

# Gender Parity and the Symbolic Representation of Women in Senegal

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# Abstract

In 2010, Senegal adopted a 50/50 gender quota law called the "Law on Parity", which led to a dramatic increase in the number of women elected to the National Assembly in the following legislative election from 22,7% to 42,7%. In a comparative perspective, the adoption of the parity law was a surprising historical turn. Scholars often attribute quota adoption to post-conflict societies, where women can influence policies in a more women-friendly direction. However, Senegal has never experienced such a conflict. Furthermore, Senegal has become the Muslim-majority country in the world with the highest proportion of women in the National Assembly. Islam is however often connected to lower levels of women's representation and gender equality. My first research question is the following: *Why and how was the Senegalese parity law adopted?* Quotas are believed to have an effect beyond numbers. In theory, exposure to more women in parliament will alter people's perceptions of politics as a male domain, which will create more acceptances to women as political leaders. This is part of what is called *symbolic representation*, and my second research question is the following: *How does the parity law affect the symbolic representation of women in Senegal?* My focus is on both political elites within the National Assembly and the public. For the former, data is collected through interviews during fieldwork in Dakar, Senegal. For the latter, I use survey data.

My findings show that the parity law was a result of strategic mobilisation from a united women's movement, which profited from the political will of former president Abdoulaye Wade and a favourable international climate. It is possible that Wade saw opportunities in supporting parity, both with regards to electoral support from the female electorate, and goodwill from the international community by appearing modern and democratic. Furthermore, the framing of gender quotas as "parity" might have facilitated adoption since "quotas" remain controversial and, to some, discriminatory. As for symbolic representation within the National Assembly, there may have been a moderate change in attitudes. However, this depends on how symbolic representation is operationalized. This thesis provides a set of indicators that can serve as a framework for further research on the subject of symbolic representation. Among the public, changes are more visible. Quotas seem to polarize public opinions among gender lines. This indicates that people react differently to parity.



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# List of abbreviations

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development
AFP	The Alliance of the Forces of Progress
AJS	Association des Juristes Sénégalaises
APAC	Association des Professionnelles de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication
APR	The Alliance for the Republic
AU	African Union
CEDEF	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CENA	Commission Électorale Nationale Autonome
COSEF	Conseil Sénégalais des Femmes
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ONP	National Observatory for Parity
PDS	Parti Démocratique Sénégalaise
PS	Parti Socialiste
RJS	Resau Siggil Jigéen
RND	Rassemblement National Démocratique
ROFAF	Réseau des Organisations de Femmes de l'Afrique Francophone
UN	United Nations
UPS	Union Progressiste Sénégalaise
WIDF	Women's International Federation

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The Senegalese parity law

Women have historically been underrepresented in political decision-making and less visible in the public sphere than men (Kymlicka 2002). Rather than waiting for cultural changes in society to happen, which might gradually lower the structural barriers that have been keeping women out of politics, many countries have chosen the "fast track" to parliament, namely quotas (Dahlerup 2006). Over the past decades, especially gender quotas have gained much attention on the international policy agenda.<sup>1</sup> During the UN Beijing conference in 1995, it was decided that at least 30% of all legislative seats should be filled by women (Krook 2006; Krook and True 2010). Since then, women's organizations and political elites have mobilized for institutional arrangements that increase women's political representation, backed by international support. Today more than 130 countries have implemented gender quotas in some form or another, and the results are striking (Nugent and Krook 2016, 115). National parliaments are becoming more and more gender balanced and in some states the number of women representatives have even surpassed the proportion of men, like in Rwanda where women make up 63,8% of parliamentary seats, or in Bolivia where 53,1% of the seats are filled by women (IPU 2016).

In 2010, Senegal adopted the Law on Parity, one of the world's most radical gender quota laws to date. This law obliges all political parties to nominate an equal amount of women and men on party lists and as constituency candidates in an alternating matter in legislative and local elections. If parties fail to achieve gender parity on candidate lists, they are not allowed to run for election (JORS 2010). This parity law proved to be highly effective in the 2012 legislative election when the number of women representatives to the National Assembly increased from 22,7% to 42,7% (IPU 2016). In a comparative perspective, the adoption of the

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of "gender quotas" has awoken some dispute among scholar. Some prefer the word "sex quotas". Feminist theory distinguish between "sex" (the biological differences between men and women) and "gender" (the socially given meanings) (Krook 2013, 4). Due to the limitations of this thesis, I will not delve further into this debate. "Gender quotas" are more frequently used in the applied literature, and I will thus stick to this concept throughout the thesis.

Senegalese parity law can be seen as surprising and unexpected, which calls for further study of its causes and effects. My first research question is thus the following:

*Research question 1: Why and how was the Senegalese parity law adopted?*

Today, many African countries are among the top ranking in the world with regards to women's numerical representation in legislative bodies. An often-cited source for quota adoption in Africa is post-conflict theory. In a transitional period from war to peace, women's movements use the newly opened political space in order to claim their rightful place in the new society and create women-friendly laws and institutions like gender quotas (Muriaas, Tønnessen, and Wang 2013; Hughes and Tripp 2015; Tripp 2015). However, Senegal is known as one of the most stable countries in Africa and has never experienced a regime transition as an independent state. Still Senegal is second in Africa, only beaten by Rwanda, in terms of women's numerical political representation (see Appendix 3). In addition, 95% of the Senegalese population are Muslim (Globalis 2011), while Islam is frequently connected to low levels of women's representation and gender equality (Inglehart and Norris 2003a; Inglehart and Norris 2003b) as well as patriarchal values (Alexander and Welzel 2011). My second research question relates to potential effects of gender quotas:

*Research question 2: How does the parity law affect the symbolic representation of women in Senegal?*

Much of the logic behind the adoption of gender quotas rests on the assumption that the effects go beyond numbers alone. One possible effect is that exposure to more women in legislative bodies will lead to changes in people's perceptions of politics as a male domain. This will lead to more positive attitudes towards women as political leaders. In addition, women in decision-making positions can act as role models for other women, inspiring them to engage and participate in politics, as well as challenge traditional gender roles (Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo 2012). These kinds of effects are based upon what Hanna Pitkin (1967) calls *symbolic representation*, which remains a highly understudied field with regards to women's political representation. This thesis aims at contributing to this emerging field of study by examining the effect of women's representatives' influx to the Senegalese National Assembly.

Previous research on this topic suggests that how and why quotas are adopted matters for outcomes in the symbolic representation of women. For instance, where quotas are adopted in a top-down manner without sufficient justification, the population may perceive quotas as an illegitimate tool promoting undeserving women. This may again have consequences for how female political leaders are perceived (Clayton 2014; Zetterberg 2012). In order to understand the workings of the symbolic representation of women, it is thus vitally important to study the process leading up the quota adoption as well.

## 1.2 The symbolic representation of women

Scholars of women's political representation often turn to Hannah Pitkin (1967) and her different forms of representation when studying quota effects. An increase in the number of female representatives in legislative bodies, or *descriptive representation*, can have positive effects on both the *substantive* and the *symbolic representation* of women. Substantive representation involves political actions: will an increase in the number of women in parliaments lead to more women-friendly policies? Symbolic representation on the other hand concerns *attitudes*, and is best understood in a historical perspective. The public sphere has traditionally been reserved for men, while the proper place for women has been in the home. In the absence of women from political space the definition of *politician* was not created under gender-neutral conditions, and thus became associated with men. As a consequence, women who enter politics today are sometimes faced with discriminatory attitudes which may help explain why women remain underrepresented (Kymlicka 2002).

This is an important argument for the introduction of gender quotas: the exposure to more women in legislative bodies will challenge people's perceptions of politics as a male domain. Instead of waiting for the necessary changes in people's attitudes that may lower the structural barriers for women to enter politics, called the *incremental* approach, gender quotas can significantly increase the number of women representatives, sometimes in the course of one election only. The incremental approach is based on the Nordic countries, where women's political representation is known to be exceptionally high.<sup>2</sup> According to this approach, "gender equality develops gradually, step wise, and as a concerted effort where state intervention may assist in moving equality in the right direction" (Freidenvall, Dahlerup, and Skjeie 2006, 55). For instance, a large public sector and welfare state lessens the domestic

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<sup>2</sup> Sweden currently has 43,6% women in its national legislature, Finland has 41,5%, Iceland has 41,3%, Norway 39,6% while Denmark has 37,4%.

burden for women who can instead focus on pursuing a political career (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2012, 169). However, it took 70 to 80 years from when women gained the right to vote until they filled up 30% to 40% of the seats in national legislatures in the Nordic countries. The increasing global diffusion of gender quotas indicates that many countries do not want to wait that long. Furthermore, we cannot expect the development seen in the Nordic countries to be deterministic, and that all countries will eventually end up in the same place without affirmative action.

As for the incremental versus the fast-track approaches' connection to symbolic representation, one can propose the following: while the incremental approach indicates that changes in people's attitudes must *precede* an increase in women's political representation, the fast-track approach assumes these attitudinal changes to happen *after* women have entered parliaments through quotas.

### **1.3 Research design and operationalization**

In order to answer my two research questions, I will conduct a case study of the Senegalese parity law and its symbolic effects. I will base much of my research on fieldwork conducted in Dakar, Senegal, in November 2015. In order to research why and how the parity law was adopted, I interview members of women's groups, academics, civil servants and politicians about the parity law process. These data are supplemented with additional information from documents to secure reliability.

Uncovering the symbolic representation of women is more complicated, however. The limited research on women's symbolic representation has focused on quotas' effects on different *audiences*, either political elites (Meier 2012; Lloren 2014) or ordinary citizens (Burnet 2012; Zetterberg 2012; Beaman, Pande, and Cirone 2012). As far as I am aware, this thesis is the only study that compares symbolic representation across audiences, both *within* the National Assembly among political elites and *outside* among the public. Since I am studying the symbolic effects of the parity law, I compare the period before and after the law first came into work in 2012, when the National Assembly saw a dramatic influx of women. A paired comparison serves this purpose. In order to obtain comparison during one fieldwork only, I interview parliamentarians who sat in the National Assembly before 2012 when the number of women was 22,7%, as well as parliamentarians who got elected after 2012 when the number of women increased to 42,7%. When it comes to studying symbolic representation outside the

parliament, I use survey data from Afrobarometer, which cover public attitudes towards women and men as political leaders before and after 2012.

One of the biggest challenges when studying symbolic representation is how to operationalize such an intangible and understudied concept. I have used existing literature to develop indicators of symbolic representation, which I have incorporated into my interview guides. However, as previous studies show, symbolic representation can be expressed in various and sometimes unexpected ways. I therefore employed an open research strategy, which allowed me to find more indicators as the process moved on, both during fieldwork and when analysing data.

The result is a *set of indicators that can serve as a framework for further research on the subject of symbolic representation*. Such a framework have been lacking in the literature of symbolic representation. I would argue that these indicators are not country-specific, and can be used in other contexts outside of Senegal. Besides, some are not limited to political elites only, and can thus be applied to other audiences as well. I have developed the following operationalization of symbolic representation within the National Assembly:

### **Gender relations in parliament**

Because of the historical exclusion of women, parliaments contain a highly masculine culture. Women may be regarded as outsiders, which might trigger negative reactions. Is there hostility or mutual respect between parliamentarians of opposite genders? Do the women participate in debates, and how are the reactions from their male colleagues?

### **Delegation of posts in parliament**

The hierarchy inside the National Assembly can measure symbolic representation. If women are still not given posts of responsibility, it suggests that they are considered less able to hold powerful positions than men.

### **Discussion of competences**

Are women described as less competent than men? And in cases when men lack education, is this posed as a problem? If not, it might indicate that more is expected from women than men, which suggest that the image of the political leader as a man remains.

### **Perspectives on representation**

Gender quotas can contribute to symbolic representation through widening the perspective both of who the representative can be, and of who should be represented. Who do the women in parliament represent? And is it considered important that they represent these groups?

### **Legitimization of quotas**

Gender quotas rest on the assumption that the public space is not gender-neutral, and that affirmative action is needed to lower the structural barrier for women's access to politics. Support for gender quotas among respondents involves an internalization of its inherent gender equality norms.

In sum, studying gender relations, delegation of posts, discussions of competences, views on who should be represented, and legitimization of quotas within the National Assembly, all within a gender perspective, allows us to measure women's symbolic representation. In this thesis, I will show how I developed these indicators.

## **1.4 Previous research on quotas and the symbolic representation of women**

Although research on gender quotas has blossomed after women's issues arrived on the international agenda, the effect of gender quotas on women's symbolic representation has been mostly overlooked. The modest amount of research on the subject shows inconsistent results. Some research finds that gender quotas have positive effects on women's symbolic representation, and supports the theory that exposure to more women as political leaders bring about changes at a broader level and more positive public attitudes towards ruling women (Alexander 2012; Burnet 2012; Bauer 2012; Yoon 2011). However, other studies show no positive effects (Clayton 2014; Zetterberg 2012; Lloren 2014; Meier 2012). In other words, the theoretical relationship between the descriptive and symbolic representation of women has to date neither been empirically confirmed nor disconfirmed, and contextual factors as well as differences in the operationalization of symbolic representation seem to play an important role for outcomes. These studies will be further elaborated in the next chapter.



