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Victims to Victors: Women Reclaiming Conflict Management in sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

Women in sub-Saharan Africa are often viewed as the victims of the conflict around them. This view discredits the hundreds of women who are serving in legislative and executive branches across the region. This research investigates if women in positions of power make more peaceful decisions in times of conflict than their male counterparts. Using negative binomial regression methods this research examines the percentages of women in legislative and executive branches to number of conflict days in a year and number of peace agreements signed. This study found that as the percentage of women in office rise the number of conflict days each year decreases. On the hand, as the percentage of women rise, the number of peace treaties signed decreases as well. These findings align with the literature that women have a different approach to conflict, and that approach leads to significant impacts on conflict levels within their state.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Study

When international organizations step into peacemaking roles post conflict, they often treat women as the passive victims of war. These groups see women who have been abused, raped, sold, or are struggling in the aftermath to care for themselves and their children (Abu-Saba, 1999; Anderlini, 2007; Cabreera-Balleza, 2011; Charlesworth 2008; Chowdbury, 2011; Hunt & Posa, 2001; Kuehnast, 2011; Onyinyechukwu; 2011). While women can be disproportionally affected by war, there is another population of women who are seeking to reclaim their power in international conflict. Traditional thinking of war and peace often overlooks these women, but that "oversight has cost the world dearly" (Hunt & Posa, 2001, p.38).

When considering women in active conflict roles, studies most often focus on Western democratic countries. This is perhaps in part because these countries also control the decision-making bodies of international organizations, such as the United Nations Security Council. These countries have the privilege and power to fight their battles on the soils of other nations, even though these nations are not always more peaceful than the nations torn apart by their wars.

Sub-Saharan Africa is no stranger to the concept of other nations making decisions on their behalf. A long history of colonization has set them up for failure in many ways. One of the greatest of these is the arbitrarily drawn borders of the 1885 Berlin Conference that carved the continent into pieces with little thought about the natural land markers or people that lived there (General Act of the Conference at Berlin, 1885). In addition to the disputes amongst themselves, colonization left these nations vulnerable to outside influencers looking for resources (Ong'ayo, 2008; Yergin, 2009). Throughout history, research has shown nations rich in resources often

experience larger amounts of corruption and violence (Klare, 2002). The combination of these internal and external influences has created an area that is ripe for conflict.

In recent years, there has been an influx of women into leadership in the region of sub-Saharan Africa. Many ministries and departments are reaching levels of 20-30% women in elected office (United Nations, 2019). Some countries are even approaching critical mass. Critical mass is the percentage that a minority population must hold in any organization for their policies to pass (Kanter, 1977). Scholars place this percentage anywhere between 15 and 33 percent. In 2003, the United Nations Equal Opportunities Commission found that specifically in developing nations critical mass for women was 30% (United Nations, 2003).

While there has been research on the women's legislative impact on domestic issues, there has been less evidence about the impact their leadership has on international conflicts. Research shows that women are more likely to support policies of protection and prevention, while men support policies of judgment when responding to criminal acts (Dodson & Caroll, 1991; Galigan & Clavero, 2008; Reingold, 1992, Thomas and Welch, 1991). Women are also socialized at a young age to handle their problems in a peaceful manner, as opposed to men being allowed to be "rough boys" (Benards, 1998, pg. 52). In light of this research, this study investigates if democratic nations with a critical mass of women in legislative and executive branches are more likely to enter peace agreements and less likely to enter armed conflict with another nation than a government without a critical mass of women in positions of power.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The focus on women as victims of conflict, coupled with the push for greater representation of women in office, opens the door for new research into the impact women can have on peacemaking. Female public servants are often boxed into policies of welfare, education, and

children's rights. The separation of these "women's issues" from the issues of conflict is a great privilege, not afforded to the region of sub-Saharan Africa. Individuals with firsthand knowledge of conflict are those who should be spearheading the peacemaking process because they have a greater understanding of what is at stake, and likely a greater commitment to avoiding violence and the associated suffering.

Women in many sub-Saharan African nations have already begun the hardest part of the process, achieving a critical mass. While activists and political action groups push women to the forefront in symbolic terms, there must be a measure of the change they are making. Is critical mass more than tokenism, and are they managing the tough issues? By studying the effects these women are having on their nation's peacemaking process, this research examines if these women are able to reclaim their power over conflict and make change within their nations. Through a greater understanding of these issues, international organizations will be able to strive for more equitable and appropriate responses to conflict that includes all stakeholders.

1.3 Purpose and Methodology of Study

1.3.1 *Research Questions*

This dissertation examines the relationship between women in political office and levels of conflict. It seeks to answer the questions are countries with higher levels of women in leadership more likely to enter peace agreements, and are countries with higher levels of women in leadership less likely to enter armed conflicts? The absence of war does not always mean peace (Kumaratunga, 2011); therefore, it is important to examine both relationships.

1.3.2 *Guiding Theories*

There are many theories related to this study in both international relations and more general feminist theories. I discuss those theories and supporting literature in Chapter 2, but there

are two particular feminist theories that have guided the research questions of this study. Due to the systematic obstacles that women face, to ground this study solely in conflict literature, would diminish the magnitude that even a small difference can be. In light of that, I chose to focus on these two theories as a framework of the question and use conflict literature in building the models and variables.

The first is the idea that women do in fact rule differently than men. Scholars across disciplines are moving away from the strict binaries, and the idea of maternal tendencies leading to an ethic of care as proposed by Gilligan (1982). They are however, still finding that women do lead differently based on socialization (Belenky et al., 1986; Chodorow, 1978). Women are more likely to be victims of violence at some point in their life. As such, they will take greater risk to avoid violence (Frerraro, 1995; Walklate, 1994; Gordon and Riger, 1989). That intrinsic adversity to violence guides the idea that women will avoid conflict situations when in positions of power.

The second guiding theory is Critical Mass Theory. This theory studies at what point minorities in an organization gain influence, rather than being a token member for the minority they represent (Kanter, 1977). In most Critical Mass studies, that minority is women. This theory is important to this research, because we cannot simply expect that when a few women are elected, they will instantly make a difference. According to Critical Mass Theory, these women must reach 20%-40% of the group to begin to see the side-effects of tokenism diminish (Kanter, 1977). This is an important framework for this study, because in order to study the influence women have, one must also be cognizant of the systemic obstacles they will face.

1.3.3 *Hypotheses*

To examine the research question in light of the theoretical framework and literature, I developed four hypotheses to be studied. Based on the theories that women will make more peaceful decisions, I hypothesize that a higher percentage of women in political office will lead to less conflict and more signed peace agreements. This will be especially true as countries reach a critical mass.

H1: States with a higher percentage of women in legislative office are less likely to be involved in armed conflicts.

H2: States with a higher percentage of women in legislative office are more likely to enter into peace agreements.

H3: States with a higher percentage of women in executive office are less likely to be involved in armed conflicts.

H4: States with a higher percentage of women in executive office are more likely to enter into peace agreements.

These hypotheses are tested in Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation.

1.3.4 *Methods*

This study will take a quantitative approach to exploring the relationship between women in leadership and conflict. While there are many complexities to be studied in this relationship, a quantitative study is best for this initial study to determine if there is in fact any evidence of connection. The methodology section will be split into two chapters: one for two models for legislative branches and the second for two models for executive cabinets. Each of the four models will be comprised of negative binomial regressions.

There are two independent variables used in this dissertation: the percentage of women in legislative branches and the percentage of women in executive cabinets. Peace agreements signed and number of days of conflict are the two dependent variables. I also control for gross domestic product and prior democratic country years. The unit of analysis is each individual democratic year for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. These variables and their measures are described in detail in Chapter 3.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to both international relations and feminism literature. While there is extensive research on women's participation in the western democracies, there are not as many studies on less developed democracies. As discussed, the existing studies also contribute to the ideas that women have greatest effects on domestic policy issues, particularly education and child welfare. This study in contrast will highlight women working in less established democracies and specifically look at their roles in conflict decision making; therefore, adding to international relations and feminism scholarship.

Outside of academia, a study like this can be used to influence policy decisions. International Organizations, such as the United Nations and World Bank, are very invested in peacebuilding and peacekeeping within this region. As they build plans for peace, this study shows the importance of including women in those decision processes.

1.5 Limitation of Study

Entering this study, there are three main limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the region of sub-Saharan Africa does limit the total number of cases available. This region is also relatively new to democracy, compared to other regions; therefore, it was difficult to find adequate records of government officials for every country. Knowing this, I still chose to study

this region. I think the rich history of how women are treated in the region, coupled with the colonization and outside influences, made it an ideal region to begin studying the phenomenon of women leading in conflict situations. In the future, the area could be expanded to other areas such as Latin America and the Middle East North African regions. This would not only add more cases but provide room for comparison between the regions. The history of these areas has strong impacts on the opportunities women have and could make for a rich future study.

Another limitation that should be stated in the beginning is how difficult it is to measure non-actions. Peace is most often measured as the absence of conflict, but that is of course not an adequate measure for peace. As an attempt to measure actions of peace, I chose to define peace as peace agreements signed. While this is not a perfect measure, it was the most accurate data I could track for each country at this time. As an alternative, there is the days without conflict, but that is simply the opposite of the conflict variable and would have not added as much depth to the study.

The final limitation to address before research is the small number of conflicts. While conflict is considered to be common in this region, that is a relative measurement. Officially declared conflict is still quite rare. With that in mind this study used all levels of conflict registered by Correlates of War. This includes smaller armed civil disputes as well as full scale war. Ideally in the future, these would be scaled or separated in the models. That would require a higher number of cases that could be achieved by including other regions.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Throughout this dissertation, there are several terms that should be defined for clarity. First is the location in sub-Saharan Africa. There is some variation in what countries are included in this region. For the purposes of this study, sub-Saharan Africa refers specifically to the 46

states that the United Nations defines as sub-Saharan Africa. Table 1 provides the names of those states.

Table 1: Sub-Saharan African States

Angola	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Madagascar	Seychelles
Benin	Equatorial Guinea	Malawi	Sierra Leone
Botswana	Eritrea	Mali	South Africa
Burkina Faso	Ethiopia	Mauritania	South Sudan
Burundi	Gabon	Mauritius	Swaziland
Cameroon	Gambia	Mozambique	Tanzania
Cape Verde	Ghana	Namibia	Togo
Central African Republic	Guinea	Niger	Uganda
Chad	Guinea-Bissau	Nigeria	Zamia
Comoros	Kenya	Rwanda	Zimbabwe
Congo	Lesotho	Sao Tome & Principe	
Cote d'Ivoire	Liberia	Senegal	

According to United Nations Development Program
https://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/regioninfo.html

While these are the countries that will be considered as sub-Saharan Africa in the literature review section, the models are only able to incorporate democratic nations. I use the work of Geddes, Wright, and Frantz to determine which states are democracies. Democracies are defined as states that are independent, are not occupied by foreign troops, do not have a provisional government, and do not meet their definition of an autocratic regime (2014).

Two other terms that are essential to this study are peace and conflict. Though these words are often used in daily conversation, they can have a wide range of meanings. For the purpose of this study, conflict is any armed dispute. Peace is a little more complicated to define. Peace is of course the absence of armed conflict. However, to measure peace, data will be used to count the number of peace agreements signed. These types of agreements are active decisions to maintain peace, and as such allow us to count when women play a part in those decisions.

1.7 Organization of Dissertation

        The following chapters will seek to describe how a greater number of women in political office can lead to greater peace and fewer days of active conflict. Chapter 2 provides greater details on the theories that guide this research, as well as further context on sub-Saharan Africa. It will also provide an overview of the relevant literature, and where this work fits into the studies of conflict and feminism. Chapters 3 and 4 outline the methods and introduce the models. Chapter 3 focuses on women in legislative branches, while Chapter 4 examines executive models. Both methods chapters will explain the variables chosen, how the model was developed, and initial findings. Finally, Chapter 5 will provide more detailed analysis of the results and possible explanations for the mixed results of the models. The final chapter will also address the limitations, significance, and future research implications.

1.8 Summary

        Throughout this dissertation, you will find evidence of the difference a group of women in government can have on conflict and peace decision making processes. While the final results are mixed on the effect of peace, there is evidence that women are making strides in reducing conflict days overall. This finding, combined with the literature presented, display the importance of representation at all levels. As Hunt and Posa profoundly stated, overlooking women in the traditional thinking of war has cost the world dearly (2001). By shifting the focus and valuing the leadership that women provide in critical decisions, women can evolve from being passive victims of conflicts to the real victors of systematic change within their country.

Chapter 2 Theory and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study is designed to examine the relationship between women in government and the levels of conflict and peace within a nation. This chapter will examine the assumptions, theories, and literature surrounding this study. First, it is important to understand the location of this study, and the context that brings. Sub-Saharan Africa has a long history with women in leadership and conflict, making it a great location for this type of work. This research builds on the theories that women rule differently than men, and that a critical mass is required for women to make a difference in policies and actions. Finally, this chapter will examine 3 key areas of the literature: how women are represented and behave in government, the causes and select theories of conflict and peace, and how women currently participate in managing conflict and peace. This framework will set the stage for the proceeding methods chapter.

