



# Transnational Women's Activism and the Global Diffusion of Gender Quotas\*

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The rapid global spread of quotas for women constitutes one of the most significant political developments of the last thirty years. It transformed the composition of legislatures worldwide. Yet we lack a solid understanding of the forces driving quota diffusion. In this article, we consider how global pressure from the international women's movement affects national gender quota adoption. In the first quantitative analysis of this question on a global scale, we use event history techniques to examine global, transnational, and national influences on quota adoption in 149 countries between 1989 and 2008. Contributing to work on international norm diffusion, we find a crucial role for women's activism, but uncover a *negative* interaction between increased global pressures and domestic ties to women's transnational organizing. We suggest global pressure to adopt quotas may be weakened by the diverse agendas of women's activist organizations, by perceived threats to male elites posed by women's agitation, or both.

Quotas for women in politics number among the most significant political developments of the last thirty years. They have changed mechanisms of candidate selection in more than 130 countries worldwide. In the 1970s, quotas existed at national and party levels in only a handful of countries. By 2008, more than 60 states had altered their constitutions or electoral laws to mandate that a certain proportion of women be included as candidates or legislators. Quota adoption occurs across diverse countries, including those with different levels of development and different degrees of democratization (Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009; Muriaas, Tønnessen, and Wang 2013). In

addition to their impact on the numbers and diversity of women elected (Hughes 2011; Paxton, Hughes, and Painter 2010; Schwindt-Bayer 2009; Tripp and Kang 2008), quotas influence a wide range of political dynamics, including party strategy (Murray 2007), legislative behavior (Xydias 2007), public opinion (Beaman, Chattopadhyay, Duflo, Pande, and Topalova 2009), and political engagement (Zetterberg 2009).

What explains the rapid introduction of gender quotas in strikingly different contexts around the world? Prevailing models of norm diffusion in international relations suggest that international pressure combines with national activism through "boomerang effects" and "spiral models" to spur policy adoption (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999). "World polity" accounts, common among transnational sociologists, theorize that a dense web of states and organizations creates and diffuses global "scripts" for modern states. In consequence, countries more deeply embedded in the world polity are more likely to adopt a wide range of globally promoted standards (Boli and Thomas 1999; Hughes, Peterson, Harrison, and Paxton 2009; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez 1997). Together, these perspectives indicate international organizations can influence state discourses and practices. In particular, countries with domestic ties to transnational activism should prove more likely to adopt policies in line with evolving global scripts (Évangelista 1995; Finnemore 1996; Risse et al. 1999; Sikkink 2011).

The existing literature thus largely assumes that norm diffusion occurs as local activists seek help from international and transnational actors, who exert pressures on states to comply with emerging global standards. However, we suggest an equally plausible alternative: International pressure and domestic ties do not positively interact. Local

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activists may reject or transform the messages being transmitted from above, affecting how and whether international norms gain traction domestically (Acharya 2004; Hertel 2006). Alternatively, broad international pressure could replace the need for domestic lobbies and strong links to transnational activist organizations, enabling outsiders to impose policy innovations with little internal resistance (Finnemore 1993). Finally, we theorize the combination of international pressure and domestic activism could prove particularly threatening to governments, especially in the case of highly contested global norms such as gender equality (Lombardo, Meier, and Verloo 2009). This might lead to a “recoiling effect” and reduce chances for policy adoption. In sum, there may be either positive or negative interactions between global and domestic factors. If correct, this adds an important new layer to theoretical and empirical research on international norms and transnational activism.

Consistent with studies of international diffusion in political science and sociology, gender scholars argue that a new global norm stressing women’s political inclusion has emerged in recent years (Krook 2006; Paxton, Hughes, and Green 2006; Towns 2010; Bush 2011). In line with this perspective, we conduct the first global test of quota adoption using data on the adoption and non-adoption of national-level quotas in 149 countries between 1989 and 2008. We construct a novel measure of global pressure toward gender equality based on the activities and resources of the international women’s movement over time. We operationalize domestic ties to women’s transnational activism using new data on the degree to which a country’s citizens are connected to international women’s organizing; we distinguish between “activist” and “non-activist” networks and thus provide the first study to consider such variation within women’s international organizations. Additionally, we draw from case study work on quotas and comparative research on policy diffusion to consider alternative explanations, including regional and cross-regional exposure—as well as country-level political, social, economic, and cultural variables that may influence quota adoption.

Drawing on previous research, we anticipate that development of the gender balance norm—and pressure on states to promote women in politics through gender quotas—resulted from the growth of the international women’s movement and its alliance with carriers of global culture such as the United Nations. The empirical analysis reveals that international influences indeed go the furthest in explaining quota introduction, although some aspects of exposure and internal context shape the likelihood of passage. In line with qualitative research (Krook 2009), we find that women’s activism, both nationally and internationally, spurred quota adoption around the globe.

Yet, confirming one of the alternative hypotheses, we also discover that the interaction between global and domestic levels of women’s activism is *negative*, an effect that proves strongest for domestic ties to *activist* women’s international organizations. As global pressures increase, states with fewer domestic connections to transnational activist women’s organizing are more likely to adopt quotas. We draw from research on social movements and quota campaigns to propose two potential explanations for this pattern, one rooted in the diverse and competing priorities that exist in gender equality campaigns and the other in the perceived threat of women’s activism. We conclude with implications of our

study for future research. We argue that scholars must more fully consider the interactions between global and domestic forces in the cross-national spread of policy innovations.

### Theories of Quota Adoption

To date, the adoption of gender quotas has primarily been explained at the case study level, giving rise to competing accounts of the actors and motivations behind quota reform (see Krook 2009). To the extent that scholars address quota diffusion, they tend to focus on a limited sample of cases that cover a single region (Caul 2001; Piatti-Crocker 2011) or only developing countries (Bush 2011)—often under the assumption that analyzing a more homogenous set of cases will improve the clarity of the theory that they test. But some processes influencing quota adoption may operate globally and therefore cross over national, regional, and developmental boundaries. Thus, we complement existing work by undertaking a global quantitative analysis of worldwide factors that might influence quota introduction. Such an approach presents an opportunity to test the insights of case study and regional research, while also exploring new ideas about the ways that international pressures might interact with domestic forces for change. Drawing on a variety of literatures, we outline potential sources of quota reform at global, transnational, and national levels.

#### Global Pressures

In an increasingly globalized world, scholars have begun to appreciate the influence of external social and ideological forces on state decision making (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse et al. 1999). One strain of research emphasizes isomorphism, demonstrating how the world polity—a growing network of international organizations, transnational activists, and states—promotes increased consensus, conformity, and structural similarity across the international system (Boli and Thomas 1997; Meyer et al. 1997; Frank, Hironaka, and Schofer 2000). These networks generate new international norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) and define new standards of behavior for “modern” states (Boli and Thomas 1997; Meyer et al. 1997). Various studies suggest, for instance, that earlier norms regarding women’s non-participation in political life have been reversed in favor of new discourses of gender equality (Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997; Berkovitch 1999; Paxton et al. 2006; Towns 2010).

The new emphasis on women’s access to decision making is evident in the recommendations and declarations of a wide range of international bodies—led primarily by the United Nations, but including the Inter-Parliamentary Union, African Union, Southern African Development Community, Commonwealth, Council of Europe, European Union, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and Organization of American States—urging member states to achieve a minimum of 30% women in all elected positions (Krook 2006:309). As a result, states that pass quotas are characterized as “modern,” while those relying on traditional electoral practices are stigmatized as “backward” (Towns 2010:176). For example, in Argentina, Senator Margarita Malharro de Torres argued that those who oppose quotas “hold women back in the name of old, traditional prejudices more worthy of a feudal era than of modern times” (Senado 1990:3791).

International norms can also be enforced quite directly: Bangladesh, for example, extended and raised their quota from 7% to 30%, allegedly in response to a \$4 million governance program funded by the UNDP (UNDP 2000).

