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The Trouble with Institutions: How Women's Policy Machineries Can Undermine Women's Mass Participation

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It is no secret that men and women continue to have unequal access in democratic systems. In nearly every country for which data exist, women participate less in politics and hold fewer government positions than men (Beauregard 2014). In recent years, analysis of this ongoing problem has taken an institutional turn: feminist institutionalism examines how the formal and informal "rules of the game" create persistent bias against women in office and the advancement of feminist policy agendas (e.g., Krook and Mackay 2011). Such analysis is important and enlightening, but it illuminates only part of the story. An ongoing problem in most democracies is women's lower level of participation: women are less interested in politics, less likely to be active in campaigning, and less likely to contact officials. While women often vote at the same rate as men, their lower rates of political engagement and higher-intensity forms of participation remains to be explained (Coffe and Bolzendahl 2011; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997).

Understanding institutional configurations that promote or hinder government responsiveness to feminist issues is essential but insufficient; to date, mass participation has not been a major focus of this

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scholarship. However, nonactivist women must feel that they have a political voice *to the same extent that men do* in order to overcome ongoing gaps in political participation. The struggles that women face in the upper echelons of government are intrinsically related to the broader engagement of women in everyday politics; as such, the policy feedback framework is a useful complement to institutional approaches for understanding how state institutions and policy outcomes influence patterns of political participation. "Policy feedback" examines how institutions and policies affect resource distribution and send signals to citizens about the potential responsiveness of the government to their specific needs (Campbell 2012; Mettler and Soss 2004). As such, feminist institutional analyses must take into account how institutional arrangements affect women's rates of political participation in addition to higher-level outcomes of representation and agenda setting.

Expanding the feminist institutionist scope to explore institutional effects on political participation uncovers a paradoxical problem: in some cases, the creation of institutions or policies designed specifically for women may have a pernicious effect on women's political engagement and participation because of the messages they send about the government's (in)ability to address women's issues. If government bodies dedicated to women generate policies that reinforce women's subordination, women may be less politically engaged, less likely to participate in politics, and less likely to understand the political sphere as an arena for feminist change than if the government made no attempt to address women's issues at all.

I elaborate this idea through a case study of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) Women's Brigade (later renamed "Women's League") in Zambia in the 1960s and early 1970s. As a wing of the ruling party and ultimately government (after the declaration of a one-party state), the Women's Brigade was supposed to provide an avenue for women's involvement in politics. In the face of colonial repression, Zambian women were widely mobilized into the Women's Brigade during the nationalist movement. After Zambia gained independence, UNIP's revolutionary fervor dissipated into bureaucratic governance, and the Women's Brigade proved to demobilize all but the most fervent female UNIP supporters.

The primary goal of this article is empirically-based theory development, and the Zambian case is suitable for several reasons. First, as a women's movement developed during the nationalist independence struggle and then incorporated as part of the independent government, the case of the UNIP Women's Brigade mirrors the experience of women's movements in many postrevolutionary or posttransition countries (Baldez

2003; Tripp et al. 2009; Waylen 2007). As such, it is "typical" in a way that suggests portions of the Zambian experience may be generalizable. Second, because of the era, the ways in which the Brigade's policies reinforced gender hierarchies are obvious, making the case illustrative in a straightforward manner. Whereas political rhetoric in recent years often reflects international norms regarding women's political, social, and economic rights, rhetoric during the 1960s is uninhibited in this regard, and the clarity of the case facilitates theory development. Such obviously gendered political language may be less common today, but many of the same attitudes persist (e.g., Phiri 2008). Finally, it sheds light on the processes of the institutional development of women's agencies in the developing world, expanding scope of these studies (Friedman 2000).

Using official documents, memos, and newspaper articles from the *Times of Zambia* collected at the National Archives of Zambia and the UNIP Archives, I argue that the institutionalization of the UNIP Women's Brigade was detrimental to women's mass political participation. I advance this argument in three stages: first by demonstrating women's high levels of political activity during the independence movement and then by exploring how women (but not men) became less politically engaged after independence. In order to isolate the effects of the Women's Brigade, I then compare the experience of rural women, whose primary contact with the government was through the Brigade, to urban women, who experienced a broader mix of policies, showing that disengagement was more likely for those whose only access to the political system was through the Brigade.

This article proceeds to review recent literature on feminist institutionalism, gender gaps in political participation, and the premises of policy feedback, elucidating how these bodies of work lead to the central thesis of this study. It continues with the case of Zambia, examining how the transition to independence and the institutionalization of the UNIP Women's Brigade influenced women's relationship to the fledgling government. It concludes by drawing some lessons about institutional effects on political participation.

GENDERING INSTITUTIONS, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, AND POLICY FEEDBACK

This article relies on an important distinction between "women's movements," "women's policy machinery," and "feminist." While "women's movement"

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may refer to any woman-led movement unaffiliated with the state (Beckwith 2000), "women's policy machineries" are government-established structures ostensibly dedicated to improving women's social status (Outshoorn and Kantola 2007, 3; Stetson and Mazur 1995;). I borrow Stetson and Mazur's definition of "feminist," as "an ideology, policy, organization, or activity . . . [that] has the purpose of improving the status of women as a group and undermining patterns of gender hierarchy" (Stetson and Mazur 1995, 323). Women's movements and policy machineries are thus only feminist if their goals include undermining gender hierarchy.

In political science, the most coherent strand of scholarship examining the interaction between women's movements, women's policy machineries, feminism, and the state has been feminist institutionalism. State institutions have been a concern for feminist scholars for decades (e.g., Goetz 1997; MacKinnon 1991), leading scholars to theorize about barriers to women's representation and institutional arrangements to improve their access (Bratton 2005; Dahlerup 1988; Tripp and Kang 2008). However, with mixed evidence as to the efficacy of female representatives and women's policy machinery to advance a policy agenda aligned with feminist movements, scholars have examined how institutions themselves create opportunity structures that inhibit or promote the advancement of feminist agendas (Krook and Mackay 2010).

