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# Ethnic Politics and Women's Empowerment in Africa: Ministerial Appointments to Executive Cabinets

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*Under what conditions do women participate in executive power in multiethnic societies? Previous research has examined how political institutions, socioeconomic factors, and cultural norms affect the appointment of women as cabinet ministers. However, no study has assessed the extent to which the politicization of ethnicity—a cleavage that shapes political life in many countries—affects women's cabinet appointments. Focusing on sub-Saharan Africa, we argue that women are less likely to become cabinet ministers where incumbents use such appointments to build patronage-based alliances with politicians who act as advocates for ethnic constituencies. Using an original dataset on the composition of cabinets in 34 African countries from 1980 to 2005, we show that women's share of cabinet appointments is significantly lower in countries where leaders must accommodate a larger number of politicized ethnic groups, but it rises with higher levels of democracy and greater representation of women in parliament.*

Political power in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa is highly centralized in the executive, and its actions are largely unconstrained by other branches of government (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Jackson and Rosberg 1982). Given the great concentration of authority in the African executive, any effort to understand the conditions under which women can penetrate the highest reaches of national politics must focus on the factors that impinge on their appointment as cabinet ministers. Previous cross-national research on women's appointment to ministerial positions has offered important insights on the influence of institutional structures and political ideologies (Davis 1997; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Krook and O'Brien 2012; Reynolds 1999a, 1999b; Russell and DeLancey 2002; Siaroff 2000). However, far less is known about how informal politics might affect their appointment to state offices despite the fact that extraconstitutional practices often play an outsized role in shaping political outcomes in many countries, not just those of sub-Saharan Africa.

To explain the variation in women's access to ministerial positions across African countries, we focus on the role of cabinet appointments, specifically as patronage appointments, in the formation of multiethnic ruling coalitions. We build on previous findings indicating that governments based on coalition negotiations are less likely to include women cabinet ministers (Kobayashi 2004; Krook and O'Brien 2012; Reynolds 1999b; Studlar and Moncrief 1997; Whitford, Wilkins, and Ball 2007). In the African context, we argue that fewer women are included in the cabinet when incumbents use ministerial positions primarily as patronage appointments to secure the support of politicians who represent ethnic constituencies. African incumbents have historically built ruling coalitions by strategically allocating cabinet appointments to ethnic patrons and thereby satisfy the redistributive demands of politicized ethnic groups (Bayart 1993; Lemarchand 1972). Even with the onset of democratization in the late 1980s, the absence of neutral institutions or universalistic norms for redistribution has induced African incumbents

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to continue forming governing coalitions by appointing ethnic patrons to ministerial positions that can be used to channel scarce state resources to their supporters (Posner 2005; van de Walle 2007).

The coalition-building imperative in African countries has limited women's participation in executive power because women generally lack the social status and personal resources needed to become ethnic patrons (Beck 2003; Goetz 2002; Tripp 2000). Women are unlikely to emerge as ethnic patrons when group leadership is contingent on the ability to engage in the clientelistic distribution of jobs, favors, and money. At the same time, ethnically targeted appointments to the cabinet tend to crowd out other types of appointments. As the number of ethnic groups that need to be accommodated in the cabinet increases, fewer ministerial positions remain for ministers selected on the basis of policy criteria that may be more favorable to women.

We assess how the politicization of ethnicity has affected women's access to ministerial positions with original cross-sectional time-series data on cabinet appointments in 34 African countries from 1980 through 2005. Using two different measures of ethnic political mobilization—a fractionalization index of politically relevant ethnic groups (Posner 2004) and a count of the number of politically relevant ethnic groups (Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010)—we show that women are systematically appointed to a smaller share of cabinet positions where incumbents must contend with distributive demands from a larger number of such groups. This finding is robust to the inclusion of a variety of controls as well as to different estimation techniques. Our empirical results corroborate previous findings concerning the positive effects of democratization, women's legislative representation, and legislative quotas. We find no consistent effects for other political variables, such as executive type or the effective number of legislative parties, or for most socioeconomic factors.

Ours is the first comparative study to consider the impact of politicized ethnicity on women's cabinet representation. In establishing a link between women's cabinet appointments and ethnic-based patronage politics, this article contributes to the study of women's political empowerment by focusing attention on the persistent influence of the informal institutions that influence politics in countries around the world (Helmke and Levitsky 2004). Our findings should compel specialists of other regions to consider how different forms of patronage politics might affect women's access to political power. The structures of patron-client relations can vary considerably in terms of strength, scope, and identity. These characteristics may well shape the supply of, and demand for, women

cabinet ministers even in countries where democracy is advancing.<sup>1</sup>

In what follows, we first discuss how the ethnic politics involved in coalition formation have hindered women's access to executive power in African countries. We then present our data, methodology, and empirical findings. We conclude by considering the implications of our findings for the study of women's political empowerment in African countries and beyond.