2.2 Context: Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa has been a hot spot for political instability for years. These countries are haunted by the injustices and oppressive structures that survived from their colonial rule (Ong'ayo, 2008). This region is also home to great diversity in ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status. In fact, according to the World Bank, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America are the two most unequal regions in the world. Combine these with population growth, rapid urbanization, economic imbalances, and strained resources, and you create the perfect environment for violent instability (Downie & Cook, 2011). That instability, mixed with the rapidly developing nations, makes this region a prime location to study the effect that a growing number of women can have on conflict.

2.2.1 *Matriarchal Societies*

Long before the outside influence began in Africa, records tell of strong matriarchs leading the way on the continent. This is documented in African literature, songs, and artifacts. While the Hebrew people told stories of Eve, the first woman who was tempted and then thrown out of the Garden of Eden by a male god; African origin literature features a strong female lead. Auset was a sacred female who possessed healing powers to save her husband's life, and produce a son who would rule over Egypt, but she would serve as the Queen with equal power. African stories also record one of the first female gods on record, breaking the male dominance of both Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian beliefs (Tour'e, 2018). This narrative continues throughout their stories, making way for women to take the forefront in society. Scholars are unclear of exactly when African societies began to shift towards more patriarchal views. However, outside influence from traders, colonizers, and explorers are believed to have influenced the trend toward entrusting men with greater power.

2.2.2 *Effects of Colonization*

The natural resources and open untamed land made Africa a prime target for colonial powers. Many nations made claims on the continent, and each left a significant impression. They left behind their ideals, culture, and language. These left a permanent mark on the continent.

One of the most obvious of those marks is national borders. Most boundaries in Africa were drawn by Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Germany to secure claims to the continent. Lord Salisbury who heavily was involved in the process noted "[we] have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white man's foot ever trod; we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were" (Ajala). While Lord

Salisbury was worried about blindly giving away Africa's rich natural resources, he was also drawing lines that would permanently divide the people of the continent as well. Most of these borders lasted well after colonization, and now are the borders of independent nations.

If these borders serve as such a conflict, the obvious question of many outside Africa is why not draw new borders? Herbst describes these new borders as "rational national frontiers" (1989). These rational national frontiers would correspond to existing divisions of people, more evenly distribute resources, and account for natural border lines (Herbst, 1989). While the idea of redrawing, the borders seems like a logical answer, the African Union (formerly the Organization of African Unity) has long been opposed to the concept of redrawing the borders. The organization recognized that the current borders "constitute a grace and permanent factor of dissension" (OAU, 1971, pg. 360). However, they have pledged "to respect the frontiers existing on their achievement of national independence" (Brownlie, pg. 361). The daunting task of having the continent redraw its own borders, does lead to a great risk of widespread war fighting for sovereignty over the current nation's territory (Herbst, 1989). This is a risk that the AU is unwilling take. Perhaps at some point in the future, the African elites will find that preserving the current borders is more costly than redrawing. Until then the continent will continue to face the challenges of the borders drawn by foreign powers (Herbst, 1989).

2.2.3 *Post Colonization*

After the exit of the colonial powers, Africans were left to develop their own independent nations. Non-governmental organizations and other nations worked to help build stability in the region, but the success of that has been mixed. Much of the continent, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, has continued to struggle with conflict. For many years, Africans have been treated as uncivilized people by Western scholars. This is especially true in literature regarding

their conflicts. For thirty years after other disciplines stopped using the ideology of tribalism, it still appears in International Relations literature (Howard, 1995). This idea of tribalism simplifies African conflicts and places them under a veil of mystery (Mafeje, 1971). It is time for Western powers to stop focusing on the uncivilized aspects of African culture that they feel needs to be corrected. They need to examine why these young nations are still unstable, and what factors lead to that instability. In the aftermath of the Rwandan crisis, Howard challenges other scholars to view African conflicts as "ordinary conflicts" (Howard, 1995, pg. 33). The new nations emerging post colonization were struggling for legitimacy, autonomy, and to develop a sense of self. That process takes time and can lead to conflict. This development coupled with new borders and outside influence makes this area prone to conflict, as would any area facing these challenges.

Not only were these nations dealing with an identity crisis, they also have environmental issues to face such as drought and scarcity (Couttenier and Soubeyran, 2013). The inability to meet the needs of citizens has also been linked with corruption and terrorism. Between 2011 and 2013, thirty percent of Africans have paid a bribe. The most cited reasons for paying a bribe were medical treatment or to avoid a problem with the police (Coulibaly, 2015 Policy Paper 10). These high levels of corruption disproportionately affect the poor, more likely to be women and children, who may go without food to pay a bribe necessary for other care (Coulibaly, 2015 Policy Paper 10). Hunger and food insecurity only add to the unrest among citizens.

In addition to internal causes for conflict, the end of colonization did not mean the end of outside influence. The same vast resources that brought colonial powers there, are still the target of some nations (Ong'ayo, 2008; Yergin, 2009). Throughout history, research has shown nations rich in resources often experience larger amounts of corruption and violence (Klare, 2002).

Outside powers have helped these young nations learn to mine their resources of oil or gems, and then buy the crude resources. They will refine the products and often sell them back to the nations at a higher cost (Ross, 2012). This paradox of plenty or resource curse, has been a great cause of conflict within the sub-Saharan African region (Karl, 1997).

2.2.4 *Moving Forward*

As Africa continues to move forward, many still believe that strong democracy is the answer for peace and stability within the region. In a 2015 study, the Afro Barometer found that 43% of people in the 36 African countries they surveyed have a "demand for democracy" and only 35% believe they have a "supply of democracy." Supply is defined by those who say that their country is a "full democracy" or "a democracy with minor problems" and they are "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied with the way democracy works" (Mattes and Bratton, 2015). The demand for democracy was highest among the middle class, those in urban settings, and those with a university education. The demand was significantly less among women, but this could be explained by the fact that women are less likely to have a university degree. Based on the results of this study we can conclude that the demand for democracy is higher than supply, signaling that Africa may be in the place for significant democratic gains (Mattes and Bratton, 2015). In a 2019 update to this study, the results were quite similar with a 42% demand for democracy, and a 34% supply. While the general African has remained opposed to authoritarian rule for the last decade of research, based on this update, it seems as though the demand for democracy will need to shift to a majority before major changes can take place (Mattes, 2019).

While the political turbulence in the region has certain negative consequences, the aftermath of this civil unrest can bring positive change to a country as well. Through this political turmoil, we have seen shifts in the makeup of legislative bodies, executive departments,

and militaries (Fosu, 2002). One of these changes has been the rise of women into positions of power. Several nations have now reached over 30% women in government, and this region has elected 4 women as heads of state. Bringing back strong female leaders, can bring sub-Saharan Africa back full circle. While matriarchal society is not the goal, a return to the key tenets of those early roots could help to stabilize the region. As the literature will show, there are ties to this type of leadership and peace.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study seeks to show that there is a relationship between the number of women in government and the levels of peace and conflict within the nations of sub-Saharan Africa. This is built off of the theory that women govern differently than men, and as a result will create more peaceful policies. This will be combined with critical mass theory to find at what threshold women are able to begin to pass peaceful policies and make a difference.

2.3.1 *Theories of Different Rule*

Stability is a key goal for national leaders. Whether for the good of the citizens or a selfish desire to hold on to power, rational actors do not govern in search of the next revolution. Despite not searching for it, heads of state in this region seem to find themselves in a constant cycle of turmoil. This research proposes the idea that women who are now gaining power might hold some qualities that lead to the stability needed in the region.

Political scientists have debated for years what difference women can make in political office, and if women rule any differently than men would. Carol Gilligan was one of the first scholars to propose that women do in fact govern differently. She suggests that women make decisions based on an *ethic of care* as opposed to an *ethic of justice* (Gilligan, 1982). Ford and Lowery (1986) build on this work but find that men can be more oriented toward care. While

women lean toward care and men toward justice, there is nothing biological that determines that leaning. Giligan's work has been criticized for being too focused on the biology of a man versus a woman, but there is evidence that something is different in the way women rule (Senchuk, 1990).

It is not just scholars who identify maternal instincts in women across the board. Women in Latin America tend to characterize themselves by their motherhood. They self-identify as nurtures and care takers (Craske, 1999). Not only did women see themselves in this way, but they identify other women in the same way. Once in the political arena, women view their political realm as an extension of their home to nurture (Chaney, 1979).

Instead of focusing on the binary distinction between male and female alone, Hurwitz and Smithey (1998) proposed perceptions of vulnerability were at the heart of why women ruled differently. While crime statistics vary greatly by country, women report feeling more vulnerable to crimes than men. Hurwitz and Smithey (1998) find that it is this perception that leads women to create policies to prevent crime. Men and women both work to end crime; men, however, are more likely to use punishment as a deterrent instead of taking actions ahead of time to prevent the crime (Hurwitz & Smithey, 1998). This could in part be because women are more susceptible to violence and change their behavior to avoid it. This is particularly true for domestic abuse and rape, which are less salient threats for men (Frerraro 1995; Walklate, 1994; Gordon and Riger, 1989). Men also have a greater confidence in their ability to protect themselves (Stanko, 1990). This is relevant when looking at war in particular as overconfidence is a predictor of armed conflict (Johnson et al, 2006).

Eckel and Grossman (1998) conducted an experiment that specifically compared the behavior of men and women in the dictator game experiment. Men and women were both given

a sum of money to dictate over. Women were more likely to share their money with their anonymous partners, while men would keep all of the money when given dictator power. From this they observed that women are less selfish in their economic behavior.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, women have certainly found themselves and their children in vulnerable positions as the result of war (Levy & Parker, 2000). It seems to reason that they would also seek after ways to prevent these types of public uprisings from happening. This could be part of their ethic of care. From childhood women's socialization stresses connection and concern for others, while boys are taught independence and autonomy (Belenky et al. 1986, Chodorow, 1978). This leads to women being less accepting of violence on television, corporal punishment in schools, and casualties during wartime (Conover and Sapiro, 1993; Smith, 1884). Whether through peace treaties, cease fire agreements, or formal alliances, this study will examine if women make decisions in government to avoid those war time casualties.

2.3.2 *The Theory of Critical Mass*

The second piece to the puzzle of whether women can make a difference in conflict leadership is how many women are needed. While representation is important at any level, it is extremely difficult for one individual to make great change. In order to measure the effectiveness of these women, we need to know that they have adequate support in their fight for stability.

In nuclear physics, the smallest amount of fissile material needed for a sustained nuclear reaction is called *critical mass*. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) borrowed this concept and applied it to corporations. She found that when women made up less than 20% of an organization, they were tokens. Tokens within the organization faced negative side effects for their difference and were unable to create any substantial change. As women in the organization increase to 20-40% the side-effects of their difference begin to diminish (Kanter, 1977).This initial work was less

focused on the ability of the minority group to make change, but rather how they were able to persist in the workplace despite negative side-effects. Examples of side-effects she found include performance pressures, fear of retaliation, constant reminders of difference, loyalty test, and role entrapment (Kanter, 1977).

Building on Kanter's framework, Drude Dahlerup (1988) applied these concepts to women in leadership in Scandinavian countries. In the mid-eighties Scandinavia had also seen a great rise in women in power, similarly to sub-Saharan Africa. Dahlerup was specifically interested in the tipping point that women in power could begin to change policy outcome. What she found was the tipping point was less about meeting a certain quota, but instead when certain critical acts were introduced. Some examples she found were women recruiting other women, states setting quotas for women in government agencies, and new legislation and institutions around equality (Dahlerup, 1988). This theory of critical mass is what is used by the United Nations when they set critical mass for various regions and minorities. The UN found that critical mass for women in Africa is 30% (United Nations, 2003). This means that when women reach the 30% threshold, their legislation, policies, and ideas will begin to take root and produce policy results.

By coupling the theory that women will most likely take preventative measures to prevent violence with critical mass theory, this dissertation will examine the difference that a critical mass of women in legislatures and executive departments can make on peace and stability within their nation. Using quantitative methods, I will examine for a relationship between a critical mass in the states' executive department or legislature and the number of formal peace arrangements and the number of armed conflicts with other states. Sub-Saharan Africa has been a victim of colonization, resource wars, and their own instability for decades.

This research will test if the most vulnerable populations are able to use their influence to prevent further instability.

2.4 Literature Review

When looking to connect women's representation to conflict and peace, the existing literature begins with women's representation in government bodies. Scholars examine what type of representation is important and the impact representation has. This study specifically focuses on women in legislative and cabinet positions. It will also examine the causes of conflict and peace, to better understand the factors at play in decision making within sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, this research examines the existing literature on women managing conflict and peace. This information lays the foundation for the variables and methods chosen for this project.

2.4.1 *Women in Government*

It has been over 160 years since John Stuart Mill wrote that an efficient government must include representatives from both the majority and minority, speaking of disenfranchised women (1859). On a global scale, there has been a struggle to incorporate women equally into democratic processes. Despite slow growth, studies have found that areas with higher levels of women's participation in government have seen greater human rights (Melander, 2005), decreased corruption (Dollar et al, 1998), and a decrease in violence or militarized disputes (Ragen and Paskeviciute, 2003; Caprioli, 2000). This literature section looks at how women are represented in government and if there is a difference in the way women govern as opposed to their male counterparts.