The turn toward institutionalism has highlighted how the formal rules of democratic institutions may reinforce gender biases in electing representatives, setting agendas, creating policy, and conducting the daily tasks of governance and has sharpened the analysis of how gender biases persist despite rule changes or explicit attempts to "mainstream" gender concerns (Beckwith 2010; Mackay, Kenny, and Chappell 2010; McBride and Mazur 2010). The confluence of feminist scholarship and "new" institutionalism has explained why attempts to remedy gender biases have been inconsistent in creating change, focusing on how actors and institutions influence each other and lead to the persistence of informal rules or procedures despite formal rule change (Chappell and Waylen 2013; Mackay and Kenny 2009; Mackay and Waylen 2014). Mackay (2014, 553) explains the problem through the concept of "nested newness," the idea that new rules are "embedded in time, sequence, and institutional environment . . . informed by 'legacies of the past.'" Moments of transition (Baldez 2003; Waylen 2007) or "reconfiguration" (Banazak, Beckwith, and Rucht 2003) can create openings for feminist actors to institutionalize changes that enhance women's ability to participate in governance and promote feminist policy

outcomes (Chappell 2000). Such analyses have focused on political opportunities across levels of governance (Vickers 2011; 2013) and alternative arenas such as bureaucracies and courts (Chappell 2002; Outshoorn 1994). These insights have led to a series of case studies attempting to understand when institutional changes — such as establishing women's policy machinery, quotas, or explicitly including women in political processes — actually achieve feminist outcomes (e.g., Chappell 2014; McBride and Mazur 2010; Waylen 2014).

The institutional angle is essential, and the scholarship conducted under its auspices has led to important discoveries about institutional configurations that are more or less likely to achieve feminist reforms. However, this approach only tells part of the story: regarding individual agents, its lens is directed primarily on female politicians, officials, bureaucrats, and members of women's movements representing only a small portion of exceptionally politically active women. Much of this scholarship examines the determinants of women's descriptive and substantive representation, but has less to say about the political behavior of qualified female voters. To achieve gender equality in democratic access to governance, it is essential to understand why women en masse continue to be less politically engaged and politically active.

THE GENDER GAP IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Scholarship on the "gender gap" may refer to two different phenomena. In Western democracies, it generally refers to voter preferences: women are more likely to support left-wing parties while men are more likely to support those on the right (Gidengil et al. 2005; Krook and Childs 2010, 8). The other phenomenon is women's overall lower levels of political participation and political engagement. In the West, the gap has narrowed since the 1980s and seems to be attributable to demographic characteristics rather than something inherent to gender. Inglehart and Norris's (2003) adaptation of modernization theory posits that women's political participation is a simple function of gender equality, a condition that coincides with postindustrial economic development. "Gender" is thus more about the demographic differences between the sexes in education, income, and occupation. As economic development proceeds, gender equality should increase and the participation gap should disappear (Burns, Scholzman, and Verba 2000).

However, there are a few conceptual problems with this thesis. First, the American gender gap "disappears" statistically only after controlling for "political interest." Women's level of political interest is consistently lower than men's (Burns, Scholzman, and Verba 2000; Verba, Burns, and Scholzman 1997), but researchers should not treat this lower level of interest as inherent to women — it is something that also needs to be explained. Furthermore, the modernization work is based on data that exclude most of Africa, Southeast Asia, and other developing nations (Inglehart and Norris 2003). More recent work taking advantage of the Afrobarometer survey calls into question whether the gender gap is truly a function of demography: Coffe and Bolzendahl (2011) show that, for the 18 countries included in the 2005 Afrobarometer, the same indicators used by Burns, Scholzman, and Verba (2000) and Inglehart and Norris (2003) can account only for the gender gap in voting, not for any other political activity. While Inglehart and Norris note that that the effects of modernization will be diminished in more "patriarchal" cultures, this caveat is not terribly helpful for understanding when and why women in different cultural contexts do engage more with the political system.

Other researchers have begun to seriously examine the sources of women's lack of political engagement. As Gidengil (2004) points out regarding Canada, women's lower levels of political engagement are likely related to the "masculine" nature of Canadian politics, which disadvantages women and results in very few women in the public/political domain. Additional work has focused on the impact of electoral institutions on women's engagement, indicating that majoritarian systems disadvantage female candidates and that the dearth of elected female officials discourages female voters (Beauregard 2014; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012). As both feminist and historical institutionalists have pointed out, institutions "reflect, reproduce, and magnify particular pattern of power" (Waylen 2009, 248). These systemic approaches are promising for understanding why women, as a group, exhibit less political engagement.

POLICY FEEDBACK AND GENDERED PATTERNS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Policy feedback points to the link between institutions, policies, and political participation, highlighting how policy can affect citizens'

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political behavior by defining the boundaries of citizenship and educating citizens about their relationship to the state (Campbell 2012; Mettler and Soss 2004). Schneider and Ingram (1993) posit that different types of social policy define parameters of appropriate political behavior for target groups. When a government targets different types of policies at different groups of citizens, each group will have a different relationship with the political sphere, translating to different forms of political participation (Bruch, Ferree, and Soss 2010; MacLean 2010; Soss 1999; 2007). For example, Campbell (2002) shows that seniors who rely on state benefits like Social Security and Medicaid are more likely to vote, even though their relative poverty would predict lower rates of participation. Meanwhile, recipients of stigmatized welfare benefits are less likely to demonstrate political efficacy (Soss 1999). Researchers posit that these diverging results are due to the specific nature of the interactions each group has with government bureaucracies, some of which are empowering (in the case of Social Security), and others of which are disempowering (in the case of stigmatized benefits).

