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Amanda Clayton, Cecilia Josefsson & Vibeke Wang

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# PRESENT WITHOUT PRESENCE? GENDER, QUOTAS AND DEBATE RECOGNITION IN THE UGANDAN PARLIAMENT

Amanda Clayton, Cecilia Josefsson and Vibeke Wang

*This article charts a new direction in gender quota research by examining whether female legislators in general, and quota recipients in particular, are accorded respect and authority in plenary debates. We measure this recognition in relation to the number of times an individual member of parliament (MP) is referred to by name in plenary debates. We use a unique dataset from the Ugandan parliament to assess the determinants of MP name recognition in plenary debates over an eight-year period (2001–08). Controlling for other possible determinants of MP recognition, we find that women elected to reserved seats are significantly less recognised in plenary debates over time as compared to their male and female colleagues in open seats.*

## Introduction

Countries in East Africa have been at the forefront of increasing the number of women in legislatures through the use of gender quotas. Today, Rwanda has the highest proportion of women in parliament worldwide and countries such as Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi all have over 30% women in their respective parliaments (IPU 2014). Yet, the ability of quotas to increase women's physical presence in legislative bodies does not guarantee that quota recipients will have the same ability as their non-quota colleagues to shape these bodies' decisions. To do this, we argue, quota recipients' presence must generate the same respect and authority as their equivalently placed colleagues in open seats.

In this article, we explore the effects of gender and gender quotas on Ugandan legislators' plenary recognition, measured as the number of times an individual member of parliament (MP) is referred to by name in plenary debates. As we expand further below, we interpret name recognition to signal both the respect (as opposed to discrimination) an MP receives by her colleagues in parliament as well as her potential power or authority in the domain of policymaking. This study thus expands research on women's physical presence in legislatures, their descriptive representation, by examining how other MPs recognise this presence. Contributing further to the quota literature, we further analyse whether different patterns of recognition exist among women elected via quotas versus those elected in open counties.

We use a unique content analysis dataset from the Ugandan Parliamentary Hansard and find that, controlling for other possible determinants of plenary recognition including incumbency, party affiliation and total debate contributions, women who are elected to reserved seats are still significantly less recognised in plenary debates over time as compared to their male and female colleagues in open seats. Further, this trend only becomes pronounced after Uganda transitioned to multi-party rule in 2006. Highly recognised quota-mandated

women from the ruling party were not reelected and the few who were reelected significantly altered their behaviour in such a way that diminished their presence and authority during plenary debates. These findings lead us to conclude that opening the democratic space in Uganda counter-intuitively had negative short-term effects on quota-mandated women's legislative recognition.

The first section reviews the literature on women's descriptive and substantive representation and situates our contribution to this field. We then introduce the Ugandan case, highlighting how certain features of the political system enable us to measure both individual- and institutional-level factors that may determine the extent to which MPs' physical presence is informally acknowledged and recognised in legislative debates. The following section introduces our dataset and methodological approach. We next present our results and offer a discussion of our findings, informed by over 100 interviews conducted between 2009 and 2013, concluding with how our findings relate to current gender quota scholarship.

### Gender, Quotas and Legislative Recognition

Research on women's political representation largely takes its point of departure from Hanna Pitkin's (1967) concepts of descriptive ('standing for'), substantive ('acting for') and symbolic ('role modeling') representation. We situate our study within the frame of women's descriptive representation, but our analysis moves beyond mere presence by focusing on female legislator's recognition in the plenary as an indication of their standing within the legislature, and by extension their possibility to advance legislation on a variety of issues. Given that both quota-elected and non-quota-elected women hold seats in the Ugandan parliament, this study is also able to distinguish between the effects of gender and electoral rules on MPs' recognition in plenary debates.

While there is extensive research in terms of the impact of quotas on women's descriptive representation, only recently have scholars begun to examine characteristics of quota recipients beyond their numbers in political decision-making bodies. These studies compare quota recipients to other MPs in terms of their qualifications, loyalty and legislative independence, and ability to influence gender-related legislation.

