

Bridge over Troubled Water: Same-Gender Substantive Representation in 49 Subnational Ugandan Governments*

SangEun Kim[†] and Kristin Michelitch[‡]

July 26, 2019

Abstract

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1 Introduction

Tremendous scholarly interest in politician gender and substantive representation has followed the rapid expansion in the number of female politicians worldwide (Wängnerud 2009). Indeed, the percentage of seats in national and regional legislative bodies held by women has increased dramatically from 10% to 24% in the last two decades (Dahlerup 2006; IPU 2018; Wängnerud 2009), in part due to the widespread adoption of various forms of affirmative action (Bush 2011; Krook 2009).¹ This rise in female office holders has galvanized hope that they will represent female citizens, whose interests have been traditionally marginalized from the public sphere (Mansbridge 1999; Young 2000).

In this study, we leverage rich data to explore whether and why politicians substantively represent same-gender citizens across 49 subnational (district) legislatures in Uganda, where one-third of first-past-the-post constituency seats are reserved for women. We investigate two types of substantive representation in legislative activity using plenary session meeting minutes: (a) *women's welfare*, or issues researchers define as pertaining specifically (or disproportionately) to women's wellbeing (e.g., prenatal care, domestic violence)² and (b) *men versus women's policy priorities*, or improvement in certain policy domains (e.g., health, education) over others derived from a citizen public opinion. We argue that theoretical mechanisms undergirding same-gender substantive representation apply more strongly to women's welfare than same-gender policy priorities, largely following from the fact that theory was largely derived around the former.

We first establish that gender gaps in citizens' policy priorities exist using an original citizen survey of over 6,000 respondents from 20 districts.³ Identifying policies disproportionately prioritized by female versus male citizens is a precursor condition to question whether different policies are disproportionately promoted by same-gender politicians. Four vital public service delivery categories are the most salient: roads/transport, water, health, and education. No gender gaps exist in health and education, while women citizens disproportionately prioritize water (significantly, by 5.6 percentage points), and men roads/transport (significantly, by 8.9 percentage points). These results dovetail cross-

¹A total of 49 countries have adopted affirmative action for women, 23 with reserved seats and 26 with candidate quotas (International IDEA).

²We thank X for suggesting this term. Some scholars denote this concept as "women's interests" or "women's issues" — however, readers found these terms confusing alongside the term "policy priorities." Further, some national-level studies refer to "women's empowerment," connoting the term with legal rights, which largely apply to national-level policy. Celis *et al.* (2008) and Young (2000) discuss different concepts of substantive representation.

³Data used in this study were collected as part of a larger project including different coauthors — see Grossman & Michelitch (2018).

national findings in sub-Saharan Africa: while it is traditionally women's work to walk often great distances to fill up jerry cans of water from public sources, men disproportionately use roads for travel and transport of goods (e.g., Gottlieb *et al.* (2017)).

By collecting hard copies, scanning, and hand-coding plenary session meeting minutes, we examine politicians' legislative activity. Since only 1% of women are elected to open-gender seats in the sample, we compare legislative activity between reserved-seat female politicians ("RS-female") and open-seat male politicians.⁴ RS-female politicians are significantly more likely to promote women's welfare (by 3 percentage points), but overall, extremely little attention is focused here. Regarding same-gender policy priorities, male politicians are significantly more likely than RS-female to take action in men's priority — roads/transport (by 79.7 percentage points). However, RS-female politicians were significantly less likely than males to advance female citizen's priority — water (by 19.9 percentage points).⁵ Interestingly, and troublingly, legislative activity in women's priority area of water was overall much lower for both types of politicians than citizens' other three high-salience public services and many lower salience policy domains.

We examine potential theoretically-derived reasons why RS-female politicians, and politicians in general, are not better representing female citizens' key policy priority of water. We leverage experimental and observational data collected from politician and citizen surveys, which have over 90% response rates. First, female citizens' policy priorities may be neglected due to differences in accountability pressures, whether rooted in (i) implicit bias against the importance of addressing women's stated priorities, or (ii) greater accountability pressures by male versus female citizens, that may be targeted at male versus RS-female politicians.

To investigate whether implicit bias underprivileges female priorities, we use a unique experiment conducted with politicians in 20 subnational governments to examine whether politicians are more responsive to male versus female citizens' voiced policy priorities. Politicians hear a request for improvements in health clinics and a request for improvements in schools and allocate a fixed (hypothetical) budget between the two. By randomly assigning the voice of the citizens for health and education as male or female, we isolate whether politicians' budget allocations favor men, favor same-gender citizens, or exhibit no gender bias in "gender neutral" policy domains. The data reveal no gender bias.

⁴This distinction is important: electoral institutions, alongside societal gender norms for behavior and gender disparities in background characteristics, jointly affect the types of women and men who seek and ultimately win elections, and their behavior once in office. Importantly, both male and female citizens vote for both politicians and job duty mandate for both types of politicians is the same - to represent all citizens.

⁵Further, higher performing politicians are no better at substantive representation, and results are not driven by committee memberships.

Citizen survey data reveals which citizens exert more accountability pressures and which politicians disproportionately receive such pressures. Male citizens disproportionately engage in politics generally (in voter turnout, publicly vocalizing viewpoints by contacting politicians and media outlets, and holding knowledge to name and evaluate politicians). Furthermore, such accountability pressures are disproportionately directed at male rather than RS-female politicians, and this accountability bias towards male politicians is stronger among male citizens.

A second explanation may emanate from a high degree of overlap in male politicians' and citizens' policy priorities, but weak overlap in RS-female politicians' and citizens' policy priorities. Interestingly, politicians, both male and RS-female, underprioritize water compared to same-gender citizens — whereby RS-female politicians are less congruent with their same-gender counterparts (by 22.9 percentage points) than male politicians (by 19.8 percentage points). By contrast, male politicians are congruent with same-gender citizens in roads/transport, while RS-females overprioritize roads/transport (by 6.1 percentage points).

A final possibility is that the nature of the public delivery sector affects its representation (Harding 2015). Water per se may be more costly with lower benefit to represent. Water is a fairly technical policy sector compared to the other major sectors, and thus perhaps challenging to understand and champion. Meanwhile, electoral benefits on delivering in other sectors may be greater because they are more visible and/or affect a greater swath of citizens (e.g., fixing potholes, lowering teacher absenteeism, increasing medicine availability), while cleanliness of water is less visible and the cost of long walks and waits to fill jerry cans is born by (typically lower status) women.

In sum, this study finds that female politicians are more likely to promote *women's welfare*, while simultaneously, substantive representation of *same-gender policy priorities* may be eclipsed for women by accountability mechanisms, politicians' own policy priorities, or the appeal of representing certain sectors per se. The study data thus supports existing theory of same-gender substantive representation that female politicians tend to promote women's welfare in word and deed more than male counterparts (e.g., Bauer & Britton (2006); Clayton *et al.* (2017); Franceschet & Piscopo (2008)). However, the study data underscores that it is less clear that theories of same-gender substantive representation hold for the promotion of same-gender citizens' policy priorities, which has received far less attention and shown more mixed evidence, especially in terms of politician behaviors (e.g., Schwindt-Bayer (2006); Wängnerud (2000)) rather than their attitudes (e.g., Clayton *et al.* (2019)). This study joins Dingler *et al.* (2019) in underscoring the idea that politicians

may represent the gender that exerts more accountability pressure on office holders — while in Europe this may be women, in Uganda (and perhaps other contexts with lower gender equality) this is men. Incongruity between same-gender politicians' and citizens' own expressed policy priorities may also play a role as our study data suggests. However, multiparty democracy is fairly new in Uganda and as Clayton *et al.* (2019) point out, such congruence may strengthen with increasing democratization. Finally, some policy domains might simply be more costly with less benefit, per se, versus other domains (Harding 2015), and such domains, here water, may be women's priority area.⁶

Finally, our study advances on existing studies by collecting a wide range of data for a more holistic study - a feat made possible in part by examining the subnational (rather than national) level, where access to politicians is extremely challenging, but possible.⁷ First, this study includes both women's welfare and same-gender policy priorities — two distinct types of substantive representation typically studied separately, making it difficult to ascertain whether they occur simultaneously. Second, this study includes both politicians' expressed priorities and their behaviors, also typically studied separately. Franceschet & Piscopo (2008) points out that both are important because politicians' behavior may not be indicative of personal priorities, and vice versa. Finally, this study is able to examine theoretical mechanisms systematically with quantitative data. Researchers often face trade-offs in national-level work between taking an in-depth qualitative approach by gaining access to individual politicians and documenting their successes and failures in particular issue areas (e.g., Ahikire (2003); Tamale (1999); Tripp (2000)) versus engaging in quantitative study of one or more entire legislatures systematically with limited evidence on theoretical mechanisms (e.g., Clayton *et al.* (2017)).⁸

2 Theoretical Framework

Whether descriptive representation of a politically-marginalized group translates to the group's substantive representation is a major empirical question of normative importance (Celis *et al.* 2008).⁹ A large empirical literature, both qualitative and quantitative,

⁶In more party-centric parliamentary systems of Europe, parties may be paramount forces dominating politicians' focus (Wängnerud 2000).

⁷We credit a very positive long-term relationship built between the researchers, donors, and Ugandan NGO partners.

⁸While subnational levels have been widely examined in the USA, this level often still tends to be difficult in terms of conducting surveys with high response rates to gauge theoretical mechanisms.