This body of work is particularly useful for feminist theorists who seek to understand how institutions influence women's relationship to the state. For example, revisions of Esping-Anderson's (1990) typology of welfare states focused explicitly on the extent to which the state conceptualized women's role as being in the public or private sphere and theorized the effects of such policies on women's relationship to the government (Sainsbury 1994). Kittilson (2010, 219) notes that public policy can have an enormous influence on the way women perceive the utility of participating in politics, as "policy responsiveness signals that established political channels offer an effective arena in which women activists can invest their political capital."

Such an effect may extend beyond activists: experiences with policies or institutions that demonstrate responsiveness to women or gender sensitivity may promote women's engagement broadly, while those that are gender-blind or nonresponsive may discourage women's engagement. Perhaps the most obvious form of gender sensitivity is "state feminism": state efforts to improve women's social, political, or economic status through the establishment of women's policy machinery (Friedman 2000; Lovenduski 2005; McBride and Mazur 2010; Outshoorn and Katonola 2007; Stetson and Mazur 1995). Scholarly attention has focused on the circumstances under which state-led attempts to incorporate women's issues actually results in changes to descriptive or substantive representation. What I will argue is that the effects of policy machineries extend beyond representation: the nature of women's policy machineries

and the extent to which they are actually "feminist" send signals to female citizens about how responsive the government will likely be to their needs. These signals can influence women's political engagement and overall levels of political participation.

ARGUMENT: THE TROUBLE WITH INSTITUTIONS

While feminist scholars have rightly focused on the extent to which institutional changes can help or hinder the achievement of feminist policy outcomes, they have paid less attention to the effect of institutions like women's policy machineries on women's political participation more broadly. The policy feedback literature provides reason to believe that institutionalizing "women's issues" through the creation of bureaus, branches, offices, or ministries has effects beyond that office's relative ability to realize feminist policy goals. The establishment of women's policy machinery is a signal that the government will focus some energy on women's issues. If the office dedicated to this task is nonresponsive to women's needs or works to reinforce rather than undermine gender hierarchies, such an office may signal to women that there is little utility engaging in politics.

I argue that nonresponsive women's policy machineries have the potential to reduce women's political engagement through interpretive policy feedback effects (Campbell 2012). When women's primary experience with the government is through an agency that fails to understand or address their needs, such an experience instructs them that there is little utility in engaging with the government. Exposure to such marginalizing policies produces a segment of the population that is alienated, politically unengaged, and unlikely to find utility in participating in democratic politics. Such a pernicious effect allows for systemic disadvantage to compound over time, "reflect[ing], reproduc[ing], and magnify[ing] particular patterns of power" (Waylen 2009, 248). Ultimately, I argue that nonfeminist, nonresponsive women's policy machineries undermine women's political engagement, contributing to ongoing gender gaps in political participation.

I elaborate this argument through the case of the UNIP Women's Brigade in Northern Rhodesia/Zambia. By examining women's political engagement from the independence movement through the early years of nationhood, I argue that the Women's Brigade had a demobilizing effect, undermining women's political participation. I trace this effect

through a series of comparisons. First, I show that women were highly mobilized during the nationalist movement, indicating a high baseline level of political engagement. Second, I show that the policies associated with the Women's Brigade resulted in a sharp decline in women's political engagement relative to men's in rural areas. Finally, I show that this demobilization effect was more pronounced for rural women (whose primary access to party politics was through the Brigade) than their urban counterparts (who had more varied points of political contact).

Examining the women's branch of a Zambian political party in the 1960s may seem anachronistic to the contemporary conversations regarding feminist institutionalism, but my focus on a developing democracy is not accidental. Feminist analyses of institutions and women's political participation have tended to focus on advanced industrial democracies, on societies that generally have greater social, political, and economic opportunities for women. In many cases, the political ills that face women in developing countries are attributed to patriarchal cultural systems, leaving the institutions of such countries exempt from analysis. However, the growing study of women's movements in countries with "patriarchal cultural systems" highlights the importance of understanding the way institutions affect women's participation not only in advanced industrial democracies, but in the developing democracies under which a large portion of the world's population resides (Friedman 2000; Geisler 2004; Goetz 1997; Tripp et al. 2009). Women's experience in Zambia is by no means unique, as women across a multitude of African countries experienced similar trends postindependence: mobilization for nationalist movements, political incorporation through national women's machineries, and ultimately political marginalization or co-optation (Tripp et al. 2009). Advancing this argument through the case of the UNIP Women's Brigade is by no means the last word on the matter; rather, I hope to use this case to demonstrate the need for systematic, cross-country (and cross-temporal) analysis on how institutionalizing women's issues affects women's political participation.

THE CASE: THE UNIP WOMEN'S BRIGADE IN ZAMBIA

Part One: Late Colonialism, Independence, and the Rise of the UNIP Women's Brigade

Northern Rhodesia became an official protectorate of Great Britain in 1924. Initially a labor reserve for mines in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, prospectors found exploitable copper deposits in the territory

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shortly after it became a protectorate. Developed as an enclave economy, Northern Rhodesia had a rapidly urbanizing population as increasing numbers of laborers migrated to the urban areas of the Copperbelt and the capital of Lusaka. The colonial government relied heavily on local men for copper production. After a series of strikes in the 1950s, they recognized the need to channel dissent, and allowed union organization. These unions gave men an opportunity to negotiate formally with both the mining companies and the colonial administration, providing them a formal arena for politics. Colonial fears of instability derived from concern that men would be too "tribal" for self-rule, so they incorporated men into formal political processes, granting them low-level roles in political administration (Herbert 2002).

