

I Am Woman: Women's Movements and Political Regime Transitions

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

There is a vast literature on how women's movements affect political regime transitions. This literature largely speaks to how these movements can lead to electoral outcomes with increased representation in formal political spaces, or to how women's movements have pushed for particular political agendas or policies. However, the question still remains: How do political regime transitions effect women's security more broadly? There is a gap in our understanding of how political regime transitions affect the public at-large, irrespective of electoral representation or policy outcomes. This paper argues that political regime transitions provide an opening for improvement in women's civil liberties, a key aspect of women's security, and that elite preferences are a key factor for whether leaders will adopt or reject policies that affect women's security after a regime transition. Using a large-N empirical analysis this paper finds that regime transitions do have an effect on women's security and this effect varies depending on a number of specifications leading to several implications for future work in the area.

Dedication

This is dedicated to my family, friends and advisors who have supported me throughout this entire process.

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1. Introduction

In recent decades we have seen states emerge successfully out of closed authoritarian regimes into burgeoning democracies, but we have also seen states move out of consolidated, liberal democracies and into quasi- or full-blown autocracies. Poland, for instance, was once heralded as the shining example for how Eastern European states, formerly of the Communist-Soviet bloc, could successfully transition into democratic states. However, in recent years the consolidated democracy has turned towards authoritarian leadership. In the last few years, the new Polish government has begun changing the laws for naming judges to the Constitutional Tribunal, ordered a major purge of public radio and television and a reduction of their independence, and abolished the political neutrality of the civil service (Rupnik 2016; Bugaric and Ginsberg 2016). Likewise, Turkey was once considered on the path to becoming a full democracy as a long-time member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and potential candidate for European Union membership. However, in a more overt authoritarian move, President Recep Erdogan moved to consolidate his own power by pushing for reform to change the Turkish political system from a presidential to parliamentary

system, implemented a crackdown on the media, and oversaw the use of human rights abuses (Erensu and Ayca Alemdaroglu 2018; Aytac et al. 2017; Yavuz and Koc 2016).

Yet there are other examples of states transitioning towards democracy. Tunisia has made strides towards democracy after the Arab Spring protests of 2011, the only state to successfully do so. The Tunisian protests led to open and fair elections which paved the way for political parties, such as the Islamist Ennahda party to transform itself into a more modern party and was able to gain representation as they were previously shut out of the process by Tunisia's former dictator (Filali-Ansary 2018). While Tunisia has a long way to go before it can be considered a democratic state, for now it remains a possibility but one far off from today.

However, these events, as briefly discussed, do not fully explain the story or effects of regime transitions affect the broader public. Namely, the gender-related aspects of transitions. When gender-related issues do enter the political transitions literature, it is often confined to the context of political representation and women's rights, and how women's movements fared politically and electorally post-transition; there is a significant amount of literature on collective action movements as well. These areas are the most frequently examined aspects of regime transitions, and while important they do not sufficiently capture the broad range of effects that are related to gender and political transitions, or how transitions affect civil society at-large.

Furthermore, there is a lack of large-N empirical evidence to explain how regime transitions effect women; most analyses are comparative case studies or within-country small and medium-N empirical analyses. Additionally, gendered effects of a political regime transition are often sequestered to their physical security, further strengthening the notion that the only salient relationship women have to political regime transitions is via their experiences with domestic and sexual violence. Additionally, this leads to reductive, essentialist interpretations of women's experiences during and after conflict. As the security of individuals after regime transitions, and not just the security of the state, becomes an emerging theoretical issue in political science, it is imperative to see how transitions effect marginalized groups in other ways.

For an example of how political transitions are intimately related to gender, we can turn to Nicaragua. Nicaragua transitioned into a democracy after the authoritarian Somoza regime in the 1980s which had been in place for decades. Nicaragua was one of the many Latin and Central American countries that experienced conflict and revolutions that led to a wave of democratization that swept the region during this time. Moreover, the Nicaraguan transition also heavily included women's groups making the progress of women in this instance worth examining further.

The 1990 Nicaraguan elections coincided with the end of the Contra War which brought about a new phase for the advancement of women's rights in the country. When

the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) lost to the conservative party, "many women had been concerned with the FSLN's 'misogynistic campaign slogans' during the 1990 election campaign, and the defeat at the ballot box allowed women to question their party loyalty in ways difficult beforehand," (Craske 1999, 155). This led to women's groups feeling pushed out by the FSLN, which they had earlier supported during the 1979 revolution ending the authoritarian regime of the Somoza revolution.

Another moment where women's rights came to the forefront was during the 2006 presidential election. The struggle over abortion rights became a salient issue when a nine-year old rape victim, "Rosa,"¹ sought an abortion and eventually received a therapeutic abortion; one poll of Nicaraguans found that 64 percent of people supported "Rosa" not carrying the pregnancy to term (Kampwirth 122). The antifeminist movement capitalized on the moment as a unifying force, and used their strong ties to the state, the ministries of health, education and family to fight against the therapeutic abortion law (Kampwirth 2002, 123). The Church initially supported the leftist movements during this time, but changed positions when Pope John Paul II, who cited

¹ Name change not my own but documented in secondary documents as such to protect the identity of the child at the time.

that the liberation ideology was a political movement and not a religious movement, shifted the Church back towards more conservative platform (Lord 2009, 553).²

In 2006, the Church introduced legislation to criminalize therapeutic abortion which was supported by both the right-wing Constitutionalist Liberal Party and the FSLN in an attempt to curry favor with the church (Kane 2008, 365). During this election former president and leader of the FSLN, Daniel Ortega, sought re-election after the government was under control by the conservative party for roughly 15 years. In order to gain electoral favorability, he changed his stance on abortion policy to curry favor with the Catholic Church. A partnership formed between the Catholic Church and Evangelicals which resulted in a mass protest on October 6, 2006 in order to garner public support for the anti-abortion measure. Despite the protest, Ortega's flip from a liberal left-wing candidate to a staunch supporter of anti-abortion policy led him to win 38 percent of the vote, which he was able to obtain with the help of the Church (Lord 2009, 550). Ortega's election was one of four left-wing presidential election in Latin America during these years (Ecuador and Venezuela in 2006, and Bolivia in 2005) as states moved towards democratization (Jacquette 2009, 23). Ultimately the law was

² The Catholic Church has a notoriously long-standing relationship with countries in Latin and Central America making it a formidable political actor.

signed by the out-going president days before the election but was supported by all parties.

As demonstrated by this illustrative case study, it is evident that despite a democratic regime in place, Ortega was able to subvert public preferences for the advancement of women's rights, and was able to effectively cater to his base and supporters - notably social conservatives and the Catholic Church whom were at odds with the established platforms and norms put in place by FSLN. In doing so, Ortega was able to grasp power with the support of women's groups, but then was able to discount their support, and thus putting the work of the women's movement and women's rights in the political crosshairs with a draconian abortion ban. This case demonstrates that regime transitions, both between and within regime transitions, can a substantive impact on women's rights and movements, but also society at-large.

In sum, the Nicaraguan example demonstrates the puzzle this paper aims to answer. What causes a leader to incorporate or repress is inherently a political question, and Nicaraguan government's decision between incorporating the preferences of the women's movement versus incorporating the preferences of the Catholic Church exemplifies what calculation a leader has to make in order to decide. Securing women's rights is pivotal to the broader public as these rights influence all corners of society – politically, economically, socially, militarily and more. This the begs the question: How

do leaders decide when to support interests of elites versus the interests of the broader public after regime transitions?

