

UNDERSTANDING THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF CIVIL WAR ON WOMEN'S
PARLIAMETARY REPRESENTATION*

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ABSTRACT

Politics is arguably the arena in which gender inequality remains most pronounced. Yet in recent decades, women in some countries and regions of the world have made significant gains in their legislative presence at the national level. Research suggests that one broad force that impacts women's political representation, especially across the less developed world, is large-scale internal armed conflict. But beyond broad statistical associations, we know little about the specific mechanisms through which war may positively affect women's political incorporation. In this paper, I identify seven potential mechanisms through which war may benefit women in politics. Then, I investigate whether these mechanisms were indeed present in four countries where women experienced political gains following large-scale government civil wars: Rwanda, Mozambique, Uganda, and Tajikistan. Similarities across these cases suggest that in post-war settings, structural and ideological mechanisms may work in conjunction with political openings to produce post-conflict gains in women's political presence. Across all four cases, the proliferation of women's organizations—both domestic and international—during periods of reconstruction is a potential catalyst for women's post-conflict legislative gains. But without changes in the political context such as democratization or the toppling of the prior regime, it is unlikely that rising women's activism would be sufficient to produce the magnitude of gains in women's political representation observed across post-war countries.

KEYWORDS: women in politics, civil war, comparative case study

UNDERSTANDING THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF CIVIL WAR ON WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION

Politics is arguably the arena in which gender inequality remains most pronounced (Nelson and Chowdhury 1994; United Nations 1996, 1999). While women have entered educational institutions and the labor force in significant numbers, women only hold about 17% of the world's parliamentary seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2006). Women's underrepresentation is problematic not only because of the ideals of justice and equality, but research also demonstrates that women focus their efforts on different types of legislation than their male counterparts (Dodson 1991; O'Regan 2000; Swers 2002). If women are underrepresented in politics, issues such as sexual harassment, maternity leave, reproductive rights, and female health care may receive little attention. But even if men and women legislate in exactly the same way, women's presence in national political office has symbolic importance. In the U.S., for example, women demonstrate greater knowledge and interest in politics in districts with more female legislators (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001). And in Uganda, the influx of women into local governance has improved both men's assessment of women's capacities and the aspirations and self-esteem of women (Johnson, Kabuchu, and Vusiya 2003).

It is encouraging, therefore, that women in some countries and regions of the world have made significant political gains in recent decades. For example, by January 2000, female parliamentary representation had exceeded thirty percent in all five Scandinavian nations. But progress has not been limited to Western industrialized countries. Women's legislative representation across Africa has increased more than tenfold since 1960, women's average levels of representation in South America are higher than in Europe, and in October 2003, the poor sub-

Saharan African nation of Rwanda elected women to 48.8 percent of the seats in its lower house (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2006; Tripp 2003).

In lesser developed countries such as Rwanda, one force which powerfully impacts women is armed conflict (Hughes 2004). While men more often fight in combat, women in conflict situations are disproportionately the victims of sexual crimes such as rape and forced prostitution, and women are more often displaced as refugees. But while these conflicts are devastating to the populace, civil wars also serve as defining moments, turning points, and catalysts for change. Armed conflict often alters the very fabric of society, changing the ideas, beliefs, and social position of its members (Sambanis 2002). And for women, research has long documented that war allows women to operate outside of the constraints of traditional gender norms and to gain access to roles that were previously closed to them (e.g., Boyd 1989; Goetz 1995; Pankhurst 2002; Tripp 1994). Once conflict subsides, women have historically been excluded from the peacemaking process, limiting their incorporation into transitional legislative bodies and newly formed governments (Geisler 1995; Waylen 1994). But, there is evidence that this is changing (Bauer 2004). Indeed, research demonstrates that recent large-scale civil wars that contest the composition or form of the government (rather than territory) produce significant gains in women's political representation (Hughes 2004).

Although recent research finds empirical connections between large-scale government civil wars and increases in women's political representation, we know little about the mechanisms that produce these gains. What is the driving force behind post-conflict gains in women's legislative presence? In this paper, I theorize seven possible mechanisms through which armed conflict may positively affect women's political incorporation. I suggest that by increasing the supply of female candidates, changing ideologies about women's place, and

altering the opportunity structure to facilitate women's entry into the halls of power, civil wars may positively impact women in politics. I then investigate the presence or absence of these mechanisms across four cases in which women's legislative numbers increased significantly in the years following civil war: Mozambique, Tajikistan, Rwanda, and Uganda.

TRADITIONAL EXPLANATIONS FOR WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION ACROSS COUNTRIES

Varying levels of female participation in parliament are thought to result from differences in both the 'supply' of and the 'demand' for female candidates (Norris 1997; Paxton and Hughes 2007; Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes 2007; Randall 1987).¹ 'Supply' is determined by socioeconomic or structural factors. Because political elites are often highly educated and are concentrated in certain professions such as law, women's access to educational and professional opportunities affects their ability to stand for office (Putnam 1976). Moreover, gender stratification theorists suggest that women's presence in highly valued positions in the labor force is a precursor to political equality (Blumberg 1984; Chafetz 1984).

