, amplifying the discrimination of women politicians.

2.2 Culture as an Obstacle to Women’s Political Empowerment

Along with imposing democratic governance, colonization also had a lasting effect on gender relations in Africa, using masculinity as a tool of authority and forcing the transformation of African gender roles to fit Western standards. Colonizers assumed “that [African] culture is devoid of gender justice,” and spreading Victorian notions of gender relations, which posited that women were the fairer sex and should remain in the private sphere, became a justification for colonization (Enloe, 2014; Tamale, 2020, p. 205). Women colonizers, such as the wives of colonial officers, played a crucial role in setting “a positive example for the local colonized women” (Enloe, 2014, p. 99). Feminine respectability structured colonization so that indigenous populations were expected to behave weakly, or femininely, and submit to their colonizers, who

embodied masculinity. Colonized women “have served as sex objects;” “married foreign men and thus facilitated alliances;” and, “worked as cooks and nannies” for the families of colonizers (Enloe, 2014, p. 91). In this way, colonizers forced their integration into the populations they colonized. While many African cultures were not equal by today’s liberal Western standards prior to colonization, they were largely egalitarian, where women were often seen as a complement to men (Tamale, 2020). Tamale (2020, p. 228) points out that “although African women had to defer to men in many respects, they were weighted equally with men as human beings;” but she adds that men deferred to women in other cases as well, exemplified in the presence of queen mothers. Though there were hundreds of women rulers in Africa prior to colonization, that number dropped off completely with European rule (Bauer, 2011). Enloe (2014, p. 118) points out that any slightly patriarchal “values and practices were exploited and exacerbated by colonists,” and this has continued to affect the region today.

Across the region, “Queen mothers” were political, religious, and ceremonial fixtures in many societies, such as in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, whose primary role was to ensure the well-being of the tribes’ women but their power was disregarded upon colonization (Stoeltje, 2003). In some traditional societies, queen mothers undertook ceremonial roles—as in the Krobo tradition—but in the Asante tradition and others they had control over important political duties, including nominating and advising the chiefs, in these ways acting as a separation of powers in tribal governance (Stoeltje, 2003; Steegstra, 2009). There were even dual-sex political systems, giving women leaders different powers than men but of the same importance; women also acted as queens, empresses, and chiefs in their own right (Skard, 2014). While women’s roles had been oppressed under colonization, women’s leadership was vital to the upheaval of colonialism as they acted in nationalist, liberation, and women’s movements, holding roles ranging from

combatants to negotiators in peace agreements (Tamale, 1999; Bauer, 2011). Though women's organizations were oftentimes foundational in colonial liberation movements, women were ultimately left out of mainstream politics following decolonization, and African men filled the leadership roles European men had left empty (Skard, 2014). While the region has a rich history of women's leadership, the status of women has remained low in sub-Saharan African countries, and this is exemplified by the lack of popularly-elected women presidents, though they legally have the right to be in politics.

2.3 Experiences of Women Members of Parliament in Sub-Saharan Africa

Though there has been some research on women executives in the region, there has been significantly more on women MPs. As such, their experiences can provide valuable insight into the setbacks women candidates may be facing in their bids for president. From the limited experience women have been allowed in the legislature, they have learned they can make real change for the lives of women by accessing political power, inspiring them to continue to fight for empowerment as politicians. In this section, I will draw on the interviews and surveys of women MPs published in reports by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008; 2021). These surveys and interviews describe women MPs' experiences at multiple levels, including within their parties, within their parliaments, and within their countries. The roadblocks women MPs describe facing act as evidence for the findings of the academic research detailed in my literature review, substantiating my theory that women presidential candidates are more likely to face discrimination from major parties, which results in their running from minor parties and as independents to a lesser extent.

While there is nothing inherently wrong with being family-oriented or nurturing, these traits are used against women attempting to enter into the public sphere and particularly politics. Women’s immense responsibility at home—in the private sphere—is a major deterrent to entrance into politics (IPU, 2008). The domestic responsibility women face also informs cultural attitudes and a lack of familial support, which are also primary deterrents for women. In comparison, men politicians rate domestic responsibilities and cultural attitudes very low in their list of deterrents. Multiple women MPs from the region pointed out this division between the public and private that affects women: “The men want to take all the places. Women have to stay in the backyard cleaning and cooking” (IPU, 2021, p. 16). Another said, “Men don’t like to see women leaders; they are afraid of losing their place. They don’t like to see a woman evolving in the same space as them” (IPU, 2021, p. 15). A woman MP from the region describes her country’s stance on women in politics: “By custom, women don’t have the right to stand in elections; a woman in politics is poorly regarded” (IPU, p. 10). Her focus on *custom* portrays the immense impediment culture is for women in politics. Ultimately, the culture affects the confidence of women to run for office.

Because domestic life is a vital factor informing femininity, women cannot be detached from their roles as mothers and wives. As a result, both women and men view women as being family-oriented and nurturing. Even women MPs note this, with one from Liberia saying, “I believe because women by nature are nurturers and give birth to children that their priorities are peace, stability, and preservation of life, social needs and prosperity” (IPU, 2008, p. 34). This is akin to earlier discussions regarding Ellen Johnson Sirleaf’s presidential campaign, for example, in which she capitalized on her experiences as a mother and grandmother. Though women can benefit from their femininity, other women MPs point out how it continues to be difficult as a

woman politician. A woman MP in Burkina Faso describes lower confidence due to patriarchal cultural features, where “women are not viewed as leaders” (IPU, 2008, p. 19). Patriarchal cultural norms are reflected in the media, as outlets use women’s femininity to frame them as unfit for office (Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008; Wang & Yoon, 2018). With the media having a strong association with culture and subsequently politics, it shows how culture continues to hold women politicians back from reaching their full political potential by emphasizing femininity as a hindrance. It is these cultural impediments that prevent legal equality from reaching its fullest potential. Furthermore, it is the notion of women as caretakers that may influence their policy focuses centralizing on improving the lives of women, children, and the elderly.

Though the legal rights of women have been expanded, the systems in place continue to support men as the systems were only amended—not transformed—to include women, with many countries in the region unlikely to uphold legal frameworks for gender equality. In Zambia, a woman MP describes this issue: “The main concerns of women are women’s rights as the legal set-up favours men. Women are advocating equality in every sphere of life” (IPU, 2008, p. 48). In societies defined by male dominance, the lack of descriptive representation of women’s leadership can both keep women out of the political sphere but also inspire them to enter into it. Across numerous studies spanning decades, regions, and levels of politicians, the presence of women politicians has been shown to encourage more women to become politically active (Atkeson, 2003; Lindberg, 2004; Wolbrecht & Campbell, 2007; Alexander, 2012; Barnes & Burchard, 2012; Bauer, 2016; Alexander & Jalalzai, 2018; Dassonneville & McAllister, 2018). The only woman member in Sao Tome’s parliament validates the importance of descriptive representation:

I do feel the weight of women on my shoulders and I do think I have a great responsibility as the only woman in parliament. I represent half of society in Sao Tome. I

have a huge responsibility but I believe that I am supported by women on the outside who help me too. (IPU, 2008, p. 57)

Because women politicians feel a responsibility to other women, they take measures to improve their lives. The woman MP from Sao Tome described herself as a “spokeswoman for women’s concerns in parliament,” where she addressed important issues such as violence against women. An MP from Liberia wishes for “more women in our parliament to implement and also pass bills successfully that have to do with gender balance,” showing that women can have voices in parliaments, especially when they work together (IPU, 2008, p. 58). Though minor parties do not allow women to win presidencies, it does allow them to be role models for future generations of girls, paving the way for the eventual election of women presidents. In some cases, women’s minor parties even gain seats in parliament.

Aside from perceived legitimacy, political parties also play a practical role for political candidates, bringing organization to campaigns. Importantly, parties are a tool of centralization, especially for purposes of administration, funding, and ideology. A woman MP in Liberia notes, “the main obstacle [to getting elected] is financial” (IPU, 2008, p. 21). Based on the supply side of candidates, funding is deemed imperative for the likelihood of women being able to enter politics, and as such, women note the lack of financing and party support as deterrents to entering into politics (IPU, 2008). While men face these issues too, women across the globe rate their deterrents at a higher degree than men do (IPU, 2008). This indicates women see their roadblocks into politics as more significant than men or that the roadblocks are actually more significant for women. A woman MP from Burkina Faso proclaims, “the fact of being a woman is already an impediment in itself” (IPU, 2008). Additionally, women typically have less access to personal funds due to economic discrimination related to their gender, which keeps them out of ethnic and patronage funding opportunities (Gichohi, 2021). Women are also *perceived* as

having less funding, which may affect their viability as candidates, since patronage is a central part of campaign efforts in many sub-Saharan African countries (Yoon, 2020). One woman parliamentarian said that men will use funding against women candidates, telling voters “Women don’t have money, don’t vote for her” (IPU, 2021, p. 9). Because of the necessity of fundraising for women politicians, I argue they are more likely to run with party affiliations rather than as independents.

On the surface, men’s and women’s motivations for wanting to enter politics are not all that different. First and foremost, both want to serve their countries (IPU, 2008). They diverge, though, at their second motivations; secondly, women want to improve the lives of women, something that men list much further down in their political motivations. This is evident in men MPs’ behavior in legislatures, where they skip meetings related to women’s issues or oppose policies for women’s advancement altogether (IPU, 2021). 85% of women MPs either agree or strongly agree that they have a responsibility to represent women and their interests. This internalized belief is also reflected in the work of women MPs across the sub-Saharan African region. 97% of women respond as being active, fairly active, or very active on women’s issues, with a majority being very active (IPU, 2008). Women’s two highest levels of activity in policy areas are women’s issues and gender equality matters. Men, on the other hand, report being most active in foreign affairs and economic and trade matters. From Madagascar, a woman MP says, “women tend to concern themselves with problems of development, population (health, education, safety), whereas men concentrate on the interplay of power and protest” (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2008, p. 33). In Kenya, women “want running water, food and security. Men will focus more on transport, roads, communications, sports and war!” (IPU, 2008, p. 33).

Similarly in Burkina Faso, women MPs “are very close to their electors whose living conditions are of concern to them” (IPU, 2008, p. 38).

A woman MP from Namibia says, “we have introduced several bills—an anti-rape bill, an anti-domestic violence bill, the marriages equality bill—which would not have come in had it not been for the strong voice of women” (IPU, 2008, p. 44). In Sao Tome, the only woman MP describes her responsibility to women, which inspired her to change the country’s laws to criminalize violence against women: “I always work to combat violence against women, and I promoted this issue which led to a resolution condemning all forms of violence against women” (IPU, 2008, p. 46). Because women typically have experience with women’s issues, they can use this experience to show a track record of being an effective parliamentarian. As such, women presidential candidates can build their campaigns around their proven role in improving the lives of women, which provides a solid foundation for women to form their own parties as opposed to running as independent candidates. Herzog (1987) and Norris (2004) described how minor parties can be used to bring attention to new policy agendas and serve as an avenue for commitment to deeply internalized beliefs. Based on the commitments women politicians feel in representing women and advocating for women’s issues, these explanations could be the case in women’s decisions to start their own parties. In contrast, men are more privileged by the context of patriarchal cultures that define them as the rightful leaders, giving them greater practical ability to run personalistic campaigns with help from connections to ethnic ties and patrimony that can provide foundations for running as independent candidates.