⁹Pitkin (1967) defines descriptive representation as the representation of groups by public officials who share salient ascriptive characteristics. Substantive representation of a marginalized group is achieved

has arisen studying whether politicians from historically-marginalized groups are more likely to represent the interests and priorities of constituents sharing their ascriptive characteristics, compared to politicians from historically-advantaged groups (Kroeber 2018). In particular, due to the recent and rapid global rise of women to political office, many scholars have focused on whether female office holders, compared to male counterparts, substantively represent female constituents in diverse contexts (Wängnerud 2009).

We outline the two main conceptual types of same-gender substantive representation examined in this study — *women’s welfare* and *same-gender policy priorities*. Subsequently, we discuss theories undergirding same-gender substantive representation, which have mostly been developed with regards to women’s welfare, as well as theories challenging these notions. Due to our study’s context, we focus the theoretical discussion on legislative activity among legislators elected by citizens to represent geographic constituencies.

2.1 Concepts: Women’s Welfare and Same-Gender Policy Priorities

The ways that substantive representation has been conceptualized and measured to examine same-gender substantive representation has taken a plethora of forms in the literature (Celis *et al.* 2008; Kroeber 2018). Scholars have typically studied these concepts of substantive representation separately. Scholars’ main approach is to examine whether female versus male politicians disproportionately promote *women’s welfare*,¹⁰ defined as actions pertaining specifically (or disproportionately) to women’s wellbeing.¹¹ In this approach, scholars typically define a list of context-specific policy issues related to women’s welfare (e.g., prenatal care, domestic violence, abortion) and examine whether female politicians promote these issues more than male counterparts.¹²

A second approach determines whether politicians are more likely to champion same-gender citizens’ *policy priorities*. Here, researchers start by examining citizens’ policy priorities in public opinion data and identifying any particular policy domains disproportionately prioritized by one gender, on average (e.g., one gender prioritizes health care, while the other prioritizes education). In high-income advanced democracies with ideo-

when politicians take steps to empower or improve the livelihoods of the group.

¹⁰See footnote 2 on terminology.

¹¹Such studies include Miller (2008); Swers (2002) on the United States congress; Taylor-Robinson & Heath (2003) on the Honduran parliament; Franceschet & Piscopo (2008) on the Argentine congress, and Clayton *et al.* (2017) on the Ugandan parliament.

¹²Politicians could discuss women’s welfare in relation to an existing issue on the docket, or bring up women’s welfare as an issue in and of itself. For example, a politician could promote prenatal care in the context of a larger debate about healthcare. Alternatively, a politician could bring up as a new issue women’s legal abilities to divorce or seek recourse from domestic violence as an important right.

logical politics, scholars have examined congruence in left-right placement between elites and voters of the same gender (e.g., Dingler *et al.* (2019)). In low-income new democracies, where politics revolves around actions in different policy domains, typically public service delivery domains (e.g., health, education), scholars examine congruence in policy domains prioritized by same-gender citizens and their elected representatives (e.g., Chattopadhyay & Duflo (2004); Clayton *et al.* (2019)).

Scholars have undertaken a multitude of measurement strategies to examine substantive representation by elected representatives (see review in (Kroeber 2018)). Some have focused on attitudinal data from surveys with politicians (e.g., Clayton *et al.* (2019)), while others have focused on behaviors in the legislature such as voting (e.g., Vega & Firestone (1995)), bill sponsorship (e.g., Franceschet & Piscopo (2008)), committee membership (e.g., Bolzendahl (2014); Thomas (1994); Wängnerud (2009)), and speeches/remarks (e.g., Clayton *et al.* (2017)). The bulk of past studies, by and large focused on advanced democracies, generally finds evidence that female politicians are more likely to advocate for women (see review in Wängnerud (2009)). However, some studies find that female politicians work no harder on behalf of women (e.g., Bratton & Ray (2002); Htun & Weldon (2012)).

2.2 Theories Undergirding Same-Gender Substantive Representation

Scholars propose several straightforward reasons for same-gender substantive representation. First, politicians may better embody their own gender's needs either because they are that gender themselves or they have increased amount of informative contact with same-gender citizens (Chattopadhyay & Duflo 2004; Pettigrew 1998). Second, politicians may intrinsically care more about their own gender constituents due to in-group bias (Mansbridge 1999). Relatedly, and perhaps more so when elected via affirmative action, politicians from historically-underrepresented groups — here women — may feel a stronger mandate to represent constituents from their group, even if this may be implicit rather than explicitly defined in the law (Franceschet & Piscopo 2008).¹³ As a response, it is possible that politicians from historically-*advantaged* groups — here men — may further

¹³Even though the legal mandate of officials elected through affirmative action is typically to represent *all* citizens, the discourse around the enactment of affirmative action often revolves around the idea that it is needed so that elected representatives from historically marginalized groups would be in a position to improve the welfare of members of their group (Franceschet & Piscopo 2008). Further, Bolzendahl (2014) relates that women may be ghettoized by parties into committee assignments that relate to women's interests as a result of such an implied mandate and/or gender bias.

advance the interests of their ingroup as a backlash.¹⁴

These theoretical mechanisms undergirding same-gender substantive representation, in our view, apply more strongly to women's welfare than same-gender policy priorities, largely following from the fact that theory was largely derived around the former. Importantly, advancing women's welfare is explicit in its orientation to promote women constituents, and often potentially (perceived as) null sum visavis men constituents. It is straightforward why scholars proposed that women more than men politicians may embody women or hold intrinsic motivations or mandate feelings with regards to women's welfare issues (e.g., domestic violence, prenatal care), while men politicians may backlash.

On the other hand, same-gender policy priorities are policy domains (e.g., education over health, more over less social welfare) that are prioritized to some degree by all citizens, but disproportionately so by one gender (i.e., not exclusive to one gender or null-sum between the genders). However, politicians' personal policy priorities may not embody their same gender citizens, but be misaligned, for example, because politicians are not drawn from a representative citizen sample — they tend to have higher socioeconomic status (Clayton *et al.* 2019). Further, even if motivated to advance their own gender's policy priorities, politicians might lack representative public opinion data or other representative contact with citizens to know aggregate gender disparities in citizens' policy priorities. Finally, even if aware of such gender disparities in citizens' policy priorities, politicians may not perceive that advancing same gender policy priority as advancing the substantive representation of one gender over another, given that both genders may be seen to generally benefit from attention to any policy domain.

2.3 Theories Questioning Same-Gender Substantive Representation

Other theories underscore important reasons why politicians may not disproportionately substantively represent same-gender citizens, but instead show no difference in their attention to policy by gender. First, politicians hold strategic accountability considerations to voters, especially those voters that hold them accountable. If men and women hold politicians accountable at equal rates, no bias in substantive representation may exist,

¹⁴Such officials may view politicians elected through affirmative action as unfairly advancing the preferences, interests and priorities of the historically marginalized group, at the expense of their own group (Clayton 2015; Cowell-Meyers & Langbein 2009). Such backlash may also stem from status discontent; i.e., the idea that historically advantaged group member may feel threatened when members of historically-marginalized groups advance (Haider-Markel 2007).

or, where one gender engages more, politicians could cater to that gender. For example, Dingler *et al.* (2019) find in a cross-national study of Europe that women are more participatory and women's substantive representation is higher.

However, an additional wrinkle is that men and women citizens could differentially direct accountability pressure toward male versus female politicians, perhaps their same-gender politician (e.g., because they feel more comfortable engaging with a same-gender politician) (Chattopadhyay & Duflo 2004; Costa & Schaffner 2018), leading to same-gender substantive representation. This latter possibility may be more likely with same-gender policy priorities than women's welfare because women's welfare is typically very low salience for citizens (Clayton *et al.* 2019; Gottlieb *et al.* 2017).

Second, politicians of both genders could disproportionately substantively represent male citizens, the historically advantaged group (Costa 2017). Politicians may hold internalized patriarchal norms that men's political concerns are more important (Cialdini & Goldstein 2004; Lukes 1974), leading politicians to be implicitly biased towards male citizens' policy priorities. Further, when female politicians substantively represent women, they could face explicit discrimination from male politicians or a masculinized working environment, and become deterred from legislative activity in such areas (Cowell-Meyers & Langbein 2009; Lovenduski 2005).¹⁵ Female politicians may decide to deliberately shun activity perceived to substantively represent female citizens, especially explicit women's welfare issues, in order to be taken "more seriously" and avoid the stigma that they are in power solely for addressing "niche topics" (Franceschet & Piscopo 2008). Instead, they may engage in activities focused on what male politicians have already deemed important.

Finally, even if politicians pursue the interests of an identity group, scholars have challenged the basic notion that office holders necessarily feel more personally responsible to substantively represent same-gender citizens (e.g., Celis *et al.* (2008)). People hold multiple intersectional identities (e.g., religious, class, ethnic). Gender may not be politicians' most salient identity.

¹⁵Women may be marginalized in mixed-gender discussions, such as being disproportionately interrupted, not recognized to speak, or not considered important (Ahikire 2003; Clayton *et al.* 2014; Karpowitz *et al.* 2012; Kathlene 1994).