Research on women's rights suggests that quotas entered the repertoire of "modern" state practices through the efforts of the international women's movement (Berkovitch 1999; Paxton et al. 2006). Unlike domestic women's movements, which vary subject to the structural and cultural constraints of nation-states, the international women's movement steadily increased in size, strength, and reach over the last century. International conferences reveal substantial growth in movement activity. Whereas only eleven countries attended the first international women's congress in Paris in 1878 (Moses 1984:207; Rupp and Taylor 1999), this number grew to 133 national delegations at the UN's World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975 and 189 delegations by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Parallel to these developments, the founding of women's international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) grew exponentially after 1970 (Berkovitch 1999). They produced an increasingly dense network of actors mobilizing on behalf of equal representation (Paxton et al. 2006).

International organizations similarly expanded their commitment to the goal of gender equality. One indication is the increasing resources provided to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), rising from 4 million dollars in 1982 to 215 million in 2008 and including contributions from an ever-growing number of governments (UNIFEM 2008). Another is the stronger statements over time from the UN in favor of women's representation, including the explicit promotion of gender balance (Paxton et al. 2006; Krook and True 2012). In sum, as the international women's movement—participants in international conferences, women's INGOs, and global resources for gender equality—grew over time, it promoted its message through an increasingly entwined relationship with carriers of global culture such as the UN and magnified pressures on states to change even in the absence of significant mobilization by local women's movements.

**Hypothesis 1:** *Growth in the international women's movement will increase the likelihood that states adopt a national gender quota.*

#### *Domestic Ties to Transnational Organizing*

Although international organizations emit global norms and scripts without regard to national boundaries, ties to these transnational networks vary across countries (Beckfield 2003; Hughes et al. 2009). States with more ties to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are more likely to adopt the standards being promoted (Frank et al. 2000; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Meyer, Frank, Hironaka, Schofer, and Tuma 1997; Schofer 2004). Yet membership in INGOs alone does not suffice as a measure of country ties to transnational organizing around gender. Although the number of international scientific or sports organizations in a country may increase the likelihood that a country adopts a *less contested* global script, such as how an educational system should be constructed, women's political rights are generally more controversial (Towns 2010). Gendered

outcomes require specific attention to women's organizations.

Gender scholars suggest that the degree to which citizens are connected to women's INGOs provides a more precise way of gauging country-level ties to transnational activism on women's issues (Berkovitch 1999; True and Mintröm 2001). Women's INGOs organize and connect women and associations for women, and recent work shows that domestic connections to women's INGOs are linked to other gendered political outcomes (Paxton et al. 2006; Bush 2011). These effects, however, may require a further distinction between "activist" organizations and "non-activist" groups to establish whether ties to organizations with an explicit goal of affecting change on behalf of women are more likely to produce national quota adoption.

**Hypothesis 2:** *Country-level ties to transnational organizing through women's INGOs will raise the chance of national quota adoption.*

#### *Global-Domestic Interaction Effects*

Existing scholarship on the global diffusion of norms and policies indicates that global pressure and domestic ties to transnational activism may interact to explain a range of state-level outcomes. Keck and Sikkink (1998:12–13), for instance, articulate how national groups bring international pressure to bear on states violating international norms through "boomerang effects." Alternatively, global movements may inspire domestic groups that "squeeze" the state from both above and below (Schofer and Longhofer 2011:577–8). The majority of theories imply that transnational pressure networks and local groups enjoy a positive, increasing interaction over time. Ultimately, however, existing cross-national research has not explicitly tested—especially quantitatively—the notion that national activism bolsters the effects of increasing international pressure on state-level outcomes.

Interacting forces across levels of activism need not be positive. As global social movements rise in power, domestic ties to the international arena may become less important (Ramirez et al. 1997). Alternatively, local actors may resist global scripts, with grassroots activists transforming—rather than uncritically transmitting—messages from above (Hertel 2006). Finally, in cases where global scripts are highly contested, as with women's rights, global encouragement and domestic activism could produce "recoiling effects," combining in ways that make them *less* successful at generating change by leading governments to react negatively to these pressures. Case study research documents numerous cases of resistance to quotas by male party elites, who may see quotas as a challenge to their power and position (Krook 2009). Their resistance may increase when pressure for change comes from multiple sources, heightening perceptions of threat. These "recoiling" processes are distinct from "decoupling," where states do not follow through on international promises (for example, Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Cole 2012). Here, states reject making such promises in the first place.

**Hypothesis 3a:** *Growth in the international women's movement will positively interact with domestic ties to women's INGOs in influencing national quota adoption.*



**Hypothesis 3b:** *Growth in the international women's movement will negatively interact with domestic ties to women's INGOs in influencing national quota adoption.*

#### *Regional and Cross-regional Exposure Effects*

The policy diffusion literature proposes that chances of introduction increase when countries observe other countries adopting an innovation (Berry and Berry 1990). The act of adoption enables observers to learn about new policies (Weyland 2005) or provides information on adoption benefits (Simmons and Elkins 2004). Quota studies similarly emphasize the importance of exposure, with a focus on regional adoption patterns (Bauer 2008; Krook 2009; Piatti-Crocker 2011).

A cross-regional mechanism, in turn, involves colonialism, whereby historical legacies facilitate sharing among former colonizers and colonies (Hughes and Paxton 2008). For example, the Commonwealth—an association of former British colonies—established a 30% goal for women in decision making. The use of the concept of “parity” in France has influenced debates elsewhere in the French-speaking world, most recently in Senegal and Tunisia. Exposure to other cases of quota reform, whether regionally or via colonial ties, may increase the likelihood of quota adoption.

#### *National Characteristics*

Countries are not homogenous. Any model of policy adoption must consider the features of the adopting state—political, social, economic, or cultural—that make it more or less open to policy adoption (Frank et al. 2000; Paxton et al. 2006). These characteristics may predispose states vis-à-vis policy reform, leading them to react more positively to external encouragement or to reach conclusions independently about the necessity of policy change (Volden, Ting, and Carpenter 2008).

The electoral system is likely to strongly influence quota adoption. The use of proportional representation (PR) may reflect, cultivate, or reinforce commitments to proportionality in politics, leading states with PR electoral systems to be more open to such measures (Krook, Lovenduski, and Squires 2009). Quotas are also more easily implemented in countries with PR because these systems are organized around multimember districts where several candidates can be elected from party lists (Tripp and Kang 2008).

Existing research suggests competing expectations for levels of democracy. On the one hand, less democratic countries may wish to bolster their democratic credentials by increasing women in their assemblies via quotas (Townes 2010; Bush 2011; Muriaas et al. 2013). On the other hand, expanded political rights and civil liberties may fuel grassroots campaigns in favor of gender quotas (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005). Relatedly, Communist-era experiences largely delegitimized quotas as a strategy for incorporating women into the political sphere (Matland and Montgomery 2003). Thus, previously Communist states are highly unlikely to adopt quotas (Tripp and Kang 2008:339).

The number of women in politics in post-conflict states has risen dramatically in recent decades (Hughes 2009). In the aftermath of conflict, political elites may be more willing to experiment with new types of political arrangements as a means to depoliticize

potential conflict (Longman 2006). At the same time, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, promoting women's participation in post-conflict reconstruction, magnified associations between “women” and “peace” (Porter 2003). Finally, states recovering from conflict may be more open to outside influence, as international actors become increasingly involved in domestic electoral processes (Krook, O'Brien, and Swip 2010; Bush 2011).

Two additional national characteristics may explain patterns of introduction. One is a country's level of economic development, believed to create a series of societal transformations that include progress toward gender equality (Inglehart and Norris 2003). Second, women's existing status in politics may affect quota adoption. On the one hand, female parliamentarians may join together to lobby for quotas (Krook 2009). On the other hand, parliaments with fewer women may offer more favorable environments for quota introduction, given the potential for a heightened sense of the need to elect more women (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005; Krook et al. 2010).