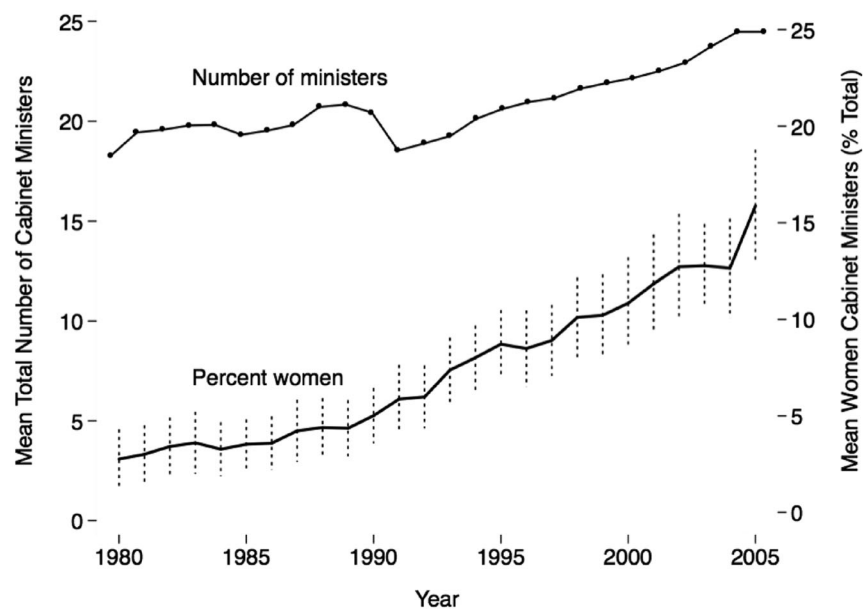
## The Politics of Cabinet Appointments

African women's share of cabinet appointments has grown more than fivefold between 1980 and 2005, as shown in Figure 1. Much of this growth can be attributed to the region's political liberalization since the late 1980s (Bauer 2011; Russell and DeLancey 2002), replicating a worldwide association between greater democracy and improved women's cabinet participation (Davis 1997; Krook and O'Brien 2012; Reynolds 1999b). Yet, despite the evident improvement in African women's access to cabinet positions, cross-national variation in the region has also grown since the onset of political liberalization. In Figure 1, the confidence intervals around the regional mean indicate that the variance in women's share of cabinet positions increased by more than half in the years following 1990. The question is whether this growing divergence among African countries can be largely attributed to differences in rates of democratization or to other factors.

We argue that much of the cross-national variation in women's cabinet participation among African countries can be explained by coalition-building dynamics. Previous studies of executive cabinets around the world indicate that women are less likely to become ministers in countries where appointments are the product of coalition negotiations (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005; Kobayashi 2004; Krook and O'Brien 2012; Studlar and Moncrief 1997; Reynolds 1999b; Whitford, Wilkins, and Ball 2007). In the African context, however, ethnic patrons rather than political parties are the relevant coalition partners. Because most political parties, including those in power, remain too weak to consistently mobilize

<sup>1</sup> Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2005) advocate the use of Norris's (1997) supply-and-demand conceptualization to explain women's cabinet representation. "Supply" refers to the availability of women candidates with the motivation and political capital needed to access the cabinet. "Demand" refers to the relative political benefits versus costs of appointing a woman instead of a man.

FIGURE 1 Women in African Cabinets, 1980–2005



Note: Vertical dashed lines around the mean percent of women ministers are 95% confidence intervals. Data on cabinet ministers are from annual volumes of *Africa South of the Sahara* (1981–2006). Data on female cabinet ministers are coded by the authors from secondary sources.

popular support (Kuenzi and Lambright 2001; Mozaffar and Scarritt 2005; van de Walle 2003), African incumbents have mainly relied on the selective distribution of patronage to build governing majorities under both authoritarian and democratic regimes.

Cabinet appointments are used by African incumbents to co-opt “big men,” the influential politicians who can activate their own personalized patron-client networks to recruit supporters or deliver votes on behalf of government (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Diamond 2008). Ministerial posts are among the most attractive forms of patronage an incumbent can offer big men, since being in government enables them to channel state resources to their followers and thereby shore up their own leadership positions—mainly among their coethnics.

African incumbents engage in ethnic arithmetic to determine which big men to appoint as cabinet ministers.<sup>2</sup> The extreme diversity of most African countries (Fearon 2003), coupled with the politicization of ethnicity before independence (Ekeh 1975), has obliged incumbents to recruit coalition partners from a cross-section of ethnic groups in order to ensure their tenure. Indeed,

<sup>2</sup>African patronage coalitions are not always based on ethnicity (Lemarchand 1972). In Senegal, coalitions have been built through regional and religious networks (Villalón 1995), though even these networks tend to have the geographic concentration associated with ethnicity.

African incumbents have historically been most likely to achieve stable rule when using patronage to integrate politicians from different ethnic groups into their coalitions (Bayart 1993; Rothchild 1997). A cabinet appointment serves as an incumbent’s commitment to include a politician’s coethnics in the redistribution of resources because such a position entails direct and discretionary authority in the allocation of state resources. The credibility of the commitment is reinforced by its visibility, since a minister’s ethnicity is usually public knowledge (Posner 2005) and can be used as a shortcut for judging patronage distribution in the absence of full information (Chandra 2007; Fearon 1999). Ethnically diversified cabinet appointments thus enable incumbents not only to maximize mass support for their ruling coalitions but also discourage aggrieved elites from conspiring against them (Arriola 2009).

But women are poorly positioned to serve as ethnic patrons in most African countries. The construction of the modern state that began under colonialism effectively excluded women from the access to resources needed to build patron-client networks. While colonial authorities granted men access to land, markets, and the civil service, women often lost the property and political rights they enjoyed in precolonial societies (Adu Boahen 1987; Hanson 2002; Van Allen 1972). The systematic exclusion of women from patronage-generating opportunities

continued well after independence. Sidelined into supporting political roles in ruling parties and state bureaucracies, women had few opportunities to participate in the allocation of resources or to claim political credit for doing so (Bauer 2011; Fatton 1989; Geisler 2004). Politically active women instead have often had to depend on men to secure their access to patronage, making it difficult for them to build clientele networks that would give them greater influence (Beck 2003; Goetz 2002; Tripp 2000, 2001). As a result, relatively few women have had the political connections or clientelistic followings needed to successfully negotiate themselves into cabinet positions.<sup>3</sup>

Women in some African countries have managed to overcome the limitations associated with traditional patronage-based mechanisms by working through activist movements or professional organizations. In this respect, the African experience mirrors a cross-national pattern in which women with policy or professional expertise are more likely to be appointed to the cabinet, as occurs in Latin America (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2009) and advanced industrial democracies (Davis 1997; Kobayashi 2004; Siaroff 2000). Autonomous women's associations, in particular, have helped to increase the supply of potential cabinet appointees in African countries by enabling women activists to develop national reputations for promoting greater transparency in government institutions and greater equity in access to public services (Fallon 2008; Tripp, Konaté, and Lowe-Morna 2006). And women with reputations as reform advocates or policy experts have become valuable cabinet appointees for incumbents intent on signaling their commitment to reform in African countries where policy performance increasingly matters in electoral competition (Basedau and Stroh 2012; Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2005; Weghorst and Lindberg 2013). For example, in Uganda, women's rights activist Miria Matembe, an outspoken critic of corruption, was appointed to lead the Ministry for Ethics and Integrity. In Senegal, Madior Boye, a former president of the Association of Senegalese Lawyers, was appointed as the country's first woman prime minister due to her reputation for apolitical management. In Nigeria, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who developed a reputation for integrity and technocratic competence as vice president of the World Bank, was twice appointed finance minister to clean up the country's public accounts.