3 Study Context

This study examines substantive representation in legislative activity across 49 subnational governments in Uganda, a low-income, electoral authoritarian regime with affirmative action for women in political office. The National Resistance Movement (NRM) took power after deposing long-time dictator Idi Amin in 1986. Until 2006, parties were banned: citizens voted to elect NRM representatives to national and subnational government in first-past-the-post elections.¹⁶ In 2006, Uganda implemented a wholesale electoral institution reform, introducing multipartyism and reserving 1/3 of the seats in parliament and subnational governments (“district councils” or “LC5s”) for women.¹⁷ To achieve this goal, so-called “special woman constituencies,” in which only female candidates can compete, were overlaid on top of “regular” constituencies. Thus, at the subnational level, special woman constituencies encompass between one and three regular constituencies (“subcounties”), depending on population size. Thus, Ugandans are represented by two elected politicians: an (almost always male) “regular councilor” and a (female) “special woman councilor,” who may represent up to two additional subcounties. Elections are concurrent for both types of politicians, where men and women citizens vote for both, and they do not have different formal job duties or mandates for representation.

District governments, of which there are 112 in Uganda, are comprised of a legislature (“district council”) and bureaucratic offices staffed by professional civil servants (see Raffler (2017) for more detail). As stipulated in the Local Government Act (1997), elected representatives (“district councilors”) develop annual budgets and work-plans for public services delivery (e.g., education, health, water, roads/transport, agriculture) together with the civil servants, and ultimately vote and approve the budget and plan for implementation. These politicians are further vested with the power to make laws (unless they conflict with the constitution), regulate and monitor the delivery of public services, formulate comprehensive development plans based on local priorities, supervise the district bureaucracy, participate in lower local government, and have regular contact with the electorate. In this study, we focus on legislative activities that occur in plenary sessions, which occur multiple times per year.¹⁸

¹⁶Prior to 2006, the NRM had begun promoting policies designed to increase the share women in the legislatures at the national and subnational levels - Uganda was one of the first countries in the Africa to introduce formal affirmative action for elected female representatives in 1989 (see Tripp (2006) and Goetz & Hassim (2003) for more detail).

¹⁷Uganda has three local government tiers: district (LC5), subcounty (LC3), and village (LC1); we focus on the highest level of subnational government – the district.

¹⁸See Supplementary Information (SI) C.1 Figure 4 for the average number of plenary sessions per year by district.

In plenary sessions, politicians, led by a chairperson pass motions/bills, deliver presentations, and make remarks.¹⁹ They are further active in committees responsible for different domains of public service delivery (e.g., health committee, water committee). As opposed to national level parliaments (or other larger bodies such as US-States), sub-national legislatures in this context do not have a hierarchal system where some senior or important politicians act as “front-benchers” while others are “back-benchers,” which is likely to affect legislative activities (e.g., Wang (2014)).

The National Resistance Movement (NRM) still maintains a tight control of the national executive and the legislature. However, opposition has gained much more ground at the subnational level. In the study area, described below, 70% of politicians caucus with the NRM, though the share of NRM politicians varies across districts, from as low as 23% in Lira to 95% in Bukwo.

4 Research Design

As part of a larger project involving one of the coauthors to examine politician behavior, 50 subnational (‘district’ or LC5) governments (depicted in Figure 1) were selected to be broadly representative out of Uganda’s possible 112 subnational governments (Grossman & Michelitch 2018). To examine the extent of substantive representation of male and female citizens, we use three different sources of originally collected data: plenary session meeting minutes, multiple politicians surveys, and a citizen survey. Because one district (Nebbi) refused to make public its records, our sample includes 49 subnational governments.

4.1 Data

Plenary Session Meeting Minutes: We use meeting minutes to measure legislative activity by policy domain and whether it included any efforts regarding women. Culling such records involved physical travel to each district to obtain and electronically scan hard copies for the most recently completed electoral term between the second and third multiparty elections (2011 to 2016).

A larger team of local research assistants then hand-coded the meeting minutes for

¹⁹The chairperson is elected separately and concurrently to lead the legislature by all citizens in the district. Additionally, one youth and one disabled representative are chosen by specialized constituencies. Because of their unique role, these other types of politicians are not included in this study.

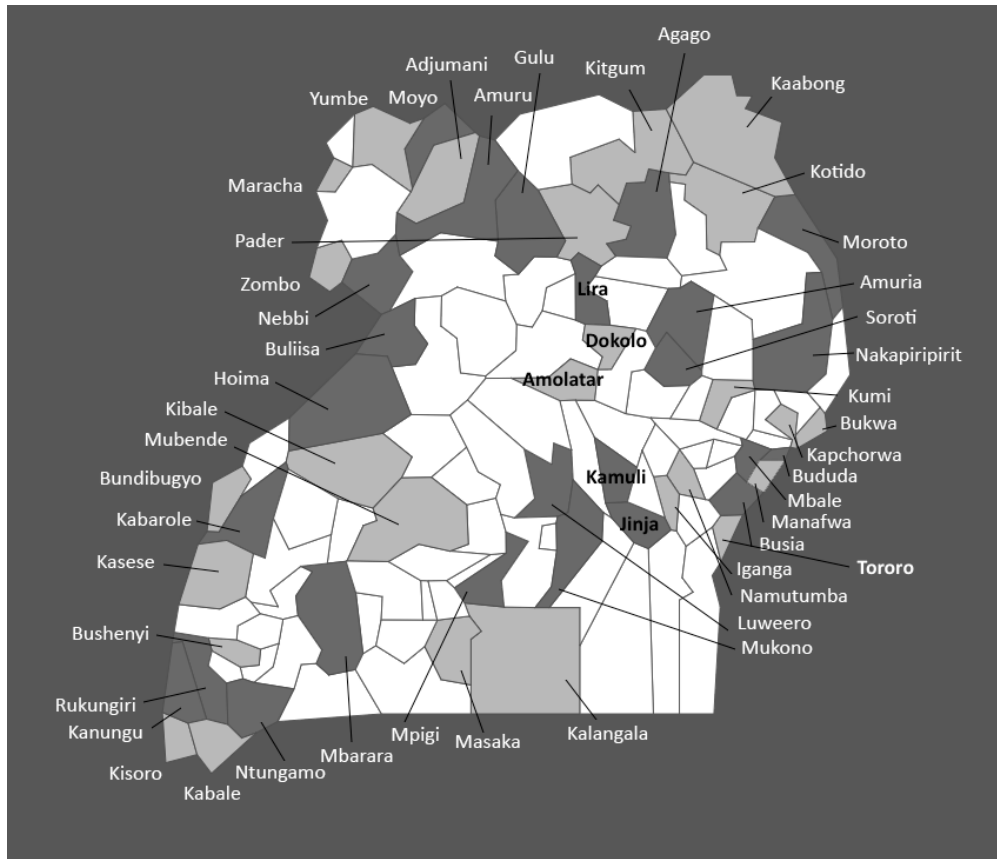


Figure 1: Study Area

legislative actions. First, each action was coded for the politician responsible, the type of action (passing a motion/bill, making a formal presentation, or making a remark), and any policy domains addressed by the action (e.g., health, education, etc). Second, each action was coded as to whether the action included any advocacy for “women’s welfare” — any rhetoric advancing women. A single action may include multiple sectors and women’s welfare (e.g., a remark about women’s prenatal care would be counted as having made a remark about health policy domain as well as a women’s welfare remark). See Supplemental Information (SI) A.1 for detail.

We sum all actions into a single variable capturing the total number of actions taken by a politician in each policy domain as well as the total number of actions advancing women’s welfare. Because the number of meetings per district per year is somewhat variable across districts, it is necessary to normalize this total by the number of district meetings in a politician’s district. For each politician, we thus compute the average number of actions taken in a plenary meeting for each policy domain, as well as women’s welfare.

Politician Surveys: We leverage several surveys of politicians in the study area that we use for supportive evidence. We primarily leverage a survey at the end of the electoral term in summer 2015 with 1,131 politicians in 50 districts (49 of which appear in this study). In 20 of these districts with 396 politicians, we conducted two earlier surveys in August-November 2012 and between June and August 2015. We have over 90% response rates in these surveys. For more detail, see SI A.2.

Citizen Survey: we leverage a survey of 6,123 citizens, enumerated between September 2012 and March 2013. Respondents were selected using a multi-stage random sampling procedure of adult constituents in 20 subnational governments within the study area. This survey allows us to assess citizens' political attitudes and knowledge, most importantly, whether gender gaps exist in policy priorities at the citizen level. For more detail, see SI A.3.

4.2 Estimation and Hypotheses

To examine whether politicians better substantively represent same-gender citizens' policy priorities, we first establish a necessary precondition — that policy domains exist that are disproportionately prioritized by male or female citizens (Phillips 1995). Next, we examine whether RS-female politicians take more actions in domains prioritized disproportionately by female citizens, and whether male politicians take more actions in domains prioritized disproportionately by male citizens.²⁰ Further, we examine whether RS-female politicians are disproportionately likely to take actions regarding women's welfare. Following most studies, our hypotheses are directional (i.e., RS-female versus men taking more or less actions) rather than point predictions (i.e., requiring the exact gender gap in policy prioritization to be mirrored in politician activities).

Given that we test for differences between RS-female and male politicians (or male and female citizens) across a number of policy domains, we follow Gottlieb *et al.* (2017) by simply using a seemingly unrelated regressions framework unless otherwise indicated. Specifically, we regress average actions per plenary session in each policy domain on an RS-female indicator and district fixed effects.

²⁰Because extremely few women are elected to open seats, we cannot unfortunately consider them as a distinct category, and drop them from the analysis.