The existing research on quota recipients' qualifications reveals no clear trend. Several studies report that in some cases quota representatives are less qualified than other representatives in terms of seniority in age (Britton 2005) and political experience (Franceschet and Piscopo 2012; Rai et al. 2006; Sater 2007) but not necessarily education (Franceschet and Piscopo 2012; Sater 2007). In a case study of Tanzania, Yoon (2011) refers to limitations due to lack of skills among female MPs. Studies of women in the Ugandan parliament, however, convincingly conclude that contrary to expectations female quota recipients are not significantly different from other representatives in terms of their relevant qualifications and skill sets (Josefsson 2014; O'Brien 2012).

Several scholars find that female quota representatives often are members of the social and economic elite and therefore easily drawn into patronage politics (Nanivedekar 2006; Rai et al. 2006; Vincent 2004). Other studies do not find that quota representatives are more likely to be elected due to favouritism and family ties than other representatives (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Zetterberg 2008). Reserved seats in particular have been criticised for reinforcing patronage politics, being used to bolster the incumbent party (Bauer 2008b; Matland 2006; Muriaas and Wang 2012) and thus promote women who are overly loyal to the ruling party (Goetz 2003; Tamale 1999; Tripp 2006). This can negatively affect quota recipients' ability to

advance gender-related legislation, in particular when it conflicts with party interests (Tripp 2006; cf. Longman 2006; Yoon 2011).

Work has also addressed the status and possibilities for quota recipients to act for women in the parliament. Writing on Argentina, Franceschet and Piscopo (2008) demonstrate how quotas have affected women's substantive representation in contradictory ways: positively by giving them a mandate to change policy, but negatively by creating the notion that women are in need of special treatment. Zetterberg (2008), on the other hand, finds that quota women in Mexican state legislatures are no more likely than non-quota women to be marginalised and invisibilised in their legislative work.

In the East African context, dominant party systems and the workings of the ruling party have been identified as constraints on women's substantive representation. Research has stressed the intrinsic problems posed particularly by reserved seat quota systems, and how quota representatives may be relegated to subordinate or 'token' positions (Bauer 2008a: 362, 2008b; Goetz 2003: 118).

It is clear from existing research, therefore, that women's presence and stature in legislative bodies by no means guarantee an increase in women's substantive representation. To better understand the theoretical connection between 'standing for' and 'acting for', we argue here that women's recognition in plenary debates is a necessary yet not sufficient precondition for women's legislative influence in general and women's substantive representation in particular.

### Gender Quotas in Uganda

Uganda became one of the first African countries to adopt a reserved seat quota in 1989. MPs in open seats are elected through a first-past-the-post system in single member constituencies, called counties, while the female legislators in reserved seats are elected in larger constituencies, called districts, covering one or several of the smaller counties. Since 1989, the number of reserved seats for women has increased in every electoral cycle as new districts have been created.<sup>1</sup> As of 2014, 30% of parliamentary seats were reserved for women, in addition to which women held 5% of seats in open counties. Despite this impressive proportion of female legislators, it has been suggested that the legislative influence and authority of quota recipients may be circumscribed as the ruling party has become increasingly authoritarian.

Uganda provides an interesting case for examining dynamics of recognition within parliamentary debates. First, the existence of reserved seats, as well as women elected to open seats, provides an opportunity to separate the effect of gender from that of gender quotas on patterns of legislative recognition. Second, the Ugandan system of reserved seats was introduced in 1989, enabling us to study the quota's impact over a longer duration than more recent adopters.

### Plenary Recognition in the Ugandan Parliament

In this study, we measure *recognition* in terms of the number of times an individual MP is recognised by name in plenary debates. This concept thus goes beyond mere descriptive representation by examining individual MPs' actual acknowledged presence—that is, whether his or her colleagues take notice of what he or she says in a meaningful way.

In the Ugandan parliament, individual legislators are generally free to speak in the plenary whenever they want to by indicating to the Speaker that they would like to be called upon. It is only in a small number of high-profile debates where the political parties draw up lists of speakers beforehand. An individual MP's name can be mentioned in the debate for several reasons: to refer to the MP's earlier intervention, to call on the MP by name, or to reference the MP's prior statements, actions or accomplishments. As an illustration, consider the following examples from a 2004 debate.