2.4.1.1 *Types of Representation*

There are 3 types of representation for any group: descriptive, symbolic and substantive (Pitkin, 1967). Descriptive representation is when the governing body mirrors those governed.

For example, when women represent women, men represent men, ethnic groups represent themselves. Descriptive representation has been shown to increase that populations trust in government, and lead to rise in that group's participation and interest in government (Banducci et al. 2004). Symbolic representation refers to the idea of women standing for women. Not only does the governing body look like them, but they also stand up for them and represent their interest in a way that sparks emotion and pride for the represented group. Finally, substantive representation, sometimes called active representation, is when the body not only looks like and stands for the minority group, but also acts for them by enacting policies that meets the group's needs and interests. Some scholars argue that there can be substantive representation, without descriptive representation. While these instances have been identified, there are strong links between descriptive and substantive representation (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Philips, 1998). As populations in sub-Saharan Africa change with war, this research suggests the importance of the composition of the government changing as well.

2.4.1.2 *Is There a Difference?*

As women have gained representation in democracies across the globe, scholars have started to study if that representation makes a difference; and if so, why? While early scholars contributed women's inclination toward peace to biology; socialization and life experience also give women a unique perspective (Gilligan 1982, 173-74; Grant and Newland, 1991; Miller, 1976). Biological determinism argues that women have a natural tendency toward pacifism based on their natural reproductive capacity and motherly instincts (Ruddick, 1989; 1987). Social constructivists find that there are no inherent differences based on gender, but instead males and females are forced into stereotypical roles (Rosaldo, 1980).

Whether the attitudes towards peacemaking are the results of biology or social constructs, all these scholars find that there is a significant difference in the leadership of men and women. Degroot found that women are more collaborative, communicative, and display a higher sense of loyalty to their cause (2001). This study will continue that research in the field of peacemaking in sub-Saharan Africa. Based on the history of this region and their belief in strong matriarchs, it is likely that we will see similar results. It should become evident how the conflict around these women leaders has constructed their disdain for needless conflict and a stronger leaning toward peace.

2.4.2 *Areas Women Serve*

2.4.2.1 *Women in Legislatures*

One of the most prominent places we see women serving in government is in legislative branches. The theories of representation have been introduced, but what does it mean for women to represent women. Their connection is most obvious in the types of legislation they support. Women in legislative bodies across the globe have been shown to support bills that address health and welfare matters for women, children and families, and expansion of public goods (Zakuan, 2010; Dodson & Caroll, 1991; Galigan & Clavero, 2008; Reingold, 1992, Thomas and Welch, 1991; Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Wangnerud, 2006). One way to sum up these issues is that they focus on day to day issues to increase quality of life (Bennet, 1995). Because women are often responsible for the home, regardless of if that is their only job, it makes sense that their primary focus are the issues in that realm.

Women are typically less conservative than men, and advocate for more progressive policies (Vega and Fireston, 1995; Kaufmann, 2006; Inglehart and Norris, 2000). Women are specifically more liberal on social welfare spending such as money for poor, and social services

(Kaufmann and Petrocik, 1999). Swchwindt-Bayer and Corbetta (2004) on the other hand find that the political leanings of a representative's constituency has a greater influence on voting behavior than gender. Moving away from American partisanship though, Scwindt-Bayer (2010) found that women in Argentina, Costa Rica, and Columbia were more likely to support women's issues than their male counterparts in office. When studying Latin American nations, Erika Burton found that although party affiliation and constituency preferences play a part in legislative behavior, gender does have an independent effect on what legislators' support (2014).

2.4.2.2 *Women's Representation in Cabinets*

In sub-Saharan Africa, political power lies within the executive branch, and their power is seldom limited by other branches (Bratton and va de Walle, 1997). Globally, the number of women in cabinet positions has doubled between 1999 and 2010 (Bauer and Tremblay 2011). Between 1980 and 2005, the number of women in cabinet positions in Africa has increased fivefold (Arriola & Johnson, 2014). Despite this growth, women are at a disadvantage for any further gains in executive leadership. This is in part due to the use of *ethnic arithmetic* to fill cabinet positions (Arriola & Johnson, 2014). Ethnic arithmetic is the practice of selecting the most influential individuals from the varying ethnic groups within the community that the executive represents (Arriola & Johnson, 2014). These individuals are likely to have been existing political opponents, and therefore most likely men.

In order to break in, women must become policy and reform experts, often through bureaucracy, to become eligible for specialized recruiting into cabinets. Legislative quotas can also help women because once women have guaranteed seats, the value of their leadership is displayed. This type of specialist recruitment has been shown to lead to a higher level of substantive and symbolic representation within cabinets (Bauer & Okpotor, 2013).

In Latin America, it is unusual for a cabinet not to have at least one woman of full ministerial rank. "This suggests that the political costs of excluding women have become too high for presidents to ignore" (Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2005, pg. 840). In 2003, women were 18% of Latin American Cabinets but held *high prestige* ministries in only 6/18 countries (Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2005). *Low Prestige* or *less powerful policy areas* is coded language for the traditional women's issues such as education, child welfare, and other social issues (Hunt and Piscopo, 2010). There is a similar pattern in African nations of awarding lower level cabinet positions to women.

2.4.2.3 *Summary*

There is no doubt that women have a role in national governments. They have been proven to have effective rule, and to make a difference on a wide range of issues. Despite the literature's focus on women leading in traditional female policies, the lines between low and high prestige policy areas can appear blurry in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. Conflict is an issue of welfare, children, and poverty. Women should be included and leading in these policy areas as well. This study will examine to what extent their presence in government affects the decisions of war and peace.

2.4.3 Conflict

In order to study the effect that women's leadership has on the concepts of conflict and peace, one must also understand what causes conflict and peace. An understanding of these complex issues will inform the selection of variables for this study. This section will look at the causes of conflict and peace in theory, as well as in examples from sub-Saharan Africa. It will also examine the concepts of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

2.4.3.1 *Causes of Conflict*

The causes of war are as varied as human desire (Blum, 2017). Each conflict has unique circumstances that contribute to the cause, the length, the intensity, and the outcome of the conflict. That being said, scholars have been able to identify certain features that are more likely to lead to a conflict. This section will examine those elements.

2.4.3.2 *Clash of Civilization*

*"*Clashes of Civilizations are the greatest threat to world peace. In the post-cold war world, the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political, or economic. They are cultural" (Hunnington, 1996, p. 21). Hunnington drew these conclusions from historical examples. Few other places in the world have the cultural diversity of sub-Saharan Africa, so this certainly applies within the region.

Other scholars who used empirical testing, however found that cultural differences were not enough on their own to cause conflict. Cultural differences had less affect than the military, political, and economic interests when studied from a realist or liberal perspective (Russet, Oneal, Cox, 2000). Kant says that "peace does not depend on morals or even a common identity when self-interest is involved (Reiss, 1970, p. 105). When looking at the context of sub-Saharan Africa, you can see many nations, from inside and outside the region, that have selfish interests in what happens there. These interests combined with the clashes of civilization are the prefect cocktail for conflict.

2.4.3.3 *Overconfidence*

Blind self-interest can lead to overconfidence, which has been closely linked with nations waging war. This is particularly relevant in the region of sub-Saharan Africa. Nations looking to exploit these younger independent nations, view the nations as lesser than them, and therefore

enter very confidently. When bargaining states overestimate their own power, and that can lead to outbreaks of violence (Blainey, 1973; Jervis 1976; Lebow 1981; Stoessinger, 1998; Van Evera, 1999; Ganguly, 2001, Johnson, 2004). One widely replicated reason for this overconfidence is "positive illusions", this is the ideals of self-aggrandizement, an illusion of control, and invulnerability of risks (Taylor & Brown, 1988, 1994; Peterson, 2000).

2.4.3.4 *Trade*

When discussing causes of conflicts, trade is a double edge sword. Liberal theory suggests that increased trade between nations will make them less likely to go to war (Oneal & Russett, 1997; Polachek, 1997, Pevehouse, 2004). Others find that instead, these countries have more reasons to fight between each other making war more likely. (Krasner, 1976; Waltz 1979; Grieco, 1988; Gasiorowski, 1986). Perhaps the answer to the question of trade is simply in how conflict is defined. Garzke and Westerwinter find that trading states are less likely to have large scale militarized conflict, but they have more non-militarized scuffles between each other (2016). Either way, trade can cause tensions between nations. These tensions can be exasperated when you factor in the way trade can be exploited for resources (Klare, 2002).

2.4.3.5 *Rivalries*

A handful of nations within the international system just seem to want to cause trouble. Using a systematic approach, Thompson was able to identify rivalries by region around the world. He found that sub-Saharan Africa contains 31 strategic rivalries (2001). Strategic rivalries were determined on these criteria:

1. Parties involved were independent states.
2. There was historical context for date of threats and perception of threats.
3. There was an assessment of length of rivalry, but there is no minimum duration established.

4. Rivalries were examined from the principal decision makers point of view.
5. States must be a rival before or after a war, countries cannot simply have fought in one war.
6. The literature was examined from the time of the threat, not in hindsight.
7. Political histories of individual state's foreign policy activities serve as the best source of information. Each rivalry has at least a dozen references.
8. Student coding was limited as much as possible (Thompson, 2001).

The Thompson study expanded the list of rivalries beyond that of previous research, such as Diehl, that focused mainly on large dyads that draw worldwide attention (Thompson, 2001; Diehl, 1993). These smaller rivalries can play a key role in regional studies.

Frequent attacks between rivalries can lead to them being considered less serious (Levy and Morgan, 1984). That doesn't diminish those rivalries' effect on the rest of the region. Thirty-one rivalries involving a group of 46 nations is significant to the perception of the entire region. Even nations who may not be involved will bear the burden of this type of instability.

2.4.3.6 *Diversionary Conflict*

The final cause of war that is significant for the region of sub-Saharan Africa is diversionary conflict. There are two leading theories on why state may go to war as a diversion from domestic unrest: "rally around the flag" (Mueller, 1970,1973; DeRouen 1995,2000) and "gambling for resurrection" (Richards et at. 1993; Downs and Rocke, 1994; Geomans, 2000; Geoemans and Fey, 2009; Chiozza and Goemans, 2011). Both of these theories highlight the office seeking behavior, and show the grave affect such behavior can have on international politics (Haynes, 2017). In young nations still seeking to find their identity as suggested by Howard (1995), the need for a resurrection or a population that rallies around the flag can be particularly appealing.

2.4.4 *Peace*

2.4.4.1 *Causes of Peace*

The causes for peace are varied much like conflict; they are slightly harder to pinpoint. Academia at its heart researches to solve the evils and problems of the world. Peace is certainly not one of those, but by studying its causes, we can find what is missing from nations at conflict. This section of literature will look at some existing theories of peace.

2.4.4.2 *Democratic Peace Theory*

Democratic Peace is one of few widely accepted generalizations in international relations. In fact, it has even been referred to as an empirical law (Levy, 1988). Despite that, the literature surrounding democratic peace has continued to evolve. Patrick McDonald categorized Democratic Peace literature into 4 stages (McDonald, 2015). The first wave of Democratic Peace Theory was built on the simple observation that democracies rarely fought with each other (Babst, 1972). This observation developed into dyads that show while democracies rarely enter conflicts with other democracies, they do participate in conflict with other types of regimes at similar rates as other states (Chan, 1984; Weede, 1984; Doyle, 1986; Maoz and Abdolali, 1989). The second wave is built on sophisticated quantitative measures, that include controls for various other factors including common alliances, similar interest, and international trade. These studies mostly confirm the basic hypothesis that democracies rarely fight other democracies (Maoz and Russett, 1993; Dixon, 1994; Owen, 1994; Rousseau et al, 1996; Oneal and Russett, 1997; Russett and Oneal, 2001; Huth and Allee, 2002). In the late 1990's, the third stage begins as uncertainty continues over whether democracy alone is a cause of peace. Research begins to find institutional constraints (Fearon, 1994; Schultz, 2001), domestic political costs (Debs and

Goemans, 2010), and public opinion (Johns & Davies, 2012; Tomz & Weeks, 2013) are significant factors that lead to democratic peace. Democracy, however, is still a key component to this peace. The fourth and current wave seeks to find alternative theories that can answer for what McDonald perceives as the three greatest challenges for democratic peace: 1) absence of a strong statistical correlation between democracy and peace prior to World War I, 2) reverse causation (peace causes democracy), and 3) the link between the great powers and democracy (McDonald, 2015).

There is little doubt that some sort of democratic peace phenomenon emerged in the nineteenth century, but perhaps there are other causes for this peace beyond simple democracy (Gat, 2005). While democracies have been more useful, the process of building democracies and the transition to democracies actually lead to more conflict (Mansfield and Snyder, 1995; Snyder, 2000). Another possible explanation for democratic peace is the political costs are higher for democracies. Democratic leaders are more likely to lose their power if they are defeated than autocratic leaders (Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson, and Smith, 1999). Particularly of interest to this study, women's votes have also been suggested as one of the reasons that liberal democracies are now more peaceful (Russet, 1996). Women tend to be more conflict averse, and therefore vote for leaders that are also opposed to conflict. At the heart however, all of these alternatives are democratic principles. So rather democracy alone, or the principles of democracy, something about these nations lead them to be more peaceful.