4.3 Gender Gaps in Citizen Policy Priorities

If male and female constituents overlap in their policy priorities, then there would be no divergent policy preferences for female and male politicians to possibly champion to better substantively represent same-gender citizens (Phillips 1995). Thus, our investigation depends on detecting at least one significant policy domain where men and women have divergent priorities. In the citizen survey, respondents were asked the same question used in the Afrobarometer and other large scale public opinion surveys for assessing policy priorities: *What, in your opinion, are the most important problems facing [this sub-county] that the [district] government should address this term (2011-2016)?* We construct a binary variable for each policy domain, which is equal to one if mentioned as one of a respondent’s three top priorities. We additionally conduct robustness checks for all analysis using respondents’ single highest priority. Table 1 depicts the distribution of responses by policy domain. Four policy domains stand out as the most salient: roads/transport mentioned at 65.3%, water at 59.9%, health at 58.9%, and education at 48.3%.²¹

	Citizen (unit %)	
	Top Three Priorities	First Priority
Roads/Transport	65.3	30.0
Water	59.9	28.5
Health	58.9	14.8
Education	48.3	9.5
Poverty	18.7	7.2
Agriculture	11.3	2.9
Economy	8.2	2.2
Violence	5.4	2.4
Governance	4.0	1.9
Women’s Welfare	0.3	0.1
Other	5.6	0.6
Observations	5835	5803

Table 1: Citizens’ Policy Priorities

Do meaningful gender gaps exist in policy prioritization among citizens? In Figure 2, the top panel reports predicted probabilities of prioritizing a policy domain by gender, and the bottom panel depicts the gender gap - the marginal effect of being female on

²¹In Gottlieb *et al.* (2017)’s cross-national analysis of Afrobarometer data which regards national-level priorities, the top domains were economy, poverty, infrastructure (roads/transport), and health. Citizens are likely to name different policy priorities for national versus local government based on differing mandates across the two levels. While national government steers the economy, subnational government administers public services.

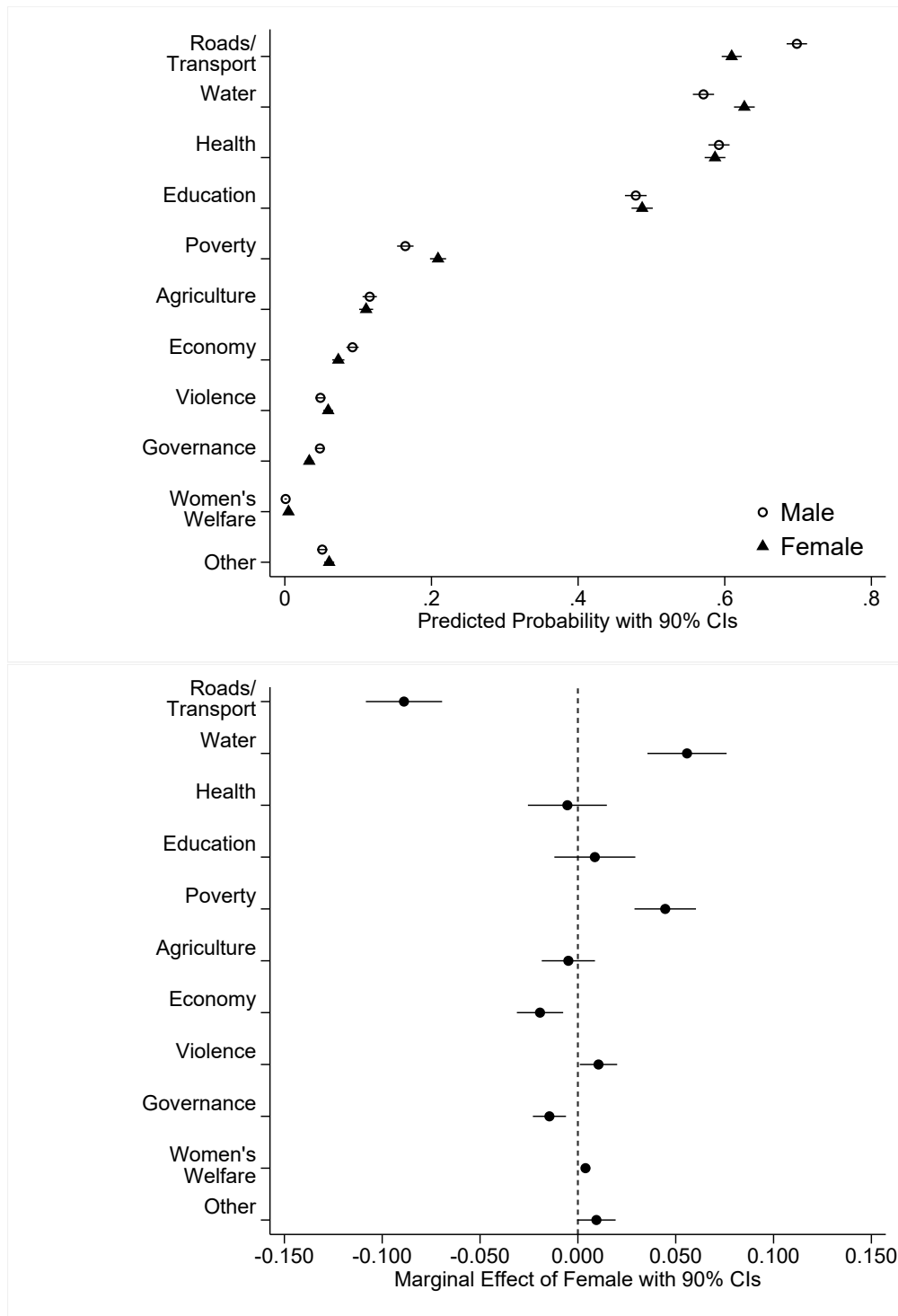


Figure 2: Gender Gaps in Policy Priorities Among Citizens

prioritizing the policy domain (see SI B.1 for regression estimates).²² Men's top overall priority is roads/transport, followed by health, water, and education. Women's top over-

²²These results are robust to taking only the first priorities mentioned by citizens (see SI B.2).

all priority is water, followed by roads/transport, health, and education. While levels of prioritization of health and education are almost identical across male and female citizens, male citizens are significantly more likely to prioritize roads/transport — by 8.9 percentage points, and women citizens are more likely to prioritize water — by 5.6 percentage points. These results are consistent with broader findings in the literature of gender gaps in policy priorities across sub-Saharan Africa (Gottlieb *et al.* 2017). This result resonates with a qualitative understanding of the gendered division of labor in this context: traditionally men are more likely to utilize roads/transport as well as be employed in the sector maintenance, and women fetch water, sometimes walking a great distance.

Turning to the lower salience categories, we see that no significant difference exists in the area of agriculture, while other policy domains reveal small disparities. Male citizens tend to prioritize the economy (by 1.9 percentage points) and governance (by 1.5 percentage points). Female citizens tend to prioritize poverty (by 4.5 percentage points), violence (by 1.1 percentage points), and women’s welfare (by 0.4 percentage points).

In the remainder of the investigation in the main text, we focus on politicians’ substantive representation in high salience policy domains in which gender gaps in citizen priority exists — water (women’s priority) and roads/transport (men’s priority), as well as women’s welfare. Although women’s welfare is a low salience policy domain for citizens, investigating whether politicians promote women’s welfare is an important form of substantive representation identified in the literature. The same analysis can be found with the low salience categories in SI C.2.

5 Do Politicians Champion Same-Gender Citizens’ Policy Priorities in Legislative Activities?

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for legislative activity. The first three columns depict the average number of actions per plenary session politicians take in each domain in the pooled sample, men only, and RS-female only. Readers may also be interested in the proportion of activities devoted to each policy domain. The last three columns depict the proportion of legislative activity devoted to policy domains within the pooled sample, within males only, and within RS-female only. Examining column one and four (the pooled sample), of the four most salient categories for citizens, roads/transport receives the most overall attention - politicians average around 1 action per plenary session, which take up about 17% of plenary session actions, on average. Education and health

have around .85 and .46 actions per session on average, 13% and 11% of plenary session actions, on average. Water sees an average of 0.19 actions per session, comprising 3% of actions. Finally, women’s welfare has about 0.04 actions per plenary on average, which is less than 1% of actions. Of course, actions on the budget are the most frequent, reflective of the importance and procedures related to passing the budget.

	Avg. Number of Actions			Proportion of Actions		
	Pooled	Male	RS-female	Within Pooled	Within Male	Within RS-female
Budget	2.1584	1.6586	0.4997	0.3939	0.3856	0.3764
Roads/Transport	0.9651	0.7510	0.2142	0.1716	0.1776	0.1945
Education	0.8537	0.6220	0.2318	0.1322	0.1242	0.1556
Health	0.4638	0.4638	0.1730	0.1105	0.1122	0.1085
Agriculture	0.2967	0.2330	0.0637	0.0552	0.0561	0.0506
Security	0.2265	0.1788	0.0476	0.0374	0.0429	0.0302
Disputes	0.2648	0.2194	0.0454	0.0408	0.0445	0.0263
Water	0.1934	0.1604	0.0330	0.0322	0.0351	0.0225
Culture	0.0476	0.0346	0.0130	0.0073	0.0069	0.0073
Electricity	0.0332	0.0259	0.0073	0.0064	0.0072	0.0036
Women’s Welfare	0.0377	0.0161	0.0216	0.0071	0.0032	0.0193
Sports	0.0357	0.0281	0.0076	0.0054	0.0044	0.0051
Observations	979	600	379	979	600	379

Notes: The left three columns report the average number of actions per plenary session for the pooled sample, for male alone, and for RS-female alone. The right three columns report the proportion of actions taken on average in each domain within the pooled sample, within male only, and within RS-female only.

