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Challenging Gendered Politics: The Impact of One-Party Systems on Women's Political Participation in Legislatures

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ABSTRACT

In the early 1990s, while a global pivot towards democracy was slowly accepted into civil society, authoritarian regimes began losing legitimacy. Paradoxically, the spread of democracy was accompanied by the insurgence of patriarchal one-party autocracies. This phenomenon catalyzed my interest to research into gender parity and one-party rule, the differences between a one-party state and a one-party dominant system, and the overall implications of adding gender quotas in party and state politics. The paper focuses on the relationship between women's political participation in legislatures and one-party systems in three countries: China, Turkey and South Africa. The aim of the research is to uncover the impact and trend of one-party rule on women representation in legislature. As a result, the research will clarify whether there are differences in political treatment of women in a one-party state in China and one-party dominant state like South Africa. Another layer of the research will illustrate the impact of women's participation in legislature where a democratic state begins to show signs of one-party dominance like Turkey. I qualitatively and quantitatively depict how each unique system identifies women's political participation and whether or not they use democratic tactics to increase the number of women in their legislature.

Keywords: Women; Parliaments; Political Participation; Political Parties; Legislature; Representation; Gender Parity; Gender Quotas; One-Party State; One-Party Dominant System

WOMEN'S ROLE IN DEMOCRACIES AND ONE-PARTY SYSTEMS

As Honorable Madeleine K. Albright puts it, "Success without democracy is improbable; democracy without women is impossible." Both on a national and international basis, Hon. Albright and other acclaimed feminists argue that the democratic cause is half-empty without the inclusivity of women. During the time that Hon. Albright served as U.S. Secretary of State in the

1990s, the third wave of democratization snowballed into several countries that were under authoritarian rule.[1] This global pivot towards democracy was slowly accepted into civil society, and authoritarian regimes began losing legitimacy. Paradoxically, the spread of democracy was accompanied by the insurgence of patriarchal one-party autocracies. This phenomenon catalyzed my exploration into gender parity and one-party rule, the differences between a one-party state and a one-party dominant system, and the overall implications of adding gender quotas in party and state politics.

According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's 2014 *Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties*, increased political representation of women "increases public trust in the political system, impacts the policy agenda, contributes to socio-economic development and promotes better understanding of gender equality issues in society."[2] The percentage of women representatives in a legislature is considered an important indicator for women's political participation, particularly at the national level. On the international level, there is a commitment to develop a women's rights standard as enumerated in the latest yet recently expired UN Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as established by UN Women. Even with gender parity introduced in the international policy arena and legislative efforts being made to empower women across political systems, challenges still remain today.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON ONE-PARTY STATES AND ONE-PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEMS

Before uncovering the structure of a one-party state and a one-party dominant state, it is important to note the difference between a one-party system and a liberal democracy. South African political science professors Hermann Giliomee and Charles Simkins argue that a liberal democratic regime allows minority groups, such as women, to express their interests effectively and runs in a competitive party system with free and fair elections.[3] On the contrary, Beatriz Magaloni and Ruth Kricheli from Stanford University study the art of autocracies and how they function in civil society. While one-party regimes exclude opposition parties' participation in elections (ex. China today), one-party dominant regimes "permit opposition parties to compete in a multiparty election but usually do not allow alternation of political power."[4] For example, my findings on Turkey's current political climate will later illustrate the sharp contrast between the general parliamentary election in June 2015 and the recent election in November 2015, and how present day Turkey resembles a one-party dominant system.

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[1] Beatriz Magaloni and Ruth Kricheli, "Political Order and One-Party Rule," *Annual Review of Political Science* (2010).

[2] Drude Dahlerup, "Using Quota's to Increase Women's Political Representation" *Women in Parliament* 2002, (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2002), 40.

[3] Hermann Giliomee and Charles Simkins, *The Awkward Embrace: One-Party Domination and Democracy* (Australia: Harwood Academic, 1999), 62.

[4] Magaloni and Kricheli, "Political Order and One-Party Rule," 124.

