



# Who benefits from gender quotas? Assessing the impact of election procedure reform on Members of Parliament's attributes in Uganda

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## Abstract

Employing a before-and-after comparison, this article exploits a reform of the Ugandan quota law to test if a change in election procedures affects the types of women elected through quotas. In Uganda, a change from indirect to direct elections was anticipated to bring in women who were more representative of female citizens at large and less loyal to the sitting regime. Using original data from 1296 biographies of Ugandan legislators spanning four mandate periods (1996–2016), this study shows that women elected before and after the 2006 reform are similar in most regards. Yet, compared with the indirectly elected women, women elected by universal suffrage in 2006 have higher levels of education and are less likely to report an interest in women's issues. Comparisons with non-quota representatives suggest, however, that these trends are not due to the change to direct elections, but rather the effect of something that influences all legislators in a similar manner.

## Keywords

Descriptive representation, electoral reform, gender quotas, Uganda

## Introduction

Debates over gender quotas worldwide have to a large extent focused on the types of women elected through these measures. Advocates of the reform, such as scholars and activists, have argued that an increase in the numbers of women elected will lead to a greater diversity of female legislators with regards to their political, cultural, social and economic backgrounds. Opponents, on the other hand, worry that quotas will produce elite women, far from representative of female citizens, or, even worse, unqualified women who will lower the overall standard of elected officials. Thus, women elected through quotas often face a 'double bind': they are expected to be as

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experienced and educated as male legislators and, at the same time, be more representative of female citizens (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2012).

While research assessing the effects of quotas has started to extend the concept of descriptive representation by looking beyond numbers to investigate the attributes of women elected through quotas (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2012; Murray, 2010; O'Brien, 2012), analyses of the factors that account for variations in these women's qualifications and experiences have been scarce. In this article, the focus is on one such factor, namely, how quota women are elected. The Ugandan case is explored to test whether a reform of the election procedures for the reserved seats for women promotes the election of a different type of quota legislator. This study thus employs a comparative approach by investigating quota women's attributes before and after rule change. Despite Uganda being in the forefront of women's political representation in Africa, the country's quota system has been heavily criticised for its cronyism and elitism – for bringing in elite women who are both unrepresentative of the female population and too closely allied with the ruling party to effectively challenge its patriarchal agenda (Goetz, 2003; Tamale, 1999; Tripp, 2006).

An often-cited rationale for the system's shortcomings has been the mechanisms of selection and election to the reserved seats. When the system was introduced in 1989, women in these seats were selected by a small electoral college composed mainly of male party elites. Since 2006, however, the quota women have been elected in their district-wide constituencies by universal suffrage. This reform was expected to promote a different type of female politician: grassroots women beholden to the people instead of elite token women uninterested in challenging the patriarchal agenda of the ruling party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) (Goetz, 2003; Tamale, 2004).

Using data from 1296 biographies of legislators in four parliaments (1996–2016), I test these anticipations and find that quota women elected in direct elections are in most regards similar to their predecessors elected by the electoral college. Nevertheless, women elected after 2006 are more educated and less prone to report an interest in women's issues. The simultaneous reintroduction of a multiparty system in 2006 and the fact that the directly elected quota women must now canvass votes and run campaigns in large constituencies could explain these unexpected results.

## **Why election procedures matter to women's political representation**

In Hanna Pitkin's (1967) seminal work, *The Concept of Representation*, descriptive representation refers to the basic attributes of the elected legislators and how well they mirror the social group from which they are drawn. Substantive representation, on the other hand, occurs when legislators seek and are able to promote the interests and priorities of their constituents (Pitkin, 1967). Normative arguments for group representation and quotas emphasise the effects that descriptive representation will have on the policy responsiveness or substantive representation of the targeted group. Even though, in most cases, quotas increase the numbers of women in office, the available evidence suggests that their impact on women's substantive representation has been mixed at best (Franceschet et al., 2012; Zetterberg, 2009). Countries across sub-Saharan Africa have been particularly successful in increasing women's descriptive representation through the use of quotas, yet these reforms' impact on women's substantive representation is more varied (for an overview, see Bauer, 2012).