Thank you, **hon. Lukyamuzi** for giving way. **Hon. Ken Lukyamuzi** has been stressing a point concerning negotiations and talking peace and he is saying negotiations must take place outside Uganda. (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa, woman representative of Kiboga district)

In conclusion, and this is in answer to **hon. Oulanyah**, my endeavour to cause dialogue does not mean that I support Kony. I am strongly opposed to Kony's activities. (Mr John Ken Lukyamuzi, county representative of Lubaga South)<sup>2</sup>

In order for an MP to be referred to by name, it is first necessary that the others know that MP by name, which may be difficult in a parliament of 375 members. Consequently, we interpret name recognition as showing some degree of respect to the named MP. This indicator also captures the authority and ability the named MP has to spur subsequent debate. For these reasons, we argue that degree of recognition reveals both an individual member's standing and his/her potency in the legislature

Specifically, we propose several hypotheses. First, it is possible that *all women will be equally recognised in plenary debates as compared to their male colleagues*. Because there are no significant differences between the backgrounds and qualifications among men, quota women and non-quota women in the Ugandan parliament (Josefsson 2014; O'Brien 2012), we could anticipate that these three groups act in similar ways in the plenary, leading to similar scores on plenary recognition.

Second, given that we could expect women to come in with new and sometimes contentious legislative agendas, including progressive gender-related laws (Wang 2013), it is possible that women (quota-mandated or not) will make noteworthy impacts in plenary debates causing a greater degree of recognition. Together with support from civil society to train female legislators in debate techniques, this may imply that *female MPs will have higher scores on plenary recognition compared to their male colleagues*.

Third, however, there are also reasons to expect that *women elected to reserved seats will be less recognised than their male colleagues*. A general critique against quotas is that they risk creating negative stereotypes (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). Even though women elected through these measures may be equally qualified, they risk being perceived as second-class parliamentarians by their colleagues, as less experienced and less capable. Further, if women in reserved seats are more loyal to the ruling party than male MPs—a dynamic that some observers suggest may have grown more powerful after the move to multi-party elections—we could expect these women to raise less contentious issues (and speak less in general) and therefore be less influential and recognised during debates. In such a scenario, quota women will be marginalised or made invisible in parliamentary work, and thus simply not listened to and acknowledged in plenary debates.

Finally, given that the Ugandan parliament is a deeply gendered institution characterised by patriarchal norms, *all female legislators may struggle to receive recognition for their contributions*.

Apart from gender and seat type, several other factors may potentially affect legislators' acknowledged presence. We expect incumbents and frontbenchers to be referred to more often, even when controlling for their total debate contributions. For more anonymous MPs, such as backbenchers and legislators who are serving their first term in office, it may be more difficult to make a personal mark on the debate.

## Measures and Methods

### *Data*

Our quantitative data is coded from the Ugandan Hansard records from 2001 to 2008. The data covers records from the complete 7th Parliament (2001–06) and the beginning of the 8th Parliament (2006–11), with over 1800 observations in the unit of MP-years. Our measure of MP recognition is coded simply as the number of times that an MP is referred to by name by other MPs in the plenary. [Table 1](#) displays the summary statistics (pooled across years) of our measure of MP recognition by our three MP seat types of interest: male MPs elected to constituency seats, female MPs elected to constituency seats, and female MPs elected to reserved seats.<sup>3</sup>