## 1.5 Women's representation in Africa

Women's representation in Africa has drawn attention from researchers, and in the following section I will present the main trends in this field of research. Scholars have identified a regional pattern with national parliaments in eastern and southern Africa tending to have a higher proportion of women. Among these are pioneer countries such as Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa, which all have long experiences with gender quotas. Consequently, scholars often turn to this region when studying causes and effects of changes in women's representation in Africa (Bauer 2012).

Since Uganda first introduced quotas for women in 1989, women's political representation in Africa has increased significantly (O'Brien 2012). Today Rwanda, Uganda, Seychelles, Namibia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Angola, South Africa, Burundi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Sudan, Algeria, Tunisia and Senegal all have more than 30% women in their legislatures<sup>3</sup>. Some of these countries are among the top ranking in the world regarding women's political representation, and are on the same level as the Scandinavian countries, which are considered among the most gender equal in the world. These African countries also outperforms some of the more developed, established democracies like France (26,2%), Australia (26,7%), USA (19,4%) and Japan (9,5%) (IPU 2016).

African women's movements play an important role in increasing women's access to parliaments. States with a strong women's movement are more likely to adopt women-friendly policies such as gender quotas than those without (Tripp et al. 2009, 14). The strongest women's movements in Africa are found in Cameroon, South Africa, Kenya, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Senegal. However, the efforts of women alone is not sufficient for quota adoption; studies show that whether these movements succeed in their goals depends on other factors as well, which I will present below (Tripp et al. 2009, 22).

Many of the African countries that have adopted gender quotas have done so in a post-conflict context, like Burundi, Eritrea, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola. In the aftermath of a destructive civil war, an institutional vacuum often appears. In this political space, new constitutions and electoral laws are implemented instead of reforming the old ones. In many African post-conflict countries, women's movements have

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<sup>3</sup> In a single or lower house of parliament

seized the moment and pushed for more favourable political measures in order to increase female representation, for instance through the adoption of gender quotas. Some of these states, like Rwanda and South Africa, have also adopted a new electoral system based on proportional representation, a system known to be favourable to women's political representation (Hughes and Tripp 2015; Tripp 2015). Some liberation movements, like the ANC in South Africa, Frelimo in Mozambique and the South West African People's organization in Namibia were left-leaning and pursued women-friendly policies once in power (Bauer 2013; Hughes and Tripp 2015).

Another effect of conflict can be dramatic changes in gender roles. Women are generally considered less responsible for creating conflict, and can thus be given political legitimacy after the war (Wood 2008). In violent conflicts, women who are left behind when their husbands and relatives are fighting, deceased or put to flight, have to take on new and untraditional tasks. In Rwanda, women became central in the development of farming cooperatives (Burnet 2008). Some women even participate in combat, as was the case in Sierra Leone (Wood 2008) and in Uganda (Muriaas and Wang 2012). This allowed women to show their capabilities in areas where they previously had been excluded or marginalized (Wood 2008; Hughes and Tripp 2015; Bauer 2013). In many cases women used this newly won public role by participating actively in peace agreements where they lobbied for women-friendly policies (Anderson and Swiss 2014, 55). Consequently, post-conflict countries in Africa have twice as many women in national parliaments when compared with African countries where there have been no such conflict (Tripp 2012).

Scholars also point to the fact that quota adoption in Africa in some cases "were introduced in the context of shifts towards multipartyism and political opening" (Tripp et al. 2009, 6). Some case studies suggest democracy as an explanatory factor for the increase in women's representation, but this theory lacks empirical support in a larger perspective (Tripp et al. 2009). In fact, "all of the countries with the highest percentages of women in parliament are dominant (...) party political systems and some of those, such as Rwanda and Uganda, are increasingly authoritarian" (Bauer 2012, 378). These two cases show that non-democratic incumbents can use quotas as a tool to remain in power: when a group in society is given privileges, its members are more likely to favour the status quo than a regime transition (Muriaas and Wang 2012; Burnet 2008).

The role of the international community is another factor that has gained much attention in explaining women's representation in Africa. Especially after the UN Beijing Conference in 1995, advancement of female representation on all arenas became the global norm, and women's organizations "began to marshal international pressure to bolster their claims for representation and to construct women's political representation as the norm for modern nation-states" (Hughes & Tripp 2015, 19). Regional actors like the African Union (AU) adopted these norms, and some African political leaders have responded by adjusting policies in a more women-friendly direction in an attempt to appear "modern" and "democratic" rather than "regressive" (Towns 2010; Bush 2011). Many African countries are dependent on foreign aid, which make the impact of international pressure particularly salient. Furthermore, in post-conflict societies international actors are often involved in liberalising peace operations and in the establishment of new constitutions. They also contribute financially in the reconstruction work of war-torn societies (Bush 2011, 104). Women-friendly international norms give domestic women's groups extra leverage to their demands (Hughes and Tripp 2015). Another factor connected to international actors is the relationship and interaction between former colonies and colonisers. This is particularly relevant for explaining women's representation in Africa today since almost all of Africa has a colonial past (Paxton, Hughes, and Green 2006).

The above section presents factors that researchers have turned to when explaining quota adoption in Africa. As for the effects of gender quotas beyond numbers, most research has focused on substantive representation: has the increase of women in national legislatures led to a better representation of African women's interests? Again, the focus of research has been limited to a few cases: Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa and to a lesser extent Tanzania (Bauer 2012, 376). It is perhaps not surprising, then, that much of the research on the symbolic representation of women also tend to limit itself to Uganda (Ahikire 2004; Johnson, Kabuchu, and Kayonga 2003), Rwanda (Burnet 2012), and Tanzania (Yoon 2011). Previous research on symbolic representation will be presented in the theory chapter.

## **1.6 Case selection**

Based on the above presentation of research trends of women's representation in Africa, I will now explain why I have chosen to study the Senegalese parity law and its symbolic effects.

First of all, Senegal is not a post-conflict country. Some armed independency struggles have taken place in the southern Casamance region, but it has never developed into a full-blown civil war threatening regime stability. In fact, Senegal is presented as one of the most stable countries in West-Africa, and has never experienced a coup d'état or military rule (Globalis 2011). In other words, there has never been any dramatic “rupture” in gender roles or in the organization of society for women’s movements to seize the moment and implement gender quotas.

Secondly, this lack of post-conflict legacy is also relevant with regards to measuring symbolic effects. Although being a brutal and traumatizing experience, war also provides women with new opportunities. What was considered an appropriate role for a woman before the war is not necessarily the same after. This upheaval of traditional gender roles is likely to influence the symbolic representation of women. Improvements in women’s symbolic representation are found in both Uganda and Rwanda, but these are also post-conflict. In fact, Burnet (2012) underlines that societal changes with regards to gender roles were taking place in Rwanda *before* quota adoption, but that quotas fuelled this process. However, when studying Senegal, potential changes in people’s attitudes towards gender roles in the political sphere are likely connected to quotas rather than dramatic ruptures in the past. One can thus argue that quotas in this regard hold more explanatory power with regards to symbolic representation than in a post-conflict society.

Additionally, while quotas are spreading to other parts of Africa, most research still focuses on the pioneer countries in the southern and eastern part of the continent. West Africa and other parts have been mainly overlooked. One of the reasons why this is a problem is that it leaves out an important aspect of the study of women’s representation: the importance of religion. In Senegal, 95% of the population are Muslim and among these, 98% reports that religion is very important in their lives (The Pew Forum 2012). According to Inglehart and Norris (2003a), religion has a major impact on what is considered appropriate gender roles, and religious authority “has often served to limit opportunities for women outside the home” (Inglehart and Norris 2003a, 71) like in work, education and politics. Furthermore, cross-national studies show a link between religious beliefs and a low representation of women in parliaments (Paxton and Hughes 2007; Kenworthy and Malami 1999), and Inglehart and Norris’ (2003a; 2003b) stresses particularly Islamic heritage as highly connected to the lack of

gender equality. Alexander and Welzel (2011) further claim that patriarchal values are related to Muslim faith. In fact, while the world average proportion of women in parliaments is 22,6%, the average for countries with a Muslim majority is 16,6% (IPU 2016; The Pew Forum 2012) (See Appendix 4 for a complete list).

The aspect of Islam is relevant for both of my research questions. Firstly, how did such a radical and highly effective quota law get passed in this context? According to a UN report, “demands from women’s movements and gender activists have not been homogeneous: they vary according to the political and social context, especially in the light of the forces (particularly traditional and religious factors) at play in the countries concerned” (Odera and Houinato 2011, 10). This contextual diversity is often reflected in the type of quota implemented. For instance, the women’s movement in Muslim-majority Niger advocated for quotas, but “settled” at a minimum 10% gender quota law (Kang 2015). Then how was the women’s movement in Senegal able to win support for a quota of 50%? Secondly, research suggests that Islam is connected to gender inequality and patriarchal values. One can thus expect cultural factors in Senegal to have an effect on people’s perceptions of women as political leaders. Little of the research on the symbolic representation of women has focused on Muslim countries<sup>4</sup>.

There are also more methodological advantages to the study of the Senegalese parity law. The concrete stimulus of women’s descriptive representation in the 2012 legislative election facilitates the investigation of its symbolic effects, and the fact that it happened rather recently makes it possible to capture people’s attitudes both *before* and *after* the implementation of gender quotas. Of course, there is a downside to the short time span of this study, namely that changes in women’s symbolic representation might happen gradually over time. Due to this fact, this thesis will be limited to investigating the short-term symbolic effects of gender quotas.

Another reason why the Senegalese parity law and its symbolic effects makes an interesting case is the following: people in Senegal hold slightly more negative attitudes towards women in politics than the African average, but has at the same time the second highest proportion of female parliamentarians in Africa after Rwanda. According to Afrobarometer surveys from

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<sup>4</sup> With the exception of Lloren’s study of Morocco (2014)

2014/2015, 65,6% of African respondents agreed or very strongly agreed with the statement "Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men". In Senegal this number was slightly lower with 64,7%. On the statement "Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women", 34% of the Senegalese agreed or agreed very strongly, whereas the African average was 32,4% (Afrobarometer 2016b). This makes Senegal a particularly interesting African case, as one would expect people to be *more* positive towards women as political leaders in a country where they currently occupy 42,7% of the seats in the National Assembly. This indicates that the theoretical relationship between descriptive and symbolic representation is not automatic and that other factors needs to be investigated.

### **1.7 Main findings of this study**

My findings show that some of the factors frequently used for explaining quota adoption apply in the case of the Senegalese parity law as well. A strong women's movement led by COSEF (Conseil Sénégalais des Femmes) initiated the parity law, and used expectations of symbolic effects as a legitimizing tool. Former president Abdoulaye Wade played an important part as an ally of the women's movement. It is not unlikely that he foresaw electoral gains by playing the "women's card". Another possible motivation behind quota adoption was to present Senegal as in line with modern and democratic international norms, fuelled by the country's dependency on foreign aid and support. The framing of the quota law as "parity" may have limited strong opposition since "quotas" remain somewhat controversial. Besides, the Senegalese president exercises much control over the National Assembly, and his political will may have trumped in the end. Interestingly however, although religious counter-mobilization did not stop parity from being *adopted*, it may stop it from being *implemented* as the case of the holy city of Touba shows. This also highlights the duality of Senegalese society, between modern, internationally oriented political elites and powerful religious leaders.

My findings show that whether or not symbolic changes have occurred after the parity law, depends on how it is operationalized, and whom symbolic effects are measured on. As for symbolic representation within the National Assembly, there seems to have been limited improvements in people's attitudes towards their female colleagues since the introduction of the parity law. For instance, gender relations in parliament have improved somewhat, and the

parity law has brought about a broader perspective on who should be represented. However, several other indicators imply that little has changed. The gender hierarchy remains within the National Assembly, as posts of responsibility are still given to men. Further, although all the women I spoke to strongly supported the parity law, their male colleagues did not appear to have internalized the gender equality norms underlying quota adoption. A persistent discussion of the newly elected women's competences indicates that more is expected of women since they do not fit as "naturally" within the parliamentary setting as their male colleagues. However, most respondents were positive to the parity initiative and believed firmly in women's ability to be role models. Still, it is suggested that this is attributed to *substantive* representation: in order to "pull the others" women deputies have to prove their abilities through political *actions*. Only then can they truly represent other women. The recently installed translation service and the extended use of parity within the National Assembly may facilitate this process, and reflects a political will to make parity work.