In order to understand when quotas enable or thwart women's substantive representation, I argue that women's attributes and the broader institutional arrangements must be taken into account. Legislators' backgrounds, interests and loyalties should be crucial to the politics they pursue and whether they are able to create a space for themselves to act autonomously. Thus, in this article, the concept of descriptive representation is expanded to imply not only the *numbers* of

women, but also their *attributes* (see Franceschet and Piscopo, 2012; Murray, 2010; O'Brien, 2012). Women elected on quotas face a double bind: if they do not have the education and political experience equivalent to their male counterparts, they are deemed undeserving and treated as tokens. On the other hand, if they have similar backgrounds to those of the male politicians, they are criticised for being too 'elite' to adequately represent female citizens (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2012; O'Brien, 2012).

The debate over quota women's qualifications is thus intimately connected to the prospects of women's substantive representation once in parliament. While 'elite' women resembling their male counterparts in parliament might have the power and experience to carve out a space for themselves to further their personal agendas within parliament, many fear that they will not promote the interests of female citizens due to their elite backgrounds. On the other hand, female politicians who resemble women in society to a greater extent, and thus, in this sense, may be better representatives for women in general, may at the same time lack the experience and respect within the legislature to effectively advance women's substantive representation.

Research on electoral systems and political parties has shown that the mode of election and candidate selection affect both who enters the legislature and the autonomy and behaviour of the elected legislators (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Crisp and Ingall, 2002; Crisp et al., 2004; Rahat and Hazan, 2001; Siavelis and Morgenstern, 2008). Forms of election and selection, in particular, have been shown to foster different candidate types, beholden to particular selectorates, such as party leaders, constituents, themselves or some functional or cultural group (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Crisp and Ingall, 2002; Siavelis and Morgenstern, 2008). In turn, loyalties towards the selectorate influence legislators' political behaviour once in office by shaping the legislators' campaign behaviour, personal vote-seeking and representative orientation, as well as legislative discipline and support for the president (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Siavelis and Morgenstern, 2008).

Connecting these insights to research on gender quotas, Zetterberg (2009) argues that how quota women are elected will affect these women's legislative autonomy and their possibilities to substantively represent women's issues. In cases where quota women are selected by a small group of party elites and where the process is characterised by patronage, the legislative autonomy of quota women is likely to be circumscribed and the party mandate may trump the mandate to represent women. Yet, in instances where women elected through quotas are selected by women's groups, female legislators are beholden to these groups and thus are more likely to further women's causes in front of their political party's platform (Zetterberg, 2009). This points to a possible paradox in quotas' effects on descriptive and substantive representation. While a selectorate consisting of a small elite can ensure the implementation of quotas (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson, 2008), an exclusive selectorate may, at the same time, circumscribe these women's possibilities to represent women's interests.

## Research design

The Ugandan case exemplifies this paradox well. While the country has been successful in increasing the number of women through its quota system of reserved seats, the system has been criticised for hampering women's substantive representation. This study takes advantage of a change from indirect to direct elections to test if the attributes of quota women are affected by how they are elected. Previous research occupied with the effects of institutions of selection and election commonly exploit electoral reforms to study changes in the behaviour and composition of the legislature (Crisp and Ingall, 2002; Hinojosa and Franceschet, 2012). The advantage with such an approach, compared with using a large number of cases is that it is possible to hold various factors constant, without controlling for them statistically.

**Table 1.** Composition of the Ugandan Parliament, 1996–2016.

	District women MPs	Female county MPs	Male county MPs	Interest groups +ex-officio members	Total number of legislators
6th Parliament, 1996–2001	38	9	204	27	278
7th Parliament, 2001–2006	55	11	202	34	302
8th Parliament, 2006–2011	79	16	199	38	332
9th Parliament, 2011–2016	110	12	228	34	384

### Case selection

The current president, Yoweri Museveni, and the NRM came to power in 1986. One of the first things they did was introduce a ‘no-party’ system (the ‘Movement System’), arguing that political parties create ethnic conflict and that an inclusive and consultative no-party democracy would bring stability to Uganda. Under the Movement System, political parties were prohibited from participating in elections and electoral candidates have been elected as individuals.

As part of a wider strategy to garner and solidify support among various groups in order to secure regime stability, the NRM regime adopted a system of reserved seats for women, the disabled, youth and workers in 1989. The system was entrenched in the 1995 Constitution and since then, the Ugandan Parliament has consisted of roughly four groups of legislators: county representatives elected through a first-past-the-post system in single-member constituencies; district women representatives elected at the larger district level (covering one to five smaller county constituencies); representatives of the army, people with disabilities, youth and workers; and ex-officio members appointed by the president. In the parliamentary elections in 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011, the number of reserved seats for women has been expanded through a continuous creation of new districts. Apart from the district women representatives, a few women have also managed to win county seats (see Table 1).