Women MPs oftentimes have negative experiences in parties in the region, giving them a reason to branch off and start their own parties after gaining experience as MPs. IPU conducted a 2021 study on political violence against women MPs in Africa, finding that 80% have endured

psychological violence, and 67% have dealt with sexist remarks and behavior. Smaller but still significant percentages of women in parliament have been victims of online attacks, threats of violence, intimidation and psychological harassment, and sexual, economic, and physical violence. Women often pointed to the discrimination they faced within their own parties: “Cases of abuse occur, above all, within political parties. That’s why women are scared to enter politics” (IPU, 2021, p. 12). Numerous women describe sexual harassment and violence from colleagues within their own parties, indicating this intense sexism is commonplace within legislatures in the region. Women MPs recount being ignored by male party colleagues, harassed based on their marriage status, enduring unwanted attempts by men party colleagues to sleep with them, and were even victims of physical violence at the hands of male party colleagues. As a result, it seems gender-based political violence is almost unavoidable for women who enter politics in the region, which could cause women to start their own parties to avoid violence and harassment. Political violence trickles into many of the components of holding public office for women, including funding opportunities and policy agendas. As a result, women MPs in Africa describe having lower self-worth, confidence, and morale due to their experience working with male MPs (IPU, 2021).

Though parties are vital mechanisms for funding, women face significant risks in accessing financial resources as they endure harassment and extortion to receive the funding to which male members are otherwise entitled. One woman candidate describes how she ultimately lost the monetary support of her party:

During a campaign, the Secretary-General of my party at the time came to my constituency with campaign packages and t-shirts that he said he would give to me in exchange for sexual relations. I refused and no longer received support from my party to pay my campaign expenses. (IPU, 2021, p. 12)

This *quid pro quo* expectation is common in party funding in sub-Saharan African countries, which is further complicated for women candidates due to parties' reliance on money from ethnic and patronage connections in my countries. As Makama (2013) pointed out, these sources of funding can be particularly dangerous for women, because the sources expect their demands to be met in return for providing money. If their demands are not met, they can turn to violence to enforce their demands or punish politicians for not meeting them. Additionally, popular avenues candidates use for fundraising can be a physical risk for women, as several authors note financial discussions often occur at night and in bars. Such circumstances are not only risks for women to face violence, but many cultures in the region see them as inappropriate for women. The issues women candidates face with receiving funding and other resources from political parties may push them to start their own parties to avoid violence and extortion. Gichohi (2021) noted that presidential candidate Martha Karua relied primarily on funding from small donations. While this strategy signaled inclusion and gave attention to the middle class, it ultimately played a role in her loss as voters interpreted it as an inability of Karua to provide for them.

While women MPs largely take on women's issues, they also face risks in doing so even from their own parties. The main factor that influences the passing of gender-related legislation is the support of the ruling party. In this way, ruling parties are the primary sources that constrain advocacy for women's issues. Not only do they gatekeep women's representation, but parties also gatekeep their efforts and ideologies. In Sao Tome, the woman MP describes how policy debates typically begin at the party level, where it is the women who tend to initiate talks of women's issues. Though women MPs advocate for advancing the status of women, they only have so much discretion due to party constraints. A Kenyan woman MP notes,

Women are also not necessarily free to pursue their own agenda [relative to the political party's agenda], but we give ourselves as much freedom as possible. We tell parties that

women's issues are women's issues and we will look at them regardless of party politics. Most of the time, they will give permission and the government will support us on certain issues to do with women. (IPU, 2008, p. 53)

While women are typically relegated to positions dealing with women's issues, they oftentimes also face backlash for being vocal supporters of women's empowerment: "Violence is a consequence of my work on women's rights. They do not want a woman who takes a political position, especially if she is young" (IPU, 2021, p. 14). Another woman MP substantiated this claim, saying "My party opposed a law addressing violence against women and girls, but I campaigned for it. This resulted in a smear campaign being waged against me" (IPU, p. 14). In addition, women may feel stronger requirements than men to be loyal to their parties due to gender expectations of submission and gratitude to parties for helping them get elected, making it even more difficult to pursue their own agendas within major parties (Arendt, 2018; Clayton & Zetterberg, 2021). Hoping to pursue their own agendas without threats of backlash, women may start their own parties, offering them more freedom to focus on the policies they want.

In the 2008 IPU study on gender relations in parliaments worldwide, respondents of both women and men MPs agreed that national party leaders are the most influential group in the selection of political candidates. Two-thirds of men noted parties as their path into politics, whereas only half of women noted parties and were more likely to enter politics through positions in NGO and civil society related to women and children's rights and human rights more broadly (IPU, 2008). Women continue to face challenges once they become members of parties. A woman MP from Sao Tome notes, "the big problem lies with the political parties when they draw up their lists for parliament because they always put the names of men before the women's" (IPU, 2008, p. 24). Because women candidates are not placed at the top of the lists, they are substantially less likely to take office than male candidates, and some parties do not put

women on their lists at all. A woman MP from Namibia describes a fundamental process for the entrance of women into the political sphere:

1. Parties must have the political will. 2. Women must use their strength to force that political will, failing which, they must form women's political parties. 3. Those who make it should be positive role models and encourage and provide space for others. 4. One must start at the local level where women are more active, then the regional, national and international. (IPU, 2008, p. 20)

In this response, the woman acknowledges that political parties are first and foremost the key to women's entrance into politics. When parties do not have the will to empower women, the MP suggests women form their own parties in order to widen political boundaries to include more women. This quote also acknowledges the role modeling effect women politicians provide, substantiating the argument that women may want to run for president in order to be role models. It seems this is precisely what women candidates are resorting to in their bids for president. Though minor parties do not allow women to be viable candidates, they do give women the avenue to run, discussing women's issues and acting as role models while doing so.

Each of the themes discussed in this chapter reveals the obstacles women politicians in sub-Saharan African countries are up against, supporting my hypothesis that women are gatekept from political parties even as their legal rights have expanded under new democratic initiatives. These legal initiatives thus far have not resulted in wider cultural changes that lead to the greater empowerment of women. This is exemplified in the World Values Survey Responses, along with the findings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women political hopefuls continue to face discriminatory attitudes from the general public, which gives men politicians reason to keep women out of politics. Those women that do break into politics also face discriminatory attitudes and outright persecution from fellow men politicians. The women MPs interviewed by the IPU describe persistent harassment and even violence, first and foremost from the members within

their own parties. The quotes from the IPU's interviews with women MPs portray that these women are keenly aware of the cultural setbacks they face, discussing factors such as the private versus the public sphere, women's financial disadvantages, sexual harassment and violence, and their involvement in "soft" politics relating to women's issues which can result in backlash from men politicians. While women politicians are treated as less than and even inhuman, research on women executives of the past 20 years from the region shows they have extensive educational and employment backgrounds that are highly relevant to politics, suggesting women politicians are very qualified for their positions. This fact gets at the struggle between the legal and cultural. Though women are legally able to gain educations, lead companies and non-governmental organizations, and be politically active, the cultural obstacles are often too big to overcome when running for president, substantiating my first hypothesis that gatekeeping occurs due to patriarchal cultures even in countries that have implemented democracy and initiatives to support legal equality.

2.4 Women Executives in Sub-Saharan Africa: Past and Present

Just as women were used as tools of colonialization, women were also used by the post-colonial authoritarian governments, where gender politics was used to maintain brutal militarism. To describe this phenomenon, Mama (1995) coined the term "femocracy," which refers to the inclusion of small circles of elite women, typically first ladies, in political affairs to signal women's empowerment. This describes the way in which the first female prime minister on the continent came to power in the Central African Republic. Elisabeth Domitien was portrayed by her niece as a born leader, gaining respect in her small village where women were seen as integral in their community's economic livelihood for their role in agriculture (Skard, 2014). She

went on to become the leader of the women's wing of the Movement for Social Development of Black Africa, before becoming leader of the party. From there, she became the right-hand-woman of military dictator Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who promoted her to prime minister for her reputation as a strong leader who could bring the country together. While the time she spent as prime minister is contested, varying from about a year and a half to over two years, along with the extent of her influence, an interview with Domitien reveals that she was particularly proud of her role in empowering women: "In matters concerning women, Bokassa always consulted me" (Skard, 2014, p. 44-45). Domitien said her role as prime minister resulted in an increase in women's income and their overall position in society. She became a highly trusted figure of the country with people coming to her personally for help and viewing her as a role model for women. While Domitien resigned upon disagreeing with Bokassa's decision to name himself emperor, her appointment reflects the historically-rooted notion that women leaders should be respected, especially in the realm of women's issues. As the first woman executive in the region, Domitien seemed to set a precedent that the notion also applies to modern politics.

Since Domitien, the region has seen 18 other female executives, though Sirleaf remains the only one to be popularly elected as the majority have been appointed as prime ministers or interim presidents. There are many factors that connect these women and their ascents to power. In general, women executives have been weak prime ministers appointed by stronger male presidents (Jalalzai & Krook, 2010). While Domitien had no formal education, the rest of the women had extensive schooling, often in Western institutions; typically, they received degrees in economics, but many of the women also earned degrees in law and science (Skard, 2014). Uniting them all was their work backgrounds, not only having experience in private sectors and non-governmental organizations, but also many climbing the ladder from MPs to ministers to

prime ministers or presidents. Though many of the women have had roles in political party leadership, Sirleaf has been the only party leader. Because all but one of the women were appointed, personal connections tended to be more important than party affiliations, though the women do tend to be associated with left-leaning parties (Skard, 2014; Montecinos, 2017). Interestingly, the women had also already raised their families before taking on roles as presidents or prime ministers, possibly because older women are revered in many African societies or due to the constraints of family obligations. Luisa Diogo of Mozambique and Sirleaf were the only two who served tenures of substantial lengths, leaving the rest of the women with little chance to really impose their own policy agendas (Skard, 2014).

Importantly, these women have continued Domitien's legacy of concern for women's empowerment. Many of the women benefitted from their identity as women, taking on leadership in areas of conflict and in climates that demanded women's empowerment and other humanitarian support. The women executives spearheaded initiatives not only for women's empowerment but also for issues ranging from ethnic conflict to economic development to poverty reduction. All had ties to advocacy for women with all but two of the women (where information could not be found) being associated with women's organizations (Skard, 2014). Early research shows that women executives in some sub-Saharan African countries aim to increase the work on women's issues, with women executives in Liberia and Rwanda resulting in the improvement of the status of women (Bauer, 2011). These findings are consistent with women's executive research from other parts of the world, including Chile, where Michelle Bachelet used her executive power more than the previous male president to enact more and wider arrays of pro-women's policies (Reyes-Housholder, 2018). The little research on women presidential candidates in sub-Saharan Africa shows that Martha Karua's 2013 campaign focused

on empowering women and calling out the ways in which current Kenyan laws placed them at a disadvantage, something she also did as an MP (Gichohi, 2021). Though women executives in sub-Saharan Africa have seemed to make women's empowerment a central goal in their policy agendas, it is also important to remember that these women often faced limitations, again just as Domitien did. Such limitations include a lack of party support, restricted powers due to being appointed, and obstacles related to conflict, economic hardships, and misogyny.

2.5 The Cases of Women from Major Parties

There are only five women who have run as presidential candidates affiliated with major parties based on my proposed definitions for them—which I will describe in more detail in the next chapter—and even a few of those women have not consistently been able to reach major party status. In this section, I will discuss the results in relation to each of these five women, also giving background on their prior experience and their presidential campaigns. While there is little information on these women's candidacies, possibly because the campaigns in the region tend to be so personalistic, their experiences in politics and their stated interests indicate their dedication to feminist ideals, with all but one of them being specifically committed to women's empowerment while the one who is not is involved in other feminist issues. Additionally, their experiences may offer context that can inform us about the obstacles they face in their candidacies—if the major party candidates are facing them, the minor party candidates are facing that and more as a result of their party representation. Table 2.1 provides a short summary of the party variables and the women candidates who are represented by major parties under each variable.

