Gender and Party Discipline:

Evidence from 800 African Parliamentarians

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Abstract

We argue that party discipline serves as an informal legislative institution that constrains women legislators' behavior and limits their tendency to push for women's rights reforms. Using original survey data from over 800 members of parliament across seventeen countries in sub-Saharan Africa, we find that women parliamentarians are significantly less likely than men to report acting in ways that go counter to the wishes of their party. This trend holds when controlling for other MP characteristics such as the MP's party and time in office as well as pre-election variables, including education and previous political experience. Moreover, we find that women MPs with higher levels of party discipline are less likely to list women's rights as a top government priority than less disciplined women. We discuss the implications for the substantive representation of women's interests in legislative institutions.

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Introduction

Globally, women's representation in national legislatures has almost doubled in the last two decades. Among world regions, sub-Saharan Africa has seen one of the highest rates of growth. Women's representation in the single or lower houses of African parliaments has jumped from 11 percent to 24 percent in the last twenty years, and many African countries are now at the top of the global ranking of women's parliamentary representation. The single or lower parliamentary houses of Rwanda, Namibia, South Africa, Senegal and Mozambique all consist of 40 percent women or more. Against this backdrop of increased representation, we examine whether and how women MPs behave differently in their legislative work compared to their men party colleagues. Further, we investigate how gendered patterns of legislative behavior affect the likelihood that women MPs will push for women's rights as a government priority.

A great deal of literature has examined whether and how women's presence in legislatures affects the advancement of women's interests, issues, and priorities in public policy (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Celis *et al.* , 2008). Examining the strength of this relationship across a variety of cases, gender and politics scholars have suggested that a link between women's presence in politics (typically called descriptive representation) and the adoption of policies the advance the status of women as a group (typically called substantive representation) is far from certain. Rather, institutional rules and norms may constrain women representatives' willingness and capacity to advocate for women's interests in the legislative process (Barnes, 2016; Childs & Krook, 2009; Franceschet, 2011; Goetz & Hassim, 2003). We argue that one such informal legislative institution is party discipline. While disciplined parties are crucial for providing voters with coherent policies and for governments to push through their agendas, they may also reduce women MPs' ability to initiate or support policies that depart from the party line, including legislation that fundamentally challenges male authority.

Gender scholars have noted these dual trends: that women seem to have more party discipline than their men colleagues and that party loyalty seems to inhibit some women representatives from taking a stronger position on women's rights (on African cases alone see Ahikire, 2003; Tamale, 1999; Britton, 2010; Hassim, 2003; Walsh, 2010: ch. 7). Yet, these questions have received little quantitative attention, in part because of the difficulty in obtaining measures of party loyalty in contexts where outward displays, such as roll call votes, are uncommon. We advance this literature by examining gender differences in party discipline across a wide range of countries, including new democracies (e.g. South Africa and Botswana) as well as hybrid regimes (e.g. Kenya and Tanzania). More specifically, we investigate two questions: (1) do women representatives exercise more party discipline than men legislators representing the same parties? and (2) how do any observed gender differences in party discipline affect women representatives' tendency to advocate for women's rights as a legislative priority? We address these questions by using data collected through the

African Legislatures Project (ALP), which surveyed more than 800 members of parliament (MPs) in seventeen sub-Saharan African countries.

Drawing on previous Africanist literature, we expect women MPs will express higher levels of party discipline than men MPs. Specifically, we theorize this may occur through two channels. First, we argue that parties tend to recruit men and women legislators based on different criteria, leading to the (s)election of more disciplined women than men. Second, once elected, gendered expectations about proper behavior may constrain women MPs' ability to go against their parties in ways not experienced by men MPs. Finally, regardless of why gender gaps emerge, we theorize that women MPs with higher levels of party discipline will be less likely to list women's rights as a top government priority than women with more legislative autonomy.

In line with our expectations, we find that women report higher party discipline than men parliamentarians. These differences remain when we analyze MPs in the same country and the same party, such that our results are not driven by women's selection into specific parties or parliaments. Further, the results hold when controlling for other MP characteristics such as the MP's time in office, and ministerial and party leadership positions as well as pre-election variables, including education and previous political experience. Finally, also in line with our expectations, we find that women who report higher levels of party discipline are less likely to prioritize women's rights as a top legislative issue than less disciplined women. We use a qualitative case study of the Namibian Parliament to demonstrate how party loyalty serves to constrain both the selection and behavior of women representatives.

Gendered Legislative Behavior: Previous Work

A large body of work has examined the ways in which legislators' behavior is gendered (see, among many others, Barnes, 2016; Lovenduski, 2005; Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2016; Krook & Mackay, 2010). This work identifies gender differences both in the forms of policymaking – that is, in legislative styles – and with respect to the substance of policymaking – that is, in policy priorities and preferences. Related to the former, a substantial body of research suggests that women legislators are more collaborative and consensus-seeking than men, whereas men tend to have more individualistic, competitive, and aggressive approaches to policy-making (e.g. Thomas, 1994; Rosenthal, 1998). These different legislative styles have consequences for legislative strategy: women seem to engage more in both within-party (e.g. Carey *et al.*, 1998) and across-party (Barnes, 2016; Volden *et al.*, 2013) coalition-building than men. Yet, gender differences in legislative styles should not be exaggerated. Work within the feminist institutionalist framework recounts the many ways that parliaments are gendered institutions, often created exclusively by men and for men (Lovenduski, 2005). In order to succeed in these contexts, women parliamentarians often have to

adapt to pre-existing masculinized rules and norms. In such instances, women legislators may be socialized into behaving in a way that does not challenge formal or informal behavioral rules.

With respect to the substance of policy-making, gender scholars have identified a similarly qualified pattern. A large body of work on women's substantive representation has focused on the extent to which (and how) women legislators prioritize and push for issues that are relevant for women as a group, as well as the conditions under which these attempts translate into policy (see e.g. Franceschet *et al.* , 2012). Success in this domain often depends on the strategic coalitions that women form either with women in other parties or with men (see e.g. Thomas, 1994; Htun, 2003). However, literature on women's legislative behavior and on substantive representation also highlights the constraints that women face in their legislative work. For instance, "women's issues" are generally accorded less political importance than traditionally masculine issues, such that advocacy in this area may undermine women's access to leadership positions and thus limit their chances for achieving personal goals (Barnes & O'Brien, 2018). On the other hand, avoiding to push for these issues may generate resistance and criticism for not being sufficiently "feminine" (Miguel, 2012).

In this paper, our focus is on one particular constraint to men's and women's maneuverability within their legislatures: party discipline. This focus on party discipline lies at the intersection of the form and the substance of policy-making: it is based on an informal intra-party rule that pushes members of party parliamentary groups to act in a united way. Party members may vary in terms of their priorities and proposals, but act as one when key decisions are made. Legislative scholars have produced extensive work on the role of party discipline on legislative behavior. On the one hand, this literature has emphasized the importance of party discipline for the development of cohesive political parties, for efficient parliamentary work within party groups, and for the possibilities for voters to hold parties (and governments) to account. On the other hand, the literature has highlighted how legislators' personal incentives sometimes clash with those of their party. In certain cases, legislators may have electoral incentives to demonstrate their independence from the party leadership (e.g. Campbell *et al.* , 2016; Lindstädt & Vander Wielen, 2014; Carson *et al.* , 2010; Strøm, 1997). Feminist political science mainly emphasizes the latter perspective. Given the large body of work that suggests that women MPs tend to prioritize women's interests, issues, and priorities more than the men in their parties, gender scholars commonly portray party discipline as something negative, as a potential obstacle to women's substantive representation (see e.g. Franceschet *et al.* , 2012).