While the adoption of quotas in Uganda is primarily seen as a tactical, top-down measure (Goetz, 2003; Hanssen, 2005; Tamale, 1999), the reserved seats have also benefited vulnerable and previously excluded groups, such as women and the disabled, who have developed vested interests in the survival of the system (Muriaas and Wang, 2012). Yet, despite women’s unprecedented gains in Ugandan politics, the quota system has been heavily criticised for creating a group of legislators beholden more to the NRM than to the cause of women’s emancipation (Tamale, 1999). The closeness of the quota women to the NRM regime has raised questions concerning the autonomy of these women and their ability to change the political agenda (Ahikire and Madanda, 2009; Hanssen, 2005).

One factor commonly cited for the system’s shortcomings is that until 2006, the district women MPs were excluded from direct elections and instead selected by an electoral college consisting of NRM leaders (mostly male) from all five levels of the local government system. In the 1989 elections, all legislators were elected via an electoral college. In the subsequent elections, the county representatives were elected by universal suffrage, while the other interest group representatives were elected through their own organisations. Women in the reserved seats, however, were not regarded as representatives *of women*, but as female representatives for their respective *districts*,<sup>1</sup> translating into this different mode of election.

The electoral college has been accused of promoting elite women who have neither had the power nor the will to further women's interests (Tripp, 2004, 2006). It has been argued that the electoral college is more susceptible to manipulation and bribery and that wealthy elite women who have the resources to procure the support of the electoral college have had an advantage over more ordinary women (Ahikire, 2004; Goetz, 2003). While some claimed that the best option would be to elect these women through women's organisations, the majority argued for direct universal suffrage given that the women in reserved seats are supposed to represent all their constituents (not only women) (Tamale, 1999; Tripp, 2006). Universal suffrage, according to its proponents, would be more democratic, and the women would gain greater legitimacy and be accountable directly to the people whom they are supposed to represent (Tamale, 2004).

In 2006, the regime reformed the manner of election to the reserved seats, and since then, the district female representatives have been elected by the people in their district. Noteworthy here is evidence suggesting that women's substantive representation, in terms of enacted pro-women laws, improved in the 8th Parliament after the reform was implemented (Muriaas and Wang, 2012).<sup>2</sup>

Also important to note is that the electoral reform coincided with the country's return to a multiparty system. In a referendum in July 2005, the Ugandans voted for a return to multiparty politics and in the following elections in 2006 and 2011, NRM won landslide victories. Thus, since 2006, NRM has remained very dominant and Uganda could still be characterised as a semi-authoritarian state (Tripp, 2010). The main opposition party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), lost seats in the Parliament in the 2011 elections, receiving 9% of the seats, compared with 13% of the seats in the 2006 elections.

## Data

The Ugandan case thus permits an analysis of how a change in election procedures might shape the attributes of women elected via gender quotas. Additionally, the existence of biographical data for *all* parliamentarians over a long period of time implies that the men and women elected to the regular county seats can serve as control groups for the district women representatives, given that the election procedures for the county seats have remained the same during the period studied. Trends in the characteristics of the women elected to the reserved seats can thus be compared with the trends in the characteristics of the county representatives, and effects of the reserved seats reform affecting only district women can thus roughly be separated from effects of the multiparty system affecting all representatives.

I conduct the analysis using an original data set constructed from 1296 individual biographies covering four legislative terms between 1996 and 2016. It includes information on legislators' seat type, constituency, party identification, age, marital status, education, profession, work history and special interests.<sup>3</sup> The data from the first two mandate periods was collected during a field trip to Uganda (December 2009–February 2010), the data from the third term was available online and coded by Diana O'Brien (see O'Brien, 2012), and the data from the current session is currently available online on the website of the Ugandan Parliament.<sup>4</sup>

Compared with other studies assessing the qualifications and attributes of quota women (see Franceschet and Piscopo, 2012; Murray, 2010; O'Brien, 2012), this study has the advantage of data spanning a long period of time, with the implication that both short- and long-term effects of the electoral reform can be assessed. In contrast to legislative quotas that apply to party lists, the reserved seat system also allows for a comparison between quota women, non-quota women and men. By using Chi<sup>2</sup> tests and, when appropriate, Fisher exact tests, the biographies of the district women representatives in the 6th and 7th Parliaments (selected by an electoral college) are

compared with the biographies of the district women representatives in the 8th and 9th Parliaments (elected by universal suffrage).