Table 2.1: Women Candidates Represented by Major Parties based on Party Typing

<u>Hypothesis 4</u>	Effective # of Parties	Major1	Major2	Major3
% women from minor parties	91.57%	97.60%	95.81%	93.98%
% men from minor parties	72.53%	80.71%	75.61%	77.47%
Women candidates represented by major parties	<u>7</u> -Ellen Johnson Sirleaf-Liberia 2005: Unity Party-19.75%, 59.40% 2011: Unity Party-43.93%, 90.71% -Elsa Pinto-Sao Tome and Principe 2011: independent-4.45% -Maria das Neves-Sao Tome and Principe 2011: independent-14.04% 2016: Movement for the Liberation of STP/Social Democratic-24.31% -Saraha Rabearisoa-Madagascar 2013: Green Party-21.16% -Joyce Hilda Banda-Malawi 2014: People's Party-20.2%	<u>2</u> Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2005, 2011)	<u>4</u> Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2005, 2011) Joyce Hilda Banda Maria das Neves (2011)	<u>5</u> Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2005, 2011) Joyce Hilda Banda Maria das Neves (2011, 2016)

Maria das Neves. Maria das Neves is considered a major party candidate based on the variables for effective number of parties, Major2 (though only her 2011 campaign; her 2016 campaign misses this cutoff by a couple of decimal points), and Major3. Though Africa's smallest country, Sao Tome and Principe has had two women prime ministers, and the highest percentage of women presidential candidates from a major party. After a weak coalition broke down, the Socialist Party appointed Maria das Neves as its first woman prime minister, and she served from 2002 to 2004. With an education in economics, she had extensive experience in politics as the Minister of Economics, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Trade, Industry, and Tourism. She also had experience in civil service, both within the government and international

organizations. She was a major advocate for economic development and women's empowerment, fighting to criminalize violence against women and increasing the inclusion of women ministers (Skard, 2014). She continues to be active in politics, even running for president. Her presidential campaigns have centered around expanding social inclusion, reducing poverty, and promoting national reconciliation, running under the slogan, "Together for stability and national reconciliation" (Seibert, 2016; The Global Vote).

Das Neves ran for president three times, twice as an independent and once affiliated with a major party in the country, the Movement for the Liberation of Sao Tome and Principe/Social Democratic Party which is the country's main opposition party. As an independent, she received 3.32% of the vote in 2021 and 14.04% of the vote in 2011; her vote percentage in 2011 was considered an effective party, though she only placed fourth. By comparison, she received 24.31% of the vote in 2016, approximately .50 points away from second place, when she was affiliated with a major party. These results indicate that party affiliation, especially with a prominent party, can be beneficial for women. Further, the number of candidates in the elections and their corresponding vote percentages may also have an effect on her placements. The top candidates in the election got 49.88% of the vote in 2016 but only 35.62% of the vote in 2011, which suggests that das Neves' vote percentages could have more to do with the percentage of the vote share that went to the winner. Furthermore, 2011 had ten candidates and 2016 had only five, another reason she could have received more of the vote in 2016.

Elsa Pinto. Pinto is considered a major party candidate only based on the variable for the effective number of parties. She ran as an independent in Sao Tome's 2011 presidential election, where she garnered 4.45% of the vote in the election. While she was considered an effective party, it is unclear whether she was actually a viable candidate. Instead, it is more likely that she

is able to be considered an effective party, because the winning candidates only received 35.62% of the vote, a ways off from a 51% majority, before there was a second round. She has an extensive political background, including as the Ministers of Defense and Justice, Secretary of State for Administrative Reform and Public Administration, and Attorney General. While she was associated with the same party as das Neves, she was unable to attain the position of party leader when she ran in 2016, evoking the party's principles of independence, democracy, and progress (RFI, 2016). After she did not win the position as party leader, she also was unable to be represented by the party for her 2021 presidential run. Again, she ran as an independent, receiving a negligible percent of the vote (0%) and thus could not be considered a major party candidate. Pinto describes her political goals as the inclusion of women in politics, economic development, and fighting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea (UN Affairs, 2019).

Joyce Hilda Banda. Banda is considered a major party candidate based on the variable for the effective number of parties, Major2, and Major3. She placed third in Malawi's 2014 presidential election with 20.2% of the vote, though this put her seven percentage points behind the second-place candidate. While she had been appointed president following the death of the incumbent and served from 2012 to 2014, she was not reelected by voters. Banda ran for president represented by the People's Party. Her other political roles include member of parliament, Minister of Gender, Child Welfare, and Community Services, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Vice President. She also has significant experience in business and non-governmental and international organizations, and she has numerous degrees from Western universities. Banda aided in Malawi's economic development and implementation of good governance and democratic norms. She is also a massive proponent of women's empowerment, spearheading initiatives relating to violence against women and women's maternal health.

Because she did not agree with the Democratic Progressive Party's decision to replace the leader with his brother, she founded her own party, the People's Party (Tenthani). She faced significant sexism from the Democratic Progressive Party, exemplified by their refusal to support her run for president.

Saraha Rabeharisoa. Rabeharisoa is considered a major party candidate only based on the variable for the effective number of parties. While she ran for president of Madagascar in both 2013 and 2018, she only achieved major party status in 2013, where she is considered an effective party with 4.52% of the vote, placing her in sixth. Similar to Elsa Pinto of Sao Tome, Rabeharisoa's status as an effective party seems more likely due to the fact that the winning candidates received only 21.16% of the vote before they went on to the second rounds of elections, rather than Rabeharisoa actually being a viable candidate. In 2018, she received only 0.48% of the vote; thus, she could not be considered a major party candidate. Rabeharisoa ran as leader of the Madagascar Green Party—which she founded herself—in both elections, campaigning for human development, social stability, and democracy based on the protection of the environment (Vedeilhe, 2013). Educated in France, she has experience in politics, non-governmental organizations, and business. Though her party does not seem explicitly active in women's issues, Rabeharisoa is known as a feminist with a demonstrated commitment to children, the elderly, and people with mental illness (Frivet, 2011). She differentiates herself from other candidates by having a clear program for her campaign, including tax reforms that would be more redistributive.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Finally, the only successful presidential candidate in the region is Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who is considered a major party candidate by all counts. In her 2005 and 2011 presidential elections, she ran represented by the Unity Party. Though she came in second

place in the first round of the 2005 election with 19.75% of the vote, she won the second round with 59.40% of the vote. In 2011, she won both the first and second rounds, garnering 43.93% of the vote in the first round and a substantial 90.71% of the vote in the second round. Before being president, she gained an education in economics and public administration from American universities and worked for the Liberian government and international organizations. In the government, she held roles including senator and Minister of Finance. While she was well-educated for these roles, she also had important connections since her father was a lawyer and the first native Liberian to become a legislator (Skard, 2014). Though the family path to power largely describes wives and daughters of executives, Sirleaf did benefit from the connections gained from her father's political career as a legislator. Sirleaf's education in economics and experience in politics signaled she had the masculinity necessary for the role of chief executive (Adams, 2010). Throughout her political career, she was outspoken about government corruption and illegitimacy surrounding elections, and even endured nine months of political imprisonment after narrowly avoiding execution. She first ran for president in 1997 and gained only 9.5% of the vote, but she remained interested in Liberian politics and was eventually appointed to lead the Governance Reform Commission in the transitional regime.

In her next run for president, she won. There were various factors that worked in her favor (Skard, 2014). The election did not have any incumbents as those in the transitional regime were not allowed to run. Furthermore, she was able to mobilize the family, her party, and other connections such as American associates and Liberian women's organizations. Because she had long-held ties to women's issues, many women's organizations provided strong support and worked tirelessly to register women to vote. Running for president following a horrific civil war and significant political instability, which had been marked by violence against women, Sirleaf

crafted a maternal image for her campaign, positioning herself to benefit from the stereotypes of caring and peaceful often associated with femininity. She drew on her experiences as a mother and grandmother, even gaining the nickname “Ma Ellen” (Jalalzai, 2013). Africans traditionally revere motherhood and this reverence only increased during the civil war years as mothers did what they could to oppose the wars and inspire peace (Adams, 2017). Ultimately, she embodied continuity and change—continuity for her extensive political experience and Liberian roots and change because she was a woman. Upon her win, Sirleaf said,

Now, I’m most concerned with being a mother to Liberia. I want to heal the deep wounds of this nation, particularly among our youth. One must show loving care to them. One must be motherly to them and make them feel wanted. (qtd. in Hough, 2006)

She also evoked her connection with fellow women, vowing “to give Liberian women prominence in all affairs of our country” in her inaugural address (qtd. in Skard, 2014, p. 310).

Like other parties in the region, the Unity Party was not defined by any strong political positions and typically drew support from business people, technocrats, and the middle class more generally (Adams, 2017). Despite the party’s lack of a policy agenda, Sirleaf made the improvement of woman’s status a goal of her presidency. She appointed more women ministers and deputy and assistant ministers than her men predecessors; Sirleaf also appointed women justices to the Supreme Court and women country superintendents. The focuses of her first administration included ridding the government of corruption; increasing education access, especially for girls; building up infrastructure, such as transportation and roads, electricity, and water; and uplifting agricultural and forestry industries.

While Sirleaf made important gains for Liberia, she faced backlash as well, making her second presidential candidacy more difficult. Though she was successful in a number of ways, including procuring \$5 billion in debt forgiveness and ending sanctions against the country, the

majority of Liberians continued to live jobless, uneducated, and among dilapidated infrastructure (Ford, 2011; Skard, 2014). Others felt she could have been more active in fulfilling the suggestions from the Truth Commission that had been held post-civil war. Overall, many Liberians believed she had not held her promises, saying Sirleaf's presidency had only benefitted some in Monrovia, the capital city. Because Liberians typically vote along ethnic lines, Sirleaf faced the possibility of voters placing their faith in ethnic patrons rather than her (Ford, 2011). Still, Sirleaf maintained her positions, continuing to highlight the development she had enacted in the country and her empowerment of women leaders. The discontent turned physical when electoral violence broke out. The runner-up of the first round of the election boycotted the second round citing fraudulence, but international election observers classified the election as "mostly free and fair" and denounced the electoral violence (Valdmanis & Toweh, 2011). Accusations of fraudulence did little to impede Sirleaf's success. She won and her party, the Unity Party, also gained more seats in the House and Senate.

Today, Sirleaf is lauded for upholding democratic institutions and economic development (Hixon, 2017). In these ventures, Sirleaf also prioritized human rights and women's empowerment though imperfectly. While she was a great supporter of "market women"—women who are sellers in informal sectors—and established new policies to tackle violence against women especially regarding sexual assault, she left much to be desired for many. She has been criticized for poor implementation of these policies and even supporting a man political candidate who went on the record approving female genital mutilation (Pailey & Williams, 2017). The Unity Party also failed to empower more women politicians with smaller, less popular parties having higher percentages of women, though not surprising based on this research and past literature. As a result, she has been accused of promoting femocracy not

feminism, a movement she has actually described as extreme. Just like Domitien, Sirleaf's presidency tended to improve the lives of elite women, as the rest of the country continued to suffer the consequences of over a decade of civil wars. Such analyses are also consistent within the academic literature. Adams (2017) notes that the most visible change for women under Sirleaf's presidencies was in the realm of symbolic representation through her appointment of women, while her policies centered on women's issues tended to fall flat for an array of reasons including lack of support from the legislature. Furthermore, women in the country have continued to struggle to win elected positions. In all, Sirleaf's legacy has been described as "mixed," with Hixon (2017) claiming she laid important foundational groundwork for the country but plenty still needs to be done to truly improve the lives of Liberians across the country.