Table 2: Actions Taken in Plenary Sessions

We now turn to our main analyses: do politicians engage in same-gender substantive representation, with males disproportionately advancing roads/transport, and RS-females disproportionately advancing water and/or women’s welfare? Figure 3 depicts the gender gaps in politicians’ actions in the legislature in roads/transport, water, and women’s welfare. Negative marginal effects indicate that male politicians take more actions, and positive marginal effects indicate that female politicians take more actions (see regression tables in SI C.2).²³ The figure reveals that male politicians are more likely to take legislative actions in the policy domain of roads/transport - by 79.7 percentage points - versus RS-female politicians. This result indicates that male politicians are more strongly substantively representing the policy domain disproportionately prioritized by male citizens. Indeed, other than the budget, male politicians spend the largest propor-

²³Results are robust to controlling for constituency population size and limiting the analysis to RS-female politicians representing only a single sub-county (see SI C.3).

tion of their activities on roads/transport (18%), more than any other policy domain (column 5 Table 2).

RS-female politicians are less likely to take legislative actions in the policy domain of water - by 19.9 percentage points - versus male counterparts, but more likely to promote women's welfare — by 3 percentage points. These results are contrasting - RS-female politicians are substantively representing female citizens by disproportionately promoting women's *welfare*, but they are not disproportionately championing female citizens' main *policy priority* of water. It is important to point out that, RS-females give very little attention to both women's welfare and water compared to other domains. Examining the proportions of actions devoted to these sectors (column 6 Table 2), RS-females spend only 2% of their actions on water per plenary session, and less than 1% on women's welfare, instead acting much more in the domains of roads/transport (19%), education (16%), health (11%), and other sectors.

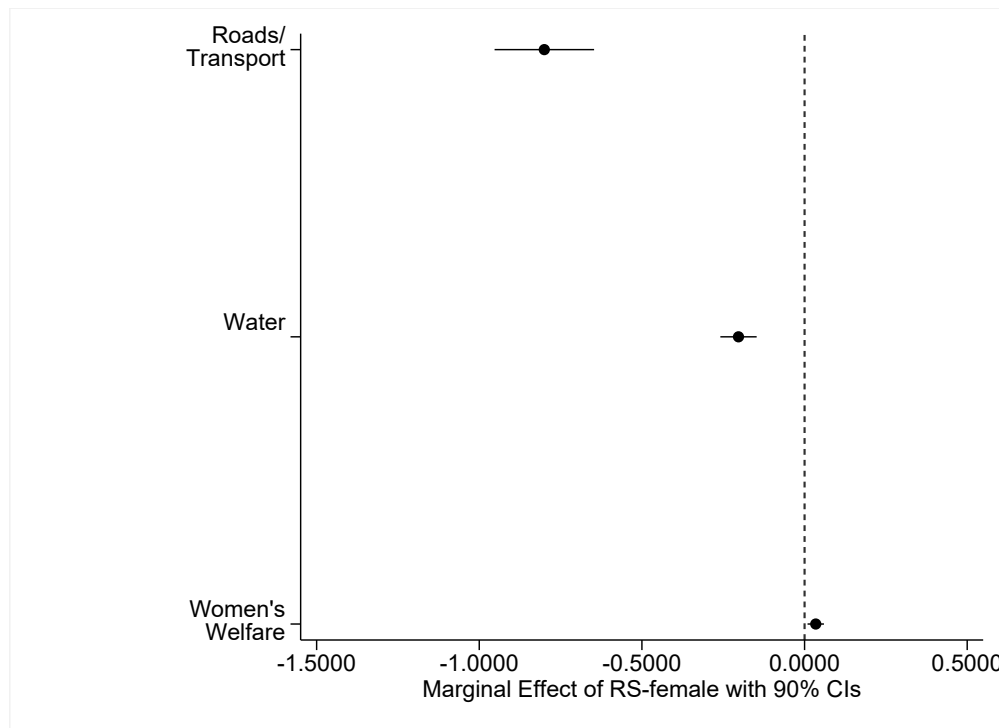


Figure 3: Marginal Effect of RS-female in Legislative Actions

We consider two extensions to dig deeper into these results. First, politicians that are more active in the legislature may be better at substantively representing same-gender citizens. However, we do not find better performers are better in same-gender citizen substantive representation (see SI C.5). Second, an alternative form of legislative activity is committee work occurring between plenary sessions. Tamale (1999) details that female

politicians can be particularly active in women’s substantive representation in committees but less so in plenary sessions due to gender dynamics in the larger group. We collected data on committee membership in our politician survey. However, we do not find significant differences in committee membership between RS- female and male politicians in water and roads/transport (see SI C.6).

6 Why Aren’t (Female) Politicians Promoting Female Citizens’ Policy Priority?

Consistent with many other studies, we find that RS-female politicians are more likely to engage in legislative activities aimed at women’s welfare. However, why are male politicians *more* likely to represent male citizens’ policy priority of roads/transport and female politicians are *less* likely to represent female citizens’ policy priority of water? Further, recalling from Table 1 that water was a fairly high priority for both male and female citizens (highest for females, but above education for males), why does water receive *so little attention overall* from politicians of both gender compared to the other three of the top four salient policy domains? We find it puzzling that water receives such a low priority by politicians.

In this section, we consider possible explanations: (1) unconscious gender bias exists in responsiveness towards female citizens’ stated priorities; (2) male citizens exert greater accountability pressure, and disproportionately to male politicians; (3) citizen-politician policy priority overlap is greater for males, and (4) water per se (versus other sectors) has a lower net benefit to champion.

6.1 Implicit Gender Bias in Response to Accountability Pressure

Across a wide range of studies, politicians have been found to be implicitly biased in their responsiveness towards historically-advantaged groups (Costa 2017). Does implicit gender bias exist here among politicians in responsiveness to male versus female citizens’ requests on policy priorities? To ascertain whether RS-female and male politicians are differentially responsive to female versus male constituents’ policy priorities, we leverage a novel survey experiment implemented in the 2014 politician survey (see SI D for detail).²⁴ Experimental methods are necessary: if we asked politicians whether they would favor

²⁴The design of this experiment was pre-registered on the EGAP website.

mens versus women’s service delivery requests, it would tap into their explicit intentions, not implicit bias. Further, explicit questions would likely induce social desirability bias.

In brief, survey enumerators played a pre-recorded oral message crafted through qualitative fieldwork to maximize the validity of the experimental design,²⁵ in which two Ugandan citizens report a service delivery deficiency and express a desire to prioritize the policy domain for improvement — one in health, and one in education.²⁶ Politicians were randomly assigned to have Citizen 1 and 2 to be {Health - Male Voice, Education - Female Voice} or {Health - Female Voice, Education - Male Voice} in the following message:

Suppose you have 100,000 shillings to divide between addressing the following two problems voiced by two citizens.

- *Citizen 1 Voice: I just went to the health center 2 to get my child tested and treated for malaria. However, there were no health workers available — they were absent. We should make sure that health center staff is present in the health center.*
- *Citizen 2 Voice: I just went to the school to deliver lunch to my child. However, there was no teacher available in the classroom — they were absent. We should make sure that teachers are present in the school.*

The enumerator then asked the politician to divide a fixed endowment to improvements in the two sectors: *How much would you allocate to monitoring health center staffing versus school staffing of the 100,000?*

To test whether money is disproportionately allocated towards one over the other policy domain based on the voices as male or female, we analyze the data in the following way. We construct the dependent variable *Prioritize Schools* as the difference in the allocation towards schools versus health, whereby positive values indicate higher allocation towards schools and negative values health (see SI D.2 for descriptive statistics). Next, we construct the treatment variable *SameGenderSchool*, an indicator variable that

²⁵The advantage of using orally recorded voices is threefold. First, a high degree of ecological validity exists to the context - most requests are made orally to politicians from citizens in this context. Second, the gender of the citizen is a subtle treatment - politicians can easily hear a male or female voice without the treatment being overt (e.g., politicians being told a woman or man made a request). Having a subtle treatment improves construct validity, given that we want to examine implicit bias. Third, politicians are unlikely to guess their treatment status, improving causal validity because they cannot engage in behavior to minimize or maximize treatment effects.

²⁶These two domains were selected because they are equally prioritized by men and women in this context; by using gender-neutral policy domains, we isolate the gender of the person requesting the policy improvement from the gendered nature of the policy domain.

equals one when the same-gender citizen makes a request for a school improvements. We then regress *Prioritize Schools* on *SameGenderSchool* and test whether politicians allocate a higher share of the budget toward same-gender citizens' requests.

Another possibility discussed in the theory section is that both male and RS-female politicians are implicitly biased towards male citizens' policy priorities. Thus, an analysis of heterogeneous treatment effects might reveal that male politicians prioritize same-gender citizens' priorities, and RS-female prioritize opposite-gender citizens' priorities. In a second model, we thus include an indicator variable for RS-female politician and an interaction term.

	Prioritize Schools	
	(1)	(2)
Same Gender School	-2.099 (2.648)	-3.628 (3.437)
RS-female		-5.839 (3.826)
Same Gender School * RS-female		3.986 (5.386)
Constant	-10.06*** (1.872)	-7.755*** (2.405)
Observations	324	324

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.
Results of OLS regression with dependent variables the amount of funding allocated to schools over health.