Yet, is party discipline gendered? Whereas a large number of studies have examined whether and how women legislators are able to advance an agenda that benefits women as a group, the issue of gender differences in party discipline is less well understood (Close, 2018). In particular, there is a lack of quantitative analyses on the topic. An important exception is an analysis of Labor MPs in

the UK following the 1997 British General Election, showing that new women MPs were less likely than any other group to "rebel," or vote against the party line (Cowley & Childs, 2003). Analyzing the Ukraine parliament, Thames & Rybalko (2011) come to a similar finding: women are more party loyal than men, a tendency particularly pronounced in right-wing parties.

In our research context, Africanist scholars have provided ample case-based and theory-building work suggesting the many ways women parliamentarians must conduct their legislative duties in a highly gendered environment. Tamale (1999: p. 120) discusses how the Ugandan Parliament is filled with a male ethos, including parliamentary customs – such as the parliamentary speaker's long white wig – imported from colonial Britain. Scholars of South African politics have noted how the increasingly centralized nature of the ruling African National Conference (ANC) has limited the ability of women MPs to make use of their numbers to collaborate on women's rights legislation (Britton, 2010; Hassim, 2003; Walsh, 2012; Barnes, 2016: ch. 7). Despite these constraints, scholars have also documented the many ways that women parliamentarians have pushed their parties for gender equality reforms, particularly during times of democratic transition (see Bauer, 2012; Bauer & Britton, 2006). For instance, Tripp (2015) finds that women in post-conflict African states have found inroads in new institutions and have used their positions to lobby for progressive reforms. Discussing the early success of women in post-Apartheid South Africa, Hassim (2002: 694) also notes how women activists and representatives were able to join together to insert "gender equality concerns into the heart of democratic debates." In short, Africanist scholars have documented the many ways women in African parliaments must navigate gendered constraints in their legislative work. Yet, despite this, many women parliamentarians have been able to use their positions to advocate for progressive women's rights reform, particularly when new institutions are forming.

Theory: Gender and Party Discipline

We theorize that women in African parliaments will express higher levels of party discipline than men in their parties due to gendered dynamics along two dimensions. First, we theorize that parties will select and advance disciplined women, while men are less bound by this potential constraint. Second, we posit that social gender norms may constrain women MPs' behavior and compel women to act in ways that are less conflictual than the men in their parties.

Gender and Candidate Recruitment

To begin, we posit that men and women may be subject to different informal rules and norms that shape how party elites select and support candidates for African legislatures. We theorize that whereas many different pathways to candidacy are open to men politicians, fewer pathways

tend to be open to women. One of the few opportunities for women to advance is taking on the legislative style of the "party loyal" (see Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008). We posit this is because men have traditionally dominated both formal and informal leadership positions in African politics, a tendency often codified during colonial rule (Mamdani, 1996; Beall, 2005). By extension, parties, as the key organizational feature of politics in the post-colonial era, still tend to function as highly gendered institutions (c.f. Kenney, 1996).

Many ruling African parties developed out of struggles for independence from colonial rule or from military groups that fought during civil conflicts after independence (Riedl, 2014). In their capacity as freedom fighters, warlords, or rebel leaders, men often came to dominate party leadership positions in post-conflict governance (see e.g. Melber *et al.* , 2016). Importantly, however, in more recent post-conflict periods, African women have been able to make inroads into newly created party structures and successfully lobby for significant advancements in women's rights (Tripp, 2015). Yet, even when women have been able to lobby for inclusion and reform in post-conflict legislatures, these political institutions still tend to reinforced male authority (see e.g. Tamale, 1999). Moreover, as party structures became increasingly institutionalized after times of social upheaval, men party leaders often entrench their positions within party hierarchies, leading, in some instances, to the return of socially conservative policies (Walsh, 2012; Ahikire, 2014: 18).

Taking a feminist institutionalist approach, we argue that parties dominated by men reproduce existing gender power asymmetries in ways that self perpetuate (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). Informal party networks determine who is selected to stand for and advance within party hierarchies. When party elites make decisions about which candidates to support for election or appoint to important posts, they look for individuals already within their networks. As similarity is important for the creation and upholding of political networks, men tend to select other men for important party positions (Bjarnegård, 2013). Party gatekeepers have traditionally perceived women as outsiders, who do not meet the informal criteria for becoming candidates (Bjarnegård, 2013). An implication of this dynamic is that while men may lean on informal connections and homosocial capital to advance in their parties, women tend to take on the characteristics of the party loyal, someone who can signal trustworthiness not by virtue of her connections to preexisting networks, but by her stated and observed commitment to the party.

In addition, men more commonly have the financial resources needed to pursue a political career, and this also often makes them more attractive candidates to party elites. Within the context of African politics, men parliamentarians are more likely than women to be patrons to their ethnic communities or otherwise deeply embedded in clientelistic networks (Arriola & Johnson, 2014; Muriaas *et al.* , 2019). If almost by definition men are more likely than women to be "big men," men may be more valuable to their parties and can afford to occasionally go against the party line

in ways that women cannot. Again, this is another political pathway that is more open to men than it is to women.

Equally, our theoretical argument suggests that there are gender differences in parties' demand for disciplined candidates. Because men party bosses may believe that women in general are less reliable, and thus provide a greater risk in nomination processes, a viable strategy for party gatekeepers is to select women whom they can control. Party leaders may choose to select women without strong ties to civil society. For instance, Hassim (2003: 88) comments on this occurrence in party-dominated systems like South Africa, noting: "party leaders will choose women candidates who are token representatives, least likely to upset the political applecart, rather than those candidates with strong links to womens organisations."

As an extension of our argument, we expect that women will carefully select which agenda to advance once they accede to office. In order to increase their chances of being re-nominated, they will avoid advancing an agenda that challenges social structures that uphold male authority. Similarly, men party gatekeepers will look for women who do not have a record of being outspoken on controversial issues. As issues that benefit women as a group often challenge male authority, we do not expect disciplined women to prioritize pursuing women's rights in their legislative work. Yet, as we will expand on below, we acknowledge that this does not preclude the possibility that women MPs with higher levels of party discipline will push for women's rights reforms within their party structures. However, our expectation is that more disciplined women MPs will be more likely to prioritize issues that are similar to those prioritized by the men in their parties, of which we do not expect women's rights to be one.

We also emphasize that the relationship between prioritizing women's rights and party discipline may be somewhat spurious. In such an instance, it is not that women's rights reforms are controversial per se, but rather that more outspoken women MPs both prioritize women's rights *in addition to* other issues that may go against the party line, such as democratic reforms that challenge the power of ruling parties in hybrid or authoritarian regimes (see e.g. Tamale, 1999: 51, for her description of Ugandan opposition MP, Cecilia Ogwal). In such a case, any observed correlation may be because undisciplined women are more likely to be feminists and not necessarily that pushing for women's rights reforms necessarily causes one to be undisciplined. We find this interpretation convincing, and our results would not be able to disentangle these two possibilities.

We also qualify our argument in one important way: the extent to which selection dynamics produce gender differences in party discipline may vary across parties and countries. Political parties vary with respect to ideology, party culture, financing, etc., and have different organizational structures. For instance, previous research suggests that different candidate nomination procedures affect party discipline and, by extension, women's substantive representation (Zetterberg, 2013).

