Women's Political Empowerment in Democratic Transitions: Does Time Matter?

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Introduction

The central question in the work of Dahlerup, is "Has democracy failed women?" (2018). While many studies show that including women into politics leads to a higher quality of democracy (Sainsbury, 2001; Bolzendahl & Brooks, 2007; Childs & Withey, 2004; Karam & Lovenduski, 2005), men are still dominating the political institutions as seen in political parties and ballot list. Globally, merely fifteen percent of the population live in societies where women have equal political power to men (Kendall-Taylor, Lindstaedt, Frantz, 2019, p. 174). One would expect that greater levels of democratic freedom should improve women's access to political positions, however, women have not obtained gender equality in the domain of politics and women's influence is not (yet) equal to that of men.

What then is the relationship between democracy and women's political empowerment? The traditional incremental time-lag theory assumes that an increase in women's representation in democracies is a matter of time (Dahlerup, 2018, p. 56). This theory explains equal gender empowerment as a slow process, which is supported by the modernization theory of Inglehart and Norris (2003). Yet these theories may prove unsubstantiated; recent research has shown it is no longer the case that the richest countries in the world have the highest representation of women in politics (Dahlerup, 2018, p. 50). New insights on the relationship between socio-economic development and the level of women's representation have been found in the Global South. While older, Western democracies are celebrating the centennial of women's suffrage, the countries in the Global South are taking a different, faster approach at achieving equality and are questioning whether it really has to take a century to reach a 30-40 percent level of female representation in parliament?

The traditional time-lag theory is challenged by the new fast-track model found in the Global South. Fast-track countries such as Rwanda (61 percent), Cuba (53 percent) and Bolivia (53 percent) are now global leaders in political gender equality, with higher percentages of female parliamentarians than many of the older democracies (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020). This in turn casts doubts on the theories of Dahlerup and Inglehart & Norris, leading us to wonder whether increasing women's political empowerment is truly a matter of time, rather than other contributing factors? Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna (2012) provide an answer to the democracy paradox by arguing that it is not democracy itself, but rather the democratization process that matters for women's legislative representation. They explain that democratic transitions are critical junctures where political cultures are transformed. Effectively, they claim that transitions to democracy after 1975 are more likely to see benefits for women's representation than old democracies or non-democratic regimes.

In old democracies, political institutions were sometimes formed before women even had the right to participate (Dahlerup, 2018). Switzerland is a perfect example of this: the country democratized during the First Wave of democratization in 1848, but women had to wait for another 123 years before they could vote for the first time in 1971 (Paxton, 2008). It can be difficult to change existing institutions and path dependence matters in a country's transition to a democracy (Waylen, 2007). In this thesis, I have examined whether 'new' democracies indeed have an advantage in favour of women due to contemporary cultural and societal circumstances when implementing political reforms, in contrast to the old democracies.

An example of a country that would confirm the theory of Fallon, Swiss and Viterna, is Tunisia. The country transitioned just after the Arab Spring and implemented a progressive law in 2014; a minimum of 47 percent of the seats in parliament must be fulfilled by women (Yerkes, 2019, p. 71). In the Netherlands by contrast, women in parliament fill 32 percent of the seats, while the constitutional monarchy is 172 years old, and women's suffrage has recently celebrated its centennial in 2019 (Parlement, 2020). After the democratic transition, Tunisia immediately adopted an institution in favour of women, while the constitution of the Netherlands was made in a different historical time period (1848) where it was not common to include women (Parlement, 2020). This leads to the question whether the historical time frame of the democratic transition has an impact on the way policy reforms in favour of women take place.

In 1975 the United Nations (UN) initiated its 'Decade for Women' and questions of women's political positions in government became globally prominent (Fallon et al., 2012, p. 381). The fourth and last Conference of the UN on Women in Beijing in 1995 caused a major shift in our thinking about why women are excluded from politics. The shift went from women's lack of qualifications and political interest to the lack of inclusiveness of the political institutions themselves (Dahlerup, 2018). In this study, I will build further on this perspective and I will examine whether democratic transitions after 1975 truly benefit women in politics more than the transitions that took place before 1975 did. I will use a statistical approach with feminist analyses with the aim to build further knowledge on increasing women's political empowerment and to understand new insights that might challenge traditional views in the field of gender equality. The fundamental research question of this thesis is: *how does the time period of a democratic transition affect women's political empowerment?*

Theoretical Framework

Engendering democracy

Democracy is a political system defined by the rule by the people (Kendall-Taylor et al., 2019, p. 15). The work of Dahlerup (2018) is based on a contemporary definition of democracy that includes the following aspects: free, equal and fair election based on universal suffrage, transparent and accountable political institutions with low levels of corruption, an independent judiciary and the rule of law, freedom of speech and assembly and freedom of the press, and as last, the protection of minority rights. In sum, the key indicators of democracy are participation, competition and civil liberties. However, Dahlerup states that the participation of women within democracy is rarely used as an indicator to illustrate the level of democracy.