Table 3: Implicit Gender Bias in Responsiveness to Constituents

Table 3 reveals the results. Politicians do not allocate more to the policy domain addressed by a same-gender constituent (column 1), a result consistent across male and RS-female politicians (column 2). The result is robust to alternative tests.²⁷ Importantly to lend confidence in a null result, the experiment is well-powered to detect small to medium effects, should they exist, according to our power calculations (see SI D.1), and balance was achieved in covariates across treatment groups (see SI D.3).

²⁷We examine models with politician covariates (e.g., education, politicians' own policy priority) - see SI D.4. We also examine multiple models of statistical inference - see SI D.5 - such as: (1) a one-way ANOVA, finding that the budget allocated to school over health does not depend on the gender of the voice, $F(1, 330) = 0.69$, $p = 0.405$; (2) a Kruskal-Wallis test, which shows no statistically significant difference between same-gender-for-school and not-same-gender-for-school ($H(1) = 0.352$, $p = 0.5529$); (3) a non-parametric difference of means test, which shows no statistically significant difference across any group; (4) a difference-in-means test by collapsing the continuous dependent variable into three categories where a consistent null result is found; and (5) randomization inference, resampling the data 1000 and 5000 times, which also supports a null hypothesis. Missingness is not an issue - see SI D.6.

6.2 Male Citizens Exert Greater Accountability Pressure on (Male) Politicians

Second, (male) politicians may be more active in roads/transport because male citizens may voice their priorities more and exert greater accountability pressures to focus on roads/transport. By contrast, (RS-female) politicians may be less active in water because female citizens are less likely to voice this priority and exert less accountability pressure to focus there. To gain traction on this possibility, we leverage data from our original survey, that will help to examine *which citizens* exert more accountability pressures and *which politicians* disproportionately receive accountability pressures.

In our citizen survey, we examine a range of citizen engagement in politics (see SI E.1 for question wording and coding). First, we examine voter turnout in the 2011 elections. If males disproportionately turn out to vote, politicians may be more accountable to their policy priorities.

Second, we examine how often and to whom citizens express political views. We ask about frequency of a few different modes of general expression: (a) a letter to a newspaper, (b) a call to a radio station; communicating opinions or requests to any politician via (c) text message, and (d) phone call. Importantly, we also asked a range of questions regarding *to whom* communication is directed in the form of talking (other than greetings) to (a) village chairperson (LC1), (b) subcounty politician (LC3), (c) district male politician (LC5 subcounty councilor), (d) district RS-female politician (LC5 special woman councilor), and (e) district chairperson (LC5 chairperson). These data will reveal whether males are disproportionately putting viewpoints in the public space and directly to politicians at many levels of local government. Greater male expressions towards lower local government (LC1 and LC3) may “trickle up” to the district level via these more localized politicians, or “trickle down” from the district chairperson that leads the district government. Further, we will understand if citizens - male or female - might contact the male politician more than the RS-female politician, thus pressuring the former more into accountability demands.

Finally, we ask whether the citizen can name (a) the male politician, and (b) the RS-female politician; and to what degree the citizen has knowledge to evaluate the performance of (a) the male politician, and (b) the RS-female politician. If citizens disproportionately recall the name and hold knowledge to evaluate male politicians, then it reveals that citizens are scrutinizing the male politicians more, perhaps viewing the RS-female politicians as peripheral or less influential, either because of their gender or a stigma

against those obtaining their jobs through affirmative action.²⁸

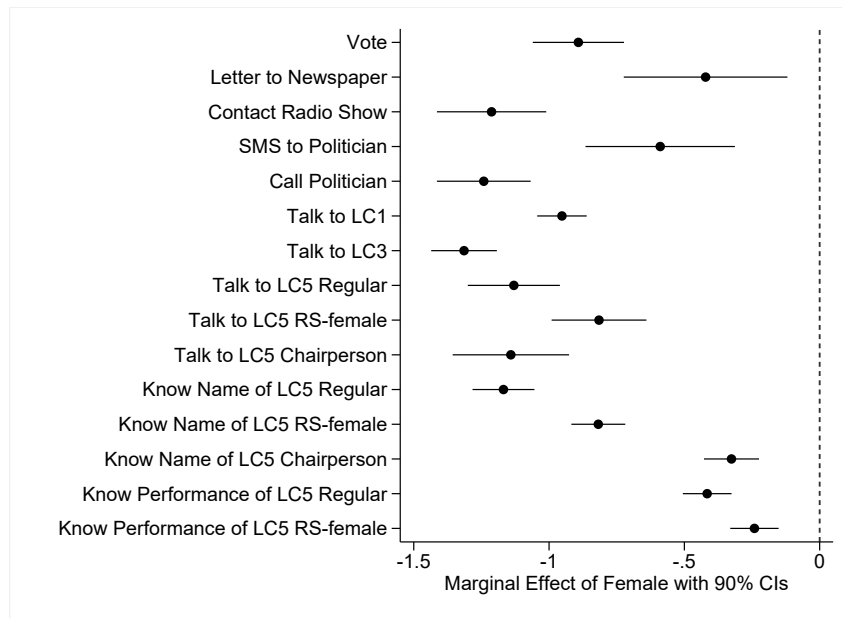


Figure 4: Marginal Effect of Female on Citizen Political Engagement

Figure 4 shows the marginal effect of being female on these outcomes, which are all coded for simplicity of comparison as 0=never, 1=one or more times (see SI section E.2 for regression results). The set of negative coefficients reveal that men are significantly more participatory.²⁹ Males are also more likely to know the names of politicians and know enough to evaluate the performance of district politicians.³⁰

Are citizens more likely to direct pressure on male versus RS-female politicians? With our data we can examine the rate of contacting, knowing the name of, and being able to evaluate the performance of male versus RS-female politicians. 8.39% of citizens contact the male politician, which is more than the 7.06% of citizens that contact the RS-female

²⁸Where institutions of multiparty democracy are longer standing, the introduction of affirmative action may be more likely to foster views of such women as marginal, than if institutions of multiparty democracy AND the affirmative action are both fairly recent. However, given the historical association of men embedded in political life, and women in the household, citizens may nonetheless view the women as more marginal in their representation.

²⁹Overall, 95% of male citizens turned out to vote, and 88% of female citizens. Males are more likely to communicate concerns to newspaper (at 2.5%, compared to 1.7% for women) and radio (9% compared to 3%). Males communicate to politicians more via text (3.3% compared to 1.9% for women) and phone calls (13% compared to 4% for women). Males also are more likely to contact every type of politician (72% compared to 50% for women for village chairpersons, 28% versus 10% for subcounty (LC3) politicians, 12% versus 4% for district male politicians, 10% versus 5% for RS-female politicians, and 8% versus 3% for district chairpersons).

³⁰63% and 52% of men can name the male and RS-female politician, respectively, versus 44% and 45% of women, respectively. 52% and 44% of men report being able to evaluate the performance for the male and RS-female politician, respectively, versus 42% and 38% of women, respectively.

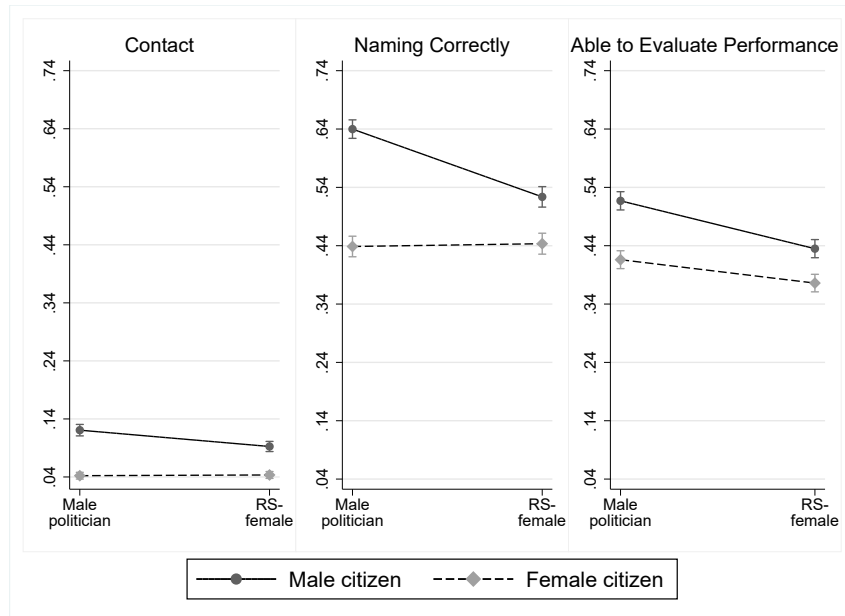
politician. Likewise, citizens are more likely to know the male politician's name, at 54%, versus the RS-female politicians name, at 49%. Finally, 47% of citizens say they can evaluate the male politician, and 41% the RS-female. Thus, citizens generally scrutinize male politicians somewhat more than RS-female politicians.

Are *male* citizens disproportionately likely to direct accountability pressure to *male* politicians? Previous work suggests that men and women may differentially exert accountability pressure on male versus female politicians (Costa & Schaffner 2018). We examine whether citizens' contacting, naming, or holding knowledge to evaluate a politician is affected by the politician being a male or an RS-female. We thus regress each type of political engagement on an indicator variable for the action being taken toward an RS-female politician (rather than a male politician), a female citizen indicator variable, and an interaction between the two. Figure 5 shows the predicted probabilities of male and female citizens' accountability pressure toward RS-female politicians and male politicians. Not only are male citizens more participatory and knowledgeable than female citizens regarding any politician (dark straight line is always above lighter dashed line), males direct such accountability pressures disproportionately towards male politicians (dark dot is higher on the left than the right in all panels). Female citizens, while engaging less, show no difference in the rate of contacting or knowing the name of male versus RS-female politicians (lighter dashed lines are rather straight in left and middle panel), while they are slightly more likely to be able to evaluate the performance of the male versus RS-female politician (light dot is higher on the left than right in right panel).³¹ See SI E.3 for regression results.