Despite strong theoretical arguments that supply-side factors are important determinants of women's political incorporation, empirical evidence supporting socioeconomic variables is mixed. Most research has found female labor force participation to be an important predictor of female parliamentary representation.² But with the exception of Rule (1981), no cross-national study has found a statistically significant effect of women's educational attainment. One important consideration is that cross-national research often employs measures appropriate for

¹ See Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes (2007) for a review of the traditional explanations for women's political incorporation.

² Oakes and Almquist (1993) and Paxton and Kunovich (2003) found significant effects of female labor force participation, while Paxton (1997) and Kenworthy and Malami (1999) did not. Kenworthy and Malami (1999) found

Western Industrialized countries, such as the percentage of women in tertiary education or law. But these measures may be inappropriate when considering the Third World context, where the thresholds of who is 'educated' are much different. In Uganda, for example, the election of a woman to political leadership in one village was attributed in part to her education, which numbered only seven years (Johnson, Kabuchu, and Vusiya 2003). Further, in some countries women's participation in civil society may constitute a more common route through which women gain skills to later run for public office. Yet, it is difficult to capture women's participation in organizations or social movements with quantitative measures.

In addition to supply-side factors, institutional differences in political systems may also create a different 'demand' for women (Paxton and Kunovich 2003). Political parties and electoral systems may be structured such that they enhance or limit the ability of groups in government to promote their own interests and therefore, they may be crucial factors in allowing women equal access (Caul 1999, 2001; Gallagher 1998; Kohn 1980; Kunovich and Paxton 2005). The existence of a proportional representation (PR) electoral system has often been found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on female parliamentary representation (Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1994; Matland 1993; Norris 1997; Paxton 1997; Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Rule 1981, 1987).³ The presence or dominance of left-oriented political parties, which are expected to express greater commitment to reducing gender inequality, have also been found to increase levels of female representation (Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Reynolds 1999; Rule 1987). In addition, affirmative action strategies such as national or party-level gender quotas

percent women in professional occupations to be statistically significant; however, Paxton (1997) did not find women's share of management positions to be significant.

³ In PR systems, the parties publish lists of candidates and are therefore more conscious of balancing their tickets to attract support from different constituencies. Moreover, powerful men may remain on party lists, so the appearance of female candidates is less threatening than in a single-member district system (like the U.S.), where parties only nominate a single candidate. Only two broad cross-national studies failed to find PR systems to be significant (Moore and Shackman 1996; Oakes and Almquist 1993).

have been increasingly employed across the world to increase women's representation and are receiving a great deal of scholarly attention (e.g. Caul 2001; Dahlerup 1994, 2006; Johnson, Kabuchu, and Vusiya 2003; Jones 2004; Krook 2003, forthcoming).

Generally, political factors appear more significant than do socioeconomic or structural attributes (Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes 2006). But the political factors analyzed by cross-national or comparative research are often limited to institutional features such as the political system, electoral system, district magnitude, political party characteristics, and level of democracy. Less often does research on women in politics consider the impact of political conflict or change. However, some recent research has examined the effects of democratic transitions (Matland and Montgomery 2003; Yoon 2001).

Ideological beliefs form a third important explanation for levels of female participation in parliament. While a favorable political system may be present alongside an adequate supply of qualified female candidates, cultural norms may still hinder women's opportunities to participate in politics (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Norris and Inglehart 2001; Paxton and Kunovich 2003). Sociological research on women's political representation often models the effects of cultural differences by including dummies for region and religion (e.g., Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Kunovich and Paxton 2005; Paxton 1997). Controlling for structural and political factors, Scandinavian countries tend to outpace other Western industrialized countries in women's parliamentary representation, while regions like the Middle East and Asia fall behind (Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Paxton 1997). Further, the world's major religions advance different views about women's proper roles, some more patriarchal than others (Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes 2007). Indeed, research often finds that predominantly Muslim and Catholic countries have fewer numbers of women in politics than predominantly Protestant

countries (e.g., Kenworthy and Malami 1999). Several recent studies have focused explicitly on the impact of ideology on women's parliamentary representation by utilizing a newly available measure of national gender ideology from the *World Values Survey* (Norris and Inglehart 2001; Paxton and Kunovich 2003). These researchers have not only demonstrated that societal values and beliefs play an important role in women's access to political power throughout the world, but that ideology may have stronger effects on female parliamentary representation than political or structural forces.

To date, cross-national research documenting the impact of ideology on women's political incorporation has been largely cross-sectional in nature (e.g., Paxton and Kunovich 2003). And in the exceptional research that is longitudinal in design, broad cultural factors are used to capture ideology such as religion and colonialism do not vary across time. Thus, quantitative cross-national research has not considered how changing ideas about women may facilitate their access to positions of political power.

ARMED CONFLICT AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Because crisis situations encourage elite turnover and offer new routes to power, elite theorists and researchers have long suggested that crises create opportunities in which women may gain political representation (Goetz 1995; Lipman-Blumen 1973; Putnam 1976). In addition, case studies have demonstrated that under conditions of change that undermine tradition, women in Third World countries may rise to political leadership positions (Chaney 1973; Saint-Germain 1993). Furthermore, although women have historically been unable to translate gains made during periods of crisis into post-conflict political representation, recent research suggests this may be changing (Bauer 2004; Hughes 2004).