Despite the opportunities democratization has created for women to enter government as policy experts,

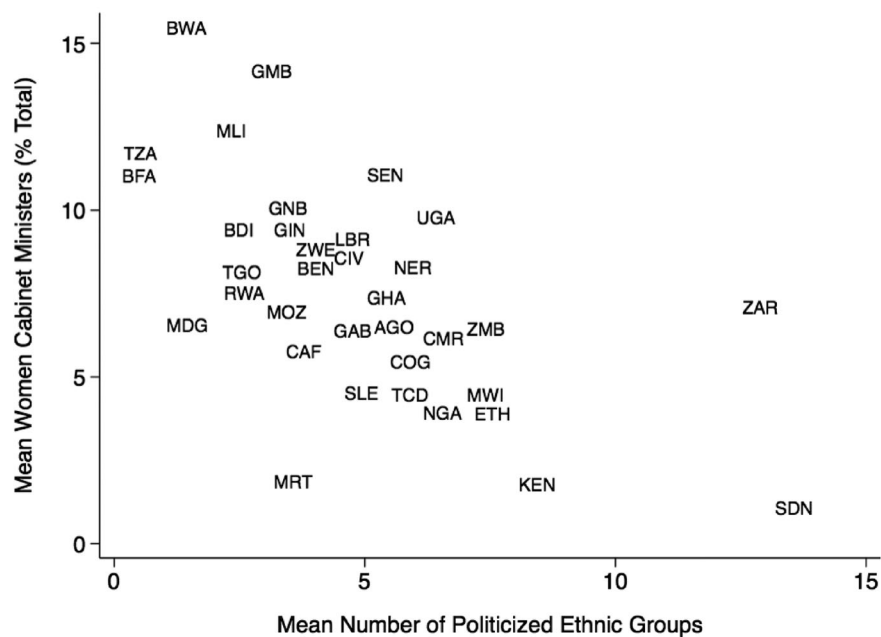
we hypothesize that women's share of cabinet positions should be lower, on average, in African countries with a larger number of politically significant ethnic groups.<sup>4</sup> The need to signal citizens' access to state resources through the appointment of ethnic patrons, who are rarely women, remains strong in many African countries (Berman, Eyoh, and Kymlicka 2004; Eifert, Miguel, and Posner 2010; van de Walle 2003, 2007). Even in countries that have made democratic gains, incumbents face competing distributive demands from multiple ethnic groups that must be satisfied through ethnically targeted cabinet appointments. Thus, incumbents have an incentive to allocate the relatively limited number of cabinet positions to ethnic patrons at the expense of policy experts, a category in which women ministers are more likely to be found.

The scatterplot in Figure 2 is consistent with the logic outlined in this article, indicating a negative relationship between the number of politicized ethnic groups and women's cabinet participation. The contrasting cases of Kenya (KEN) and Tanzania (TZA), which are found at opposite ends of the scatterplot, can be highlighted to make this hypothesized relationship more concrete. While ethnicity has been the main political cleavage in Kenya since independence, the salience of ethnicity in neighboring Tanzania was attenuated through early nation-building efforts, socialist policies, and extreme ethnic fragmentation (Barkan 1994; Miguel 2004). Kenyan politics have since been defined by the competition over the distribution of state resources among five to eight ethnic groups that expect cabinet-level representation. Tanzanian politics, by contrast, have focused on the delivery of collective public goods, providing incumbents with the flexibility to follow through on promises made by the ruling party to ensure women's representation in national politics (Geiger 1982). This is evident in the data. Between 1975 and 2005, the Tanzanian cabinet averaged 25.4 ministers per year and included 2.8 women per year. The Kenyan cabinet similarly averaged 25.7 ministers per year during the same time period but only included 0.4 women per year. This difference persisted despite political liberalization in both countries in the mid-1990s. Between 1995 and 2005, two to four women served in the Tanzanian cabinet every year, but only one woman served in the Kenyan cabinet from 1995 to 1997, and no woman

<sup>3</sup>Women ethnic patrons obviously exist. One example is Senegalese politician Mata Sy Diallo, who used an appointed government position to become a patron in the Wolof-dominated region of Kafferine (Beck 2003). However, the relative paucity of such examples proves the rule.

<sup>4</sup>Afrobarometer survey data suggest there remains a strong association between ethnic identification and clientelistic behavior. In Round 3 of the Afrobarometer (2005–2006), respondents were asked whether they feel closer to ethnic over national identities and whether they expect politicians to hand out "gifts" during elections. The correlation between these two variables across 13 countries is 0.5643.

FIGURE 2 Ethnic Politicization and Women in African Cabinets



Note: Mean values are for 1980–2005. Countries with incomplete data for the entire time period due to late independence (i.e., Eritrea, Namibia, and South Africa) or breakdown in central government (i.e., Somalia) are excluded. Data on cabinet ministers are from annual volumes of *Africa South of the Sahara* (1981–2006). Data on politicized ethnic groups are from Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010).

served between 1998 and 2002. Three women were finally appointed to the Kenyan cabinet between 2002 and 2005.

## Data and Methods

We use cross-sectional time-series data on appointments to ministerial cabinet positions in 34 African countries from 1980 through 2005 to test our argument along with other hypotheses from the literature.

### Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is women's share of cabinet positions. We calculate the number of women as a percentage of all cabinet ministers by compiling the name, title, and gender of every cabinet minister for each country profiled in annual volumes of *Africa South of the Sahara* (1981–2006). We focus on the female share of the cabinet rather than the total number of women ministers because, as noted in Figure 1, the average size of the cabinet has been expanding across African countries over time, and it remains

to be shown whether women have been included in that expansion. The gender of cabinet ministers was coded using the Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership,<sup>5</sup> biographic guides, newspaper articles, case studies, government documents, and published photographs.<sup>6</sup>

### Independent Variables

Our argument suggests that women's share of cabinet portfolios will be smaller in African countries where incumbents must accommodate a larger number of politicized ethnic groups in their ruling coalitions. In testing this expectation, we use measures for the number of politicized ethnic groups across African countries. While the number of politicized ethnic groups may be an imperfect indicator for the latent variable of interest—the redistributive demands associated with politicized ethnicity—our approach taps into the stylized fact that political mobilization in African countries often occurs along ethnic lines precisely because citizens believe that they can only gain access to state resources through the mediation of

<sup>5</sup>www.guide2womenleaders.com.