This paper presents a theory and argument for how and why leaders decide to repress or incorporate women's movements into their political agenda. First, political transitions, regardless of whether it is from one type of regime to another or a subregime transition, present an opening for renegotiation and emergence for new political alliances and preferences. However, depending on the transitional environment, some realignments can be more significant or opportune than others. Second, political regimes present an opportunity for groups to mobilize. Seeing an opportunity, groups may decide to mobilize if they perceive a chance of incorporation, using the transition as a priming mechanism, and self-selecting into becoming a political actor. Third, once groups have mobilized, leaders are faced with three options: incorporation, the status quo or repression. Conditional on group mobilization and the type of political transition at hand, leaders can decide to incorporate, maintain the status quo or repress women's movements into their political umbrella of supporters. I argue that given certain institutional and political factors, elite preferences are a key consideration of a leader's decision. Political regime transitions provide an opportunity for political groups, parties and, as presented in this paper, women's movements to be incorporated into the political

fold as coalition partners for a leader in power securing advancements for women's civil liberties and thusly, women's security.

The analysis finds that there are mixed results regarding how different political regime transitions effect women's civil liberties. In some instances, leaders of democratic states are more amenable to protecting women's civil liberties, while in other cases authoritarian leaders allow for improvements in women's civil liberties. Also, when accounting for changes in elite preferences, measured as changes in leader support, we see that this continues to vary our findings. These findings will be discussed in much greater detail later.

In following section, there will be a more comprehensive discussion of the theory posited in this paper. Section Three will provide an overview of the literatures related to political regime transitions and women's movements as a mechanism for supporting women's civil liberties, along with the hypothesized expectations from this relationship. Subsequently, in Section Four there will be a description of the research design and data, and in Section Four will present the empirical results and analysis. analysis. Finally, Section Five will then provide concluding remarks and future research opportunities.

2. Theory

Transitions open a window of opportunity for the protection and advancement of women's civil liberties in ways that, as of this writing, had not been previously discussed in depth, either theoretically or empirically. For instance, Kitschelt (1986) calls these opportunities, political opportunity structures, in reference to his case studies of anti-nuclear protest movements, which he describes as, "specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others," (58). This is a useful definition to frame the subsequent theory, however I would like to expand its use to understand women's movements in multiple types of regime types instead of narrowing in on exclusively democratic states. These periods of transition allow for measures protecting women's civil liberties to be incorporated into the fold or be boxed out formalized political protections depending on the type of transition that is occurring. Thus, this should be an important area of concern for scholarship to make a theoretical contribution to this topic.

Transforming political regimes can be a calamitous event in even the best of circumstances and can breed a lot of uncertainty around the stability of regimes (i.e. unfinished military conflicts, un-crystalized political power relations, fighting between political parties vying for power, economic instability etc.), that could make consolidating security, more broadly, difficult for regimes. Moreover, ensuring the

security of marginalized groups, such as women, political, ethnic or religious minorities, that may not be "politically salient" at the time may be pushed to the wayside, thus these groups may find that they may not be insulated from new policies and would not have the same protections that populaces of consolidated regimes may receive. Given the hurdles these groups already have to jump through, any movement associated with them, they may decide not to mobilize despite an opportunity to do so. This failure to act could be driven by a number of reasons such as a lack of broad support, poor organizational capacity to get the movement off the ground (Kitschelt 59). We may also expect different mobilization processes depending on the regime type and the context-dependent political environment.

For instance, in democracies it would be reasonable to assume that women's movements are willing to incur the cost of mobilizing to fight against the status quo when other avenues of shifting the status quo are inviable or futile. In general, there are effective and meaningful opportunities for women's movements to mobilize voters and supporters for a cause such as by lobbying politicians or organizing non-violent protests to gain recognition and government responsiveness in democratic regimes. Whereas in autocracies, women's movements may be able to mobilize domestic support and mobilize supporters, but this support may not equate to policy change, especially if the elites do not need the support of women's movements to maintain their own preferences, or this could lead to leaders and elites viewing women's movements as

merely a nuisance that can be ignored. It can therefore be assumed that if women's movement's do not exert either political or electoral pressure on leaders, then leaders are unlikely to specifically address any grievances. Leaders may find it to be an inefficient use of time, effort and money to cajole supporters that may not guarantee their political longevity. There is also an underlying assumption in this theoretical framework that leaders can somewhat accurately gauge about how elites will react to a leaders' response to a women's movement and the leader will then act accordingly. In order to better understand this process, this paper will walk through the steps a women's movement can take to influence or change a leader's position on women's civil liberties.

First, whether or not a political regime is willing to incorporate women's civil liberties policies is conditional on a women's movement's decision to exert pressure on a leader to disrupt the status quo. Women's movements, and social movements more broadly, have an opportunity to formulate organized groups on the ground to make a collective, coordinated effort to challenge the status quo. However, we can expect that this particular process would operate slightly differently depending on the regime type but would largely be similar to one another.

In the next step, leaders in power have to make a calculated political decision about whether to make a policy concession to include and/or maintain women's movements into their coalition of supporters as a part of their policy-making agenda. This calculation is based on if the women's movements can be a mobilizing force to gain

support for other politically advantageous policies that are relevant to these movements and a chance to court a new base of potential voters. This calculation is also weighed against this women's movement becoming another coalition of supporters to be appeased that could be in opposition to other members of the coalition or elites. With imperfect information about how this calculation will unfold, leaders must consider the likelihood of their continued political survival (electoral cost) and the costly signal they would project to elites about a policy change on the electoral outcomes.¹

The literature suggests that prior to political transitions elites in power have a vested interest in maintaining their preferences as the status quo by best situating themselves to retain positions of power to remain in their status as military, economic or political elites; whether these preferences align with the preferences of civil society is another matter. We would expect to see a chasm, for example, between how elites would perceive policies around the protection and promotion of women's security from the perception of both the public and women's groups. This would be especially evident among democratic subregime transitions. For instance, liberal political elites seeking electoral safety may be more open to courting the supporters of women's movements as potential new voters while also maintaining their base, while more conservative political elites may double down on subverting women's security in the name of more

¹ This paper would broadly define elites as a formal and informal coalition of political and economic powerbrokers that keep leaders in power.

"traditional values." However, after autocratic transitions, we would expect that elites would be concerned with facilitating their own personal security, and less concerned with electoral or audience costs associated with civil society perceptions.

The political institutional arrangements of regimes may also impact the environment for the promotion and protection of gendered norms, such as the protection of women's security through a variety of means. Institutions that are robust to political headwinds, such as an independent judiciary, may be more able to protect these policies, norms and values. As liberal and conservative, democratic and autocratic regimes ebb and flow in a particular state, robust institutions can make it difficult to roll back on policies affecting women's security. However, in states that change the institutional structures that limit veto points, for example, regimes with one-party rule or regimes that switch to a presidential system may find it easier for progressive gender norms that promote women's security to persist.

Consequently, this theory of political incorporation of women's civil liberties leads to three potential outcomes that leaders can take:

Incorporation: While a leader making a policy concession with a women's movement would have a positive effect on women's security and would garner electoral support, there is an uncertain effect on elites. Depending on the nature of the policy concession, there could be a wide range of possibilities for how elites will react to the concession as either a benign or malignant change.

