The Road to Parity:  
Gender and Political Recruitment in Malawian Local Councils

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Abstract

Why are women underrepresented in elected office? We propose a pilot study that will allow us to design plausibly effective and contextually appropriate interventions aimed at increasing women’s descriptive representation in the 2019 Malawian local council elections. Through the collection of open-ended, qualitative candidate surveys and a conjoint survey experiment to detect and disaggregate voter gender bias, we will ascertain whether and where female candidates face particular barriers in the political recruitment process. The results of this pilot will allow us to design future randomized intervention(s) targeted toward potential and / or existing female candidates to increase candidate entry and electoral success in the 2019 local elections. Here we present four documents pertaining to this project: (1) a general description of the project goals, (2) a pre-analysis plan for the conjoint analysis component of the research, (3) a survey designed for local candidates, and (4) a preliminary survey for citizens containing the conjoint analysis. NOTE: EGAP participants we’d particularly appreciate your feedback on part (2) the conjoint analysis pre-analysis plan.
Part 1: Project Description

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Why are women underrepresented in elected office? Recent scholarly and public attention has focused on the role of electoral gender quotas in increasing the number of female representatives in national parliaments (Krook, 2006; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009; Tripp & Kang, 2008), but less work has examined factors that increase women’s representation in local politics, particularly in non-quota contexts. Women’s participation in local government varies greatly across the globe, reaching near parity in some sub-national governments (e.g., Namibia, Costa Rica), while remaining near or below single digits in others (e.g., Angola, Panama). Few studies address this variation. Further, while there has been significant research on female candidate emergence and electoral success in Europe and the U.S., we know much less about the barriers to women’s participation in local governance in developing countries.

The paucity of scholarly work on women’s entry into local politics in the developing world has implications for both economic and human development. Substantial research indicates that women’s increased presence in local politics improves the provision of public goods important to women, including access to safe drinking water (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004; Olken, 2010), and local health and education facilities (Clots-Figuerasa, 2012; Svaleryd, 2009). Further, drawing mostly from a government-initiated policy experiment in which districts are reserved for female village leaders in India, scholars have shown that women’s presence in local leadership increases female citizens’ political engagement and the likelihood that women will run in future local elections (Beaman, Chattopadhyay, Duflo, Pande, & Topalova, 2009; Beath, Christia, & Enikolopov, 2013; Bhavnani, 2009). Further, this work suggests that the presence of women local leaders decreases citizens’ gender biases (Beaman et al., 2009), improves the career ambitions and educational attainment of young women and girls (Beaman, Duflo, Pande, & Topalova, 2012), increases reporting of violence against women (Iyer, Mani, Mishra, & Topalova, 2012), and specific to southern Africa, decreases the perceived authority of the traditionally male chieftaincy (Clayton, 2014).

We propose a pilot study that will allow us to design plausibly effective and contextually appropriate interventions aimed at increasing women’s presence (descriptive representation) in the 2019 Malawian local council elections. Malawian local councils hold considerable local authority. They are responsible for enacting and enforcing national legislation, soliciting national funds for local infrastructure and economic development projects, resolving local disputes, and overseeing essential local services. Despite a national campaign to increase the number of women elected to public office in Malawi (the 50-50 campaign), the 2009 and 2014 elections produced only modest increases in both national and local government. In the local council elections of May 2014, women made up 17 percent of the candidate pool and ultimately won 12 percent of local councilor positions (56 out of 457, country-wide). This represents a slight increase from the 2000 local elections, in which women won only 8.3 percent of councilor seats, but it is well below the 50 percent envisioned by the 50-50 campaign. Clearly more effective tools are needed to reach political parity at the local level. To develop these tools, scholars, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations need a fuller understanding of how political recruitment, campaigns, and vote choice are gendered in Malawi.
We focus on three research questions related to women’s underrepresentation in local governance. In the context of Malawi’s most recent local council elections: (1) What are the characteristics of women who sought elected office and how are these different than those of male candidates? (2) Are there gender differences in campaign experiences between male and female candidates? And (3) How do voters evaluate female candidates with distinct features relative to male candidates with the same characteristics? Data on the first two questions will help us better understand barriers to candidate entry that may limit the pool of competitive female candidates and campaign-related constraints unique to women. Data on the third question will allow us to identify how gender biases affect voters’ demand for female candidates. In combination, this research will allow us to understand where in the political recruitment process women are at a disadvantage, which will, in turn, facilitate the design of potential randomized interventions ahead of the 2019 local elections.

**Contribution to the Literature**

We see this work contributing to literatures related to both the supply of female candidates – the desire and ability of individual women to run for office - and the demand for female candidates – the (s)electorate's willingness to nominate or vote for women (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Regarding supply, much work has been done on female candidate emergence in the United States (Fox & Lawless, 2004, 2010), but very little has been done in the Global South, particularly at the local level and in contexts without gender quotas. Further, assuming that the “political ambition gap” uncovered in the U.S. will apply to non-Western cases is problematic. Women in the Global South may experience different types of barriers when they contemplate standing for office, such as cultural norms around women’s leadership or harassment and intimidation while running (Krook, 2017). Identifying specific barriers to candidate entry in Malawi allows us to develop contextually appropriate and ethical interventions aimed at increasing women’s willingness and ability to compete for local elections.