Theoretically, internal armed conflict may positively affect both the supply of and the demand for women. First, officially recognized wartime heroism may be an important factor for the rise of women to future positions of power (Denitch 1981). Indeed, although the image of a soldier is usually male, women have fought in battles throughout history and around the world. For instance, during the Ethiopian civil war of the 1980s, roughly one-third of the rebel fighters were women (Bloomfield, Barnes, and Huyse 2003). Soldiering may transform the identity of women. As Bop (2001:21) summarizes, serving as an armed combatant gives participants a sense of power, which leads “women fighters to transform the way they perceive themselves. It has contributed to changing their traditional identity as wives and mothers to that of fighters and liberators of their country.” And once conflict has ended, female combatants may be reluctant to forfeit their newfound identities.

Beyond their participation as combatants, conflict situations may also cause women to enter the public realm through activity in social movements or the formation of women’s organizations. Women in conflict situations create campaigns and demonstrations, institute human rights reporting, lobby for ceasefires, and build networks to care for refugees and support victims of war (Bop 2001; Rehn and Sirleaf 2002). Women active in social movements may then pursue formal political careers once conflict has subsided. For example, many South African women who were active in the anti-apartheid and women’s movements were later incorporated into the government (Bauer and Britton 2006; Kumar 2001). Even if women enter the public realm for reasons completely unrelated to gender, common experiences with sexism may facilitate a collective consciousness that later gives rise to feminist struggle (Shayne 2004). Furthermore, in post-conflict environments, many women’s organizations receive significant support from regional and international sources of aid. In Rwanda, for instance, scholars argue

that “dependence on international funding is an unavoidable reality” (Newbury and Baldwin 2000:10). Through these connections, strategies and tactics to increase women’s legislative representation may be diffused to states.

The structural effects of armed conflict may also be a matter of numbers. While women are more often victims of crimes of war such as rape and forced marriage, men are much more likely to die in combat. For example, although women comprised approximately 30 percent of guerillas in the Nicaraguan Sandanista movement, only around 7% of those killed were women (Kampwirth 2002:2). Thus, across post-conflict societies, women often outnumber men. For instance, following the Rwandan genocide, adult women made up an estimated 56% of the country’s population (Hamilton 2000). Further, during reconstruction men are more likely to face imprisonment. For example, only about 1-5% of the 120,000 facing charges of war crimes in Rwanda have been women (Ciabattari 2000; Hamilton 2000). In post-conflict societies, if women outnumber men in the pool of possible candidates, women may simply be better able to compete for political power.

In addition to the structural effects of armed conflict, wars may also impact the opportunity structure, creating spaces for women to enter. First, research indicates that incumbency effects often hinder the political incorporation of women and minority groups (Putnam 1976). So, when governments are toppled and incumbent politicians are pushed out of office, space is created for new candidates. The institutions of a society may also be completely re-constituted or political parties may realign in ways that benefit women. Further, countries receiving international aid may be more likely to respond to external suggestions for change, including the adoption of quota laws (Tripp, Konate, and Morna 2005). For instance, in Bangladesh, a UN funded governance program allegedly facilitated the both the extension of

lapsed quota legislation and an increase in the quota threshold (UNDP 2000:97; cited from Paxton and Hughes 2006). Thus, as international aid flows into post-conflict societies, countries may be more likely to implement structures and electoral rules that foster women's political representation.

Internal conflict may also positively affect the demand for female candidates by empowering leftist parties or movements that advance women. Groups struggling for independence or to overthrow the current regime often put forth an alternative vision of society, and expanded women's rights becomes part of that vision. For example, during the mid-19th Century, the Taiping Peasant Rebellion in China included demands for sexual equality, and where it won control, foot-binding was banned and women were given governmental positions (Chafetz and Dworkin 1986:137). Women's rights were also recognized as significant for the revolutionary movements' present and future success in countries such as El Salvador and Nicaragua (Labao 1990).

But not all oppositional movements advance a more egalitarian model of gender relations. To distinguish the gendered ideas put forth by different movements, Moghadam (1997, 2003) categorizes two types of revolutions: patriarchal and modernizing. In patriarchal or "woman-in-the-family" revolutions, national liberation is connected to a discourse about women in traditional familial roles (Moghadam 1997:143). Women play a key symbolic role as mothers of the revolution, rather than an active role as revolutionaries. Modernizing revolutions, on the other hand, advance models that serve to emancipate women (Moghadam 1997, 2003). Therefore, a successful modernizing revolution, which empowers a political party or movement that has a stated commitment to the emancipation of women, may be more likely than other types of internal conflict to positively affect women's political representation.

Wars may also alter the political landscape in key ways for women by more broadly facilitating ideological change. As Sambanis (2002) aptly suggests, civil war is “a disruption of social norms that is unparalleled in domestic politics” (217). War has historically allowed women to operate outside of the constraints of traditional gender norms, permitting women access to roles that were previously closed to them. For example, in post-conflict Kosova, women are involved in the new police force, in projects to dismantle mines, and in running farms and businesses (Corrin 2002). While women may enter these new roles only out of necessity, the movement of women out of the home and into the public sphere may alter perceptions about women’s economic and political capabilities, making women more viable candidates. Further, the mere presence of female revolutionaries or guerillas may challenge perceptions about gender (Jaquette 1973).