Status Quo: Seeing women's movements as a non-violent nuisance to the regime, leaders may decide to maintain the status quo and the preferences of the elite.

Repression: Leaders may also make the decision to react aggressively against the women's movement to thwart any domestic challenges. Fearing insurrection, a leader may signal strength to other domestic actors thinking that the leader is vulnerable, and to elites that the leader is in control of its populace and has the interests of elites in mind. However, we would expect this to be the least likely option regarding women's movements, because they are largely not seen as politically dangerous or potentially violent. However, this option may apply to other types of movements which is outside the scope of this paper.

The next section will provide context for the theory of political incorporation with a review of the literature as it currently stands.

3. Literature Review

This section will provide an overview of the extant literature regarding the effects and implications of political regime transitions and women's movements. Both of these literatures can provide more color and context to the theory as presented above, and the expectations we can draw from both the theory and literature review.

3.1 Women's Civil Liberties

In order to conceptualize women's civil liberties, it pays to zoom out and see how women's civil liberties tie into a broader conception of security. This paper draws upon the human security framework, an idea conceived by the UNDP which is gaining relevance in the security literature. Human security is composed of two main concepts, "safety from chronic threats" and "protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily life," (UN Development Programme 23). While this is deliberately broad, there are seven categories under which human security operates: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security (UN Development Programme 24-5). While this definition is by no means concise, it provides a broad and cross-cutting framework to operate within. Therefore, it is useful to consider women's civil liberties as a more easily defined concept and important aspect of human security to work with for this analysis.

There has been a long literature surrounding the progress of women have made after conflict (Berry 2018) and after regime transitions (Chinchilla 1991; Waylen 1994;

Inglehart 2002; Wang et al 2015; Coppedge 2017). These improvements have, broadly, led to an increase in representation and rights, but the road is a sometimes long and difficult one. Wang et al (2015) argue if women are denied basic liberties, such as free movement and the right to hold assets, this will affect women's demands for redistribution and their organizational capacity, and thus the cost of repression.

"Political liberalization includes the elimination or reduction of state repression and extension of civil liberties. It is believed that once authoritarian rulers ease their control over citizens, citizens have more opportunities to challenge existing political leaders and institutions. With liberal rights, citizens have a stronger standing in the public sphere and are better able to organize in political movements to demand democratic rights, and hence improving the overall participatory environment and increasing the cost of repression for authoritarian rulers," (Wang et al. 3).

They argue a necessary precondition to transition to an electoral democracy, a country must first give liberal rights to men and women (Wang et al. 5). Wang et al. also emphasize that the accumulation of rights for both genders is important as it increases civic skills, strengthens civil society organization and the increases the likelihood of regime change (5). Wang et al. utilize this framework to connect female civil liberties and regime change and note that where women already have civil liberties and rights, the cost of repression increases than countries where these rights are not codified, thus women will maintain the status quo by staying in the private sphere and less cognizant of ideas such as wealth distribution. Moreover, these countries are less likely to have protest movements, and when they do, they are more easily oppressed by elites, since a smaller share of the population will engage in these. Therefore, the successful transition

to democracy is expected to be more common after women have obtained civil liberties and rights," (Wang et al. 11).

3.2 Women's Movements

From Rwanda to Bosnia-Herzegovina to Argentina, there are numerous examples of women's movements and groups were able to build organized grassroots efforts to push society, and hopefully political leaders, for civil liberties. For instance, women's movements throughout Central and Latin America were able to mobilize despite the authoritarian regimes of the time and effectively mobilize outside the traditional institutional bounds of politics (Safa 1990; Waylen 1994). "Latin American women ... think that their roles as wives and mothers legitimize their sense of injustice and outrage, since they are protesting their inability to effectively carry out these roles, as military governments take away their children or the rising cost of living prevents them from feeding their families adequately," (Safa 355).

According to Waylen (1994), women's mobilization efforts operate differently at different stages in the democratization transition process. She summarizes, "Women's movements, therefore cannot be ignored in any analysis of the process of transition, especially in its initial stages, since these activities often seized the political initiative and encouraged the military to begin negotiations within civilian elites," (Waylen 339). It would therefore be logical to deduce that women's movements operate outside of the confines of typical or formal boundaries of speaking out against repressive regimes and

have to rally around salient, yet broad-based issues and in order to mobilize quickly and efficiently. Despite these efforts, Waylen suggests that once the transition process occurs, women's groups must either fold into traditional institutional bounds or stay on the outside and potentially lose their newfound position of power and influence. "The trend of marginalization is evidenced even more clearly once competitive party politics are resumed fully, making clear that playing a key part in the initial opening does not guarantee an important role in the outcome," (Waylen 340).

Citing Chowdhury et al. (1994), Beckwith (2000) finds that during revolutionary periods, women's movements can operate with mixed results (450). However, "A change of governing regime, within a single state, may transform the context within which women's movements mobilize and act collectively,"(Beckwith 2000, 453). Women's movements have the ability to work within the political parties as well as outside of them given the political disorder going on during revolutions (Beckwith 2000, 450). Moreover, "the Nicaraguan women's movement became increasingly feminist and increasingly autonomous. In absence of a sympathetic governing party, however, the autonomy accorded to the feminist movement meant the possibility of autonomy with failure, as well as the possibility of NGO-ization," (Beckwith 2000, 450).

Thus, we can take away from this discussion that women's movements are an instrument for social change in political regime transitions. However, there is also

another vein of literature which discussing how women's movements interact with elite intuitions and structures that merits further discussion.

3.3 Women's Movements, Elites and Party Politics

It is worth spending some time on the part that elites and party politics play in the transition process. For instance, in contradiction to the long-standing assumption that elites support authoritarian regimes, Albertus and Gay (2017) present a generalizable mechanism for how economic elites can support democracy given uncertainty about dictatorial rule; their novel contribution is separating economic from political elites in democratization. Albertus (2018) examines why some authoritarian elites return to power after democratization in Latin America. This suggests that elites are amenable to shifting political tides, but only when they can be safely taken along for the ride.

Traditionally, operating outside of the political mainstream, women's groups had to mobilize and find support elsewhere to capitalize on existing social and institutional structures. Women's groups in post-revolutionary Nicaragua were able to pull upon the Catholic Church's wide-ranging influence to pursue health policy goals that would change current social culture. Traditionally, the Church's influence in Nicaragua has been strongly associated with symbols such as the mother and Virgin Mary, both being strong influences throughout society. However, in civil society, the notion of maternal mortality as a given while women's movements strived to place an emphasis on the

protection of women's lives with educational campaigns, pulling from Catholic culture (Ewig 1999, 92).

"While women's movements can work within institutional frameworks, it may be more opportune for movements to operate outside of the government depending on the capacity of the state to act. Basu (1995) argues that when the state is involved in civil society women's movements are weak and strong when the state control is weaker (Basu 1-21). Moreover, Beckwith states that women's movements can prevent being coopted by the state or maneuvered into cooperation when they chose to autonomous," (Beckwith 2000, 452).

While much of the present discussion has rested on women's movements working against elite structures and within the current political culture, it is possible for the two diverging opinions to work together. Chinchilla (1990) argues there is a tendency for women to demobilize after a revolutionary government comes to power can be combatted by political will of the leader by taking on the tough issues of sexism (373). This would imply that leaders can overcome their issues with sexism be supportive of women's movements despite the possibility of these ideas going against the grain of the elite preferences, values or ideas.