2.6.1 Overarching Remarks

There are similarities among the women candidates, especially the losing ones, that may offer important insight into women's presidential runs in sub-Saharan African countries. Two of the women presidential elections who garnered enough of the vote to be considered a major party were previously appointed prime ministers or interim presidents: Joyce Hilda Banda and Maria das Neves. This pattern points to the idea that women politicians must be highly experienced in order to prove to voters they can be successful in office. Additionally, it aligns with Jalalzai's (2008) earlier finding that women executives are more likely to be appointed than popularly elected. To this day, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf continues to be the only popularly elected woman president on the African continent, with her presidential wins in 2005 and 2011 accounting for two of the major party cases in each of the variables. Aside from Sirleaf's 2005 presidential win,

the other six cases of women being represented by effective parties occurred in 2011 or after, signifying that women presidential candidates may be increasingly successful with time and experience. An additional factor tying the candidates together is their dedication to what may be considered feminist issues. All but Rabeharisoa had a clear passion for women's empowerment and had worked in their previous roles to improve the status of women. Even Rabeharisoa's environmental advocacy and past work with children, the elderly, and people with disabilities can be considered feminist work. In this way, it seems each of the women candidates were likely motivated by sincere care for their countries' peoples, but all besides Sirleaf remained held back by their parties.

Notably, all but one of these candidates—Joyce Banda—ran for president more than once. As such, these women may be interesting cases for future research, providing cases for why women run even as all but Sirleaf knew they were unlikely to win. Are they acting as role models? Do they bring attention to women's issues? Answers to these questions would not only provide an understanding of women politicians' experiences in the sub-Saharan African region but also reflect the possible importance and functions of minor parties, especially in new democracies. These cases may substantiate the literature that describes minor parties as being a route for politicians' voices to be heard, started due to intrinsic passion for the issues they are raising. As mentioned, each of the women seemed to have a genuine interest in feminist issues, which may have inspired their presidential runs. Though all but one lost their elections, it is possible these losing women still had role-modeling effects or were able to get discussions for new policies on the agenda as a result of bringing them to light during their candidacies. It is these explanations that are important to the stories of women presidential candidates but often difficult to support due to a lack of information especially surrounding minor parties.

While the cases described above technically received enough of the vote to be considered major, none of the losing women placed second in their elections, indicating that the parties themselves may not have had much of a chance of winning. Possibly pointing to the slim likelihood these women actually had of winning, there was little parliamentary representation for both Rabeharisoa and Banda's parties, which could indicate they are more minor than major. Banda and Rabeharisoa both started their own parties in order to run for president, a blatant example of party gatekeeping women in the region face. In comparison, Pinto was unable to secure representation from her party for her presidential campaigns and also lost internal elections for party leader. In the same country, das Neves had party representation for only one of her presidential runs. Unfortunately, I could not find any information on how the women discussed came to be supported by their parties in their presidential runs, a vital gap that remains unfilled. We do know Sirleaf was appointed leader of the Unity Party, but it is unclear why exactly the party chose her (Academy of Achievement). Without knowing the motivations of party executives in their decisions to represent women candidates, it is difficult to know how more women could break through gatekeeping to become supported by major parties.

Chapter 3

Quantitative Evidence

In this chapter, I provide quantitative evidence on the cultural background of sub-Saharan African countries by analyzing the results from the World Values Survey from 2000 to 2022, showing how patriarchal beliefs continue to be held by substantial portions of the populations or in some cases a majority of the populations. These patriarchal beliefs seem particularly activated when asked about women in leadership as the WVS statement I focus on is “Men make better political leaders than women do,” analyzing the extent to which people agree or disagree with it. Next, I provide original quantitative evidence on the relationship between variables for party type—major or minor—and the sex of presidential candidates. In all, the findings signify support for my hypotheses that women are more likely to run from minor parties, possibly due to patriarchal cultures of countries in the region.

3.1 Additional Cultural Background from the World Values Survey

To analyze culture, the World Values Survey conducts surveys and interviews across the globe. Of the wide array of questions, they ask participants the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statement: “Men make better political leaders than women do.” It is likely that countries that disagree with this statement would be more hospitable to women overall. The research is conducted in waves, with the waves relevant to this research occurring between 2000-2004, 2005-2009, 2010-2014, and 2017-2022. Though WVS does not study every country every year, the results they do have for countries in my sample show a complicated story of gender relations.

World Values Survey Responses 2000-2004: “Men make better political leaders than women do.”

	TOTAL	Country/region		
		Nigeria	Zimbabwe	Tanzania
Agree strongly	36.2 (1,519)	54.4	15.1	23.0
Agree	25.3 (1,062)	23.9	34.4	20.0
Disagree	23.1 (968)	13.8	35.1	28.8
Strongly disagree	12.6 (529)	6.1	9.8	26.1
No answer	0.3 (11)	-	-	0.9
Don't know	2.5 (107)	1.8	5.5	1.2
(N)	(4,195)	(2,022)	(1,002)	(1,171)

Table 3.1

From 2000 to 2004, *Table 3.1* shows that 78.3% of Nigerians agreed or strongly that men make better political leaders, with the majority strongly agreeing. People from Zimbabwe (49.5%) and Tanzania (43%) agreed or strongly agreed at lower but still significant rates.

World Values Survey Responses 2005-2009: “Men make better political leaders than women do.”

	TOTAL	Country/region			
		Ghana	Mali	Burkina Faso	Zambia
Agree strongly	29.1 (1,777)	35.6	41.3	22.2	17.1
Agree	35.1 (2,143)	40.4	33.7	35.4	30.9
Disagree	24.2 (1,477)	16.4	16.4	28.6	35.7
Strongly disagree	6.7 (411)	4.8	3.5	5.9	12.9
Missing; Not asked by the interviewer	0.3 (21)	0.1	0.7	0.5	0.1
No answer	1.3 (77)	1.1	1.8	1.1	1.1
Don't know	3.2 (196)	1.7	2.6	6.3	2.3
(N)	(6,102)	(1,534)	(1,534)	(1,534)	(1,500)

Table 3.2

As shown in *Table 3.2*, from 2005 to 2009 76% of people from Ghana agreed or strongly agreed that men make better political leaders. 75% of people from Mali agreed or agreed strongly with the statement, 57.6% of people from Burkina Faso agreed or agreed strongly with the statement, and 48% of people from Zambia agreed or agreed strongly with the statement. Again, these responses indicate that women still faced consider cultural obstacles in becoming politicians.

World Values Survey Responses 2010-2014: “Men make better political leaders than women do.”

	TOTAL	ISO 3166-1 numeric country code		
		Kenya	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
Agree strongly	27.2 (1,011)	19.4	45.0	17.2
Agree	26.4 (980)	22.3	29.7	27.2
Disagree	30.1 (1,118)	36.9	16.2	37.1
Strongly disagree	14.9 (554)	19.7	7.9	17.0
Don't know	1.2 (46)	1.5	1.2	1.1
No answer	0.2 (7)	0.2	-	0.4
Other missing; Multiple answers Mail (EVS)	0.1 (3)	0.2	0.1	-
(N)	(3,718)	(1,266)	(1,237)	(1,215)

Table 3.3

The WVS wave from 2010 to 2014 includes countries from the previous waves, giving the opportunity to analyze change over time. The results for the 2010-2014 wave are in Table 3.3. In this wave, 81.3% of people in Ghana agreed or agreed strongly with the statement, an increase of 5.3% from the previous wave. 76.8% of Nigerians agreed or agreed strongly with the statement, a decrease of 1.5%. In Zimbabwe, 58.3% of people agreed or agreed strongly with the statement, an increase of 8.8%. These results indicate that the status of women does not improve over time in a linear way. Instead, the results are reminiscent of Yoon (2001) and Fallon, Swiss, and Veterna’s (2012) findings related to democracy’s curvilinear effects on women’s representation. The only country that improved did so only minimally, while the other two increased at even higher rates.

World Values Survey Responses 2017-2022: “Men make better political leaders than women do.”

	TOTAL	Country/region		
		Ghana	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
Agree strongly	39.3 (1,892)	44.3	46.6	25.6
Agree	33.2 (1,595)	37.0	30.2	32.7
Disagree	20.4 (983)	14.6	18.9	28.3
Strongly disagree	7.1 (341)	4.1	4.3	13.4
(N)	(4,810)	(1,552)	(1,759)	(1,499)

Table 3.4

Finally, the wave from 2017 to 2022 in *Table 3.4* shows slight decreases in those who agreed or agreed strongly with the statement that men make better leaders, a step in the right direction for women politicians. 41.7% of people from Kenya agreed or agreed strongly with the statement, though the country was not present in previous waves and thus cannot be compared. In Nigeria, 74.7% of people agreed or agreed strongly with the statement, a decrease of 2.1% from the previous wave, though an even greater decrease than last time. 44.4% of people in Zimbabwe agreed or agreed strongly with the statement, a decrease of 13.9%. While the patterns indicate that some of the countries are headed toward improving the status of women, others are undergoing a more complex fluctuation in their acceptance of women politicians.

Overall, the evidence from the WVS shows that women continue to face cultural prejudice in their attempts to enter politics. In this way, not only are party leaders gatekeepers but voters are as well. Though the current literature on voters' perceptions of women politicians in Western countries shows a warming up to these leaders (e.g. Kosiara-Pedersen & Hansen, 2015; Bridgewater & Nagel, 2020), the World Values Survey is evidence this may not be the case in African countries. If anything, it shows the opposite, supporting the previous evidence that women continue to face cultural prejudice in their attempts to enter politics. In this way, not only are party leaders gatekeepers but voters are as well, giving party leaders further justification for their gatekeeping. In Nigeria, for example, men politicians use democratic responsiveness as a reason to keep women out of politics on the assumption that voters do not want women leaders (Abba & Babalola, 2017). As a result, women politicians are unable to run represented by major parties and instead must resort to other attempts at candidacies, such as affiliations with minor parties.

3.2 Original Quantitative Analysis

In this section, examine the quantitative evidence relating to hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. How prevalent are women candidates in sub-Saharan African presidential elections? To what extent do women run for minor versus major party labels or as independent candidates? I hypothesize that women are more likely to run with minor party representation than with major party representation or as independent candidates. To test this hypothesis, I analyze an original dataset of 26 Sub-Saharan African countries from 2000 to 2021, covering 120 elections. The countries included in the dataset are represented in *Figure 3.1*. I have collected the data from sources such as the African Elections Database, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems ElectionGuide, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, and primary sources including documents from state election commissions. The countries included in the data set have popularly elected presidents, which leaves out a few countries in the region, such as South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, and Mauritius. I focus on countries with popularly elected presidents for two reasons. First, the majority of African governments are presidential. Second, I aim to capture voters' reactions to women presidential candidates, which is hindered in parliamentary regimes as voters choose the parties not necessarily the candidates themselves. Because Jalalzai (2008) has shown it is more difficult for women to be elected president, it is vital to investigate this phenomenon further.