We also see our work making a methodological contribution to research related to female candidate emergence in the Global South. While a growing body of work examines differences in the qualifications and background of male versus female members of parliament (MPs) (Josefsson, 2014; O’Brien, 2012) this work does not examine which female candidates were not elected to public office. Examining the pool of male and female candidates is important because it allows us to examine whether the attributes that propel men into office are the same as those that propel women into office. Identifying the profiles of successful female candidates from the 2014 elections will also allow us to construct a pool of potentially successful female candidates to target in future interventions aimed at encouraging female candidate entry (described in greater detail below).

Related to the demand for female candidates, whereas considerable research has used experimental approaches to identify whether voters discriminate against female candidates across various contexts (Beaman et al., 2009; Sanbonmatsu, 2002), little work has sought to determine exactly how gender intersects with other candidate features as voters evaluate candidates. A large and related body of research focuses on how women’s presence in politics – local or national – affects citizens’ evaluation of future female candidates. This work has shown that increased exposure to women in political decision-making decreases public gender biases (Alexander, 2012; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). Specific to African experiences, several case-based and cross-
national studies have documented the ways in which women’s increased presence in politics has changed political cultures to be more inclusive of women's perspectives, as well as how women’s inclusion in politics may legitimize women's presence in nontraditional spheres more broadly (Barnes & Burchard, 2012; Bauer, 2012; Burnet, 2011). This work is important, but it typically obfuscates which women achieve political office. By examining both candidate profiles and voter attitudes, our project will allow us to identify which women are able to navigate the political recruitment process successfully. It will also allow us to identify specific barriers that hinder women’s ability to compete alongside men, a research question of particular concern when women’s representation (and the thus the availability of female role models in politics) is low.

Study Design and Implementation

Our pilot proposal involves two related research efforts: (1) the collection of open-ended, qualitative data on the biographical characteristics and campaign experiences of all 2014 candidates for local councilor in one of the 28 districts in Malawi (Kasungu District) and (2) a conjoint survey experiment to detect and disaggregate different types of gender bias among citizens when evaluating hypothetical local council candidates. Our conjoint analysis also contains an endorsement experiment in which we randomize exposure to three prompts before the candidate profiles: a message about the 50/50 campaign supported by the Malawian government, a message about the 50/50 campaign supported by international NGOs, or a control message about a civic engagement campaign.

Our councilor and citizen-level data will allow us to design appropriate experimental interventions for our larger-scale randomized control trial ahead of the 2019 Malawian elections. Depending on our results, the target population of future interventions may be (1) potential female candidates to encourage candidate entry, (2) existing female candidates to increase the effectiveness of women’s campaigns, or both. We describe possible future inventions in Research Outcomes below.

We will conduct our data collection in Kasungu District in northern Malawi for several reasons. First, Kasungu District is home to both matrilineal and patrilineal ethnic groups. Previous research has shown that matrilineal cultural practices are associated with less gender disparities in citizens’ political engagement (Robinson and Gottlieb, 2016), and a focus on Kasungu District will allow us to determine how such differences influence candidate emergence and citizen support. Second, there are two different local councils within Kasungu District, one for rural constituencies (18 members) and one for wards within Kasungu town (9 members). We observe that urban women both run more often than rural women (30 percent vs. 15 percent) and are elected at higher rates (33 percent vs. 11 percent). We hope to uncover the nature of these urban-rural differences, and Kasungu is one of only a handful of districts in Malawi that has two different local councils. Further, Kasungu is fairly typical in terms of women’s local council candidacy and electoral success as well as a host of other demographic and development characteristics. Finally, our co-PI team has over ten years of research experience working in this region of Malawi.

Candidate Biographical Data and Interviews: We propose a qualitative survey of all candidates who ran for local councilor in 2014 in Kasungu District, Malawi. We currently have the
complete candidate list from the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), which identifies the
gender, party affiliation, and vote share associated with each of the 142 total candidates by ward
and constituency. Using contact information on file with the Kasungu District Council, we
anticipate being able to reach most if not all candidates. Across the candidates for local councilor
in Kasungu District, we aim to collect two types of data. For each of the 142 candidates, we will
collect (1) detailed biographical information, including year of birth, marital status, number
and ages of any children, education, prior occupations and work experience, notable leadership
experience, party involvement prior to running for office, ethnicity, and kinship practices
(matrilocality residence and matrilineal land inheritance). These biographic details will be collected
in person from the candidate, whenever possible. In cases where the candidate is unreachable, we
will rely on relatives or close associates to provide this information. To our knowledge, no such
systematic candidate-level information (including both winner and losers) has been collected for
local government candidates in the developing world. We will use the biographical data to
evaluate the common profiles associated with men and women candidates, how different
biographical characteristics are associated with success, and whether biographical predictors of
success differ for men and women. We will also conduct in-depth interviews with each candidate
on their (2) campaign experience. These interviews will solicit information about why the
candidate ran for local office, whether and how they were recruited, what factors and which
individuals were involved in making the decision to stand, how the candidate campaigned, what
endorsements the candidate received, and whether and how campaign funds were raised.
Winners will be asked what, if any, barriers he or she perceived to their electoral success and
how they were overcome. Among the losing candidates, we will solicit their perceptions of why
they were unsuccessful and under what conditions they would choose to stand again. Analyses of
these interviews will reveal how political recruitment and campaigning operate in gendered
ways, and whether there are particular barriers (and solutions) to challenges faced by women.
(See attached survey.)