Kane (2008) discusses how abortion laws were restrictive throughout Latin American during the 1980s. Nicaragua, Chile and El Salvador implemented effectively instituted total abortion bans, in part due to the mobilization of interest groups such as women's organizations and religious leaders which is unique to Latin America. "The successes of national and regional movements for abortion reform in Latin America can be measured primarily in terms of progressive changes in national legislation; increased

capacity on the part of the movements and individual member organizations to advocate on the issues; and increased public consciousness of the issue," (Kane 362). Scholarship has further explored the role elites have played in maintaining certain structures, norms and agendas in Nicaraguan politics. Close and Deonandan (2004) note the Nicaraguan transition to democracy may not have been a clean shift away from the authoritarian regime and the loosening of elite control in politics. They argue the Alemán-Ortega Pact, which distributed political power between the parties and established rules for political parties and institutions, effectively blocked out democratic development in Nicaragua.¹ "Furthermore, it restricted political competition by imposing stringent new requirements for new political parties, thus ensuring it was the parties of the pact-makers which held sway over the political scene," (Close and Deonandan 188). While the Sandinista party, FSLN lost in the 1990 election, they were still able to influence and support party politics. "Given Daniel Ortega's role in fortifying Alemán's grasp on power, it can be legitimately argued that the FSLN and its leader were important 'allies' contributing to Alemán's undoing of democracy despite having significant political and ideological differences with him," (Close and Deonandan 2004, 188).

¹ The pact was meant be a power sharing agreement between the two political parties after the fall of the Somoza regime. Arnoldo Alemán was the president of Nicaragua from 1997-2002 with the Constitutionalist Liberal Party, the main opposition party to the FSLN.

Further, as the Nicaraguan women's movements transitioned out of revolution mode and into political actors during this time, they needed to maneuver from grassroots organizers into effective political leaders among other more established political groups. Speaking to change after the 1979 revolution, Coraggio (1986) notes the difficulty women groups such as AMNLAE had integrating into the political sphere in comparison to European feminist movements. "This can be attributed to the greater difficulties involved in breaking down the ideological and material structures that perpetuate women's subordination in comparison with demands voiced by the youth and workers' organizations," (69). Moreover, Safa (1990) noted an issue that women's movements have in Latin America once they have transitioned out of authoritarian regimes. "This tension between feminists and *políticas* [party militants of the left] has become more apparent with the end of military rule in Latin America and the reemergence of political parties, with reactive divisions within the women's movement formerly united with the opposition," (364). Both Coraggio and Safa highlight the chronic problem of women's movements incorporating themselves in a post-revolutionary, or post-transitional, political field.

In sum, scholars have demonstrated that women's movements can mobilize women at the grassroots level and support regime change within a state's government, but women are often left by the wayside once that regime comes to power, even a democratic one. Moreover, elites can stifle the process for women's groups to metastases

their goals into substantive policy change. This disregard for creating an inclusive political environment and the grassroots efforts to transition to democracy ultimately has an affect on women's civil liberties, not mention civil society more broadly. This would harken to believe that there is an understudied link between power transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes, and advancement of women's civil liberties which is largely disregarded by these power transitions.

3.4 Expectations

Examples from Latin America to Eastern Europe have demonstrated that women's movements are a powerful vehicle for the advancement of women's civil liberties during political transitions. These movements act as a key actor in the post-transition process as they give voice the sentiments and demands of the “ordinary” woman and provide a different perspective from the male-dominated elite power structures and institutions. These transitions provide an opening for women to shake the traditional norms and roles they have had in society, and lead to an increase in women's civil liberties. Tripp (2015) called this a change in the gender regime, in her analysis of women’s rights in post-conflict Africa. Moreover, this process is expected to be more easily facilitated in democratic regimes as they are designed to increase representation and protection of all citizens. By default, democratic regimes should be amenable to supporting women’s civil liberties – a general tenant of liberal democracies of the modern era. This leads to the first hypothesis generated in this paper:

Hypothesis 1: Democratic regime transitions should increase women's civil liberties.

The literature as previously reviewed here has demonstrated how transitions in Latin America were notable for their repressive nature and in particular for the progression of women's civil liberties and participation. Democratic transitions may be at best, an unsatisfying opportunity for promoting women's security, or at worst a significant detriment to women's security. In sum, the male-dominated, patriarchal power structures and societal norms of a democratic state may make it harder to advance women's civil liberties, and consequently would make it difficult for elites to support for more liberal gender policies. Therefore, it could be expected for elites to enact restrictive and regressive policies regarding women's rights in order to maintain the status quo of these male-dominated structures and institutions. Democratic systems are not necessarily conducive to be reflective of gender-inclusive protections domestically. In order for gender-based civil liberties to be put forth and advanced, this would require larger cultural shifts to likewise be amenable to changes. This would lead us to believe that transitions towards democracies leading to advancements of women's civil liberties to be a reasonable expectation and results in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Democratic regime transitions should lower women's civil liberties.

Conversely, we could expect for authoritarian regimes to be more likely to support women's civil liberties, or at worst not impede them, despite that being contrary to intuition. As an appeasement mechanism to discontent women's movements and domestic constituents, or perhaps because there's no reason not to, authoritarian leaders may be more amenable to civil liberties - to an extent. They may feel less politically threatened and open to supporting women's civil liberties.

Cases such as Nicaragua and scholarship such as Kampwirth (2004) and Close and Deonandan (2004) have demonstrated that elite politics, in conjunction with grassroots efforts, can impact the role of women's civil liberties during regime transitions. The literature suggests that elites are amenable to political regimes changes as long as they are within their vested interest, or at least do not hurt their interests. This leads to the final hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Elite support for women's civil liberties will lead to an increase in women's civil liberties.

The subsequent section will describe the model used to test these hypotheses, a description of the data used for the empirical models and analysis of the results.

4. Research Design

To test these hypotheses, this empirical analysis will include a fixed effects models and ordinary least squares regressions on cross-national panel data. The panel data covers states as defined by the Correlates of War dataset analyzed at the country-year level from 1960-2008 with 5,072 observations from a compilation of sources. The dependent variable, a women's civil liberties index, comes from the Variety of Democracy dataset. This index measures concepts for each country such as freedom of domestic movement, right to private property, freedom from forced labor and access to justice as determined by subject matter experts. This interval index is measured on a low to high scale, from zero to one and asks, "Do women have the ability to make meaningful decisions in key areas of their lives?" This variable, while not perfect, attempts to capture whether or not women are capable of meaningful control over their lives to ensure their security. This measure is also broadly defined which enables it to capture the cross-cutting, intersection nature of the human security framework, and is an accepted measure of women's security. Figure 1 presents a histogram of the women's civil liberties index which shows a fairly even range of values and there are no systematic skews that would need to be accounted for.