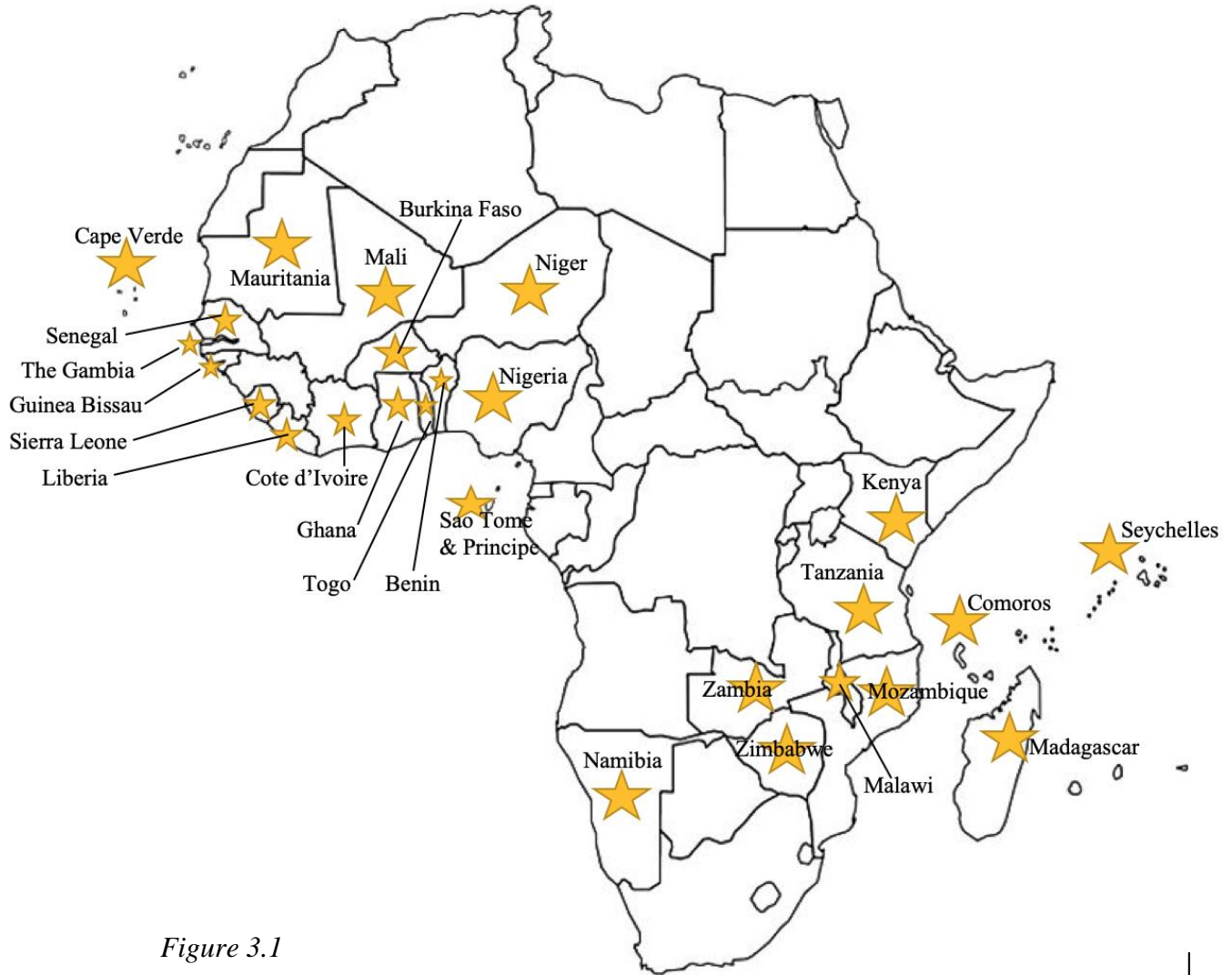


Figure 3.1

Though many countries in the region are authoritarian but continue to have elections where women run as candidates, I aim to capture women’s experiences in democratic settings with competitive elections to hone in on the relationship between women’s political involvement and democracy. With this focus, I hope to capture how voters in the region react to women presidential candidates, and, ultimately, the extent to which the culture is democratic. I use Freedom House to inform my data set, which gives countries numerical scores for indicators relating to political rights and civil liberties. Broadly, political rights include electoral processes, political pluralism and participation, and the functioning of the government. In comparison, civil

liberties include freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights. From there, countries are then labeled “Free,” “Partly Free,” or “Not Free” based on their combined numerical scores from the political rights and civil liberties categories. The countries in my dataset are only those considered “Free” or “Partly Free” as of 2020. While this does not guarantee every election will take place in a free or partly free country, most do; only 14 of the 120 elections take place under “Not Free” conditions.

3.3 Methodology

For my hypotheses, the independent variable is the sex of presidential candidates. The dependent variable is the party representation. Men are coded as a 0 and women as a 1. For the third hypothesis, it is whether the candidate is running as an independent. For the fourth hypothesis, it is whether the candidate is running from a major or minor party. This is an exploratory study, with the goal largely being to show the party representations of women running for president and how often they run. As such, I will tabulate the proportions of women who run from minor parties and as independents as compared to the proportions of women who run from major parties and as non-independents, or those represented by parties. While statuses as independent candidates are straightforward, the distinction between major and minor parties is more difficult to label. As a result, I use four different calculations to differentiate between major and minor party variables. For purposes of operationalization, I combine independent candidates with minor party candidates, except for the variable that specifically analyzes independent versus non-independent candidates. In comparison, there is only one variable to analyze independent candidates. Finally, I ran regression analyses between the variable for candidate gender and the variables for major party and independent candidates.

3.4 Operationalization of Dependent Variables

Even today, parties and party systems can be challenging to categorize because many of them still fail to be institutionalized and operate in countries that are not autocracies but fail to be full democracies (Van de Walle, 2002; Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2014). With this in mind, I devise several variables to test associations with major and minor parties based on the pre-existing literature related to identifying and counting parties, rather than attempting to choose a single best fit for the research. In devising various methods of identifying major and minor parties, I came up with four variables: *effnum* (related to the effective number of parties), *Major1*, *Major2*, and *Major3*. In the next section, I discuss each variable in more detail¹.

3.4.1 *Effective Number of Parties (effnum)*

The number of parties is commonly used as the defining characteristic of party systems. Laakso and Taagepera (1979) devised the “effective number of parties” formula that assigns a number of parties in a given party system based on how effective, or influential, each of the parties is. In other words, larger, ruling parties would count more than smaller parties. Though Laakso and Taagepera (1979) originally applied their formula to Western European countries, it has since become widely used in the study of party politics and other scholars, such as Mozaffar (1997) and Van de Walle and Butler (1999), give credence to the formula, using it in their own work on party systems in African politics. It is still imperfect in this research, though, since it is

¹ In the appendix, I discuss various control variables related to country-level institutional and cultural factors, none of which achieved statistical significance.

widely used to analyze legislatures and parties that can be effective actors within them, not parties in presidential elections. The formula is as follows:

$$N_2 = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^2} = \left(\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^2 \right)^{-1}$$

In this formula, p_i is the fractional share of votes of the i -th party, and the summation is over all n parties that obtain votes. I calculated this formula for each of the 120 presidential elections in my data set. From there, I code the major parties based on those that fit within the effective number of parties as 1. The minor parties, those that did not fit within the effective number of parties, are coded as 0.

3.4.2 *Major1*

Gerring (2005) states that “*Major* parties are defined as the two parties gaining the most seats in the lower house in a given election. All other parties are considered *minor*.” Based on these characterizations, I code the two parties with the highest percentage of the vote in each election as 1, denoting them as major parties. The rest of the parties are considered minor and coded as 0.

3.4.3 *Major2*

This variable is based on Sartori’s (1994) guidance on analyzing presidential systems as discussed in the literature review. To summarize, he advises that parties that make a difference in the outcome of the election can be considered major parties (Sartori, 1994). Based on this advice, I consider major parties, coded as 1, as the top two parties, along with those parties that get a higher percentage of the vote than the difference between the first- and second-place candidates.

It is these parties that have the possibility of affecting the outcome of the election, as in the example of the 2000 presidential election in the U.S. All other parties are considered minor parties and coded as 0.

3.4.4 Major3

In the Global Party Survey, “the size of electoral parties is gauged by categorizing their share of the vote in contests for the lower house of the national parliament/congress” (Norris, 2019, p. 12). Major parties capture at least 10% of the vote, whereas minor parties capture between 3% and 9.99% of the vote. The survey also includes a category for fringe parties, which capture 0% to 2.99% of the vote. For the purposes of my research, I just distinguish between major and minor parties, so I code a party above 10% of the vote share as 1, a major party, and a party below 10% as 0, a minor party.

3.4.5 Independent

Finally, I analyze the prevalence of candidates who run as independents. For this analysis, I code independent candidates as 1 and candidates who are running with a party as 0. *Table 3.1* below shows the summary statistics for the averages of each variable in each country in the dataset from 2000 to 2021. It also has the number of men and women presidential candidates and elections in the time period.

Table 3.5

Country	Women	Men	Elections	effnum	Major1	Major2	Major3
Benin	6	87	5	17.20%	10.75%	15.05%	13.98%
Burkina Faso	2	45	4	21.28%	17.02%	17.02%	14.89%

Cabo Verde	0	20	5	55%	50%	65%	55%
Comoros	2	68	5	42.86%	14.29%	31.43%	21.43%
Cote d'Ivoire	3	30	4	21.21%	24.24%	24.24%	21.21%
Ghana	4	42	6	26.09%	26.09%	28.26%	26.06%
Guinea-Bissau	2	56	5	31.03%	17.24%	22.41%	27.59%
Kenya	2	28	4	23.33%	26.67%	30%	23.33%
Liberia	6	52	3	22.41%	10.34%	17.24%	13.79%
Madagascar	8	81	4	22.47%	8.99%	13.48%	11.24%
Malawi	3	31	5	44.12%	29.41%	47.06%	41.18%
Mali	3	81	4	21.43%	9.52%	10.71%	10.71%
Mauritania	2	45	5	34.04%	21.28%	27.66%	25.53%
Mozambique	0	15	4	53.33%	53.33%	53.33%	53.33%
Namibia	1	38	4	20.51%	20.51%	20.51%	15.38%
Niger	1	60	4	27.87%	13.11%	16.39%	18.03%
Nigeria	11	141	5	6.58%	6.58%	6.58%	6.58%
Sao Tome & Príncipe	6	36	5	38.10%	23.81%	28.57%	33.33%
Senegal	2	40	4	30.95%	19.04%	26.19%	30.95%
Seychelles	1	18	5	57.89%	52.63%	57.89%	57.89%
Sierra Leone	3	38	4	24.39%	19.51%	29.27%	21.95%
Tanzania	4	40	5	20.45%	22.72%	22.72%	22.72%
The Gambia	0	20	5	65%	50%	55%	65%
Togo	1	29	5	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
Zambia	6	60	7	30.30%	21.21%	34.85%	28.79%
Zimbabwe	4	33	4	21.62%	21.62%	24.32%	21.62%

3.5 Hypothesis Two

Between 2000 and 2021, men ran for president 1,234 times and women ran for president 83 times in sub-Saharan African countries, meaning women ran only 6.3% of the time. A total of 71 women ran for president, with five candidates running two times, two candidates running three times, and one candidate running four times. 88.73% of women presidential candidates ran in only one election. These numbers clearly indicate that women run for president substantially less than men, not only from major parties but also from minor parties and as independent candidates. This finding supports my second hypothesis that women run for president less often than men in sub-Saharan African countries.