According to Dahlerup (2018) it is a complex question of definition whether we choose to acknowledge democracies even if women and minorities are excluded from the right to participate. For a long period in history, only granting suffrage to men, and in certain cases only men who fulfilled racial or economic criteria, was sufficient for a nation to be characterized as a democracy. For example, George H. Sabine's popular textbook: "*A History of Political Theory"* manages to avoid women entirely in its 948 pages. Even when he starts to analyse John Stuart Mill's thinking, he does not mention a single part of Mill's work in "*the Subjection of Women"*. Only including male suffrage was so embedded with the meaning of democracy, that there were no actors that were boycotting Switzerland for not granting women's suffrage until the year 1971.

Times have changed and nowadays academics agree that granting universal suffrage for both men and women of all races and classes is seen as an important criteria for labelling a country a democracy. Yet, it is difficult to study the past through the lens of contemporary definitions. Paxton (2008) mentions the gap in the work of many scholars between the initial definition of democracy – that includes universal suffrage – and the actual dating of a country as a democracy. Her work leads to interesting questions such as whether or not it is fair to label France a democracy since the middle of the nineteenth century, despite such labelling discounting women, who only obtained the right to vote as late as 1944. We still assume that the democratic transition of the United States took place in 1870 – rather than 1920 or even to the 1960s and 1970, when black people obtained the right to vote. Huntington (1991) refers to these systems as undemocratic in his book: "*The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century".* This gap can have major implications for research, which investigates the factors leading to democratic transitions, as well as for this study itself.

Women and democracy

The level of women's political empowerment and access to leadership has increased worldwide for over a period of seventy years. While in 1998, the global average of female parliamentarians was around thirteen percent, by 2019 the average had increased to twenty-four percent (Kendall-Taylor et al., 2019, p. 174). Besides that, the voting gap between men and women has also decreased to the point that it is almost insignificant now (Coffé & Bolzendahl, 2010).

Women's political empowerment is defined as "*a process of increasing capacity for women, leading to greater choice, agency, and participation in societal decision-making"* (Sundström, Paxton, Wang & Lindberg, 2017). This covers areas such as women's representation in parliament, property rights, the number of female journalists, and the power distribution between men and women. Many studies confirm that women's influence in politics would lead to many positive outcomes. In Africa, more women in parliament has led to a higher female political participation and engagement (Barnes & Burchard, 2013) and in Scandinavia, research shows similar results and concludes that greater representation of women in parliaments improved gender equality and the quality of democracy (Sainsbury, 2001).

Other studies claim that besides enhancing women's rights, greater levels of women's participation in government also leads to increases in spending for health care, education, and other family and social policies (Bolzendahl & Brooks, 2007; Child & Withey, 2004; Karam & Lovenduski, 2005), as well as lower levels of corruption (Dollar, Fisman & Gatti, 2001). Finally, female participation can play an important role in conflict prevention and resolutions (Adebajo, 2002). The United Nations states that conflict-afflicted countries have very low levels of women in parliament and ministerial positions compared to the world average (Kumalo, 2015).

These studies show us that including women into politics leads to a higher quality of democracy. Yet, studies also demonstrate that democracy does little to improve women's legislative representation. This phenomena is referred to as the *democracy paradox* (Fallon et al., 2012). This leads us back to the very first question: has democracy failed women? According to Dahlerup (2018) it did, especially in older democracies, for which she provides several arguments. One of them is the exclusion without words by not granting women's suffrage and another argument focuses on the "stickiness" of male dominance in political institutions. She explains that women and other newcomers in politics need to adjust to existing patriarchal norms and practices.

Engendering transitions and institutions

When this thesis refers to a democratic transition, it means the breakdown of a non-democratic regime into a democracy (Boix, Miller & Rosato, 2012). It is interesting to understand how democratization processes and regime breakdowns happen in order to find out what kind of transitions end up being successful and which ones experience difficulties, backsliding, or outcomes other than democracy. Waylen (2007) has written a book about the relationship between gender and regime transitions with a particular focus on institutions. According to her research, there are three major tools – actor-based models, structural models, and notion of path dependence – which can be used to understand regime breakdowns and changes. She explains that in both actor and structure-based models, path dependence is used by scholars to analyse these transitions.