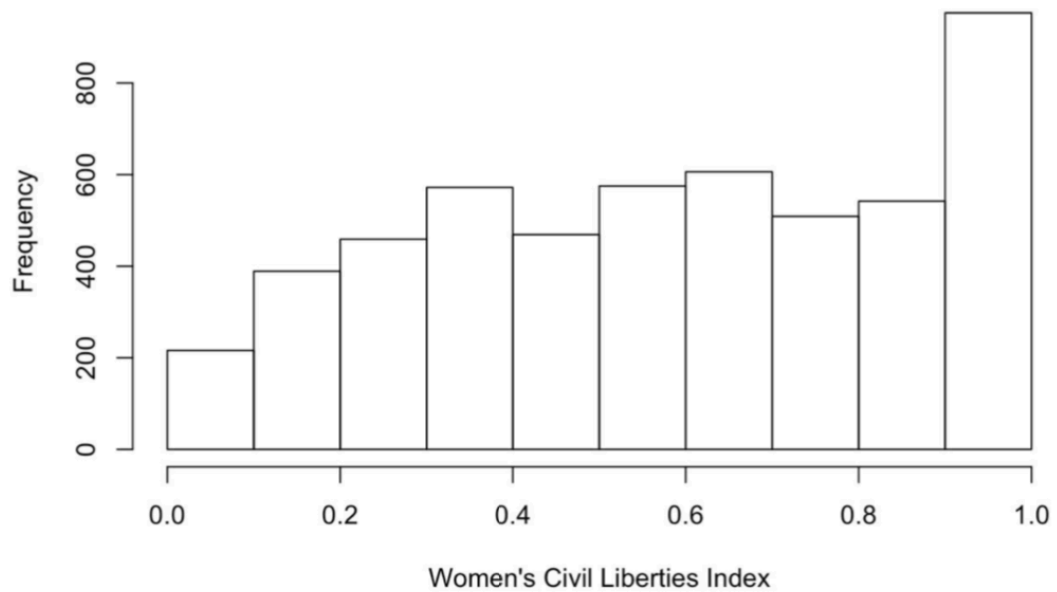


Figure 1: A histogram of the Women's Civil Liberties variable.

By being an index rather a simple binary variable, this variable provides more flexibility and can provide a more robust understanding between the relationship of civil liberties for women and regime transitions. The Variety of Democracy's index is a holistic measure that would respond well to a variety of human security needs relating to their overall capacity to act as autonomous individuals. While this measure is a blunt proxy for women's security, I argue that leaders, by and large, cannot adopt policies that would address women's civil liberties, without the consultation and consent of elite preferences. Moreover, women's civil liberties are one aspect of securing women's security which makes it an appropriate choice for this analysis.

The independent variable comes from Ashley Leeds and Michaela Mattes' Change in Source of Leader Support (CHISOLS) dataset which includes a variety of measures to assess changes in leader support. This dataset is designed to differentiate

new leaders from when they gain support from the same or different groups. This dataset provides more information about the overall regime and its political environment as opposed to simply noting the change in leadership (Leeds and Mattes 2016). To capture whether a regime transition occurred, we use Leeds and Mattes' measure, *regtrans*, as our main independent variable. *Regtrans* is a dummy variable which is coded as a one if there is a transition between a democratic and nondemocratic regime within a state-year, otherwise it is coded as zero. For this analysis, *regtrans* was lagged by one period, one year, in order to account for any changes that may occur from one year to the next. In alternative models, *demtrans* and *auttrans* are similarly coded lagged dummy variables that denote transitions between different democratic or autocratic subregimes within a state-year, respectively. *Demtrans* is coded as a one if there is a transition between any type of democratic subregimes such as from a parliamentary to presidential regime. Similarly, *auttrans* is coded as one if there is a transition between any transition between autocratic subregimes, such as between a military and a personalist regime.

Control variables *lpopl* and *ldgpcapl* come from the Cederman (2010) model on democratization and civil war onset. They are all state-level variables to control for that could be important in accessing the onset of women's civil liberties after a political regime transition. *Ldgpcapl*, logged GDP per capita, is included because a measure of a state's wealth, wealth redistribution and state capacity is often associated with

democracy and regime stability which could be useful here. Understanding how stable an autocratic or democratic a state is incredibly important in this analysis and thus a state's polity score was included. Moreover, including *lpopl*, logged population, seems like a prudent variable to include in that it may be harder to mobilize supporters for promoting civil liberties when there's a large population within a state and moreover, that creates more factions and interests for the state to consider when looking for electoral support.

The ordinary least squares base model is as demonstrated:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_{regtrans(t-1)} + \beta_{subregime(t-1)} + \beta_{lpopl} + \beta_{gdpcapl} + u$$

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

As demonstrated in Figure 2, there has been a steady increase in women's civil liberties throughout Latin America. As we can see Nicaragua, remains largely in the middle of the pack, with Guatemala and Cuba having the lowest rise of women's civil liberties since the 1960s and, countries such as Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina maintaining relatively high rates of women's access to civil liberties. Moreover, this

graph demonstrates that there is great variation across the region which dissuades any potential concerns related to norm diffusion or time.



Figure 3: Women's Civil Liberties Trend Line in Latin America

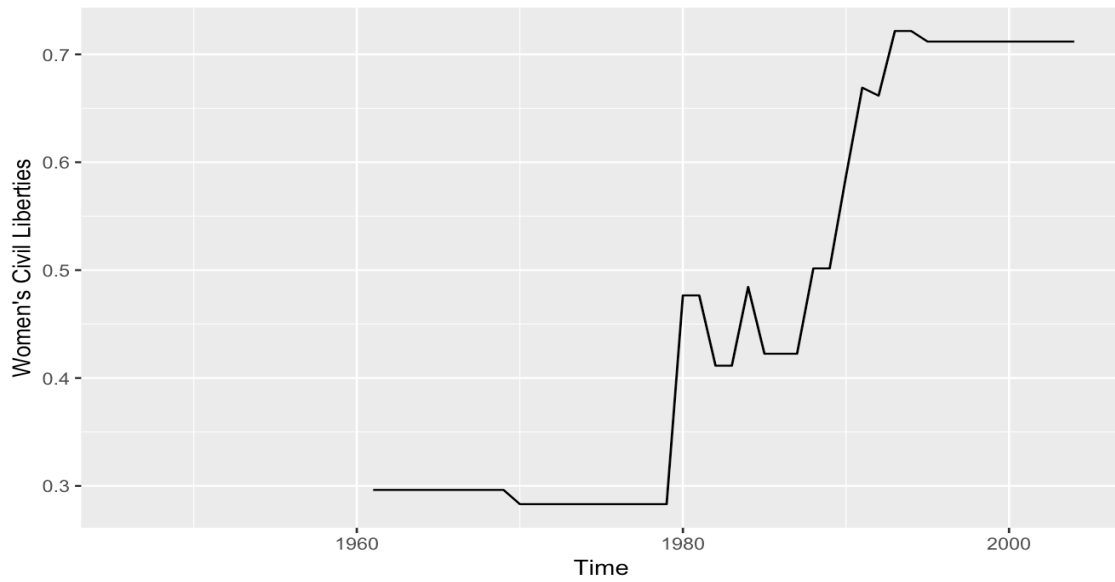


Figure 2: Women's Civil Liberties Trend Line in Nicaragua

When we examine Nicaragua more specifically in Figure 3, we see that there is an S-shaped curve to women's civil liberties since the 1960s. We see that women's civil liberties in Nicaragua has steadily rose since the Contra War, with some reversions and a drop in the 1990s which coincides with the election of the conservative party in 1990.