Figure 3.2

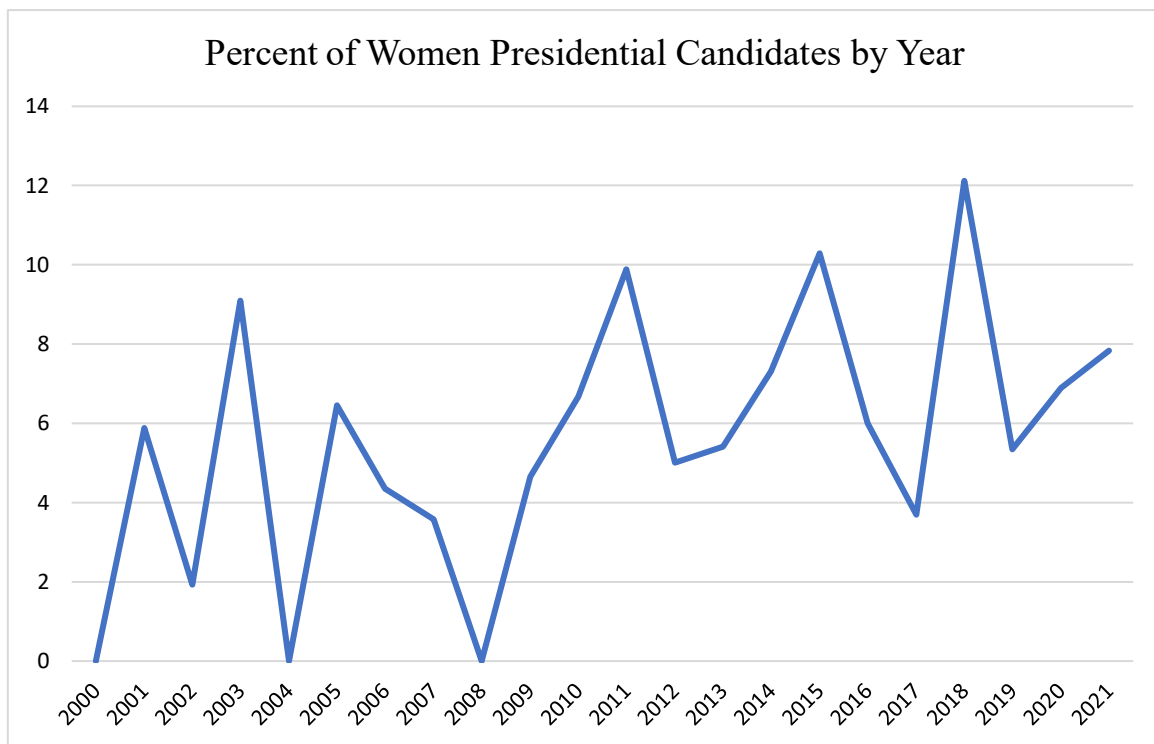
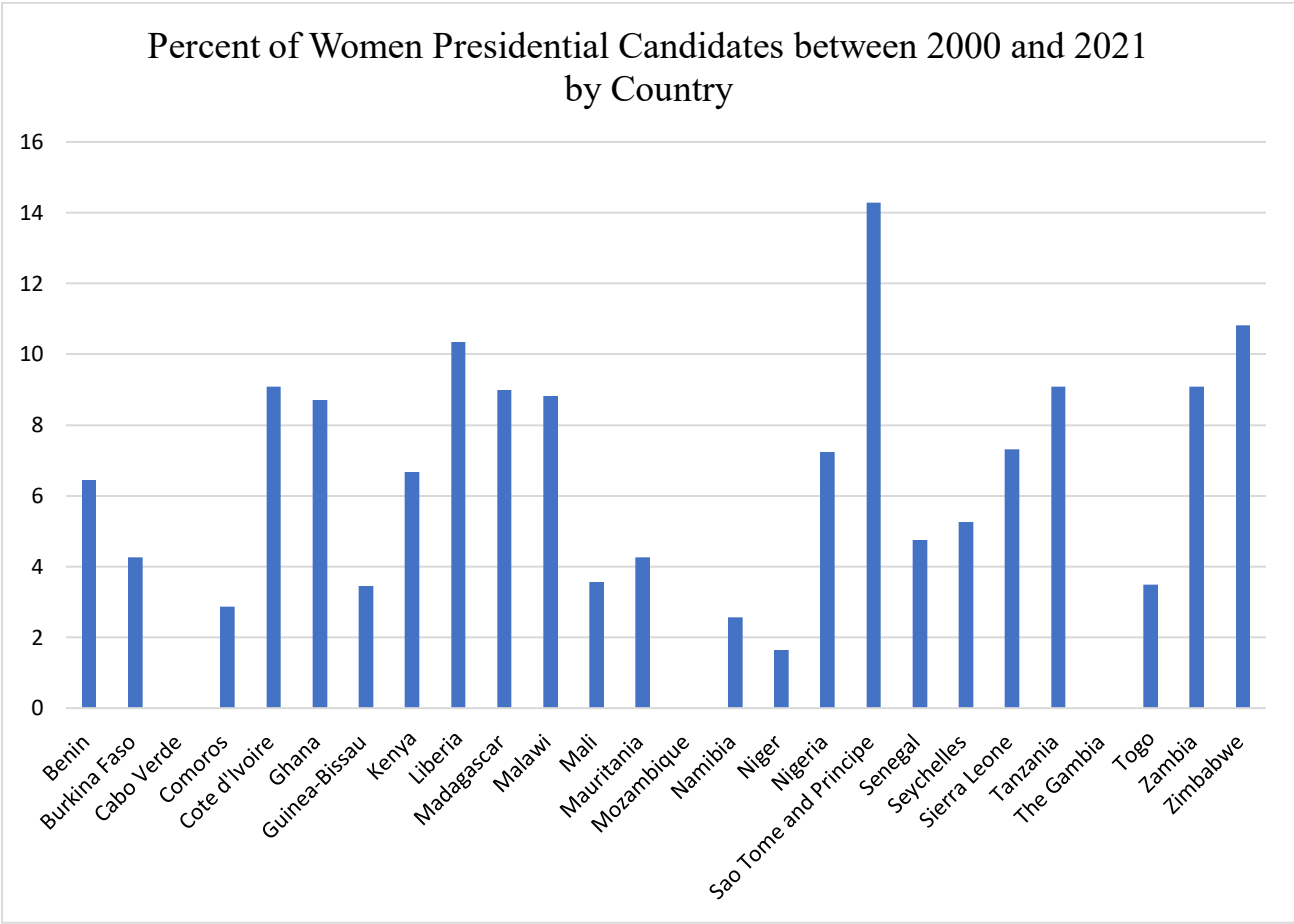


Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of women presidents by year from 2000 to 2021, the entirety of my dataset. While the line as a whole indicates a general increase in the percentage of women running as presidential candidates in sub-Saharan African countries, it is also defined by

sharp rises and falls. In attempting to figure out the causes of these rises and falls, I looked at the number of elections in various years marked by this pattern. There were only three presidential elections in 2003, while there were five in 2004. In 2007, there were six elections, and in 2008, there were three. 2011 held nine presidential elections, while there were only four elections in 2012. Finally, there were two elections in 2017, four in 2018, and eight in 2019. Based on these numbers, the number of elections may only slightly account for the percentage of women candidates present in elections by year.

Figure 3.3



In contrast, the elections the countries are happening within are likely a more important factor in the percentages of women running by year. Because countries in the region typically

only have elections every four to six years, every country will not be present in every year. As *Figure 3.3* shows, the percentage of women candidates varies significantly by country. Sao Tome, Zimbabwe, and Liberia have the three highest percentages of women. As discussed in the following sections, Sao Tome and Liberia have both had a woman president and prime minister, which using theories of role modeling and socialization, may help explain why they have higher rates of women presidential candidates (Atkeson, 2003; Lindberg, 2004; Wolbrecht & Campbell, 2007; Alexander, 2012; Barnes & Burchard, 2012; Bauer, 2016; Alexander & Jalalzai, 2018; Dassonneville & McAllister, 2018). The case of Zimbabwe may be explained by the current literature that describes authoritarian regimes using women's political representation to feign a commitment to equality (Tripp, 2022). Upon a closer look, it seems these countries may have the highest percentage of women candidates due to electoral factors. Until their most recent elections, Zimbabwe and Sao Tome have had only three to 10 candidates running, which is quite low compared to many other countries in the region. While Liberia has upwards of 15 candidates in its elections, it only had three elections between 2000 and 2021, also low compared to other countries in the dataset. With fewer candidates and fewer elections, fewer men have run in those countries, making it appear as though higher percentages of women have run in the three countries. Countries with the highest *number* of women candidates, such as Madagascar, Benin, Zambia, and Nigeria actually have lower *percentages* of women candidates, because they also have the highest rates of male candidates.

On the other hand, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, and The Gambia have not had any women run for president since 2000. Again, electoral factors may be the explanation as these three countries have some of the fewest total presidential candidates between 2000 and 2021. Cabo Verde and The Gambia have had only 20 candidates during this time, and Mozambique has had

only 15. While Cabo Verde has strong representation of independent candidates in its elections, The Gambia has had only two and Mozambique has not had any. The lack of independent candidates in Mozambique and The Gambia could indicate it is more difficult for candidates to enter into elections, especially if they are not from prominent parties, ultimately making it more difficult for women to run for president. Even in Cabo Verde where independents are more common than candidates affiliated with parties, women could face obstacles in their abilities to be independent, such as a lack of confidence and resources. Furthermore, The Gambia switches between free and not free during its election years, which could be a possible factor in the lack of candidates as many authoritarian regimes constrain opposition parties and candidates. Though Mozambique is consistently partly free, the country still may have laws hindering opposition candidates. While these findings initially point to women’s candidacies largely being attributed to a numbers game, more research should be done on the processes politicians must go through to create new parties and enter into elections. As Jaquette (2017) posits, women’s likelihood for political success may have more to do with timing or countries’ geopolitical positions, at least at this point when the lack of women candidates makes it difficult to draw conclusions on patterns relating to their presidential bids.

3.6 Hypothesis Three

Table 3.6:	Male Candidate	Female Candidate
Independent		
Party Representation	991	67
Independent	243	16
Totals	1,234	83

% independent candidates by gender	19.69%	19.28%
------------------------------------	--------	--------

Men and women run for president as independent candidates at approximately the same rates, with the percentage of women independents being only slightly lower than the percentage of men independents. An important distinction to note here is that while numerous male independents received vote percentages in line with those of major parties and a few even won their elections, female independents rarely received above one percent of the vote. Male independents from Benin, Sao Tome, Comoros, and Mauritania won presidential elections, and male independents in several other countries were viable runners-up in their elections. Only a couple of women independents in Sao Tome received votes that could be considered in line with major parties, but even then, they were only considered major parties based on the variable for effective number of parties, none of the other variables. This shows that women are not consistently strong as independent candidates, whereas men can win presidential elections as independents.

Coefficients:				
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	0.196921	0.011323	17.391	<2e-16 ***
Gender	-0.004149	0.045106	-0.092	0.927

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1				

Figure 3.4

Figure 3.4 shows the regression model for this relationship. It indicates that the variables for gender and independent candidacy have a negative relationship, meaning that women are less likely to be independent candidates than men. While this is in line with my third hypothesis, the

relationship is not statistically significant. This may be due to the small sample of women independent candidates, which would make it less likely for the relationship to reach significance.

3.7 Hypothesis Four

3.7.1 *Effective Number of Parties*

Table 3.7: Effnum	Male Candidate	Female Candidate
Minor Party	895	76
Major Party	339	7
Totals	1,234	83
% minor party candidate by gender	72.53%	91.57%

The variable for the effective number of parties included the most female presidential candidates as members of major parties, with 8.43% of women coming from major parties. In comparison, 27.47% of men run as members of major parties, over three times the number of women running with major party representations. The effective number of parties is representative of the number of women candidates who received above 4% of the vote. All cases of women candidates who received above 4% of the vote were considered effective parties, while none of the cases between 1% and 4% of the vote—also a total of seven—were considered effective parties. Also to note, in five of the seven cases of women being from effective parties, women were represented by parties while two of the cases were independent candidates, both

from the same country. This indicates that party representation is likely to make for more viable presidential candidates in the region.