### *Hypotheses*

Using this data, I test two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that, as scholars, activists and the legislators themselves have argued, the change to direct elections will advantage women who are less loyal to the NRM, less elite and more representative of the female population at large in terms of their background and previous experience (Goetz, 2003; Tamale, 1999, 2004). This claim is tested by comparing the educational level, occupational background and previous political experience of the women elected to reserved seats before and after the electoral reform:

H1: The universal election will bring in women who are 'less elite' and less loyal to the NRM

Expectations regarding the type of women elected are closely connected to the politics we can expect these politicians to pursue once in office. In the parliamentary biographies, MPs are encouraged to report their special interests. Expressing an interest in gender or women's issues is a low-cost way for legislators to signal a commitment to women's issues to their constituents, and it does not necessarily have to translate into action within the legislature. Yet, it does at least signal an aspiration to *appear* to be committed to women's issues.

We could expect that district women elected directly feel more beholden to the female citizenry since this group now constitutes around 50% of their electorate. Moreover, the improvement of women's substantive representation in terms of passed women-friendly laws in the 8<sup>th</sup> Parliament also suggests an increased interest in women's issues. Thus, the second hypothesis is that quota women elected after 2006 are more likely to state an interest in gender or women's issues than their predecessors selected by the electoral college:

H2: The introduction of universal suffrage will make women more prone to state an interest in women's issues

### **Results**

Hypothesis 1 is tested by comparing district women representatives elected before and after the change to direct elections in terms of their incumbency rates, party identification, education, professional background and previous political experience.

#### *Incumbency*

While high incumbency rates could indicate that the reserved seats continue to be filled with MPs who owe their seat to the NRM, low incumbency rates could imply that the legislators lack the necessary experience to actively challenge a patriarchal policy agenda. In both the 7th (before the reform) and the 8th Parliament (directly after the reform), 38% of the elected district women representatives returned to their seats. In the 9th Parliament, 34% of the quota women are incumbents, and the difference between the 9th and 7th Parliament is not significant ( $p = 0.564$ ). Thus, the majority of the district women in the 8th Parliament were new to their seats, and the direct election did not seem to have affected the re-election rate of this group of legislators.

**Table 2.** Background of district women MPs 1996–2016.

	6th Parliament 1996–2001		7th Parliament 2001–2006		8th Parliament 2006–2011		9th Parliament 2011–2016	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Incumbent	52.6	38	38.2	55	38.0	79	33.9	110
NRM	–	–	–	–	73.4	79	76.4	110
Education (at least Master's degree)	31.6	38	27.3	55	44.7	76	38.9	108
Profession (in education)	45.7	35	43.3	51	41.3	75	38.8	108
Elected at local level	21.6	37	21.8	55	27.8	79	23.9	109
Worked in national bureaucracy	29.7	37	16.7	54	27.8	79	11.9	109
Worked for government at local level	21.6	37	18.2	55	21.5	79	17.4	109
Age (mean)	40.6	35	41.9	54	41.8	78	42.9	109

### Party identification

Opponents of the electoral college have argued that the change to universal elections would free the women from their dependence on the NRM. If this is the case, we could expect the district women elected after 2006 to be equally or even less likely to be affiliated with the NRM compared with the county representatives.<sup>5</sup> In the 8th Parliament, the first elections after the introduction of multiparty politics and the reform of election mode, 73% of the district women were affiliated with NRM compared with 65% of the regular county representatives. This difference is not significant ( $p = 0.156$ ).

However, even though the difference between these groups is smaller in the 9th Parliament, more women in reserved seats still sympathise with the NRM (76% of district women compared with 69% of the county representatives;  $p = 0.166$ ). Combining all MPs from these two parliaments, 75% of the district women affiliate with the NRM, while 67% of the county representatives do so. In this case, the difference is significant at the 0.05 level ( $p = 0.042$ ).<sup>6</sup> Thus, contrary to H1, district women representatives elected by universal suffrage are still more likely to be affiliated with the NRM than their male and female counterparts elected to county seats.