Colonial policy toward women, on the other hand, focused on restricting their movement and activities. The colonial economy relied heavily on women's unremunerated labor, both as wives in mining compounds and in maintaining agricultural production in the countryside. "Wives" in mining compounds performed unpaid domestic labor that lowered the mining company's operating costs: for example, it freed companies to provide workers with raw foods that women could cook in the home rather than prepared meals (Chauncey 1981, 140). However, the migration of unmarried women to urban areas threatened agricultural production, as rural women were responsible for the lion's share of crop and food production (Moore and Vaughan 1994). To keep unmarried women in the countryside and make sure that urban women were married to miners, officials banned unmarried women from towns, where they would be fined and repatriated if caught (Schuster 1979, 19–20). Targeting urban women's primary income-generating activities, they made beer brewing illegal, shut down black markets, and cracked down on "prostitution," loosely defined (Parpart 1988, 144).

Colonial policy created different political opportunity spaces for men and women, but both were active in nationalist organizing. As the nationalist movement came to a head, political participation fell into two categories: formal negotiations for independence and grassroots organization through the nascent UNIP. While the former was institutionalized and male-dominated, the latter demonstrated striking gender parity. Formal independence negotiations began among the unionized miners. Because formal employment was exclusively male, women could not take part in the official strikes or negotiations (Cooper 1996, 3). However, both women and men were highly active in grassroots nationalist organizing. Leading up to independence, women

had considerable autonomy in the operations of the Women's Brigade, the women's wing of UNIP. They elected their own members, organized tirelessly, and were occasionally sent to "the prison of imperialists" for their political activities.[1] Female UNIP organizers encouraged women to "act like men;" Regional Secretary Rosemary Lungu instructed, "We are now at a hard time that even women should turn [i]nto men. Let us show the world that women of Zambia want freedom in January … never sit down doing nothing."[2] Membership rolls in 1962 from Broken Hill, an economically important mining town, show near balance between men (10,645) and women (9,941).[3] Women were active even in remote rural areas: they helped to organize underground meetings of unionists, they hid prominent nationalist Kenneth Kaunda during his cross-country tour of political mobilization, and they brewed and sold beer illicitly to fund the nationalist movement (Poewe 1981, 206).

While the nature of their organizing differed due to men's ability to better engage in the formal political sphere, both men and women across both urban and rural settings poured energy into the campaign (Tripp et al. 2009, 30). However, the solidarity between UNIP's men and women during the independence struggle began to erode after independence, as UNIP transitioned from an independence movement to a political party. The high levels of political energy women exhibited during the nationalist movement diminished after independence with the institutionalization of the Women's Brigade. Geisler notes that, across Southern Africa, "Liberation movements tended to be more inclusive, allowing women political spaces in order to claim their energies for struggle … Political parties developed more particularistic goals, which did not represent the aspirations of all citizens and often no longer included the concerns of women" (2004, 88). This trend — women's energies harnessed for revolutionary movements or political transitions, only to be co-opted or ignored in the new regime — has been documented across numerous countries and time periods (Jaquette and Wolchik 1998; Rowbotham 1972; Tetreault 1994; Walsh 2011; Waylen 2007).

1. UNIP 5/8/1/2/3 Letter from National Secretary M. Chona to the Broken Hill Regional Secretary, November 6, 1962.
2. UNIP 5/8/1/2/15 Letter to Mama Secretary of the Shamputa Women Constituency from Women Regional Secretary Rosemery Lungu, December 16, 1963.
3. UNIP 5/8/1/2/3 Monthly Return Ending May 30, 1962; Mumbwa-Broken Hill Regional Report June 30, 1962, from Regional Secretary B. Kapupi.

As a nationalist movement, UNIP had little need for programmatic coherence beyond attaining independence and could afford to recruit supporters with disparate visions of what "independence" would actually mean. However, as a ruling party, UNIP no longer had the luxury of accommodating such incoherence and instead had to coordinate members' energies into a workable plan for national development and governance (Larmer 2011). While the preindependence Women's Brigade comprised a disparate group of women, the postindependence Brigade became ever more socially conservative, dedicated to supporting the government and reinforcing rather than challenging the social gender hierarchy (Geisler 1987, 43). The result was to squeeze out more progressive members for those that towed the socially conservative party line (Schuster 1979, 22–23). Early on, some astute members of the Brigade recognized that the party would likely sideline them after independence; for example, the Feira Constituency Women's Brigade Secretary received the following stern letter in July 1963:

> According to the facts collected by the Regional Cabinet . . . It is found out that: You went around all the branches to tell the Women to sit down and stop organizing and since May no organization has been done. You condoned with these words — Women to be used by the party as tools — women not educated and therefore they will not be recognized after independence . . . This is a serious matter . . . I must warn you very strongly that such conduct would lead you to suspension and later expulsion from the party.[4]

As more progressive women grew disaffected and left the Brigade, the remaining membership reflected an increasingly conservative ideology (Geisler 2004, 89–92).

Where women established their own nonpartisan groups outside the auspices of UNIP, Women's Brigade Director Dorothy Kapantha instructed all the Women's Regional Secretaries to incorporate "and if possible, control" these organizations within UNIP, so as to limit women's autonomous organization.[5] In a 1972 document elucidating the "Role of the Women's Brigade in Relation to the Main Body," their activities were limited to vague goals such as "to help their less fortunate sisters to improve their well-being by teaching them some little things,"

4. UNIP 5/8/1/1/10 Letter to Feira Constituency Women's Brigade Secretary from Regional Secretary H. Shamabanse, July 26, 1963.