#### **Data and Method**

Our analysis includes data on 149 states from 1989 to 2008. We include UN recognized independent countries with populations exceeding one million inhabitants in 2000. In light of the previous literature, we estimate models excluding OECD countries, but ultimately retain a focus on the global sample—finding little in the way of major differences in patterns. Expectations of widespread policy adoption are not appropriate prior to being demonstrated by a pioneering state. Thus, we consider the “risk” of quota introduction to begin in 1989, when Uganda became the first state to guarantee women a substantial share of seats in parliament—18%.<sup>1</sup> Soon after, in 1991, Argentina became the first country to revise its electoral law to mandate that parties nominate at least 30% women. Once a quota law has been introduced in at least one country, it is reasonable to assume that all sovereign countries are also at risk of passing one. States not independent in 1989 enter the analysis in their first year of sovereignty.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Method*

Given our interest in explaining quota adoption across countries over time, duration or event history analysis is the appropriate method (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). Because parliamentary information is typically recorded yearly, we use discrete time logistic regression models. In this analysis, time represents historical time (see Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998). That is, a country's “risk” of adoption begins at particular historical dates, rather than in relation to a country's internal clock. We are interested in the first attainment of a quota law, so we do not treat quota adoption as a repeatable event, even though some states have revised or repealed their laws. Countries that have not yet

<sup>1</sup> Several countries adopted reserved seats prior to this date, but none set thresholds requiring 10% or more female legislators.

<sup>2</sup> Communist states such as the USSR and SFR Yugoslavia are excluded. Instead, the constituent parts of these republics enter the analysis as independent countries.

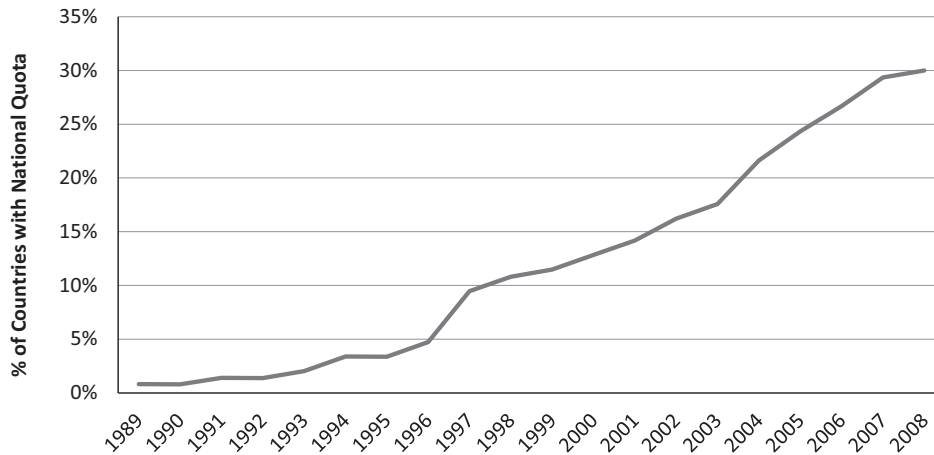


FIG 1. Growth in National Quota Adoption, 1989–2008

adopted a quota by 2008 are right censored (Yamaguchi 1991).

#### *Dependent Variable*

We predict the adoption of quotas affecting the lower or single house of the national legislature.<sup>3</sup> Our measure of quotas includes both major categories of national-level quotas: reserved seats and legislative quotas. We exclude quotas that function largely as “window dressing”: those that regulate less than 10% of candidates or seats, or those do not specify a specific quota threshold.<sup>4</sup> Between 1989 and 2008, 45 countries, 30% of our sample, adopted a national-level quota of 10% or higher. Figure 1 presents global trends in national quota adoption during this period.

For both practical and theoretical reasons, we do not analyze party quota adoption. Because individual political parties, large and small, introduce these measures, information on exact years of their adoption is not available for all cases. Furthermore, given that their adoption often stems from considerations of party ideology and electoral competition, pressures on parties to pursue quotas are likely quite different than those operating on a national scale (Krook 2009).

Yet, excluding party quotas from our analysis altogether might influence our results. The presence of well-functioning party quotas may reduce the likelihood of adopting national-level quotas. However, party quotas are not uniformly successful at increasing women’s representation in elected office. The reasons are multiple, ranging from the lack of central enforcement mechanisms leading quotas to be ignored, a preference for quotas among smaller parties, and the varying electoral fortunes of even large parties with quota measures. Therefore, the

<sup>3</sup> Nearly all comparative work on women’s representation focuses on the lower or single house of parliament, given that upper houses do not always exist and often have quite varying responsibilities and sources of election. Where upper houses do exist, national quota legislation often does apply (as it does to other levels of election). To our knowledge, there is only one case—Malawi—where a quota applied to the upper house but not to the lower house, but the upper house was subsequently eliminated, rendering moot this constitutional provision.

<sup>4</sup> Previous research identifies 10% as an important early milestone in women’s political representation (Paxton et al. 2006). However, including all national quotas adopted between 1989 and 2008 does not change substantially any of the results.

presence of a party quota does not preclude adoption of a national-level quota. As only one example, consider Mexico, where party quotas adopted in 1993 and 1996 had only mixed effects, inspiring mobilization for a national quota achieved in 2002.

To test whether party quotas influence national quota adoption, we take advantage of the limited data that are available in some auxiliary analyses. We code a set of polychotomous variables measuring if a country adopted a party quota: (i) prior to our study period, (ii) between 1989 and 2009, or (iii) not at all before 2009. Results from these auxiliary models are discussed below; however, we strongly caution that these results are only preliminary.

#### *Independent Measures*

Our measure of *global pressure* is designed to capture the global institutionalization of the international women’s movement and combines three world-level indicators: (i) cumulative foundations of women’s INGOs (updated from Berkovitch 1999 to include organizations founded between 1985 and 2008), (ii) the cumulative count of international conferences, UN treaties, and UN groups related to women, and (iii) yearly resources of United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). We combine the three indicators by estimating values (factor scores) of the underlying latent variable—the global institutionalization of the women’s movement—using confirmatory factor analysis (see Bollen 1989).<sup>5</sup> Because growth in the international women’s movement follows a generally increasing trend, we investigate two alternative time specifications in auxiliary models by including the following: (i) a linearly increasing variable, and (ii) a set of dummy variables for each year (using 1989 as the reference category). The results we present below prove robust to these alternative time specifications.

To capture *domestic ties to women’s transnational organizing*, we record the share of total possible women’s INGOs present in each country. Using the *Yearbook of International Organizations (YIO)*, we collect data across three time points—1988, 1998, and 2008—and interpolate missing years. As *YIO* data represent the state of organizations five

<sup>5</sup> In auxiliary analyses, we include each component of our measure separately. Individual components have similar, but weaker, effects on adoption than the summary measure.

to seven years prior to the coding year, we do not further lag the women's INGO measure. The percentage of possible women's INGOs for a country is calculated as the number of women's INGOs present in a country in a given year over the total number of women's INGOs present across all countries in that year. It measures the extent to which a country is connected to women's transnational organizing while acknowledging that transnational organizing has increased dramatically over time. Thus, although women's INGO foundings have increased over time, the trend in percent of possible women's INGOs, aggregated across countries, is actually flat across countries, with variation across the top and bottom performers. We try various alternative specifications of this variable (the raw count of number of women's INGOs in a year and a logged measure); results are robust to these changes.<sup>6</sup> To determine how the effect of domestic ties may vary as the international women's movement grows in size, strength, and reach, we also interact the global pressure measure with the country-level women's INGO measure.

Additionally, we test differences among women's organizations by considering their orientation and aims. We define "activist" organizations as those that actively promote women, women's rights, or women's status. Using the aims and activities of each women's INGO, as recorded in the *YIO*, we code each organization as activist or not activist. When data in the *YIO* were insufficient to determine organizational aims, we research organizations on the Internet. For example, although it is unclear whether the aims of the *International Federation of University Women* are activist, their Web site suggests that they "[advocate] for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training..." (IFUW 2011). Alternatively, the *International Federation of Women's Travel Organizations* could be activist in its aims, but their Web site suggests that it is largely a professional organization, enhancing "the personal and professional growth and leadership of its members" (IFWTO 2011). Most organizations coded as activist are feminist in their aims (81%), but we do not equate activism with feminism. Thus, we code as "activist" the *World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations*, an organization working against abortion but from a woman's perspective. Alternatively, we code the *International Association of Liberal Religious Women*, which primarily fosters connections and communication among women, as "not activist."