### Educational background

Educational background can serve as an indicator of whether a legislator is perceived as capable of governing and whether she is perceived as more elite than her constituents and fellow legislators. The Ugandan Constitution requires that in order to be eligible to serve as an MP, candidates must have 'completed a minimum formal education of Advanced level standard or its equivalent' (Article 80, Section 1), implying that the range of possible educational backgrounds is limited. However, there is some variation. Degrees were assigned codes based on their level (1 = post-secondary certificate, 2 = diploma, 3 = Bachelor's degree, 4 = Master's degree or higher).

The results show that directly elected district women have higher education than their predecessors elected by the electoral college. A significantly larger proportion of district women in the 8th Parliament hold at least a Master's degree (45%) than the quota women in the 7th Parliament (27%) ( $p = 0.041$ ). In the 9th Parliament, 39% hold a Master's degree, which is not significantly different to the 7th Parliament ( $p = 0.141$ ). Taking the 6th (where 32% of the district women hold a Master's degree) and 7th Parliaments jointly and comparing them with the 8th and 9th Parliaments, the

difference is significant (29% versus 41%;  $p = 0.046$ ). Thus, contrary to H1, the women elected by direct elections are more educated and thus more 'elite' in this sense compared to their predecessors.

Compared with the Ugandan female population where only 2% have attended post-secondary education, MPs who all hold advanced degrees are, of course, far more privileged (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2002a). Yet, to claim that the women in reserved seats are more elite than their male and female colleagues in Parliament would be misleading. Combining data from all four parliaments, 37% of the women in reserved seats hold a Master's degree or higher, while 38% of the county representatives do so ( $p = 0.709$ ). Moreover, similar to the educational trend for women in reserved seats, both men and women elected to county seats after 2006 have a higher level of education than their predecessors, implying that the quota women's educational trend is most likely not an effect of the change to direct elections.

### *Occupational background*

Similar to education, occupational background could also be an indicator of merit and elitism. Legislators' occupations were categorised by using the most frequently listed careers of the Ugandan MPs.<sup>7</sup> Comparing the district women's reported occupations directly before and after the electoral reform yields no significant differences (a Fisher exact test yields  $p = 0.879$ ). The largest category in both parliaments is 'education': in the 7th Parliament, 43% of the district women are teachers, and in the 8th Parliament, 41%.<sup>8</sup>

Analysing the possible long-term effects of the reform, the occupational backgrounds between the district women representatives in the 7th and 9th Parliaments are not significantly different (a Fisher exact test yields  $p = 0.619$ ). Similar to the 7th and the 8th Parliaments, 'education' is the most common profession in the 9th Parliament (39%), followed by 'business' (16%). These employment histories are indeed very different from those of the Ugandan female citizens, where 88% work with subsistence farming and only 3% are associate professionals (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2002b). Comparing occupational backgrounds within the Parliament, women in reserved seats differ from their male and female counterparts elected to county seats. While district women representatives are primarily educators (42% in all parliaments), the largest occupational categories for men are business (29%) and law (15%), while women elected to county seats are primarily businesswomen (24%).

### *Prior political experience*

Prior political experience, both elected experience and experience working in the bureaucracy, could also be interpreted as a sign of elitism. In the 7th Parliament, 22% of the women elected to the reserved seats had experience in local politics, while 28% of the women elected in the 8th Parliament had once been elected to a local government seat. In the 9th Parliament, this proportion was 24%. None of these differences are significant. With regard to experience in national politics, there are no significant differences between the parliaments, as also noted in the incumbent section. Thus, women elected through direct elections have roughly the same amount of previous electoral experience as their predecessors.