After her analysis, Waylen (2007) concludes that: *"the nature of the non-democratic regime, the way it breaks down and what happens during the transitions, all have an impact on how the new system will become a consolidated democracy"* (p. 17). This conclusion supports the claim of Fallon et al. (2012) that was mentioned in the introduction. Their argument is that it is the democratization process that matters rather than democracy itself for the importance of women's political empowerment. Waylen finds that in authoritarian states and in state socialism, the breakdown of non-democratic regimes and their transitions happened directly after each other or sometimes even simultaneously. As a consequence of this, political parties did not have much time to reform and to play a significant role in these democratization processes. In longer drawn-out transitions, however, a gradual process led to the re-emergence of some political actors as important players during, and occasionally prior to, the transition itself. In this latter case, political parties had more time to reconstitute themselves and play a more significant role in negotiations.

Waylen (2007) further provides an explanation on what exactly the gendering of political institutions means – as seen in constitutions, party, and electoral systems. Gendered institutions imply that *"gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life"* (Waylen, 2007, p. 9). She explains that states and political parties are gendered hierarchies, because men are far more represented at the top than women. She separates the broad definition of institutions into three political arenas: the electoral, constitutional/legal, and the bureaucratic/state arena and mentions that even within the same polity or organization, women can face both opportunities and constraints out of these three dimensions. She claims that it is important to be aware of how

these mechanisms are gendered in order to understand the policy outcomes, which emerge out of these institutions, and to understand the position of women within these organizations.

These dynamics exhibit differences in terms of the interaction between women as political actors and the respective political institutions they take part in. Dahlerup (2018) builds further on Waylen's study by claiming that women need more inclusive and well-functioning democratic political institutions in order to counteract discriminatory effects in existing forces.

Time-lag theory versus fast-track model

The book *"Breaking Male Dominance in Old Democracies"* by Dahlerup and Leyenaar (2013) highlights the historical development of women's representation in elected political assemblies. They provide an empirical analysis with a particular focus on old democracies. By the use of a longitudinal, in-depth comparative approach they examine mechanisms that maintain a male-dominated political order. Inspired by the United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, Dahlerup and Leyenaar step away from the traditional focus on women's shortcomings and alleged lack of qualifications and political interest and instead discuss the "stickiness" of male-dominated institutions and the lack of inclusivity of women in political parties and other elected positions.

Feminist activists and gender researches in new democracies and post-conflict countries often question whether it really merely takes a certain amount of time after women's suffrage to reach a 30-40 percent level of female members in parliament, as nowadays is seen in the old Western democracies (Dahlerup & Leyenaar, 2013). Yet, despite a century having passed, political power is still not evenly distributed between men and women in these older democracies. The enfranchisement of women in old democracies took place before and around World War I. In these old democracies, the historical development of women's political representation happened through an incremental, time-lagged trajectory. In many new democracies and post-conflict countries however, countries have opted to follow a fast-track trajectory in order to accelerate the process of women's political empowerment – often through the use of legislated gender quotas (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005).

According to Dahlerup and Leyenaar (2013) political life with its institutional norms and practices in old democracies were established before the inclusion of women in many areas of society had become the norm. As a consequence of this, the initial standard was a political order dominated by men. The number of female legislators and ministers has since then increased significantly and the presence of women in the political system is now undisputed. Dahlerup and Leyenaar claim that an engendering of political life might have taken place.

Globally, we are currently experiencing an increase in female prime ministers, party leaders and chairs of important parliamentary committees. However, only fifteen percent of the population lives in societies where women have equal political power to men (Kendall-Taylor et al., 2019, p. 174). Men still dominate the political order and in most old democracies gender-balanced parliaments have remained out of reach. Moreover, in some countries, there is even stagnation and in others a risk of backlash in women's political representation. This is supported by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project, which states that 2017 was the first year this level did not improve globally, after seventy consecutive years of growth (Kendall-Taylor et al., 2019, p. 174).

This recent finding challenges the time-lag theory, according to which *"women's representation will increase gradually through a constant, maybe even irreversible process towards permanent gender balance"* (Dahlerup & Leyenaar, 2013). According to the time-lag theory, obtaining gender equality is primarily a matter of time, and the successive reaching in old democracies of thresholds of levels of political representation – first 10 percent, then 25 percent and eventually, if trends hold, over 40 percent – seems to have confirmed this theory. Dahlerup and Leyenaar (2013) claim that this theory may in itself contribute to a lack of progress or change. They argue that if women's political empowerment is a matter of time and development, no changes in existing institutions are required.