To gauge *exposure effects*, we construct measures of the density of regional adoption and colonial ties. First, for neighborhood influences, we measure the share of countries within a given region that have adopted a gender quota by a given year.<sup>7</sup> For example, by 2000, 27% of Asian countries had adopted some form of national quota, while only 7% of Eastern European countries had done so. The regional density variable is therefore coded 27 for all Asian countries in 2000 and 7 for all Eastern European countries for that year. Region is coded into 6 categories: the West, Eastern Europe and former Soviet

Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa. In auxiliary analyses, we also test the effects of sub-regional density using the UN's regional classification scheme.

Second, we consider potential cross-regional exposure through former colonial relationships. We use a polychotomous set of dummy variables measuring relationships to British, French, Spanish, and other regimes (Hughes 2009). Countries not a part of any colonial regime are the reference category.

Finally, we control for numerous *national characteristics* that may affect whether a country is willing or easily able to adopt a national quota measure. We code electoral systems into four categories: PR, plurality-majority, mixed-PR, and an "other" category that includes periods of one-party rule, coup years, and other legislative interruptions. Plurality-majority systems are the reference category. We also differentiate all countries currently or historically Marxist-Leninist from those never under Marxist rule, updating data from Paxton et al. (2006).

We measure democracy using data from Freedom House (2010), which breaks its scales into political rights and civil liberties, allowing tests of specific hypotheses about the impact of democracy on quota adoption.<sup>8</sup> We focus our analyses on general democracy, consistent with much gender and politics research (Paxton et al. 2010; Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna 2012). In additional analyses, we test effects of civil liberties alone, as suggested by Paxton et al. (2010), both as a linear and nonlinear effect.

We assess effects of economic development by including measures of GDP per capita in constant 1990 dollars, logged to reduce skew. Our primary measure is from Maddison (2010), who offers the best coverage of countries and time points. In auxiliary analyses, we use the same measure from the Penn World Tables, but find no differences to our substantive results.

To test whether adoption is more likely in post-conflict contexts, we include a time-varying measure of armed conflict that begins three years prior to the first election after conflict has reached high intensity (more than 1,000 battle deaths) and runs through the first post-conflict election. We also code additional measures using different rules for what constitutes "high intensity" (cumulative versus year-specific), extending the measure to the second post-conflict election, and limiting the measure to only post-conflict years (excluding years during conflict and transition years). Results presented are not sensitive to differences in conflict measurement.

To understand how women's political presence in a given country might impact quota adoption, we code two different sets of variables. First, we test for potential direct effects of women's national legislative presence and national leadership on quota adoption. Women's legislative presence is measured as the percentage of women in the lower house of the national legislature, lagged one year (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2013). We also code a time-varying measure of women's presence as prime minister or president. In our primary analysis, we limit women's national leadership to only truly powerful positions, excluding the lesser position in dual executive arrangements where there is a large imbalance of power among the two posts (for example, in Ireland where the

<sup>6</sup> As our sample includes only countries with a population of one million or more, this variable captures domestic ties to international organizing, rather than acting as a proxy for country size or a country's capacity to connect to INGOs.

<sup>7</sup> We do not expect (or find evidence of) geographic differences in the likelihood of quota adoption overall or net effects of neighborhood exposure; dummy variables for geographic region are not statistically significant in any models.

<sup>8</sup> In auxiliary models, we tested an alternative measure of democracy from the POLITY IV project but found no substantive changes to the results reported.



president wields largely symbolic power compared to the prime minister) (Paxton and Hughes 2013). Tests for effects of women's presence in more ceremonial, or symbolic, positions do not produce substantively different results.

One limitation of using data on women's representation, however, is that many countries experience periods of legislative interruption due to coups or armed conflict. During periods of interruption, these data are missing. Dropping these country-years is likely to strongly influence models, as seven countries adopted quotas in years with no national legislature in the previous year. In order to measure effects of prior experience related to women in politics, we code a second set of variables capturing prior or historical "climate" of women's representation. To do so, we carry forward prior levels of women's representation to fill gaps in the data. Countries never electing a female parliamentarian are assigned values of zero. We also operationalize "prior climate" of women's national leadership by considering whether a woman had ever been elected head of government or state.

We consider the robustness of our findings to additional cultural and structural variables. Because specific measures of cultural attitudes toward women are not available across all countries or years under analysis, we test the effects of dominant religion. Consistent with much cross-national research, we measure religion with a series of dummy variables signifying the dominant religion of the population. We exclude the Protestant category and compare the results to four other categories: Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox, and Other.

To address Bush's (2011) insights that developing countries might be particularly subject to international pressure through their dependence on foreign aid, we include a measure of logged official development assistance. We also estimate models separately for a sample excluding OECD countries.

Finally, we examine effects of six measures of gender development: total fertility rate, the ratios of male-to-female enrollment in tertiary education and secondary education, women's secondary and tertiary education rates, and the female labor force participation rate (World Bank 2011). Missing data between observed data points are interpolated. Any notable findings are reported below, and full results are available from authors upon request.

We lose a small number of country-years due to missing data, between 1% and 5% of our sample depending on which variables are included. Missing data typically arise when introducing lags to ensure proper order, but also when data are not available for earlier years, as in cases where countries are newly independent during the period of analysis. One country, Serbia, adopts a quota in the first year of independence and is thus affected by this problem. In auxiliary analyses, we try removing the lags that give rise to this problem, adjusting Serbia's adoption to the following year, and extrapolating variables to produce data for missing years.<sup>9</sup> None of these alternative strategies alter the substantive results reported here.

## Results

Table 1 displays the results of the discrete time event history models predicting national quota adoption. Model 1

is a baseline model including most of the internal characteristics—electoral system, economic development, democracy, Marxist–Leninist history, and major armed conflict—in addition to the global measure of pressure from the international women's movement (H1) and country-level connections to women's INGOs (H2). The first coefficient in Model 1 shows positive and significant effects of global pressure. Consistent with our expectations, quota introduction is more likely as the international women's movement grows in size, strength, and reach. However, against our expectations, country-level connections to women's INGOs do *not* increase the likelihood that a country will adopt a quota. Of the internal characteristics, only electoral system and major armed conflict are significant predictors in Model 1. Consistent with case studies, countries with PR electoral systems are more likely to adopt quotas than those with plurality–majority systems. Experiencing major armed conflict also increases the likelihood of quota adoption.<sup>10</sup>

To better understand the effect sizes, we can transform the logit coefficients into predicted probabilities. Beginning with the first column, we consider the probability of quota adoption for a non-Marxist–Leninist country with a plurality electoral system and no recent or ongoing major armed conflicts, and levels of development, democracy, and women's INGOs set at zero. As indicated by the intercept, a country with these characteristics has a predicted probability of adopting a quota of 0.08% in any year  $((1/[1 + \exp(-7.08)]) * 100)$ .

The chance of quota adoption increases over time with enhanced global pressures. For example, a ten-year increase in the institutionalization of the international women's movement is expected to result in a 1.14% increase in the predicted probability of adoption (from 0.08% to 1.22%). Effects increase nonlinearly. Fast forwarding to the end of the time period—a 19-year increase in international women's organizing—increases the probability of quota adoption by 3.14%. Having a PR system and experiencing major armed conflict also have sizable effects in this initial model. At the midpoint of the study period, in 1998, having a PR system increases the probability of adoption by 2.10%. Major armed conflict has nearly double this effect in the same year, increasing the probability of quota adoption by 3.69%.

In Model 2, we test whether the effects of domestic connections to women's INGOs vary as the international women's movement becomes increasingly institutionalized (H3). We find that once we include an interaction, women's INGOs do have a positive significant main effect. Furthermore, we observe a significant *negative* interaction between women's INGOs and the global pressure variable. As the international women's movement expands and increasingly embeds itself within global institutions such as the UN, the importance of domestic country connections to women's INGOs declines. We explore these findings further below.