In regards to one-party states, Barbara Geddes in *What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?* examines how the state apparatus and civil society members play competing roles in finding political representation in the one-party state. She claims,

> "The different branches of the state and the various areas of social activity have been strictly subordinated to the leadership of the party. This makes one-party regimes more resistant to opposition. They have access to a stronger organization of supporters within the population, and at the same time they find it easier to control dissidents. This endows them with a longer life expectancy."[5]

One-party regimes have become the most common type of authoritarian rule and have proved to be more stable and to grow faster than other types of authoritarianism.[6] In fact, "any time between 1946 and the present, single-party regimes have survived an average of almost 23 years."[7] Geddes concludes after analyzing the consequences of one-party states that, "…[these] regimes have tried to negotiate institutional changes that allow the opposition some participation and satisfy international donors and lenders, while not actually giving up control of the government and the resources attached to it."[8] Implementing positive discriminatory policies means favoring citizens of a disadvantaged group in order to promote diversity and inclusion. Examples of these institutional changes include the establishment of gender quotas and other positive discriminative policies within the state in order to achieve the support of an underrepresented group – women.

One-party dominant systems can function within different types of regimes. It may coexist in a democracy, as it comes to power through a free and fair election and functions as a power-sharing regime. On the other hand, many democratic states that run under a one-party dominant system appear to be "semi-democratic" – that is, a state that "portrays characteristics of both a democratic and an authoritarian regime."[9] Giliomee and Simkins describe how leaders of one-party dominant systems in particular share the conviction that, "only through their own continuance in power would the national interest, as they choose to define it, be served."[10] In their research for *The Awkward Embrace*, they found that a broad spectrum of one-party dominant systems exists in society today – from those who carry out a personalist regime to those that allow a host of individual and group freedoms in civil society and among office holders. Many one-party dominant systems, such as South Africa's current political climate, come from a background of revolution and liberation movements. Their political survival is to a

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[5] Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know About Democratizations After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review – Political Science* 1, no. 2 (2009), 132.

[6] Magaloni and Kircheli, "Political Order and One-Party Rule," 123.

[7] Geddes, "Democratizations After Twenty Years," 132.

[8] Geddes, "Democratizations After Twenty Years," 141.

[9] Elin Bjarnegård and Pär Zetterberg, "Gender Politics in Semi-Democracies: Comparing gender quota implementation across political parties in Tanzania" (paper presented at the annual conference for the International Political Science Association World Congress: Gender Politics and Regime Type Panel, Montreal, Quebec, July 19-24, 2014).

[10] Giliomee and Simkins, *The Awkward Embrace*, ix.

large degree due to the fact that "even prior to the founding election they had staked a strong claim to represent the new nation with its particular historic project, and had managed to occupy a strategic position of power."[11]

THE AIM AND THE ANTICIPATION

The main aim of the research is to uncover whether there is an impact on women representation in legislature if state politics are run by a one-party system. As a result, the research will clarify whether there are differences in political treatment of women in a one-party state in China and one-party dominant state like South Africa. Another layer of the research will illustrate the impact of women's participation in legislature where a democratic state begins to show signs of one-party dominance like Turkey. The significance of the research is to take steps towards finding an effective solution that increases women's access to state politics.

I hypothesize that over time, one-party rule inhibits and deteriorates the ability for women to find strong, transparent political representation in legislature. Whether it is a piece of legislation or through a campaign statement, most political figures address the role of gender equality in their state. However, the patriarchal nature commonly found among one-party systems will ultimately limit women's political participation in legislature. Additionally, no difference will be observed between the political treatment of women in a one-party state and a one-party dominant state. The absence of multi-party competition and democratic electoral processes in both systems will fundamentally restrict women's participation in legislature.

Although establishing gender quotas opens a lane for political parties and leaders to facilitate democratic practices, I anticipate to observe that as a democratic state like Turkey appears to transition into a one-party dominant state, the leader's initial emphasis on democratic values, such as gender equality, will gradually disappear. As they increasingly adopt authoritarian traits to retain their political control and pursue their own political agenda, the leader's authoritarian approach will increase the gender gap in political participation. Some counter-hypotheses include that a decrease in women's political participation is due to women's lack of access to education or cultural notions that serve to sway women away from holding public office.

METHODOLOGY

In my research, the dependent variable is the level and trend of women's political participation in one-party, one-party dominant, and semi-democratic state legislatures. The possible outcomes include restrictive access to political participation for women, partially visible political participation for women, or an extremely transparent measure of women's political participation. The qualitative and quantitative analysis will illustrate the different political patterns each country and leader has reflected over the course of the one-party rule.

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[11] Giliomee and Simkins, *The Awkward Embrace*, 2.

In regards to the independent variables, the explanatory variables include a series of causal factors such as established electoral gender quotas in the legislature and the level of authoritarian rule that is exerted by a one-party state or one-party dominant leader. Another explanatory variable includes the overall political ideology each country is run under – whether it is a communist, semi-democratic, or democratic state. Finally, the control variables in my research are a woman's access or level of education, race, ethnicity, and an individual's cultural background. These control variables also apply to the leaders of each country as part of the case selection. On the state level, the control variables include the socio-economic conditions before, during and after the one-party rule is established as well as the country's signature and ratification of CEDAW.