Similarly, country-level features such as electoral systems may affect women MPs' incentives to collaborate across parties. For instance, in South Africa a closed-list proportional (PR) system with large districts gives party leaders control over legislators' political careers, which inhibit the creation of women's alliances and spur party discipline (Barnes, 2016: ch. 7). To methodologically account for variation across institutional contexts, our main analysis compares men and women legislators in the same parties and in the same countries.

Gendered Expectations about Behavior

We also theorize that gender differences in party discipline may stem from social norms that dictate different expectations for men's and women's behavior. Women may be socialized to "play by the rules" and may experience greater punishment for behavior that is seen as going it alone. Moreover, gendered expectations of men's and women's behavior may lead to different legislative styles (Cowley & Childs, 2003). Parties, other MPs, and voters may expect women to be more consensus building and tolerate more maverick or ideological extreme men. To put it differently, women are likely to be rewarded for conforming to gender stereotypes that prescribe collaborative behavior or "being a team player." Moreover, there is evidence that this type of legislative style might be particularly effective for women. Taking a collaborative approach may allow women legislators to increase their influence in group decision-making (Barnes, 2016). There is also abundant evidence that women experience negative consequences when they take a more assertive legislative style. For example, Tamale (1999: 45) in describing the vocal women's rights activist and then-Ugandan MP, Maria Matembe, notes: "She is generally portrayed as a loose cannon, an erratic eccentric who should not be taken seriously. No matter how tough she is, the media does a good job of reminding Ugandans that she is a woman."

If women MPs have higher levels of party discipline than men because of descriptive and prescriptive expectations about proper behavior, we expect these differences to persist even after controlling for all other observable MP characteristics. In addition, we expect that these differences should be fairly consistent across cases. Social norms that dictate men's and women's behavior within legislative institutions have been documented in the British House of Commons (Cowley & Childs, 2003), Argentinian state legislatures (Barnes, 2016), and the Ugandan Parliament (Tamale, 1999) among others. Thus, whereas the selection of women candidates allows for substantial variation in gender differences in party discipline across legislatures, this mechanism foresees less heterogeneity across cases.

Alternative Explanations

There are also a host of alternative explanations that might predict higher levels of party discipline among women parliamentarians. To begin, women may report higher discipline because they are newer to their positions than are men. Women's parliamentary representation on the African subcontinent has doubled in the last fifteen years and tripled in the last twenty-five in large part due to the rapid diffusion of electoral gender quotas across the region (Tripp & Kang, 2008). As such, many women MPs may be newer to legislative politics than their men counterparts. If more established parliamentarians have built up political capital in ways that allows them to sometime depart from the party line, women may be more disciplined than men because they are newer to parliament and not because they are women. If this is the case, any observed gender gap should attenuate when we control from an MP's parliamentary tenure.

Another alternative explanation is that women MPs have less formal education or less previous political experience than men MPs. In particular, despite evidence to the contrary across a variety of cases (O'Brien, 2012; Josefsson, 2014; Besley *et al.* , 2017), critics of electoral gender quotas often suggest that quotas allow less qualified women to enter political office. If being less educated or having less previous political experience causes one to be more likely to follow the party line, gender differences in these pre-election characteristics might explain any observed gender gaps in party discipline. If women's higher levels of discipline can be explained by differences in their pre-election qualifications, we should see the gender gap in discipline weaken once we account for previous political experience and educational attainment.

It is also possible that women MPs have higher levels of party discipline because they are less likely than men to be members of opposition parties. African parties generally do not organize around programmatic or ideological differences. Rather, ruling parties typically represent ethnic strongholds and / or have been able to consolidate power through authoritarian means. Opposition parties, then, tend to be weak, fractionalized, and based either on support from smaller ethnic groups or headed by political entrepreneurs hoping to challenge ruling party hegemony (Weghorst & Bernhard, 2014). We suggest that women may be more risk adverse as they choose political careers and therefore may be less likely to join opposition parties (see García-Peñalosa & Konte, 2014). Because ruling parties tend to be more established, hierarchical, and centralized, we expect ruling party MPs to express higher levels of party discipline. In such instances, controlling for ruling party membership should account for gender differences in party discipline. More generally, controlling for MP party and country will allow us to test whether gender gaps in discipline are driven by women's selection into specific (un-)disciplined parties or parliaments.

As a final alternative explanation it is possible that men and women MPs view their legislative responsibilities differently in such a way that affects party discipline. This might be the case,

for instance, if parties encourage women MPs to specialize in legislative work, while men MPs specialize in constituency service. Such a division might be particularly common in PR systems in which party elites often select candidates whom can bring a diverse array of issues and styles to the party delegation. If a gendered division of parliamentary labor can explain gender gaps in party discipline, we should observe that men and women parliamentarians report prioritizing different types of legislative duties.

Data: Measuring Party Discipline

To test our expectations, we use data collected through the African Legislatures Project (ALP), a research effort initiated by the Center for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town (Barkan *et al.* , 2010). ALP conducted MP surveys between 2008 and 2012 in seventeen countries, which cover more than half of the subcontinent's population. The sample is quite geographically representative. It includes six West African cases (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria), seven cases in Southern Africa (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) and three from East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda). A random sample of fifty lower-house MPs was selected in most countries; sixty MPs were selected in Nigeria and forty were selected in Benin and Botswana, because of legislature size. Surveys were conducted through face-to-face interviews. The response rates were very high for elite surveys, averaging 80 percent across the seventeen countries.[1] In total, the data include survey responses from 813 MPs, representing 25 percent of the total population of MPs across the seventeen countries. Women MPs are 17.7 percent of respondents (n = 144), similar to the 19.1 percent of the total parliamentary seats held by women in the seventeen cases at the time of the surveys.

The cases offer a rich range of institutional variation, including differences in the use of gender quotas, electoral systems, and ruling party dominance. In general, the included cases tend to score more favorably on indices of democracy and political rights than the average values for sub-Saharan Africa, although the sample does contain variation. For instance, included in the sample are liberal democracies (Ghana, South Africa, Benin), electoral democracies (Malawi, Lesotho, Zambia), and hybrid and closed regimes (e.g., Uganda, Mozambique, Zimbabwe). It also contains countries with both one-party dominant party systems (e.g. South Africa, Botswana, Namibia) and competitive party systems (e.g. Benin, Ghana, Senegal).

We measure party discipline through MPs' responses to six survey questions.[2] Table 1 contains the question wording and original coding with higher values associated with higher levels of party discipline. MP responses are correlated across the six questions (ranging from r = 0.11 to r = 0.63),

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[1]There was no statistical difference between the response rates of men and women MPs.

[2]Our data are largely complete, but we have some missing values on our party discipline questions (ranging from 0 to 9%). We elect to use the Amelia package for R to impute rather than list-wise delete missing values.

Question	Original Response Coding
How often have the following occurred:	0 = Often
1. Your vote differed from the wishes of	1 = Occasionally
your political party or you abstained?	2 = Once or twice
	3 = Never
2. In general, when you take a position about	0 = All other responses
an issue in the Parliament, which of the	1= Views of my party or the
following is most important?	views of my party leader
3. Which of the following statements	0 = All other responses
most accurately describes your	1 = Always vote with my party
personal view?	because of party discipline
You have told us about yourself, but what	0 = Oppose the party position
would you advise others to do?	1 = Abstain
What should MPs do if there is a conflict with:	2 = Support the party position
4. The national interest?	
5. Their personal convictions?	
6. The views of their constituents?	