4.2 Results

Table 1: Fixed Effects Model of Women's Civil Liberties

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	v2x_genc1		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Regime Transtion	0.001 (0.011)		
Democratic Transition		0.002*** (0.00005)	
Autocratic Transition			0.0001** (0.0001)
Logged Population	0.155*** (0.006)	0.109*** (0.005)	0.157*** (0.006)
Logged GDP	0.071*** (0.005)	0.047*** (0.004)	0.071*** (0.005)
Observations	5,224	5,224	5,224
R ²	0.202	0.414	0.203
Adjusted R ²	0.180	0.398	0.181
F Statistic (df = 3; 5081)	428.339***	1,196.942***	431.026***
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		

To control for unobserved heterogeneity, a country-level fixed effects model was used to test the relationship between women's civil liberties and regime transitions. A

fixed effects model provides an estimate for the variation that efficiently captures the differences between countries so that the dependent variable, women's civil liberties, can provide a more generalizable estimate.² A potential issue associated with studying women's security is the variation within countries for how different sectors of women are treated throughout a country so sub-national information would be more useful (Forsberg and Olsson, 2008). However, data collection and availability are an enduring problem in this area of study, and therefore country-level data will be utilized in this analysis.

The initial results shown in Table 1 show some variation in significance of our key independent variables in both significance and directionality. We can see that there is no significant effect for switching from a democracy to a nondemocracy, however the regime transition variable is positive suggesting that Hypothesis 1 is a validity theoretical expectation though not statistically significant. Moreover, both democratic and autocratic subregime transition variables are both significant at the 0.5 level. Both types of subregime transitions are in positive directions suggesting that the institutional changes occurring here allow for improvements in women's civil liberties. These

² A potential issue associated with studying women's security is the variation within countries for how different sectors of women are treated throughout a country so sub-national information would be more useful (Forsberg and Olsson, 2008). However, data collection and availability are an enduring problem in this area of study, and therefore country-level data will be utilized in this analysis.

findings suggest that Hypothesis 1 holds, and our intuition about autocratic regimes may need to be reconsidered given its positive, significant result. The predicted coefficients plot in Figure 4 also demonstrates that there is a relatively wide uncertainty band around our variables which suggest that there is some noise around the results even when accounting for fixed effects.

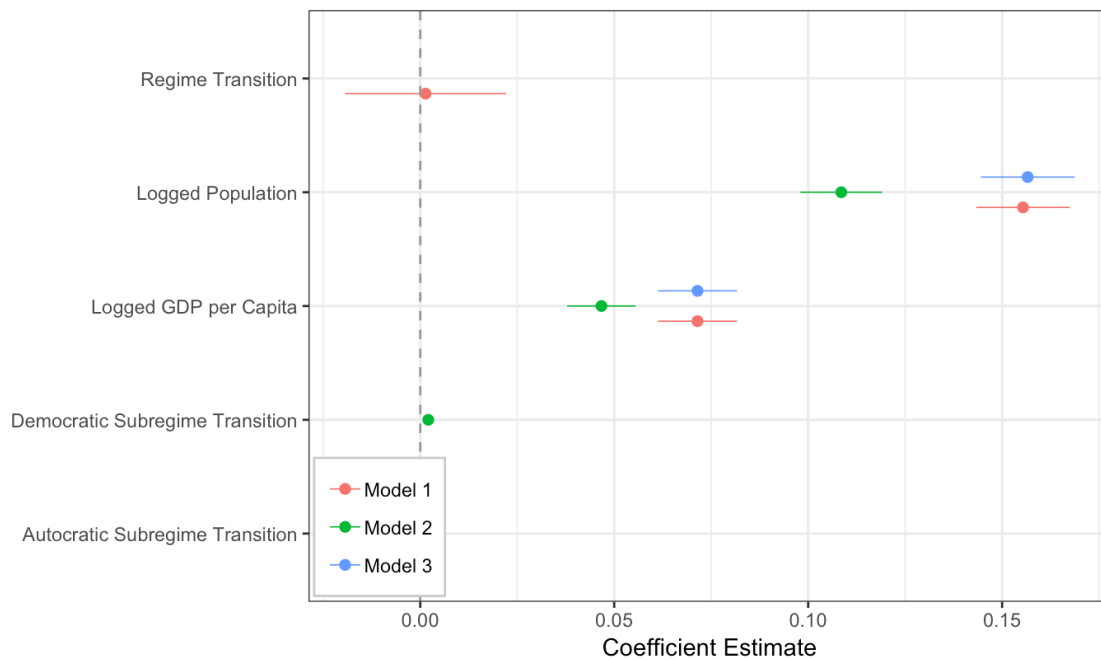


Figure 4: Predicted Values for Women's Civil Liberties

Additionally, the control variables are all positive and highly significant across all four model variations. We can see that there are strong effects for logged population and logged GDP per capita. This result would suggest that the country-level variables have an important relationship with women's civil liberties which should be investigated further. Given the first cut of this test, it is possible to conduct various

robustness checks to understand more about the relationship between political regime transitions and women's civil liberties.

4.3 Robustness Checks

To see if the results hold using a less rigorous empirical test, a simple ordinary least squares model presented in Table 2, we see some similarities to the fixed effects model. While a regime transition occurring still seemingly has no effect on women's civil liberties, authoritarian and democratic subregime transitions do present to be significant results and in the anticipated directions. This demonstrates that subregime transitions are more volatile to women's civil liberties in that democratic subregimes improve women's civil liberties, but authoritarian subregimes have a negative relationship. Therefore, the results still support Hypothesis 1 and leave uncertainty surrounding Hypothesis 2. This would suggest that under a less rigorous test, the conclusions about the effects of democratic transitions and women's civil liberties are still sound. Additionally, all of the control variables maintain positive and significant which would suggest, again, that state-level factors are relevant regarding women's civil liberties maintenance. Further, the pFest comparing the ordinary least squares model to the fixed effects model demonstrates that a fixed-effects model is a better model to use to explain the phenomena at hand.

Table 2: Ordinary Least Squares Model on Women's Civil Liberties

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Ordinary Least Squares Model		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Regime Transtions	0.008 (0.022)		
Democratic Transitions		0.003*** (0.0001)	
Autocratic Transitions			-0.0003*** (0.0001)
Logged Population	0.007*** (0.002)	-0.006*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)
Logged GDP	0.129*** (0.003)	0.060*** (0.003)	0.130*** (0.003)
Constant	0.346*** (0.022)	0.738*** (0.020)	0.328*** (0.023)
Observations	5,224	5,224	5,224
R ²	0.270	0.491	0.273
Adjusted R ²	0.269	0.491	0.273
Residual Std. Error (df = 5220)	0.240	0.200	0.239
F Statistic (df = 3; 5220)	643.151***	1,678.661***	654.744***

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 5 demonstrates the OLS marginal effect plot for the *regtrans* variable. This figure demonstrates a clear downward trend in the predicted values with a large and increasingly wide confidence interval. This would suggest that there is a clear negative relationship between women's civil liberties and regime transitions from democracies to nondemocracies, which suggests Hypothesis 2 has some legitimacy. The reasoning for

this is unclear but could be rooted in a simple renegotiation of power and thus democracies would like to commit to the stability of regimes by protecting civil liberties, whereas authoritarian regimes may be less certain of their stability and curb civil liberties. This figure also demonstrates that a fixed-effects model is a better predictor of the relationship. Marginal effects plots for democratic and autocratic subregimes can be found in the appendix. These plots show much stronger trend lines in positive and negative directions, respectively, and tighter confidence intervals suggesting a better fit.