Next, in Models 3 and 4, we consider the effects of regional and colonial exposure. First, stepping in colonial ties, we find that only Spanish colonies have a stronger propensity to adopt quotas than never-colonized countries. Yet, this effect is likely capturing the rapid diffusion of legislative quotas across Latin America after Argentina adopted the first such policy in 1991. Model 4 confirms

<sup>9</sup> We do not use multiple imputation or maximum likelihood strategies to account for missing data, since patterns of missing data are not missing at random.

<sup>10</sup> In auxiliary models, we also test interactions between armed conflict and measures of international women's organizing, but interactions are not robust to minor changes in model specification.

TABLE 1. Discrete Time Event History Models of National Gender Quotas

	Model 1 Baseline Model	Model 2 Add Interaction	Model 3 Add Colonialism	Model 4 Add Regional Density	Model 5 Add Women Politicians	Model 6 New Baseline	Model 7 Non-OECD
International influences							
Global pressure from Int'l women's movement	0.34 (0.09)***	0.66 (0.17)***	0.73 (0.19)***	0.52 (0.20)*	0.58 (0.24)*	0.43 (0.18)*	0.47 (0.19)*
Women's INGOs (% of possible)	0.00 (0.01)	0.07 (0.03)*	0.07 (0.03)*	0.06 (0.03) <sup>†</sup>	0.07 (0.04) <sup>†</sup>	0.06 (0.03)*	0.09 (0.04)*
Global pressure × women's INGOs		-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00) <sup>†</sup>	-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)*
Internal characteristics							
PR electoral system	1.02 (0.47)*	1.07 (0.47)*	0.20 (0.57)	0.33 (0.57)	0.29 (0.62)	0.94 (0.48)*	1.05 (0.52)*
Mixed-PR electoral system	0.79 (0.56)	0.83 (0.55)	0.34 (0.62)	0.51 (0.62)	0.04 (0.66)	1.00 (0.56) <sup>†</sup>	1.03 (0.64)
Other electoral system	0.80 (0.57)	0.94 (0.58)	0.51 (0.62)	0.51 (0.63)	-0.04 (0.85)	0.88 (0.60)	0.73 (0.64)
Log GDP per capita (t-1)	-0.11 (0.19)	-0.11 (0.19)	-0.13 (0.22)	-0.11 (0.22)	-0.01 (0.26)	-0.05 (0.20)	-0.04 (0.22)
Democracy (t-1)	0.08 (0.14)	0.09 (0.14)	0.08 (0.15)	0.03 (0.15)	-0.12 (0.16)	0.03 (0.15)	0.02 (0.16)
Ever Marxist-Leninist	-0.36 (0.41)	-0.30 (0.41)	-0.40 (0.45)	-0.47 (0.46)	-0.14 (0.53)	-0.18 (0.41)	-0.21 (0.44)
Major armed conflict	1.41 (0.40)***	1.43 (0.41)***	1.51 (0.44)***	1.60 (0.44)***	0.87 (0.53) <sup>†</sup>	1.72 (0.42)***	1.90 (0.46)***
% Women in Nat'l Legislature (t-1)					-0.06 (0.03)*		
Female national leader					0.41 (0.67)		
Exposure effects							
British empire			-0.71 (0.55)	-0.83 (0.55)	-1.60 (0.72)*		
French empire			-1.25 (0.85)	-1.40 (0.86)	-1.54 (0.88) <sup>†</sup>		
Spanish colony			1.64 (0.49)***	0.67 (0.68)	0.84 (0.73)		
Other colony			0.15 (0.56)	-0.02 (0.56)	0.33 (0.63)		
Regional density				0.03 (0.01)*	0.03 (0.01) <sup>†</sup>	0.04 (0.01)***	0.05 (0.01)***
Intercept	-7.08 (1.49)***	-10.10 (2.05)***	-10.00 (2.38)***	-8.45 (2.43)***	-8.80 (2.85)***	-9.13 (2.10)***	-9.29 (2.42)***
N-Countries	149	149	149	149	149	149	117
N-Country-years	2,405	2,405	2,405	2,405	2,204	2,405	1,859

(Note. \*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .01, \*p < .05, <sup>†</sup>p < .10, two-tailed tests.)



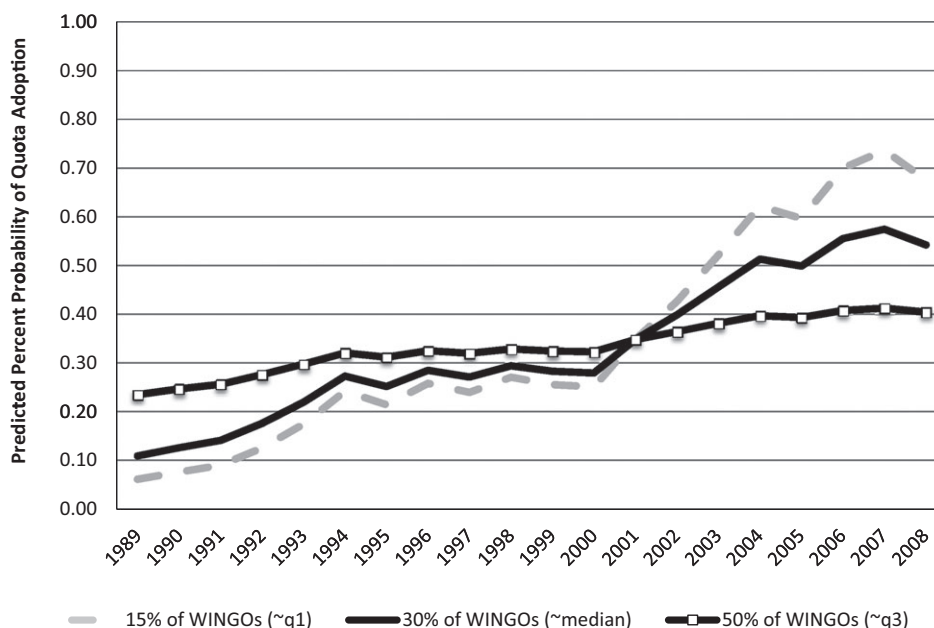


FIG. 2. Effects of the Institutionalization of the International Women's Movement and Women's INGO Embeddedness on the Predicted Probability of National Quota Adoption, 1989–2008

these suspicions; once we account for regional density of adoption, the effect of Spanish colonialism falls away.<sup>11</sup> Accounting for regional and colonial exposure to quotas, the effects of electoral system also are no longer statistically significant. Yet, major armed conflict remains a strong predictor of quota adoption.

In Model 5, we test for effects of women's legislative presence.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, we observe that this effect is negative: As women's share of seats in the national legislature increases, the likelihood of quota adoption decreases. Quotas are thus not being adopted in places that already have a strong female presence, suggesting no strong sense of need to elect more women where they are already prevalent. In this model, the effect of armed conflict is cut in half: Because years with no legislatures fall away when women's representation is included, we lose seven quota adoptions that occur in periods without legislatures, all countries affected by major armed conflict (Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Pakistan, Serbia, Somalia, and Uganda). Losing interruption years also affects colonialism variables such that British and French colonies are less likely to adopt quotas than countries that were never colonized.

In Model 6, we remove effects of colonialism from the model to present a more parsimonious model. Global pressure, domestic ties to transnational women's activism, and the interaction between these forces remain statistically significant, as do effects of armed conflict and regional density. In this reduced model, countries with mixed-PR systems also emerge as significantly more likely to adopt national-level quotas than countries with

plurality–majority systems, although the effect is only marginally significant.