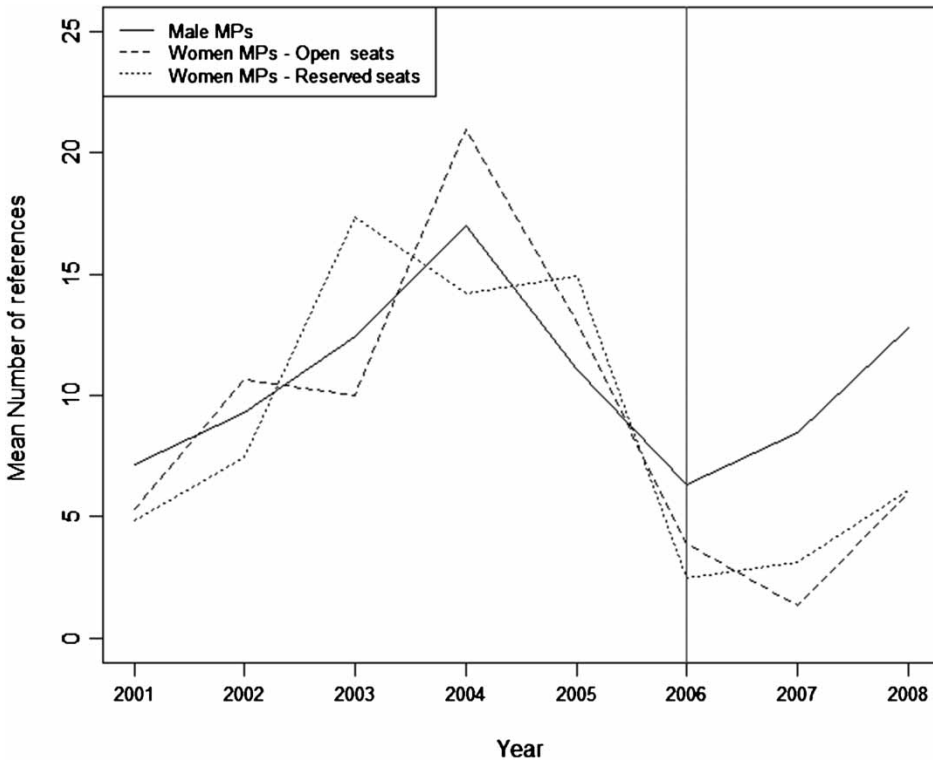
A series of t-tests comparing the means between these various MP groups reveals that the difference between the recognition of male MPs in constituency seats and female MPs in reserved seats is statistically significant (Welch Two Sample t-test p-value = 0.05). The differences between the other two groupings (male vs. female constituency seats and between both types of female MPs) are not statistically significant (p-values = 0.38 and 0.55 respectively). Of course, the limited number of women in constituency seats limits the likelihood that observational differences between groups will attain statistical significance.

More revealing than pooled statistics, [Figure 1](#) plots the trend of MP recognition by seat type over time. Several trends immediately stand out. First, the number of MP references appears to be cyclical, peaking in the middle of the parliamentary term, likely as a function of the total debate activity that also peaks in this way. Second, the two types of women MPs (women in open seats and women in reserved seats) have greater variation in their influence with higher peaks and lower troughs, as compared to male MPs. Third and perhaps most strikingly, 2006 stands out as turning point after which women's name recognition and reference in parliament steeply declines. As previously noted, this year is important in the history of Ugandan parliamentary politics as the country rather unexpectedly turned from one-party (National Resistance Movement, or NRM) rule to a multi-party system.

**TABLE 1**  
Summary statistics for MP recognition, pooled across years

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Dev.	N
<b>Male MPs Constituency Seats</b>	0	224	10.53	19.92	1267
<b>Female MPs Constituency Seats</b>	0	54	9.13	12.23	67
<b>Female MPs Reserved Seats</b>	0	259	8.01	20.03	317

*Note:* Here we exclude other special seats (army, youth, people with disabilities, and ex-officio officers).



**FIGURE 1**  
MP plenary recognition by year and seat type

### *Modelling MP Recognition*

Moving beyond descriptive statistics, we model possible determinants of MP recognition over time. Our dependent variable, count data that is over-dispersed such that its variance is greater than its mean, follows a negative binomial distribution (see Cameron and Trivedi 1998). We model MP recognition over time as a function of various MP-level attributes and external-level variables. Our key covariate, gender/seat type, is a multinomial variable and in the models that follow, we use male MPs in constituency seats as the reference category. Our model specifications include additional covariates to account for other possible explanations of MP recognition. Specifically, we control for MP incumbency status, ruling party membership, the MP's date of birth, whether the MP is a backbencher, and the total number of lines the MP contributed to the Hansard that year. We also include individual years as fixed effects and the parliamentary term as external-level variables. Our second model specification adds interaction terms to the baseline model to measure interactions between seat type and parliamentary term as well as between seat type and NRM party membership.