**Citizen Conjoint Analysis**: The candidate biographical and interview data will allow us to design
a conjoint survey in which we vary candidate profiles to examine which candidate features in
conjunction with gender lead to various levels of voter support. Precisely which features we vary
will depend on our findings on how actual candidate qualifications relate to electoral outcomes;
however, we anticipate including such features as party affiliation, party support, political
experience, campaign resources, personal and family characteristics, ethnicity, and chosen policy
focus. The conjoint design makes respondents choose between two hypothetical candidates with
randomized features and rate each candidate’s favorability. This allows us to causally identify
which components of a multi-dimensional treatment (i.e. candidate profiles) affect vote choice
and candidate support (see Hainmueller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto, 2013).

The results will allow us to analyze how voters evaluate female candidates with distinct features
relative to how they evaluate male candidates with the same characteristics. Whereas political
scientists have used similar techniques to detect discrimination against vulnerable groups
(Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015) or to predict voter support (Carnes & Lupu, 2016), this method
has seldom been used outside of Western cases (but see Carlson, 2015) and, surprisingly, has
seldom been used to detect gender bias. Within the conjoint survey, we will also embed an
experimental treatment through which respondents will be exposed to one of three messages
before the candidate profiles. Respondents will either hear about the Malawian government’s
efforts to promote the 50-50 campaign to increase women’s representation in local councils,
about efforts by international NGOs to promote the 50-50 campaign, or a control message about civic engagement. This will allow us to tell if and how gender bias is mitigated or exacerbated when respondents are reminded about efforts to increase women’s representation. (See attached pre-analysis plan.)

Regarding implementation, we will partner with IPOR Malawi, an experienced Malawian research firm, to recruit likely voters as respondents. These conjoint surveys would be administered through vignettes read aloud to respondents during face-to-face interviews in respondents’ homes across Kasungu district, including both urban and rural and both matrilineal and patrilineal kinship areas. Based on estimates of citizens’ bias against women in politics from the 2014 Afrobarometer survey in Malawi, as well as estimates of bias specifically against local female politicians in other developing countries (see Beaman et al., 2009; Clayton, 2015), we calculate a conservative sample size necessary to adequately power the conjoint analysis to be 1200 respondents.1

**Research Outcomes:** The purpose of our pilot is to determine at which point in the political recruitment process an intervention would most effectively increase women’s representation on local councils. Our pilot would allow us to establish whether the greatest limits to women's representation are the supply of competitive women candidates, gender-specific differences in campaign resources, and/or voter bias against women candidates. We envision two potential interventions, depending on our pilot findings.

If our research reveals that women candidates with certain immutable characteristics (e.g. marital status, family ties, employment sector, local prominence, party embeddedness) are more successful, then the most expedient way to increase women's representation in local office is to recruit more women with these characteristics to run. Our first potential intervention would therefore aim to establish which recruitment strategies are most effective at generating competitive women candidates. To identify and design potentially effective recruitment practices, we would use our qualitative data on women’s decisions to run in the 2014 local elections and vary recruitment strategies across constituencies.2 If voters are not systematically biased against women with certain immutable characteristics but look instead to campaign-specific attributes like endorsements, spending, speeches, or policy positions when evaluating candidates, we hypothesize that programs designed to train and support women candidates will increase women's electoral success. In this instance, our second potential intervention would entail a candidate training program in which we vary the specific resources and tools made available to women candidates in order to isolate the most effective mechanisms for increasing women's electoral success. Such candidate support programs are common in Africa and other parts of the world, but their quality differs considerably and relatively little is known about what makes for the most effective training and support programs. Drawing on our pilot study with candidates from the 2014 election and the results of our conjoint analysis, we can identify the most promising models for candidate training. In conjunction with local agencies already working on the 50-50 campaign, we will test the effectiveness of different training programs through randomized interventions across multiple constituencies ahead of the 2019 elections.

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1 To increase statistical power, each respondent will make five vote choices, resulting in 6000 discrete votes.
2 If interviews during our pilot suggest that party leaders or other individuals act as gatekeepers in determining who runs for local office, we will seek to involve them in our intervention.
To ensure that training and support programs have the maximum impact, we will rely on our conjoint analysis to identify those mutable traits for which women are specifically penalized. For example, if we find that voters penalize female candidates who are perceived to have limited party support, we would prioritize the creation of campaign materials designed to highlight the candidate’s party ties. Similarly, if voters base their choice on women’s policy positions or previous experience, we would train women candidates in how to best disseminate this information. By identifying which mutable traits influence voter choice through our conjoint analysis, we can design appropriate and effective training and support interventions.

Our pilot will almost certainly reveal a combination of barriers to women running for and winning elected office. We therefore envision combining and varying randomized interventions across constituencies to identify whether certain candidate- or campaign-focused mechanisms are more effective when paired with others. Ideally, because Kasungu mirrors key demographic variations that we observe across Malawi, our results would allow us to scale up potential future interventions to include a majority of Malawi’s districts.