In the final model presented in Table 1, we address Bush's (2011) argument that processes of quota adoption in developing countries are distinct from elsewhere in the world. Following Bush, we exclude OECD countries from our sample and replicate our analysis. Interestingly, we find minimal differences when excluding OECD countries. Analyzing separate samples does not provide any evidence that global pressure, domestic ties to transnational women's organizing, and the interaction between the two have effects on quota adoption that are anything but global.<sup>13</sup>

Of all of the results presented in Table 1, certainly one of the most striking is the negative interaction between institutionalization of the international women's movement and country links to women's INGOs, as predicted by our "recoiling" theory. Given the known limitations of relying on statistical significance when evaluating interaction effects in logistic models (Brambor, Clark and Golder 2006; Berry, DeMeritt and Esarey 2010; Berry, Golder and Milton 2012), we map the interaction effect between women's INGOs and global pressure from the international women's movement in Figure 2. At the beginning of the study period, having a greater number of domestic ties to women's INGOs increases the likelihood of quota adoption. But over time, for countries with 50% of possible women's INGO memberships (roughly the third quartile), pressure from the international women's movement increases the probability of national quota adoption only slightly. Alternatively, for countries with 30% of possible women's INGO memberships (the median), the positive effects of global pressure are stronger. These countries

<sup>11</sup> Similarly, when we test religion, Catholic countries have a higher likelihood of national quota adoption compared to Protestant countries until accounting for regional exposure effects.

<sup>12</sup> Female-to-male secondary education ratio and women's labor force participation rate have significant positive effects on adoption only when controlling for women's legislative representation but not including measures of female leadership. Other measures of gender development did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance in any models.

<sup>13</sup> Modeling quotas only in OECD countries is complicated by small sample size and a slightly later pattern of quota adoption. However, even among OECD countries, our main theorized effects retain their direction and significance. In auxiliary analysis, we also included dummy variables to control for OECD membership or Western geography; they are not statistically significant and do not affect the women's INGO–international women's movement interaction.

have a lower probability of adoption early on but experience steep increases in the likelihood of adoption after 2001. The post-2001 slope is even steeper for countries with just 15% of possible women's INGO memberships (roughly the first quartile). Overall, the effect of women's INGOs on quota adoption is maximized in the earliest years with the least pressure. Its marginal effect on the likelihood of adoption becomes negative around 2001. Symmetrically, as global pressure mounts, having the same number of domestic ties through women's INGOs produces an increasingly negative marginal effect. Put another way, as global pressure grows, having more domestic ties to women's INGOs becomes detrimental to quota adoption.

It is possible, however, that the effects of women's INGOs are conditioned by differences among them. Only some women's INGOs have an "activist" orientation, defined as seeking to promote women's status in some way. Others, including professional, sports, and other fraternal associations, are decidedly "non-activist." By considering these differences, we may gain insight into the negative interaction.

We present results separating domestic connections to activist and non-activist women's INGOs in Table 2. These models also control for effects of major armed conflict, electoral system differences, Marxist-Leninist history, democracy, economic development, and regional density (like Models 6 and 7 in Table 1). Overall, the results suggest that differences among women's INGOs do matter. Effects for domestic connections to activist women's INGOs are stronger than for connections to women's organizations without an activist orientation; the main effect of activist women's INGOs is about 11% larger than for non-activist women's INGOs, and the interaction effect for activist organizations is approximately 33% larger.

Although differences in coefficients presented in Table 2 may not seem large, plotting the predicted probabilities shows dramatic differences between effects of activist and non-activist women's INGOs (see Figure 3). Whereas the pattern for activist organizations appears somewhat similar to what we described for all women's INGOs, the interaction effect for non-activist women's INGOs is much weaker. Lacking ties to activist women's INGOs, in particular, is what maximizes global pressure from the international women's movement in the later years of our analysis.

### Auxiliary Results

Before turning to the discussion of these results, we present a few notable findings in Table 3. First, in Models 9

and 10, we substitute civil liberties for the combined measure of democracy and test for nonlinearity by adding a squared term. Increasing civil liberties has positive effects on quota adoption, but only when accounting for the nonlinearity of its effects. The effect of increased civil liberties is positive but has decreasing returns. This effect is robust across a broad range of models.

To further examine the role of women in politics, we test the effect of the prior climate of women's legislative representation and having had a female national leader. Although the effect of women's representation in the prior year is negative, when considering prior climate, the effect reverses: A more favorable history is associated with a higher likelihood of quota adoption. However, these results are sensitive to the specification of democracy. Female leaders, past or present, continue to have no effect.

Finally, Model 14 estimates even more nuanced measure of regional exposure, focused on subregions. When geographic boundaries are measured more tightly, regional exposure effects are even stronger—the size of the regional coefficient increases by 43%. These results are consistent with theoretical expectations about the role of exposure effects.

In further auxiliary analyses not presented, we test effects of logged official development assistance (Bush 2011). Including this measure does not affect quota adoption or our substantive results. However, this lack of an effect is not necessarily surprising, given our global analysis. Rather, our findings complement those of Bush (2011) by evaluating effects of international pressures that may not be contingent on economic forces.

We also introduced dummy variables measuring party quota adoption before and during the study period, testing the effects of party quotas in all models presented thus far. Although the effect of adopting a quota prior to 1989 is negative, the measure only reaches statistical significance in one model (Model 14) and does not alter our substantive results.

## Discussion

The statistical findings provide strong evidence for the importance of international pressures on states to adopt national quota policies (H1). A case exemplifying this trend is Afghanistan, where a significant proportion of seats, 27%, were reserved for women in the lower house under the 2004 constitution. Demands for a quota emerged, importantly, at conferences organized with the technical and financial support of the UN (Krook et al. 2010:71). In 2001, the UN was instrumental in bringing about the Bonn Agreement, in which Afghan leaders

TABLE 2. Comparing Effects of Activist vs. Non-Activist Women's INGOs

	<i>Model 8</i> <i>All Women's INGOs</i>	<i>Model 9</i> <i>Activist</i>	<i>Model 10</i> <i>Not Activist</i>
Global pressure from Int'l women's movement	0.428 (0.178)*	0.467 (0.183)*	0.356 (0.160)*
Women's INGOs			
% of total possible	0.062 (0.031)*		
% of activist		0.062 (0.031)*	
% of not activist			0.056 (0.030) <sup>†</sup>
Global pressure × Women's INGOs	−0.007 (0.004)*	−0.008 (0.003)*	−0.006 (0.003) <sup>†</sup>
N-Countries	149	149	149
N-Country-years	2,405	2,405	2,405

(Note. \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ , <sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ , two-tailed tests; all models also include major armed conflict, electoral system variables, Marxist-Leninist, democracy, logged GDP per capita, and regional diffusion; full results available from authors upon request.)