This variable does not come without limitations. The effective number of parties may not be an accurate measure of whether presidential candidates are actually viable in elections as Laakso and Taagepera (1979) originally intended the formula to reflect the number of parties with similar levels of influence in legislatures. While the percentage of the vote parties receive in legislative elections reflects the number of the seats they will hold in parliament, there is only one winner in presidential elections and thus the percentage of the votes candidates receive have a slightly different meaning. As such, the effective number of parties is an imperfect formula for presidential elections, where the winner takes all.

Coefficients:				
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	0.27472	0.01247	22.032	< 2e-16 ***
Gender	-0.19038	0.04967	-3.833	0.000133 ***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1				

Figure 3.5

Figure 3.5 shows the regression analysis for the relationship between gender and the variable for the effective number of parties, which is negative. This means that women presidential candidates are less likely to run from major parties than men, substantiating my fourth hypothesis. The relationship is also significant at the highest level.

3.7.2 Major1

Table 3.8: Major1	Male Candidate	Female Candidate
Minor Party	996	81

Major Party	238	2
Totals	1,234	83
% minor party candidate by gender	80.71%	97.60%

On the other hand, the variable for Major1 included the fewest female presidential candidates represented by major parties, with only 2.4% of women coming from major parties. This variable also had the fewest men represented by major parties at 19.29%. Still, men came from major parties at eight times the number of women with major party affiliations. The two cases of women running from a major party in this variable actually account for Ellen Johnson Sirleaf’s initial presidential win and her subsequent win in the reelection. Other than Sirleaf, no other women have been popularly elected president. This variable’s finding also shows that women have not even been runners-up in their presidential elections, though the variable for the effective number of parties showed that a couple of women were close behind in third place.

Coefficients:					
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	0.19287	0.01094	17.637	< 2e-16 ***	
Gender	-0.16877	0.04356	-3.874	0.000112 ***	

Signif. codes:	0 '***'	0.001 '**'	0.01 '*'	0.05 '.'	0.1 ' ' 1

Figure 3.6

Figure 3.6 shows the relationship between gender and Major1. Like the previous variable, there is a negative relationship between the two, indicating that women are less likely to run in major parties than men. The relationship is also significant at the highest level, supporting my fourth hypothesis.

3.7.3 Major2

Table 3.9: Major2	Male Candidate	Female Candidate
Minor Party	933	79
Major Party	301	4
Totals	1,234	83
% minor party candidate by gender	75.61%	95.81%

The variable for Major2 had women running from major parties 4.19% of the time, and men running from major parties 24.39% of the time. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's presidential wins are included in these cases, along with Joyce Hilda Banda's candidacy in 2014 and Maria das Neves' candidacy in 2011. The goal of this variable was to operationalize the extent to which women candidates may be affecting the outcomes of the elections by receiving a higher percentage of the vote than the difference between the top two parties. With very few cases of women in major parties based on this variable, it is unlikely that women presidential candidates, as they stand today, pose much of a threat to the prevailing electoral, and more broadly political, systems that are dominated by men. It is key to understand with this variable, though, that the two women who have come closest to influencing the outcomes of their elections are women who have previously held high positions as prime minister, in das Neves' case, and president, in Banda's case. While both of the women were appointed to their posts, this indicates that voters are more

likely to vote for women who have been given the experience to prove their abilities to rule and even with that experience, they are not guaranteed to win or even come in second place.

Coefficients:					
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	
(Intercept)	0.24392	0.01194	20.427	< 2e-16	***
Gender	-0.19573	0.04757	-4.115	4.12e-05	***

Signif. codes:	0	'***'	0.001	'**'	0.01
	'*'	0.05	'.'	0.1	' ' 1

Figure 3.7

Figure 3.7 shows the regression analysis between gender and Major2, which is again a negative relationship. The relationship is significant at the highest level, validating my fourth hypothesis that women are less likely to run from major parties than men.

3.7.4 Major3

Table 3.10: Major3	Male Candidate	Female Candidate
Minor Party	956	78
Major Party	278	5
Totals	1,234	83
% minor party candidate by gender	77.47%	93.98%

Finally, the variable for Major3 had women affiliated with major parties 6.02% of the time, and men affiliated with major parties 22.53% of the time. The five cases of women candidates affiliated with major parties according to Major3 are: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia in her 2005 and 2011 presidential wins; Joyce Hilda Banda of Malawi in her 2014 presidential

candidacy; and, Maria das Neves of Sao Tome in her 2011 and 2016 presidential candidacies. While the Major3 variable represents women who received above 10% of the vote, it is important to point out that the majority of women struggle to even receive above 1% of the vote. In only 14 of the 83 cases of women candidates did women receive above 1% of the vote.

Coefficients:				
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)
(Intercept)	0.22528	0.01165	19.345	< 2e-16 ***
Gender	-0.16504	0.04639	-3.558	0.000387 ***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1				

Figure 3.8

Figure 3.8 shows the relationship between gender and Major3, which is negative. This means that women presidential candidates are less likely to run from major parties than men candidates. The relationship is also statistically significant at the highest level, showing support for my fourth hypothesis.

The results from the regression analyses show that women are less likely to run as both independent candidates and major party candidates than men, though only the variables for major parties achieved statistical significance. These results were also substantiated by both the raw numbers and percentages of women and men presidential candidates. Overall, this means that the findings indicate support for my theory that women presidential candidates are most likely to run from minor parties. Even as women run as independents at only slightly lower rates than male candidates, they are less likely to be successful in doing so. While I was unable to achieve statistical significance for any control variables that could point to why women presidential candidates are less likely to have major party representation, the qualitative evidence in the previous chapter and the quantitative evidence introduced by WVS in this chapter portrayed a

clear picture of patriarchal cultures that, in turn, are likely to create patriarchal political institutions. Women politicians continue to endure animosity, if not outright violence, from men politicians, including those within their own parties. Women's policy goals of empowering women are not taken seriously, though women are often relegated to positions relating to women and children. These provide grounds for further gatekeeping as women are still seen as unelectable and out-of-place in the political sphere, especially at the executive level where politicians are expected to handle issues beyond those facing women.

Conclusion

In her work for women's empowerment, Joyce Banda has said, "We are calling for a return to the tradition, as old as Africa itself, of respecting and venerating women as leaders. And we must act now," with the most well-known African women leader being Cleopatra of Egypt (Banda, 2016). This is an important reminder in the drive for increased women's status on the continent, where, as discussed, the suppression of women is closely linked to European colonization. Still, the effects of colonization continue to have a stronghold on multiple levels, influencing the current cultural perceptions of women. Though the evidence presented in the previous chapter shows that the number of women presidential candidates is slightly increasing over the years, this phenomenon has not yet resulted in the popular election of more women presidents in the sub-Saharan African region. Also exemplified in the evidence is that the progress of women is not linear and instead fluctuates across the years, further complicating their positions in politics and society at large. With these concerns in mind, I posed the following questions: How prevalent are women candidates in sub-Saharan African presidential elections? To what extent do women run for major party labels versus minor party labels or as independent candidates? What factors explain those patterns of party representation for women presidential candidates in the region?

To answer these questions, I have argued that women are more likely to be represented by minor parties than run as independents or from major parties due to party gatekeeping that occurs as a result of patriarchal cultures that have not been transformed through processes of democratization. The crux of this argument hinges on the interaction of pervasive patriarchal culture, which is built into the institutions of politics. In this way, not only do voters seem to be

skeptical of women candidates, but these women also face discrimination at the party level, making it difficult if not impossible for them to be viable political candidates. In supporting this argument, I employed a mixed methodological approach, providing qualitative evidence backed up by numbers of men and women candidates that are represented by major and minor parties and those who run as independents. The quantitative evidence, drawn from an original data set created for this project, substantiates my hypothesis that women are more likely to run from minor parties than men. Regression analyses for the relationships between each of the party variables and the gender variable also support my claim at the highest level of statistical significance. The evidence from the raw data also backs up my hypothesis that women are less likely to run as independents, though this relationship did not achieve statistical significance. Unfortunately, the variables I introduced in attempts to mediate why these relationships occur also did not achieve statistical significance, likely because the low number of women presidential candidates hinders the dataset. As such, it was important that I used qualitative evidence to describe the context that women presidential candidates are facing in the region.

I also analyzed evidence from surveys and interviews, taken from the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the World Values Survey, providing important historical context for sub-Saharan Africa, describing how colonization had detrimental effects on both governance and gender relations. The qualitative evidence supported the academic literature's concern with party gatekeeping, with interviews from women MPs in the region's countries painting a clear picture that they face the most substantial discrimination from their own parties. However, it diverged with other academic findings that show that voters are increasingly supportive of women politicians. Instead, cultural expectations, as drawn from the World Values Survey, portrayed the continued existence of quite sexist cultures, with a majority or near-majority of respondents in

each country not approving of women leaders. These key factors show that women politicians face sexist discrimination from both their societies and their political institutions. As such, it is unsurprising that women presidential candidates are most often represented by minor parties. Finally, I offered background on the women presidential candidates who have been able to transcend minor parties to become represented by major parties, which largely coincided with the experiences outlined by women MPs in their IPU interviews. Though the women had gained the support of major parties, their support was often not consistent, as in das Neves' case. Their support was also refused by preexisting major parties, as in the cases of Rabearisoa and Banda. Thus, while these examples do not perfectly represent all women presidential candidates' experiences, they certainly give important insight into the obstacles these women face in their presidential bids.

A constraint of this research is that I was unable to find information regarding the circumstances of *how* the women came to be represented by major parties. Did they have close connections with higher-ups in the parties? What made the party executives place their faith in women presidential candidates? Did the parties (outside of Sirleaf's) know they would not win regardless and thus rationalized representing a woman candidate, like the sacrificial lamb argument? Going forward, it may be worth considering other factors of the parties women candidates came from, especially those not formed by the women themselves, such as whether they were likelier to support pro-women's policies than other major parties; how they performed in previous presidential and parliamentary elections; and how the parties choose their presidential candidates. For example, while Sirleaf was appointed leader of the Unity Party, das Neves was not the leader of the Movement for the Liberation of Sao Tome and Principe/Social Democratic Party and was only represented by them for only one election. These short vignettes,

along with the academic literature and IPU interviews with women MPs, support my claim that women presidential candidates are likely to run on pro-women policy agendas. In comparison, it may also be important going forward to compare whether men presidential candidates run on policy and, if so, what types of policy they use in their campaigns. While the literature indicates the candidates likely appeal to valence issues, there may be a distinction between men and women, especially between those who run as independents: Are men more likely than women to have personalistic campaigns? While I have suggested that claim in this research, further analysis should be done to gain a clear answer.

Alongside the aforementioned limitations and possibilities for future research, I find that it is also important for me to emphasize the importance of culture in the processes of democratization. Reflecting on Banda's quote at the beginning of this chapter, many African cultures have a centuries-long history of powerful women leaders. Colonization ended that history, and it seems unlikely women leaders will truly reemerge under current methods of Western democratization that emphasize political institutions over local cultures. Gender equality and democratization tend to emphasize the role of legal equality, but gender customs in countries oftentimes override legal measures—the customs being a lingering effect of colonization in the case of sub-Saharan Africa. The failure of democratic equality can be attributed to the “imperfect implementation of laws already in place” and “the grip...social convention has had on the formation of gender identity” (Kittay, 2020, p. 9). In this way, the mere presence of democratic rights is not enough to improve the status of women. Furthermore, the enforcement of rights through measures such as gender quotas has had mixed results. While quotas have increased the symbolic representation of women politicians, my research demonstrates that quotas on their own do not lay the groundwork for women to reach the

ultimate political position. The mere right to run for president means little for women if they have no chance of being elected.