At the end of the 1990s only five countries – Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and the Netherlands – had passed the 30 percent threshold, but today over fifty countries, twenty-three of them are from the Global South (as of the start of 2017), have reached this level (Dahlerup, 2018). Currently, the leading countries in women's representation in parliament worldwide are Rwanda (61 percent), Cuba (53 percent) and Bolivia (53 percent) (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020). All three of these countries are examples of the fast-track model. The traditional incremental time-lag theory, with its slow process to increase women's political empowerment in old democracies, is challenged by the new fast-track model found in the Global South.

The waves of democratization

In order to find an answer to the research question, this thesis will differentiate between two time periods of democratic transitions based on the work of Samuel Huntington (1991). According to Huntington, a wave of democratization is *"a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time"* (p. 15).

The first wave of democratization emerged out of the American and French revolutions and is followed by the second wave starting in World War II. The third wave towards democracy was a global one which started around 1975.

The second and third waves will be used in this study to differentiate between the different time periods of democratic transitions. According to Huntington (1991), the second wave of democratization was dominated by political and military factors and can be separated into three categories. First, Western Allies who had won the second World War imposed democracy on a number of countries: West Germany, Italy Japan, a major part of Austria, and South-Korea. The second category contains countries that moved to a democracy due to the victory of the Western Allies in the world war. This category includes Greece, Turkey, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Colombia. Finally, the weakening of the Western states and the rise of nationalism have led to the process of decolonization, Huntington's third category. All in all, the victory of the old Western democracies in World War II and the process of decolonization were major events that defined the second wave. The third wave however, emerged from other factors.

The third wave of democratization was a global movement towards democracy. In a period of fifteen years the wave covered areas in southern Europe, Latin-America, Asia, and decimated dictatorships in the Soviet bloc. Within this wave, many diverse types of regimes experienced a democratic transition. Examples of such regimes are: one-party systems, military regimes, personal dictatorships, and the racial oligarchy in South Africa. Another defining aspect of the third wave is prior experience with democratic systems, which twenty-three of twenty-nine countries that democratized within this wave had (Huntington, 1991).

Huntington (1991) explains five changes that caused the democratic transitions in this third wave to happen. He starts with the deepening legitimacy problems that authoritarian regimes experienced in a period where democratic values began to become more widely accepted. Second, the global economic growth of the 1960s led to the rise of living standards, increased education, and expanded the middle class in many societies. Furthermore, he discusses the transformation of national churches *"from defenders of the status quo to opponents of authoritarianism"* and how they started to support social, economic, and political reform. Fourth, he mentions drastic changes in the policies of external actors, such as Gorbachev's changes in the late 1980s in the Soviet Union, and the new attitude of the European Union towards expanding its membership. Finally, Huntington claims that the "snowballing" effect of the first transitions in the third wave influenced other regime changes in other countries by new means of international communication (pp. 45-46).

Method

This thesis seeks to further investigate the relationship between democratic transitions and women's political empowerment. To this end the main research question posed in this work is: *how does the time period of a democratic transition affect women's political empowerment?* I expect that the democratic transitions that happened after 1975 will have a higher positive effect on women's political empowerment than democratic transitions that took place between 1946 and 1975, due to the institutionalist argument that the democratization process took place in a time where it was more common to include women in politics.

In order to answer this research question, I will use a quantitative method and I will test the data through a multiple linear regression analysis, with the change in women's political empowerment index as the dependent variable and the period in which the democratic transition took place as the independent variable. Eventually, four control variables will be added to the analysis – women's political empowerment index (WPEI) at the start of the democratic transition, the nation's most dominant religion, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in 2011$, and the presence of gender quotas in the lower chamber. The aim of this study is to explain the relationship between these several variables. The statistical model should therefore not just show the differences between the means, but should illustrate how the values of a variable change as another variables change. This, combined with the fact that the dependent variable is an interval/ratio, leads to the multiple linear regression analysis as the statistical model.