Through the lens of three different countries, the analysis focuses on the impact of one-party rule on women's political participation in legislatures. The selected time period is the third wave of democratization in the 1990s. Each case selection has established the one-party system before, during or shortly after this time period. The one-party state analyzed is China, which is politically monopolized by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The one-party dominant system analyzed is the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa. The democratic state that appears to transform into an authoritarian one-party dominant state is the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey. It is important to note that each case selection follows a unique political ideology. While the dominant AKP in Turkey is an Islamic-rooted, right-winged party, the ANC in South Africa is a social democratic party and the CCP in China is fundamentally communist. Observations on the trend of women entering legislature, a leader's public statements and political actions towards women's political participation as well as the level of democracy each country embodies are recorded and analyzed.

BACKGROUND ON SELECTED CASE STUDIES

China's Communist Conversion and the Role of Women in the National People's Congress

CCP founder Mao Zheng's campaign slogan, "Women can hold up half the sky" is well known in Chinese society and has been encouraging and accompanying many Chinese women in their pursuit of gender equality for a few decades.[12] Although the Chinese government has defined its objectives for encouraging women leadership in legislature, many male leaders and voters in the past and present tend not to trust women's leadership abilities simply because they are women.

In 1949, China under CCP rule was established and still stands as the official political ideology of the state. Six year later, Mao's leadership and lawmakers formed the state's legislative body known as the National People's Congress (NPC). Contrary to many assumptions, China has one of the largest legislative bodies in the world. In practice, only

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[12] Zhongxin Sun, "Chinese Women: A Social Context Analysis for Understanding Gender Equality in China," in *Women and Politics Around the World: A Comparative History and Survey,* ed. Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 292.

members of the CCP, its eight allied parties, and CCP-approved independent candidates are indirectly elected. The nomination of candidates is tightly controlled by the party, underlining the lack of electoral processes. The quota system used is in the form of reserved seats. In 2007, the 10th NPC decided that in the 11th NPC session, legislated quotas would go into place and women would take up a 22% proportion of the seats. There are no party quotas enumerated in the Constitution that applies to the NPC.

South Africa's Structural Changes and the Role of Women in the Parliament

It was not until the 1994 Constitution that men and women of all races were enfranchised into the South African Parliament. Held in the same year, South Africa's first inclusive election replaced the apartheid government with "a constitutional democracy based on social justice and fundamental human rights."[13] These rights, expressed in the Constitution and the South African Women's Charter, included a steady commitment to gender parity and women's rights – "a moral touchstone" of the newly crafted democracy according to women's studies professor Cathi Albertyn.[14]

In his first State of the Nation address to Parliament in 1994, President Nelson Mandela spoke about the importance of gender equality in the same vein as Hon. Albright, declaring that:

> "Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. All of us must take this on, that the objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Programme will not have been realized unless we see in visible and practical terms that the condition of women in our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society."[15]

On the same note, he claimed that instead of catering only to his own party's political agenda and ambitions, he was socially and fiscally committed to ensuring that the, "ANC government [would] serve all the people of South Africa, not just ANC members."[16] In regards to the quota system, ANC adopted a 50% gender quota in general parliamentary elections in 2009 and remains the only party which participates in the party quota system. There are no legislated quotas enumerated in the Constitution that applies to Parliament elections. Parliament members are directly elected into multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote.

Turkey's Transformation into a One-Party Dominant State and the Role of Women in the Grand National Assembly

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[13] Ruth B. Cowan, "Women's Representation on the Courts in the Republic of South Africa," *University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender and Class* 6, no. 2 (2006): 291.

[14] Cowan, 291.

[15] Cowan, 292.

[16] Nelson Mandela, "ANC Election Victory," (speech presented at Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa, May 2, 1994).

During the 1935 elections – the first in which women were allowed to run for the parliament – "18 women were elected into the parliament, comprising 4.6 percent of the entire body."[17] Nearly 70 years later in 2002, the proportion of female parliament members was a mere 4.4 percent. Despite pro-women legislation and declarations being fundamental to Turkey's Muslim democracy, women are underrepresented in the legislative politics.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is the first directly elected president of Turkey and leader of Turkey's largest political party. One of his major initiatives when he was elected in 2002 was to strengthen the rights of women particularly in the political arena. The big picture he wanted to paint was a society built on Islamic ideals and democratic institutions. Based on his past actions, it is important for him to keep his political legacy and survival of the party he co-founded in 2002.