In sum, the groundwork described in this pilot proposal would allow us to better understand why women are underrepresented in Malawi’s local government. This information – derived both qualitatively and quantitatively – is essential in designing experimental approaches to successfully remedy this important development concern.

**Partners:** Data collection will be carried out in partnership with the Institute for Public Opinion and Research (IPOR) in Zomba, Malawi, which has extensive experience in collecting high quality interview and survey data. The interventions that result from this pilot project will be implemented in partnership with Malawian state institutions and NGOs already working towards increasing women’s descriptive representation. Such organizations include the Malawi Local Government Association (MALGA), the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE), the NGO-Gender Coordinating Network (NGO-GCN), the Malawi Electoral Support Network (MESN), and the Women’s Legal Resources Center (WOLREC).

**Timeline:** Candidate biographical and interview data will be collected in the first two weeks of July 2017 and the citizen surveys fielded in August 2017. Potential interventions based on our findings will be developed in conjunction with our local partners in early 2018, and those interventions will be evaluated through randomized controlled trials in the context of the May 2019 local elections.

**References**


Part 2: Conjoint Analysis Pre-Analysis Plan

Hypothesis and Expectations

The candidate biographical and interview data will allow us to design a conjoint survey experiment in which we vary candidate profiles to examine which candidate features in conjunction with gender lead to various levels of voter support. Precisely which features we vary will depend on our findings on how actual candidate qualifications relate to electoral outcomes, based on our candidate survey data.

The conjoint design makes respondents choose between two hypothetical candidates with randomized features and rate each candidate’s favorability. This allows us to causally identify which components of a multi-dimensional treatment (i.e. candidate profiles) affect vote choice and candidate support (see Hainmueller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto, 2014a).

Here we preliminarily draw from previous literature to hypothesize which features when interacted with gender will affect voter support for female candidates. We also include hypotheses describing our anticipated conditional average treatment effects; that is, how citizen-level characteristics may condition gender bias.

First, research from subnational elections in another southern African nation, Lesotho, shows that female candidates are elected less frequently when they run without the backing of a major political party (Clayton and Tang 2016). At the national level, a survey of over 800 African MPs reveals that that a higher proportion of women MPs belong to ruling parties than the proportion of men MPs who are ruling party members (Clayton, Josefsson, Mattes, Mozaffar 2016). This likely has to do with candidate recruitment by party gatekeepers (see Bhavnani 2009, Sanbonmatsu 2006), but may also be related to the way voters evaluate the qualifications of male versus female candidates. Because most local candidates in Malawi have been historically been men, women candidates may have a harder time convincing voters of their qualifications if they run on opposition parties or as independents. We thus hypothesize:

\[ H1: \text{ Ruling party membership will be a stronger predictor of support for female candidates than male candidates.} \]

Relatedly, voters may evaluate political experience differently based on the candidate’s gender. Research from the U.S. suggests that female candidates need to be more qualified than male candidates to be as electorally successful (Fox and Lawless 2004, Anzia and Berry 2011). If this finding travels to other contexts, we hypothesize:

\[ H2: \text{ Political experience will be a stronger predictor of support for female candidates than male candidates.} \]

Similarly, voters may have different expectations about the ability of male and female candidates to raise campaign resources. If voters believe that women candidates are less able to fund their campaigns in Malawi (see Kayuni and Muriaas 2014), they may penalize women with limited resources to a greater degree than male candidates. Because voters may perceive male candidates
as more central in political and business networks, they may be more willing to believe that men will have the ability to secure funds in the future. We thus hypothesize:

**H3:** Campaign resources will be a stronger predictor of support for female candidates than male candidates.

Past research from Malawi has shown that voters expect women candidates to conform to wider cultural expectations of women, including fulfilling important duties and engaging in “proper” behavior (Nkuuhe and Kanyongolo, 2014). For example, longtime DPP MP and Minister Patricia Kaliati is often pointed to as an example of a proper woman politician because she often wears a traditional cloth wrap (*chitenje*) and engages in women’s activities such as cooking or attending funerals (Nkuuhe and Kanyongolo, 2014). Given the importance of being a wife and mother in cultural understandings of womanhood in Malawi, and the fact that most women MPs are married with children (O’Neil, Kanyongolo, and Wales 2016), we anticipate that unmarried women and women without children will be especially penalized, leading to our fourth hypothesis:

**H4:** Respondents will penalize unmarried women and/or women without children more than unmarried and/or childless men.

While women are generally expected to be subordinate to men in the public realm across Malawi, kinship practices provide an interesting source of variation in the nature and strength of such gender norms. In particular, around two thirds of Malawians are members of ethnic communities that traditionally practice matrilineal kinship. This means that kinship and familial belonging are traced through women, often resulting in matrilocal residence patterns and matrilineal inheritance of land. Women in Malawi’s matrilineal societies also enjoy significantly more local power, including influence over chiefly successions and distributional conflicts, and such leverage translates into less gender disparities in political engagement among citizens (Robinson and Gottlieb, 2014). These patterns could influence gender bias in candidate assessments in two ways. First, women candidates from matrilineal groups may be subject to less voter bias because they are perceived to be more qualified -- due to having exercised local influence and decision making -- or better financed -- due to having access to familial resources. Second, voters, both male and female, from matrilineal groups may demonstrate less bias against female candidates given more favorable gender norms within matrilineal groups. We thus hypothesize:

**H5a:** Support for women candidates from matrilineal ethnic groups will be higher than support for women candidates from patrilineal groups.