2.4.4.3 *Trade*

As discussed before, trade can lead to scuffles, but it can also lead to peace. Kant wrote of an international system built on a tripod of International Organizations, democracy, and trade (Reiss, 1970). Nations who trade, will thrive from the success of each other, and therefore be less

likely to enter conflicts (Oneal &Russett, 1997; Polachek, 1997; Pevehouse, 2004). Recently, this topic has resurfaced in International Relations literature. While scholars agree there is a connection between peace and economic interdependency, they also agree that there are other factors in play. One such factor is capitalism. When privately owned property is high, nations are less likely to enter military disputes. When publicly owned property is higher, nations are insulated from internal political opposition, and therefore able to enter military disputes more freely. As public v. private property is a key factor in defining capitalism, one can conclude that capitalism is a strong factor in determining peace (McDonald, 2007,2010). When we shift from simply trade to free trade, the relationship becomes stronger (McDonald, 2004). The complicated trade relationships within sub-Saharan Africa, and the infant economic systems can make these nations appear volatile.

2.4.4.4 *Interdependence*

Just as with trade, nations who depend on each other in other ways will be less likely to have large scale wars with each other. It is not in either nations' best interest. While trade is one of the most studied dependencies, there are many more to consider. Links can consist of similar ethnic backgrounds, military alliances, bilateral cooperation agreements, international or nongovernmental organization memberships, or United Nations roll call vote tradeoffs (Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Dorussen, Gartzke, and Westerwinter, 2016). These formal and informal agreements that nations' leaders enter can often play apart in major conflict decisions. This is why liberal scholars believe that a more interconnected world is a more peaceful world.

2.4.4.5 *Alliances*

While rivalries can cause conflict, strong alliances within a region can cause peace. Some states may enter into alignments, but those are not the same as alliances. Alignments do not have

to be written, because the common interest is obvious (Dingman, 1979). Alliances on the other hand are not always obvious. Instead they are written agreements between states, with specific agreements and parameters. These agreements are self-enforced, as with most rules of the international system (Morrow, 2000). Despite the lack of enforcement power, nations know it is in their best interest to cooperate. This can be explained using the metaphor of Rousseau's Stag Hunt. By cooperating everyone can catch the stag, and all eat well, but if anyone deflects to chase a rabbit, he risks catching nothing and none of the others eat (Jervis, 1978). This tale particularly rings true in regions like sub-Saharan Africa, where scarcity is a real threat to nations' existence. These nations are more likely to cooperate in the system, as it may be the key to their survival.

2.4.4.6 *Cosmopolitan Peace*

A final model of peace that is particularly relevant to this study and sub-Saharan Africa is cosmopolitan peace. Cosmopolitan peace moves away from the state-centric approach to peace and shifts towards a human security model (Brown, 2005). This type of positive peace has already been seen to some extent in Sierra Leone, with success (Curran and Woodhouse, 2007). There is an African tradition of *ubuntu* meaning "my humanity is caught up and inextricably bound up in yours" (Giri, 2006). This focus on humanity relates deeply to African cultures and can be a motivator for pacifism when the region is viewed as a whole. This tradition was used in Mandela's approach to the apartheid as well with success (Curran and Woodhouse, 2007).

2.4.4.7 *Peace Keeping v. Peace Building.*

At the end of the Cold War the United Nations shifted from their focus in peace from solely peace keeping to incorporating the idea of post-conflict peacebuilding (Mohamad, 2005). The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations states that peacekeeping aims to provide

security and support to help countries make the difficult early transition from conflict to peace. Their missions "range from large military deployments to small observer forces, from complex integrated missions, to specialist police, rules of law, and other civilian operations" (UN Peacekeeping Best Practices). Historically, peace keeping is done with military units with skills in patrolling, establishing observation posts, and mounting shows of force. While these are effective to some extent, these units also need those who are skilled in holding meetings, negotiating agreements, de-escalation, arbitrating disputes, and shuttling between the opposing forces (Last, 1995). One scholar claims that peacekeeping is an opportunity for rich countries to enter countries to claim they have helped with an international disaster, but then blame the UN for negative results (Jett, 2019). When those involved have little stake in the conflict, they are often unsuccessful. Peacekeeping often serves as a bandage, but does little to cure the wound (Jett, 2019). This is in part why the United Nations has begun to incorporate peacebuilding as well.

Peacebuilding is a "more complex, long term process aimed at creating the necessary conditions for positive and sustainable peace by addressing the deep-rooted structural causes of violent conflict in a comprehensive manner. Peacebuilding measures address core issues that affect the functioning of society and the state" (UN Peacebuilding Best Practices 2008, p.18). This can include election support, democratic institution building, and governing document formation. In addition to systematic help, peacebuilding also helps to rebuild communities. This focus on citizens helps to prevent a resurgence of violence (Mohamed, 2005).

Both of these processes are necessary for the security of a nation and the safety of citizens (Imboden, 2012). While the UN has acknowledged the need for this to be a coordinated effort with communication between both parties (UN General Assembly, 2010), that has proven

to be easier in theory than practice. Rothbart and Allen suggest that adding a pattern of compassion as a systematic practice, can make this process more effective. They conducted a case study of the Georgian-South Ossetia Dialogue. In this case key stake holders, including women, were brought to the table (Rothbart and Allen, 2018). The use of these local peace builders has been shown to be more effective than using only outside forces (Paffenholz, 2015; Newby, 2018)

2.4.4.8 *Summary*

It is nesassary to understand the causes of conflict and peace in order to properly examine the effect that women can have on these policies. For example, if overconfidence is more common among men, then it shows that women will in fact rule differently. When considering peace, scholars have found women to be more collaborative, lending their skill set to the peaceful activities of interdependence and alliances. Their focus on day to day life and humanity will also make them more aligned with a cosmopolitan peace. Finally, from this literature we know that women are key stakeholders in the peacebuilding process, showing that they play a vital role in sustainable peace within sub-Saharan Africa.

2.4.5 *Women in Conflict and Peace Management*

Women are often labeled victims of war, this fact alone gives women a unique perspective on war. Traditional thinking about war ignores women and disregards them as victims; this "oversight costs the world dearly" (Hunt & Posa, 2001, pg. 38). When women are invited to govern, they are often put into a box to deal with traditionally feminine issues such as welfare and education. This section examines how women can make a difference on the costliest of foreign policy issues, war.

2.4.5.1 *Peacebuilding as a Gendered Process*

Women must have a seat at the table in planning peace in sub-Saharan Africa. "Allowing the men who plan wars to plan peace is a bad habit" (Hunt & Posa, 2001, pg. 38). It has also been shown that higher levels of gender equality in government result in lower levels of military action (Caprioli, 2000). International relations scholars have found that increased gender equality in political, economic, and social power results in more pacifist behavior (Caprioli, 2000). The United Nations Security Council has passed two resolutions highlighting the lack of women in peace keeping efforts, and the need to integrate women into the process (UN Security Council, 2000; UN Security Council, 2013). Despite this international attention, individual nations have continued to bar women from peacekeeping conversations (Abu-Saba, 1999; Anderlini, 2007; Cabreera-Balleza, 2011; Charlesworth 2008; Chowdburry, 2011; Kuehnast, 2011; Onyinyechukwu; 2011).

Although not a subject of this study, studies that look at women in militaries often take a gendered approach to conflict studies. These gendered views are based on tradition and bias, and often lead to women having roles that suit those stereotypes. Therefore, women are less likely to be the decision makers. In reality, there are few gender differences between men and women in military academies, and women ranked more positively when there were (Morgan, 2004). Women rank significantly higher in *duty motivation* (Morgan, 2004).

The sense of duty motivation, as Morgan describes it, would fall into the category of female traits. These traits, such as empathy, creativity, collaboration, and cooperation, are now proving to serve leaders well in modern industry (Book, 2000). This also rings true in the military (Morgan, 2004). While empathy does not sound like a strong way to wage war, it is

certainly why women should be involved in waging peace (Book, 2000). Whether in the military or the departments featured in this study.

Kenya has been an example of the cyclical nature of electoral in violence for years. The peace building initiatives there have also been unfunded for the most part. Women's role as wives and mothers puts them in a position to do this work within their community, even when the government cannot provide many resources for the work. These women are not only survivors. They are also continuing to cope with the cycle of violence while meeting a gendered expectation of their societal roles. While they are acting in what Western democracies would consider stereotypical gendered roles as mothers and nurturers, they are doing peace building work. This narrative change can be empowering and transformative for women's rights. This process has put women leaders in a place to make strategic choices, participate in the public and political life, and contribute to a need for changing gender norms (Mueller-Hirth, 2019). This is a perfect case study to show the impact that women can make on a small scale, and a testament to the potential they have to make change when given a larger platform.

2.4.5.2 *Conflict Management as a gendered process*

There is a great deal of research on women in leadership and how women handle conflict in social settings, but much less on how they handle international conflict or war. Women are socialized to diplomacy from a young age (Benards, 1998). Starting as children, men are given a pass to use violence to solve their problems, but women are taught that they should use their words instead (Conover & Sapiro, 1993). It is acceptable for men to be "just warriors" marching into battle, but women should be "beautiful souls" marching for peace (Elshtain, 1987, pg. xii). Women are socialized to see violence as a direct threat to their social gains. As an extension of this, women see violent conflict as a threat to their political gains as well (Benards, 1998).

While the difference in treatment can certainly be a negative for women, it could be argued that this socialization towards diplomacy makes them much more pre-disposed for planning peace in conflict areas. There have been large influences on peace from women serving as individual citizen- diplomats and in grass roots movements (Bernards, 1998). Using their words to negotiate as they march forward for peace, they have been a catalyst for change in many war-torn areas.

As discussed earlier, one major cause of war is overconfidence. Testosterone, particularly in men, promotes overconfidence, dominance, and challenging behavior. Based on that knowledge, Johnson and his colleagues set out to examine the connection between testosterone and conflict. While they could not determine that testosterone was directly the cause, they did find that overconfidence and unprovoked attacks were more pronounced among males than females (Johnson et al., 2006). They also found that narcissism was greater in men and lead to higher levels of overconfidence and unprovoked attacks.

2.4.5.3 *Summary*

While countries seem to confine women to "soft issues" that are domestic and social in nature, this section of literature makes clear that women are more than capable of making change in the traditionally "hard issues" such as war and peace (Buvinic and Roza, 2004). In fact, some scholars show that maybe women are more well-suited for managing those hard issues.

2.5 Chapter Summary

While there is a vast array of literature about representation and conflict, studying them separately is an injustice to the women who live in sub-Saharan Africa and other conflict prone regions. By examining these concepts through the lens of critical mass theory, nations and International Organizations can make more informed decisions about who should be involved in

the process of peace. In the next two chapters, using quantitative methods this study examines the relationship between the number of women in government and the levels of peace and conflict. This analysis will show if women are contributing to more peaceful foreign relations.

Chapter 3: Legislative Models

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between women in political office and the presence of conflict within a state. It seeks to answer the questions are countries with higher levels of women in leadership more likely to enter peace agreements, and are countries with higher levels of women in leadership less likely to enter armed conflicts? The absence of war does not always mean peace (Kumaratunga, 2011); therefore, it is important to examine both relationships.

This chapter details the research design and results from the test of the first 2 hypotheses related to the research question:

H1: States with a higher percentage of women in legislative office are less likely to be involved in armed conflicts.

H2: States with a higher percentage of women in legislative office are more likely to enter into peace agreements.

This chapter also explains why sub-Saharan Africa is the area of study, define the unit of analysis, and provide detailed descriptions of each variable and how they are operationalized. It also provides results from the first two models.

3.2 Area of Study

As discussed in the previous chapter, sub-Saharan Africa is a hot spot for political instability. As one of the oldest populated areas on earth, it has a unique history involving women. It is home to strong women who served as some of the first great female political and social leaders on Earth (Tour'e, 2018). Colonization and other outside influences changed the power structures within this region drastically. Today, the region is still grappling with those

changes and the lasting impacts they have left. Those impacts include instability, inequality, and violence. These factors, coupled with the rise in women to political power again, make this region the ideal place to examine the relationship between women and peace and conflict.

3.3 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study is be democratic country years. It was key to this study that the women in office be elected in a free and competitive electoral process. Therefore, these models only include years that the 46 states above were considered democratic. The state's democratic status was determined using Autocratic Regime Data from Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014).

According to Geddes, Wright, and Frantz states are considered to be democratic when they are independent, are not occupied by foreign troops, do not have a provisional government, and do not meet their definition of an autocratic regime (2014). Autocratic regimes start when: 1) an executive comes to power via undemocratic means, 2) an elected government achieves power and then changes formal rules to limit future competitive elections, 3) military power prevents one or more parties from participating in elections, or 4) takes on another form of indirect military rule. An autocratic regime can be changed to a democratic regime in the data the year that a competitive election is held and someone other than the incumbent or someone allied with the incumbent wins executive office (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, 2014).