The current party in power has deviated from the democratic values it once adopted in 1935 and has moved towards an authoritarian one-party dominant system. This trend is best observed in the most recent general elections in November 2015. President Erdogan's party see-sawed back into the majority – and essentially dominant – position in a snap election, despite losing the majority in an election held five months earlier. While opposition minority parties include party quotas, the AKP does not. There are no formal legislated quotas in the Assembly. It is important to note that even though members are directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation, only parties surpassing the 10% threshold can win parliamentary seats.

DATA COMPUTATION

The information relayed in the table and chart describe the representation of women in legislature since the one-party rule took power or dominated the multiparty electoral process. It is important to note that in China's special case, the NPC was not created until six years after the CCP established legal one-party rule. Therefore, the number of women in the legislature was not recorded until 1954, even though the CCP was established in 1949. By pairing the qualitative narrative from sources like scholarly journals and speeches, and the quantitative narrative drawn from the table and chart, one can efficiently visualize the historical patterns and trends of women's political participation in one-party system legislatures as well as the effectiveness of gender quotas and other positive discriminative policies.

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[17] Zehra F. Kabasakal Arat, *Human Rights in Turkey*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 204.

Table 1: **Summary Findings of Women's Participation in a One-Party Rule System**

| Country | Initial Year of One-Party Rule | Percentage of Female Legislature Members (Lower or Single House) | | | Global Rank[2] |
		Initial (1st Year After One-Party Rule)	Decade Later (10 years after One-Party Rule)	Current (As of November 1, 2015)	
South Africa	1994	25.3% (101/400)	32.8% (131/400)	42.0% (168/400)	8
China	1954[1]	12.0% (147/1226)	17.8% (542/3040)	23.4% (699/2987)	56
Turkey	2002	4.4% (24/550)	14.2% (78/550)	14.9% (82/548)	92

1. When National People's Congress was created under CCP
2. 190 countries were classified by descending order of the percentage of women in the lower/single house as of *November 1, 2015.*

Chart 1: **One-Party Rule and the Percentage of Women in Legislature (Lower or Single House)**
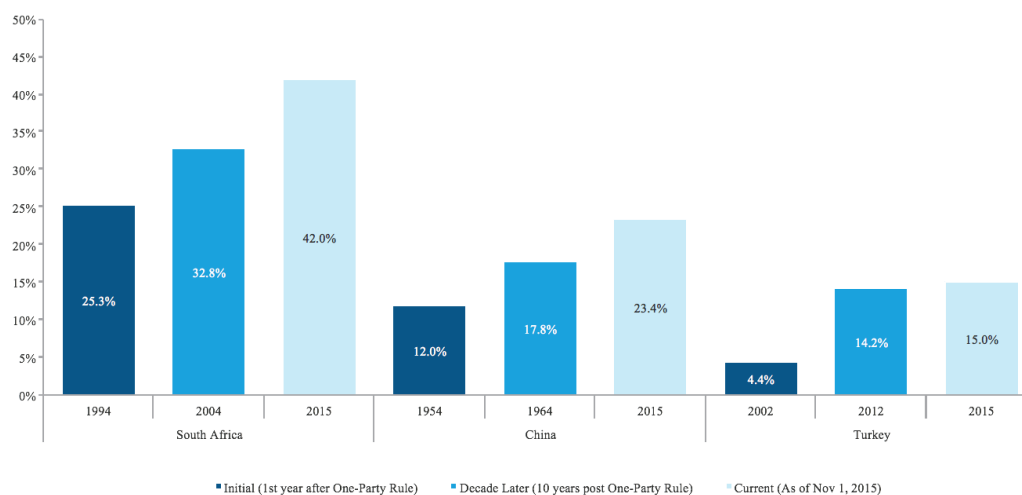
THE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Findings in China

Although the global pattern of women's political participation illustrates a 50% increase between 1995 and 2015 (UN Women), the rate of increase in women's participation in China's NPC has largely plateaued. In the 11th NPC formation in 2008, women representatives totaled 21.3%, marginally higher than three decades earlier in 1978 (21.2%). This is despite the third wave of democratization striking the globalized world two decades ago, which does not appear to have at all influenced the political participation of women in the NPC. China's relatively unchanged women's participation would suggest that they are lagging behind countries that are

more recently and more rigorously adopting legislation in favor of gender equality, such as the implementation of gender quotas.