When it comes to symbolic effects among the public, my findings show that gender quotas have led to a *polarization of opinions along gender lines*. Women's strong support for other women's chances to be elected has increased considerably since the parity law was adopted, and those who were positive before are even more positive now. Among men, however, we see a similar yet contrasting pattern. Men's strong support for other men as political leaders has more than doubled during the same period, and those who favoured male political leaders before are more convinced now. Even among women, the support for men as political leaders has increased although it remains lower than among male citizens. This suggests that people react differently to gender quotas, which again influences attitudes towards women as political leaders. For many women, quotas are seen as a tool that guarantees women's rightful inclusion to decision-making bodies. While for some men – and some women – it may symbolise exclusion, disrespect of equality before the law and a violation of appropriate gender roles. These findings also suggest that although the framing of "parity" may have helped adopting the highly radical quota law, the meaning of this concept has not yet been successfully transmitted to the people.

## **1.8 Outline of the thesis**

In the next chapter I will present the theoretical framework for my thesis. I will start by explaining the theoretical relationship between the descriptive and symbolic representation of

women. Then I will present different types of gender quotas and conventional explanations for their implementation. I will also present previous research on the subject of gender quotas and its effects – or lack of effects – on women’s symbolic representation.

Chapter three concerns the research design and my choice of method. I am conducting a within-case study of the Senegalese parity law, and I am studying its symbolic effects by looking at attitudes towards women as political leaders before and after the parity law came into action. As for measuring women’s symbolic representation within the National Assembly, I rely on my own interviews with political elites. The symbolic representation of women outside the National Assembly is measured through survey data.

Chapter four introduces the analysis. I present background information on Senegal, its history, political system, the role of Islam, and women’s status. These contextual factors are important in order to understand both the adoption of the parity law as well as its symbolic effects. For the sake of clarity, I will discuss these elements in chapter five and six.

Chapter five concerns the parity law and what led to its implementation. It identifies the initiators and their allies, the arguments used for legitimization of the concept, and campaign strategies.

Then I proceed to analysing symbolic effects of the parity law in chapter six. I start by studying symbolic representation within the National Assembly and present a set of indicators that operationalizes the concept. Then I study symbolic effects among ordinary citizens, followed by a discussion of what may explain my results.

The last chapter contains conclusions and possible implications of this study and its limitations.



# 2 Theoretical framework

## 2.1 Introduction

Hannah Pitkin (1967) argues that political representation is a complex concept that has been understood in different ways by political theorists. In this part of my thesis, I will present three types of representation defined by Pitkin: descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation. Even though Pitkin herself did not focus on the representation of women specifically – in fact, she constantly refers to the political leader as “he” – I will present how these concepts have been treated by scholars in a gender perspective. Then I will move on to explain the symbolic representation of women more thoroughly, and the theoretical relationship between descriptive and symbolic representation. I will then present what is seen as a direct stimulus to the descriptive representation of women, namely gender quotas. I will finish this chapter by presenting previous research on quotas and its potential effects on the symbolic representation of women.

## 2.2 Descriptive representation

Descriptive representation focuses on how the agent, or the representative, "stands for" the principal or the represented. Theorists of the descriptive view of representation are concerned with how the representatives should mirror those represented. In practice, this means that a representative body should resemble those being represented with regard to common interests and experiences. The importance lies in how the legislative body is composed. John Adams argued for this form of representation, and claimed that a representative legislature "...should be an exact portrait, in miniature, of the people at large, as it should think, feel, reason and act like them" (quoted in Pitkin 1967, 60)

Scholars of women's representation have mainly focused on descriptive representation, referring to the proportion of female representatives in legislative bodies. Some scholars have also studied what type of women gets elected to parliaments through quotas: what are their characteristics in terms of education, political experience, party loyalty et cetera? (Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo 2012) There is still an unbalance in the descriptive representation of gender, as women make up approximately half of the world's population, but just 22,5% of legislative seats worldwide (IPU 2016). Much research has been devoted to finding the cause to this imbalance, and scholars point to cultural, socioeconomic and political

factors. As mentioned, Islam is one cultural factor often connected to low levels of women's representation, while Christian Protestantism is seen as more favourable. Egalitarian gender roles and women's access to higher education and are also examples of cultural factors positively correlated with women's descriptive representation (Tremblay 2012, 9).

Socioeconomic factors have received attention when mapping out women's access to parliaments: when socioeconomic conditions improve, exemplified by women's participation in labour markets or an developed welfare state, the supply of female potential candidates increases, which may again increase women's presence on politics (Tremblay 2012, 10).

Political factors like party system, electoral system, and women's political rights also influence women's descriptive representation through the selection and election of candidates. Voting systems using proportional representation are said to promote women's election to parliament, while majoritarian systems often work against women's descriptive representation (Paxton, Hughes, and Green 2006; Reynolds 1999). However, Tripp and Kang (2008) argues that in the 2000s, gender quotas hold the most explanatory power in terms of women's increased presence in legislatures around the world. This helps explain the influx of women to African parliaments, even in countries with a lower status for women and poorer socio-economical conditions (Bauer 2012, 371). However, what explains quota adoption? I will present theories regarding this later in this section.

### **2.3 Substantive representation**

Pitkin herself was sceptical towards focusing primarily on descriptive representation, as this did not in any way guarantee what she considered real representation in the form of political *actions* (Phillips 1995). The *substantive* view of representation focuses on this: rather than "standing for" the principals, the agents are "acting for" them. What do the agent actually do in order to represent the principal? (Pitkin 1967)

Some research has detected different policy priorities between men and women (S. Thomas 1991). Does this mean that once elected to office, female representatives pursue different, more women-friendly policies than their male colleagues? By asking these kinds of questions, feminist researchers link the descriptive and substantive representation of women together. The results from this research is however inconsistent. Some researchers find that where there

are many women in parliament, they might form strategic coalitions and promote women-friendly policies (S. Thomas 1994), or push their male colleagues in a feminist direction (Bratton 2005). Alternatively, a large presence of women might lead to less women-friendly policies, either due to a backlash among male legislators (Hawkesworth 2003), or because of reduced effectiveness by the women representatives as a larger, but less specialized group in promoting women's issues (Crowley 2004).

As for Africa, most of the literature on parliaments has focused on the substantive effects of women's increased political presence. In many cases, an increase of women to parliament has led to substantial gains in women-friendly policies, which indicates that numbers do matter (Bauer 2012, 375). For instance, in Rwanda women was to thank for the enactment of an "Inheritance Law" which granted women many new rights (Burnet 2008, 376-377). In the Ugandan parliament, district women MPs were among those who performed best in terms of substantive representation (Muriaas and Wang 2012) , while in Tanzania, women MPs have initiated parliamentary skills training for women, just to mention some substantial achievements (Yoon 2011).<sup>5</sup>

## **2.4 Symbolic representation**

At its core, symbolic representation "entails the representation of a principal through an agent who is attributed a certain representative meaning" (Lombardo and Meier 2014, 4). In this case the agent is seen as "standing for" the principal, although on a more abstract level than descriptive representation. Of the types of representation defined by Pitkin, symbolic representation has gained the least attention from scholars (Lombardo and Meier 2014). This may have to do with the abstract character of the concept, which makes operationalization and measurement difficult. It has also opened up for several interpretations, and the literature has taken two strands, which I will present later.

Theorists of the symbolic view see all representation as symbolization. Both things and people can be seen as symbols: a flag can symbolize a nation, and so can a person. The importance lies in how people *react* emotionally to the symbol, or how the symbol can evoke feelings or attitudes. A symbol does not give any information about what it represents, nor is it based on any "rationally justifiable criteria" (Pitkin 1967, 100). It is rather made out of

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<sup>5</sup> For a more extensive overview, see Bauer (2012, 375-378).

people's beliefs, attitudes and assumptions. The meaning of a symbol is constructed through training and habit, and is thus changeable, depending on "whatever they are currently taken or defined to stand for" (Pitkin 1967, 100).

The symbolic representation of women in particular is related to the social construction of gender roles. This is often attributed to the lack of exposure to women as political actors. As Lombardo and Meier sums it up:

The meanings assigned to women and men are, as we learnt, expressed through different images and discourses that are not 'simply given', but rather socially constructed. These images and discourses then, have meanings at the symbolic level (Lombardo and Meier 2014, 12).

Women and men have always been important symbols in politics, but with different meanings. Female figures have traditionally had allegorical and passive roles, symbolizing for instance the virtue of the nation. Men on the other hand have been the ones defending and more literally representing the nation (Puwar 2004). This affects how we view women in politics, and reveals an interesting paradox: while female figures are frequently representing justice, like the Statue of Liberty, "they are not seen as being capable of actually administering justice" (Puwar 2004, 26). Historically, women have been excluded from public life. Consequently, the role of "politician" is not gender-neutral in how it was defined. Since men were the first politicians, this role is defined to fit to men. Thus, through years of female political underrepresentation, people have learnt to associate the image of a political leader with that of a man (Kymlicka 2002). At the same time, the lack of exposure to women that rule can give people the impression that women are not able or fit to rule (Mansbridge 1999, 649). As stated by Dahlerup (2006, 3): "The underrepresentation of women as well as that of other groups may influence how various categories of people are constructed in our minds". This again creates a bias towards female political candidates competing in elections against male candidates: "The political lion skin has a large mane and belonged to a male lion, it is a costume for men. When women finally win the right to don the lion skin it is exceedingly ill-fitting and therefore unbecoming" (Pateman 1995, quoted in Puwar 2004, 77).

However, this socially constructed image is as mentioned subject for change. Symbolic representation always involves a maker who is "the actor or actors constructing the agent" (Lombardo and Meier 2014, 142). The maker can be anyone in a society exposed to an agent, and in research on symbolic representation the maker has been the whole electorate, the

female part of the electorate, or political elites (Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo 2012). Through training and habit, the image of the typical political leader is contested in the mind of the maker. Exposure to more women as political leaders might alter people's attitudes, beliefs and assumptions concerning which gender is more "fit" to govern. This connects descriptive representation to symbolic representation, and most of the research on symbolic representation has focused on the relationship between these two types of representation.

It is however also likely that substantive representation affects symbolic representation: if women in decision-making positions can show to political accomplishments, people are more prone to have their discriminatory attitudes towards women as political leaders altered (Beaman, Pande, and Cirone 2012). If no substantial gains are achieved, the women may be perceived as "tokens" without real decision-making power (Lloren 2014). Drawing on this, one can hypothesize that an increase of women's descriptive representation to parliament can affect their symbolic representation *through* substantive representation.

## **2.5 The relationship between descriptive and symbolic representation**

Feminist scholars have considered increasing women's access to legislative bodies as valuable if it leads to changes at a broader level. As mentioned, some have studied the relationship between women's presence in legislatures and the policies created there. However, some claim that women's presence in legislative bodies matters *beyond* just the concrete political measures that might result from it. As stated by Phillips:

Including those previously excluded matters *even if* it proves to have no discernible consequences for the policies that may be adopted. Part of the purpose, that is, is simply to achieve the necessary inclusion: to reverse previous histories of exclusion and the way these constituted certain kinds of people as less suited to govern than the rest. (Phillips 1995, 40)

Women should represent women because "descriptive representation promotes goods unrelated to substantive representation" (Mansbridge 1999, 628). That is, even though there is no guarantee that more women in legislative bodies create more women friendly politics, their mere presence matters (Phillips 1995). This is because the presence of historically marginalized groups in legislative bodies creates a different social meaning of their ability to rule where historically this ability "has been seriously questioned" (Mansbridge 1999, 628). Social meanings of gender exist among both men and women, since we all are what Pitkin describes as makers.

The literature on the relationship between the descriptive and symbolic representation of women has taken two strands. The first explores how the presence of women in politics may change beliefs among both men and women about politics as a male domain. The historical lack of female representatives might signal that politics is not an appropriate sphere for a woman, which contributes to different social expectations for women and men from childhood (Clayton 2014). Exposure to more women in politics can challenge these socially constructed roles. In addition, more female representatives can act as role models for other women, thus making female citizens more politically involved. Mansbridge (1999) separates between the “haves” and the “have-nots” in her writings on representation. In a gender perspective, men have traditionally held real decision-making power while women have not. Mansbridge stresses that it is the “haves” that primarily must change their perceptions of women's ability to govern, and of politics as a male domain. This does not mean that all women automatically accept women as political leaders: “If the prevailing cultural images define women’s role as primarily to serve men, then women may adapt their preferences to fit this image” (Kymlicka 2002, 393). In other words, gender roles can be hard to change amongst both genders.

The second strand focuses on how the number of women in political institutions can affect the legitimacy of these institutions and democracy in general (Lombardo and Meier 2014). Based on our modern inclusive definition of democracy, an increased presence of historically underrepresented groups like women increases the legitimacy of the legislative body (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2008). This strand concerns people’s attitudes towards institutions rather than towards the agents, and is perhaps more fruitful to measure outside of legislative bodies than inside.