5. UNIP 5/8/1/3/16 Memo to All Women Regional Secretaries, "The National Women's Organization of Zambia." From Director of Women's Brigade D. Kapantha, August 31, 1968.

or "promotions of Zambia identity," or "take part in the affairs of the Labour Movement . . . so as to introduce more Party Influence and control."[6] In a draft of this document, one loftier political goal — increasing women's representation in Parliament — was deleted in a hand-written edit.[7]

In addition to the political incentives to exercise tight control over party branches, the purpose of channeling women's political energy into the Brigade was to execute a vision of national development that characterized women's role as mothers and homemakers. Government discourse regarding the role of the UNIP Women's Brigade illustrates its mission of reinforcing the social gender hierarchy: Official proclamations regarding women's role in development emphasized their importance in "look[ing] after the children and homes,"[8] and to "cook and prepare good food, keep their houses in good order and be able to look after their menfolk and children."[9] Exhortations of this vision were repeated by the Women's Brigade under the leadership of Director Princess Nakatindi and Undersecretary Dorothy Kapantha. In one representative speech, Princess Nakatindi emphasized that "We, as women, have been assigned with very great responsibility by nature. Citizenship starts in the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society. It is here that the citizens of the future receive their first training, and our influence as women, therefore, becomes of particular importance."[10] Commensurate with this vision, government calls to action for women often entailed duties such as monitoring the prices of controlled goods while they conducted their household shopping.[11]

Geisler (1987; 2004) has documented the process by which the Women's Brigade transitioned from a mass organization successfully mobilizing women for the independence movement to an organization that primarily reflected the ideology of older urban women who wholeheartedly supported UNIP's gendered vision of national development. She notes that women increasing dissociated from the League, as the issues it raised were "often irrelevant to the majority of

6. UNIP 5/8/1/2/44 Letter to the Chairman of the Political Committee from Secretary for Women Affairs B.C. Kankasa, January 5, 1972.

7. Ibid.

8. National Guidance Minister of State Mishek Banda, quoted in *Times of Zambia*, April 14, 1970, "No development without your help."

9. UNIP 5/9/6 1970–1971 Tour Reports, Minutes of the Central Province Political Committee held in Serenje January 4–5, 1971.

10. UNIP 5/8/1/3/16 UNIP Regional HQ Mkushi 1965–1971, "Appeal to Women" by Princess Nakatindi, November 19, 1965.

11. For example, "Government Wants Housewife Vigilantes," *Times of Zambia*, March 18, 1966.

women" (1987, 47). For an organization mobilizing women's political energy during a nationalist struggle to be co-opted into the ruling party government after independence is hardly unique. Waylen (2007, 69) notes that moments of political transition can open political opportunity structures for women, and that these openings can close after the establishment of "party politics and conventional political activity" after the transitional moment is over. While this phenomenon has been well documented, an open question is how the establishment of women's policy machineries that undermine feminist goals — like the UNIP Women's Brigade — influence women's proclivity for political participation more broadly.

In order to understand the impact of Women's Brigade policies on Zambian women in the postindependence era, this case proceeds with a set of paired comparisons. First, it compares the experiences of rural women with rural men. During Zambia's First Republic, rural men were targeted for a number of government programs under the auspices of the First National Development Plan (FNDP), while rural women were primarily exposed to projects operated through the Women's Brigade. It demonstrates that, while both rural men and women had been politically active during the independence movement, their rates of participation diverged after independence. Men continued to make claims on the government, contacting officials to air grievances, but women tended to disengage from the political sphere. However, based on this comparison alone, it is possible that women's disengagement was simply a function of broader "return to politics" that excluded women from the political sphere. In order to isolate the effects of Women's Brigade policies, the second comparison examines the different experiences of rural women, whose experience with the government was primarily through Women's Brigade projects, and urban women, who were exposed to a broader policy environment.

Part Two: Gendered Patterns in Rural Projects and Political Participation

One pressing development problem that newly independent Zambia faced was unsustainable rural-to-urban migration (as a result of the copper mines and disproportionate economic growth in industrial areas) and an agricultural sector dominated by small-scale subsistence farmers who were unable to achieve national self-sufficiency in agricultural

production. To create a viable rural agricultural sector, the government focused on organizing (male) rural producers into cooperatives; to stabilize the rural population, the government attempted both the expansion of service provision and reestablishment of "traditional" rural family life. These policies were based on gender difference: opportunities for economic advancement targeted men through cooperative formation, loans, and access to tractors and other machinery.[12] The government offered rural women only a narrow subset of programs designed to make them more efficient as homemakers, the most prominent being cooperatives for sewing, knitting, and handicrafts.[13] The Women's Brigade instructed its members to support the party and form clubs "where women will learn to cook, sewing, and how to keep their children."[14] On the whole, these approaches emphasized women's role in the private realm of the household and limited interaction in the public or political sphere. This rationale was explicit in instructions to Women's Brigade extension workers "to assist women to improve family life and to learn and understand better health, food, and nutrition habits, as in her role as a mother she has the main responsibility for the fitness and happiness of all members of the family."[15]

One prominent exception to this general rule was the establishment of poultry cooperatives for women. Unlike the other projects slated for rural women, this one was unique in that it both contributed to household self-sufficiency and created income-generating opportunities. However, directing this project at women was an afterthought — originally for men, it was reoriented toward women in 1968 because "You will all agree it will be far healthier for the country in general if these able-bodied men devoted their time to building cooperatives, ranching enterprises, mechanical cultivations and other more rigorous activities leaving the poultry farming to our womenfolk."[16] Despite emphasizing family health over income-generating potential, the poultry cooperatives were one of the only projects that rural women were enthusiastic about.