Women's Political Empowerment

Women's empowerment is a broad concept that covers multiple dimensions. The World Bank for example defines this concept as "rights, resources, and voice" (King, Mason, Basu, Elson, & Đạng, 2001). Other subsequent studies add terms such as perceptions, relations, power, and achievements to it (Chen, 1992; Kabeer, 1999). In this study, I have chosen to focus on women's *political* empowerment. The meaning of this concept will be based on societal decision-making and for this we need to understand what it means to have political power. Political power in this study refers to: *"Individuals who hold formal and official positions in government and allocate scarce resources and direct resources to some groups at the expense of others* (Bratton & Ray, 2002; Franceschet & Piscopo, 2014), *and have the power to enforce their decision, ultimately with force"* (Sundström et al., 2017).

According to Sundström et al. (2017) the Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem) is the largest dataset on democracy at the time of writing, including over 350 indicators. This

project developed one of the most extensive measures on women's political empowerment with a large spatial and temporal scope, covering data from 1900 to 2019 in 173 countries. They define women's political empowerment as: "*a process of increasing capacity for women, leading to greater choice, agency, and participation in societal decision-making".* The three dimensions of this definition: choice, agency, and participation are represented in the women's political empowerment index of the V-Dem project in the following way.

The element of choice measures the ability and freedom of women to make meaningful decisions in important areas of their lives. The V-Dem project translated this into a *women civil liberties index,* that is derived from four critical aspects: women's freedom of domestic movement, freedom from forced labour, property rights, and access to justice. Agency is judged through the *women civil society participation index*, which measures the ability of women to freely engage in public debate. This index combines three elements: women's freedom of discussion, participation in civil society organizations and representation in the ranks of journalists. To measure the third dimension, participation, the *women political participation index* has been constructed. The argument behind this index is that women need to be represented in adequate numbers in formal political positions in order to engage effectively in societal decision-making. This index combines two elements: legislative presence of women and political power distribution by gender (Sundström et al., 2017).

The dependent variable in this study is the change in women's political empowerment after five years since the start of the democratic transition. This data is derived from the women's political empowerment index developed by the V-Dem project. The change captures the impact of the democratic transition on the empowerment of women, and the time frame prevents other longitudinal influences from interfering.

Democratic Transitions

The Quality of Government Institute has developed a dataset which consists of over 2000 variables and combines information from over one hundred data sources. This dataset provides the democratic transition variable, originally developed by Boix, Miller & Rosato (2012). The definition of democracy in the work of Boix et al. (2012) is based on Dahl's (1973) classification of democracy. Dahl theorized democracy on the basis of two political elements: contestation and participation.

Effectively this means that a country can be labelled a democracy if: *"The executive is directly or indirectly elected in popular elections and is responsible either directly to voters or to a legislature"* and: *"The legislature (or the executive if elected directly) is chosen in free and*

fair elections". The third criteria holds that "*a majority of adult men has the right to vote.*" This element contributes to the debate whether it is fair to label a state a democracy if half of the population – women – is not included. This criteria confirms the statement of Dahlerup (2018), which holds that the participation of women in politics is rarely used as an indicator of democracy.

After labelling countries as a democracy or as a non-democracy, Boix et al. (2012) created the democratic transition variable. This variable refers to countries that transitioned from a non-democratic regime to a democracy. A democratic transition is captured when a country experiences a change in the score from 0 (= no transition) to 1 (= democratic transition). The use of this minimal conception of democracy and the dichotomous nature of the transition make the variable useful for quantitative research.

The Quality of Government dataset covers the period between 1946 and 2010. For this practical reason, I have chosen the year 1946 as the starting point. During this time frame, 110 democratic transitions have taken place. In the following cases: Albania in 1992; Argentina in 1958; Bolivia in 1979; Panama in 1950 and Suriname in 1988, a second democratic transition took place within five years after the first transition. These countries are therefore excluded from the dataset. Their democratization processes were too short to capture the change in women's political empowerment after five years. Tunisia transitioned to a democracy in 2011 and is thus added to the dataset as well.

The independent variable in my research is the time period of democratic transitions. In order to examine whether the historical time period matters for the effects of democratization processes on women's political empowerment, I have chosen to develop a dummy variable that compares two groups. The first group will be referred to as "old" democracies and is based on the time-lag theory, while the second group is referred to as "new" democracies and is based on the fast-track model.

0: Democratic transitions that took place between 1946-1974.

1: Democratic transitions that took place between 1975-2011.

I have chosen for the year 1975 for several reasons, based on the literature. For one, this year is in line with Huntington's (1991) waves of democratization. Besides that, by choosing 1975, I can test the claim of Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna (2012), that states that transitions after 1975 are more likely to experience benefits in favour of women. 1975 was also the year when the United Nations 'Decade for Women' was initiated and questions of women's political positions in government became globally prominent (Fallon et al., 2012, p. 381).