The concept of symbolic representation presented in this thesis will focus on the first strand, more specifically on how an increase in women’s descriptive representation might alter people's perceptions about politics as a male domain. Following the logic of the theoretical relationship presented here, we can expect more positive attitudes towards women as political leaders where there are more women in legislative bodies. Much of the research on this relationship focuses on the symbolic effects of gender quotas. When quotas are introduced – if effective – they function as a direct stimulus to women’s presence in parliament. This makes it easier to observe the cause of potential changes in the symbolic representation of women.

## 2.6 The adoption of gender quotas

The continued underrepresentation of women long after this group gained full political rights has led to demands for affirmative action like gender quotas "that target structural discrimination or that make it possible to leap over the barriers" that are keeping women out of politics (Dahlerup 2006, 9).

Today gender quotas are found in more than 130 countries world wide, and are commonly classified into three different forms. The first form is called *reserved seats*. These are seats reserved for women in legislative bodies. According to Bauer (2013), 12 of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa use reserved seats. Reserved seats are often geographically based additional seats, where the electorate vote in elections where only female candidates are allowed to participate, often through a majority plurality first-past-the-post voting system. The second quota type, *legislative quotas*, requires a certain percentage of nominees on party lists to be women. The third form is called *voluntary party quotas* and also involves a certain percentage of female political candidates on party lists, but these quotas are not statutory, and are rather based on individual party promises. 12 sub-Saharan countries use either legislated candidate quotas or voluntary party quotas, most often in combination with a PR electoral system, while seven countries have the same quota type but in combination with a first-past-the-post voting system. As stated by Bauer, these last cases do not guarantee any change in the representation of women, and are "potentially useless". Findings from the SADC countries<sup>6</sup> support a general assumption that gender quotas are more effective in a proportional or mixed electoral system. The chance for women to be elected is even greater in a PR system combined with legislated or party-based quotas (International IDEA 2004). The countries in sub-Saharan Africa that this far have sustained from adopting gender quotas are former British colonies with a plurality majority voting systems like Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Nigeria and Ghana, which is reflected in their low numbers of women in parliaments (Bauer 2013). The initiative to quota adoption can come from different sources, which I will present in the following section.

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<sup>6</sup> The Southern African Development Community includes Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

### **2.6.1 Women as initiators**

The most frequently used explanation for quota adoption is that the initiative comes from women themselves, “even when male elites are ultimately responsible for the decision to establish quotas” (Krook 2006, 307). Women see affirmative action as the most effective means to increase women's political representation, and they organise in grassroots movements, in cross-partisan networks, or through transnational women's networks, where strategies on how to successfully increase women’s representation are exchanged (Bruhn 2003; Hughes et al. 2015; Connell 1998). Individual women within political parties can also lobby to promote gender quotas (Krook 2006).

### **2.6.2 Strategy of political elites**

A second explanation emphasizes the importance of strategic choices among political elites. Gender quotas can be perceived by elites as a means to gain political support or other types of advantages. For instance, by promoting female candidates before an election, a party can gain political support among the female portion of the electorate and thus increase the chances of winning. According to several studies, “[t]hese effects are often heightened when parties seek to overcome a long period in opposition or a dramatic decrease in popularity by closing a gap in support among female voters” (Krook 2006, 308). Also, quota adoption might be just an empty gesture to make the political elites seem committed to women's issues, or to exercise control over its representatives. By including previously underrepresented groups in legislative bodies, these groups will no longer be interested in a regime turnover. Quotas thus become a part of a legitimization strategy of the incumbents (Muriaas and Wang 2012).

### **2.6.3 Notions of Equality and Representation**

A third theory view quota adoption "as an extension of existing or emerging notions of equality and representation" (Krook 2006, 308). These notions can be found in the ideology a party is based upon, reflected by how left-leaning parties often tend to promote gender quotas.



Focus is also on the role of specific norms in the wider society, like for instance principles of equality. Quotas can also be seen as a form of democratic innovation by ensuring women and other traditionally underrepresented groups inclusion, which is often the case in democratic transitions or when a country is creating new democratic institutions (Krook 2006; Brown et al. 2002).

#### **2.6.4 International norms and transnational sharing**

The fourth explanation highlights the importance of international norms, which are spread through transnational sharing. This frequently coexists with the three aforementioned explanations. Through international meetings and conferences, recommendations for member states are shaped in order to promote women's access to decision-making instances. In this way, the international community is shaping national quota debates (Krook 2006, 309). United Nation's Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995 is presented as decisive for the mobilization of international women's organisations and the spread of gender quotas worldwide (Hughes and Tripp 2015; Dahlerup 2006). The Beijing Platform represents the "fast track" discourse, which contains "a growing impatience with the slow pace of change of the position of women" (Dahlerup 2006, 6). Although avoiding the somewhat controversial word "quotas", the Beijing Platform states that governments all over the world should use "specific targets and implementing measures...if necessary through positive action (FWCW 1995; Art. 190.a, quoted in Dahlerup 2006, 5) in order to obtain a "critical mass" of women.<sup>7</sup> The 50-50 campaign launched in 2000 by Women's Environment & Development Organisation (WeDo) went as far as calling for equal participation between men and women (Dahlerup 2006, 5). International organisations like the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth, the European Union and the African Union have also issued recommendations involving women's increased participation. Other transnational actors like NGOs, more or less formal networks of scholars, women's rights activist, and politicians "share new tactics for reform and import strategies from other countries into their own" (Krook 2006, 309).

Gender quotas are today being adopted in increasing numbers all over the world by countries with highly different political and socio-economic background. As stated by Bush (2011),

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<sup>7</sup> The critical mass is often defined to be around 20% or 30% of decision-making bodies (Dahlerup 2006, 5).

gender quotas are not a result of modernization,<sup>8</sup> as has previously been suggested in the literature. Gender quotas are often adopted in the developing world, and in countries where women have low status. This also helps explain the importance of pressure from the international society. Developing countries are dependent of "foreign aid, foreign investment, international reputation, and legitimacy" (Bush 2011, 131), and benefits from acknowledging international norms. Because of the increased focus on gender quotas in the international community, states that adopt quotas are characterized as more "modern" than the "backward" countries relying on traditional electoral practices (Hughes, Krook, and Paxton 2015). Adopting quotas show that a country is living up to international gender equality standards, like in the Scandinavian countries (Sgier 2004).

### **2.6.5 Arguments for gender quotas**

When women, political elites or international actors campaign for gender quotas, different arguments are used, and some of these arguments are based on expectations that gender quotas can contribute to the symbolic representation of women. For instance, expectations of symbolic effects have been used by the international society as a legitimizing tool for increasing women's presence in representative bodies. Women in decision-making bodies can act as role models, which will attract more women to participate in politics, and thus improve women's decision making power (SADC 2009; UN 2005). The importance of female role models was also motivating the international 50-50 campaign (WEDO 2001).

In this section I will present arguments for gender quotas grounded in the symbolic representation of women. Some of these arguments are relevant for the purpose of my thesis, both in order to identify the motivation behind the Senegalese parity law, and to uncover different ways of measuring symbolic representation. This again facilitates the operationalization of this complex concept.

The *justice or democracy* argument, builds upon our modern inclusive definition of democracy. Since around half of the world's population are women, it is a democratic problem that these remain highly underrepresented. Gender quotas reformulate "the concept of citizenship, adding a female face to the previously male one" (Meier 2012, 160), and

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<sup>8</sup> Modernisation theory suggests that women's socioeconomic standing, level of democracy, economic development, and female-friendly policies co-vary (Bush 2011, 120).

makes the role of the political agent one that can be taken on by both genders: “The initial male connotation of this role is thus broadened or replaced”. (Meier 2012, 160-161)

Another argument for gender quotas’ contribution to symbolic representation claims that women have different interests and needs than men, and should thus be represented by women. These differences are sometimes explained by biological characteristic, but more often by “the societal gendered division of roles and tasks” (Meier 2012, 161). With an increased number of women in politics, the chances that women’s interests and needs get respected and considered increase. Meier further states that “[g]ender quotas contribute to the symbolic representation of women in that they broaden the perspective of whom representatives, and politicians more broadly speaking, should represent and to whom they should be responsive” (Meier 2012, 161). In this perspective, not only the agent but also the principal is given a certain symbolic meaning.

### **2.6.6 Previous research on quotas and symbolic representation**

The quota literature is vast, and during the last years scholars have finally started studying quotas in relation to symbolic representation. These studies focus on what impact the presence of female representatives have on shaping beliefs and attitudes of different *audiences*: among political elites, the polity as a whole or just its female constituents. The studies also suggest that “symbolic effects may vary among these audiences and also by sex within these audiences: for instance, male political elites may feel resentful at losing control over candidate nominations, while female aspirants may feel more empowered to seek office” (Krook et al. 2012, 155-156). In addition, research varies with regards to the operationalization of symbolic representation. I will now present some of the limited research that has been done on the relationship between gender quotas and the symbolic representation of women. The results are however inconsistent, thus the theoretical relationship between the descriptive and symbolic representation of women has to date neither been empirically confirmed nor disconfirmed.

#### **Cases of positive effects**

Burnet (2012) examines the impact of gender quotas on people’s perceptions of the role of women in politics and society as a whole in Rwanda. After the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) came to power after the bloody civil war, Rwanda has experienced a "gender

revolution", and has pursued three different types of gender quotas. Consequently, Rwanda has the world's highest proportion of women in its legislature with 63,8% (IPU 2016). Women-friendly policies from the RPF regime has "placed women at the forefront of public life" (Burnet 2012, 205). Gender quotas have improved people's attitudes towards of women in politics. However, quotas have also had an impact on symbolic representation beyond the scope of national parliaments. Female respondents report that they have now found respect, and that they finally dare speak up to their men. They also claim that women are no longer limited to the domestic sphere, and that their social mobility has increased. However, men and women are experiencing these social changes differently, and among some men it has stirred opposition. Burnet explains these findings by pointing to how increased descriptive representation of women changes "gendered ideas about the public sphere, which have traditionally associated men with the realm of politics and women with the realm of home and the family" (Krook, Piscopo, and Franceschet 2012, 17).

Studies of Uganda show that quotas have led to an increase in women's descriptive representation in a parliament formerly dominated by men. These changes are slowly transforming attitudes towards female representatives amongst both genders. This generates a new political culture, with a broader acceptance of women as political leaders (Bauer 2012, 379). These women are predicted to act as role models for other women, inspiring them to join politics and run for elective office. Uganda use gender quotas also on local level, where scholars find similar effects: more women increased the number of positive female role models, inspiring other women to take part in community activities, while also affecting the attitudes of men towards women as political leaders positively (Johnson, Kabuchu, and Kayonga 2003).

In Tanzania, Yoon (2011) attributes positive changes in women's symbolic representation to the use of reserved seats for women. As more women have entered parliament, some of them have produced "good governance"; women have now shown that they can "perform, deliver and show their competence" (Yoon 2011, 91) which has lessened previous scepticism towards women's ability to govern. This connects descriptive and symbolic representation *through* substantive representation: what the women actually do in parliament matters for how they are perceived.

While not specifically addressing the impact of gender quotas, but nonetheless supporting the theoretical relationship between descriptive and symbolic representation, Alexander (2015) presents a longitudinal analysis of the relationship between the number of women in parliaments and changes in people's attitudes towards women as political leaders. Alexander claims that, due to women's historical exclusion from political representation, there is a global pattern<sup>9</sup> in that both men and women view women as less fit for governing than their male colleagues. Her findings show that an increase in the number of female representatives has positive effects on other women's beliefs in their own gender's ability to govern. There is however no significant positive effects among men. This suggests that women and men react differently to the exposure of more women in political office. Alexander suggests that, in the long run, one might also see these changes in men's attitudes, implying that gender roles are more rigid among men than among women.

### **Cases of no positive effects**

As already mentioned, not all research concerning potential symbolic effects of gender quotas show positive results. Clayton (2014) explores whether gender quotas affect constituents view of, and interaction with, female representatives in Lesotho. Clayton finds evidence that where there are quota-assigned female leaders, all citizens and women in particular shows less political engagement than where the female leader is not elected through quotas. According to Clayton, "the positive effects of symbolic representation due to quotas rest on the assumption that citizens respond to quotas in positive ways" (Clayton 2014, 399). However in Lesotho, gender quotas have triggered negative reactions. People might see quotas as an illegitimate form of representation which overruns the concept of meritocracy, and that "quota women" are undeserving of their seats. This is particularly the case where the adoption "is seen as originating from an outside body rather than pressure from domestic groups" (Clayton 2014, 339).