Somewhere, the pipeline continues to be cut off as women candidates face roadblocks in gaining acceptance from both major party politicians and voters alike. Gender quotas and the resulting percentages of women in legislatures do little to reflect the lived experiences of women politicians, who continue to endure unending obstacles as politicians. As Kittay (2020) elucidates, women cannot be equal so long as they are viewed as primarily responsible for the caretaking of societies' dependents. This stereotype engenders the public versus private spheres, in which men are viewed as entitled to the public sphere, whereas women are viewed as belonging in the private sphere taking care of the home and family. Rights alone cannot change these views. Deeper changes in society at large are necessary in order for the path to be smoothed for more women to attain executive power. In sub-Saharan African countries, it seems forces of enduring change can come right from traditional cultures. Offering recommendations for increasing women in politics, Joyce Banda emphasizes the importance of connections to local cultures in more than one of her ideas. Banda (2016) asserts that "civic and rights education tailored to African culture must be mainstreamed into African educational systems" and that traditional leaders and chiefs should exercise their authority to empower women, setting an example for greater populations that women are important components of society. These notions give the power back to sub-Saharan African populations, as opposed to the power remaining in the hands of outside interventionists. Banda's advice also reminds these populations that their ancestors venerated women, and it just might be time they do too.

Appendix

A.1 Control Variables

I tested numerous country-level control variables in attempt to gain a greater understanding of the conditions in which women presidential candidates tend to run. To do so, I used the percentage of women candidates for each country and the variables in the following sections. Though none of the relationships came back with any statistical significance, they reveal interesting factors at play in the backgrounds of women's presidential candidacies. The control variables likely failed to achieve significance due to the small sample of the dataset. A detriment to the analysis, Sao Tome and Principe is not included in several of the datasets for control variables, which may add complications as it is the country with the highest percentage of women presidential candidates. Because my argument is based on both the cultural and institutional constraints women presidential candidates face, I organize my control variables into each of those categories.

A.1.1 Institutional Factors

I use the World Bank's dataset on the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments, based on data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Significant past findings show that women's representation can increase women's overall interest and involvement in politics (Atkeson, 2003; Lindberg, 2004; Wolbrecht & Campbell, 2007; Reingold & Harrell, 2010; Barnes & Burchard, 2012; Bauer, 2016; Alexander & Jalalzai, 2018). As such, countries with more women in parliament may have more women running as presidential candidates. Oppositely, other scholars show that countries with higher levels of women in parliament are

more authoritarian, which could result in fewer women presidential candidates (Tremblay, 2007; Tripp, 2022). To get a single score for each country, I average the percentages of women in parliament from 2000 to 2021. There was a negative relationship between the percentage of women in parliament and the percentage of women presidential candidates in countries. This may be due to findings that more autocratic regimes have higher numbers of women in their parliaments, often due to gender quotas, which allow them to signal gender equality without actually being deeply committed to it.

I look at the year of the countries' most recent constitution, which is available on the CIA World Factbook. From there, I calculate the age of the constitutions in years as of 2021. I used this variable due to previous findings that indicate countries with newer constitutions are likelier to promote women's representation (Bauer & Burnet, 2013; Paulson-Smith & Tripp, 2021). Furthermore, the presence of newer constitutions may suggest that the country has undergone recent conflict, which may also affect the likelihood that women run for president. There is a positive relationship between the age of a country's most recent constitution and the percentage of women presidential candidates it has. This is at odds with past research on women in the legislature. While newer constitutions and the inclusion of gender quotas may help women MPs, it may be more stable democracies—with older constitutions—that encourage and allow women to run for president.

Level of democracy may have an impact on the presence of women presidential candidates, though the exact impact is unclear. While earlier research shows positive correlations between democracy and women's political representation, more recent research has indicated that women's representation is higher in autocratic states (Tripp, 2022). To analyze democracy levels of the sample countries, I look at the Freedom House rating for each election from 2000 to

2021. As discussed, the ratings include Free, Partly Free, and Not Free. In order to operationalize these scores, I assigned a 3 to Free, a 2 to Partly Free, and a 1 to Not Free, averaging these scores from the election years in each country. There is a positive relationship between Freedom House scores and the percentage of women presidential candidates in a country. This seems to align with the two previous variables that indicate that women in the legislature may benefit from contexts of newer democracies or even autocracies, while women presidential candidates need more democratic settings in order to run.

I used the Free Political Parties (C_SD13) variable from the Global State of Democracy published by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. The variable is based on six indicators and “denotes the extent to which political parties are free to form and campaign for political office” (Tufis & Hudson, 2022, p. 12). It is coded from 0 to 1, with closer to 1 indicating that parties have more freedom. Because women do not tend to run as candidates from major parties, the openness of the political system is crucial for their abilities to run for president. As such, countries with more free party systems may be more likely to have higher rates of women presidential candidates. There was no data for Seychelles or Sao Tome and Principe. For the rest of the countries, I take the average from 2000 to 2021. Interestingly, there is a negative relationship between party freedom and the percentage of women presidential candidates. While I would have thought that women could create their own minor parties in environments with higher party freedom, the findings at this time do not align with that theory.

I also look at the average number of effective parties in each country, taken from my own calculations for the effective number of parties in each presidential election year. Though Paxton and Kunovich (2005) suggest that fewer women are in parliament when there are more effective parties, defining major parties based on effective parties may mean that a higher average of

effective parties results in more opportunities for women to be in major parties. There is a negative relationship between the average number of effective parties in countries and their percentages of women presidential candidates. This finding aligns with Paxton and Kunovich's earlier finding that there are fewer women in the legislature with more effective parties, possibly suggesting that effective parties are less likely to concern themselves with including women politicians as they are already legitimate political actors.

A.1.2 Cultural Factors

Violence against women may be an important indicator of whether women are able to run for president as viable candidates as rates of violence speak to cultural contexts within countries. As already discussed, women politicians also face gendered political violence, which may be higher in countries that have higher rates of violence against women overall. To look at violence against women, I used the Ordinal Murder Scale (Murder-Scale-1) from the Woman Stats Project. This variable combines measures related to the existence of socially accepted reasons for committing violence against women, social practices related to violence against women, and existing figures on violence against women. The Scale is from 0 to 2, with 0 representing no cultural motivations for violence against women, 1 representing some cultural motivations for violence against women, and 2 representing substantial cultural motivations for violence against women. The dataset includes ratings as of 2010 and 2016, so I average the scores from both years to get an overall score for the countries. It does not analyze Seychelles or Sao Tome and Principe. As such, I make the scale from 1 to 3, adding 1 to the original score in order to create a clearer graph. There is a positive relationship between violence against women and the percentages of women presidential candidates in countries. This may reflect earlier studies that

show women leaders in the region tend to come from conflict-ridden countries. In this way, women may feel a responsibility to run for president in order to represent, embolden, and support women's equality in their countries, hoping to change the current climates that suppress women.

Women's unemployment may decrease the presence of women as viable presidential candidates, because if women are not working in the public sphere, they are unlikely to gain the experiences or confidence necessary to enter into politics. Additionally, higher rates of female unemployment suggest that women are less likely to have access to funding for their campaigns. I use the ERBG-Scale-1 variable from the Woman Stats Project, which represents the percentage of female labor force participation out of the female population aged 15 and up. The scale operates from 0 to 2. 0 represents female participation of greater than 65%. 1 represents female participation between 40% and 65%. 2 represents female participation less than 40%. The data set includes World Bank data from 2018, but does not include Seychelles or Sao Tome and Principe. Thus, I again increase the scores by 1 for clarity in graphing the results. As expected, there is a negative relationship between women's unemployment and the percentage of women's presidential candidates in countries. This signifies that employment may be a vital source of experience and confidence for women political hopefuls. In addition, countries with higher levels of women in the public sector may indicate that the countries are more egalitarian.

As I have argued, processes of democratization oftentimes result in a gap between democratic laws and institutions and democratic cultures, where democratic institutions do not necessitate democratic cultures. Thus, while laws change to allow women's representation in politics, cultural factors do not change that enable women politicians to be voted into power. To reflect this, I look at a variable for the presence of government frameworks for gender equality (Multivar-Scale-5) and a variable analyzing the discrepancy between national law and practice

concerning women (Multivar-Scale-2), both of which are from the Woman Stats Project. The governmental framework for gender equality is based on three dimensions: the existence of a legal declaration of gender equality, the existence of a gender equality action plan, and commitment to CEDAW, the international framework for gender equality. The scale operates from 0 to 7. 0-1 indicates strong policies across each of the three dimensions. 2-3 indicates strong policies on most of the three dimensions. 4-5 indicates policies exist but are inadequate on at least one of the dimensions. 6-7 indicates there are no or very weak policies across all three of the dimensions. This dataset includes scores for 2015 and 2022, so I average the two together to get an overall score for the countries. It does not include Seychelles or Sao Tome and Principe. There is a positive relationship between the presence of gender equality frameworks and the percentages of women presidential candidates, which means that higher percentages of women are running in countries that have weak gender equality policies. As previously discussed, this may be due to the fact that women could be compelled to run in these contexts in order to improve the lives of women.

In comparison, the scale for the discrepancy between national law and practice concerning women reflects whether countries actually follow and enforce the laws enacted to improve the lives of women. The scale is based on indicators related to women's rights to physical security and bodily integrity, women's rights to education, and women's rights within the family. These three dimensions are based on rights outlined within the CEDAW Convention. The scale operates from 0 to 4. 0 indicates that a country's laws align with CEDAW and are enforced by high priority of the government. 1 indicates that a country's laws align with CEDAW, and the government is moderately proactive in enforcing them. 2 indicates that a country's laws align with CEDAW, but the government may or may not be concerned with their

enforcement. 3 indicates that a country's laws mostly align with CEDAW but there is little enforcement. 4 indicates that a country's government does not enforce laws associated with CEDAW or such laws do not exist at all. For most countries, the dataset includes scores for 2007, 2010, 2015, and 2021; thus, I average the scores together to get a single country score. The data set does not include Sao Tome and Principe. There is a negative relationship between discrepancy scores and the percentages of women presidential candidates. As countries have more CEDAW-related laws and actually enforce them, higher percentages of women are running for president. This may signal that the question of enforcement is key in analyzing the existence of legal frameworks for gender equality. It also may reflect other control variables which seem to show that women presidential candidates are more likely to run in more institutionally democratic countries.

A.2 Countries that have Two Rounds of Voting

Benin; Cabo Verde; Comoros; Cote d'Ivoire; Ghana; Guinea-Bissau; Liberia;
Madagascar; Mali; Mauritania; Niger; Senegal; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Sao
Tome and Principe; Zimbabwe

A.3 Raw Data

	0	1
2000	24	0
2001	48	3
2002	51	1
2003	30	3
2004	27	0
2005	58	4
2006	66	3
2007	81	3
2008	16	0
2009	41	2
2010	42	3
2011	82	9
2012	38	2
2013	70	4
2014	39	3
2015	61	7
2016	94	6
2017	27	1
2018	87	12
2019	124	7
2020	81	6
2021	47	4

Numbers of male (0) and female (1) presidential candidates by year.

	0	1
Benin	87	6
Burkina Faso	45	2
Cabo Verde	20	0
Comoros	68	2
Cote d'Ivoire	30	3
Ghana	42	4
Guinea-Bissau	56	2
Kenya	28	2
Liberia	52	6
Madagascar	81	8
Malawi	31	3
Mali	81	3
Mauritania	45	2
Mozambique	15	0
Namibia	38	1
Niger	60	1
Nigeria	141	11
Sao Tome and Principe	36	6
Senegal	40	2
Seychelles	18	1
Sierra Leone	38	3
Tanzania	40	4
The Gambia	20	0
Togo	29	1
Zambia	60	6
Zimbabwe	33	4

Numbers of male (0) and female (1) presidential candidates by country.

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