In fact, Zeng discusses how in recent years, "the gap between women's participation in different political power structures in China and in other countries has widened rather than narrowed."[18] Undemocratic elections and the lack of electoral processes also contribute to the lower rate of women's participation in the political arena.[19] According to Freedom House's 2015 Report on China's freedom, it was ranked as a "Not Free," country heavily due to the lack of political pluralism.[20]

The Findings in South Africa

Why have countries like South Africa placed women's political participation as one of the top priorities on their agenda? From the beginning of his presidency, Nelson Mandela realized that the role of women on the political decision-making stage attributes to strengthening the state's democratic values and ultimately contributes to the state's sustainable peace and development efforts. Since the post-apartheid period, South Africa and its parliament members have stood by their commitment to promote and entrench gender equality within the democratic state. The establishment of a specific and elaborate framework has ensured the inclusion of gender equality concerns in policy formulation. In effect, a "gender pact" was instituted in South Africa as women were recognized and incorporated as an interest group into the policymaking process.[21]

As one of the top ten countries that represent women best in Parliament, the effective use of party quotas has expanded the grounds for women to secure a seat in the South African Parliament. Today, nearly 50% of the Parliament is made up of women leadership. **Chart 1** also depicts how the state has achieved the fastest rate of increase between the ANC's ten-year mark and the present Parliament, 9.2% in 11 years, which underlines the positive effects of a democracy and its efforts to represent all groups a part of civil society. The national liberation movement incited by the ANC increased the scope for women to politically participate in parliament with consistent and growing participation levels over two decades, despite starting from a significantly higher base level than either China or Turkey.

The Findings in Turkey

Unlike the clarity in China's and South Africa's chart results, Turkey's near-plateau between 2012 and 2015 requires a deeper analysis in the current political climate and the shifting agenda of the leadership. President Erdogan has further tightened his grip on power after AKP swept back to its majority party position with an unexpectedly convincing win in the general

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[18] Benxiang Zeng, "Women's Political Participation in China: Improved or Not?" *Journal of International Women's Studies* 15 no. 1 (2014): 146.

[19] Sun, "Chinese Women," 298.

[20] *Freedom in the World*: *China Country Report*, Freedom House, 2015.

[21] Shirin Hassim, "The Gender Pact and Democratic Consolidation: Institutionalizing Gender Equality in the South African State," *Women in Democratic South Africa* 29 no. 3 (2003): 506.

parliamentary elections on November 1, 2015. The irony behind the results in Turkey's election is that in 1934, Turkey became the first European country to give women the right to vote. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, carried out legislative reforms to expand political representation for women. In fact, he did so years before many other Western countries such as France, which only gave women the right to vote a decade later.

"You cannot make women work in the same jobs as men do, as in communist regimes. You cannot give them a shovel and tell them to do their work. This is against their delicate nature…" stated President Erdogan back in November 2014 at a summit in Istanbul which focused on justice for women.[22] This statement marked the initial stage of his public authoritarian discourse. His remarks highlight his fundamental belief that women and men are unequal in their ability to perform the same tasks - arguably including the ability to lead a nation and must simply do the "equivalent" work. Many critics, both feminists and non-feminists, accused Erdogan of seeking to erode Turkey's secular principles and to limit the civil liberties of women based on the Islamic roots that the party was founded upon.

News headlines which only 12 months earlier proudly trumpeted "Women's Political Participation on the Rise in Turkey" (Huffington Post 2014) and once lauded the progress being made have since been replaced by headlines such as "Number of women MPs in Turkish parliament drops..." (Hurriyet News Daily 2015). In a period of five months since the June 2015 general election, the number of women parliament members decreased. After examining the election results, it was recorded that "female representation in the Turkish parliament dropped to 82 deputies out of a total of 550...."[23] This is a 14.9% decrease from the June election, which was the highest percentage of female representation in the Grand National Assembly recorded in Turkey's history.

Prior to November 1st, it was observed that the left-wing minority parties kept the number of female candidates the same, while the ultra-nationalist MHP [Nationalist Action Party] saw a slight increase, since it waived the fee for female candidates.[24] However, AKP had a significant reduction in the number of women. When the November election was announced, Turkey's main opposition groups have identified President Erdogan's rhetoric that is straying away from the country's secular foundation and moving towards a more authoritarian regime. The apparent plateau in the percentage of women in parliament paints a new face for Turkey as a semi-democratic state led by a semi-authoritarian president.