Table 1: Coding of MP discipline: higher values associated with greater MP discipline and lower values correspond to greater MP independence.

and load well onto a single factor (Cornbach's $\alpha = 0.79$), and we thus elect to use factor analysis to generate a composite score. Prior to construction of the composite score, component variables are mean-centered and standardized, so indices have a mean of 0. A simple two-tailed t-test reveals a significant difference in women's and men's self-reported party discipline: men have an average score of -0.063 and women have an average score of 0.293 ($p \leq 0.001$), a point difference associated with 0.47 standard deviations on the composite index. We also find gender differences for each composite variable (five of these are significant at $p \leq 0.05$ or lower, and the sixth is significant at $p \leq 0.10$, see Appendix Table A2).

Ideally, we could supplement our survey measures with data based on actual actions that MPs took that were out of step with their parties. Unfortunately, such data rarely exist from African parliaments because, unlike legislative institutions in other parts of the world, roll call votes are infrequent. We suggest that our survey-reported measures are likely a strong test for party discipline. We are measuring how much MPs have internalized their willingness to buck the party line, and this likely underestimates the actual tendency to rebel. For instance, in their analysis of party discipline in the British House of Commons, Cowley & Childs (2003: 356) find few gender differences in self-reported measures of party discipline despite new women MPs' tendency to rebel much less often than any other group. This suggests to us that if women are *reporting* higher levels of discipline than men, it seems likely that they are indeed acting in more disciplined ways.

In addition to differences in party discipline, Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for women and men MPs on other MP post-election characteristics, namely: MP years in office, appointment to a ministerial post, a position in the party leadership, and ruling party membership. We also include two pre-election characteristics: highest level of education completed and whether the MP

	Men MP	Women MP	Difference (SE)	t-test p-vlaue
Party discipline score (DV)	-0.063	0.293	-0.356 (0.069)	< 0.001
% ruling party	0.556	0.646	-0.090 (0.044)	0.044
MP years in office	7.229	7.228	0.001 (0.481)	0.998
% minister	0.197	0.166	0.031 (0.035)	0.379
% party leadership position	0.547	0.569	-0.022 (0.046)	0.625
Education (9 levels)	6.155	5.868	0.287 (0.156)	0.066
% previous political career	0.218	0.313	0.095 (0.042)	0.026

Notes: Num. women MPs: 144, Num. men MPs: 669

Table 2: Descriptive characteristics by MP gender

held a lower political position (e.g. a district or local councilor position) prior to being elected. We calculate the gender gaps for each characteristic and note their statistical significance with standard two-tailed t-tests. Aside from our dependent variable, party discipline, the only MP covariates with significant gender differences are ruling party membership and previous political experience. Fifty-six percent of men MPs are members of the ruling party, whereas 65 percent of women MPs belong to their country's ruling party. Additionally, 31.3 percent of women MPs held a lower political post immediately prior to their election, whereas only 21.8 percent of men MPs did so. Both of these indicators (ruling party membership and previous political experience) suggest that men candidates have more success as political outsiders compared to women candidates, and are thus important controls in assessing gender differences in party discipline.

Results

Gender Differences in Party Discipline

We expect that gender differences in party discipline will hold when controlling for other MP characteristics. To test this expectation, we first run a basic OLS model with country and party fixed effects. The inclusion of these fixed effects is important, as it allows us to compare gender differences among MPs in the same country and in the same party. Model 1 in Table 3 shows the gender gap in party discipline in this basic comparison. Controlling for party and country reduces the descriptive gap presented in Table 1 by slightly more than half (from 0.36 to 0.15 on the composite index), but the difference retains statistical significance at below the 0.05 level.

From this baseline model, we also include the MP covariates listed in Table 2 that might account

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Intercept)	−0.905***	−0.729**	−0.729**
	(0.339)	(0.354)	(0.354)
Female	0.153**	0.146**	0.146**
	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.060)
MP Years		−0.001	−0.001
		(0.005)	(0.005)
Minister		0.141**	0.141**
		(0.060)	(0.060)
Party Leader		0.027	0.027
		(0.056)	(0.056)
Education		−0.029**	−0.029**
		(0.014)	(0.014)
Ruling			1.163***
			(0.360)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
Party fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
R^2	0.494	0.501	0.501
Adj. R^2	0.411	0.415	0.415
Num. obs.	806	806	806
RMSE	0.586	0.584	0.584

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

Table 3: OLS models measuring the association of MP characteristics on levels of party discipline.

for our observed variation. First, we test in Model 2 whether women's higher levels of party discipline are due to differences in political experience or qualifications prior to entering office. To do this, we include several variables that measure political experience both before and after MPs take office. We include whether the MP holds a ministerial post or a party leadership position and his / her number of years in office as post-election variables. We also include the MP's highest level of education and whether s/he held a political position prior to entering office. The inclusion of these variables does not change the estimated gender difference in party discipline. Model 3 also includes ruling party membership, which also does not change the estimated effect of MP gender. Across models, we observe that women MPs score about 0.15 higher on the composite discipline index, associated with about two-tenths of a standard deviation on this scale. This represents a persistent small to moderate effect size, roughly equivalent to the associated increase in party discipline expressed by ministers compared to backbenchers in the sample.

Above, we suggested that a potential alternative explanation for gender differences in party discipline might be that men and women MPs view their legislative responsibilities differently. To explore this possibility, we examine gender differences in MP responses to the ALP survey question, "In your opinion, which of these following jobs is the most important part of being an MP?" MPs were given seven possible response options, which we grouped into three categories: constituency service (including: "bringing development to your constituency," "assisting constituents with their personal problems," and "soliciting funds for your constituency"), legislative duties (including: "debating bills and passing laws," "making public policy by writing laws," and "representing constituents' views in parliament"), and executive oversight (including: "overseeing the executive.") We observe no gender differences in the frequency of responses to these questions controlling for

other MP covariates (see Appendix Table A3). The only significant differences we observe are that, intuitively, ruling party membership, holding a ministerial position, and years in office are all negatively associated with prioritizing executive oversight.

We are also interested in whether or how gender gaps in discipline vary across countries. If gender gaps in discipline are due to different social expectations about men's and women's behavior, these gaps should be fairly consistent across countries to the extent that such social norms are fairly universal. Descriptively, we note that we do observe some variation in gender gaps across countries: in some cases, gender gaps are negligible and not significant (e.g. in Burkina Faso and Nigeria), whereas in other cases gender gaps are substantially larger than the mean, up to seven-tenths of a standard deviation (e.g. in Senegal and Zambia). Yet, we also observe that generally there are larger differences across countries for both men and women MPs than by gender within countries. Moreover, when we parametrically estimate whether there is significant variation in gender gaps across countries, we find that there is not.[3] We offer an extended discussion of cross-national variation in Appendix 4.

Party Discipline and Women's Rights

As a final analysis, we are interested in how observed gender differences in party discipline are related to the likelihood that women MPs prioritize women's rights in their legislative agenda. To do this, we use a linear probability model to assess the likelihood that MPs will list women's rights as a top government priority. The dependent variable is constructed from responses to an ALP survey question, which asks MPs: "In your opinion, what are the three most important problems facing this country that government should address?" Whereas issues such as the economy, public health, and poverty are generally more salient to both women and men than women's rights, important gender differences do emerge: 9.7 percent of women MPs raised women's rights as one the top three most important issues (14 out of the 144 women MPs interviewed), while less than 1 percent of men MPs did so (6 out of 669 interviewed) (see Clayton *et al.* , 2018).