### **Results**

Table 2 shows the results of our baseline model as well as the second specification with a series of interaction terms. In our first model, with the reference category of male parliamentarians, women in reserved seats are associated with significantly fewer name

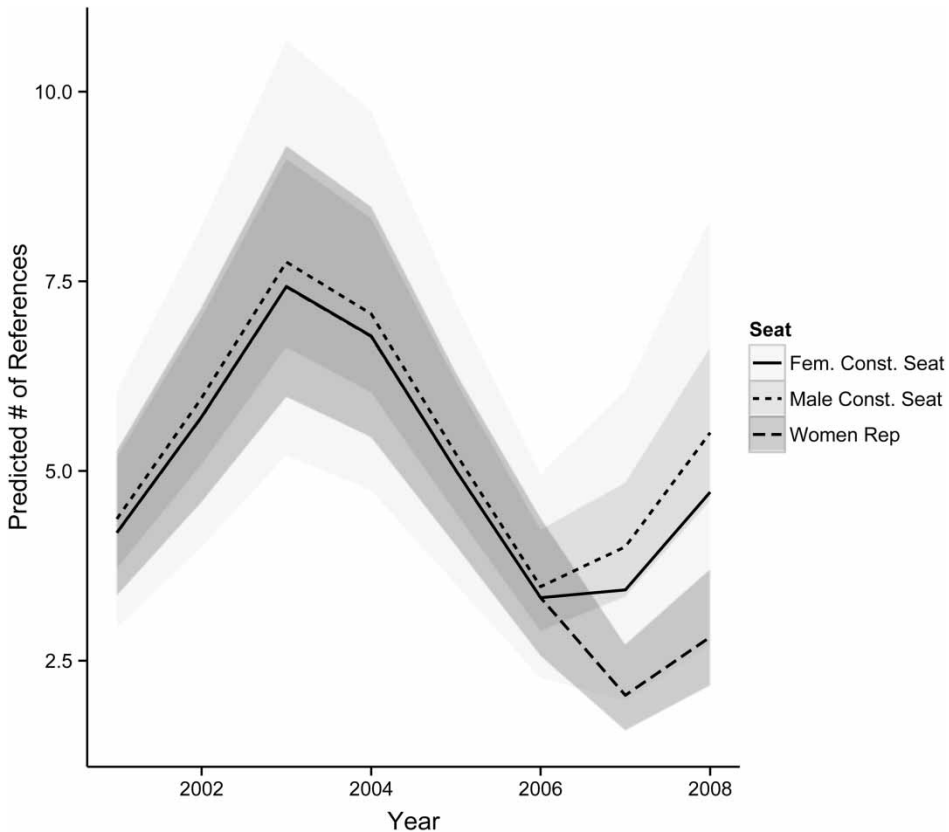


**Table 2**  
Negative binomial regression results. Dependent variable: number of references by name

	Model 1	Model 2
Incumbent	0.468 *** (0.061)	0.454 *** (0.061)
NRM	-0.245 *** (0.091)	-0.197 ** (0.100)
Date of Birth	0.007 ** (0.003)	0.007 ** (0.003)
Constituency Seat Women	-0.121 (0.144)	19.717 (136.615)
Other Representative	-0.322 *** (0.101)	-0.325 *** (0.101)
Women's Representative	-0.216 *** (0.076)	190.140 *** (68.944)
Year	0.090 *** (0.023)	0.106 *** (0.024)
Backbencher	-0.068 (0.067)	-0.066 (0.067)
No. of Contributions	0.025 *** (0.001)	0.025 *** (0.001)
8 <sup>th</sup> Parliament	-0.833 *** (0.115)	-0.821 *** (0.115)
Const. Seat Women * Year		-0.010 (0.068)
Women's Rep * Year		-0.095 *** (0.034)
Const. Seat Women * NRM		0.448 (0.582)
Women's Rep * NRM		-0.369 (0.244)
Constant	-193.259 *** (45.890)	-223.063 *** (47.496)
Observations	1,820	1,820
Log Likelihood	-5,255.102	-5,250.908
Theta	0.877 *** (0.035)	0.877 *** (0.035)
Akaike Inf. Crit (AIC)	10,532.200	10,531.820

Note: \* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$

references in the Hansard. This association, however, does not hold when comparing women in open seats to their male colleagues. Unsurprisingly, incumbents are associated with a greater number of references and MPs that speak more in general are referred to by name more often. Year fixed effects (not included in the regression table) confirm the descriptive picture in [Figure 1](#) pertaining to the cyclical nature of this measure. We also find that NRM membership is significantly associated with less name recognition—a variable that only applies after MPs could officially identify with political parties after the move to multi-partyism in 2006. Intuitively this makes sense. Because there are fewer opposition MPs, they tend to stand out in parliamentary debates and tend to make more controversial statements.