<sup>6</sup>Appendix A in the supporting information provides a full description of the compilation and coding of cabinet membership.



coethnic politicians. In this context, the number of politicized ethnic groups can serve as a proxy for the degree to which incumbents are pressured to appoint ethnic patrons to their cabinets.

We ensure that our findings do not depend on any single measure of politicized ethnicity by alternating between two independent variables. The first measure is Posner's (2004) fractionalization index of politically relevant ethnic groups (PREG). The PREG measure is calculated as an ethnic fractionalization index, indicating the likelihood that two randomly selected individuals from a country will be from different politically relevant ethnic groups. Because it is explicitly designed to account for groups that mobilize for national politics, the PREG measure is distinguished from standard fractionalization indices that are based on an enumeration of all ethnic groups within a country, regardless of their political relevance.

The second measure is drawn from Cederman, Wimmer, and Min's (2010) Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset.<sup>7</sup> The EPR provides a count of the number of politically relevant ethnic groups. An ethnic group is considered politically relevant, according to the EPR, if a political organization claims to represent the interests of the group at the national level or it experiences systematic, intentional political exclusion. The EPR measure for the number of politically relevant ethnic groups has two distinct advantages. First, as in the case of the PREG fractionalization index, the EPR count only includes politicized ethnic groups rather than all ethnic groups in a country. Second, the EPR count is coded on an annual basis, which, unlike most other indices, allows for variation within countries over time.

We expect women's share of cabinet portfolios to be larger in more democratic countries, as suggested by previous findings (Krook and O'Brien 2012; Reynolds 1999b). To assess the impact of democratization, we use the aggregate Polity index from the Polity IV Project as a measure for the level of democracy (Marshall and Jaggers 2010). The Polity index is a 21-point scale that ranges from -10 (fully autocratic) to 10 (fully democratic). Additionally, the number of years the executive has been in power is used as an indicator of political stability.<sup>8</sup>

To gauge the influence of specific institutional and political factors, we analyze the period after the onset of democratization in the early 1990s, as one would expect variation in formal democratic institutions to shape polit-

ical outcomes under democratic systems rather than the authoritarian regimes of the earlier period. We include dichotomous variables that indicate whether the executive is based on a parliamentary system or an assembly-elected presidency. Presidential systems serve as a reference category.<sup>9</sup> Dichotomous variables are used to control for legislative electoral rules, namely, proportional representation, majoritarian, and mixed systems. Plurality-based electoral rules serve as a reference category.<sup>10</sup> Separately, the government's share of seats in the legislature is used to capture the size of the government's majority, while the effective number of legislative parties is used to reflect the party system's fragmentation.<sup>11</sup> Given previous findings concerning the negative impact of coalitions (Krook and O'Brien 2012; Reynolds 1999b), we expect women's share of cabinet positions after political liberalization to be lower under institutions that might induce greater fragmentation in the political system—i.e., parliamentary systems and proportional representation—as well as under a smaller government legislative share and a larger number of effective legislative parties.

We follow the literature by including variables that reflect the extent of women's participation in national politics (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Krook and O'Brien 2012; Reynolds 1999b): the percent of the legislature that is made up by women and the number of years since the first female MP entered the legislature.<sup>12</sup> To indicate a country's commitment to the inclusion of women in government, we include measures for the number of years since the adoption of a legislative quota for women (Tripp and Kang 2008), as well as the number of years since a country ratified the 1981 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>13</sup> We expect women's share of cabinet portfolios to be larger with higher values on all of these measures.

Among relevant political factors suggested by the literature, we include a variable for ideology by

<sup>7</sup>Cederman, Wimmer, and Min's (2010) replication data are available at [hdl.handle.net/1902.1/13825](http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/13825).

<sup>8</sup>Executive years in office are from the Database of Political Institutions (Beck et al. 2001).

<sup>9</sup>Executive system data are from the Database of Political Institutions (Beck et al. 2001).

<sup>10</sup>Data on legislative electoral rules are from Nohlen, Krennerich, and Thibaut (1999) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance ([www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int)).

<sup>11</sup>Data on government share of legislative seats are from the Database of Political Institutions (Beck et al. 2001). The effective number of legislative parties was calculated based on data from the African Elections Database ([africanelections.tripod.com](http://africanelections.tripod.com)).

<sup>12</sup>Data on women in parliament are from Paxton, Green, and Hughes (2008).

<sup>13</sup>Data on legislative quotas are from the Quota Project's Global Database of Quotas for Women ([www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org)). Data on CEDAW ratification are from the United Nations ([treaties.un.org](http://treaties.un.org)).

controlling for the years a country's government was committed to Marxism (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005).<sup>14</sup> Another variable controls for the years since the end of internal violent conflict between the central government and armed insurgents (Bauer 2011; Hughes 2009).<sup>15</sup> Two dichotomous variables indicate whether a country has either a Muslim majority or no religious majority (Reynolds 1999b). Christian majority countries serve as a reference category.<sup>16</sup> Previous findings in the literature suggest we should expect women's share of cabinet portfolios to be larger in countries that had greater experience with Marxism and where internal conflict has ended but relatively smaller in Muslim majority countries.

The impact of socioeconomic conditions is assessed through four variables that measure different dimensions of women's status in society. These variables include female life expectancy, the average number of births per woman, and female labor participation as a percentage of the total labor force.<sup>17</sup> A broader legal measure is provided by the women's social rights index from the Cingranelli and Richards (2007) human rights dataset. We generally expect women's share of cabinet portfolios to be larger in countries with higher values on these socioeconomic dimensions (Russell and DeLancey 2002).