In Model 1 of Table 4, we include the MP covariates included above and now include the party discipline index as an independent variable. We continue to see a strong and significant tendency for women MPs to prioritize women's rights to a greater degree than men MPs when controlling for other MP covariates. In Model 2, we interact MP gender with the party disciple index. Here we see a strong negative interaction. Women MPs with higher levels of party discipline are much less likely to list women's rights as a top government priority than less disciplined women. Descriptively, we see that 17 percent of women MPs below the mean level of party discipline listed women's rights as

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[3]We test this by running a basic linear model which includes an interaction term between gender and country. We run a simple ANOVA test on the results which indicate that variation in gender gaps across countries is not significant p = 0.82.

	Model 1	Model 2
(Intercept)	−0.045	−0.075
	(0.082)	(0.081)
Female	0.078***	0.101***
	(0.014)	(0.015)
Discipline index	−0.015*	−0.003
	(0.009)	(0.009)
I(Discipline index * Female)		−0.083***
		(0.018)
Years in office	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Minister	−0.001	0.001
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Party leader	0.005	0.005
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Ruling party	0.027	0.051
	(0.084)	(0.083)
Education	0.000	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Previous political job	0.004	0.008
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓
Party fixed effects	✓	✓
R^2	0.328	0.348
Adj. R^2	0.210	0.233
Num. obs.	806	806
Num. groups: Country	17	17
RMSE	0.135	0.133

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

Table 4: Linear probability OLS models measuring the association of MP characteristics on the likelihood of listing women's rights as a top government priority.

a top government priority, whereas only four percent of women MPs above the mean did so. Yet, it important to note that even among more disciplined women, this four percent is more than four times the percentage of all men MPs who listed women's rights as a top priority. That is to say, while more disciplined women are less likely to prioritize women's rights than less disciplined women, both groups are significantly more likely to prioritize women's rights than their men counterparts.

An Illustrative Case: Namibia

Our results reveal two trends: (1) women tend to report higher levels of party discipline than the men in their parties even when controlling for other observable characteristics, and (2) women's rights seem to be a higher priority among less disciplined women. To illustrate these findings, we supplement our quantitative results with a case study of the Namibian Parliament. Our analysis is based on over twenty elite interviews with MPs (both ruling party and opposition), parliamentary staff, members of civil society organizations, and women's rights activists conducted in late 2012 and summer 2017, as well as an author's association with a prominent gender research and advocacy group in Windhoek, Namibia for five months during the 2012 field visit.

While elections in Namibia are largely considered free and fair, the increasing electoral dominance of the ruling party, Swapo, as well as the limited turnover in party elites have led some scholars to

characterize the nation as falling increasingly under competitive authoritarian rule (Melber *et al.* , 2016; Cooper, 2018). Swapo Party members currently hold 77 of the 96 elected seats in the country (80 percent), as well as eight additional seats appointed directly by the president. Opposition parties are extremely weak and fractionalized, the largest of which holds only five of the 96 elected seats. In July 2013, Swapo formally amended its party constitution to require a "zebra list" gender quota on its candidate list for National Assembly seats, in which men's and women's names are listed in alternate order. The quota was successfully applied for the first time in the 2014 elections and, accordingly, women's representation in parliament jumped from 23.6 percent to 46.2 percent in the 2015 electoral term. With a near parity parliament, the country is now a world leader in women's legislative representation (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2019).

Namibia holds elections for its lower parliamentary house, the National Assembly, through a closed-list proportional representation system with one nationwide list. Like other closed-list PR systems with high district magnitude, a candidate's fate is entirely reliant on where she is placed on the party's list. This electoral process affects both the types of MPs who are able to advance in this system and the calculation of individual MPs once they achieve their positions. Pushing for reform that is not initiated by party elites is costly, as party leaders can easily replace representatives who do not toe the party line. While allegiance to party leadership affects both men and women MPs, our interviews suggest three reasons this might be felt particularly strongly among women: (1) the dominance of men among the ruling party's old guard, (2) women's exclusion from informal intra-party networks, and (3) social expectations about the proper behavior of women.

The Swapo Party emerged from the political wing of the chief military organization that fought for independence from Apartheid South Africa. Whereas the country is now on its third post-independence president, this office has always been held by a member of the Swapo old guard, those who fought in the initial liberation struggle. This old guard continues to dominate all parts of the party leadership. Of the ministers appointed between independence in 1990 and 2015, over half (56 percent) were former exiled liberation fighters (Melber *et al.* , 2016: Table 3). Notably, women also fought in the liberation struggle, and their role as fighters opened new opportunities for their political participation after independence, particularly in local government (Bauer, 2004). Yet, the majority of former independence fighters who went into national politics were men. Of the Swapo ministers from the old guard only six out of 37 (16 percent) have been women (Melber *et al.* , 2016: Table 3). Male dominance in the Swapo Party leadership means there are fewer political career paths open to women party members. As the director of a prominent women's rights advocacy group notes:

> Women are more [likely to be] party hacks because it's harder for them to succeed
> in the party. It's because women are only beginning to make inroads. It is the men
> who are powerful in the party and have been powerful for a long time. So [they] have

the confidence that their positions are safe [and] they are prepared to sometimes say something that is outside the party chapter-and-verse because they know they are secure in their positions.[4]

A gender scholar at the University of Namibia further notes how women MPs often realize who has power in the party and adopt strategies to align themselves with this influential cadre:

It is not a dumb strategy. It is just a strategy where she realizes that the men know how the system functions. [She thinks] it is good for me to align myself with men if I want my agenda to move forward. Men just dont like it when women organize themselves.[5]

Further, in a rarely candid observation, one Swapo MP notes how men in the party may actively try to keep out popular women from ascending in the party hierarchy:

Monitoring of the internal party elections is very important to avoid situations where a woman who scores high during the election may find herself not even listed in the final party list that is approved by the [...] top leaders. This kind of political party culture and unspoken rules and biases serve as barriers for women's access to leadership positions and party structures (Iipinge, 2014: 20).

The dominance of men in party leadership and the barriers that exist for women to enter the cadre of powerful party insiders suggest that women have few ways to advance in the party. One of the best ways for women to succeed is to become a loyal party servant. We note this points to a limitation from our survey data. Whereas we control for party leadership and ministerial positions, this belies huge variation in the power held by these positions. For instance, as one Namibian opposition MP notes: "Most chairpersons are men and then the deputy is always the women."[6] This is true for ministerial posts as well. While women are at parity among Swapo Party members, only 16 percent of ministers in the 2015 - 2020 electoral term have been women. In contrast, women have held 50 percent of deputy ministers positions during the current electoral term, commensurate with their percentage among Swapo parliamentarians. In short, women's historical exclusion from positions atop the party hierarchy limits their ability to advance and presents ambitious women with few options.