**H5b:** Respondents from matrilineal ethnic groups demonstrate lower levels of bias than respondents from patrilineal ethnic groups.

We are also interested in how a candidate’s chosen policy focus may affect voters’ gender bias. Afrobarometer data reveal small but statistically significant differences the types of issues prioritized by men and women citizens (Gottlieb, Grossman, & Robinson 2016). Using Afrobarometer data specifically from Malawi, we find that male citizens are more likely to
prioritize infrastructure projects, and female citizens are more likely to prioritize water access, poverty alleviation and women’s rights. We find the education is a gender-neutral policy area. We expect that citizens will be more likely to support a co-gender candidate when s/he espouses a gender-specific policy priority because it will appear as a more credible claim. That is, we expect women citizens will be more likely to support women candidates when she focuses on poverty than when she prioritizes infrastructure. As a corollary, non-co-gender respondents may penalize candidates when they express a policy priority specific to their gender. For instance, male citizens may have a particular dislike for women candidates who prioritize women’s rights issues because it suggests the candidate seeks to represent women’s (rather than men’s) interests. Thus our sixth hypothesis is:

**H6a:** Women respondents will have higher levels of support for women candidates who prioritize: poverty, water access, or women’s rights. Men respondents will have higher levels of support for men candidates who prioritize infrastructure.

**H6b:** Women respondents will have lower levels of support for men candidates who prioritize infrastructure. Men respondents will have lower levels of support for women candidates who prioritize poverty, water access, and women’s rights.

Finally, previous research indicates that men and women may respond to female candidates in different ways - but the predicted direction of these effects remains unclear. Studies conducted in Western contexts often find that gender bias is most pronounced in men's evaluations of female leaders (Rudman & Kilianski 2000). Other work has indicated that cultural norms around appropriate gender roles may be most intractable among women in societies in which male-dominated economic and political power structures have yet to be socially challenged (Goldberg 1968, Rudman & Phelan 2008, Clayton 2015, Gottlieb 2016). We are thus ambivalent about whether observed gender bias will be stronger among male or female citizens.

**Priming Experiment**

Prior to candidate evaluations, and within a survey module on political attitudes and preferences, we also include a priming experiment. In particular, we will prime some respondents to recall a large-scale campaign to achieve gender parity among elected officials called the 50-50 Campaign. The 50-50 Campaign began in 2008 as a formalization of ongoing efforts to increase the number of women in elected office. The initiative was led by the Ministry of Gender (called the Ministry of Women and Child Development at that time) in partnership with the NGO-Gender Coordinating Network -- a network of domestic NGOs working on issues related to gender equality -- and the Development Assistance Group on Gender (O’Neil, Kanyongolo, and Wales 2016). The 50-50 Campaign, with the financial support from various international donors, provided material support for all female candidates in 2009 and 2014 (e.g., campaign materials, cash support, mentoring, radio time, etc.), in addition to efforts to generate support for gender parity among religious and traditional leaders, as well as the Malawian public.

Priming respondents to think about the goal of gender parity may reduce the degree of bias against women as measured in our conjoint experiment. This is certainly the intention of the 50-50 Campaign, and many forms of discrimination and implicit bias are reduced simply by
drawing attention to the problem (c.f. Mendelberg 2001). However, such efforts could lead to backlash in the form of increased bias against women candidates, if such efforts violate gender norms (Gottlieb 2016). Such backlash may be especially strong if initiatives for gender equality are seen as being externally imposed (Clayton 2015, Bush & Jamal 2015). Thus, there are competing expectations about the effect of priming the 50-50 Campaign:

\[ H7a: \text{ Priming the 50-50 campaign will reduce gender bias in candidate assessments relative to control.} \]

\[ H7b: \text{ Priming the 50-50 campaign will increase gender bias in candidate assessments relative to control, especially when the initiative is framed as externally imposed.} \]

To evaluate the relative support for the two hypotheses above, we will randomly assign respondents to one of three groups:

- Treatment 1: A passage discussing the 50-50 campaign, framed as a domestically-led initiative.
- Treatment 2: A passage discussing the 50-50 campaign, framed as an internationally-led initiative.
- Control: A passage discussing a non-gender related initiative surrounding recent elections.

Respondents will then answer questions about their familiarity with and support for the campaign. The passage and accompanying questions are meant to introduce exogenous variation in the salience of women’s under-representation among elected officials.

**Research Design**

**Priming Treatment**

We will randomize respondents into one of three treatment groups:

- A passage discussing the 50-50 campaign, framed as a domestically-led initiative. “In 2008, the National Programme on Increasing Women’s Representation in Parliament was launched by the Ministry of Gender and a group of Malawian civil society organizations called the NGO-Gender Coordinating Network. This campaign came to be known as the 50/50 Campaign, and was active in both the 2009 and the 2014 elections. The 50/50 Campaign has provided material support to women candidates for local and national office and led civic education initiatives aimed at increasing public support for women candidates.”