Yet even if perceptions about women are resistant to change, war may create an environment in which women are more valued politically. Paradoxically, one benefit to women in the post-conflict context may be their previous exclusion from power. As one scholar of post-conflict reconstruction states, “Generally, the people who have been excluded or underrepresented are great partners for change . . . That usually means women” (Enda 2003). As political outsiders, women may be perceived as less corrupt. Given that women are less often armed combatants, the electorate may hold them less responsible for the atrocities of late. Further, the perception that women are more peaceful and cooperative may increase their value to parties and voters, who seek to forge a more peaceful and cooperative government.

Research also suggests that women have succeeded better than men in identifying a commonality and uniting as victims across boundaries of nation, class, religion, and ethnicity (Bloomfield et al. 2003). After conflict subsides, women who were “enemies only yesterday”

form associations bridging ethnic groups (Bop 2001:23). Therefore, in post-conflict situations, women may constitute an important coalition. For example, at the Somali National Peace Conference, women presented themselves as a ‘sixth clan’ (delegations came from four major clans and a coalition of minor ones) that reached beyond ethnicity to a “vision of gender equality” (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002:78).

Based on the above research, I suggest seven causal mechanisms by which armed conflict may increase women’s numbers in national politics. These mechanisms are summarized in Figure 1, categorized into structural, political and cultural forces.⁴

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Although these mechanisms suggest that internal armed conflict may further women’s political representation, research cautions that armed conflict is far from a panacea for women’s advancement. Indeed, feminist scholars often indict revolutions and liberation movements as inimical to women’s interests (Moghadam 1995). Although women often play a crucial role at the initial stages of resistance to authoritarian rule (Jaquette 1994), and gender differences may be suspended during times of conflict, there is evidence that women find it hard to convert their activities into political representation once conventional political activity resumes (Geisler 1995; Waylen 1994). Women held combatant roles in the revolutionary movements of Algeria, China, Nicaragua, Rhodesia, Russia, the U.S., Vietnam, and Yugoslavia; yet in each of these cases following the conflict’s resolution, women left the military and returned to more traditional roles (De Pauw 1981; Enloe 1980; Denich 1981; Geisler 1995; Goldman 1982).

⁴ Although I broadly categorize each mechanism as structural, political, or cultural, they do not fit neatly into these categories. Indeed, these mechanisms often impact multiple domains simultaneously. For instance, the influence of changing gender roles is both a structural and cultural change.

One explanation for differences in outcomes for women across conflicts is that women's mobilization itself may be more or less feminist in nature (Shayne 2004). Across almost all wars, women utilize their femininity to advance the goals of revolution. As Shayne (2004:160) explains:

It was femininity that allowed women to transfer weapons in their fabricated bellies. It was femininity that enabled women to travel relatively safely through militarized airports with 100,000 U.S. dollars earmarked for the purchase of weapons. . . . It was femininity that allowed women to protest as mothers, confront the military face to face, and in some cases continue marching unharmed.

But not all female activists are feminists (Molyneaux 1985). Indeed, women's organization as mothers and wives may embrace rather than contest traditional gender roles (Shayne 2004). Further, women's participation in feminine rather than feminist ways may allow males to underacknowledge women's contribution to the struggle. So, after conflict subsides women may be relegated to "feminine" positions in caring ministries or pushed out of government altogether (Shayne 2004).

Another explanation for women's difficulty in converting wartime activity to peacetime gains is that women are largely denied access to peace negotiation processes and representation in decision-making bodies (Bloomfield et al. 2003). For example, despite the fact that as many as 30 percent of the fighters of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) are women, FARC included only one woman among its representatives to official negotiations with the Columbian government. Therefore, after conflict has subsided, women's organizing efforts, as well as their roles as combatants and political leaders in national liberation movements, are ignored.

Beyond the challenges of consolidation, it is also important to recognize that not all episodes of internal conflict are equally likely to generate changes in women's political opportunities and outcomes. Research suggests that only large-scale civil wars that contest the

nature or composition of the government benefit women in politics (Hughes 2004). Smaller-scale conflicts may not facilitate the structural, ideological, and political mechanisms that foster change. And wars fought over territory, rather than the government, may be less likely to produce the political openings necessary to further women's political representation. Indeed, while countries that experienced a recent government war increased the number of women in parliament by an average of 7 percent, countries that fought territory wars only gained 2 percent women. But beyond these broad statistics, we know little about the causal mechanisms that produce gains for women in politics following government wars.

METHODS

To investigate the mechanisms through which armed conflict could impact women's political representation, I review scholarship on women and war in four countries: Mozambique, Rwanda, Tajikistan, and Uganda. Because post-conflict gains in women's political representation have only been observed in recent years, these countries were selected because they experienced lengthy internal civil wars during the 1980s to early 1990s. In each of these countries, combatants contested the type of political system or composition of the government. And after conflict subsided, women in each of these countries experienced significant political gains. Table 1 presents the conflict specifics for these four countries over the 1980s and 1990s.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

I present short case studies for each of the selected countries. Data sources include journal articles, books, online reports, government documents, and news stories. After discussing each case, I draw comparisons across countries to determine which mechanisms are operating to further women's legislative gains.