A second barrier that women face is their exclusion from informal intra-party networks that often take place outside of formal legislative work. For instance, a Namibian gender researcher notes:

If you look at women who are in the Swapo Politburo or the Swapo Central Committee, those ones are experts... They know that you don't politic during the day, they know it's in the evenings. They know that you don't politic in an office, they know its a Saturday afternoon, a weekend evening. They understand the dynamics. For average women, the weekend is when they do their laundry. You have to tell them, no you don't do laundry,

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[4]Interview Subject 5, interviewed by author on December 5th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[5]Interview Subject 6, interviewed by author on December 10th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[6]Interview Subject 15, interviewed by author on July 22nd, 2017 in Windhoek, Namibia.

you must go to the rally, that's where things are happening. We have to shift their mindsets and we have to realize that politics is still predominately a male game.[7]

A final theme that emerges from our interviews is the sense that patriarchal attitudes still dominate politics and set expectations for the type of behavior that is acceptable from women. For instance, a 2009 report by a prominent Namibian think tank found that men MPs participated in all capacities of parliamentary debates to a greater extent than women MPs (Tjirera & Hopwood, 2009). When asked to speculate why she thought this might be, a longtime women's rights activist in the country lamented: "I don't know if people are convinced of the fact that we are actually equal. Otherwise why wouldn't we demand our space? I mean [the parties] have really indoctrinated women to feel inferior."[8] This theme came up repeatedly. As one former Swapo party member and women's rights activist noted:

> You have to go through a party... And how do women belong? For so long they were told not to participate and as a result they don't belong. And even if they belong, [it is] as voters or as members only. They don't belong as leaders, as people who can discuss issues very consciously and analytically. They are not regarded as that.... Men see themselves as leaders of this country and that has taken away the ability of women to speak out and to be different.[9]

Finally, women politicians in Namibia face the classic double bind. They must choose between adopting a gender-conforming style or a style more characteristic of political leadership. Before the 2014 presidential election, Swapo had an internal party vote to decide who they would put forward as the party candidate. A prominent woman in the party was one of the three internal candidates, but ultimately received the fewest party votes. One opposition MP notes how her gender hurt her:

> [They say] she is bossy, like a dictator... It is so unfair, ne? I mean do you think a woman who is so motherly and so ladylike will make it as a president? You need to be proud and you need to be strong.... The men are so afraid of her. Because they think this woman will put us in our place where we belong. For them, it makes them look like they are weak.[10]

The Namibian case also lends insight to our finding that women MPs with higher levels of party discipline are less likely to list women's rights as a top government priority. One consistent theme that emerged from our interviews was the degree to which prominent women MPs in the ruling party owe their longevity to their unwavering support of the party's policies. For instance, one women's rights activist in the country recalls how one of the most prominent women in Swapo would publicly tell women's groups that she held no allegiance to them:

> We were having a meeting, when [she] said: 'People, I am in this position not because I am a woman. I am in this position, because Swapo put me here. And if I have to vote

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[7]Interview Subject 6, interviewed by author on July 12th, 2017 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[8]Interview Subject 1, interviewed by author on December 13th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[9]Interview Subject 7, interviewed by author on December 13th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[10]Interview Subject 2, interviewed by author on November 21st, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.

for anything if it is pro-women and anti-Swapo, Im telling you openly, it is because of Swapo I am here, I will vote for Swapo.' She made it clear...She said if it's good for women and bad for Swapo, she'll vote for Swapo...And she's done that. She's stuck faithfully to that. Whatever her reasons, she understands the situation.[11]

This sentiment seems to permeate Swapo rank-and-file women as well. A gender researcher at the University of Namibian notes how Swapo women feel pressure to not depart from the party in any way:

Radicalism is something that is not appreciated. The word is still loyalty. You must be loyal. You must not step outside the boundaries.... You stay on that line. And that is what we see. A woman will not advocate for a woman's issue if it is not initiated from the leadership of the party. And the leadership of the party is still predominately male.[12]

This feeling was continually confirmed by women Swapo members themselves. For instance, when asked whether she would support an issue related to women's rights if it was not initiated by her party, a then Swapo women MP and deputy minister answered: "You need to follow the principle of the party. It is not what you want – it is what the party is telling you to do. You cannot go outside the principle of the party."[13]

Some interviewees thought that the party selected women who did not have a strong commitment to women's rights. As one longtime women's rights activist in the country notes:

Just having someone with a dress in parliament doesn't mean much. What you want is people who are steeped in the concept that women should have equality. And I don't know whether there are people who feel strongly enough about this to brace the attack that will come. That is the problem.[14]

Another women's rights activist also notes how Swapo seems to select and groom women to adopt a party mindset: "I think politics is male dominated. The political parties are run by the old guard of men with their patriarchal mindsets. Women who find their way up these steep ladders take on the patriarchal way of doing things."[15] A former opposition MP notes how she thinks that Swapo women MPs might want to take a stronger stance advocating for women's rights issues, but feel pressure from their party not to:

They did not speak up all the time. They let us [in the opposition] speak, but they were in agreement.... I had to sometimes go to them and say: 'Are you not going to say anything? Why do you keep quiet?' For example, they didn't even want to organize the [Women's] Caucus. I think they were scared. They were very scared. I think the women of Swapo are very afraid. They didn't want to lose their positions.[16]

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[11] Interview Subject 1, interviewed by author on December 13th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[12] Interview Subject 6, interviewed by author on November 21st, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[13] Interview Subject 4, interviewed by author on November 16th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[14] Interview Subject 1, interviewed by author on December 13th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[15] Interview Subject 3, interviewed by author on December 14th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[16] Interview Subject 7, interviewed by author on December 13th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.

Finally, in discussions about the potential impact of Swapo's voluntary gender quota, many observers were worried that an increase in women's numbers would not make a big impact on policy. For instance, as one longtime women's rights activist observes in the year prior to the quota's adoption:

> But what are women going to do with their 50 [percent] in parliament, unless we organize? I mean when they get there, they will get there through their party. I mean will they be prepared to take a stand against their party for women?... Because now you are there by the grace of the men who put you there, so how independent are you?[17]

A parliamentary staffer interviewed two years after the quota's implementation in the 2015 election notes how the quota has affected MP calculations:

> Because of the change in the [Swapo Party] constitution to accommodate more women MPs, the MPs think they are only there because of the party. If they turn to work against the party, then their job is on the line. That is the fear. Most of them are very quiet and they are just there for voting in the house. The quota did not change it. [...] Women don't want to be seen as disruptive, rocking the boat."[18]

In sum, despite having one of the highest rates of women's parliamentary representation in the world, powerful party leadership positions are still dominated by men, and women are often excluded from informal networks that might help them advance in the party. Further, gendered expectations about proper behavior put women at a disadvantage should they want to adopt a more assertive legislative style. Finally, a tendency for loyal party service makes it unlikely that ruling party women will take a strong stance on women's rights issues they are not sanctioned by their party.

Discussion

We have argued that informal norms or expectations within parliaments can serve to constrain women MPs from acting outside of party doctrine in ways not experienced by the men in their parties. Our analysis of the Namibian case documents one way in which this can occur in a proportional representation system with high party control. Africanist scholars have made similar observations in other PR cases on the subcontinent. For instance, scholars of South African politics have noted how the increasingly centralized nature of the ruling party serves to limit women MPs from taking a stronger stand on women's rights issues (Britton, 2010; Hassim, 2003; Walsh, 2012). Yet our results do not seem contained to PR systems, but rather suggest that women display higher levels of party discipline than men across different types of electoral systems. To explain this, case studies from across the continent suggest women representatives enter parliaments in which legislative rules,

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[17]Interview Subject 1, interviewed by author on December 13th, 2012 in Windhoek, Namibia.
[18]Interview Subject 8, interviewed by author on July 4th, 2017 in Windhoek, Namibia.

norms, and customs are highly gendered. For instance, Tamale (1999: ch. 7) describes the many ways gender hierarchies are reinforced in the Ugandan Parliament, and argues that conforming to social expectations about gendered behavior is "political pragmatism" on the part of women MPs in all aspects of their legislative behavior (Tamale, 1999: 122).