Geddes, Wright, and Frantz use various codes for different types of autocratic regimes, but this study only looks at those that are coded as democratic. Of the 46 sub-Saharan African nations defined by the United Nations, 21 experienced at least 1 democratic year between 1997 and 2010. The total number of democratic country years studied in the legislative models is 234. Table 1 shows the dates for each state's democratic regimes.

Table 2: Sub-Saharan African Democratic Regimes from 1997-2010

State	Beginning Year	Ending Year
Benin	1992	2010
Burundi	1994	1996
Burundi	2006	2010
Central African Republic	1994	2003
Congo-Brz	1993	1997
Ghana	2001	2010
Guinea Bissau	2001	2002
Guinea Bissau	2006	2010
Kenya	2003	2010
Lesotho	1994	2010
Liberia	2006	2010
Madagascar	1994	2009
Malawi	1995	2010
Mali	1993	2010
Mauritania	2008	2008
Mauritius	1969	2010
Niger	2000	2010
Nigeria	1980	1983
Nigeria	2000	2010
Senegal	2001	2010
Sierra Leone	1997	1997
Sierra Leone	1999	2010
South Africa	1995	2010
Sudan	1987	1989
Zambia	1992	1996

Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2014. "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(2): 313-331

3.4 Variables

3.4.1 *Independent Variable*

For the two models examining the legislative branch, this study looks at the percentage of women holding seats in the legislature. The World Bank tracks gender statistics by country in their World Development Indicator database. This study uses their variable "proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments percentage" to operationalize this variable. The data is available from 1997-2010 for all 21 states represented in this study

3.4.2 *Dependent Variable*

The first dependent variable measures the level of conflict within a state. Correlates of War offers many different measures of conflict. For this study, I am using the total number of conflict days in a year. This number is a combination of inter and intra-state conflict. These numbers were calculated based on the start and end dates of each listed conflict. All conflicts were included regardless of level of hostility. It is important to include all conflicts in order to capture the true level of unrest. This study does not differentiate between the types of conflict, because the skills of diplomacy required by state actors (male or female) are similar to end all types of unrest. In the future, a broader study with more states could separate inter and intra-state conflicts and named and unnamed conflicts to determine if there is any change in the role women play.

The second dependent variable we examined is peace. Unlike conflict, which has many measures, peace is more difficult to capture quantitatively. Since this study is looking specifically at how women can affect peace and conflict decision, I focus on definitive actions of peace. Correlates of War tracks the number of peace documents signed each year. The

documents they track are formal alliances, defense pacts, nonaggression agreements, and entente. This study looks at the combined totals of those documents

3.4.3 *Control Variables*

Throughout the literature one of the most significant determinants of peace is democracy. That is part of the reason this study is looking specifically at democratic nations. Even when only examining democracies, there could be some variance based on how stable the democracy is. For this reason, I include a measure of the number of years, prior to the year in question, that the state has functioned as a democracy. This number was determined using the same criteria from Geddes, Wright, and Frantz that was used to select the countries in the study. Based on the literature, countries with a higher number of prior democratic country years should be more likely to enter peace agreements and less likely to participate in armed conflicts.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a commonly used control in international relations studies. GDP is the total monetary value of goods and services produced within a country in a given year. GDP is a measure of how robust a nation's economy is, their buying power abroad, and is statistically tied to the nation's standard of living. Nations with greater economic dependency and strong trade relationships are less likely to enter armed conflicts (McDonald, 2007,2010). Nations with lower GDPs are more dependent on others, and therefore would be more likely to remain peaceful. Nations with higher GDPs would also have greater resources to enter into conflicts. This study uses GDP measures reported by the World Bank Development Indicators. They are all measured in US dollars.

3.4.4 *Summary Table*

Table 3: Summary of Variables for Legislative Models

	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Independent Variable					
Percentage of Women Legislative Branch	168	12.86	8.68	1.20	44.50
Dependent Variables					
Conflict Days per Year	287	9.20	45.40	0	366
Peace Agreements Signed per Year	287	.71	5.63	0	64
Control Variables					
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	269	$26,100,100,000	$67,032,300,000	$56,698,866	$375,349,000,000
Prior Democratic Years	285	8.80	8.23	0	41

3.5 Methodology

To examine the relationship between women in legislative bodies and conflict or peace I created two models. The first uses the conflict dependent variable and the second uses the peace dependent variable. Since both of the dependent variables are count variables, count regression methods must be employed (Long, 1997; Cameron & Trivedi, 3013). For each of the two dependent variables the variance is many times larger than the mean, and because of that I use a negative binomial model (Long, 1997).

It could be argued that a zero-inflated model would be best due to the large number of zeros within the data. Zero inflated models differentiate between types of zeros within the data (Long, 1997). For example, a year with zero conflict could be the result of deliberative action to

remain peaceful, or it could be because there was simply no conflict within that year. Upon my own testing there was very little difference between the Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial Regression and the Negative Binomial Regression. After reviewing other methods literature, it was determined that the Negative Binomial Regression was the more appropriate test and the best fit for this study (Allison, 2012).

3.6 Findings

3.6.1 *Conflict*

Hypothesis 1: States with a higher percentage of women in legislative office, are less likely to be involved in armed conflicts.

It is hypothesized that a higher number of women in legislative office, will be less likely to be involved in armed conflict. In the model, this hypothesis was slightly supported. The results showed that for every one percentage point added to women in legislature, there was a decrease in conflict days by .221. While a two-tenths of a day decrease may not seem to be of great effect, if a state saw a 10% increase in women in their legislative branch, they would decrease their conflict days by more than two days per year. We also surmise from critical mass theory that the greater the concentration of the majority population (in this case women) the greater the difference they make (Kanter, 1977). Therefore, the impact could grow exponentially.

As suspected from the literature, there is also negative relationship between the number of prior democratic country years and conflict days. This effect was slightly stronger than number of women in office at -.388. Gross domestic product was not significant.

Table 4: Negative Binomial regression estimates for Conflict Days

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
(Intercept)	6.696	0.5359	.000
Percentage of Women in Legislature	-0.221	0.0393	.000
Prior Democratic Year	-0.388	0.0452	.000
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	-3.166E-12	3.2971E-12	.337
N	163		
Likelihood Ration Chi-Square	254.174		
Log Likelihood	-311.544		
Pearson Chi-Square	1948.752		
Akaike's Information Criterion	631.088		
Bayesian Information Criterion	643.463		

3.6.2 *Peace*

Hypothesis 2: States with a higher percentage of women in legislative office are more likely to enter into peace agreements.

Similar to the last hypothesis, it is predicted that higher percentages of women in legislative office will sign more peace agreements with other nations. Peace agreements are not just formal peace treaties, but also include cease fires and other more temporary arrangements. However, this hypothesis was not supported. For each percent increase in women in legislatures, there is a .333 decrease in the number of peace agreements signed. The model also shows a negative relationship between prior democratic country years and number of peace agreements signed. GDP is once again not statistically significant.

Table 5: Negative Binomial regression estimates for Peace Agreements Signed

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
(Intercept)	4.955	0.6835	.000
Percentage of Women in Legislature	-.0333	0.0635	.000
Prior Democratic Year	-.406	0.0742	.000
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	-1.704E-11	1.1882E-11	.152
N	163		
Likelihood Ration Chi-Square	171.202		
Log Likelihood	-100.258		
Pearson Chi-Square	790.881		
Akaike's Information Criterion	208.516		
Bayesian Information Criterion	220.891		

3.7 Discussion

There are 4 key factors that I believe affect the mixed results of the legislative models. First the sample from sub-Saharan Africa brings a multitude of historical factors and outside influence that cannot be adequately controlled for. The type of power held in the legislative branch also affects the ability to influence these types of decisions. As discussed earlier, peace is not easily quantifiable by definitive action; therefore, it is hard to study the impact a specific group has on any given action of peace. Finally, the complexities of war will never be reduced to something as simple as gender. There are many factors and strong theories that explain a greater percentage of conflict decisions. The results of this study do, however, show that gender can play at least a slight role in the outcomes.

3.7.1 *Sample*

When examining these models and judging their ability to explain the relationship hypothesized, it is important to recognize some complications in the sample. First, the sample is relatively small. By only examining the democratic country years of this region, there is a large amount of conflict that cannot be included. Also based on trends we can see in world data, the number of women in power fluctuates over the lifespan of a democracy. Nations with fewer

democratic country years will have fewer women in power, and therefore it is harder to determine the difference more women might have on this question.

While ancient history shows strong matriarchal power in Africa, one also must account for the years of colonization from European nations. Colonizing nations had strong preferences for male leadership, and they forced that leadership onto their colonies. It would be difficult to separate those western ideals of leadership from the type of democracy that many sub-Saharan states now have. This certainly impacts the number of women who are in office.

3.7.2 *Critical Mass*

Critical mass theory suggests there is a threshold at which women begin to make key difference. Until that threshold is met, women are tokenized. Women legislators' ideas are not taken seriously, and they act in such a way to blend in and keep their position. This prohibits them from pushing their real policy desires (Kanter, 1977). As shown in Table 2 the mean of the percentage of women in legislative branches is only 12.857%. Kanter's research found that women need to reach 20-40% for the side-effects of tokenism to diminish (1977). The fact that there is already a slight decrease in conflict being made by women at a mean so much lower than the desired threshold, shows the power these women can have once a critical mass is reached. This finding supports the overall theory of this study that we need more women in political office to promote peace.

One could also make the argument that this finding could suggest that critical mass theory is incorrect. If women are already making a significant difference at around 12% then the threshold could be lower than 20%. It is also plausible that in decisions such as these, there is not a need for a critical mass, but rather women are able to voice their opinions in smaller numbers.

Critical Mass Theory has been tested predominantly in western democracies, so more testing will need to be done in other regions to determine which of these could be the case.

3.7.3 *Type of Power*

Another key component in the impact a legislature can have on peace and conflict decisions is the type of power each legislature has. Most legislatures in this study hold the purse strings of their state. War is very expensive; therefore, these organizations hold power over how often their state enters conflicts, and to some extent the level of force used. This suggests why women were able to make a slight difference in days of conflict within the legislative branch. Due to balance of powers, legislative branches do not have signing power for formal agreements in most cases. That power is held by the high-ranking executive officers. While legislators may each have some influence through ratification processes, they are not often in the drafting room for such decisions. That is more so true for shorter term agreements such as cease fires, nonaggression agreements, and entente. There is also the potential for informal influence outside of negotiations. From Kanter's work, however, it is shown that women do not have as much social capital or direct influencing power as men when they are acting alone; therefore it is understandable why women in the legislative branch would not have as much effect on peace agreements (Kanter, 1977).

3.7.4 *Alliances v. Alignment*

Alliances are not the only way nations can agree to peace. Alignments are very common in sub-Saharan Africa. These alignments do not have to be written down because the common interest is obvious to all involved (Dingman, 1979). Nations might report no formal alliances, but still have many alignments that keep them from participating in violence. This study does not

have a way to measure those. Those agreements are often also based on shared resources, borders, or scarcity situations that are hard to capture in a quantitative manner.

Measuring non-actions can be extremely difficult in quantitative data. While the variance is statistically significant, it is extremely small. The inflated zeros could be causing the negative relationship, between peace treaties and the number of women in legislatures. A better dataset that can account clearly for different types of peace is needed to further this study. Also, further testing that looks at other groups that have impacts on peace, such as the military. There is some impact, but without more testing it is hard to measure if this relationship could just be spurious.

3.7.5 *Complexity of the Question*

When looking at these models as well as the literature, the portion of women in legislature is only effective at the margins. This study was never designed to prove more than the traditional theories such as democratic peace and trade balance. There are many factors that determine if a nation will enter a conflict, but this study does show that the presence women in legislative office does have some influence in that. When combined with the other positive results that come from equitable representation, there is a strong argument for why more women are needed in legislative office.

3.8 Implications and Conclusions

Table 6: Summary of Findings for Legislative Models

Variable	Model	Support?	Statistical Significance	Effects
Percentage of Women in Legislature	Conflict	Yes	Yes	-0.221
Prior Democratic Year	Conflict	Yes	Yes	-0.388
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	Conflict	Yes	No	
Percentage of Women in Legislature	Peace	No	Yes	-0.333
Prior Democratic Year	Peace	No	Yes	-0.406
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	Peace	No	No	

The results of this chapter are mixed. The models show that women in legislative offices do have some negative impact on number of conflict days, but they also have a negative impact on the number of peace treaties signed as shown in Table 5. In a similar fashion the prior number of democratic country years also yields mixed results, yielding a negative direction for both conflict and peace variables. The Gross Domestic Product did not prove significant in either model.

These results are part of a greater conversation on why women must be included in conflict studies as more than victims. Studies of women in legislative branches often study how they vote on domestic issues. The literature defines these women's issues as education, child welfare, and food stability. The results of this study show that women can have power in decisions of conflict. If the number of women in these offices continues to trend upwards, future studies should find that the impact women have trends upward as well.