CASE STUDIES

Rwanda

In recent years women's parliamentary success in Rwanda has generated increasing attention from both scholars and activists (Ciabattari 2000; Enda 2003; Hamilton 2000; Mutamba 2005; Newbury and Baldwin 2000; Powley 2005; Schwartz 2005; Women for Women International (hereafter WWI) 2004). Interestingly, this research suggests that in post-war Rwanda, almost every mechanism hypothesized in Figure 1 is, at minimum, present. Indeed, except for the rise of a leftist movement previously committed to women's emancipation, any of the structural, political or ideological changes produced by the civil war could plausibly be driving the increases in women's political representation.

Although women took part in the resistance, female fighters were only a small percentage of the guerillas who put an end to the genocide in Rwanda (Mutamba 2005). Thus, most research on women in Rwanda focuses on the role of women and women's groups in the aftermath of the genocide. Immediately after the killing subsided, women's associations began to step into the void (Powley 2005). These organizations were supported by international aid, which assisted their development at both the grass-roots and national levels. By 1997, more than 15,400 women's organizations were operating in Rwanda (Newbury and Baldwin 2000).

Beyond numbers, women and women's organizations played important roles throughout the rebuilding process (Longman 2005; Newbury and Baldwin 2000; Powley 2005; WWI 2004). For example, as early as 1994, under the umbrella of a preexisting organization of women's associations called Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe, women drafted a document addressing Rwanda's post-conflict problems and suggesting how women could foster reconciliation (Newbury and Baldwin 2000). But to advance peace, women also moved beyond words to

action. For instance, in 1998, women served as mediators and civilian authorities to effectively end the ongoing insurgency in northern Rwanda (Mutamba 2005). And building up to the new constitution adopted in 2003, Pro-Femmes served as a key advocate for women by eliciting suggestions from women at the grass-roots level, meeting with the state gender machinery, making recommendations to ensure that the constitution increased women's political representation, and then lobbying for constitution's adoption (Powley 2005).

Incorporating women's associations into the reconstruction effort facilitated the adoption of political factors that further empowered women. As one Rwandan woman involved in the process reported: "We got almost everything we asked for, including the 30% quota for women" (WWI 2004:16). Indeed, in the post-conflict period, Rwanda established institutional and electoral structures quite favorable to women. In addition to adopting a party-list proportional representation system and a 30 percent gender quota, the transitional government established gender machinery favorable to women, including women's councils, the Ministry for Gender and Women in Development, and gender posts in all other government and ministerial bodies.

In addition to structural and political changes, research on Rwanda also highlights the importance of changing perceptions of women's capabilities. For instance, one female parliamentarian in Rwanda stated, "Men and women both took part in the fight against the genocide, even at the front. When the men saw how tough the women were...they saw what women were capable of and the value of collaborating with them" (WWI 2004:12). Following the genocide, women not only became heads of their household and took on traditionally male occupations such as house construction and security, but they also "came forward in large numbers to adopt 400,000 orphans regardless of their ethnicity" (Mutamba 2005:15). Based on interviews with Rwandans, Mutamba (2005) concludes that women shouldering these burdens

generated both the political will and public support required to advance women's political empowerment.

Mozambique

At first glance, gains in women's political representation in Mozambique appear that they could be the result of a modernizing revolution. After Mozambique's civil war came to an end, the leftist revolutionary party FRELIMO won a majority in the parliamentary elections. And FRELIMO, the Liberation Front of Mozambique, had long espoused a commitment to women's emancipation. Indeed, as early as 1973, FRELIMO's leader Samora Machel stated that "The liberation of women is a fundamental necessity for the Revolution, the guarantee of its continuity and the precondition for its victory" (Sheldon 1994:34).

But the empowerment of a leftist revolutionary party cannot alone explain women's post-conflict gains in Mozambique because the civil war did not bring FRELIMO to power. In fact, FRELIMO initially formed during the 10-year resistance movement against Portuguese colonialism, and the party has governed the country since its independence in 1975. Furthermore, in the post-war elections, the rise of democracy meant that FRELIMO's representation in parliament was actually cut significantly. Therefore, neither the empowerment of a new leftist political party nor a regime change led to the increases in women's political representation in post-war Mozambique.

So what explains the significant increase in women's political representation after the end of Mozambique's 12 year civil war? Focusing on political factors, research suggests that democratization led to the adoption of new institutional, electoral, and party rules that facilitated greater levels of women's political representation (Tripp, Konate, and Morna 2005; van Kessel

1999). Specifically, the introduction of proportional representation electoral systems and gender quotas appear as the most proximate causes of women's political gains in recent years. But this conclusion belies FRELIMO's significant and central role in women's political gains in Mozambique. Indeed, it was FRELIMO that drove the post-conflict changes in women's numbers. FRELIMO elected 48 women out of 129 deputies, or 37%, while RENAMO, the opposition party, elected only 12 women out of 112 deputies, or 11% (Baden 1997).