12. NAZ, Office of National Development and Planning, "First National Development Plan," 1966, page 24.

13. UNIP (no location number) Mumbwa Women Regional Secretary 1971–73: "Mumbwa Women's Activities" Report to the Director of Women from A.R. Sinachize, Women Regional Secretary. See also Schuster (1979, 22).

14. Letter to the Regional Woman Secretary of Kasempa from Undersecretary to the Director of the Women's Brigade Dorothy Kapantha, February 2, 1966.

15. CNP 2/6/23 Department of Community Development Four Year Development Plan, undated, probably 1965.

16. UNIP 5/8/1/3/16 Memo from the Minister of Co-Operatives, Youth and Social Development, March 18, 1968.

While Women's Brigade field reports often showed that knitting and handicraft clubs had limited memberships or were completely defunct, the poultry cooperatives tended to maintain high levels of membership and perform well.[17] In Mumbwa, the Women Regional Secretary reported that they had "few women who were interested in s[e]wing," and that they would prefer poultry clubs.[18] The following year, however, a list of women's cooperatives from the same district reveals that every single one was a "knitting and sewing" cooperative, and only 8 (of 29) ever received any funding.[19] The poultry cooperatives were the only clubs that were able to maintain membership, but there were few available. After initial enthusiasm in the years after independence, according to UNIP records, women's political activity in rural areas "faded."[20]

Due to the lack of survey data, it is difficult to identify precisely how these experiences affected men and women's political participation. However, there is some circumstantial evidence as to the diverging patterns of participation of rural men and women. In Crehan's (1997, 136) study of two rural communities in the Northwestern Province in the 1980s, she notes that women were "in general relegated to the margins of public politics" and were able to speak only on issues that were directed specifically at women through the Women's Brigade. Women were thus reluctant to participate in UNIP events. While there had previously been a women's club in the area, it was long since defunct. Crehan (140) notes that "for many women [the clubs] were simply irrelevant." Nevertheless, the women's clubs were the only formal political venues that provided space for women; as a result, women were disinclined to participate at all.

In comparison, rural men continued to make claims through formal political channels in the years after independence. Particularly in more remote areas, where nationalist mobilization occurred through promises of postindependence development, Larmer (2011, 102–103) notes that where UNIP failed to meet expectations, rural dwellers expressed discontent by making demands on politicians. Macola (2006) makes a

17. UNIP 5/9/6 Report of the Tour of the Eastern Province by Under-Secretary to the Women Brigade (c.1970).

18. UNIP (no index number) Mumbwa Women Regional Secretary 1971–1973. Letter to the Secretary of the Women's Brigade from Women Regional Secretary A.R. Shinachize, July 7, 1971.

19. UNIP (no index number) Mumbwa Women Regional Secretary 1971–1973. Mumbwa Women's Activities Report to the Director of Women, to the Director of the Women's Brigade, from Women Regional Secretary A.R. Shinachize, November 9, 1972.

20. Ibid.

similar argument regarding rural discontent in Zambia's remote Luapula Province. However, these claims were made almost exclusively by men. The claimants in Macola's study were predominantly male. Anecdotally, during my own work in the UNIP archives, there were file folders full of written requests to UNIP officials over the 1960s and 1970s, almost all of which were written by men.

While admittedly circumstantial, the record suggests the following: both rural men and women were politically mobilized during the nationalist movement. After independence, women's energy was channeled into the Women's Brigade, which targeted rural women with policies and projects that reinforced the gender hierarchy and were at best "irrelevant" to rural women (Crehan 1997; Geisler 1987). Faced with such a narrow space for political participation, rural women disengaged from political activity. Alternatively, men encountered the government through myriad policies regarding cooperative development, rural credit schemes, and other such broadly desirable projects. While access to these projects did not always meet their expectations, their reaction was to continue to engage in formal political channels to air their grievances and make claims on the government. Perhaps this pattern of behavior had little to do with exposure to different sets of policies, but instead was a reflection of women's alienation from politics more broadly. In order to examine this possibility, the next section compares the experience of rural women, whose encounters with the government were primarily through the Women's Brigade, to those of urban white-collar women, who were exposed to a broader array of government policy.

Part Three: Diverging Patterns of Participation for Urban and Rural Women

The policy experience for rural women was dramatically different from that of urban women, particularly urban white-collar women. In urban areas, women were exposed both to Women's Brigade projects extolling the virtues of the modern housewife and to policies from the national government encouraging them to contribute to national development through education and white-collar work. UNIP's vision of economic development created an enormous demand for bureaucrats, civil servants, and office workers, which the undereducated Zambian population was ill-prepared to supply (Jolly 1971, 212–15). During the colonial period, many of these positions — secretaries, typists, phone

operators — had been filled by the "white wives" of colonial administrators and European businessmen, the majority of whom left the country at independence (Tordoff 1979, 5). An initial stop-gap measure to fill these positions included importing "Sunshine Girls" from Ireland, but the strong political need to fill coveted urban positions with Zambians ensured that this strategy was short-term (Sardanis 2003, 152).

Initially the government recruited Zambian men for secretarial positions, but only temporarily because (as one official noted) "I do not think it is basically a satisfying occupation for a well-educat[ed] African man whose hopes will [be] in the direction of a promotion to the executive and administrative grades and not in such field as that of, say, shorthand and typing."[21] To fill this gap, the government began heavy recruitment of young women for typing and clerical coursework.[22] Shortly after independence, the massive demand for the small pool of women who could fill these positions led one *Times* reporter to declare, "The shorthand typist is the most popular girl in Zambia — because she is hard to get …Whether she is beautiful or plain, young or in her forties makes little difference to her attraction. She is one of a diminishing group with essential skills." The growth of the economy depended in part on young women with clerical skills.