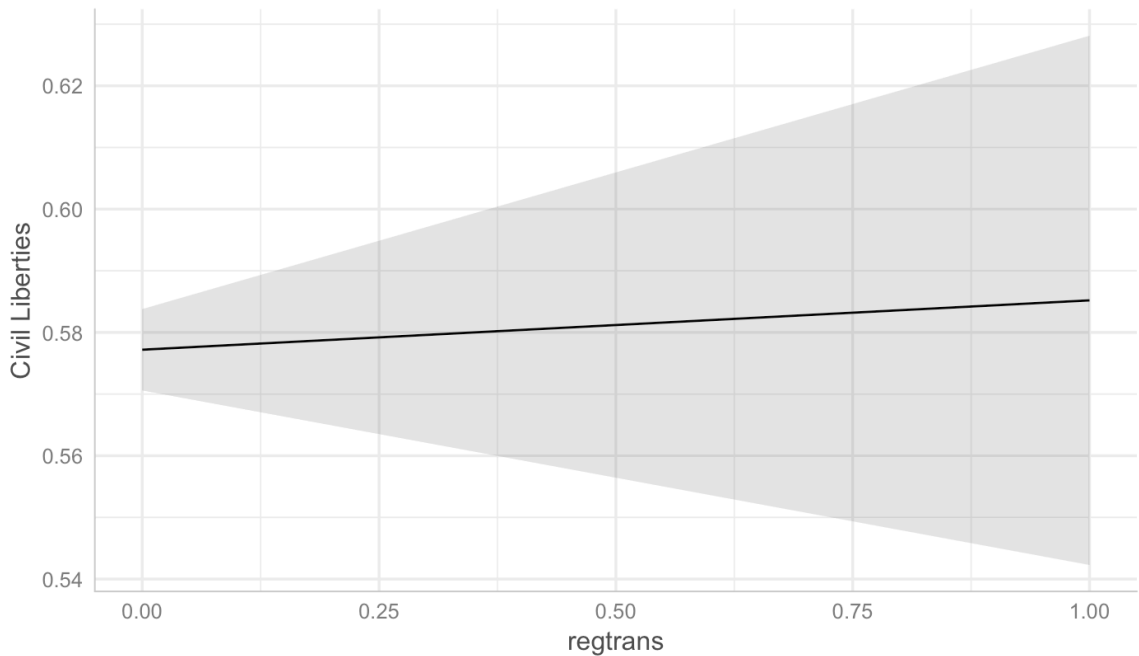


Figure 5: Marginal Effect Plot of Women's Civil Liberties

Table 3: Change in Leader Support Model

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Women's Civil Liberties		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Change in Leader Support	0.029*** (0.006)	0.005 (0.005)	0.029*** (0.006)
Regime Transition	0.001 (0.011)		
Democratic Transition		0.002*** (0.00005)	
Autocratic Transition			0.0001*** (0.0001)
Logged Population	0.155*** (0.006)	0.109*** (0.005)	0.156*** (0.006)
Logged GDP	0.071*** (0.005)	0.047*** (0.004)	0.071*** (0.005)
Observations	5,224	5,224	5,224
R ²	0.206	0.414	0.207
Adjusted R ²	0.184	0.398	0.185
F Statistic (df = 4; 5080)	329.797***	897.922***	331.920***

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This alternate model in Table 3 includes specifications for including the CHISLOS' *solschange* variable, as an additional robustness measure to test Hypothesis 3. In this model, the independent variable of interest is *solschange* which captures the change in the groups that lend support for the leader to maintain and exercise power; this for changes that last longer than 30 days. Per Leeds and Mattes (2016), this variable

is designed to be similar to Ethan Bueno de Mesquita's conception of a leader's winning coalition. This variable provides a measure of how changing elite preferences can affect leader decision-making on policies that either support or hurt women's civil liberties. Variation in the group that lends support to a leader from one year to the next allows us to better understand how elite preferences matter during regime transitions, as well as how elite preferences effect women's civil liberties from one period to the next. When this support changes from one year to the next this would suggest that elite preferences no longer align with the leader and a new group arises, this would suggest that a new status quo for the regime exists.

However, we see that the *solschange* variable is not significant across all models, but is in the expected direction, in all models but one, and does create a stronger impact on the other key independent variables which do remain significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 cannot be supported under this test. As we can see in this fixed-effects specification, it also increases the r-squared and degrees of freedom. Notably, the political group that lends support to a leader switching between authoritarian subregime transitions, has a positive relationship with women's civil liberties. This would suggest that there is a relationship between elite preferences and women's civil liberties, and in the expected direction of Hypothesis 3, and that women can make gains under authoritarian regimes. Therefore, this model may not be capturing elite preferences perfectly, but there is a relationship to further pursue in future work.

Table 4: Women's Political Participation Fixed Effects Model

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Women's Political Participation		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Regime Transtion	0.009 (0.012)		
Democratic Transition		0.001*** (0.0001)	
Autocratic Transition			0.0002*** (0.0001)
Logged Population	0.335*** (0.007)	0.309*** (0.007)	0.337*** (0.007)
Logged GDP	0.062*** (0.006)	0.051*** (0.006)	0.062*** (0.006)
Observations	5,139	5,139	5,139
R ²	0.408	0.439	0.410
Adjusted R ²	0.391	0.423	0.393
F Statistic (df = 3; 4996)	1,145.862***	1,302.544***	1,155.522***

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

An interest of this paper is to understand how political regime transitions can affect civil society at large, and aspects of women's civil liberties. Thus, it is prudent to include an alternative dependent variable into this empirical analysis to test the overarching relationship between women's security and regime transitions. Therefore, this model specification includes a women's political participation index variable also from Varieties of Democracy. The interval index also on a low-high scale from zero to

one and asks, "Are women descriptively represented in formal political positions?"

Though similarly coded, this dependent variable provides different results.

In this alternative model, the *regtrans* variable is significant and suggests regime transitions have a negative relationship with women making meaningful decisions in their lives. Additionally, subregime transitions lose their significance but maintain the expected directionality. This suggests that subregime transitions have no significant effect on women's political representation demonstrating that gains in representation are difficult to achieve among smaller government shakeups. Figure 4 visually represents the predicted values for this model, and we can see the very strong effects for logged GDP per capita and even more so for logged population. These predicted values, as seen in Figure 6, also have a narrower confidence interval bands suggesting a good fit of for this model and increase confidence in the results. Notably, this model is the only iteration where the *regtrans* variable is significant suggesting that fully switching regime types has an impact upon women's political participation, unlike women's civil liberties, and lends an explain as to why the other independent variables are insignificant. This would suggest that women's participation and women's civil liberties, both partial conceptions of women's security, have complicated and different effects on political regime transitions.