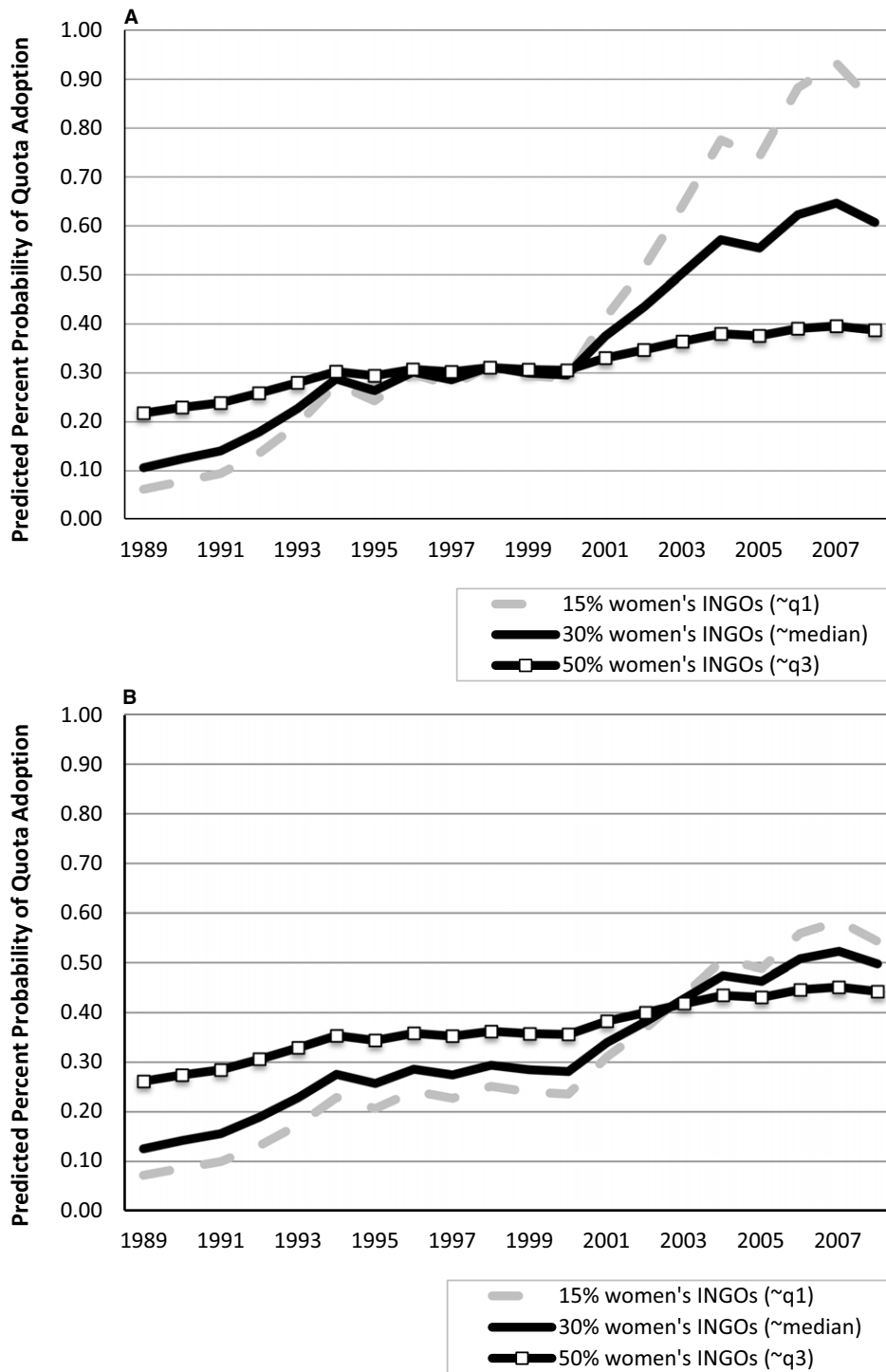


FIG 3. (A) Activist Women's INGOs. (B) Non-Activist Women's INGOs

pledged to foster women's inclusion in post-conflict governance (UNIFEM 2004). Among domestic actors, a few women's groups were involved in mobilizing for change on behalf of women (Krook et al. 2010). But the presence of warlords and religious fundamentalists made organizing all but impossible outside of Kabul (Human Rights Watch 2004). Further, women on the ground voiced concerns in interviews that a national gender quota would be unfeasible and potentially dangerous (Bauer 2002). Overall, it is therefore impossible to describe the success of the Afghan quota law without reference to international pressure.

The finding in most need of discussion is the negative interaction—or “recoiling” effect—that we hypothesize between global pressure and domestic ties to women's transnational organizing through women's INGOs (H3), especially women's INGOs that actively promote the advancement of women's status. One possibility is that there is much less resistance to quotas in cases where adoption occurs earlier, when there was less pressure, leaving only the more “difficult” cases in the sample for later adoption. The available evidence suggests, however, that events leading up to quota introduction among the earliest innovators could take longer and were often

TABLE 3. Auxiliary Discrete Time Event History Models of National Gender Quotas

	<i>Model 11</i> <i>Civil Liberties</i>	<i>Model 12</i> <i>Non-Linear Civil Liberties</i>	<i>Model 13</i> <i>Women in Politics Climate</i>	<i>Model 14</i> <i>Sub-Regional Density</i>
<b>International Influences</b>				
Global pressure from Int'l women's movement	0.42 (0.18)*	0.45 (0.18)*	0.39 (0.18)*	0.34 (0.18) <sup>†</sup>
Women's INGOs (% of possible)	0.06 (0.18) <sup>†</sup>	0.07 (0.03)*	0.06 (0.03) <sup>†</sup>	0.07 (0.03) <sup>†</sup>
Global pressure × Women's INGOs	-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)*
<b>Internal characteristics</b>				
Civil Liberties (t-1)	0.08 (0.15)	0.96 (0.53) <sup>†</sup>	1.25 (0.56)*	1.37 (0.17)*
Civil liberties squared		-0.11 (0.06) <sup>†</sup>	-0.14 (0.07)*	-0.20 (0.07)**
Women in politics (climate)			0.04 (0.02) <sup>†</sup>	0.06 (0.02)**
History of female national leadership			-0.45 (0.42)	-0.29 (0.45)
<b>Exposure effects</b>				
Regional density	0.04 (0.01)***	0.04 (0.01)***	0.04 (0.01)***	
Subregional density				0.06 (0.01)***
Intercept	-9.14 (2.10)***	-11.84 (2.62)***	-12.32 (2.68)***	-13.25 (2.81)***
N-Countries	149	149	149	149
N-Country-years	2,405	2,405	2,405	2,405

(Note. \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ , <sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ , two-tailed tests; all models also include major armed conflict, electoral system variables, Marxist-Leninist, and logged GDP per capita; full results available from authors upon request.)

fraught with obstacles, processes that were dramatically shortened in later cases (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005). For example, failed quota reform at the local level, followed by more than a decade of intense public debate, eventually culminated in the adoption of a quota law in France in 2000. In comparison, Tunisia approved a nearly identical provision in May 2011, a mere four months after popular protests toppled the prior regime.

Here, we propose two alternative explanations, drawing on literatures on social movements, gender in politics, and in-depth case studies of quota campaigns. We argue that domestic ties to international activist women's organizations may undermine quota adoption due to (i) increasing diversity and competition among women's rights agendas, leading to divisions in priorities and a disunited front, and/or (ii) increased perceptions of threat felt by male elites and the emergence of counter-mobilizations producing enhanced opposition to feminist goals. Our data do not permit us to adjudicate between these two possibilities, although evidence from case studies offers some support for both intuitions.

Our first explanation draws from work arguing that "gender equality policy" is a multifaceted concept that includes not only women's underrepresentation in politics but also domestic violence, reproductive rights, and parental leave (Htun and Weldon 2010). At the same time, research on the concept of "intersectionality" emphasizes that women—like other identity groups—are internally diverse (Hughes 2011). Together, these perspectives suggest that as ties to organizations that act on behalf of women increase within a given country, domestic actors may disagree rather than agree on which issues are the most important to pursue (Haussman and Sauer 2007). Quotas may thus be only one of many priorities, leading to divisions among activists and decreased pressure on the state to adopt quotas.

The fight for ratification of the African Union (AU) Protocol on the Rights of Women in the Republic of Niger illustrates these processes in relation to packages of gender equality reforms. Kang (2011) explains that while international activists and their local partners were advocating for ratification of the AU Protocol, other activists were simultaneously lobbying for the removal of Niger's

reservations to the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These differences in focus led women's rights activists to disagree over strategy: whether to combine the two issues into one campaign, pursue them separately, or pursue one before the other. As one international donor reported: "There was no common front" (Kang 2011:22). The result was that neither measure passed, undercutting gender equality goals more broadly.

Our second explanation is grounded in research on backlash, stemming from perceived threats to majority interests and the rise of social movement counter-mobilization. According to the concept of intrusiveness theorized by Blalock (1967), minorities are viewed as non-threatening and more easily accepted in environments when their numbers are small. As minority numbers increase, however, majority groups perceive a threat to their dominance, triggering a negative response toward minority members. Yoder (1991) observed this dynamic in relation to men's hostility toward women as their numbers grow in the business sector and also Kathlene (1994) noticed it in a study of political committee memberships. Male decision makers may thus feel that quotas are a threat to their power, imposing "political costs they are not willing to bear" (Simmons 2009:13).

Perceptions of threat to the status quo may also extend beyond male elites. As numerous studies have documented, the rise of various movements for social justice provokes the emergence of new conservative networks aimed at thwarting or rolling back progressive policy gains. These efforts have—perhaps ironically—often been the most successful where there have been prior advances in the rights of marginalized groups (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Soule 2004; Bob 2012). The result is that, when viewed in comparative perspective, countries with less forceful women's movements may achieve their goals before those with highly active and aggressive campaigns (Charrad 2001; Paxton and Hughes 2013).