Finally, an observable implication of the accountability argument would be if politicians campaign based on their same-gender policy priority. We leverage politician survey data on politicians' appeals to village chairpersons to gain their electoral support. We analyze whether male and RS-female politicians are more likely to mention roads/transport or water, respectively. While no differences exist in politicians' frequency of water mentions, we do find that males are significantly more likely to mention roads/transport, consistent with their same-gender priority of roads/transport (see SI E.4). Of course, the vast majority of such village chairpersons are male and we know they are disproportionately contacted by male citizens, so it is consistent with prior findings that male politicians disproportionately mention roads/transport.

While these data are by no means perfect, taken together, these data are consistent

³¹These results contrast with Costa & Schaffner (2018)'s study in the United States, where politician gender does not seem associated with accountability pressures from men, but women are significantly less likely to contact female politicians.



Note: The predicted probabilities of male and female citizens contacting, being able to name, and having knowledge to evaluate the performance of male and RS-female politicians.

Figure 5: Who is More Active Toward Whom?

with an accountability explanation behind the result that roads/transport receives overall much more attention in legislative activity, and disproportionate attention from male politicians, while water receives less attention overall, even from RS-female. Males participate more and direct their scrutiny disproportionately more towards fellow male politicians. In turn, male politicians disproportionately make campaign appeals regarding roads/transport. Water does not receive disproportionate attention from (female) politicians because females participate less on a general basis, and do not disproportionately direct scrutiny towards RS-female politicians. One may interpret these findings as having both an informational and a sanctioning component. On the one hand, since politicians do not hold public opinion data in this context, contacting and other forms of participation may make politicians become more aware that roads/transport is a priority, while politicians are not similarly aware that water is a priority. On the other hand, politicians could be generally aware of the public opinion from living in their context, and the contacting and other forms of participation may inspire a greater fear of sanctioning.

6.3 Incongruence Is Higher in Female Politician and Citizens' Policy Priorities

In this section we test whether a larger degree of congruence in policy priorities exists between male politicians and male citizens, as opposed to RS-female politicians and female citizens. We asked politicians the following survey question (mirroring the citizen survey): *In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing your constituency that the district government should address this term?* Table 4 reveals that politicians mention the same set of four top priorities as citizens: 70.5% mentioned roads/transport, followed by about 60% for both health and education, and 37.9% water.

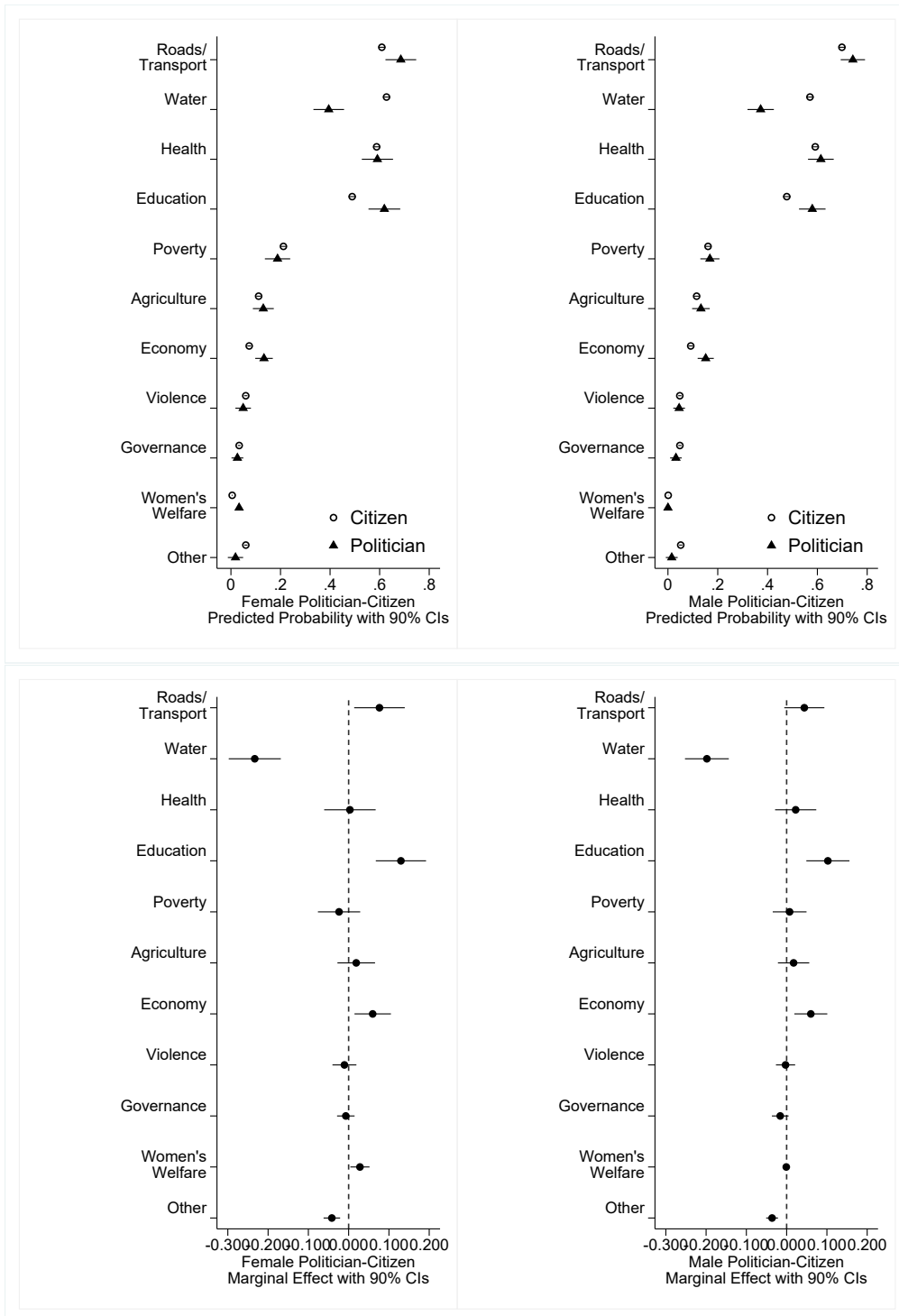
	Politician (units %)	
	Top Three Priorities	First Priority
Roads/Transport	70.5	33.8
Education	59.5	15.5
Health	60.1	16.8
Water	37.9	15.8
Poverty	18.6	6.6
Economy	15.0	6.4
Agriculture	13.7	2.5
Violence	4.8	1.5
Governance	3.1	0.5
Women's Welfare	1.3	0.3
Other	1.5	0.3
Observations	393	

Table 4: Politicians' Policy Priorities

To test whether politicians prioritize the policy preferences of same-gender citizens, we simply use a seemingly unrelated regressions framework to examine the effect of an indicator variable in which 1=politician and 0=citizen within a sample of female citizens and politicians, and again within a sample of male citizens and politicians (see SI F.1 for regression estimates).³² Figure 6 depicts the predicted probabilities (top panels) and marginal effects (bottom panels) of the politician-citizen gap for females (left panels) and males (right panels). In the bottom panels, negative coefficients indicate politicians underprioritize a policy domain compared to same-gender citizens, while positive coefficients indicate politicians overprioritize a policy domain compared to same-gender citizens.

The most striking finding of non-congruence between same-gendered citizens and

³²The findings are robust to just the top priority - see SI F.3.



Notes: Top panels: predicted probabilities of prioritizing a policy domain, with dots representing politicians and triangles representing citizens.. Bottom panels: marginal effect of politician (versus citizen) with confidence intervals. Left panels: females. Right panels: males.

Figure 6: Politician-Citizen Gaps in Policy Priorities Among Men and Women

politicians in high-salience policy domains is in water. Politicians, both male and female, underprioritize water compared to same-gender citizens (bottom panels). The results indicate that RS-female politicians are even slightly less congruent with their same-gender counterparts (by 22.9 percentage points) than male politicians (by 19.8 percentage points).³³ This finding is consistent with less overall legislative activities by both male and RS-female politicians in water than in the other domains, as well as the finding that RS-female politicians do not disproportionately prioritize water.

By contrast, male politicians are congruent with male citizens regarding roads/transport (bottom right panel). Among females, additional incongruence exists in roads/transport, where RS-female politicians over-prioritize (by 6.1 percentage points) citizen prioritization in roads/transport (bottom left panel). This misalignment is consistent with the legislative activity findings - RS-females spend a much greater proportion of time on roads/transport than other sectors.

Other domains exist in which politicians are congruent with same-gendered citizens. In the major policy domain of health, politicians and citizens of all genders are completely aligned in their level of prioritization — no statistically significant gap exists between any groups. In the low-salience domains of poverty, violence and governance, politicians have no statistically significant different level of prioritization versus citizens, and in these policy domains, there exist statistically significant gender gaps between male and female citizens.