**FIGURE 2**

Expected values of mean references by year and seat type.

In the second model with interaction terms, we see a negative and significant interaction associated with women in reserved seats in the 8<sup>th</sup> Parliament, again confirming the descriptive trends in Figure 1. Interestingly, we also find that NRM women in reserved seats are associated with significantly fewer references by name. This pattern provides suggestive evidence in line with the notion that NRM women became more disciplined and less outspoken after the move to the multi-party system.

Regarding the magnitude of these coefficients, we simulate predicted values for our three different subgroups of interest, while holding all other values at their appropriate central tendencies. Our model results confirm our descriptive intuitions. Figure 2 plots the expected values of mean references by year with respective confidence intervals for each subgroup.

Overall the results from our statistical models are in line with our descriptive findings. The three groups are not statistically differentiable during the 7th Parliament. Within the first two years of the 8th Parliament, however, we see a clear pattern emerge in which women in reserved seats are referred to by name significantly less frequently than men in constituency seats. Whereas in 2003, two years after the beginning of the 7th Parliament, women in reserved seats were referred to by name 96% as frequently as male MPs in constituency seats (7.43 versus 7.75 times), by 2008, two years after the beginning of the 8th Parliament, women were referred to only half as frequently (51%) as their male colleagues (2.81 versus

**TABLE 3**  
Incumbency rates for different subgroups

	Incumbency: subset of obs. 2 standard deviations above the mean (b/n 7th and 8th Parl.)	Incumbency: subset of obs. 1 standard deviation above the mean (b/n 7th and 8th Parl.)	Overall group incumbency (b/n 7th and 8th Parl.)*	Overall group incumbency (b/n 6th and 7th Parl.)*	% NRM among subset of obs. > 1 sd. above the mean
Male MPs— Constituency Seats	40.9% (9/22)	60% (9/15)	42.1%	47.2%	88.9% (16/18)
Female MPs— Constituency Seats	50% (1/2)	0% (0/1)	66.7%	31.6%	0% (0/3)
Female MPs —Reserved Seats	25% (1/4)	50% (1/2)	33.9%	38%	0% (0/6)

Source: data from Josefsson (2014).

5.50 times). Women in constituency seats have name recognition between the other two groups during the 8th Parliament, although they are not statistically differentiable from either group, in part stemming from the limited number of observations.

## Discussion

Relating to our hypotheses, we find evidence that initially all three types of MPs have similar levels of recognition during the 7th Parliament, which we would expect given their similar qualifications and backgrounds. However, this trend changes dramatically after 2006 with the election to the 8th Parliament, at which point women, particularly those elected to reserved seats, are referred to significantly less frequently than their colleagues in open seats.

Why do women lose recognition so dramatically in the 8th Parliament? Three possibilities emerge: (1) The women representatives that received the most name recognition in the 7th Parliament were not reelected to the 8th Parliament; (2) Women representatives behaved differently between the 7th and 8th Parliaments, leading to less recognition; (3) or, MPs in the 8th Parliament began to refer to women less often despite women exhibiting the same behaviour in the plenary. Further evidence suggests that our findings most likely stem from a combination of the first two scenarios.

### *Female MPs with High Recognition Scores Were Not Reelected*

To gain leverage on which of the three explanations holds the most weight, we compare the incumbency rates of the three subsets of MPs, as well as note the party affiliation of MPs with high levels of recognition who were reelected to the 8th Parliament. Table 3 displays these descriptive statistics. We see that four women in the 7th Parliament were referred to by name over two standard deviations above the mean (over 63 times for at least one of the years of their term): Alice Alaso, Bernadette Bigirwa, Miria Matembe and Margaret Zziwa. None of these women except for Alice Alaso (an opposition member) were reelected to the 8th Parliament. Two additional women were referred to by name only one standard deviation above the mean (over 38 times for at least one year in the parliamentary term): Betty Amongi and Beatrice Kiraso. Kiraso (NRM) was not reelected to the 8th Parliament. Amongi (opposition)

was reelected and continues to be referred to by name a great deal in the 8th Parliament. In sum, none of the most recognised NRM women in reserved seats in the 7th Parliament were reelected to the 8th Parliament. In contrast, close to 90% of highly recognised men reelected to the 8th Parliament were members of the NRM.