Turning to experience from working in the bureaucracy, the difference in bureaucratic experience at the local level between women elected in the 7th and the 8th Parliaments is not significant ( $p = 0.636$ ), even though more women in the 8th Parliament have such experience (22% compared with 18%). The difference in national bureaucratic experience is greater before and after 2006 (17% in the 7th Parliament and 28% in the 8th Parliament have experience of working in the



**Table 3.** Reported interest in women’s issues for district women MPs, 1996–2011.

	6th Parliament, 1996–2001		7th Parliament, 2001–2006		8th Parliament, 2006–2011	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Reported interest in gender/women	65.8	38	30.9	55	20.3	79

national bureaucracy), yet this difference is also not significant ( $p = 0.134$ ). In the 9th Parliament, this number has decreased to 12% (comparing with the 7th Parliament yields  $p = 0.404$ ). In sum, there are no significant differences between the women elected by the electoral college and those elected by direct election when it comes to previous political experience.<sup>9</sup> If anything, women seem more politically experienced directly after the introduction of direct elections.<sup>10</sup>

Taken together, these findings contradict H1 by suggesting that the district women elected after 2006 are, if anything, slightly more elite in terms of their background and experience than the women elected before 2006. Why is this so? Josephine Ahikire, a Ugandan scholar, suggests that: ‘the problem is that you still have to go through the party primaries to qualify to stand for a seat. In the NRM this is especially critical and those most loyal to the NRM will be their candidates’ (interview with Josephine Ahikire, December 2009). Thus, primaries seem to imply that women are still beholden to the party elite. Moreover, direct elections require that district women canvass votes and run an electoral campaign in a large constituency, often much bigger than the county constituencies. These women must thus either have these resources themselves or rely on party backing for their campaigns. Yet, given that similar trends could be observed among men and women on county seats, who have also become more educated, and in this sense more elite, these effects are most likely not due to the change in election mode, but rather due to something that affects all legislators in a similar manner, such as the introduction of the multi-party system. Thus, it is possible that multiparty politics has made competition tougher and party loyalty even more salient, and that, for this reason, the women are slightly more ‘elite’ than their predecessors.

### *Interest in women’s issues*

H2 explores the degree to which quota women expressed an interest in women’s issues (see Table 3). In order to analyse the commitment to women’s issues among the women elected by the electoral college and women elected by direct election, the two groups’ self-reported interests connected to gender and women’s issues were compared.

In the 6th Parliament, 66% of the women in reserved seats reported an interest in women’s or gender issues. In the 7th Parliament, this proportion was 31%, and in the 8th Parliament, after the reform, 20% of the quota women did so. The difference before and after the rule change is significant ( $p = 0.001$ ).<sup>11</sup> Thus, contrary to H2, the electoral reform does not seem to have promoted legislators more prone to report an interest in women’s issues. Rather, the desire to *appear* as working for women has declined since 1996, with the biggest drop between the 6th and the 7th Parliaments.<sup>12</sup>

We can only speculate as to whether this is because individual quota women care less about these issues, whether it is due to strategic hesitations to report a commitment to women’s concerns, or whether women’s commitment to represent women has become assumed to the extent that they no longer feel a need to mention it. Yet, in line with the view of many of the MPs themselves, the

introduction of the multiparty system has made it more difficult to speak out for women, particularly within NRM: '[Before the multiparty system] people were free to speak. Today, they rather keep quiet. Some women are afraid that they speak against the party line ... this is a hindrance to women's participation' (interview with Rebecca Kadaga, Deputy Speaker in the 8th and 9th Parliaments, January 2010).

Given the fact that several women's and gender issue laws were enacted in the 8th Parliament and that we consequently have evidence of improved substantive representation of women during this mandate period, at least in terms of outcomes, these results are surprising. The discrepancy in results between different measures of substantive representation could potentially be explained by changed strategies, where women organise collectively rather than as individuals and work 'behind the scenes' to push for pro-women legislation (see Muriaas and Wang, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

In this article, I have argued that in order to understand when and whether gender quotas enable or thwart women's emancipation and the representation of women's common interests, we must investigate what kind of women the quota system promotes. By exploiting a reform of the electoral procedures to the reserved seats in Uganda, I test the impact of direct elections on the attributes of the women elected through the quota provision. The results show that the women elected by direct elections are more loyal to the regime than their male and female counterparts in Parliament. Moreover, they are slightly more 'elite' in terms of their education and less likely to state an interest in gender issues compared with their predecessors elected by an exclusive electoral college.

The fact that the quota women in many regards are very similar to their male and female counterparts in county seats and that comparable trends could be spotted in the attributes of all three groups, such as higher levels of education and less interest in women's issues, suggests that the introduction of direct elections has had little effect on the attributes of the women elected to the reserved seats. Moreover, the introduction of the multiparty system seems to have had the effect of electing NRM legislators in all three groups who are generally more educated, both compared with their opposition counterparts in Parliament and with their predecessors under the Movement System. This could possibly be the result of tougher screening processes in candidate selection due to stiffer competition through the introduction of the multiparty system.