While recruiting young women was economically imperative, encouraging them to move to urban areas and work outside the home contradicted government messaging about women's primary role as mothers and homemakers, particularly since these women tended to be unmarried.[23] Secretarial work could empower women, but it also exposed them to state-sanctioned harassment for their autonomous behavior. Schuster (1979, 149) highlights the deeply confusing relationship that urban women had with the government, which promoted women as agents of development while simultaneously claiming, "The [urban] she-devil's influence would ultimately destroy not only the institution of the family, but also the economy." Concern about the moral implications of unmarried, economically independent women in urban areas manifested in preoccupation with women's chastity and sobriety and culminated in a slew of inhibiting policies

21. MCD 1/4/8 Ministry of Labour and Mines, memo dated March 21, 1963.

22. UNIP 5/8/1/3/7 Letter to Regional Secretaries from Roger Kitava for the Education Secretary, November 26, 1963; see also Z C04/1/1 Memo by JB Zulu, Permanent Secretary for National Development and Planning, "Principles of Training Establishments," January 21, 1966.

23. UNIP 5/8/1/2/41 Letter to Regional Secretaries from Administrative Secretary Peterson Ngoma, April 21, 1965.

regarding their dress, ability to move freely at night, and ability to be unaccompanied in public. By the late 1960s, the government banned women in urban areas (in Lusaka and elsewhere) from entering bars without their husbands.[24] UNIP officials dubbed this campaign a "war" on "single girls" who "roam the streets unaccompanied."[25] By 1972, it meant that any woman outside at night without a man was subject to arrest and "assailed and harassed by the government, the ruling party, the media, and ordinary male citizens posing as plainsclothes police" (Schuster 1979, 148).

In addition to women's decisions to go to bars or nightclubs — or even outside — by themselves, their adoption of western-style dress alarmed public officials. Their outrage was so strong that it even triggered legislative action: in Ndola (Copperbelt Province), the Regional Council found it necessary to pass a resolution in protest of immodest clothing, declaring that

> . . . we are not prepared to see our women black or white to be demoralized with some of these international fashions, which encourage prostitution. We stand firmly that, the Party and our people cannot stand the so-called civilization of France, therefore we are going to fight tooth and nail to see that the diabolic dresses are not entertained here. . .we are not a dumping ground for all the satanic ideas, which brings the moral[s] of our women from bad to worse.[26]

Youth members of UNIP took it upon themselves to harass or attack women who did not adhere to modest standards of dress. These attacks were more or less officially sanctioned.[27] By 1969, the National Council considered banning "miniskirts and tight pants,"[28] state-owned companies were banning miniskirts, cosmetics, and wigs,[29] and UNIP Youth tried to bully women into adherence to conservative standards of dress.[30] Because of the increasingly conservative composition of the UNIP

24. For example, UNIP 5/8/1/2/13 Circular to the Officer in Charge of the Zambia Police from Women Regional Secretary Mrs. S. J. Tembo, February 26, 1968.

25. Ministry of Home Affairs, quoted in *Times of Zambia*, April 5, 1972, "War Declared on Single Girls."

26. UNIP 11/1/36 Letter to Honoroable Secretary, Ndola from Regional Public Secretary James Phiri, July 15, 1964.

27. For example, UNIP 58/1/3/11 Letter to the National Secretary from Regional R.N. Mborona, January 15, 1966.

28. UNIP 5/8/1/3/16 Record of the National Council, Matero Welfare Hall, Lusaka, March 21, 1969.

29. "Mini-skirted Girls Banned from ZBS [Zambia Broadcasting Services]," *Times of Zambia*, February 14, 1969.

30. For example, "Wig Snatchers Spark Terror in Bars," *Times of Zambia*, February 21, 1972.

Women's Brigade, this body also participated in the social sanctioning of young professional women (Geisler 2004, 90).

As subjects of enhanced education and heavy recruitment into desirable positions in both the government and private industry, urban white-collar women occupied a place of economic privilege in the years after Zambia's independence. However, this place of economic privilege was marred by the experience of aggressive social sanctioning, as young, single, economically independent women tended to violate their proscribed social role of mother/homemaker. In response, women pushed back against government sanctioning. They ignored restrictions on dress, such as proposed bans on miniskirts,[31] and defied the government's interdictions against women in bars.[32] Urban women during the 1960s and 70s regularly engaged in protests and demonstrations against the government, staging political events over everything from food prices[33] to public service provision[34] to women's empowerment.[35] To be clear, it was not only the white-collar urban women engaging in such contentious behavior — women marketeers, housewives, and illegal beer brewers all regularly engaged in contentious actions against the government.[36] However, the pattern of women critically engaging the government in urban areas indicates a level of engagement with the formal political sphere and a willingness to make claims on the government that was absent among rural women.

The gendered policies of the UNIP government had a profound effect on the way women engaged with and participated in the political system. In rural areas, where women felt largely marginalized or neglected by the government, women disengaged in politics. Urban women responded to the combination of economically empowering and socially repressive policies by engaging in more political behavior than in other parts of the country. While access to additional opportunities outside the auspices of the Women's Brigade certainly did not make their lives "easier" as a result of the harassment and repression they experienced, they did not disengage with the political system — they pushed back.