Interestingly, although much fewer in number, this pattern extends to women elected to open seats as well. In this group, there were two women who were referred to more than two standard deviations above the mean (over 41 times per year for at least one year during this term): Cecilia Atim Ogwal and Dora Byamukama. Ogwal, an opposition member, was reelected to the 8th Parliament, where she continued to be recognised at similar levels.<sup>4</sup> Byamukama, an NRM member, was not reelected.

The political future of virtually all ruling-party MPs, irrespective of gender, is dependent on funding from the NRM machine. MPs that do not toe the party line can be threatened with a loss of campaign funds, making their reelection chances slim.<sup>5</sup> According to the Ugandan scholar and woman's rights activist, Sylvia Tamale, who has followed the developments in parliament closely, 'All the outspoken women were weeded out'.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, openly opposing NRM leadership may lead to both physical and emotional violence. This was, for instance, the case in the lead-up to the 2001 elections, where vocal critics of Museveni were targets of such abuse (Tripp 2006: 129).

### *Female MPs Changed Their Behaviour*

A second explanation is that female MPs might have altered their behaviour due to enhanced party discipline imposed in the 8th Parliament, or in other ways that generated less name recognition. The multi-party system has put greater pressure on MPs to toe the party line, especially within the NRM, and we have argued that this is especially salient among quota-elected women in the 8th Parliament. Further, after the transition to multi-partyism female MPs from the NRM became more reluctant to go against the party's position.

As the then-Deputy Speaker of Parliament, an ardent supporter of women's rights issues, told us: '[before the multi-party system] people were free to speak. Today, they rather keep quiet. Some women are afraid that they speak against the party line ... this is a hindrance to women's participation.'<sup>7</sup> Other respondents we interviewed confirmed this narrative. For instance, one female NRM MP explained to us: 'if you are against the party position then you are seen as an undisciplined member ... you discuss with caution which doesn't give a free expression of views.'<sup>8</sup>

To test whether the general trend after 2006 is purely a function of highly recognised women leaving, our first explanation, or whether the pattern still holds among less recognised women, we remove the most recognised MPs from our observations, those that are referred to above one standard deviation from the mean for each of their respective groups. Our main results (not included here) hold when removing close to 300 of the most recognised MPs, although the magnitude of the interaction term of women's representatives in the 8th Parliament is somewhat mitigated. We interpret this to mean that our results are being driven both by the most recognised NRM women not returning to the 8th Parliament, as well as a more general trend among quota women to curtail their speech in the plenary.

The change in behaviour we witness in the 8th Parliament may also be related to a further puzzle. As Wang (2013) extensively details, despite less acknowledged presence, female MPs were successful in passing several pieces progressive gender-related pieces of legislation in the 8th Parliament. During this time, equality-promoting legislation was enacted concerning female genital mutilation (2009), prevention of trafficking in persons (2009), the establishment

of an equal opportunities commission (2006), and perhaps most notably the Domestic Violence Act of 2010, the major achievement to date in family law reform in Uganda.

These accomplishments were achieved in part through an explicit strategy developed by the cross-party Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association (UWOPA). This involved breaking large pieces of progressive legislation into smaller piecemeal parts that were often less controversial, as well as active recruitment by female MPs of male MPs under the auspices of UWOPA to publicly support and even table pro-women bills. For instance, during the 8th Parliament a male UWOPA associate with a background in medicine successfully put forth a private member bill on the prohibition of female genital mutilation. The chair of UWOPA explained this strategy as follows: 'because he brought the male face on the bill it mattered, and other male MPs followed because a man is talking . . . and he is a male doctor, and he is telling us facts on this issue.'<sup>9</sup> Getting male MPs to advance pro-women issues could in theory contribute to less female name recognition, as the male MPs spearheading the bill receive credit in debates at the cost of female MPs that otherwise would have tabled the bills. Thus, the conscious strategy on the part of women in the 8th Parliament to focus on issues that are relatively non-divisive, as well as recruiting male sponsors, could possibly explain some of the change in recognition of female MPs. Yet is unlikely to account for the entire decline observed.