The implications of this study overall support the need for more equal representation in government. As international organizations, such as the United Nations and World Bank, look for ways to increase equality and stability in this region, it should be examined how to increase the number of women running for legislative office, and insure that they have a fair race. Placing women in these offices not only increases equality in representation but based on these results has some level of impact on stability as well.

The results of this chapter open the door to a great deal of future research. At the present time, data is not available for specific legislative votes in all of these countries for each democratic year. In the future data should be broken out to see if women do vote differently on specific pieces of legislation involving conflict and defense spending. It would also be beneficial to expand the region of this study. Most critical mass studies have focused on western states and

broad policy ranges. I would like to test if these results hold true in areas with a higher critical mass, and if perhaps a higher percentage is needed to make a difference in the area of defense which is typically considered to be very masculine in nature. Further quantifying peace and a clear measure for informal alliances would also help to create better results for future studies.

Overall, these results need further study before they should be trusted to make policy decisions, but it does support the general findings in the literature. Gender affects policy decisions, and it appears that conflict is not immune from that influence. More research must consider women as change makers in conflict policy, and not the passive victims of conflict circumstance.

Chapter 4: Executive Models

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the relationship between the women in legislative bodies and the presence of conflict or peace within a state. This chapter takes a similar approach in testing the relationship with conflict and peace with women in executive cabinet positions. It test the final two hypotheses:

> H3: States with a higher percentage of women in executive office are less likely to be involved in armed conflicts.

> H4: States with a higher percentage of women in executive office are more likely to enter into peace agreements.

This chapter explains through an executive lens why sub-Saharan Africa was chosen as the area of study, defines the unit of analysis, and provides detailed descriptions of each variable. It then reports the results of the final 2 models.

4.2 Area of Study

As discussed in the previous chapter, sub-Saharan Africa is a hot spot for political instability. The region is one of the oldest populated areas on earth, and as such it has a deep history of powerful women. Africa as a whole is home to some of the first ever female leaders from ancient history. Colonization and other foreign powers left lasting impacts to this region, some of the most damaging being instability, inequality, and perhaps a loss of matriarchal culture. While there are a few female heads of state, most of the executive power is still male dominated. This complicated history of female leadership coupled with historically high levels of conflict make it an excellent region for this study.

4.3 Unit of Analysis

Just like with the legislative models, the unit of analysis for this study is democratic country years. While the head of the executive branch is elected in a democracy, the cabinet positions are often selected by appointment. While a democratic process does not ensure that the selection process of these positions is fair or just, it certainly adds a level of accountability for them. By making sound choices and improving the quality of life for their citizens, they increase their approval ratings and likelihood that their chief executive is re-elected, and they may remain in power. That concept of public service is important to this study, and therefore I continue to only look at democracies for the executive models.

The state's democratic status was determined using Autocratic Regime Data from Geddes, Wright, and Frantz as in the legislative models (2014). Of the 46 sub-Saharan African nations defined by the United Nations, 20 experienced at least 1 democratic year between 1994 and 2010. The total number of democratic country years that are studied in these executive models is 223. Table 1 in Chapter three displays the dates for these regimes. The time frame of 1994 and 2010 was selected based on the availability of executive branch data.

4.4 Variables

4.4.1 *Independent Variable*

The second independent variable measures the number of women in the executive branch. There is not a standard database that regularly measures women's participation in executive branches within the sub-Saharan region; therefore, I had to create and code this variable. Stateman's Yearbook has reported the names of all executive officers each year from 1864 to 2021 for all of the states in this study. Using their text from 1994 to 2010, I created a database of all of the ministers and cabinet members for each state, including the top two officials (president, vice-president, prime minister etc.) for each year of this study (Statesman's

Yearbook, 1994-2010). Once this list was created, I used various national and international news

sources to code the individuals as male or female. The total number of cabinet positions varied

greatly from year to year and state to state. For this reason, I calculated the percentage for each

nation. For a future research project, it would be valuable to create a more sophisticated measure

that accounts for the level of the cabinet position. For example, many states had women serving

in an education role, but very few had women as a Minister of Defense.

4.4.2 *Dependent Variable*

The first dependent variable measures the level of conflict within a state. This is

measured exactly as in the legislative models from the previous chapter. The total number of

conflict days in a year is measured by combining both inter and intra-state conflict. These

numbers were calculated based on the start and end dates of each listed conflict. All conflicts

were included regardless of their level of hostility or if they were a named conflict. It was

important to include all conflicts in order to capture the true level of unrest and increase the

number of cases for a significant study. In the future a broader study with more states could

separate intra and inter-state conflicts and named and unnamed conflicts to determine if there is

any change in the role women play.

The second dependent variable examined is peace. These models focus on how women in

legislative branches can affect peace and conflict decision. The focus is on definitive actions of

peace just like in the previous chapter. Correlates of War tracks formal alliances, defense pacts,

nonaggression agreements, and entente. By combining all of these documents, I created the

peace variable used.

4.4.3 *Control Variables*

Throughout the literature, one of the most significant determinants of peace is

democracy. Even when only examining democracies, there could be some variance in democratic

stability. To control for stability, the number of years prior to the year in question that the state has functioned as a democracy is counted. This number was determined using the same criteria from Geddes, Wright, and Frantz that was used to select the countries in the study. Based on the literature, countries with a higher number of prior democratic country years should be more likely to enter peace agreements, and less likely to participate in armed conflicts.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a commonly used control in most international relations studies. GDP is the total monetary value of goods and services produced within a country in a given year. A higher GDP is means that a nation has a more stable economy and higher buying power abroad. Nations with a higher GDP would have more discretionary funding making it easier for them to enter armed conflicts. Nations with lower GDPs would be unable to enter major conflicts, due to lack of stable economy. We also know when nations are dependent on other nations, they are less likely to enter conflicts. Therefore, those nations would be overall more peaceful (Oneal &Russett, 1997; McDonald, 2007,2010; Polachek, 1997; Pevehouse, 2004). This is not a perfect measure, because the instability from a low or falling GDP could also lead to instability within the nation. In general, a lower GDP would suggest a nation to be more peaceful. These models use GDP measures reported by the World Bank Development Indicators. They are all measured in US dollars.

4.4.4 *Summary Table*

Table 7: Summary of Variables for Executive Models

	Observations	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Independent Variable					
Percentage of Women in Executive Branch	182	12.58	7.77	0	38.89
Dependent Variables					
Conflict Days per Year	287	9.20	45.40	0	366
Peace Agreements Signed per Year	287	.71	5.63	0	64
Control Variables					
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	269	26,100,100,000	67,032,300,000	56,698,866.02	375,349,000,000
Prior Democratic Years	285	8.80	8.23	0	41

4.5 Methodology

Similarly, to the models of chapter 3, I have two models to examine the 2 hypotheses of this chapter. The two dependent variables are the same as the previous models, so I continue to use negative binomial regression models since they are count data (Long, 1997; Cameron & Trivedi, 2013). The variance is still many times larger than the mean, so this method is more appropriate than Poisson modeling. In alignment with current research patterns and my own testing with these variables, I found no need for zero-inflated models (Allison, 2012).

4.6 Findings

4.6.1 *Conflict*

H3: States with a higher percentage of women in executive office are less likely to be involved in armed conflicts.

It is hypothesized that a higher percentage of women in executive office will lead to the state entering fewer armed conflicts. The model confirms that hypothesis. For each percentage

point increase in women in the cabinet, there is a .273 decrease in the number of conflict days. While this is not a remarkable decrease, it is certainly noteworthy and significant. With the limited number of cabinet seats in each state, even just adding one woman to a staff can be a great percentage increase, and predictably decrease the level of conflict.

Prior democratic country years is correlated in the predicted direction. However, it is surprisingly slightly less impactful. I believe this might be because cabinet positions are less democratic in nature due to appointment processes; therefore, the added autonomy of cabinet members could give them greater influence than democratic history. GDP correlates in the predicted direction and is significant unlike in the legislative models. Although it is statistically significance, the effect is extremely minimal.

Table 8: Negative Binomial regression estimates for Conflict Days

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
(Intercept)	5.597	.3501	.000
Percentage of Women in Executive Branch	-.273	.0313	.000
Prior Democratic Years	-.218	.0274	.000
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	8.214E-11	1.0654E-11	.000
N	176		
Likelihood Ration Chi-Square	270.641		
Log Likelihood	-392.481		
Pearson Chi-Square	2240.882		
Akaike's Information Criterion	792.961		
Bayesian Information Criterion	805.643		

4.6.2 *Peace*

H4: States with higher percentages of women in executive office are more likely to enter into peace agreements.

The final hypothesis of this study is that a higher number of women in executive office will lead to states entering a greater number of peace treaties. As with the legislative model, this hypothesis was not supported. For each percentage point increase in women in the executive

cabinets there was a 0.117 decrease in the number of peace agreements entered. Prior democratic

country years also had a negative impact with a coefficient of -0.188. While these do not match

what the literature would suggest, perhaps there is just an overall lack of formal alliances in this

region. GDP was not statistically significant in this model.

Table 9: Negative Binomial regression estimates for Peace Agreements Signed

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
(Intercept)	1.789	.3499	.000
Percentage of Women in Executive Branch	-.117	.0275	.000
Prior Democratic Years	-.188	.0410	.000
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	1.750E-11	1.5098E-11	.246
N	176		
Likelihood Ration Chi-Square	83.492		
Log Likelihood	-150.709		
Pearson Chi-Square	2606.418		
Akaike's Information Criterion	309.419		
Bayesian Information Criterion	322.101		

4.7 Discussion

These models produced mixed results similar to the legislative models. The explanations

of that are similar in nature as well. The sample of women in executive branches is even smaller

than the legislative branches. That smaller total size also results in a smaller mass within the

cabinets as well. There are still concerns over the measures of peace and if they capture the full

picture. Finally, while some members of the executive branch may have higher levels of power,

those are often not the seats given to women.

4.7.1 *Sample*

Measuring the number of women in executive branches is not quite as straight forward as

legislative power. While many non-governmental organizations track legislative patterns, women

in executive branches are not as widely studied unless they serve as head of state. The Council

on Foreign Relations does have a Women's Power Index, but they do not provide an extensive

data set dating back over time (CFR, 2020). Instead, I had to rely on a list of cabinet members that I coded individually. This data is accurate to what is reported, but it is still very limited to what is available. Due to the nature of appointments to cabinets, there is a large amount of turnover that was not fully accounted for in Stateman's Yearbooks (1994-2010).

As with the legislative models, the study is also limited by the short history of democracy in many countries. The colonial powers that many of these democracies are modeled on were male dominated. Cabinet positions are appointed, so there is not as much pressure from citizens for them to be as representative as legislatures. All of these factors influence the number of women in office.

4.7.2 *Critical Mass*

The mean of the percentage of women in executive cabinets for this study is only 12.068%. The maximum is 38.889%, and there are 17 democratic country years with less than 5%. According to Kanter's Critical Mass Theory, an organization needs between 20-40% to diminish the effects of tokenism for women. Only 34 of the 176 countries included meet the minimum 20%. The fact that there is already a significant difference with such a minimal number of cases meeting the threshold shows the importance for continuing to promote women into these spaces.

4.7.3 *Type of Power*

Executive branches traditionally play a greater role in creating peace agreements and leading the charge in conflict situations. I believe that is why we see that women make more difference in this branch. That does not consider their position though. We know from the literature that women are most likely to receive lower prestige cabinet positions such as Minister of Women and Children or Minister of Education (Hunt and Piscopo, 2010). This study did not differentiate between the positions that these women hold within the executive branch. A

Minister of Defense would have a higher impact than the Minister of Parks and Recreation on conflict issues. I think studying these decisions as a whole is valuable because women can have an impact even if they do not have the final voting authority, but more research needs to be completed that can separate positions by level of influence.

4.7.4 *Alliances v. Alignments*

In this study peace is very simply defined by only signed agreements. There is no current data set that could account for all of the informal alignments that exist. These are often not formally recorded because there is an obvious common interest that pushes those states together (Dingman, 1979). Because those are not recorded, there could be a disproportionate number of zeros in this study. In the future, finding a data set that can better account for informal allies could lead to greater results that more closely match the predicted results.

4.7.5 *Complexity of the Question*

As with the legislative models, it is important to remember that these models are only meant to explain a small portion of these phenomenon. The decisions of war and peace are highly complicated. There are many longstanding theories such as democratic peace, cosmopolitan peace, interdependence, and trade balance that explain larger patterns. This research is meant to measure the effects that one particular variable might have in the process.

4.8 Implications and Conclusions

Table 10: Summary of Findings for Executive Models

Variable	Model	Support?	Statistical Significance	Effects
Percentage of Women in Executive Branch	Conflict	Yes	Yes	-0.273
Prior Democratic Years	Conflict	Yes	Yes	-0.218
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	Conflict	Yes	Yes	8.214E-11
Percentage of Women in Executive Branch	Peace	No	Yes	-0.117
Prior Democratic Years	Peace	No	Yes	-0.188
Gross Domestic Product (US$)	Peace	Yes	No	

As with the previous chapter, these models yield mixed results. As displayed in Table 10 women in executive branches do have a negative effect on the number of conflict days in a year, but they also have a negative effect on the number of peace agreements signed. Democratic country years also trended in the same directions with a negative impact on both conflict days and number of peace agreements signed. Gross Domestic Product was significant for conflict days, but the effect was extremely minimal.