31. "Hands Off Our Mini Skirts, Warn Girls," *Times of Zambia*, February 11, 1969.
32. "Ndola African Women Defy UNIP Plea," *Times of Zambia*, June 2, 1964.
33. For example, "Women Accuse Price Control Office," *Times of Zambia*, September 20, 1971.
34. For example, "Women March on Ministry," *Times of Zambia*, April 27, 1967.
35. For example, "Varsity Reels as Girl Power Demo Accuses Boys," *Times of Zambia*, November 20, 1969.
36. Based on 114 articles from the *Times of Zambia* between 1964 and 1972 discussing women's political acts.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Of course, women's pattern of participation may be attributable to something other than policy, and three possibilities stand out as being particularly plausible in the context of Zambian history: widespread political disillusionment, economic decline, and a highly patriarchal cultural context each provide potential explanatory power for women's declining political energy. However plausible, each of these alternatives fails to provide a comprehensive explanation for the patterns of participation outlined in the case above.

Other scholars have observed that, in the years following Zambia's independence, political disillusionment grew as the new government proved unable to meet Zambians' high expectations of development (Larmer 2011; Macola 2006; Tordoff 1977). It is also possible that political participation declined broadly with economic decline after the initial boom years following independence (Rakner, van de Walle, and Mulaisho 2001; Tordoff 1979). In either of these cases, it is possible that women's political disengagement was thus part of a broader disengagement, the result of growing disillusionment with the government and acknowledgement of the vagaries of the global economic system. If either of these were the case, one would expect lower levels of political participation generally in the face of systemwide constraints. However, as discussed in the case above, men tended to respond to "thwarted expectations" by making *more* claims on politicians (Macola 2006). Similarly, Larmer notes that President Kaunda's decision to implement the one-party state in 1972 came as the result of *rising* levels of political activity, not diminished engagement (Larmer 2011). Similarly, while political participation declined broadly *after* the establishment of the one-party state (Tordoff 1977), these explanations fail to account for the gender differences in participation trajectories prior to 1972.

Perhaps, then, the reduction in women's political engagement was the result of living in a highly patriarchal system: UNIP had mobilized women strategically during the independence movement, but the return to "politics-as-usual" also triggered a return to the status quo of politics as "men's domain" (Crehan 1997). An account invoking patriarchal culture would have to account for the different levels of political energy demonstrated by rural and urban women, but perhaps this difference might be explained by the greater social independence women had historically had in Zambia's urban areas (Chauncy 1981; Parpart 1988).

There is likely some truth to this account, and it is more difficult to falsify than the other possibilities. However, I will offer two suggestions as to why "patriarchy" is an unsatisfying explanation on its own.

Taking a macrolevel perspective, "patriarchy" offers little analytic leverage: it cannot account for variation in women's ability to overcome it. In the Zambian case, women in urban areas were subject to (possibly) more virulent manifestations of patriarchal culture than their rural counterparts, they were still often financially dependent on men, and arguably had fewer prospects for social independence because they could not fall back on subsistence agriculture in the face of economic trouble (Hansen 1984; Schuster 1979). Furthermore, "patriarchy" cannot explain the different trajectories of posttransition women's movements in other parts of East and Southern Africa, all of which historically exhibited similar forms of patriarchal culture but had a variety of outcomes (Geisler 2004; Tripp et al. 2009).

Returning to case-level analysis, invocations of "patriarchy" do not match the language used by women themselves when they explained their withdrawal from politics. Geisler (1987) noted that urban women distanced themselves from the Women's Brigade because it did not represent them even though it was their most direct line to the political sphere. Similarly, Crehan (1997, 137) noted that rural women ignored or otherwise failed to take advantage of political opportunities through the Women's Brigade, which they deemed "irrelevant," even though the Brigade was the only "formally designated space for women's voices within UNIP." In these accounts, women described their withdrawal from politics as a function of the very narrow political opportunity structure presented by the Women's Brigade, suggesting that the organization's attempts to mobilize women actually resulted in their demobilization.

LESSONS FROM ZAMBIA

The UNIP Women's Brigade holds important lessons for institutional scholars even 50 years later. It is important to consider the extent to which institutions facilitate women's representation and allow the advancement of feminist agendas, but institutions can also influence political engagement and participation. In order to move toward a political sphere in which both men and women have equal access to power and voice, women must be as willing to engage the political

system as men. The extent to which women engage in quotidian politics depends heavily on the policy environment they encounter: different policy configurations send dramatically different messages about the utility of ongoing participation in a political system. The case of the UNIP Women's Brigade in Zambia suggests that the marginalizing incorporation of women into government offices may have a demobilizing effect. Such an effect is particularly stark in light of the high levels of women's mobilization in the face of colonial repression and the political energy they demonstrated in the face of urban harassment.

While this case can only serve as fodder for theory generation rather than provide definitive evidence, it suggests the importance of understanding more systematically how various institutional configurations affect women's likelihood of engaging in politics. The sort of repression that women in 1960s Zambia experienced is not terribly common in advanced western industrial democracies, but it still occurs in many other developing democracies. At the very least, the pattern in Zambia was repeated across numerous other African countries in postindependence years, and many African countries have created national machineries to deal with gender issues. Tripp et al. (2009, 182) note that such national machineries continue to coopt women's movements and that they have rarely been effective at "initiating, coordinating, [or] enforcing gender policy." Beyond Africa, women across a broad spectrum of democracies have been subject to a swath of state attempts to institutionalize women's issues (Friedman 2000; True 2003). Under what circumstances do these institutions dampen women's political interest?

Finding the formula for advancing women's political access and representation is an exceptionally important institutional goal. However, it is also essential to understand how institutional arrangements and related policy outcomes affect mass participation. Governments that fail to create institutions that achieve feminist standards for progressive policy creation are not simply falling short of the goals of the feminist elite; if women feel that government attempts to redress gender inequality dramatically miss the mark, they may be less likely to engage with the political system altogether, deepening political imbalances. Understanding such ground-level effects is essential for understanding the broader impact of institutional change.

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