### *Female MPs Referred to Less Despite Similar Behaviour*

A third explanation proposes that, at least to some extent, women's parliamentary standing in general may have decreased, because the most respected and high profile female legislators were no longer present in the 8th Parliament, leading to women in general becoming less recognised. These trends may have led to a general devaluation and less recognition of female parliamentarians. However, our interview data suggests otherwise. For instance, a prominent women's rights activist explicitly referred to the overall pro-equality gains made post-2006 by noting: 'I think we would need to ask silence [by women] in what regard? It's in the multiparty parliament that we got all these laws.'<sup>10</sup> A female legislator, when reflecting on the different parliamentary periods, referred to the 6th and 7th Parliaments as 'mainly a period of pro-women advocacy' and 'really strong voices on issues of gender . . . Now [in the 8th Parliament] I think there's more action than talk'.<sup>11</sup> Further, our interview data point to enhanced working relations between female and male MPs in order to realise legislative objectives.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, based on the narrative that emerged from extensive interviews we conclude that this explanation is the least plausible of the three.

## **Conclusion**

Our analysis suggests that women elected through quotas do not necessarily have equal influence as their male colleagues to shape legislative outcomes. This is a crucial finding for gauging the broader meaning and impact of quotas, at a moment when countries elsewhere in Africa and around the world are adopting gender quotas. In employing a new indicator for determining individual legislators' standing and potency in the legislature, this study also contributes to the gender and politics literature by expanding research on women's numerical representation to examine the effect of gender and gender quotas on MPs' recognised presence in plenary debates. We argue that recognition in plenary debates, together with other indicators of legislators' presence and recognition, are crucial in order to better understand complex power relations within legislatures. Dynamics of recognition, we suggest, will

mediate the success or failure of quota reforms to affect broader legislative agendas, and thus women's substantive representation, in the long run.

Our contribution extends the line of inquiry in the growing body of work that systematically examines MP dynamics within parliaments in at least two ways. First, our work seeks to more specifically theorise about the nexuses that emerge between the classical conceptualisations of descriptive and substantive representation. Second, our study slightly shifts the focus of analysis from what women do in parliament to how others receive them. Conceptualising female legislators' presence as recognition provides a new direction for future research. Research could further explore other measures of performance that might indicate how women elected via quotas may differ from policymakers elected through non-gender-specific rules—and what implications such measures of power dynamics have for the ways quota-elected women are able to serve their roles as representatives.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### NOTES

1. Women in reserved seats were first elected by an electoral college at the district level, but since 2006 they have been elected through universal adult suffrage in their respective districts.
2. Examples taken from a plenary debate on 24 June 2004 concerning the first reading of the International Criminal Court Bill.
3. Even though there are fewer women than men in the Ugandan parliament, this does not affect the individual-level mean of each of these three subgroups.
4. Ogwal moved from an open seat to a reserved seat between the 7th and 8th Parliaments.
5. This is what happened to Miria Matembe, Winnie Byanyima, Dora Byamukama and several others.
6. Sylvia Tamale, interviewed by Vibeke Wang, 2010.
7. Rebecca Kadaga interviewed by Cecilia Josefsson, January 2010.
8. Rosemary Nansubuga Seninde, interviewed by Vibeke Wang, 2010.
9. Jane Alisemera interviewed by Vibeke Wang, March 2010.
10. Jaqueline Asiimwe Mwesige, interviewed by Vibeke Wang, March 2010.
11. Beatrice Amongi Lagada, interviewed by Vibeke Wang, April 2010.
12. Ibi Florence Ekwau, interviewed by Vibeke Wang, March 2010, Rebecca Lukwago, interviewed by Vibeke Wang, April 2010, Jane Alisemera interviewed by Vibeke Wang, March 2010, and Washington Anokbonggo, interviewed by Vibeke Wang, April 2010.

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**Amanda Clayton** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Washington. During the 2014/2015 academic year, she will be a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Free University of Berlin as well as hold a Research Fellowship at the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard Kennedy School. Email: abc24@uw.edu

**Cecilia Josefsson** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Government at Uppsala University. She also currently holds a research scholarship at the Swedish Parliament. Email: cecilia.josefsson@statsvet.uu.se

**Vibeke Wang** completed her PhD in comparative politics at the University of Bergen. She is currently working on a three-year post-doctoral project at the Chr. Michelsen Institute funded by the Norwegian Research Council. Email: vibeke.wang@cmi.no