We control for economic conditions through per capita income at purchasing power parity (PPP) and foreign aid as a percentage of gross national income (GNI).<sup>18</sup> We expect women's share of cabinet portfolios to be larger with higher levels of per capita income, and we expect a similar effect with greater reliance on foreign aid, as such reliance may make African governments more receptive to international pressures for women's representation.

### Model Estimation

We use the dynamic panel system Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) technique to deal with estimation issues related to the cross-sectional time-series nature of

<sup>14</sup>Data on years under Marxism are from Paxton, Green, and Hughes (2008).

<sup>15</sup>Postconflict years are calculated based on the armed conflict country-year coding of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program ([www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP/](http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP/)).

<sup>16</sup>Data on religious adherents are from the Association of Religion Data Archives ([thearda.com](http://thearda.com)).

<sup>17</sup>Socioeconomic data are from the World Bank's (2010) World Development Indicators.

<sup>18</sup>GDP and foreign aid data are from the World Bank's (2010) World Development Indicators.

our data (Arellano and Bond 1991; Arellano and Bover 1995; Blundell and Bond 1998).<sup>19</sup> We opt for the system GMM estimator because a lag for women's cabinet share is included as an explanatory variable in the model to capture initial levels as well as to ameliorate the problem of autocorrelation.<sup>20</sup> The system GMM estimator is the preferred method in this case because standard techniques, such as country fixed effects, can result in biased and inconsistent estimates (Nickel 1981).<sup>21</sup> The system GMM estimator can ameliorate these problems by using lagged differences to instrument for endogenous relationships (Roodman 2006).<sup>22</sup> Estimates based on the system GMM estimator are thus more reliable relative to other estimation techniques. Based on their analysis of Monte Carlo simulations, Judson and Owen (1999) specifically recommend the use of the system GMM estimator for unbalanced panels with fewer than 30 years of observations, which are precisely the conditions of the dataset used in our study.<sup>23</sup> Hauk and Wacziarg (2009) similarly use Monte Carlo simulations to show that estimates based on the system GMM estimator are smaller when compared to dynamic fixed effects. Nonetheless, we report alternate versions of our findings in the supporting information for the article to confirm that they are robust to different estimation techniques.

## Empirical Analysis

The empirical results presented in Tables 1 through 3 corroborate the main argument developed throughout this article. The alternate measures for ethnic politicization—the PREG fractionalization index and the EPR number of

<sup>19</sup>The system GMM specification is estimated using the `xtabond2` command in Stata (Roodman 2006).

<sup>20</sup>The Breusch-Godfrey test indicates that there is no autocorrelation once the lagged dependent variable is included.

<sup>21</sup>The inclusion of the lagged dependent variable leads to endogeneity when using fixed effects because the transformed lag becomes correlated with the transformed error, thus leading to bias. There is no consensus on the size of the bias, though Judson and Owen (1999) find that it can be substantial even in panels with longer time series.

<sup>22</sup>We use two lags to avoid overfitting the model. The Sargan test for overidentifying restrictions fails to reject the null hypothesis of the validity of the instruments.

<sup>23</sup>Judson and Owen (1999) find that the GMM technique can lead to bias when a panel's time series is small. But they note that this bias mainly concerns the lagged dependent variable, while almost no bias shows up among other independent variables. This is significant for our purposes, since we are primarily concerned with the effects of variables other than the lagged dependent variable.



**TABLE 1 Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios (1980–2005)**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>
PREG fractionalization index	−1.662** (0.676)	−1.892** (0.744)		
EPR number of groups			−0.181*** (0.063)	−0.198*** (0.067)
Level of democracy	0.203*** (0.033)	0.198*** (0.033)	0.230*** (0.036)	0.232*** (0.036)
Executive years in office	0.006 (0.021)	−0.004 (0.022)	−0.001 (0.022)	−0.009 (0.023)
Women's share of cabinet, % lag	0.611*** (0.062)	0.578*** (0.064)	0.612*** (0.064)	0.569*** (0.066)
Women's share of legislature, %	0.142*** (0.029)	0.151*** (0.032)	0.138*** (0.028)	0.145*** (0.031)
Years since first woman MP	0.053*** (0.015)	0.035** (0.017)	0.041*** (0.015)	0.019 (0.017)
Years since legislative quota adopted		0.248** (0.119)		0.300** (0.118)
Years since CEDAW ratified		0.026 (0.032)		0.051 (0.034)
Years under Marxism		−0.013 (0.054)		−0.021 (0.055)
Years since end of internal conflict		0.074** (0.033)		0.053 (0.032)
Muslim majority		1.089** (0.449)		1.181*** (0.449)
No religious majority		0.093 (0.357)		0.440 (0.415)
GDP per capita PPP, log	−0.112 (0.178)	−0.014 (0.214)	0.111 (0.198)	0.263 (0.234)
Foreign aid % GNI		−0.006 (0.015)		−0.011 (0.016)
Constant	2.660* (1.373)	2.228 (1.759)	1.898 (1.433)	1.084 (1.789)
Wald $\chi^2$	841.26***	944.94***	948.08***	1055.93***
AR1	−6.68***	−6.66***	−6.37***	−6.34***
AR2	−0.45	−0.34	−0.61	−0.64
Number of observations	646	622	622	602
Number of countries	34	34	34	34

Note: Dynamic panel one-step system GMM estimation. Dependent variable is female share of cabinet. Independent variables lagged one year. Standard errors in parentheses. \*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01.

groups—attain their expected negative sign and conventional levels of statistical significance in two-tailed tests across model specifications. These results are robust to the inclusion of relevant political, economic, and sociological controls.<sup>24</sup> The significant Wald  $\chi^2$  statistics associated

with the results further indicate that the estimated models fit the data well. And the Arellano-Bond tests for serial correlation suggest that the estimates are consistent. In Tables 1 through 3, the test for first-order serial correlation (AR1) shows the presence of significant negative serial

<sup>24</sup>We have confirmed that the results are not driven by outliers or by high-leverage observations. We examined measures such as DFITS and DFBETA to investigate whether any particular observa-

tion changes the estimated coefficients. The tables in Appendix K in the supporting information show that there are no such effects.

correlation in the differenced residuals, while the test for second-order serial correlation (AR2) is not significant. Estimates are inconsistent in the presence of second-order serial correlation (Arellano and Bond 1991).