FRELIMO has long demonstrated a commitment to emancipating women. As Urdang (1989) recounts, efforts to translate a rhetoric of equality into practice were, "already underway in the liberated zones prior to independence. Countless women were working in FRELIMO as political mobilizers, some rising in the ranks of leadership. Many more were bearing arms..." (Urdang 1989:22). In 1968, women were organized into the Female Detachment, an all-female military unit (Disney 2006; Urdang 1989). Civilian women were also organized through the foundation of the Organization of Mozambican Women (OMM), which grew out of the Women's Detachment to become the first women's organization in Mozambique (Disney 2006). All together, women's efforts were not only conceptualized as contributing to the country's liberation, but to their own liberation as well. As one 1973 report summarized, "by joining the struggle at all levels, [women] are opening up new prospects for their future, destroying in practice the concepts which relegated them to a passive and voiceless role in society" (Mozambique Revolution 54:23; cited from West 2000:185).

In 1975, FRELIMO reached its goal of liberating Mozambique from the Portuguese, and the country declared its independence. But peace was short-lived. By 1977, an anti-communist resistance movement called the Mozambique Resistance Movement, or RENAMO, had already formed. Over the next 16 years, a bloody civil war raged between FRELIMO and RENAMO,

resulting in an estimated one million casualties, the displacement of at least six million people, and tremendous structural damage (Baden 1997). In fact, by the war's end, Mozambique was "one of the poorest, most aid dependent and indebted countries in the world, and had some of the worst indicators in health and education internationally" (Baden 1997:viii).

During the civil war, FRELIMO supported women's greater economic roles and instituted new laws and policies to protect women's rights, including protections against bridewealth, forced marriage, and polygyny (Baden 1997; Urdang 1989). But similar to other Marxist revolutions, women's emancipation remained an incomplete project. Even OMM continued to reinforce women's domestic and reproductive roles alongside the burdens of work and political participation. And women's political representation in the national level did not approach parity. Until 1994, women only secured around 12-16% of seats in the national legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union 1997).

Overall, a combination of structural, ideological, and political mechanisms produced changes in women's political representation in post-conflict Mozambique. Decades of war against internal and external threats in the presence of an emancipatory ideology politicized women and altered women's accepted roles. But it was not until the introduction of multiparty competition that FRELIMO fully advanced women's legislative representation nationally. Given FRELIMO's previous efforts to improve women's status, the party may have assessed the strategic value in fielding a large percentage of female candidates. If so, their strategy paid off, since as a result of the 1994 elections, the party successfully held on to political power.

Uganda

As in Mozambique, armed conflict in Uganda ostensibly brought to power a leftist government. Although the victors, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), pursued policies of economic liberalization after the collapse of the USSR, the party initially established a Marxist-oriented one-party state. Also similar to Mozambique, the resistance incorporated women into its governing structure during the war. As the NRM gained control over areas of the country, it constructed governing bodies called resistance councils and committees (RCs) that each included at least one woman member (Tamale 1999). But unlike in Mozambique, leaders of the NRM did *not* establish gender transformation as central to the revolution. As one NRM guerilla summarized, “The NRM leadership was fully aware of the extent of women’s oppression and in principle it opposed sex discrimination. However, in practice, the leadership did not openly speak against male domination” (Byanyima 1992:140). Indeed, Ugandan scholar Silvia Tamale (1999:20) characterizes the NRM’s pro-woman position as mostly “lip service” (20).

So, without an ideology of women’s emancipation guiding the new government, why would male leaders incorporate women into political positions? Sources present several mechanisms by which armed conflict empowered women in Uganda (Ankrah 1987; Goetz 2002; Ottemoeller 1999; Tamale 1999; Tripp 2001; Watson 1988). First, by most accounts women’s agency was crucial to their political empowerment. Women played an active role in the combat “recruiting, espionage, procurement of supplies, and attending to the sick and injured” (Tamale 1999:19). And after the conflict, women’s groups demanded greater representation at all levels of decisionmaking:

In 1986, leading women’s rights organizations started to publicly lobby for female political appointments, a ministry for women, for every ministry to have a women’s desk, and for women’s representation in the local government at all levels. ... Many of the women’s recommendations were adopted immediately, including the appointments of nine women ministers.” (Tripp 2001:112)

But these demands were not initiated by a broad-based women's movement. Indeed, the growth of the women's movement had been suppressed by prior non-democratic regimes (Goetz 2002). And only a limited number of urban women's organizations mobilized after the NRM take-over (Goetz 2002).

The personal support of President Museveni for women's rights is also judged as a key factor explaining women's political gains in Uganda. As Goetz (1998) summarizes, "Museveni's support has been a tremendous piece of political luck for the women's movement. This contingent variable—support for gender equity issues from a top national leader—is a critical yet unpredictable ingredient for success in feminist politics." Interestingly, as a young man, Museveni lived in Tanzania, where he developed a relationship with FRELIMO (Tamale 1999). Since FRELIMO did include gender as an explicit part of its revolution, Museveni himself may have believed in the emancipation of women, regardless of the gender ideology espoused by the NRM. But political expediency may also explain why Museveni would incorporate women. As Tamale (1999:17) observes, "What better way to show the international community that NRM is committed to democracy than to make women more visible within the arena of decisionmaking?"