Clayton further explains her findings by the fact that people's approval of affirmative action depends on whether there is a perceived existence of discrimination or not. Furthermore, quotas may aggravate the existing biases against women if the female representatives are seen as "violating appropriate gender roles" (Clayton 2014, 341). In Lesotho, women have been "socialized to accept male authority" (Clayton 2014, 359) which is apparent in how gender

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<sup>9</sup> The study includes 25 countries from all continents, however South Africa is the only African country.

roles are more rigid among women than among men. Women do not see themselves as belonging to a marginalized group, which might affect support for quotas negatively. Furthermore, quotas in Lesotho were installed in a top-down matter rather than from a grassroots effort, which may have contributed to the perceived illegitimacy of the law.

Clayton concludes that the perceived preferential treatment of women rather than the gender itself causes this bias against quota women. She proposes that different types of quotas may have different symbolic effects. The quotas used in Lesotho can be regarded as quite controversial in that some electoral districts are reserved solely for women candidates, where men are not allowed to run at all. In cases where “quota women” are less detectable from other candidates, for instance through a given percentage on party lists, this bias might be limited.

Meier (2012) studies the effects of gender quotas on women’s symbolic representation among political elites in Belgium, and uses an alternative measure of symbolic representation: support for gender quotas. She finds no support for the theoretical relationship that gender quotas leads to changes in attitudes and behaviour, exemplified by the lack of internalization of the underlying equality norms used for legitimizing gender quotas. While female politicians favour gender quotas and acknowledge the political sphere as a non-neutral space with regards to gender, their male colleagues believe gender quotas undermines principles of non-discrimination and democracy, and that quotas “do not fit into the dominant conceptualization of representation in Belgium” (Meier 2012, 163). In order for quotas to be connected to symbolic representation, there needs to be an agreement that women’s inclusion indeed is a problem that calls for affirmative action.

There are no positive effects from quotas on women's symbolic representation at the Moroccan party level (Lloren 2014). In Morocco, women elected through quotas are seen as "tokens" without real decision-making power, and their selection is often related to family ties, through their husbands or brothers. In other words, women are seen as lacking independence from their male protectors. As a result, no one takes the Moroccan “quota women” seriously. Lloren suggests that gender quotas in Morocco "are regarded as a mechanism serving patronage politics and legitimizing authoritarian regimes" (Lloren 2014, 535), as is the case in many other developing countries.

Studies from Mexico (Zetterberg 2012) focuses on symbolic representation in the form of political engagement among women and perceptions of democratic institutions' legitimacy. Zetterberg finds no positive symbolic effects of gender quotas and attributes this to the fact that quotas were initiated from elite-level rather than from grassroots movements. Consequently, people's attitudes might be slower to change. Zetterberg suggests that it matters how and how much female representatives are portrayed in the media for attitudinal changes to occur among the public. In other words, women's presence in the media, not just in the parliament, may matter for their symbolic representation.

As the examples above illustrates, scholars do not seem to agree on whether one can expect positive symbolic effects from gender quotas or not. Factors like quota type, culture, initiators, the media, electoral system and regime type are all presented as possible explanations for this variation. Furthermore, changes in attitudes can respond to, for instance, "domestic political developments and evolving perceptions of women's success as officeholders" (Krook, Piscopo, and Franceschet 2012, 18). In addition, there are obvious difficulties associated with the time perspective when studying this topic. How long does it take for changes in the symbolic representation of women to happen? In the case of Uganda, reserved seats for women had the effect of turning women legislators from something unheard of, into something "virtually taken for granted by both men and women" (Dahlerup 2006, 129) in less than a decade. Zetterberg (2012) studies attitudinal change only two years after quotas led to an influx of women to parliament, while Clayton's study of Lesotho (2014) looks at effects after three years. One can imagine that the limited time perspective may explain cases of no observed symbolic effects. This is something one must take into account when researching changes in the symbolic representation of women.

In addition, previous research varies in the operationalization of symbolic representation. Political engagement, the legitimacy of democratic institutions, internalization of gender equality norms, belief in women's ability to govern, and gendered images of the public and private sphere are all important aspects of symbolic representation. In addition, the above studies focus on different audiences. All of this reflects that symbolic representation is a relatively new field of study that is just emerging, and that there is still no consensus regarding how to research it.

# 3 Methods and research design

## 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present and explain my methodological choices. I am conducting a case study of the Senegalese parity law of 2010 and its potential effects on women's symbolic representation.<sup>10</sup> The purpose of this thesis is to find out how and why the Senegalese parity law was adopted, and how this may have led to attitudinal changes both *within* the National Assembly itself, as well as *outside* in the Senegalese society.

I conducted a fieldwork in Dakar in November 2015 where I gathered in-depth information through semi-structured interviews with 20 informants. Seven respondents were academics, women's groups members, and bureaucrats who could describe the process leading up to the adoption of the parity law and current discussions on the subject. The remaining 13 were former or current parliamentarians of both genders who I interviewed about the symbolic representation of women. I have developed different indicators with the purpose of measuring changes in women's symbolic representation inside the National Assembly. I gained supplementary data from conducting some non-participatory observation in the National Assembly, and from documents I acquired from an informant.

Measuring women's symbolic representation in the Senegalese society *outside* of the National Assembly requires a different methodological approach. I therefore use survey data from Afrobarometer, a highly acclaimed research network that conducts public attitude surveys in Africa on democracy, governance and economic development, among other things (Afrobarometer 2016a). Survey data can uncover attitudes among the public, and has previously been used as a means to trace changes in the symbolic representation of women (Alexander 2012; Zetterberg 2012). Afrobarometer has conducted several rounds of surveys from 2005 to 2015 that includes questions covering attitudes towards women versus men as political leaders.

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<sup>10</sup> The project outline was designed during the spring of 2015, the interview guide developed from August to October 2015, the field work was conducted in November 2015, followed by a transcribing process from December 2015 to January 2016, and a structured analysis of data in the spring of 2016.



### 3.2 Why use case study as a method?

I let my research questions guide my choice of method, and in this section I will explain why I am conducting a single-case study. First of all: what is a case study, and what can it be used for? The literature offers different definitions of cases and case studies. According to George and Bennet (2005, 17), a case is a class of events and a case study is thus a study of these events. Gerring (2004, 341) defines a case study as an “in-depth study of single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar’s aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena”. One of the advantages of doing a case study is that it allows the researcher to carefully consider contextual factors and how it may influence the workings of variables, which a statistical analysis cannot. It also clarifies causal relationships in detail, and allows the researcher to detect “any unexpected aspects of the operation of a particular causal mechanism or help identify what conditions present in a case activate the causal mechanism” (George & Bennet 2005, 22). Moreover, case studies can identify new variables and hypotheses by studying deviant or outlier cases. One can even “develop new theories that can be tested through previously unexamined evidence” (George & Bennet 2005, 21). There are also limitations to case studies. While these studies can say something about whether or how a variable affects an outcome, it cannot determine *how much* it matters (George & Bennet 2005, 25). There is also a risk of selection bias if the researcher favours one hypothesis and chooses case accordingly, while ignoring other cases that can contradict this hypothesis. Case studies also involves a trade-off: “Greater explanatory richness within a type of case usually leads to less explanatory power across other types of cases” (George and Bennet 2005, 31). Case study researchers tend to favour explanatory richness over generalizability. To study gender quotas and its symbolic effects in Senegal where this has not previously been studied requires focusing on explanatory richness.

Yin (2009, 20) writes that case studies can “*describe* an intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred”. In other words, a case study of the Senegalese parity law is highly fruitful, since its adoption can be regarded as such an intervention. A case study is also a method that can “*enlighten* those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single-set of outcomes” (Yin 2009, 20). This is the case for the limited research on symbolic effects of gender quotas: results are inconsistent, thus the outcome is unclear. This thesis aims at contributing to more knowledge about this still understudied field.

Both of my research questions involve complex social phenomena, which makes case study a good methodological choice. The first question “How and why was the Parity Law implemented in Senegal?” opens up for “What are the symbolic effects of the Senegalese Parity Law?” Typically, research questions with “how” and “why” are *explanatory*, and thus compatible with case studies (Yin 2009, 9). The first question requires a thorough research process, with different actors manoeuvring between grassroots level and political elites, groups and individuals, where historic events and social realities must be taken into account. It also involves an in-depth study of the quota process spanning several years. I want to look further into the process leading up to the adoption of the Senegalese Parity Law in order to establish the purpose and thus the expectations of such a law, and then see if these expectations have been met.

This leads us over to the research question regarding symbolic representation. I would argue that research on symbolic representation is still in an exploratory phase, and that research within this field opens up for further inquiry. According to Yin (2009, 9), case studies are suitable for exploratory research. Also, symbolic representation is perhaps the most complex of all the types of representation, and in many ways something highly personal: it is about people’s attitudes, associations and perceptions. At the same time, it is not formed in a personal vacuum. It is my opinion that people’s attitudes are in part shaped by the society in which they live, and through a case study the researcher is allowed to “retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin 2009, 4). Furthermore, case studies are recommended when the boundaries between the phenomenon being studied and the context in which it occurs is not clearly evident. One can argue that the phenomenon of symbolic representation is highly intertwined with contextual factors such as level of development, religion and patriarchal culture, to mention some.

One of the big challenges in studying symbolic representation is how to measure such a complex and intangible concept. The ideal methods in this case would be an experiment, which would have allowed me to manipulate groups systematically to uncover their “real” attitudes (Yin 2009). Organising and conducting an experiment is a time-consuming and expensive process, which the limited resources - both economical and temporal - for my thesis do not allow. Instead I rely on interviews and survey data. This triangulation of data collection will hopefully ensure the study’s reliability by checking self-reports of parliamentarians with outside perspectives. Also, it allows me to compare women’s symbolic

representation on elite level and among ordinary citizens, where previous research has focused on only one audience. There are reasons to believe that there are differences between these groups, as findings show that political elites hold different opinions than their electorate (McAllister 1991).

### **3.3 The deviant case of the Senegalese parity law**

Why study the Senegalese parity law and its potential symbolic effects? My research on the Senegalese parity law is a single case study, and a *deviant* one<sup>11</sup>. The case selection is based on the independent variable, namely the intervention that is the parity law. As stated earlier, much of the literature on the subject of gender quotas focus on the pioneer countries such as South Africa, Rwanda and Uganda. The theories that are constructed with regards to gender quotas are thus created in a limited context, with the typical case of study being a post-conflict state with a long experience of gender quotas, situated in the southern or eastern part of Africa, with a predominantly Christian population. Much of the literature also focuses on gender quotas in autocratic or semi-autocratic countries like Uganda and Rwanda. However, little is known about how and why quota policies are implemented in countries that do not share these traits. Also, when it comes to the limited research on symbolic representation in Africa, scholars often return to the same pioneer countries to find answers, which the studies of Tanzania (Yoon 2011), Uganda (Bauer 2012; Johnson, Kabuchu, and Kayonga 2003) and Rwanda (Burnet 2012) shows. West Africa, however, has been mainly overlooked in the study of women's representation.

With this in mind, the Senegalese parity law makes up an exceptionally interesting and deviant case. Since independence, Senegal has been put forth as one of the most stable countries in Africa. The country has never experienced a violent conflict that has resulted in a transition of power. In other words, women's organisations in Senegal never had the possibility to take use of a post-conflict political space in which constitutions are rewritten and electoral rules are altered in a more women-friendly direction. Yet today the country has one of the most effective gender quota laws in the world where women make up as much as 42,7% of the National Assembly. Besides, the Senegalese parity law was created in a country with a predominantly Muslim population. In the pioneer countries, Islam is not an issue when

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<sup>11</sup> Yin (2009) uses the term *unique*, while Gerring (2007) and George and Bennet (2005) calls it *deviant*. In order not to distract the reader, I will use the term *deviant* throughout this thesis.

it comes to understanding quota implementation and its symbolic effects, even though some scholars claim that Islam might affect people's views of female politicians negatively, which again may hamper attempts at adopting gender quotas. As I will elaborate in the next chapter, Islam is omnipresent in Senegalese society, and Muslim leaders are important in everyday life. Then how could such a radical law as the Law on Parity get signed?

According to George and Bennet (2005, 7), "the intensive study of one deviant case, a case that fails to fit existing theories, may provide significant theoretical insight". Thus, the purpose of this study is not to generalize, but rather to hopefully generate new hypothesis that might contribute to the quota literature, and also help better understand how the symbolic representation of women works under different conditions. In a comparative context, Senegal "performs" much better with regards to women's political representation than what could be expected. As more and more countries use gender quotas around the globe, there is a need to move beyond the pioneer countries in finding causes for quota adoptions, as well as its potential effects on women's symbolic representation.