The results in Tables 1 through 3 indicate that fewer women become cabinet ministers in African countries where governments must accommodate distributive demands from a larger number of politicized ethnic groups, regardless of prevailing political or economic conditions. In Model 2, the estimated coefficient on the PREG fractionalization index suggests that increasing the number of politicized ethnic cleavages from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile—a move from 0.05 to 0.66 on the PREG index—is associated with a 16.15% decrease in the share of cabinet portfolios held by women, holding all else constant.

The estimated coefficient on the EPR number of groups in Model 4 shows an effect of similar magnitude to the PREG fractionalization index. Increasing the number of politicized ethnic groups from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on the EPR scale—or from one to eight groups—is associated with a 19.47% decrease in women's share of cabinet ministers, holding all else equal. The size of the estimated coefficient on the EPR number of groups changes little despite the addition of other political and social controls, as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

The findings associated with the level of democracy in Tables 1 through 3 help to explain why the share of women in African cabinets increased fivefold between 1980 and 2005. The estimated coefficients on the level of democracy, as proxied by the Polity index, are consistently positive and statistically significant at conventional levels, suggesting that women are more likely to be appointed to cabinet positions as African countries become more democratic. According to Model 4, increasing the level of democracy by one standard deviation—a six-point change on the Polity index—would be associated with an 18.1% increase in women's share of cabinet positions, all else equal.<sup>25</sup> However, the coefficient on executive years in office, which we use as an indicator of political stability, fails to attain statistical significance.

Considering the opposing influences of ethnicity and democracy on women's share of cabinet portfolios, one might expect the effects of ethnic mobilization to be mitigated by stronger or consolidated democratic institutions. But we find no such interaction effect under any modeling specification or estimation technique. The simple cross tabulation in Table 4 clearly shows that women's share of cabinet appointments is persistently lower in

countries where more ethnic groups are politically mobilized, regardless of regime type.<sup>26</sup> The difference in means across countries with fewer versus more ethnic groups is nearly as large as the difference in means between the two principal regime types among African countries, that is, autocracies and partial democracies. The pattern evident in Table 4 suggests that political liberalization may generally help to bolster the supply and demand for women cabinet ministers, but it does not necessarily undercut the preexisting ethnic patronage structures that have long impeded women's political empowerment. The data indicate, for example, that an autocracy with fewer ethnic groups has a comparable, if not slightly higher, share of women cabinet ministers as does a partial democracy with more ethnic groups.

Political liberalization may facilitate the entry of more women into African cabinets, but the results in Table 2 suggest that this cannot be traced to any specific institutional or political arrangement. Prior to the mid-1990s, most African countries were ruled by either *de jure* one-party governments or military juntas. The results in Table 2 are based on a 1995–2005 sample, that is, the period by which most African countries had adopted democratic constitutions and began holding regular multiparty elections. The estimated coefficients on the EPR number of groups in Models 5–8 not only retain their negative sign and statistical significance, but their relative magnitude is also larger in this posttransition period.<sup>27</sup> The level of democracy continues to be statistically significant as well. However, in Model 5, the estimated coefficients for different types of executives (parliamentary systems and assembly-elected presidencies) do not attain statistical significance, suggesting they are no different from pure presidential systems in permitting women to secure cabinet positions. The estimated coefficients on the government's share of legislative seats in Model 6 and the effective number of legislative parties in Model 8 similarly fail to attain statistical significance. Among the variables for legislative rules, only the estimated coefficient for majoritarian electoral rules is statistically significant. It indicates that the female share of the cabinet is, on average, relatively smaller in countries with majoritarian legislative rules when compared to countries that have a plurality system. But proportional and mixed systems appear to be no different from the plurality system in the share of cabinet portfolios allocated to women.

<sup>26</sup>A similar table using Freedom House scoring is provided in Appendix D in the supporting information.

<sup>27</sup>Substituting the PREG fractionalization index for the EPR number of groups produces comparable results.

<sup>25</sup>Alternate democracy indices show comparable results to the Polity measure.

TABLE 2 Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios and Political Institutions (1995–2005)

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
EPR number of groups	−0.263*** (0.101)	−0.305*** (0.103)	−0.330** (0.140)	−0.225* (0.125)
Level of democracy	0.332*** (0.058)	0.348*** (0.063)	0.356*** (0.076)	0.400*** (0.081)
Executive years in office	−0.048 (0.039)	−0.058 (0.040)	−0.056 (0.045)	−0.057 (0.046)
Women's share of cabinet, % lag	0.473*** (0.086)	0.456*** (0.088)	0.452*** (0.091)	0.482*** (0.093)
Women's share of legislature, %	0.201*** (0.043)	0.201*** (0.042)	0.174*** (0.054)	0.167*** (0.050)
Years since first woman MP	−0.006 (0.022)	−0.004 (0.021)	0.022 (0.028)	0.003 (0.026)
Years since legislative quota adopted	0.394*** (0.137)	0.420*** (0.134)	−0.536 (0.483)	−0.537 (0.497)
Years since CEDAW ratified	0.090** (0.045)	0.080* (0.045)	0.062 (0.051)	0.060 (0.050)
Years since end of internal conflict	0.074* (0.042)	0.083** (0.039)	0.105** (0.048)	0.140*** (0.049)
Muslim majority	2.792*** (0.727)	2.912*** (0.704)	3.794*** (0.940)	3.049*** (0.819)
No religious majority	0.138 (0.657)	0.122 (0.615)	0.177 (0.989)	0.039 (0.736)
GDP per capita PPP, log	0.602* (0.328)	0.688** (0.330)	0.782** (0.366)	0.661* (0.357)
Executive: parliamentary	0.732 (1.009)			
Executive: assembly–elected president	0.531 (0.931)			
Government seats, % legislature		0.007 (0.015)		
Legislature: proportional representation			−0.479 (1.129)	
Legislature: majority rule			−2.362** (1.028)	
Legislature: mixed system			−1.304 (0.858)	
Effective number of legislative parties				−0.028 (0.241)
Constant	−0.509 (2.390)	−1.159 (2.550)	−1.020 (2.617)	−1.139 (2.802)
Wald $\chi^2$	471.98***	471.67***	456.52***	399.14***
AR1	−4.55***	−4.53***	−4.21***	−4.36***
AR2	−1.11	−0.19	−1.10	−1.03
Number of observations	313	302	242	242
Number of countries	34	33	27	27

Note: Dynamic panel one-step system GMM estimation. Dependent variable is female share of cabinet. Independent variables lagged one year. Standard errors in parentheses. \*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01.