However, scholars suggest that the political opportunity context alone could not explain women's post-conflict gains. Although the NRM leadership may have "seized on gender as a political issue," they "found a ready supply of female political activists anxious to assume roles in formal politics. The NRM did not give women a role in formal politics as much as it opened the door to women who were already clamoring to enter the formal political realm" (Ottemoeller 1999:92). Furthermore, women were "clamoring" to enter politics because they had been politicized by the war. As Tripp (1994:115) argues, "[Y]ears of internal warfare in Uganda had

profound effects on women's self-perceptions and men's perceptions of women... It unwittingly thrust women into new roles and situations which fundamentally transformed their consciousness" (Tripp 1994:115). Overall, therefore, a combination of structural, political, and ideological mechanisms appear to have enabled women's political gains in Uganda.

Tajikistan

In contrast to Rwanda, Mozambique, and Uganda, many of the hypothesized mechanisms for the impact of armed conflict on women's legislative outcomes are not present in Tajikistan. Women did not comprise a significant percentage of combatants during the civil war. And although an estimated 50,000 men died in the conflict, men still outnumbered women after the war subsided (CIA 1995). Politically, the civil war did not produce regime change, nor newly empower a leftist movement committed to women's emancipation (Human Rights Watch 2001). And despite changes in women's productive roles, traditional attitudes towards women's status and their proper place remain (Dikaev 2004; Falkingham 2000; Kasymbekova 2005). In fact, women themselves do not believe they can be elected to government. In one NGO-backed survey, more than half the women interviewed said they would like to run for local councils, but around 12% "believed they would have no chance of being elected," and 23% "expressed doubt that they could get support from voters" (Kasymbekova 2005).

Although research indicates that the civil war in Tajikistan did not facilitate widespread changes empowering women (Kuvatova 2001, 2004; United Nations 2004), there are positive post-conflict forces at work. First, in Tajikistan after the war, many women sought to escape poverty and unemployment by founding NGOs, often with the aid of international funds (Times of Central Asia 2005). More than 70 women's NGOs have been founded since the conflict, and

more than 35% of NGOs in Tajikistan are headed by women (Falkingham 2000; Kuvatova 2001). Although these NGOs have been criticized as having little to no influence on government policy, women are still gaining valuable training and management skills in the public sector (Times of Central Asia 2005). As one international activist reports, “By assuming leadership roles, these women have been able to address all the community’s priority problems. This has raised their stature within the community, and they feel proud of their achievements” (World Bank 2003).

Some research suggests that the efforts of women’s organizations may have positively impacted women’s political representation. Following the civil war, local women’s organizations and INGOs organized conferences and meetings. These activities resulted in two key changes to the institutional and political context (Kuvatova 2004). First, in 1998 the government passed the National Plan of Action on Improvement of Women’s Status, a plan that includes provisions for women’s political incorporation. The following year in December, President Imomali Rahmonov issued a decree “requiring ministries, regional and city governments, courts and prosecutor’s offices, universities and other state institutions to employ at least one woman as deputy director” (Kasymbekova 2005). Thus, elections in 2000 followed a succession of political promises to place women into positions of power.

Comparing Across Cases

Table 2 presents a summary of the hypothesized mechanisms across the four cases. Looking across the table, the cases of Rwanda, Mozambique, and Uganda share a number of similarities. Across each of these cases, women’s structural position in society was altered significantly by their roles during and/or after the conflict. Each of these cases also suggests that changes in

cultural attitudes and women's post-war political utility may play important roles in women's post-conflict gains. Alternatively, the political mechanisms functioning in these three cases differ significantly across the countries. Indeed, although Rwanda and Uganda experienced regime changes, Mozambique did not. And while Rwanda and Mozambique instituted proportional representation electoral systems during reconstruction, Uganda's no-party state uses a majoritarian system. Furthermore, though none of the cases is an ideal example of the rise of a leftist emancipatory movement facilitating women's political empowerment, this mechanism may be part of the story in Uganda.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Assessing the cases together, Tajikistan presents the weakest evidence that the mechanisms of internal war directly facilitated gains in women's political representation. Therefore, it is possible that the effects of civil war are spurious in this case. Absent the civil war in Tajikistan, women's presence in the national legislature could have reached the same levels. But it is equally possible that the post-war political context created space for international norms of women's political representation to take hold. In fact, Tajikistan may have incorporated a greater number of women into politics to attract additional international aid. Regardless, across this small sample of countries that experienced internal government wars, Tajikistan stands out as an atypical case.

The sum of this research demonstrates that government wars generate a range of political, structural, and ideological mechanisms that may contribute to women's legislative gains. This analysis does not allow me to determine whether any of these mechanisms would be sufficient to enable change by itself, whether a constellation of forces is necessary to produce the observed gains, or whether there are varied but equivalent routes through which armed conflict may

benefit women. Furthermore, with the presence of multiple causal forces, it remains difficult to determine whether pressure for change was generated externally by activists, women's organizations, and INGOs, or whether changes were driven by perceptions by government leaders and political parties regarding women's utility. Still, these brief case studies demonstrate that the mechanisms hypothesized to impact women's political empowerment are at play in these cases of post-conflict gains.

CONCLUSION

Periods of war affect women differently than men. While men more often die on the battlefield, women disproportionately suffer crimes such as rape, forced prostitution, and other atrocities. Women in post-conflict situations are more often displaced, as widows struggle to hold onto property in societies that do not recognize their rights. However, my research suggests that post-conflict situations present windows of political opportunity through which women are gaining political power. At the intersection of these two social problems, women's political underrepresentation and the devastating effects of civil war, there may be hope for women seeking political access.