- A passage discussing the 50-50 campaign, framed as an internationally-led initiative. “In 2008, the National Programme on Increasing Women's Representation in Parliament was launched with support from many international governments and NGOs. This campaign came to be known as the 50/50 Campaign, and was active in both the 2009 and the 2014 elections. The 50/50 Campaign has provided material support to women candidates for local and national office and led civic education initiatives aimed at increasing public support for women candidates.”
• A passage discussing a non-gender related initiative surrounding recent elections. “The Malawi Electoral Commission, in collaboration with various local and international partners, has engaged in an extensive Civic and Voter Education (CVE) campaign around both the 2009 and the 2014 elections. The CVE campaign has conducted citizen workshops, radio and TV programmes, and other forms of community outreach to educate Malawian citizens about the election process.”

Conjoint Analysis

We will update this list of characteristics based on our candidate survey, but we envision candidate profiles will consist of combinations of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender (signalled by first name)</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Amos, Charles, Emmanuel, Francis, James, John, Patrick, Peter)</td>
<td>(Agnes, Alice, Dorothy, Esther, Grace, Linda, Mary, Patricia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (signalled by surname)</td>
<td>Chewa -- matrilineal</td>
<td>Tumbuka/Ngoni -- patrilineal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Mbewe, Chisale, Ngozo, Gama, Chingaipe, Kalimanjira)</td>
<td>(Mkandawire, Munthali, Gondwe, Nyasulu, Nyirenda, Mshali, Ndlovu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party affiliation</td>
<td>DPP (ruling party)</td>
<td>MCP (dominant party in Kasungu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent candidate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political experience</td>
<td>First time seeking office</td>
<td>Served as a local councilor in the previous term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Served on a village development council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign resources / career background</td>
<td>Has campaign resources from private business connections</td>
<td>Has limited campaign resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has campaign resources from political party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and marital status</td>
<td>Married with three children</td>
<td>Married with no children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married with no children</td>
<td>Unmarried with no children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unmarried with three children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Reducing domestic violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reducing poverty in the village</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building new wells in the village</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Building new schools</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reducing corruption in local councils</td>
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Example candidate comparison:

<table>
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<th>Name (gender + ethnicity)</th>
<th>Candidate A</th>
<th>Candidate B</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Party affiliation</td>
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<td>DPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political experience</td>
<td>Served in the previous term</td>
<td>First time seeking office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign resources</td>
<td>Campaign resources from party</td>
<td>Limited resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and marital status</td>
<td>Unmarried with three children</td>
<td>Married with three children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy focus</td>
<td>Building new roads in the village</td>
<td>Reducing domestic violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response questions:
1. If you had to choose between them, which of these two candidates would you vote for: Candidate A or Candidate B
2. Do you think that Candidate A is: very qualified, somewhat qualified, neither qualified or unqualified, somewhat unqualified, very unqualified?
3. Do you think that Candidate B is: very qualified, somewhat qualified, neither qualified or unqualified, somewhat unqualified, very unqualified?
4. Why did you select the candidate that you did?
5. What characteristics did you find appealing about this candidate?
6. What did you dislike about the candidate that you did not select?
7. Who do you think would win the election?

Note: See full citizen survey below for remaining survey questions.

**Sampling Procedure**

We aim to recruit a stratified random sample of 1200 Kasungu residents of voting age. The enumeration area (EA) will be the first unit of randomization, with EA selection stratified by both urban vs. rural and matrilineal vs. patrilineal ethnic group dominance. There are 516 EAs within Kasungu District, with an average population of 1,205 (standard deviation = 485). Of the 516, 29 EAs are part of Kasungu Boma (population = 38,264) and thus under the Kasungu Town Council, and 491 EAs fall under the Kasungu District Council (population = 584,262). We plan to over-represent the urban EAs so that we have the power to compare the urban and rural populations, so we will select 10 urban EAs and 30 rural EAs.

On the whole, rural EAs in Kasungu are ethnically homogenous. The average proportion of the largest ethnic group is 0.84, over 95% of all EAs have a majority ethnic group. For 78% of the EAs, the majority ethnic group is the matrilineal Chewa, while the patrilineal Tumbuka constitute the majority in 21% of rural EAs. In order to generate variation in the kinship practices of our respondents, we will stratify EA selection by ethnic group, over-representing Tumbuka-dominated EAs. Thus, among the 30 rural EAs, we will select 15 (of the 104) Tumbuka-majority EAs and 15 (of the 380) Chewa-majority EAs.

Within each selected EA, we will use a random walk procedure to select 30 households and a card draw to select one respondent per household from all eligible household members. We will alternate the gender of respondents in order to include equal numbers of men and women in the sample. Research enumerators will be recruited and trained by the PIs in collaboration with the Institute for Public Opinion and Research in Zomba, Malawi. Researchers will administer access randomized candidate profiles on tablets, and read the profiles aloud to respondents.

**Analysis**

Following Hainmueller, Hopkins, & Yamamoto (2014a), we will use the cjoint R package to assess baseline levels of gender bias among respondents as well how candidate gender interacts with other candidate characteristics. The package also allows us to assess heterogeneous treatment effects by respondent characteristics. Our code first sets the baseline levels for each of
our profile characteristics and then proceeds with candidate level and then respondent level interactions. As a robustness check, following Egami and Imai (2016), we will also estimate the average marginal interaction effect so as not to depend on the choice of baseline conditions.