While case studies from across the subcontinent suggest women parliamentarians face gendered constraints in their legislative work, our data suggest that there is some descriptive – albeit statistically insignificant – variation across our sample of cases: while in most countries, women express higher levels of discipline than men, the size of this gap varies a great deal, and in several cases no meaningful gender gaps emerge. This suggests to us a common tendency for the theoretical expectations we have outlined here – such as gendered expectations about behavior and particularly strong electoral sanction for undisciplined women – but also suggests that variation across parliamentary institutions, either formal or informal, may mediate the emergence and size of these gaps. Related to the generalizability of our findings, we find it notable that the two other quantitative studies we are aware of on this topic from the British and Ukrainian Parliaments report findings very similar to ours, despite operating in very different contexts (Cowley & Childs, 2003; Thames & Rybalko, 2011). While our ability to test for meaningful differences in cross-national variation is limited given the nature of our sample (country-level $n = 17$), we believe this is a fruitful avenue for future research.

Our results also speak to the distinction scholars have made between substantive representation as a process versus substantive representation as an outcome. Related to the former, women's substantive representation as a process is typically conceptualized as whether, when, and how political actors claim to act on behalf of some or many women (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008). The term is also used to denote an ultimate set of policy outcomes that reflect women's (or some group of women's) interests, priorities, or preferences. Importantly, substantive representation as both a process and as a set of outcomes can occur through multiple actors, sites, goals, and means (Celis *et al.* , 2008). Our results suggest that one pathway to substantive representation is often closed to women MPs: asserting for women's rights in ways that fundamentally challenge party doctrine. But, of course, there are other ways that women (or men) can lobby for women's rights. Women may work inside their parties for reform, choosing to advocate within existing institutional constraints rather than outside of them. In this way, it is possible that women MPs see advantages in toeing the party line in the hope that this will better allow them to influence their parties' agendas in the future. If this is true, women MPs may be playing a long game related to women's substantive representation in ways that we are not able to capture empirically.

Further, advances in women's rights legislation can occur with or without the advocacy of women parliamentarians. For instance, despite the rather pessimistic conclusions from the Namibian

case that we present here, the country has seen remarkable progress in terms of women's rights legislation, particularly in the decade or so following independence. For example, the country's 2000 Combating of Rape Act is one of the most progressive of its type in the world. The 2003 Combating of Domestic Violence Act and the 2003 Maintenance Act are also among the most progressive in the region (LeBeau & Iipinge, 2004). Namibia, then, represents a case in which the outcome of women's substantive representation seems to be occurring without a strong and independent women's rights lobby in parliament. Rather, these gains likely came in part from the young regime's desire to appear progressive to international and regional audiences (Tripp, 2019) as well as from the influence of key actors in civil society who were able to lobby critical political actors throughout the legislative process. We note this fits well with previous work that highlights the importance of extra-parliamentary forces on the adoption of progressive women's rights legislation, such as pressure from international organizations (Bush, 2011) or the strength and autonomy of women's movements in civil society (Htun & Weldon, 2012).

Conclusion

This study to our knowledge presents the first cross-national analysis of gender differences in party discipline. Using a sample of more than 800 legislators across seventeen sub-Saharan African parliaments, our results confirm our expectations: women representatives are more likely to follow the party line than men who represent the same party. Our findings have mixed normative implications. On the one hand, our results suggest women MPs may face informal barriers if they should seek to promote legislation related to women's rights in countries where these rights historically have been quite weakly protected. On the other hand, women's higher levels of party discipline may help build stronger and more cohesive political parties, which in turn may strengthen legislative accountability in Africa's emerging democracies (see Riedl, 2014)

There are various extensions of our findings that we hope future work might address. First, our findings raise the question as to why women are more disciplined than men. We have theorized about the origins of this gender gap, but our data do not allow us to directly test our proposed mechanisms. Future work might consider ways to do this, including perhaps through survey experiments with political elites. Second, and interlinked, there is important variation between women: not all women are more party loyal than men. Future work could better seek to understand this variation: are some groups of women more likely to rebel than others? Third, by taking a longitudinal approach, future research might assess how toeing the party line affects men's and women's advancements within their parties (see e.g. Smrek 2019). Fourth and finally, future work might look more in-depth at variation in gender gaps across different institutional contexts. By engaging in these scholarly activities, it is possible to build a comparative research agenda on gender differences in party discipline and, more

broadly, to better understand the gendered nature of legislative institutions.

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Appendix

A1: Economic and Political Characteristics of Sample Countries

Country (2008)	GDPPC (2005$)	Effective # of Parties	% Ruling Party	Polity Score	% Women in Parl.	District Mag.	Elect. Sys.
Benin	618	3.9	42	7	10.8	3.5	PR
Botswana	6,291	1.6	71	8	7.9	1	SMD
Burkina Faso	447	2.9	66	0	15.3	2.5	PR
Ghana	563	2.1	50	8	8.3	1	SMD
Kenya	559	3.5	44	7	9.8	1	SMD
Lesotho	801	3.2	52	8	24.2	14	MMP
Malawi	240	2.5	59	6	20.8	1	SMD
Mali	445	1.6	34	78	10.2	1.2	SMD
Mozambique	313	1.6	76	5	34.8	22.7	PR
Namibia	4,022	1.7	71	6	26.9	72	PR
Nigeria	804	1.8	73	4	7	1	SMD
Senegal	773	1.3	87	7	22	4	Par.
South Africa	5,186	2.1	66	9	33	111	PR
Tanzania	488	1.7	65	-1	30.7	1	SMD
Uganda	380	1.9	62	-1	31.5	1	SMD
Zambia	726	2.9	47	7	15.2	1	SMD
Zimbabwe	453	2.2	48	-4	15.2	1	SMD
Average, sample	1,499	2.3	62	4.9	19.1	14	-
Average, SSA	972	2.4	65	2.3	17.8	13.6	-

Notes: Data from World Bank Development Indicators, Polity IV Project, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. All proportional representation (PR) systems used closed lists.

Table A1: Economic and Political Characteristics of Sample Countries

A2: Gender Differences by Discipline Measure

	Men MPs	Women MPs	Difference (SE)	t-test p-value
Vote differs from party	-0.032	0.149	-0.182 (0.080)	0.024
Take party position	-0.012	0.076	-0.068 (0.041)	0.099
Vote due to discipline	-0.016	0.166	0.092 (0.035)	0.036
Conflict with national interest	-0.077	0.355	0.432 (0.046)	< 0.001
Conflict with personal convictions	-0.044	0.204	0.248 (0.156)	< 0.001
Conflict with constituents	-0.064	0.297	0.361 (0.082)	< 0.001

Notes: Num. women MPs: 144, Num. men MPs: 669

Table A2: Gender differences in composite discipline questions

A3: Gender Differences in Perception of MP Duties

DV:	Model 1 Constituency Service	Model 2 Legislative Duties	Model 3 Executive Oversight
(Intercept)	0.215**	0.660***	0.144**
	(0.107)	(0.115)	(0.069)
Female	−0.014	0.053	−0.026
	(0.044)	(0.047)	(0.028)
Ruling party	−0.012	0.046	−0.049**
	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.022)
Years in office	0.001	0.002	−0.004**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Minister	0.032	0.018	−0.055**
	(0.042)	(0.045)	(0.027)
Party leader	−0.041	0.020	0.013
	(0.039)	(0.042)	(0.025)
Education	−0.010	0.001	0.009
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.006)
Previous political job	−0.002	0.012	0.001
	(0.039)	(0.042)	(0.025)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓
R^2	0.112	0.079	0.074
Adj. R^2	0.086	0.052	0.047
Num. obs.	813	813	813
Num. groups: Country	17	17	17
RMSE	0.454	0.486	0.293

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$

Appendix Table A3: OLS models measuring the association of MP characteristics on perceptions of most important job duties.