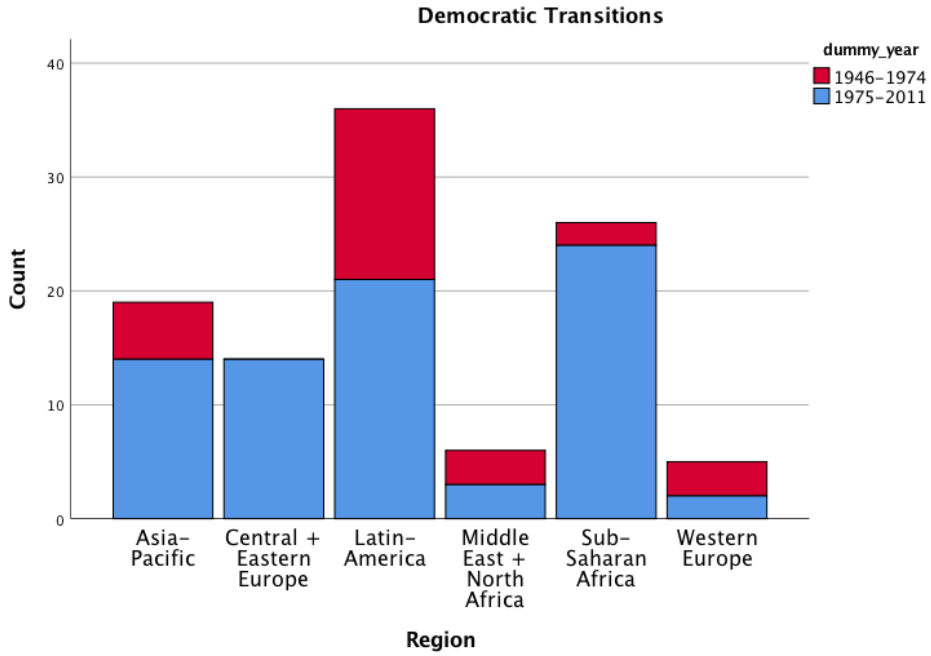

Figure 1. The democratic transitions per region (N= 106); old democracies (N= 28) and new democracies (N= 78).

Control Variables

In order to examine the relationship between the time period of democratic transitions and its influence on women's political empowerment, I have added four control variables to the statistical model: women's political empowerment index at the start of the democratic transition, the nation's most dominant religion, real GDP per capita in 2011$, and the presence of gender quotas in the lower chamber.

The women's political empowerment index at the start of the democratic transition is added to the model to control for different starting points. The nation's most dominant religion functions as a cultural control in this model and is based on the work of Fallon et al. (2012). This data is retrieved from the Global Religious Futures Project from the Pew Research Center. I have transformed this variable into a dummy variable with Protestantism as the reference category coded 0, and all other religions, such as: Catholicism, Islam, and Buddhism coded 1. Previous literature claims that countries with mostly Protestant traditions are more accepting of women's political participation and have higher levels of female representation in the legislative arena (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Paxton, 1997; Paxton, Hughes & Green, 2006). While, according to Huntington (1991) the third wave was *"overwhelmingly a Catholic wave"* (p. 76).

The third control variable is the real GDP per capita in 2011$ in the year of the start of the democratic transition. This is the socio-economic variable in the model based on the

modernization theory of Inglehart and Norris (2003) that lends support to the time-lag theory. According to them, changes in women's and men's lives in favour of gender equality are related to the development in the post-industrial and more secularized societies, as measured in the World Values Survey. This data is retrieved from the Maddison database on Historical Statistics of the World Economy that – at the moment – has the largest range of data on GDP per capita across countries and over time. It includes information from over 160 countries and covers the period from Roman times to the present. In order to compare income levels and developments, they transformed national income estimates from a national currency basis to a common currency using purchasing power parities.

The last variable controls for the presence of gender quotas in the lower chamber. According to Dahlerup (2018), ever since the achievement of women's suffrage, women in politics have had to adjust to male-dominating institutions. She describes the adoption of gender quotas as: "*crucial structural changes for the first time being made to and by the political institutions in order to facilitate the inclusion of women. This is new – and highly controversial."* (p. 58). Her study claims that the use of gender quotas is characteristic for fast-track countries (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005). By adding this to the model, I can examine whether this variable indeed illustrates a difference between old democracies (time-lag theory) and new democracies (fast-track model).