When it comes to studying changes in symbolic representation, I am conducting a paired comparison, which is the study of two similar cases that differs on the independent variable only. By dividing one single longitudinal case in two, the variance between the two parts can explain different outcomes on the dependent variable. I will thus look at Senegal before and after 2012. This allows me to observe whether the variation on the independent variable, or the increase in women's descriptive representation, has had any effects on the dependent variable, which is women's symbolic representation. According to George and Bennet (2005, 81), controlled comparison "may provide a control for many factors and is often the most readily available or strongest version of a most-similar case design". I will explain below how I intend to attain such a before- and after comparison during the course of one fieldwork only.

### **3.4 Collecting data**

#### **3.4.1 Locating the fieldwork and sampling**

In order to answer my research questions, I have conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with people that could enlighten me on the Law on Parity and its potential symbolic effects. I selected informants through purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling "seeks to maximize the depth and richness of the data to address the research question", and

the sample “should be fairly homogenous and share critical similarities related to the research question” (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006, 317). For the purpose of gaining information on the parity law itself, my sample consisted of informants who shared a certain expertise on the subject. Academics specializing in history or law could recount the process leading up to the adoption of the parity law from an outsider’s perspective, as well as mapping out present-day discussions surrounding the law. Members of women’s organisation’s who were the ones pushing for change could provide me with an insider’s perspective of the process with a better understanding of arguments and tactics. I supplemented and verified this information with documents from COSEF.<sup>12</sup>

As for the symbolic representation of women, the data would have to be on a more personal level. Symbolic representation is connected to the feelings, beliefs and attitudes of individuals, which are subject to change. When Burnet (2012) studied the development of women’s symbolic representation in Rwanda, she did this through extensive fieldwork conducted between 1997 and 2009. For obvious reasons, my study requires a different approach. In order to achieve a longitudinal analysis, I divide my sample in two: parliamentarians who sat in the National Assembly prior to the parity law, as well as current parliamentarians elected after the quota law’s implementation. By asking these two groups an identical set of questions about their experiences in the National Assembly, I am able to compare and examine whether changes in symbolic representation can be attributed to the parity law and the subsequent influx of women representatives. This allows me to “visit” the former parliament and uncover attitudes and perceptions towards women as political leaders. Are there any differences in how women are perceived as political leaders before and after the parity law came into action? Has the increase in women’s descriptive representation contributed to positive changes in women’s symbolic representation? My focus is on both men and women, since I want to explore how women politicians are or were perceived by others and how they perceive themselves, thus covering more than just one aspect of symbolic representation. At the stage of my fieldwork conducted in November 2015, only three years had passed since the 2012 legislative election. In a methodological perspective, I expected this to work to my advantage as previous members of parliament would not have “disappeared” and would perhaps hold prominent positions in society, which would facilitate

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<sup>12</sup> The women’s organisation that initiated the parity law.

access. However, attitudes are known to change slowly, and it is possible that too little time has passed since 2012 for me to detect any possible changes. I will return to this topic later.

My goal with regards to sampling was to speak to three people from each of the three following categories: current female parliamentarians, female ex-parliamentarians, current male parliamentarians, male ex-parliamentarians and an undefined number of people with knowledge about the parity law. All in all, I achieved my goal as Table 1 shows below (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviews). In order to catch a wide spectre of opinions, I planned on recruiting informants through the snowballing effect by asking the finishing question “Who should I talk to that would disagree with you?”

Table 1: List of interviews conducted in Dakar, November 2015

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Academics		2
Civil Servants	1	2
Civil Society ( <i>Women’s organisations, Observatory for Parity</i> )	2	
Current parliamentarians	4	4
Ex-parliamentarians	3	2
<b>Total (20)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

To gain the information I was after, I decided to go on a two-weeks fieldwork to Dakar, Senegal’s capital and largest city, in November 2015. Dakar is located on the Cap-Vert peninsula and is the westernmost city on mainland Africa. During the colonial era, Dakar was considered the capital of French West Africa, and still holds an important position today due to its strategic location. The city is home to many regional headquarters of international businesses and organisations, and has a modern business district. Dakar is considered a cosmopolitan city, has a sizable middle class, and the city’s living conditions are better than in the inland area of Senegal. However, problems of high unemployment, water shortage, pollution and shantytowns persist. Unemployed people from the poorer inland areas, migrating to Dakar looking for work, often inhabit the shantytowns (Johnson Jr. 1999). Dakar is both home to the National Assembly, the Cheikh Anta Diop University as well as a variety of organisations working with women’s rights and other issues. The proximity between the locations of my informants was important in order to save time. I researched when the

parliament was in session, and planned my trip thereafter. Alternatively, I would risk having to travel all over Senegal to the representative's constituencies to talk to them.

### **3.4.2 Establishing contact with the field**

I was dependent on finding a gatekeeper in order to get in contact with my informants. I started at the Christian Michelsen Institute where I am writing my thesis, a research institute with an international staff that is doing research all around the globe. One of the researchers put me in contact with a Senegalese academic living in Oslo who set me up with a host family and an acquaintance working as a parliamentary assistant in Dakar. The latter introduced me to an ex-parliamentarian who was a member of the National Observatory for Parity (ONP)<sup>13</sup> and who knew other people I could interview. In this manner, one gatekeeper led me to another, bringing me closer and closer to the site of study and the informants. This chain of gatekeepers was of particular importance since I was to conduct elite interviews. This was exemplified when I tried to contact parliamentarians on my own through e-mails with little success. Whenever I had a third party's familiar name to refer to, the chances of getting an answer increased.

### **3.4.3 Preparing interview guides**

I spent much time preparing my interview guides. I had one for the informants regarding the parity law process, one for women parliamentarians and ex-parliamentarians, and another for their male colleagues and ex-colleagues. I decided that open-ended questions were most advantageous for my subject of study and my informants. As mentioned, qualitative research on the subject of symbolic representation gets a certain exploratory dimension. Open-ended questions give respondents flexibility when answering, while the interviewer can probe for information in an "uncharted area" (Aberbach & Rockman 2002, 674). Another advantage of open-ended questions is that it increases the response validity by allowing respondents to "organize their answers within their own framework" (Aberbach & Rockman 2002, 674). It is particularly useful when conducting elite interviews, since elites often prefer articulating and explaining their views instead of choosing an answer among ready-made alternatives in a closed-question interview. However, the downside is that it makes coding of the data material much more challenging (Aberbach & Rockman 2002, 674).

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<sup>13</sup> An organisation responsible for monitoring whether the parity law is respected

The interview guides consisted of between 12 and 20 questions (see Appendix 2). Preparing questions for the quota law process was a fairly straightforward task. I asked open questions focusing on initiators, their tactics, and arguments used by promoters and the opposition. For my second research question, the big challenge was to operationalize symbolic representation, and to avoid asking leading or provocative questions. To establish rapport between the interviewee and myself, I started the interview guides with a couple of non-threatening questions like: “What is your most important political issue?” and “What is the biggest thing you have achieved in the parliament?” These questions would hopefully trigger the interest of the informant, as well as establish a relaxed setting and the conversational style I was aiming for. Most of my questions were open questions like:

- “Who do you represent first and foremost?”
- “Do you think women have other types of qualifications than men?”
- “Are there<sup>14</sup> any differences between how men and women are treated in the parliament?”
- “What are the consequences of the increased presence of women in parliament?”
- “What is parity to you?”

In case these types of questions were too vague, I also included more concrete question that could say something about attitudes in the parliament: “Have you ever defended your opinions before the assembly? Can you describe how people reacted?” And then, to make the informants reflect: “Was there any difference between how men and women reacted?” I also included one closed-ended question that focused on substantive versus symbolic effects of increased descriptive representation of women: “In your opinion, what is the most important consequence of the augmentation of women in the National Assembly? A) They can focus on women’s issues in politics, or B) They can work as role models for other women”. This question allowed me to compare different types of consequences, while it also said something about the motivation behind the parity law, or perhaps just hopes for the future. My main goal when preparing interview guides was to find many alternative ways of capturing the essence of the symbolic representation through experiences from everyday life in the National Assembly. This helped me attain concept validity, which is especially important when

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<sup>14</sup> For the ex-parliamentarians, I asked the same questions in past tense



studying concepts with different operationalisations like symbolic representation (Grønmo 2004, 232).

Since the interviews were to be conducted in French, I translated the questions and had a francophone acquaintance verify that they had the same meaning in French as in English. I have studied French, and I was an exchange student in Paris some years ago, but I didn't know exactly what level of French I was currently on, so I decided to contact a research assistant in Dakar who could help me get around and assist me if the language barrier proved to be too challenging.

#### **3.4.4 In the field**

My gatekeeper in the National Assembly helped me get a foot inside the parliament on my first day in Dakar. I was allowed to use the parliamentary assistant's office as a base. However, I arrived in the middle of the budgetary discussion, and it was difficult to get hold of the parliamentarians, as they were busy from morning to evening. This could have been avoided if a parliamentary calendar was available online, but the official webpage of the National Assembly was under construction. The other parliamentary assistants tried to get me appointments with their employers in their lunch breaks, without results. I was constantly told that the people I wanted to talk to were very important and busy, and that I had to respect their time.

I was thus forced to find a new strategy, so I began spending time in and around the cantina at lunch hours, approaching parliamentarians as they left from lunch in a persistent but polite way. When I presented myself and my research topic, some people said that they were no parity experts and hurried away. But all in all, my new tactics worked surprisingly well as many people were interested in talking to me, and I ended up with interviewing four male and four female parliamentarians in the National Assembly. Some invited me to their table while they were eating; others wanted to talk in the lounge next to the restaurant, while a couple invited me to their offices the next day. Some people even arranged meetings for me with other parliamentarians they knew. I usually asked people if they had around 15 minutes to talk, but the average interview lasted at least the double as it turned out that people were interested in the subject and enjoyed talking about their own experiences. None of my

informants had anything against our conversations being recorded, and I did not get the impression that it inhibited them in any way.

Due to the budgetary discussions, my approach to collecting data in the National Assembly became much more pragmatic than I initially planned. Since the access to informants was mostly limited to lunch hours, I gave less priority to catching a wide variety of opinions and instead focused on the gender-balance within my sample group. When I introduced my subject and myself, there might have been a form of self-recruitment in that the ones who wanted to talk to me were also supportive of the law. During my fieldwork, my general impression that the word *parité* was very in vogue among the political elites, and that the parity law was something innovative and modern to be proud of, which might have led the sceptics to lay low. I suspect this might have had an impact on the content of my data. Even though informants told me there were members of parliament that were against the parity law, these people went under my radar.

One must not underestimate the importance of what I myself brought into the interview context, being a young Scandinavian woman travelling alone to Senegal to research gender equality. Scandinavia is well known around the globe for being best in class when it comes to gender equality. Several of my informants brought this up during interviews, comparing Senegal to the Scandinavian countries. The fact that I chose to write about gender quotas and its symbolic effects reflects that I am very much concerned with gender equality myself. This might have led informants to withhold information or moderate politically incorrect statements. On the other side, my persona might have driven people with more conservative or sceptic voices away, which may have led to an imbalance in the data material that has to be taken into account when analysing the material. I tried to avoid all of this by being as open as possible and equally interested in everything that was being said.

With regards to information about the quota process, I found my informants at various locations. Some of these were introduced to me by the parliamentary assistant whose office I was sharing. They worked in the administrative department of the National Assembly and knew the parity law and the process leading up to it well. I also spoke to academics working within the field of law and sociology at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar. Some appointments were difficult to obtain and had to be scheduled a week in advance, for instance with the president of the Observatory for Parity.

The ex-parliamentarians turned out to be rather difficult to get in touch with. First of all, as my research assistant only accompanied me some days, I had to call around trying to make appointments in French. It was a small breakthrough when I discovered the effectiveness and response rates of text messages. Also, as opposed to the current parliamentarians, the ex-parliamentarians could not be found in one place, and I spent much time and energy getting from one place to another. However, I ended up with interviewing three women and two men, a number I deem sufficient to get some understanding of the environment in a pre-parity National Assembly. Two interviews took place in the ex-parliamentarians' current workplaces. One of my interviewees was so passionate about the Parity Law that he wanted to talk to me even though he was hospitalized. One interview was conducted in a restaurant in the outskirts of the city, while another was done at the informant's home by the sea. The issue of reflexivity of course applies in these cases as well. However, it might be that the current politicians were also more concerned with being in line with their party's policies or the existing political norms.

Almost all interviews were conducted in French without the assistant as interpreter. Some informants offered to speak English. I politely declined because I wanted them to articulate as freely as possible and in their own words, to maintain validity. This might have had some negative consequences as well, as my French is not perfect and I might have missed out on some potential follow-up questions and prompts to make the interviewee elaborate. It also complicated the transcription process. I therefore asked my parliamentary assistant to transcribe the interviews for me, which saved much time. However, to maintain reliability of my data, I made sure to listen to all interviews and double check with the transcribed text. Some parts I had to transcribe myself, since the assistant had not transcribed what he had considered irrelevant.