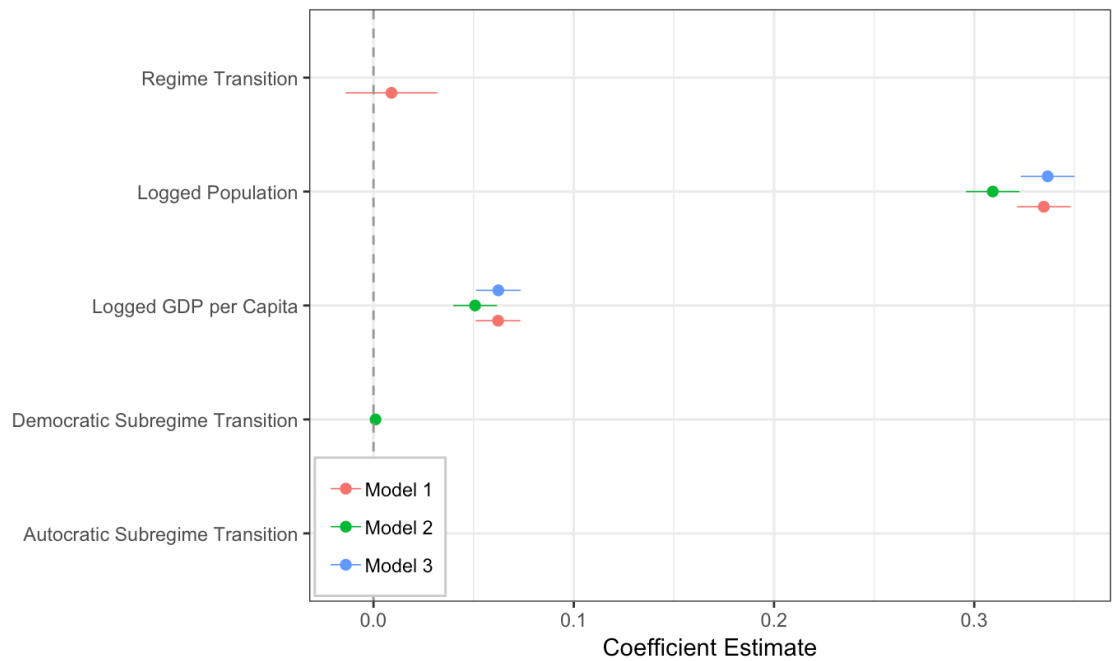


Figure 6: Predicted Values for Women's Political Participation

4.4 Analysis

The empirical results provide some insight into the relationship between regime transitions and women's civil liberties and, ultimately, women's security. While transition between nondemocracies and democracies provided a less clear insight into the relationship, whereas transitions between different subregimes presents to be where tighter conclusions can be drawn. Ultimately, this suggest that there is more work to be done empirically to more finely understand the relationship as understood here. Also, the models seem to suggest that gross domestic product per capita, and possibly other associated economic factors, may be a strong driver for why regime transitions effect

women's security, as *lgdpcapl* had the largest coefficient of the control variables across all model specifications. Additionally, the population variable remains significant across all the three independent variables suggesting that as the population of a state increases, regime transitions increase women's civil liberties.

Section Five summarizes the main findings of this paper, presents implications and areas of future research.

5. Conclusion

Acemoglu and Robinson (2001) surmise that there are a variety of factors that can muddy the process of democratic transition. That point remains even after this analysis, but this paper has moved the ball forward to better comprehend the effects of the transition process. As it has been demonstrated, there is an understudied relationship between women's civil liberties, and security, and regime transitions. This association could improve our understanding of how regime transitions have consequences for not only political leaders and elites, but civil society broadly.

Nicaragua has proven to be a useful motivating example to explain how the security of women can be tied to political power transitions. As governments emerged out of authoritarianism and into democratic governance, women and women's movements are placed in a precarious position. Women's groups can often act as the mobilizing force for these transitions to occur, as seen in the end of the Somoza regime, but even with transitioning democratic governments, the role of the movements as a mechanism for change in society was threatened and the security of women at-large was caught in the cross hairs with the 2006 abortion ban.

Moreover, this analysis has several implications for how we are to view political regime transitions. The analysis presented here suggests that not all regime transitions are created equally. There are disparate differences between and within regime

transitions which need to be further teased out. The empirical tests here demonstrated that women's civil liberties, a broader aspect of women's human security, are affected by state-level characteristics in political regime transitions. Therefore, sub-national characteristics could further color in our understanding of this interaction. Connecting local and sub-national actions to national political changes helps us better understand the complex world in which we live in.

In addition, authoritarian regime transitions seem particularly sensitive to changes in leader support which coincides with our intuition about how authoritarian regimes are established and exist. These sensitivities also vary between the different aspects of human security – civil liberties and political participation. In other words, autocratic leaders may more sensitive to the political winds of the elites that support them, which aligns with conventional wisdom. In a potential extension of this paper, we could test for variation among authoritarian regimes and women's civil liberties using Barbara Geddes' data on authoritarian regime types to differentiate interactions on a more nuanced level.

This analysis has demonstrated that the human security framework can provide more explanatory power for how we examine how regime transitions effect women's security, rather than the traditional top-down, state-centric view of security. Therefore, more research, qualitative and quantitative is needed to understand how these transitions are impacting on women's security and what mechanisms are causing this

effect. These subtler forms of transition are important to examine as we are seeing more consolidated democracies slowly erode liberal, democratic values and policies.

However, there are several methodological improvements that could be made to this analysis. In order to better understand the linkages demonstrated here there is a need for better, fine-grained sub-state data across countries for a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship and stronger theoretical framework in this area of scholarship. More precise data would allow for more robust results for how women are affected by regime transitions.

Specifically, a variable that could holistically better capture women's security would be the primary improvement for this analysis. Ideally, a dependent variable for this analysis would be an index variable that is composed of measures for economic, political and social parameters such as female labor participation rate, literacy rate, access to justice, social mobility property rights and access to reproductive health. An index for women's security, akin to the parameters used to measure state failure, could be useful as a composite score to measure a woman's ability to be secure. For example, in an analysis of terrorism and state failure, Coggins (2015) examines state failure among three dimensions: human security, state capacity and political collapse. She argues each of these dimensions get at different aspects of a state underperforming its duties by not providing public goods, a failure to enforce institutions of law and order, and a lack of political control over the state's fundamental aspects of statehood. Similar dimensions

could be created as indexes as alternative conceptions of women's security for additional robustness checks. However, this would require detailed cross national-data which would be difficult and time consuming to obtain.

Future research on this topic may provide deeper insight into how women's security is affected by different types of political subregimes. The analysis here suggests that subregimes have stronger and different effects on women's security than completely different types of regime transitions. It would also be worth diving into what types of policies have the strongest effects on women's security using an in-depth case study approach in recently transitioned countries. A potential extension for this paper would be a game-theoretic model in which women's movement are the catalyst to better understand the strategic decision-making for whether leaders will adopt policy changes that support women's security or not conditioned on their own perception of survival and the signal policy adoption would send to elites. As of the writing of this paper, there are few formal theory papers related to topics of gender and international relations.

Additionally, qualitative work could improve our understanding and complement the work presented here. For one, a survey experiment in a recently transitioned state could help understand how women view their relationship to the state. Alternatively, a comparative case study approach could showcase how women's movements were either effective or not at being mechanisms to improve women's civil liberties in recently transitioned states in a democratic and autocratic setting.

This paper has demonstrated the human security framework can be an insightful barometer for how regime transitions effect society at large and can be applied to other aspects of society. Further, this paper has utilized methodological tools to evaluate the aforementioned relationship, an area where qualitative work has largely been used for explanatory power. In sum, women's movements can play a vital role in ensuring the adoption of rights and civil liberties after transitions. The relationship clearly has significant and substantive effects on civil liberties and, consequently, the women's security.

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