A4: Cross-National Variation in Gender Gaps

Figure 1 plots the mean levels of men's and women's party discipline for each of the seventeen countries in the sample. Women report higher levels of party discipline in eleven of the seventeen countries. In the six countries in which men express higher levels of discipline, gaps are smaller and the mean difference within this subset of countries does not reach statistical significance (mean gap = 0.08, SE = 0.12), suggesting generally no meaningful differences. In the eleven countries in which women express higher levels of discipline, the differences on average are much more pronounced (mean gap = 0.39, SE = 0.08). In short, there are some cases where men and women have similar levels of discipline, and there are several cases in which women MPs report much higher discipline than men MPs, but there are no cases in which the reverse is true.

Gender Differences in Party Discipline by Country
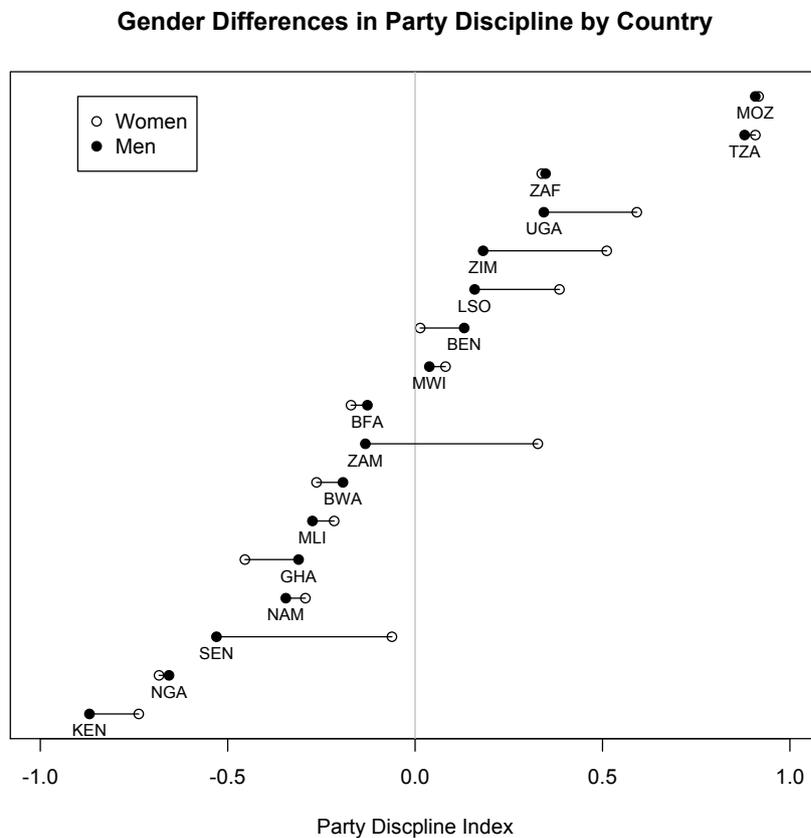
Figure 1: Cross-national variation in party discipline and gender differences in party discipline.

To parametrically estimate predictors of variation in gender gaps *across* countries, we remove the country fixed effects and model MP discipline as a function of country-level characteristics (see Appendix Table 4). At the country level, we include the following variables which we theorize might explain cross-national differences: the presence of an electoral gender quota, women's numeric representation, Polity IV democracy score, and logged district magnitude. We also include a measure

of gender attitudes: the percentage of respondents from the Afro-barometer survey in the country that either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men."[19] We also include logged GDP per capita as a country-level control. To model how these country-level variables are associated with gender differences in party discipline, we run a series of hierarchical linear models that sequentially include cross-level interactions between each of the country-level variables and MP gender. None of these cross-level interactions are significant (see Appendix Table 4 below). As an alternative specification, we also estimate variation in country level differences through models that take the average gender gap in scores at the country level as the dependent variable and country-level features as the explanatory variables. We get similarly null findings (see Appendix Table 5). In sum, likely due in part to the limited number of countries in our sample (n = 17), the country-level variables we include do not explain variation *between* countries in gender differences in party discipline.

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[19] As robustness checks, we also include women's labor force participation rates and the UNDP's Gender Inequality Index (GII). Neither alternative measure reaches statistical significance.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
MP-level variables:						
(Intercept)	−0.743	−0.790	−0.857	−0.714	−1.049	−0.238
	(0.944)	(0.939)	(0.937)	(0.968)	(1.078)	(0.776)
Female	0.122**	0.120	0.160**	0.112	0.165	−0.186
	(0.055)	(0.075)	(0.071)	(0.083)	(0.125)	(0.596)
Ruling	0.122***	0.122***	0.122***	0.123***	0.123***	0.122***
	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)
MP Years	−0.002	−0.003	−0.003	−0.002	−0.003	−0.003
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Minister	0.102*	0.101*	0.102*	0.101*	0.100*	0.102*
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Leader	0.023	0.023	0.025	0.024	0.024	0.028
	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Edu.	−0.022*	−0.022*	−0.021*	−0.022*	−0.021*	−0.022*
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Experience	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.016
	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Country-level variables:						
Quota	−0.223	−0.203	−0.230	−0.214	−0.407**	−0.190
	(0.294)	(0.300)	(0.293)	(0.296)	(0.173)	(0.259)
Polity score	−0.023	−0.023	−0.025	−0.025	−0.031**	−0.016
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.012)	(0.020)
log(GDPPC)	−0.107	−0.105	−0.089	−0.102	0.000	−0.182*
	(0.113)	(0.111)	(0.112)	(0.116)	(0.109)	(0.102)
log(Dist. Mag.)	−0.066	−0.062	−0.059	−0.071	−0.095	−0.053
	(0.098)	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.095)	(0.079)	(0.093)
Gender Attitudes	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.012	0.008	0.012
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.008)
Women's Rep.	0.041***	0.040**	0.041***	0.042***	0.042***	0.043***
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.012)	(0.015)
MP x country-level interactions:						
Female x Quota		0.003				
		(0.111)				
Female x log(Dist. Mag.)			−0.027			
			(0.031)			
Female x Polity				0.002		
				(0.014)		
Female x Women's Rep.					−0.002	
					(0.005)	
Female x Gender Attitudes						0.004
						(0.008)
AIC	1533.882	1542.420	1544.222	1546.210	1548.687	1545.218
BIC	1609.094	1631.734	1633.536	1635.524	1638.001	1634.532
Log Likelihood	-750.941	-752.210	-753.111	-754.105	-755.344	-753.609
Num. obs.	813	813	813	813	813	813
Num. groups: Country	17	17	17	17	17	17
Var: Country (Intercept)	0.088	0.083	0.082	0.057	0.355	0.336
Var: Residual	0.329	0.329	0.329	0.329	0.329	0.329

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$

Table A4: OLS models measuring the association of MP characteristics, country-level variables, and cross-level interactions on MP party discipline.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.124	0.101	0.070	0.023	0.149	0.137
	(0.080)	(0.060)	(0.058)	(0.096)	(0.517)	(0.632)
Polity	−0.006					0.004
	(0.013)					(0.017)
log(District Mag.))		−0.006				−0.056
		(0.032)				(0.060)
Quota			0.082			−0.026
			(0.106)			(0.210)
Women's Rep.				0.004		0.010
				(0.004)		(0.011)
Gender Attitudes					−0.001	−0.003
					(0.007)	(0.009)
R^2	0.015	0.003	0.038	0.047	0.001	0.132
Num. obs.	17	17	17	17	17	17
RMSE	0.202	0.203	0.200	0.199	0.203	0.221

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$

Table A5: OLS models measuring the association of country-level variables on gender gaps in discipline at the country level.