I generally followed my interview guides as long as I saw it fruitful. Sometimes I had to ask questions in an alternative order when they had already been covered. When there was little time, I had to drop the first "non-threatening" questions. In other cases I added topics to the interview guides that had been mentioned by others, like the case of Touba. This city was often mentioned as a challenge to the implementation of parity in local elections, since the General Khalif of Touba publicly refused to respect the parity on his candidate list while receiving no sanctions from the Senegalese electoral commission (CENA). I found this

information highly interesting, and tried to incorporate questions about Touba into the following interviews.

Unforeseen events, like the budgetary discussions, forced me to abandon my ideal sample tactic and adapt to what was realistic. Also, some of the questions I had prepared worked in some cases but not in others, which perhaps points to weaknesses in my French translation of the interview guide, and I should maybe have had a Francophone political scientist look through the questions to see if the political expressions were correct. Another difficulty I encountered was that sometimes my informants reacted to my open questions with confusion, and wanted me to elaborate what I meant or give examples. It was challenging to explain the questions more closely without leading the respondents in one way or another. One particularly challenging interview worthy of mention was with a current female parliamentarian who changed between speaking Wolof and French, while her teenage son translating the parts in Wolof. Parts of this interview were lost in the transcription process due to background noises.

However, all in all I consider my fieldwork a highly rewarding and interesting experience. Despite its challenges, I managed to attain a certain degree of reliability through adapting my techniques for data collection, being aware of my own role and what was considered “political correct” et cetera. I was positively surprised by how open and reflected my informants were, and how much interest they took in the subject of parity.

### **3.5 Survey data on symbolic representation**

In order to study symbolic representation among ordinary citizens, I rely on surveys, or opinion polls, which is a widely used means to research public opinion. I use survey data from Afrobarometer, a research network that has conducted several survey rounds in Senegal and other African countries, and in the years 2005/2006, 2011/2013 and 2014/2015, they have included the following statement regarding gender and political leaders:

“Statement 1: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men”

“Statement 2: Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women”

Respondents choose which of these contrasting statements they agree with or agree strongly with. I would argue that these two statements reveal a lot about the symbolic representation of gender. It touches upon the notion of the political sphere as a male domain, and that women are less fit to govern than men. I plan to use this data in a descriptive statistical analysis in order to trace potential changes in the percentage agreeing with the two statements. According to the descriptive-symbolic theory, one may expect that after the influx of women in the National Assembly, people are more in favour of women as political leaders as they are more exposed to them. This can be reflected either by an increase of support for statement one, or by a decrease in support for statement two.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that Afrobarometer includes statements that cover other aspects of symbolic representation, like women's political involvement and engagement. I would argue that this focuses on a slightly different side of symbolic representation than the one I am studying within the National Assembly. I thus limit the survey analysis to attitudes towards women versus men as political leaders.

# 4 The parity law in a context

## 4.1 Introduction

Senegal passed the “Law on Parity” on May 28, 2010. The first time the law came into effect was two years later in the legislative election. The law aimed at creating a 50/50 gender balance in the legislature, which it almost achieved when the proportion of women increased from 22,7% to 42,7%.<sup>16</sup> During one election, Senegal had become the Muslim country with the world’s highest proportion of women in the National Assembly (see Appendix 3). In a comparative perspective, it is surprising that Senegal adopted such a radical quota law. However, an historical in-depth study of Senegal shows a more complex picture, where some factors can help explain the development of the parity law. The purpose of this chapter is to present the multifaceted context in which the parity law came to be. The focus will be on Senegal’s history as a French colony, politics after independence, today’s political system, religion and the role of women in society. I will further discuss the importance of these factors in the adoption of the parity law in chapter five. In addition, people’s beliefs, attitudes and perceptions are shaped by the society in which they live. Contextual factors are thus important when studying the symbolic representation of women.

## 4.2 Senegal: An overview

Senegal is the westernmost country of mainland Africa, and borders the Atlantic Ocean to the west, Mauritania to the north, Mali to the east, and Guinea and Guinea-Bissau to the south. The total population of Senegal is around 15 000 000, and is composed of many ethnic groups, the biggest being the Wolof, which makes up 43 % of the population (Globalis 2011). Senegal is a former French colony, and French remains today the only official language although it is spoken by a minority of the population (Leclerc 2015). The local language Wolof is widely used and serves as a lingua franca (Madjiguene 2001). 95% of the Senegalese population are Muslim, while 5% are Christian (mostly Catholics), and 1% holds indigenous beliefs. Senegal is a poor country with a poverty rate of 46,7%. Inequality is slightly lower than the sub-Saharan average, but there are big differences between the rural and urban

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<sup>16</sup> The law did not produce a 50/50 gender balance because of Senegal’s mixed electoral system.

population<sup>17</sup> (World Bank 2015). Three of four works in agriculture, and since colonial times there has been a one-sided focus on groundnut production, which has made the economy highly vulnerable (Globalis 2011). Senegal receives a substantial amount of international aid and support (OECD 2004). Senegal “looks after its external image” and “as a ‘moderate’, ‘stable’, and ‘democratic’ country, it has sympathy in the Western camp; as a country of Muslim tradition, it has support from the Arab states” (Coulon & Cruise O’Brien 1990, 163).

The territory of Senegal has been inhabited for about 15 000 years (Globalis 2011). In pre-Muslim Senegal, aristocratic women could participate in public life, had some access to offices and were able to influence the state apparatus (Callaway and Creevey 1994). The Wolof-kingdom had its days of glory from the 14th to the 17th century, and introduced Islam to the country. Under the Wolof kingdom, social roles were determined by women’s position within a social hierarchy of freeborn, castes and slaves, rather than by gender (Jupiter-Jones 2002). Although pre-Muslim Senegal was clearly patriarchal, the introduction of Islam coincided with women disappearing from public positions (Creevey 1996).

Senegal fell under French colonial rule in 1885 (Globalis 2011). The French applied an assimilationist method in their new colony, considering the coastal settlements in Senegal as an “extension of the métropole” (Gellar 1995, 8). The city of Dakar became the capital of all the French West African territories. The establishment of state schools gave the native Senegalese possibilities for education, and scholarships made it possible for some to receive higher education in France, which created an educated elite (Madjiguene 2001). The French established several territorial institutions and granted a limited number of urban male Africans full French citizenship rights that allowed them participation in electoral politics. The French also set up an extensive groundnut production, which they thought to be a male responsibility “based on their own culture and economy” (Creevey 1996, 276). Men were consequently the ones who were trained in production techniques, while women’s labour potential was mostly ignored, and they had no direct control over production. This system was reproduced in the industrial and commercial establishments in the cities.

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<sup>17</sup> 2 of 3 residents in rural areas are poor, while only 1 in 4 in the capital of Dakar (World Bank 2015).

Furthermore, the French introduced Catholic Christianity that put women in a subordinate position. The French presence also contributed to the spread of Islam through the empowering of Sufi religious leaders, called *marabouts*. In an attempt to maintain control over the territory, the colonizers started collaborating with the marabouts who received large pieces of land for groundnut production. In 1912, 66% of the Senegalese were Muslim, while by independence in 1960, this number had reached 90% (Creevey 1996, 275).

After the Second World War, nationalism and pan-African ideologies emerged, and colonial wars erupted in some of the French colonies which fuelled the decolonization process in West Africa (Madjiguene 2001). French citizenship was expanded to include the whole population in all the French West-African colonies in 1946, and all Senegalese were thus allowed to vote in French elections (Globalis 2011). Colonial reforms were initiated, leading way to final independence from France in 1960. By then, there were already established democratic institutions in Senegal, with several political parties present. Léopold Sédar Senghor, a prominent poet, teacher and member of the French Constituent Assembly, was leading a coalition of parties whose support went across both ethnic and regional cleavages called Union Progressiste Sénégalaise (UPS). Through this coalition, Senghor managed to incorporate several of the smaller Senegalese parties, and he also had the support of the religious leaders from the powerful Sufi Mouride brotherhood. This paved the way for the rise of the UPS and Senghor himself, who was unanimously elected as Senegal's first president (Encyclopædia Britannica 2015c; Creevey, Ngomo, and Vengroff 2005).

### **4.3 Politics after independence**

After independence, Senegal adapted much of the French political system and laws to national needs. Senegal's first years as an independent nation were dominated by Senghor and the UPS consolidating their power over Senegal. Even though opposition parties were not illegal by law, for several years Senegal was a *de facto* one-party system (Creevey, Ngomo, and Vengroff 2005, 480). After a short period experimenting with parliamentarism, Senghor established Senegal as a strong presidential regime, which was approved by referendum. The following years were marked by general discontent among the rural population, political unrest in 1968, and an assassination attempt on President Senghor. After pressure from fragments within his own party, Senghor started liberalising the regime by restoring the office of prime minister and permitting a three-party system, where each party represented an



ideological current. In 1980, Senghor resigned before the end of his term, and his protégé and previous prime minister Abdou Diouf took over the following year (Elgie 2011, 124).

Even though Diouf abolished the limitation on legal parties<sup>18</sup>, democracy also experienced some backlashes under his rule (Gellar 1995). He abolished the position of prime minister and was accused of election fraud in the 1988 presidential election. During the days of rebellion that followed, Diouf arrested his biggest political opponent, Abdoulaye Wade, who considered himself the rightful winner of the 1988 election, and who was later to become the new president. In the subsequent period, Senegal faced tensions with Mauritania and with separatists in the Casamance region in the south, in addition to a faltering economy (Encyclopædia Britannica 2015a). People feared that the image of Senegal as a stable African democracy would deteriorate.

However, the 2000 election was won by Abdoulaye Wade, who had campaigned under the slogan “Sopi” (Wolof for “change”) with the backing of a coalition of opposition parties. This peaceful transmission of power marked the end of the 40-year rule of the Socialist Party. Wade proposed a new constitution, which was overwhelmingly approved by referendum. The new constitution reduced the presidential term limit from seven to five years, and the presidency was restricted to two terms where there previously were no term limits. However, during his presidency Wade continued to amend the constitution a dozen times. Many of the amendments were highly controversial, leading to a concentration of power within the executive. Country experts have characterized Wade as acting like an “absolute monarch” (Gaye 2012, quoted in Elgie 2011, 127). When tensions erupted between president Wade and the prime minister, Moustapha Niasse, who came from another party, the latter was dismissed and replaced by Senegal’s first female prime minister, Mame Madior Boye (Creevey, Ngomo, and Vengroff 2005, 489). Wade’s popularity diminished among the Senegalese, as he could not tackle the serious infrastructure problems or the increasing cost of living. Also, Wade chose to prioritize the construction of a massive and very expensive statue on the occasion of Senegal’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an independent state while claiming his personal right to take one-third of the revenue from visitors since the monument was his idea. This incident fuelled the growing discontent among the population (Encyclopædia Britannica 2015b).

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<sup>18</sup> The number of legal parties grew from four to fourteen, however the practical consequences was a fragmented and weak opposition

In the 2012 presidential election, Wade ran for the third time, even though he himself had limited the presidency to two terms. According to Wade, the 2001 enactment was not retroactive, and he claimed his "first" term as the one starting in 2007. The Supreme Court agreed with Wade. Many saw this so-called "constitutional coup" as a threat to the relatively long-lived democratic stability in Senegal (BBC 2012b). The Supreme Court's decision led to weeks of violent clashes between armed forces and angry youths in the streets, leaving six dead. However, most Senegalese turned to the polls to show their dissatisfaction with Wade, and in the 2012 election, Wade lost to his former prime minister Macky Sall (The Guardian 2015). Wade conceded power peacefully to Sall, in a moment described by the EU as "a great victory for democracy in Senegal and in Africa" (BBC 2012a).

Even though there have been cases of non-respect of human rights and democratic practice, Senegal has been held as an example of one of the most stable countries in Africa. Although having been labelled a quasi democracy (Vengroff & Creevey 1997, 204), Senegal has seen a move towards full democracy since the end of the Socialist Party rule in 2000. Freedom House currently labels Senegal as "free". The opposition has a viable chance to win office, exemplified by the peaceful transmissions of power from incumbent presidents in 2000 and 2012. The local elections in 2014 also led to several replacements of representatives in major urban areas. Freedom of expression, belief, assembly and association is legally guaranteed and widely respected (Freedom House 2015).