The results are in alignment with the current literature and fit into the broader conversation of the need for women in higher office. While the causes of peace and conflict are best predicted through other standing theories, there is clearly some impact of women in executive branches. Representation has many benefits from the literature, but with future study stability could be added to that list. As international organizations look to build peace, they must incorporate the views and ideas of women who live in these regions. Their perspective is not only valuable from a qualitative perspective but can also be shown to have measurable effects on peace.

This research points to many future opportunities for research. As with the legislative chapters, the results could be strengthened by a clearer measure of peace. This measure should be able to account for both alliances and alignments. Such a measure would adjust for the high number of zero variables in peace agreements. Another potential study would be to break out the cabinet positions by level of prestige. By creating a measure of prestige, you could account for cabinet executives with direct influence over conflict decisions as opposed to those individuals who only have indirect influence.

These results need further study before they can be implemented in making any policy decisions, but overall, they do support the idea that more women in public office can lead to

peace and stability. Whether this is an example of women displaying "ethic of care" or it is one of the other factors from the literature, women are definitely making decisions that are in alignment with peace (Gilligan, 1982). Through future research, I hope that more evidence can be found to promote the incorporation of more women into public office.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

Are states with higher levels of women in political leadership more peaceful? That is the basic question that this dissertation sought out to answer. The results of the models were mixed in their findings; however, when considering peace at the most basic level, absence of conflict, it does find that women have an impact on the number of conflict days.

This chapter discusses the results and findings of this study in greater detail for each hypothesis tested. I also compare across variables, to speculate about similarities between the legislative and executive models. I also highlight the significance of this study within the literature and how these findings could be used to support peace building efforts of international organizations. I examine the limitations of this study, as there were many factors that could use improvement. Finally, I discuss the questions that arose within this research that could lead to future studies.

5.2 Discussions and Interpretation of Findings

This section discusses the overall findings of this dissertation and draw some inferences about patterns between the models. First, I discuss the major findings from the literature review and how they can inform the interpretation of the results. Secondly, I provide a review of the results from each model and their interpretations. Then, I discuss a few patterns that arose when comparing the models against each other.

5.2.1 Literature Review

In Chapter 2, I discussed the literature surrounding the research question. The first key finding from the literature is that women do in fact rule differently, and as such should have representation. Studies are moving away from the older ideas that there is a biological difference

between men and women that affects the way they lead, but there are still certainly differences. Many scholars attribute the difference to socialization and societal norms expected of women and girls. Women were also found to have unique life perspective. This could certainly be argued for the women of sub-Saharan Africa based on the history and culture of the region. Regardless of reason, women are predicted to support less violence, more restorative practices, and more communication within decision making processes.

In addition to examining literature specifically related to women, the literature review also looked at possible causes of conflict and peace. In order to suggest that women in office have a significant impact, first there must be a study of what is already proven to have impact. The literature showed that self-interest, overconfidence, trade, diversions, and rivalries could all create conflict within a region. Stable democracies, trade, interdependence, and alliances are known to create peace.

The final finding in from the literature is that there is already support for why women must have a seat at the table when planning peace. "Allowing the men who plan wars to plan peace is a bad habit" (Hunt and Posa, 2001 pg. 38). Increased gender equality has been tied to many positive growth metrics for nations. Specifically, Caprioli found that women's political, economic, and social equality leads to pacifist behavior (2000). Women have been shown to be more communicative, less narcistic, and less likely to be overconfident compared to their male counterparts. When considering that one of the causes of conflict is overconfidence, these findings could point that women are in fact better suited for peacebuilding work.

Overall, the literature discussed in Chapter 2 supports the idea that women should be involved in decisions regarding peace and conflict. While women are not theoretically tied to the

causes of war or peace, the other literature supports that they could have a marginal effect on such efforts. This is also confirmed in the models.

5.2.2 Model 1 Legislative Conflict

The first model looked at the relationship between women in legislative office and the number of conflict days in the given year. It suggests that for every percentage increase of women in office, the number of conflict days would decrease by 0.221. When the number of prior democratic country years increased, conflict days decreases by 0.388 as well. This finding is in line with the literature. While women in office can lead to fewer conflict days, a stable democracy has more effect.

While the model is significant, the variance is small. There are several reasons that explain this. First of all, the legislature is not often where decisions of war begin. Executives and military personnel have much greater power in regard to conflict. That said, legislatures hold the power of the purse in many of these countries. War is an expensive business, so without some legislative support, countries cannot enter into conflicts. With that in mind, this study did not differentiate between named or formal conflict and more minor attacks. A variable for conflict that differentiates between the two could have led to greater impact.

These models were never meant to explain the complete story of why states choose to enter conflicts. Those decisions are complicated, and there are many factors already tested in the literature that can help predict conflict scenarios. It is also important to recognize that no study will every have the full story because many of those decisions are made in private. This study simply sought to show the effects that women can have when they have a seat at the table. This model supports that the variable of women in the legislature can have an impact. With that in mind, there is significant data that women legislatures lead to fewer conflict days.

5.2.3 Model 2 Legislative Peace

The second model examines women in legislative office with the number of peace agreements signed. This model suggests that for every percentage increase of women in legislative office, there is a 0.333 decrease in peace agreements signed. It also found that there was a negative relationship between prior democratic country years and peace agreements. This is the opposite of what was predicted.

The model suggests that adding women into legislative offices decreases the number of peace agreements signed in a year. This could be true, but there are also other contributing factors to consider. The first one is the problem with the peace variable. Defining peace as simply the absence of conflict would have been measuring the same numbers as the conflict variable, and therefore would find that women in legislative offices help promote peace. The fact that prior democratic country years also had a negative relationship with peace is not in line with the prevailing theories as well. That further shows that there could be problems with the variable.

I wanted to measure active decisions of peace, so I chose peace agreements. Peace agreements are signed for many reasons, and sometimes those are not always peaceful. I discuss that in depth in my limitations, but if peace agreements are not completely peaceful in nature, the literature supports why women would not sign them. The literature shows that women are less likely to be narcissistic and overconfident and they value communication. If those statements are true, it would be unlikely that women would push for backroom style decisions that are not peaceful in nature.

Another factor to consider is that this model specifically looks at the impact of women in legislative branches. At most, legislative branches have ratification powers over treaties, and that is not always guaranteed. They are not often included in the drafting peace documents.

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Executives and high-ranking military are responsible for that. Without powers in writing the documents, or insight into the intentions of the document the effect women legislators have is minimal.

5.2.4 Model 3 Executive Conflict

The third model, found in Chapter 4, is designed to examine the relationship between women in executive office and number of conflict days. The model suggests that for each percentage increase in executive cabinets, there is a decrease of 0.273 in days of conflict. Prior democratic country years also was significant. This suggest that for each prior democratic year there was a decrease in the number of conflict days by 0.218. This was also the only model where gross domestic product was significant, and it acted as predicted, though the variance was extremely small. This aligns with my hypothesis based on the literature.

In comparison to the legislative model, there is a slight increase in the impact women have. Perhaps this is because executive positions are entitled to a greater level of information before such decisions are made. That being said, the numbers are still very low. This could be for similar reasons with the legislative model that conflict needs to be better defined. There needs to be a model that can separate avoidable conflict from conflict that is out of the governments control.

The control variables are also interesting in this model. Prior democratic country years actually had a smaller coefficient than women in executive branches. The difference is extremely minimal and should only be applied to these very specific data points. However, it is worth mentioning that the percentage of women is the strongest variable in this model. GDP is also significant only in this model, although with a coefficient of 0.00000000008214. The effect is extremely small.

Correspondingly to the legislative conflict model, this model can only explain the story of these specific years in this specific area. Until better measures of conflict and peace are created, the power to generalize from the models is very small. However, it does support the hypothesis that, in these circumstances, women in executive office lead to fewer days of conflict.

5.2.5 Model 4 Executive Peace

The final model measures the relationship between percentage of women in executive cabinets and the number of signed peace agreements. Similarly, to the legislative peace model, for each percentage increase of women in the executive cabinet, the number of peace treaties signed decreased by 0.117. The relationship between democratic country years and women in executive cabinets was also negative. This is the opposite reaction that was predicted by the hypothesis.

As with the previous peace model, the measurement of peace used could be responsible for this unpredicted relationship. The relationship between treaties and democratic country years is also still negative, despite strong theoretical evidence that democracy does increase peace. It is worth noting that the decrease in peace treaties is smaller in the executive model opposed to the legislative. This could be explained by the fact that executive powers have a stronger role in the drafting of these documents.

5.3 Emerging Patterns

The findings of this study encompass only a small area, and as such do not have great explanatory values. However, there are some emerging patterns for each variable. These patterns could be used to focus future research. They also could be used to influence policy and practices relating to peace and conflict within sub-Saharan Africa.

5.3.1 Legislative Patterns

The legislative models for both conflict and peace were significant. Therefore, regardless of direction of impact, women in legislative branches are making impacts in peace and conflict decisions. This is meaningful, because while women have been gaining more political positions, they are often boxed into areas of policy regarding children and education. As discussed in the beginning of Chapter 2, in sub-Saharan Africa there is less of a divide between conflict and domestic issues in comparison to western democracies. Women are not only capable of leading in conflict decisions, but they are. This is an important finding. It has particularly implications for international organizations who are carrying out peacebuilding and peacekeeping projects within sub-Saharan Africa. Continuing to treat women as victims of war, instead of leaders in peace will cost the world dearly.

5.3.2 Executive Patterns

The executive model for peace and conflict were both significant, and in opposite directions as with the legislative models. Despite the finding that women in executive branches had a negative effect on peace treaties signed, it is still clear that they have an impact. In the executive conflict model, for each percentage of women in office there is a decrease in conflict days by 0.273, on the other hand in the legislative model there is a decrease of 0.221. This supports that women in the executive branch can perhaps have more impact than those in the legislature.

Another explanation could be that the percentage of women in executive branches was often higher than the legislative percentage. Although there are more women in legislative branches, because of the size of the cabinet, women can hold a critical mass more easily in the

legislature. This suggests support for Critical Mass Theory, and perhaps in a higher percentage, legislatures could also have a slightly higher impact.

5.3.3 Conflict Patterns

In addition to the patterns from the independent variables, there are some patterns with the dependent variables as well. Both of the models that involved conflict were significant in and the results were in the direction predicted by the hypotheses. Higher numbers of women in office, led to a decrease in conflict days. I believe one of the reasons this variable produced more predictable results, is its simplicity. Conflict was defined simply by the number of days with conflict each democratic year.

While this definition helped to support my hypothesis, a more comprehensive definition of conflict that accounts for other factors could produce a model that was more adaptable to other regions and studies. The first factor I would include is who originated the dispute. Whether the state was acting offensively or in defense plays a large role in how cabinet members and legislators would respond. I believe the number of states involved could also give further insight. If a nation is in a large dispute with many nations, they may be acting in the interest of their allies as well. Understanding these motivating factors could help make this study more generalizable to other regions. Including factors that measure the intensity of the conflict could also help to make this study more adaptable. Those factors include length of conflict, highest level of violence, and number of casualties. By including these measures of motivation and intensity this study could be more readily applied to other regions.

5.3.4 Peace Patterns

One of the more surprising patterns is that in both the legislative and executive models peace was significant, but led to a decrease in peace agreements signed. There are a couple of

reasons why this could be the case. First, as discussed, the definitions of peace for this model were somewhat problematic. In addition to the need to use a variable other than peace agreements, measuring the impact that individuals have on such agreements is extremely difficult. The negotiation process cannot be quantified in a way that measures the impact of each individual. While executives and legislators have some impacts, the military as well as outside parties complicate the impacts that anyone person can directly have. This pattern does not mean that women are less likely to support peace; however, without better measurements, it is hard to draw any conclusions on the specific effects of women as opposed to their male counterparts.

5.4 Significance of Study

Overall, this study found significant results that women in public office can lead to fewer conflict days. Although there was no evidence that specifically supported peace decisions, fewer conflict days do contribute to the idea that women are more peaceful. This supports the overall theory of the study that incorporating women into positions of power does lead to peace.

It is also important to note that very few of the countries in this study had met the thresholds set by critical mass theory. So even in smaller numbers, women could create significant change. This could suggest that the threshold of 20-40% set by critical mass theory does not hold true. More studies would be needed to determine why that might be the case.

One possible explanation is that conflict decisions have a lower threshold. The literature explains how women are socialized to avoid violence. That need to avoid could outweigh the effects of tokenism for women in positions of power. Another possibility is that in this particular region, the threshold is lower because of the way women are treated. While history has moved on from the matriarchal societies of Africa, there could still be a deeper respect and appreciation for than Western democracies where much of the critical mass literature is conducted. I believe these

questions of critical mass could best be studied in a case study that interviews women in this region about their experiences.