ANALYSIS

Based on the findings, one-party domination deteriorates the ability for women to find strong, transparent political representation within the state if positive discriminative policies, like a quota system, are not effectively implemented. Leaders with authoritarian and socially conservative tendencies believe that women should be held only to the responsibility of

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[22] "Recept Tayyip Erdoğan: 'women not equal to men,'" *The Guardian*, November 24, 2014.
[23] "Female Representation in Parliament Declines," *Today's Zaman*, November 2, 2015.
[24] Pinar Tremblay, "Women were big losers in Turkey's elections," *Al-Monitor*, November 23, 2015.

motherhood and not the public office, as President Erdogan explained. However, the effective use of party quotas can expand the grounds for women to secure a seat, as the case in South Africa illustrated. Surveys and studies from the *UN Development Fund for Women* found that democratic and transparent politics is correlated with low levels of corruption, and the two create an enabling environment for greater participation by women.[25] National legislatures that establish an electoral gender quota system attribute to a more pragmatic representation, ultimately leading to a more democratic system. The use of proportional representation and party lists within the quota system democratically organizes the candidate slate as well as the legislature representation. It is observed through the case selections that until the country adopts a political system that allows a percentage of popularly elected seats to be held by women, progress towards gender equality is limited. As the policy analysts from the Macrothink Institute recommend, one-party systems that fail to increase women's political participation should, "educate men on the importance of gender balancing in politics, so that they prepare themselves to support the advancement of women in politics" and "to instigate a monitoring and evaluation framework that will assess the level and effectiveness of women participation."[26]

      In all, the impact of one-party political systems on women's political participation depends on the gender ideology of the one-party state or dominant party as well as the authoritarian tone of the leader. Their misuse of increased political power brings priorities from their personal political agenda above prior democratic promises. The implications of a more authoritarian regime would decrease not only the leadership's efforts in increasing women's political participation, but it will also discourage women from entering the electoral process. Quantitatively, all three countries experienced an initial phase of increased women's political participation in the first decade - however, over time, progress in China and Turkey plateaus while it continues to flourish in South Africa. China's slow rate of women representation in legislature is due to the lack of electoral processes and absence of overall party advocacy for women's political participation. Turkey's increasingly authoritarian leadership undermines the democratic values it was founded on and has ignored women's political participation as a priority. Meanwhile, South Africa showcases that gender quotas and overall strong democratic initiatives allows for increased women's representation in legislatures.

      Across the three case selections, I did not find a significant difference in the political treatment of women between a one-party state legislature and a one-party dominant legislature. Each case selection is or was led by leaders with different presidential approaches to gender parity. It was not the one-party structure itself that ultimately affected the political treatment of women. However, most one-party states like China and Cuba prohibit gender quotas as a whole. Mala Htun argues that "one-party states, no-party states, military governments, and other

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[25] Anne Marie Goetz, *Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women?,* (New York: UN Women, 2008).

[26] Zengura Mervis, "The relationship between democracy and women participation in politics," *Macrothink Institute Journal of Public Administration and Governance* 3 no. 1 (2013): 175.

countries that fail to respect civil liberties are more likely to give women reserved seats instead of [party] quotas" which shows to have a negative societal impact.[27]

CONCLUSION AND THE FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

While researching, I better understood the concept of positive discrimination and how it builds the democratic foundation in civil society. Political parties around the world, particularly those that are underrepresented or are part of the minority opposition movement, implement more positive discriminative policies and laws within their constitution in order to attract and increase diverse party membership. Many parties, such as HDP in Turkey, temporarily place fee-waivers for women candidates until equal representation and opportunity is shared amongst all potential public office holders.

It is important to note the research collected and analyzed focuses on a limited selection of countries with distinct types of governance. Another element that should be considered for future analysis of this topic is the country's historical perception of the role of women in politics. Even though political parties and the state have the opportunity to implement a gender equality narrative in their leadership, many women are discouraged by the institutional changes and peddle back to the traditional image of a woman being weak, dependent civil society members. However, the creation of women leagues and various organizations catered to the interests of women's rights opens an avenue of new found confidence for women to run for parliamentary elections. I am cautiously optimistic about the future of women's political participation in countries controlled by one-party systems, whether the one-party rule is embedded in the constitution or naturally dominates the competitive multiparty system. Implementing gender quotas and other forms of positive discriminatory policies in party and state politics emphasizes the promise of a successful democracy.

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[27] Mala Htun, "Is Gender like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups," *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 3 (2004): 450.

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