#sample code

library(cjoint)

# Set baseline levels
baselines$Gender <- "Female"
baselines$Ethnicity <- "Chewa"
baselines$Party <- "Independent"
baselines$Experience <- "None"
baselines$Resources <- "Limited"
baselines$Family <- "UnmarriedNoChild"
baselines$Policy <- "Schools"
baselines$Treatment <- "Control"

#baseline analysis
# Run AMCE estimator using all attributes in the design
results <- amce(Vote_Choice ~ Gender + Ethnicity + Party + Experience + Resources + Family + Policy, data=modeldata, cluster=TRUE, respondent.id="CaseID", design=uniform)

# Run AMCE estimator using all attributes in the design with interactions (Test H1 - H5a)
interaction_results <- amce(Vote_Choice ~ Gender + Ethnicity + Party + Experience + Resources + Family + Policy + Gender:Ethnicity + Gender:Party + Gender:Experience + Gender:Resources + Gender:Family + Gender:Policy, data=modeldata, cluster=TRUE, respondent.id="CaseID", design=uniform)

# Include a respondent-varying interaction, CATE based on respondent demographics

#interaction with respondent gender
results <- amce(Vote_Choice ~ Gender + Ethnicity + Party + Experience + Resources + Family + Policy + RespGender:Gender, data=modeldata, cluster=TRUE, respondent.id="CaseID", design=uniform, respondent.varying = "RespGender")

#interaction with respondent ethnicity (H5b)
results <- amce(Vote_Choice ~ Gender + Ethnicity + Party + Experience + Resources + Family + Policy + RespEth:Gender, data=modeldata, cluster=TRUE, respondent.id="CaseID", design=uniform, respondent.varying = "RespEth")

#interaction with policy and respondent gender (H6)
results <- amce(Vote_Choice ~ Gender + Ethnicity + Party + Experience + Resources + Family + Policy + RespGender:Gender:Policy, data=modeldata, cluster=TRUE, respondent.id="CaseID", design=uniform, respondent.varying = "RespGender")

#based on treatment received (H7)

results <- amce(Vote_Choice ~ Gender + Ethnicity + Party + Experience + Resources + Family + Policy + Treatment:Gender, data=modeldata, cluster=TRUE, respondent.id="CaseID", design=uniform, respondent.varying = "Treatment")

Bibliography


Part 3: Interview Protocol for Local Candidates

Biographical Information

Enumerator: I would like to start by asking you a few questions about your background before entering politics. These questions will include your previous political experience and your education, business, and personal background.

Political Background
1. What year did you first run for elected office?
   a. What position did you seek?
2. How many times have you run for elected office (including this most recent election) and for what positions?
   a. If you have run more than once, how many times have you been elected to public office?
3. If you have run for elected office more than once, were you on the same party’s list each time? Yes / No
   a. If no, on how many different parties’ lists have you been a candidate?
4. Have you ever run as an independent? Have you ever considered running as an independent? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever occupied a leadership position in your party?
   a. If yes, have you occupied a leadership at position at the
      i. Village or neighborhood level? Which year(s)?
      ii. Municipal level? Which year(s)?
      iii. Communal level? Which year(s)?
      iv. National level? Which year(s)?
6. Have your parents or your spouse ever:
   a. Run for elected office?
   b. Been elected to public office?
   c. Held a leadership position in a political party?

Educational Background
1. What is the last level of school you attended?
2. What is the highest degree you obtained?
   a. If you obtained a university degree or equivalent,
      i. What was your field of study?
      ii. What school granted your degree?

Professional Background & Work History
1. How would you describe your profession?
2. Were you working immediately before you ran for office in the most recent election?
   a. If yes, were you working in the profession listed above?
   b. Which of the following best describes your work immediately before you ran for office in the most recent election?
      i. Self-employed (business owner, consultant, etc.)
      ii. Private enterprise
iii. NGO
iv. State-owned enterprise
v. Civil servant
vi. Elected or appointed official
vii. Teacher
viii. Other

3. Did you own a business before your most recent campaign for public office?
   a. If yes, did you have paid employees?
      i. How many employees?
      ii. Were any of these employees salaried?
   b. If yes, what type of business did you own?

Personal Background
1. What is your birth year?
2. When you ran for office in the most recent election, were you…
   a. Married
   b. Divorced
   c. Widowed
   d. Single
3. If you were married, did your spouse support your decision to run for public office?
4. When you ran for office in the most recent election, did you have children?
   a. If yes, were any of your children under the age of 5?
   b. If yes, were any of your children under the age of 18?

Full Candidate Survey

Enumerator: *Now I’d like to learn a little bit more about why you choose to run for public office the first time.*

1. When were you first interested in politics?
2. When were you first interested in running for public office?
3. Why did you decide to run for elected political office the first time?
4. Did someone ask you to run?
   a. If so, who, how, and when?
5. When you first ran, did you feel well qualified?
   a. Why or why not?
6. Did your previous career help you in running for office or play a part in why you decided to run?
   a. In what ways?