**TABLE 3 Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios and Socioeconomic Conditions (1980–2005)**

	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
EPR number of groups	−0.184** (0.065)	−0.189** (0.066)	−0.273** (0.079)	−0.180** (0.067)
Level of democracy	0.239** (0.036)	0.224** (0.036)	0.240** (0.036)	0.223** (0.035)
Executive years in office	−0.010 (0.022)	−0.010 (0.022)	−0.007 (0.022)	−0.013 (0.023)
Women's share of cabinet, % lag	0.576** (0.065)	0.573** (0.066)	0.564** (0.066)	0.569** (0.064)
Women's share of legislature, %	0.130** (0.030)	0.138** (0.029)	0.164** (0.033)	0.149** (0.030)
Years since first woman MP	0.025 (0.016)	0.018 (0.017)	0.010 (0.016)	0.018 (0.017)
Years since legislative quota adopted	0.307** (0.119)	0.308** (0.121)	0.279** (0.118)	0.302** (0.120)
Years since CEDAW ratified	0.036 (0.034)	0.051 (0.034)	0.073** (0.036)	0.054 (0.034)
Years since end of internal conflict	0.072** (0.034)	0.049 (0.034)	0.060* (0.033)	0.065** (0.033)
Muslim majority	1.127** (0.444)	1.201** (0.458)	0.453 (0.494)	1.276** (0.456)
No religious majority	0.379 (0.403)	0.383 (0.402)	−0.232 (0.474)	0.432 (0.408)
GDP per capita PPP, log	0.511* (0.266)	0.259 (0.255)	0.148 (0.235)	0.337 (0.226)
Female life expectancy	−0.068** (0.033)			
Births per woman		−0.142 (0.248)		
Female labor force participation, % total			−0.101** (0.040)	
Women's social rights index				0.384 (0.335)
Constant	2.645 (1.616)	1.836 (3.130)	6.753** (3.193)	−0.053 (1.620)
Wald $\chi^2$	1047.43**	1076.57**	1084.39**	1019.59**
AR1	−6.31**	−6.32**	−6.27**	−6.41**
AR2	−0.77	−0.71	−0.69	−0.41
Number of observations	603	603	603	588
Number of countries	34	34	34	34

Note: Dynamic panel one-step system GMM estimation. Dependent variable is female share of cabinet. Independent variables lagged one year. Standard errors in parentheses. \*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01.

A similar institutional nonfinding occurs when the sample is limited to the pre-1990s authoritarian period. Though not reported here, we controlled for Geddes's (1999) coding of authoritarian regimes—one-party, per-

sonalist, or military—and found no systematic difference across types for the period from 1980 to 1990. The impact of other variables, including the number of politicized ethnic groups, remains largely unchanged.

**TABLE 4 Mean Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios by Number of Ethnic Groups and Regime Type**

	Autocracy	Partial Democracy	Full Democracy
>4 Ethnic groups	4.4% (404)	7.7% (131)	12.3% (73)
≤4 Ethnic groups	7.9% (362)	11.9% (104)	15.3% (15)

*Note:* Country-years for 1980–2005 are in parentheses. The regional median number of politicized ethnic groups is four groups per country (Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010). The Polity IV index is used to categorize regimes as autocracies (–10 to 0), partial democracies (1 to 7), and full democracies (8 to 10).

The rise in women's cabinet participation across African countries can also be attributed to the expanded presence of women in national legislatures, which nearly doubled between 1980 and 2005. The estimated coefficient on this variable is consistently positive and statistically significant across all models. The coefficient in Model 4 indicates that a one standard deviation increase in the female share of the legislature, which is equivalent to a 6.44 percentage point increase in women legislators, would be associated with a 12.03% increase in the female share of cabinet ministers, holding all else equal. This finding is consistent with previous studies of advanced industrialized democracies (Davis 1997; Krook and O'Brien 2012; Siaroff 2000) and Latin American countries (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005). While the length of time that women have participated in the legislature also seems to be positively associated with increased female cabinet share, this variable performs inconsistently across model specifications.

Legislative quotas for women reinforce the participation of women in African cabinets, possibly reflecting the influence of the women's movements in advocating for quotas in the first place (Tripp and Kang 2008; Tripp et al. 2009). The estimated coefficients on this variable are generally positive and statistically significant in most models. This variable may reflect a broader political commitment to the inclusion of women or simply an increased supply of women candidates for cabinet positions. In either case, the findings here suggest that the female share of cabinet portfolios grows with every additional year since a country adopted a legislative quota. According to the estimated coefficient in Model 4, increasing the number of years by one standard deviation—from less than 1 year to 1.5 years—is associated with a 4.92% increase in women's share of cabinet ministers, all else equal.

International norms cannot be readily shown to have an influence on women's participation in African cabinets. The coefficient on CEDAW is positive in all models reported in Tables 1 through 3, indicating that the share of female cabinet positions grows with every additional year since a country ratified the international convention. However, this variable attains statistical significance only intermittently. The coefficient on Marxism, which reflects the number of years that a country was committed to the international leftist ideology, including its egalitarian ideals, is statistically indistinguishable from zero in all models.

Whereas international factors appear to have little effect on women's access to the cabinet, certain domestic political factors do seem to play a role. The estimated coefficient on the number of years since the end of internal conflict is positive and statistically significant across most models. The coefficient in Model 4 indicates that increasing the number of years since the end of conflict by one standard deviation—from 2.28 to 6.95 years—is associated with a 3.19% increase in women's share of cabinet ministers, all else constant.