This variable is retrieved from the V-Dem dataset as well. They describe quotas as: *"national-level quotas either reserve some seats for women in the legislature (as a whole or per district) or mandate through statutory law that all political parties must nominate a certain percentage of female candidates or candidates considered for nomination."* They differentiate the categories based on sanctions of non-compliance that imposes a penalty on a party that fails to meet the quota provisions. Examples of sanctions could be: rejection of the party list, loss of public campaign funds or other financial penalties. The different categories of the presence of gender quotas in the lower chamber by the V-Dem Dataset are as following:

0: No national level gender quota.
1: Yes, a statutory gender quota for all parties without sanctions for noncompliance.
2: Yes, statutory gender quota for all parties with weak sanctions for noncompliance.
3. Yes, statutory gender quota for all parties with strong sanctions for noncompliance.
4: Yes, there are reserved seats in the legislature for women.

Results

A significant regression analysis is found and is presented in the following table[1].

Table 1. Multiple linear regression model of the change in women's political empowerment index during democratic transitions, 1946-2011

	Model 1
(Constant)	0.013
	(0.044)
Period of transition	0.079
	(0.025)**
Religion	0.047
	(0.029)
Quota	-0.007
	(0.008)
WPEI: start	-0.129
	(0.064)*
GDP per capita	0.000
	(0.000)
R^2	0.146
F	3.074
N	95

Note: OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in brackets.

*** p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

The contribution of the time period of the democratic transitions to the variation of women's political empowerment is presented by a measure called coefficient of determination. This coefficient indicates the proportion of the variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables in a fitted multiple regression model. The explained variance of this model is 12,2 percent.

The regression coefficient of a dummy variable explains how the values on the change of women's political empowerment of new democracies (coded 1) differs from the values of old democracies (coded 0) while controlling for the effects of the other independent variables. In this model, the change in the women's political empowerment index after five years on

[1] The assumptions for a multiple linear regression analysis are checked and no violations were found.

average is 0.079 higher in new democracies than in old democracies. These results lead to the following formula that predicts the change in women's political empowerment index (ΔWPEI):

$$\Delta WPEI = 0.013 + 0.079 * period\ of\ transition + 0.047 * religion - 0.007 * quota - 0.129 * WPEI_{start} + 0.000 * GDP\ per\ capita$$

In order to understand this formula, I will use predicted values to calculate the differences between the two time periods. The predicted values are based on the means of the independent variables with all the data considered. The average scores of the variables with no distinction made between old and new democracies are as following: religion (M = 0.849, SD = 0.360), WPEI year of start of democratic transition (M = 0.59, SD = 0.18), lower chamber quota (M = 0.50, SD = 1.23), and GDP per capita (M = 4820.50, SD = 3974,18). We consider two fictional countries, one that experienced a democratic transition after 1975, called Country A and one that democratized between 1946 and 1975, called Country B. Country A scores a 1 on the period of the democratic transition and Country B scores a 0. By adding the means of the other variables to the formula, Country A is predicted to experience a post-democratization change in women's political empowerment index of 0.053. In contrast, Country B is expected to experience a post-democratization change in women's political empowerment index of -0.026.

Eventually, Country A would end up with a women's political empowerment value of 0.64, while country B would end up with a value of 0.56. In other words, countries democratizing after 1975 on average experienced around a 10% growth in women's political empowerment in the 5 years after their transition, while countries democratizing between 1946 and 1975 on average experienced a decrease of around 5% in women's political empowerment. Thus, according to this model, democratic transitions that happened after 1975 indeed have a higher positive effect on women's political empowerment than democratic transitions that took place between 1946 and 1975. These results confirm my hypothesis and support the theory of the fast-track model.

Conclusion

Has democracy failed women? This is the complex question where we first started out examining in this thesis. The Western old democracies showed us that it took a hundred years after granting women's suffrage to reach a 30-40 percentage of women in parliament. However, countries in the Global South now challenge this traditional time-lag theory by implementing institutions in favour of women – e.g. quotas – in order to accelerate the process of women's political empowerment. These fast-track countries are now leading in their numbers of female legislators.

In this thesis, I wanted to examine whether 'new' democracies indeed had an advantage of cultural and societal circumstances for implementing political reforms in favour of women than 'old' democracies did. Backed by the argument that their democratization process took place in a time period where it was more common to include women into politics. My research question was: *how does the time period of a democratic transition affect women's political empowerment?* My expectations were that new democracies (1975-2011) would have a higher positive effect on women's political empowerment than old democracies (1946-1974).