Together with studies of social movements revealing that "political actors...are typically much less afraid of movements threatening, say, to occupy their offices than to drive them out of office" (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, and Su 2010:297), this work suggests that women's activist



organizing to change the electoral law—promoting women, the minority, at the expense of men, the majority—may heighten perceptions of threat and produce resistance among male legislators, canceling out pressure from the global arena. In contexts without strong ties to activist women’s INGOs, in contrast, the reverse is likely to be true. There, quotas may be viewed as less of a challenge to the status quo and male-dominated legislatures more comfortably agree to the global policy script.

These dynamics of threat and resistance can be seen in Chile which stands out as one of the few Latin American countries that as of 2013 had not approved a quota law, despite the rapid diffusion of these measures across the region in the late 1990s (Piatti-Crocker 2011). Chile’s lack of a quota was puzzling, given the presence of an active women’s movement (Baldez 2002) that had, among other demands, called for passage of a quota law since the transition to democracy in 1990 (Gray 2003). Yet numerous attempts to introduce quota bills were thwarted, dying in committee deliberations even when prominent female parliamentarians proposed them (Waylen 2000) or were considered a high priority by the president (Estrada 2006).<sup>14</sup>

Reasons emerge in a government agency study. A common refrain among political elites, journalists, and civil society groups was that the bill was not viable because “men would not be disposed to being replaced by women” (SERNAM 2002:56). Male party leaders and deputies, further, characterized quotas as “inadequate, inopportune, or frankly mistaken” and confined to female political elites “with scarce reflection in public opinion” (42). A poll conducted in 2006, however, revealed that more than 70% of citizens, both male and female, supported the parity measures proposed by the government. In contrast, more than half of all deputies opposed gender quotas (Fernández Ramil 2008), including a former presidential candidate, who published an opinion piece stating that women had more serious problems than fighting for increased participation in politics (Estrada 2006).

### Conclusion

Quotas for women in politics, with the potential to transform the composition of parliament and, in turn, enact widespread changes in politics and society (Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo 2012), are a force to be reckoned with on the global stage. In this article, we explain how this outcome came about, theorizing that international pressure and domestic activism may interact in a variety of ways. We develop a novel measure combining multiple indicators to create a trend variable that captures increasing global pressure from the international women’s movement. We include this global measure in interaction with country-level ties to activist and non-activist women’s INGOs. Event history analysis estimates the influence of these factors, as well as exposure effects and internal characteristics of countries, on policy adoption. In contrast to previous work, this study offers the first fully

global consideration of the spread of national gender quotas.

We find that as the international women’s movement increased in size, strength, and reach, it generated global pressure on nation-states to adopt quotas (H1). The influence of the movement is striking: In 1989, a country with no women’s INGOs had a 0.1% chance of adopting a quota, whereas by 2008, that percentage had jumped to 3%. Although we cannot, of course, definitively prove that it is the activities of the international women’s movement rather than change over time that matters for quota adoption, there are significant reasons to view our measure of the international women’s movement as appropriate. The passage of time is not itself an explanation; it is equally plausible that the probability of adoption should remain constant over the time period, or that the probability of quota adoption in any year may increase or decrease, resulting in a nonlinear trend. Time only has an effect on quota adoption if there is some process driving change. We argue that growth in the international women’s movement explains that change. Further, as discussed in the Data and Method section, the effect of the international women’s movement is robust to the inclusion of both a completely constrained linear time trend and a completely unconstrained nonlinear time trend. Thus, beyond the passage of time, we find that the international women’s movement increases pressure on states, fueling the widespread proliferation of gender quotas.

We also find that women’s activist organizing through women’s INGOs played both an independent and a moderating role in the quota adoption process. By themselves, country ties to women’s INGOs, particularly activist women’s INGOs, increase the likelihood of quota adoption (H2). However, the presence of activist women’s INGOs *decreases* the influence of global pressure emanating from the international women’s movement, especially in the later years of our analysis (H3). Thus, we ultimately reach the conclusion that in recent years, women have been most able to make gains toward gender equality in politics when they are the least connected to international activist organizations. This finding—concerning the relationship between local and global actors—may matter a great deal for other research on international norms and transnational activism.

In the discussion, we posit two potential explanations for this negative interaction. First, we suggest that a larger number of activist organizations in a country may be associated with diffuse goals. Thus, although organizing may be widespread, it need not focus solely on quotas or even women’s political underrepresentation. Instead, internal divisions among women may create a lack of common purpose and weaken pressure toward any one goal. Second, we posit that a larger presence of activist organizations could threaten the male legislators who must approve a quota and/or provoke counter-movement organizing, thereby canceling out the pressures emanating from the international arena. Conversely, in countries where women’s mobilizing is weak or non-activist, calls for quotas may be viewed as less threatening to the status of male elites. Although we cannot directly adjudicate between these two explanations, we provide case study evidence from Niger and Chile to illustrate their operation. Further research should consider these explanations and also whether activist organizations matter more to the adoption of effective quotas than ineffective ones.

<sup>14</sup> An explanation often given for the lack of quota introduction in Chile was the existence of a binomial electoral system, which means that in most instances, each party could elect at most one representative per district to the Chamber of Deputies. Quota policies in a wide variety of contexts around the world, however, have been designed with exactly this type of scenario in mind, requiring parties to nominate equal numbers of women (France) or alternate men and women at the top of their electoral lists (Libya), taking all districts into account.

In addition to international influence, we observe that quota introduction is also bolstered by exposure to other cases of adoption, especially within the same region, corroborating research on policy diffusion, as well as case study intuitions about demonstration effects. In contrast, features of the national context generally play much less of a role. For the literature on quota policies, these findings highlight the need for scholars to look beyond domestic characteristics—the primary focus of most work—to explore potential international and transnational influences on quota reform.

Apart from some gender scholars, social scientists as a whole have not yet addressed the global phenomenon of gender quotas. Yet, we suggest quota policies offer a crucial opportunity to further refine work on policy and norm diffusion, contributing to literatures in IR, transnational sociology, and comparative politics. Our results indicate, for example, that the transmission of highly controversial scripts, such as those associated with quotas, involve a more complicated set of dynamics than those portrayed via the language of boomerang effects or spirals of increasing pressure.<sup>15</sup> When international and domestic activists push highly controversial scripts simultaneously, governments may be more resistant to change, provoking recoiling effects instead of a seamless alignment with international standards. Data on quotas can therefore provide scholars with a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics behind international norm diffusion.

A second insight to highlight from this study is that current modes of operationalizing transnational activism may be insufficient for capturing the mechanisms by which organizations play a role in the diffusion of global norms and scripts. Scholars have often limited INGO measures by domain. This article proposes that researchers may also need to consider distinctions among INGOS, according to their aims and strategies. Many organizational subfields include a broad range of cultural, professional, as well as more social-change-oriented groups. As we find here, it is possible that activist and non-activist INGOS in other domains have different and conflicting influences on state outcomes. Consequently, some of the boundaries between research on INGOS and transnational social movement organizations may require interrogation.

Finally, at a more basic level, quotas are among the widest reaching electoral reforms of recent years. By addressing, and seeking to overcome, the fact that women make up one-half of the population globally, but constitute only 22% of legislators worldwide, these policies have the potential to radically alter both politics and society at large. With their ability to recast the composition of parliaments around the world, quotas are thus a policy with potentially major implications for domestic and international politics, possibilities that are only now beginning to be understood.

<sup>15</sup> Certainly, other global scripts are potentially controversial, such as those related to human rights or minority rights. However, in comparison with human rights especially, the co-optation of human rights language by the international women's movement (for example, "women's rights are human rights") suggests that women's rights are generally considered more controversial than human rights broadly defined. It is not our goal here to prove that women's rights are the most controversial in the international arena; instead, we wish to suggest that understanding international pressure is complicated when scripts are controversial.

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