One high-salience area exists in which male and RS-female politicians are equally incongruent with same-gendered citizens — education. Male and RS-female politicians both equally overrepresent that policy area vis-a-vis same-gender citizen priorities (by about 10 percentage points). No gender gaps exist among citizens, and none among politicians, so the incongruence is simply a politician-citizen incongruence.³⁴

Finally, while both female citizens and RS-female politicians prioritize women's welfare over male counterparts, RS-female politicians over-prioritize this area relative to female citizens. The difference-in-differences is statistically significant. These results are consistent with the idea that women's welfare is more of a concern for elite than citizen women, findings consistent with Clayton *et al.* (2019)'s cross-national data on African

³³Although the difference-in-differences across males and females is not statistically significant (see SI F.1 Figure 16).

³⁴Similarly, politicians overprioritize the economy (by 6.2 percentage points) relative to citizens of any gender. Although female citizens are less likely to prioritize the economy than male citizens (by 1.9 percentage points), no statistically significant difference-in-differences exists across men and women in the degree of same-gender congruence.

members of parliament (MPs).

One consideration is that perhaps the incongruence among RS-female and female citizens in water is a result of class differences. Politicians tend to enjoy a higher socioeconomic status (SES) than citizens, on average, leading them to prioritize policy domains that reflect high SES concerns and rendering them “out of touch” with the lower class experience. In particular, socioeconomic status gaps might be larger between female politicians and citizens, than male politicians and citizens. For example, we mentioned that fetching water from communal sources in jerry cans is traditionally women’s work but high SES women are likely to have domestic help to do this job, or even in some cases, access to piped water. Further, high SES individuals may be more concerned with education because they are more likely to utilize and benefit from education for prospective employment. Thus, we repeat our analysis by examining whether politicians overlap more with those citizens who are above versus below median SES (see SI F.2). We find no evidence, however, that this is the case. Both low and high SES female citizens prioritize policy very similarly.³⁵

6.4 Net Benefit of Water Representation Per Se Lower Than Other Sectors

Different public service delivery sectors may be intrinsically more costly or less beneficial to represent because of the properties of the sector (Harding 2015). It may be that the intrinsic attributes of service delivery sectors coincidentally confound the gendered policy priorities of water versus roads/transport. To our knowledge, other studies have not considered this possibility.

Of the top four salient sectors, water might be the most costly for politicians to promote in legislative activity. It may be costlier to understand — water involves drilling a borehole or other water source and subsequently maintaining its function, requiring technical engineering expertise. By contrast, road repair (in this context - filling pot holes, new pavement), education (e.g., teacher absenteeism, sufficient desks/books), and even health (e.g., healthworker absenteeism, availability of common medicines) might be more accessible in terms of understanding.³⁶ Another possibility has to do with the relative

³⁵To construct above versus below median SES, we conduct a factor analysis of income and education for citizens. They load nicely onto one latent dimension (loadings are 0.81 and communalities are 0.65). The only difference is that for high-SES citizens, RS-female politicians slightly overprioritize agriculture.

³⁶Politicians may be more likely to have personal experiences using (or even occupational background in) such sectors as well, versus water.

complexity of working with the bureaucracy by sector. Multiple levels of government and both the legislative and bureaucratic branches, as well as frontline service providers are involved in delivering public services in all sectors. However, water could be more difficult than other sectors.

Further, the electoral benefit may be much lower for championing water in legislative activity. Less visible policy domains are associated with less politician accountability because politicians cater to public service delivery domains that voters care most about (Harding 2015). It is hard to detect how clean water is without having access to formal tests and laboratories, and poorly visible as to whether people become sick more or less frequently due to water cleanliness. By contrast, it is relatively easier to identify if a pot hole is filled, books are purchased for a school, or health care professionals are hired. Relatedly, the ongoing costs of poor access to water (walking long distances and waiting at sources) are born by lower status female household members. By contrast, poor service delivery in other sectors may be more visible to a larger swath of society.³⁷

7 Conclusion

In this study, we examine substantive representation of female and male citizens in legislative activities of male and reserved seat (RS-)female politicians across 49 subnational legislatures in Uganda. We leverage a rich amount of data to examine two important types of substantive representation: *women's welfare* and *same-gender policy priorities*. We find evidence that RS-female politicians disproportionately engage in women's welfare, or actions that directly bring up women's wellbeing (e.g., prenatal care in health policy), consistent with the bulk of studies on gender and substantive representation. However, while male politicians take *more* legislative actions in male citizen's policy priority of roads/transport, female politicians take *less* legislative actions in female citizen's policy priority of access to clean water. Further, roads/transport, alongside other top citizen priorities of health and education receives a much greater proportion of attention in legislative activity from both types of politicians than water.

It is important to understand why water, a policy area prioritized by all citizens but especially women, is neglected by politicians, especially RS-females. Although women's

³⁷Others have suggested that it could be that other service delivery sectors are easier for politicians to take advantage of for private gain than water. However, due to the "eyes on, hands off" reforms to local government elected officials in this context, where the implementation is by and large conducted by the bureaucracy, opportunities for corruption of this kind might be more limited and less a concern than in other contexts.

welfare is a critical aspect of women's substantive representation, it is not a high priority for female citizens. Scholars have noted that prioritizing women's welfare is an elite woman's concern, while the average woman is more concerned with issues of vital public service delivery — here access to clean water that women spend a large amount of time on a daily basis to collect walking to and waiting at public sources.

While by no means an exhaustive set of theoretical mechanisms, we examine a few key theoretical mechanisms through tailored data collections in the politician and citizen surveys. First, we examine accountability theories. In a survey experiment with politicians asked to allocate hypothetical budget funds towards causes voiced by male versus female constituents, we find no evidence of implicit bias towards accountability pressures from male versus female citizens. However, we do find that accountability pressures come disproportionately from male citizens. Male citizens are much more likely to engage politically than female citizens in a wide range of participation and knowledge factors. Further, more accountability pressure is directed toward male versus RS-female politicians, especially from male citizens. Taken together, evidence exists that stronger accountability pressures coming from men to men, and weaker accountability pressures coming from women to women, may be undergirding the stronger substantive representation by male politicians for male citizens. This finding is consistent with Dingler *et al.* (2019) that the gender that exerts more accountability pressure has better substantive representation. However, in the case of Uganda this is men, while in Europe this is women.

Second, we also find that male politicians and citizens have more congruent personal policy preferences than RS-female politicians and citizens. Male politicians are congruent with male citizens' prioritization of roads/transport, while RS-female politicians under-prioritize water compared to female citizens' prioritization. This finding shows evidence for theories that politicians may not necessarily embody the policy priorities of same-gender citizens, on average. We examine whether incongruence among women relates to a socioeconomic status gap between politicians and citizens, that might be greater for women as a historically marginalized group. However, we do not find that female (or male) politicians are more congruent with higher socioeconomic status citizens.

Finally, we surmise that water might be harder for politicians to represent because there is lower benefit and higher cost than other sectors due to its intrinsic attributes as a sector. Water is a more technical service delivery area in many ways and harder to understand versus roads/transport (or other sectors such as health, education, agriculture). Further, the visibility of deficiencies or improvements in cleanliness of water may be lower than other sectors (e.g., potholes filled or not, classrooms crowded or not, or

medicines missing or not). Further, deficiencies or improvements in other sectors may be felt by a broader swath of society — many suffer the consequences of impassible roads, low education provision for children, and sick relatives, while the time women, often low status women, spend walking to water sources and waiting in line with a jerry is born by a more narrow group.

This study raises important questions for future research. First, researchers should examine both women's welfare and same-gender substantive representation, given the normative importance of both in substantive representation. However, as we propose in the theory section and confirm with the data, the theory is stronger regarding female politicians championing *women's welfare* than *female citizens' policy priorities*. It may be more likely for female politicians to promote women's welfare than male politicians, perhaps because they are more likely to embody or hold explicit motivations or informal mandate to do so. However, which policy priorities are championed may be more a function of accountability pressures, politician-citizen congruence in personal preferences, or net benefit of promoting a policy sector due to attributes of the sector per se. These mechanisms are stronger at present for men's substantive representation by male politicians. This area is ripe for future comparative research, both theoretically and empirically. In particular, the conditions under which female politicians substantively represent female citizens policy priorities should continue to receive attention cross-nationally, as such substantive representation is likely conditional on gender norms in society, electoral institutions, and other contextual aspects of politics.

This study also provides key implications for policymakers seeking to improve substantive representation of women or citizens more generally in new democracies, especially where societal gender norms tend to exclude women from the public sphere. Affirmative action for female politicians may not be enough to improve women's substantive representation in the area of female citizens' policy priorities. Related to accountability dynamics, policymakers might consider encouraging female citizens to be more participatory regarding their policy priority, for example by lowering costs for women to contact politicians and/or increasing efficacy of women to do so.³⁸ Another possibility is NGOs or the local government association training politicians to access and examine public opinion data on policy priorities, perhaps by gender, using regularly collected data from Afrobarometer or other local polling services (e.g., U-Report in Uganda). However, such polling should consider including eliciting policy priorities for different tiers of gov-

³⁸Grossman *et al.* (2017), for example, worked with NGOs on a text message service allowing citizens to voice concerns directly to politicians, finding that efficacy messages eliciting participation worked disproportionately to increase female citizens' participation.

ernment instead of only the national level, given that different levels of government have jurisdiction over different policy domains. Related to incongruences between politician and citizen personal policy priorities, policymaking initiatives that allow citizens more exposure to specific policy platforms may help in improving congruence, for example encouraging townhall meetings or debates in election season (Platas & Raffler 2017). Finally, politicians may also need training on public service delivery sectors that might be hard to champion due to their technical nature.

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