I conducted a multiple linear regression analysis with the change in women's political empowerment index after five years of the democratic transition as the dependent variable and the time period of the democratic transition as the independent variable. I controlled for the nation's most dominant religion, the women's political empowerment index at the start of the transition, GDP per capita, and the presence of gender quotas in the lower chamber. All in all, this resulted in a significant model which showed that the change in the women's political empowerment index after five years is 0.079 higher on average in new democracies than in old democracies. This is a substantial difference that is in line with the theory behind the fast-track model.

Thus according to this study, I can conclude that the time period of the democratic transition matters for the effects on women's political empowerment and that democratization processes after 1975 indeed are more likely to experience benefits for women's representation than old democracies. The data provided in this thesis shows that when the democratization process took place in a time where it was more common to include women in politics, new democracies have an advantage of cultural and societal circumstances when implementing political reforms in favour of women. This advantage is absent during the democratization process of old democracies, potentially explaining the difference in speed between the fast-track model and the time-lag theory.

This study has built further on the new perspectives of the United Nations that represented a major shift in our thinking on why women are excluded from politics. The shift went from women's lack of qualifications and political interest to the lack of inclusiveness of the political institutions themselves (Dahlerup, 2018). It is important to understand the "stickiness" of male-dominance in our current political institutional norms and practices and the understanding of gendered institutions could provide better insights on how to improve women's political empowerment. As Dahlerup (2018) states, gender quotas are the first structural changes made by and within political institutions that guarantees the inclusion of women. For this, I recommend future research to investigate how gender quotas can increase women's political empowerment.

The strengths of this study rely on newly provided insights on how women's political power increases in a male-dominating order. The countries in the Global South are examples of the fast-track model, which have shown that a faster process of inclusion is possible. My statistical model confirms the fast-track model, however, there are some weaknesses. The first weakness relies on the definition of "old" democracies. The old democracies in the discussed literature refer namely to the First Wave (Western) countries of Huntington that emerged before World War I. In this study however, we refer to countries as "old" democracies if they emerged between 1946-1974. This leads to a discrepancy of the definition used in the theoretical framework and the one used in my method.

Thus, the category of the old democracies might not be a well-fitted representation of the countries mentioned in already existing literature. I therefore recommend future research to include a wider range of transitions into the model that includes the time period before World War I. A second implication denotes that the notion of path dependence is very difficult to examine in a quantitative approach. In order to fully understand the cultural and societal circumstances for implementing political reforms, a qualitative approach might provide better insights on the different factors impacting a democratization process (in favour of women). As Waylen (2007) states *"the nature of the non-democratic regime, the way it breaks down and what happens during the transitions, all have an impact on how the new system will become a consolidated democracy"* (p. 17).

I have chosen to measure the change of the women's political empowerment index after five years. Within these five years, other factors besides the democratic transition could impact the dependent variable as well. In some countries, a democratic breakdown occurred or the regime kept changing shortly after these five years. For example, Argentina experienced a democratic transition in 1963, 1973, as well as in 1983. All three of these transitions were

included in the dataset, although the last one might have impacted women's political empowerment the most in the long-term. Moreover, for most of the countries, only one election has taken place during these five years and policy outcomes might need more time to adopt and develop within a society. Thus, in order to answer the how, when, and through which processes women can obtain equal power, qualitative research is recommended.

More cultural and socio-economic variables can be included into a statistical model in order to control for the relationship between women's political empowerment and democratic transitions. Examples could be: the quality of democracy, a dummy variable to indicate whether a country was colonized or not (Paxton et al., 2006; Swiss, 2009), or women's socio-economic participation in society by using the percentage of a nation's appropriately-aged women enrolled in secondary education (Fallon et al., 2012, p. 389). Another important variable could be the electoral system. Many studies conclude that countries with proportional representation or mixed systems have a higher percentage of female legislators than countries with a plurality/majority electoral system (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Matland, 1998).

In this study, I wanted to build further on a new perspective provided by the United Nations. I wanted to examine whether democratic transitions after 1975 truly benefit women in politics more than transitions did before 1975. According to my model, new democracies did score higher on women's political empowerment than old democracies did. The traditional time-lag theory can thus be challenged by the fast-track model. By using a quantitative approach with feminist analyses, the aim was to build further knowledge on increasing women's political empowerment and to understand new insights that challenge traditional views in the field of gender equality.

I want to end this thesis with the note that if the time period of a democratic transition indeed matters for increasing women's political empowerment, that this will hopefully be embedded with much optimism for future transitions.

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