The finding that women elected through quotas have higher levels of education than their predecessors, as well as substantial prior political experience, could be interpreted as meaning that they are too 'elite' to be able to properly represent their female constituents. As noted earlier, however, this could also imply that these women have greater capacity to act autonomously within the legislature and further their own and female citizens' agendas. Quota opponents often assert that women who enter through quotas are less qualified and less educated than their male colleagues. However, as shown here, this is not the case in Uganda. Rather, there are no significant differences in educational level between the male and female county representatives and the district women representatives.

Quota and non-quota representatives have different occupational backgrounds; while quota women are more likely to be teachers, men and women on county seats are more likely to be lawyers or businessmen. Yet, this does not necessarily imply that the quota women are less qualified as legislators. Moreover, while county representatives are more likely to have experience working within the bureaucracy at the national level, quota women have more elected experience at the local level. Similar to findings from neighbouring Rwanda, this could be interpreted as quota women having more grassroots political experience (see Devlin and Elgie, 2008). This points to how contested the definition of a 'qualified candidate' is. While some argue that it is desirable that

candidates possess the characteristics of the ruling elite, scholars and activists arguing for quotas often assert that a qualified candidate is someone who contributes to diversify the background of the legislators, and someone who is not constrained by the political regime. The expectations of quota representatives are thus often in tension with one another and scholars may want to rethink how a qualified quota candidate should be defined.

Finally, this article has pointed to the importance of investigating how quota laws and the interaction between quota regulations and the institutional context affect the type of women elected through quotas. Scholars may want to proceed along this road to explore how reforms of quota regulations or reforms in the surrounding institutional environment affect the link between quotas and women's descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation.

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### Notes

1. The Constitution explicitly spells out the descriptive roles of quota women: a 'woman representative for every district'. In the same Article (Article 78), the other affirmative action categories are referred to as 'representatives of the army, youth, workers, and persons with disabilities' (Republic of Uganda, 1995).
2. The Domestic Violence Act, Equal Opportunities Act, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and Female Genital Mutilation Act were all passed in the 8th Parliament.
3. All biographies include information on seat type, sex and constituency. Apart from this, the legislators have been free to report how much or how little information they want. More than 98% report educational background and more than 96% report their employment background.
4. Available at: <http://www.parliament.go.ug/>
5. Since no parties except the all-inclusive NRM were allowed to participate in elections before 2006, I cannot assess who were loyal to the NRM before the change to the multiparty system.
6. Analysing only the difference among the newcomers in the 8th and 9th Parliaments, the results are very similar (74% of the district women are NRM, 64% among the men;  $p = 0.067$ ).
7. This classification scheme corresponds to O'Brien's (2012): (1) 'Education'; (2) 'Health'; (3) 'Agriculture/Veterinarian'; (4) 'Defense'; (5) 'Law'; (6) 'Business'; (7) 'Social Work/Non-Governmental Organisation'; (8) 'Public Administration'; (9) 'Engineer'; (17) 'Other'.
8. Comparing only the newcomers, there is no significant difference between the women in reserved seats in the 7th and 8th Parliaments ( $p = 0.783$ ). However, while 49% of the new women in the 7th Parliament are educators, only 35% of the newcomers in the 8th Parliament are teachers.
9. While a larger proportion of the newcomers in the 8th Parliament have experience of working in the bureaucracy, both on a local and national level, and more elected experience in the local government than the newcomers in the 7th Parliament, none of these differences are significant.
10. Comparing the women in reserved seats with their male and female counterparts in Parliament, men and women on county seats generally have slightly higher incumbency rates and slightly more experience in the national bureaucracy, while women in reserved seats have more elected experience in local government. Opposition politicians in all three groups differ from NRM politicians in that they have less experience of local and national jobs for the government.
11. There are no significant differences among newcomers. While 29% of the newcomers in the 7th Parliament state an interest in women's issues, only 22% in the 8th Parliament did so.

12. The proportion of men who report an interest in women's issues is much smaller (2% in total compared with 34% of the district women in reserved seats and 37% of the county women), but a declining willingness to report an interest in women's issues can be traced in all three groups.

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