Enumerator: *I am interested in whether a party helped you decide to run or supported your campaign.*

1. When you first ran for office, did you have the official endorsement of a political party?
   a. If yes, did that party ask you to run?
2. Did that party provide any support for you?
   a. If yes, what kind?
3. Do you think the party offered other candidates more or less support?  
   a. If yes, what did this look like?  
   b. Why do you think this was the case?  
4. Who in the party decides which candidates to recruit?  
5. What does the party look for when choosing which candidates to nominate or support?  
6. How are local party selection committees decided?  
7. When did you first join your party?  
   a. Did you join through a particular wing – i.e. women’s wing? Youth wing?  
8. Did any other groups besides the party support you?  
   a. Did you have any official endorsements?  
   b. From whom?  
9. Do traditional leaders have influence in local nominations?  
10. What was your relationship like with local traditional leaders?  

Enumerator: I’d like to know more about how you campaigned and the resources you needed.  

1. When you first ran for office, how did you campaign?  
   a. What did you have to do to win votes?  
2. Did you have the resources you needed to campaign effectively?  
   a. What kind of resources did you need?  
3. Where did these resources come from?  
   a. Did you use your own resources?  
   b. Did anyone help you come up with these resources?  
4. If you are married, how did your spouse feel about you spending money to campaign?  
5. Do you think other candidates had an easier or harder time coming up with resources?  
   a. If so, why?  

Enumerator: I’d like to ask you a few questions about how you related to voters.  

1. When you first ran for office, do you think voters believed you were qualified for the position you sought?  
2. Why do you think some people did not vote for you?  
3. Why do you think some people voted for you?  
4. Who were your biggest supports? Your biggest detractors?  
5. How would you say you were treated by the media? What kind of coverage did you receive?  
6. Can you tell me what a typical day of campaigning would look like? i.e. how many events did you go to, how many constituents did you meet? What about in a typical week?  

Enumerator: I would also like to know a bit about your policy positions.  

1. Were there any particular issues or policies that you emphasized while campaigning? Which ones?  
2. Did you disagree with your opponent(s) on any particular policies or issues? Which ones?  
3. Are there particular groups that you feel especially interested in representing?
Enumerator: *I would also like to know a bit about the training you received.*

1. Did you receive any training about how to run a campaign or run for public office?
   a. In yes, who provided this training? Were they part of the government, your party, or an NGO?
   b. Was that training helpful? How was it helpful?

Enumerator: *I’d like to know if you had any negative experiences while campaigning.*

1. Did you face any sort of harassment during the campaign?
   a. If so, by whom? Why?
2. Did you feel unsafe at any point during the campaign?
   a. If so, at what points in the campaign?
   b. How did you address this harassment or these threats?
   c. Did anyone help you address them?
3. Did your campaign have any impact on your relationship to your family or your friends?

Enumerator: *Now I’d like to learn more about how your experiences may have changed with experience. I’d like you to think about your most recent campaign in comparison to that first one.* (Note: This section is only for respondents that have run multiple campaigns)

1. Has your motivation for running for office changed over your political career?
2. Why did you decide to run again and/or for higher office?
3. Has your career or work situation changed?
4. Has your relationship to the party changed?
   a. Does the party offer more or less support?
5. Do you campaign differently now?
   a. Are the demands associated with campaigning different?
   b. Do you need more resources now?
   c. Where do these resources come from?
6. As your relationship with voters changed?
7. Have your policy positions changed?
   a. Did you advocate for any particular policies or issues in the most recent election?
8. Have you received any more training in how to campaign or how to govern?
   a. If so, from whom?
9. Did you have any negative experiences in the most recent election?
   a. If so, what were they?
10. How do your family and friends feel about your current career? Did they support you in the last campaign?

Enumerator: *Ok, as a final question:*

1. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about campaigning and running for office in Malawi?
2. [For women respondents] Is there anything else you’d like to tell me about your experience as woman candidate in Malawi?
Part 4: Interview Protocol for Citizens

Demographics
1. Age
2. Gender
3. Occupation
4. Marital status
5. Originally from village/district of residence

Political attitudes and behavior
1. Interest in national politics
2. Interest in local politics
3. Participation: voting, contacting, protesting

Treatment
50-50 Campaign treatment (civic education; 50-50 Malawi led; 50-50 international led)
1. Have you heard about this campaign before?
2. Did you support the goals of the campaign?
3. Do you think that the campaign was successful in meeting its goals?

Candidate evaluations (conjoint experiment)
See Pre-Analysis Plan

Post-treatment questions
1. Out of the following which is the most important issue facing the village that the local councils should address?
   - Building new roads in the village
   - Combating poverty in the village
   - Building new wells in the village
   - Reducing corruption in local councils
   - Reducing domestic violence
2. Do you feel close to any political party? If so, which party?
Can you name who holds the following positions?
3. Know Pres/VP
   a. Evaluation of Pres/VP
4. Know MP
   a. Evaluation of MP
5. Know councilor
   a. Evaluation of councilor
6. Other leaders: Bingu, Muluzi, J. Banda
Kinship Custom

1. Who do children belong to
2. Live with parents or in-laws
3. Inherit land, how split

Gender Attitudes

1. Explicit gender attitudes questions
2. Afrobarometer questions: men make better leaders; education; traditions

Demographics II

1. Ethnicity
2. Grandparents’ Ethnicities
3. Languages spoken