Internal government wars may place women on the "fast track" to legislative gains (Dahlerup and Friedenvall 2005). Recent research on women's political incorporation recognizes that not all countries advance women's political representation the same way. Scandinavian countries like Sweden emphasized structural changes in women's status and institutionalized gains in women's political representation across several decades (Dahlerup and Friedenvall 2005). But today, many countries are jumping on the "fast track" to women's political equality, adopting mechanisms such as gender quotas to facilitate women's entry.

Countries that are rebuilding after devastating conflicts may be more likely than other countries to adopt this fast-track perspective. Indeed, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda all adopted gender quotas after their civil wars came to an end.

Yet, my findings also suggest that more is happening in post-conflict societies than simply the introduction of gender quotas. Across the last two decades, many countries and political parties have adopted gender quotas, but many of these laws and party regulations prove ineffective (Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2003). Alternatively, in the post-conflict cases analyzed here, women are reaching levels of representation far above those mandated by each country's gender quotas. While new institutional rules following government civil wars may explain some of women's fast-track gains, the in-depth case evidence presented here suggests that other mechanisms may also be at play.

The cases investigated here suggest that civil wars have important structural and ideological implications that may be necessary to ensure post-conflict gains. Since territorial wars do not positively impact women's legislative representation, it is likely that structural arguments alone may not explain women's post-conflict political gains. But in the presence of a political opening, women's agency may still be crucial. Indeed, across Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda, women's efforts during and/or after the conflict were visible and were judged as important by the post-war governments. And although women were not always given a seat at the table during negotiations for peace, women's groups and international organizations consistently lobbied post-war governments to ensure that women were given a voice in the new government.

In many parts of the world, the representation of women remains "little more than a blip on the male political landscape" (Reynolds 1999:547). But even across the less developed

world, women seeking political office have made significant gains. While we know from research on democratization that new political institutions often lead to declines in women's political representation, the devastating effects of war may also provide opportunities for a new political voice for women.

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Figure 1. Mechanisms Through Which Armed Conflict May Increase Women's Political Representation

Structural

- 1) Influx of qualified female candidates: women are politicized by serving as soldiers or through activity in women's organizations or social movements.
- 2) Demographic change: men who were in power have been killed or jailed, and as a percentage of the adult population, women outnumber men.

Political

- 3) Regime change: incumbent politicians are pushed out of office creating spaces for women.
- 4) Overhaul of the political system: internal or external pressure produces institutional change, party realignment, or the adoption of new electoral or party rules that facilitate women's entry.
- 5) Modernizing revolution: the empowerment of a leftist party or movement that includes women's emancipation as a stated goal leads to more women in political positions.

Cultural

- 6) Changing gender roles: women take on new wartime responsibilities challenging perceptions about women's proper place.
 - 7) Political utility of women increases: parties and/or voters place a greater value on women's perceived characteristics (e.g., peaceful, cooperative).
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Table 1. Conflict Specifics and Change in Women's Political Representation for Selected Countries, 1981-2000

Country	Years	Opposition	Pre-War	2000	Change
Mozambique	1981-1992	Renamo	12.4	30.0	17.6
Rwanda	1991-1992	Rwandan Patriotic Front	17.1	25.7	8.6
Tajikistan	1992-1993	United Tajik Opposition	3.0	12.7	9.7
Uganda	1981-1989,1991	NRA, UFM, UPM, UNRF, UFD, UPF, UPDA, UPC, UNLA, FOBA, HSM, UJPA, UDCM, UPDCA	0.8	17.8	17.0
<i>Mean</i>	<i>7.0</i>		<i>8.3</i>	<i>21.6</i>	<i>13.2</i>
<i>Std Deviation</i>	<i>5.2</i>		<i>7.7</i>	<i>7.8</i>	<i>4.7</i>

Table 2. Hypothesized Mechanisms of Change across Four Selected Cases

Hypothesis	Rwanda	Uganda	Mozambique	Tajikistan
Structural				
<i>H1a</i> : Significant % Female Combatants	No	Yes	Yes	No
<i>H1b</i> : Increase in Women's Organization	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	women's organizations proliferated and were active in building the new government	the post-war context facilitated a growing and more independent women's movement	women are active both within the post-revolutionary party and in autonomous groups	conflict fostered a rising number of women-led NGOs but not a mass women's movement
<i>H2</i> : Sex Ratio F:M (1995)	1.03	1.02	1.05	0.99
Political				
<i>H3</i> : Regime Change	Yes	Yes	No	No
<i>H4</i> : Electoral System and Gender Quotas	PR, quotas	FPTP, quotas	PR, quotas	Mixed-PR, no quotas
<i>H5</i> : Empowerment of Leftist Party with Emancipatory Ideology	No	Yes, but gender not considered central to the leftist revolution	No, leftists were already in power prior to post-conflict gains	No
Ideological				
<i>H6</i> : Changing Gender Roles	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>H7</i> : Political Utility	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Civil War Years	1991-1992	1981-1989,1991	1981-1992	1992-1993
Change in % Women, Pre-War to 2000	8.6%	17.0%	17.6%	12.0%
% Women in Lower House, 2006	48.8%	29.8%	34.8%	17.5%