Traditional theories of what cause conflict or peace are based on government systems and the interactions between nations. There is not a prevailing theory that looks only at the internal demographic makeup of a government. While this study is far from being a significant predictor of conflict or peace, it does show that the gender makeup of government offices can have some effects on decision making. Such effects should be studied further to determine if they should be included in theories of conflict, and more generally in international relations theory.

In addition to adding to existing literature, this study could also have policy implications as well. International organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank have invested in the region of sub-Saharan Africa extensively, and therefore have interest in the peace within that region. The UN as a whole is deeply invested in peace worldwide, including having peace-keeping forces in the region and elsewhere. This study suggests that women should be invited to the table in peacekeeping situations. They are not simply victims to be interviewed, but when given a seat at the table, they can have an impact on avoiding conflict and building peace.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

While this study found several significant results, there are certainly limitations with every study. Steps were taking to mitigate as many of these limits as possible, but there are still a few that should be pointed out. Defining peace and conflict, time and space limitations, measuring non-actions, and measuring power levels in executive cabinets are a few I will address here.

5.5.1 Measuring Peace

While there were limitations with most of the variables' measurements, peace was the most difficult. Ultimately, signed peace agreements was the measurement selected because it is a decisive act of peace that both legislative and executive branches have some authority over. In order to increase cases for this study, all types of peace agreements were included. While this was the most logical measure based on the parameters of this study and the available data, it could be considered problematic.

Non-aggression agreements are often signed right before war breaks out with other parties. While they may signal peace for the signing parties with each other, one or more of those parties will not remain peaceful for long. One of the most important examples of this is the Hitler-Stalin Pact. By signing an agreement with Stalin, who he was absolutely at odds with ideologically, Hitler freed himself up to invade Poland. This act was the beginning of World War II. While these instances are not always the case, they certainly limit the findings of this study. A measurement of peace that could account for such actions is necessary for future study.

5.5.2 Measuring Conflict

This study measured conflict as the number of conflict days within a year. This measure includes all conflict: interstate, intra-state, all hostility levels, all lengths. This decision was made to increase the number of cases. While this measure is all inclusive, it does not allow the model to examine the motivations before a conflict or the intensity of the conflict. Therefore, the decision to retaliate against a foreign attack and a violent protest could both be coded the same. Policy makers have some effect on response to both of these situations, but the level of response required is vastly different. In order to examine the whole picture, measures for the originator of

the conflict, civil versus international conflict, number of states involved, the length of conflict, number of casualties, and level of hostility should be added in the future.

This study found that women decrease overall conflict. When adding these factors in the future, I would predict that women are less likely to enter civil conflicts or conflicts with one other state. Such conflicts have great cost to their state and less reward. On the other hand women might support larger wars, especially wars fought in other nations, because the risk is slightly less, but there is a reward in creating alliances. I would also predict that conflicts that happen with higher percentages of women in office are shorter, have fewer casualties, and lower levels of hostility. Women will work harder than men to avoid conflict, but when it is unavoidable, I believe they will work to end it more quickly and with as little damage as possible. Adding in these factors about motivation and intensity could greatly enhance the generalizability of this study.

5.5.3 Time and Space

One of the greatest limitations on any work is time and space. That is certainly the case with this study. Due to time and data constraints, I chose one region to focus my work. I selected sub-Saharan Africa. This region has deep historical roots of women in positions of power. Due to the aftermath of colonization and outside influences they have also been riddled with conflict. In recent years, they have also seen a resurgence of female leadership. These factors made this an ideal choice. However, it would have of course been great to include additional regions, but based on the data available, that was no feasible.

Also based on the data, I chose to focus my study post World War II. Going back further into history would have provided rich comparisons. The parameters of this study, however, needed to measure years that countries operated as democracies. Prior to World War II most of

Africa was held as colonies, and therefore this study would not be possible. In a future study that examined total women in government, as opposed to separating two branches, non-democratic states, could be included. While democracy is a significant predictor of peace, it would be interesting to see if women can have impacts in other government systems.

5.5.4   Measuring Non-Actions

Another limitation of this study is the difficulty of measuring non-actions. A decision to enter an armed conflict or remain peaceful happens every single day. However, the difficulty of that decision varies greatly based on a broad range of circumstances. Even when a nation chooses to respond to some threat in their system, a war is a very rare event. The rarity of war means that I need to measure other types of conflict to have an appropriate number of cases for this study. I chose to measure all conflict regardless of hostility level. Though the results were significant, there are other ways to measure these non-action events that could lead to greater results.

One possibility is to examine crises and crises escalation. In those events, there is a significant probability of conflict, as compared to an average day. This study as is compares times when conflict is extremely unlikely with times it is more likely. I believe that the adding in a control for when a nation is at crisis and what level the crisis is, I could better predict what effect women have. It is possible that nations with more women in office are peaceful because they avoid these crisis situations by preparing far in advance. What I believe is more likely however based on the literature, is that women are making more peaceful decisions in the face of a conflict situation because of their socialization to avoid violence. A control for crisis level would allow me to test such a hypothesis.

5.5.5 Levels of Executive Power

The variable for percentage of women in executive conflict was one that I constructed for this study. Using Stateman's Yearbook data from each democratic year, I compiled a list of all the ministers. From that list, I used various news sources to code the ministers as male or female. Also included were heads of state and seconds in command. However, all of the positions were counted equally in the percentage.

The literature suggest that women are most likely to hold lower level cabinet positions, such as Minister of Education or Minister of Recreation. They are far less likely to hold high ranking positions such as Minister of Defense or a Vice President or Prime Minister role. While all cabinet members have a certain level of influence, the Minister of Defense will have far greater authority on peace decisions than the Minister of Recreation.

A scaled approach or weighted percentage needs to be developed to better measure the role that women have in cabinets. Such a measure would need to account on a state by state level the prestige of each office. It would also require extensive research from year to year. While some positions remain every cabinet, other executives create special offices to fulfill their political goals. Those positions my vary in prestige and would need to be studied case by case.

5.6 Implications for Future Research

While there are some statistically significant findings in this study, it also opens up several questions and avenues for future research. I believe broadening the area of study is the first future study that is needed. Grounding this study in conflict literature, as opposed to feminist literature could also inform new models and findings. Building out better ways to measure both conflict and peace could yield more reliable results. Finally, I would like to see some case studies that examine the experiences of these women in power.

5.6.1 Broaden the Area of Study

Future studies should be done on a broader area. As discussed earlier, the small number of cases was a major limitation of this study. Adding more cases would help to validate the results, as well as allow for greater generalization. In addition to simply adding more cases, broadening the area would also allow for a richer study comparing across region.

I selected the region of sub-Saharan Africa for its relationship with conflict, the international focus on peace efforts there, and its history of matriarchal societies. Other regions could however bring different perspectives. Latin America, for example, has made great strides in women's rights in the past decade and would be an interesting addition. The Middle East North Africa region have a complicated relationship with women's rights as well. The impact of women who are able to break through their political glass ceiling is an important story to tell. Comparing that across regions would add a great deal of depth.

5.6.2 Build better definitions for Conflict

The decision to count all conflicts, regardless of level of hostility, was made to increase the number of cases within the study. Named conflicts are few and far between. Often conflict is less intense and short lived. However, by counting a civil war and a retaliation to a foreign terrorist attack at the same weight, it is hard to paint a true picture. Civil war may could have been negotiated and avoided by the executive branch, but rarely can you negotiate out of a terrorist attack.

There are two ways that I believe conflict could have been better defined had the number of cases allowed. First, and most simply, you could have created multiple conflict variables based on Correlates of War Data. A categorical variable based on number of causalities, level of hostility, or length of conflict could all provide valuable data. Perhaps countries with a critical

mass of women still go to war, but those wars are shorter or have fewer casualties. Separating interstate and intrastate conflict would also provide valuable information.

The second way that I think conflict could have been better defined would have been to create an aggregate variable that had a scale for level of hostility, causalities, conflict escalation, or length. While such a variable would not provide the same level of detail, it could provide a consistent measure across regions to assess the intensity of conflict. A study could then examine if women have greater decision-making power in lower level conflicts than higher level.

Conflict is often messy and extremely volatile. There is no perfect way to strictly quantify it. By creating a variable or variables with multiple levels though, a study could capture more of the nuances within a conflict and be able to better predict the effectiveness of peace policy. Particularly for this study, the impact that women can have in peacebuilding and keeping.

5.6.3 Build better definitions for Peace

As discussed above, the measure chosen for peace was one of the greatest limitations of this study. Moving forward, a better measure must be chosen. Measuring peace is inherently a very political process because no nation is ever completely at peace. All measurements must tolerate some level of unrest. This was especially true when choosing a measurement for peace that was influenced by both the executive and legislative branches of a state. That is why this study settled on signed agreements. They are measurable, and government officials have a direct impact on those documents. As discussed above though, such documents are not always signed with pure intentions, so there must be a better measure.

The simplest answer would be to use an index such as the Global Peace Index (GPI). GPI is an index created yearly by the Institute of Economics and Peace (2020). I chose not to use this measure in my dissertation because of the extremely broad criteria that are included. Some

things, such as refugees, international conflicts fought, political terror scale, United Nations peacekeeping funding, and military spending, all fit well within the type of peace this study was measuring. However, measurements such as incarceration rate, police rate, violent crime, and access to small arms did not fit within the scope of this study. In future studies, expanding the literature review to include those measures, and broadening peace could provide important context. All of those are important factors in stability within a nation and could provide important insight into peacefulness. They are all also influenced by executive and legislative policy makers.

A more complicated method could be to measure the quality of peace agreements. Peace agreements are active choices to not go to war, most of the time. While sometimes they may be to clarify alliances before conflict, normally they are to help create peace. Correlates of War breaks down peace agreements into four categories: alliances entered, defense pacts, non-aggression, and entente. To increase the number of cases, this study combined those into one number. By using them separately in combination with the conflict variable, it could be studied which agreements were aimed at promoting peace. A more time-consuming method on a smaller scale could also be to look at how long each agreement did last. While this would not be sustainable for a large-scale study, it could inform a case study on this subject.

A final alternative might be to simply count days of peace. This method is the opposite of the conflict variable I used, and therefore measure the same issue. However, including days of peace in conjunction with one of the other alternatives could provide a more wholistic picture. It could be particularly effective in conjunction with the escalation variables discussed with conflict. Some days the decision to not enter a war is not a conscious decision, because there are no threats to your system; other days, there could be multiple threats that officials have to

balance and choose how to respond. Considering "peaceful actions" by counting days of peace that were a conscious choice, could provide the clearest picture of when legislators and cabinet members are impacting peace within their state.

There is not a perfect measure of peace. Even defining peace varies widely and depends on the study. Sometimes conflict is inevitable, some might even consider conflict justified. Civil unrest may be at no fault of current policy makers, but still lead to conflicts. No measure can account for all of these things. However, there are measures that have greater explanatory power. Future research should choose such a measure to narrow down the effect women have on peace making decisions more directly. The measure used in this study does not provide enough specificity.

5.6.4 Conflict Theory

It was a conscious decision to ground this theory within the feminist theory of critical mass. The key to the research question, and what sets this study apart from many other conflict studies, is the focus on women. However, embedding into another general model of conflict could have provided greater explanation of the results. It could address interaction effects and also improve the generalizability of the results. One prominent theory that could be used is Democratic Peace Theory, which was discussed briefly in the literature review. It was already shown in all the models that prior democratic country years was a significant variable that had a greater explanatory power. Using Democratic Peace Theory would have helped to build stronger models with more explanatory variables that could have increased the findings.

5.6.5 Case Studies

Quantitative studies are important to establish patterns. This is particularly true in a study such as this, where you need to measure many data points and compare across a large area.

However, I also believe a qualitative case study could truly enhance these findings. This research is examining the impacts that women are making in high level positions. By telling their stories and examining how they feel they are making an impact, these results could be further verified or supplemented.

Such a case study could be especially helpful in considering Critical Mass Theory. While statistically it appears that there is perhaps a high enough percentage for them to make some difference, their lived experiences might tell another story. This current study does not consider the micro-aggressions, role entrapment, and performance pressures that are all side effects of tokenism. To ignore those side effects and suggest that there is a critical mass would be performing a disservice to the women in these positions.

5.7 Conclusions

The findings of this dissertation are the beginnings of the work to elevate women's status in conflict management. Women are not victims to be passively interviewed about their experiences, but rather victors to lead the charge of making decisions on building more peaceful and stable states. The findings of this study align with the literature that women have a different approach to conflict, and that approach does lead to significant impacts on conflict. There is evidence that women are already making strides towards peace, and as percentages of women increase, conflict days decrease.

I began this dissertation quoting Hunt and Posa that traditional thinking of war and peace often overlooks these women, but that "oversight has cost the world dearly" (Hunt and Posa, 2001, p. 38). This study attempted through literature and statistical modeling to measure what difference was made when instead of being overlooked, these women were included in the process through legislative and executive cabinet positions. While there is still great work to be done on this topic, women are breaking those glass ceilings to enter higher office, and the world will reap the rewards of their impact.

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