The variables used to indicate whether a country has a Muslim majority or no religious majority reveal distinct patterns. The estimated coefficient for countries that have neither a Christian nor a Muslim majority fails to attain statistical significance in any model, suggesting that they are no different from the Christian majority countries that serve as a reference category. But the estimated coefficient for Muslim majority countries, contrary to expectations, is positive and statistically significant in nearly all models, indicating that they tend to have a larger share of women in the cabinet than Christian majority countries. The estimated coefficient in Model 4 suggests that the female share of cabinet portfolios is 15.21% higher in Muslim countries when compared to Christian countries, all else equal.

The results in Tables 1 through 3 indicate that changes in women's share of cabinet portfolios generally cannot be linked to changes in socioeconomic conditions. The estimated coefficient on GDP per capita attains statistical significance inconsistently or only in the restricted 1995–2005 sample, while the estimated coefficient on foreign aid never attains statistical significance.<sup>28</sup> However, the estimated coefficients for two of the indicators used to reflect women's status in society—female life expectancy in Model 9 and female labor force participation in Model

<sup>28</sup>We control for specific types of aid offered by the United States through USAID and find only a significant effect for human rights budget allocations.



11—are negative and statistically significant.<sup>29</sup> These results suggest that the female cabinet share is actually lower on average in African countries where women live longer and have greater presence in the workforce. Though not reported here, alternate indicators for the socioeconomic resources available to women—e.g., primary school enrollment, the number of NGOs, and urbanization rate—showed no effect on the female share of cabinet ministers. Additionally, the Cingranelli and Richards (2007) index for women's social rights in Model 12 is indistinguishable from zero. Taken together, these findings on the limited influence of socioeconomic factors may seem surprising, but they are generally consistent with previous research on women ministers in Latin America (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005).

## Conclusion

African women's participation in executive power is significantly influenced by coalition politics. Whereas coalition dynamics limit women's representation in advanced industrialized democracies because women are often absent from positions of party leadership (Lovenduski and Norris 1993; Studlar and Moncrief 1997), we find that coalition dynamics in African countries limit women's participation through the distributive demands imposed by ethnic groups. African leaders build ruling majorities by co-opting the big men who can deliver their ethnic constituencies through the distribution of patronage. Women in African countries, however, rarely become ethnic patrons. Women are therefore less likely to be appointed as cabinet ministers where incumbents must accommodate more ethnic groups and, by extension, more big men, in their coalitions.

While ours is the first study to consider the impact of ethnic mobilization on women's executive representation, future scholarship on the gendered nature of access to executive power in African countries should consider how formal and informal politics operate in tandem. Complementing recent studies of women's legislative representation in Africa (Bauer and Britton 2006; Tripp and Kang 2008; Yoon 2010, 2011), our study suggests that understanding women's political empowerment requires careful attention to informal barriers. Studies of well-established democracies have already shown how informal barriers like internal party politics, media bias, and stereotypes limit women's access to the cabinet (Borrelli

2002; Davis 1997). Women in Africa's new democracies may face additional informal barriers like ethnic-based patronage politics. Efforts to increase women's representation will likely falter if such informal politics are not taken into account. Further research on the strategies used by women to achieve political prominence outside traditional patronage networks would provide much-needed insight.

The Africanist scholarship suggests that ethnic and redistributive mechanisms operate jointly, but we acknowledge that these two mechanisms might operate independently to affect women's access to ministerial positions. Ethnic-based political appeals might limit women's cabinet representation by stressing "traditional," meaning masculine, ideals of political leadership, though women's actual participation in leadership roles in many African ethnic groups would challenge such claims (Bauer 2011; Okonjo 1994). Alternatively, redistributive politics might have a direct effect on women's cabinet representation, regardless of whether clientelistic networks operate through ethnicity. Unfortunately, our data do not enable us to test these mechanisms separately. The intertwined nature of ethnicity and redistribution makes such an analysis difficult because, as observed by scholars who have studied politicized ethnicity in the region, personalized patronage networks are "the conduit of ethnic politics" in African countries (Berman, Eyoh, and Kymlicka 2004, 2). In short, we lack reliable and systematic cross-national data on patronage that are independent of ethnic markers across most African countries.

The study of women's empowerment beyond Africa could shed light on the independent effects of ethnicity and patronage. Patronage-based politics are common in South and Southeast Asia (Brown 1989; Chandra 2007; van Klinken 2008), Latin America (Helmke and Levitsky 2006), and the Middle East (Cammatt and Issar 2010; King 2009). Variation in the nature of patron-client relations across these regions may be used to shed additional insight on the extent to which informal institutions affect women's access to cabinet positions. For example, while we demonstrate that the number of ethnic constituencies can affect female cabinet appointments in African countries, scholars of other regions might be able to show that different types of constituencies also matter. The redistributive demands associated with constituencies defined by other markers of identity (e.g., region, language, or religion) might present different opportunities for women in securing cabinet appointments where ethnicity is not politically salient. Similarly, ethnicity is salient in a variety of political systems, some of which do not rely heavily on patronage. Further research is needed to establish whether politicized ethnicity impedes women's access

<sup>29</sup>Substituting the PREG fractionalization index for the EPR number of groups produces comparable results.

to executive power where politics is less patronage-based. Where clientelistic ties are weak, researchers may find that women more easily rise in politics through crosscutting programmatic appeals despite the presence of politicized ethnic groups.

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## Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's website:

- Appendix A.** Coding Protocol for Dependent Variable
- Appendix B.** Cross-National Sample of Women Cabinet Ministers (1980–2005)
- Appendix C.** Number of Women Cabinet Ministers (1980–2005)
- Appendix D.** Mean Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios by Number of Ethnic Groups and Regime Type (Freedom House)
- Appendix E.** Summary Statistics
- Appendix F.** Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios with Alternate Ethnicity Measures
- Appendix G.** Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios with Alternate Democracy Measures
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- Appendix I.** Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios with Socioeconomic Conditions & PREG
- Appendix J.** Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios with Democracy Aid Measures
- Appendix K.** Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios with Dropped Countries
- Appendix L.** Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios: OLS, Fixed Effects, and GMM
- Appendix M.** Women's Share of Cabinet Portfolios with Country Fixed Effects