Although being officially a secular republic, Senegalese law includes a Family Code deeply influenced by Sharia law and "contains an option allowing self professed Muslims to follow a version of Islamic law in regard to marriage, divorce, family authority, child custody and inheritance" (Creevey 1996, 268). Among other things, the Family Code recognises polygamy and women's inferior position within the family, and Islamic heritage law. Article 152 states that the man is the "Family Head", while other articles underline the paternal authority of men (article 277) and gives the man the right to choose the marital home (Odera and Houinato 2011, 21). While men have more responsibilities outside of the home, women's sphere have traditionally been limited to the domestic one, to housework and child rearing (Diokhane et al. 2000, 26). In most of the ethnic groups of Senegal, women have a position of dependence, meaning that their husbands and male relatives have rights over them and their productions. Especially in rural areas, women face societal discrimination, despite

constitutional measures against it. It is estimated that around half of all Senegalese women live in a polygynous relationship (Madjiguene 2001). An approximate equal number of boys and girls start school. However, more girls tend to drop out as the level of education increases. Consequently, 61% of all women<sup>19</sup> are illiterate, while the figure for men is 38%. Early marriages and pregnancies contribute to the illiteracy problem. In poorer areas, girls are pushed into economic activity to support their families. The problem of illiteracy is more profound in rural areas. According to UNESCO, the “socio-cultural norms and practices concerning the role and position of women in society and other challenges such as gender-based violence, contribute to the low literacy rate of girls and women” (UNESCO 2011, 2).

However, Senegal has long experienced an exodus of young men from rural areas to the big cities, looking for work. The rural women have taken over manual and managing jobs previously reserved for men. In urban areas, women are working in a wide range of different occupations. The women’s movement in Senegal is both numerous and is reputed for its strong activism. Women’s associations on village level are thriving, amounting to 35 000 different groups in the mid-1990’s (Jupiter-Jones 2002). Bop (2005) claims that women in Senegal enjoy more freedom than women do in most other Muslim societies. Senegal has ratified all international conventions regarding women’s rights and other human rights. The greatest achievement of the Senegalese women’s movement to date is arguably the adoption of the Law on Parity in 2010.

#### **4.4 The political system in Senegal**

The political system in Senegal is semi-presidential, and grants much power to the president who is the “the guardian of the constitution” (Elgie 2011, 126). The president is responsible for the functioning of public institutions, national independence, and holds privileges when it comes to defence and foreign affairs. He can also dissolve the National Assembly, which Wade did in 2001, securing his party PDS (Parti Démocratique Sénégalaise) a parliamentary majority (Elgie 2011, 126). Wade’s presidency saw a high turnover of prime ministers, which indicates that he considered the prime minister a “clientilistic resource that can be given out or taken away at any time the president considers there is a benefit to be gained from so doing” (Elgie 2011, 129). The government initiates most laws, and the National Assembly rarely votes down proposals. Nor does the assembly “exercise substantial oversight of the

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<sup>19</sup> All women of 15 years or older

executive branch” (Thomas & Sissokho 2005, 113). The National Assembly acts more like a consultative body amending government bills, and as a link between the local communities and the state administration. This can be explained by the lack of technical experts to assist the parliamentarians in their daily work, as well as the fact that some parliamentarians do not speak French, the official language used in parliament. Also, the president exercises much control over the parliament, and even though party discipline is weak, “most deputies look to the administration for patronage goods and opportunities” (Thomas & Sissokho 2005, 114). This is the case even when the president does not have a majority in the parliament (Thomas and Sissokho 2005). The president of Senegal is elected through a two-round majority system. The presidential term is currently seven years, but president Macky Sall has reported that he wants to shorten it to five years “to set an example” for other African states (The Guardian 2015) and he plans to hold a referendum on the reduction of his mandate in 2016. Today, the president of Senegal can only be re-elected once (TSEP 2015).

Senegal has a multiparty system, and held one of the first multiparty presidential elections in sub-Saharan Africa in 1978. Nevertheless, the Parti Socialiste (PS) dominated Senegalese politics until 2000. Osei (2012) describes the party system in Senegal as instable and fluid, with many small parties and a high presence of “political nomadism” (Osei 2012, 589). The parties are not structured along any social cleavages, they are weakly institutionalized, and there is a high degree of personalism. Today there are more than 175 registered parties in Senegal, although the last 15 years only five of these have had any real influence or electoral weight within the political landscape.<sup>20</sup> Major coalitions, party mergers and dissidence are frequent (TSEP 2015).

Senegal’s parliament is unicameral, and its members are elected for a five-year term through a mixed legislative voting system. In short, mixed systems aim at a “stable effective government” and a “sociodemographic representation in parliament” (Tremblay 2012, 6). 90 out of the 150 members of the National Assembly are elected through the simple majority winner-takes-all system in the country’s 35 electoral constituencies (departments). The number of MPs elected from each constituency correlates to the demographic size of the department, ranging from seven to one candidate. Each party nominates a set of candidates up

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<sup>20</sup> These are The Socialist Party, Rewmi, The Alliance for the Republic (APR), The Democratic Party of Senegal (PDS), and The Alliance of the Forces of Progress (AFP).

for election. The party that gets most votes takes all candidates. The remaining 60 parliamentary seats are elected through proportional representation (PR) from party lists. The PR system is also used on local level.<sup>21</sup> (TSEP 2015). The mixed electoral system is the reason why absolute parity has not been achieved under the parity law. Most of the seats in the National Assembly are elected from constituency candidate lists. The leader of the party is usually placed on top of the list, and the party leader is almost always a man. In cases where the number of constituency candidates is one, three or another odd number, the men will be in majority (Diallo & Ka, interview, November 2015). Before the parity law was introduced, most of the female deputies in the National Assembly were elected via PR (Kassé 2004). As already stated, PR-voting systems are known for facilitating the election of women. In these cases, the parties present lists composed of many candidates, and parties do not “have to pay the cost of denying a slot to an incumbent or male candidate in order to nominate a woman” (Dahlerup 2005, 105), which is the case in majoritarian systems. In PR-systems, parties matter more than person. In pre-parity Senegal, the number of women on the departmental lists contested by majority vote was very limited. Kassé (2004) connects this to the lack of women in leadership positions within the political parties, from where candidates are elected.

#### **4.5 Islam in Senegal**

A big majority of the Senegalese are Muslim, and Islam might serve as a unifying factor in this multi-ethnic country (Madjiguene 2001). 98% of Muslims in Senegal reports that religion is very important in their lives, and most Senegalese Muslims belongs to a Sufi brotherhood (The Pew Forum 2012). Sufi Islam is omnipresent in Senegalese society, where images of Sufi saints are painted on public transportation and as murals in public space (Augis 2012). Most children are sent to Qur’anic schools before they attend Western schools (Creevey 1996). Senegal is officially a secular state, and although there are no pure Muslim parties, “the religious elite carry great weight in national politics; political discourse is replete with references and appeals to Islam; Islamic symbols are omnipresent, and a myriad of popular organisations centred around Islam are flourishing” (Villalón 1995, 2). Despite this politicization of Islam, there are no significant religious cleavages in politics, neither between Muslim and non-Muslim, nor between different Muslim orders and brotherhoods (Leonardo

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<sup>21</sup> The electoral constituencies involves 14 administrative regions, 45 Departments, 64 municipalities, more than 100 sub-municipalities, and over 350 rural districts

A. Villalón 1995).

The Sufi brotherhoods are centred around the marabouts, and for most Senegalese, “relations with a marabout are an integral component of an individual’s life” (Villalon 1999, 134). The most important marabouts today are descendants of the founders of the different brotherhoods (Creevey 1996). The Mouride brotherhood have gained attention for their emphasis on work as a means to salvation, and have gained considerable economical power, both due to their control over peanut production and “their growing current importance in the urban economy, especially in Dakar” (Creevey 1996, 284). Touba is the sacred city of the Mouride brotherhood, and was established by Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Mbacké in 1887. The Mouride brotherhood “maintains absolute control over the holy city” and “wields real power over population, territory, and resources, and it does so outside of the state’s administrative structures” (Ross 1995, 222). The city’s leader is the Khalif, a descendant of Ahmadou Bamba. The holy city of Touba marks an interesting case in the implementation of the gender parity law that I will return to later in this thesis.

The followers of the marabouts are united in well-organised cells which “has placed marabouts at the center of very highly structured and dynamic social networks with obvious political potential” (Villalon 1999, 134). The French colonists witnessed the social power these religious leaders held over the masses. The colonisers chose a cooperative approach with the marabouts in order to recruit the Senegalese as labourers and soldiers, and to maintain control over parts of the rural Senegalese territory where their direct authority did not reach (Creevey 1996, 275). As a consequence, the marabouts have since enjoyed political privileges. They also came to play an important economical role in Senegalese society when they started controlling peanut production. The collaborative relationship between the marabouts and the state continued after independence, when president Senghor gathered votes and legitimacy through the marabouts’s approval in exchange for services and gifts (Augis 2012). This is all part of the traditionally clientelist and patrimonial character of Senegalese politics, where power networks involving marabouts and local bosses and politicians connects the political system to a local base (Coulon and Cruise O’Brien 1990). The recent presidents Abdoulaye Wade and Macky Sall have maintained contact with the marabouts, although in a less explicit manner. Villalón (1999) argues that the marabouts play an important part in the country’s political stability, where Islamic institutions have coexisted peacefully with a secular state without trying to challenge its power. However, he also claims that the dynamics

of religion and politics is changing, and that one sees tendencies of a less moderate Islam than before.

# 5 The adoption of the parity law

## 5.1 Introduction

Based on some of the factors in the previous chapter – particularly the subordinate role of women and the power of religious leaders – it appears surprising that Senegal ended up with one of the most radical quota laws in the world. On the other side, these factors are not necessarily a hindrance to quota adoption; after all, quotas are seen as a means to *overcome* a patriarchal culture. In this chapter I will discuss how some of the contextual factors in Senegal help explain the adoption of the Law on Parity. I will also identify the initiators, supporters and critics of the parity law, as well as present the main arguments behind it.

My findings show that parts of the philosophical framework used for legitimizing parity built upon women's symbolic representation. There were expectations that more women to decision-making instances would challenge perceptions of the political domain as something highly masculine, and would reinvent a new and more politically active feminine citizenship. In the next chapter, I will investigate whether these expectations have been met or not. As for the adoption of the parity law, I identify several explanatory factors: A unified women's movement with COSEF in front campaigned strategically allied with juridical resources in order to propose amendments to the electoral law. The role of former Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade was also of vital importance, and he and the women's movement profited on each other's support mutually. The adoption of the parity law coincided with Wade's decreasing popularity, and his active support may have been inspired by prospects of electoral gains. In addition, during the last decades the international environment has promoted women's representation, which gave COSEF extra leverage to their demands for parity. Combined with a strong president and a parliament that rarely votes down proposals, this helps explain the successful adoption of the parity law. Senegal borrowed the *parity*-concept from the French, and this framing of the quota project may have lessened the stigma connected to gender quotas. Furthermore, religious authorities did not stop the law from being adopted, but they seem to have power to limit its implementation.

## 5.2 The initiators: COSEF and the women's movement

Women's movements are frequently cited as the initiators of gender quotas (Krook 2006), which is also the case in Senegal. The 1990s saw a new wave of African women's



organisations that focused less on improving women's welfare and domestic conditions, and more on promoting women's political participation. These organisations aimed at influencing "opinion, practice and policy" in society at large, and the women's organisations recruited members from a wide array of different backgrounds like politics, the media, human rights groups, trade unions, and grassroots organisations (Tripp 2003, 248). Senegalese women have engaged in action aimed at promoting women's rights for decades. After independence from France, "there were the first awareness movements on the necessity to leave more space to women" (Kiné Diop, interview, November 2015)<sup>22</sup>. Since then, Senegalese women have been reputed for their activism:

The Senegalese women have always been looked upon as some sort of reference for other West African countries when it comes to the capacity of mobilisation, the creation of networks... Especially in the 1980s and 1990s they were role models, particularly for their capacity to create networks and prevail in political debates (Cartelette, interview, November 2015).

However, the road to parity has been a long and complex process, and attempts at promoting women's rights were uncoordinated and weak until preparations started before the Beijing Conference in 1995. At a workshop organised by the African Institute for Democracy in 1994, the Senegalese Council of Women, or COSEF, saw the light of day. This organisation consisted of women from different political parties, trade unions and women's organisations. While most women's groups in Africa had been subject for patronage networks used by the ruling party (Tripp 2003), COSEF drew its members from all over the political spectrum: "Its status as an entity that cut across party lines, the commitment and cohesion of women at the grassroots, and its national presence in all ten regions of Senegal, made COSEF a major innovation in Senegalese politics." (Kassé 2004, 67). During the workshop in 1994, women's role in the democratic process was debated, and there was an acknowledgment of the heavy underrepresentation of women in decision-making sphere (Diop 2011). As stated by a COSEF-member and former politician:

We saw that women were numerous in the political field in terms of party membership and trade union membership et cetera... But we also saw that it was difficult for these women to access power ... they are always behind the men who run things. They are not in the structures where they can, for example, really prepare themselves for leadership and power. They follow (Samb Dia, interview, November 2015).

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<sup>22</sup> All interviews and documents used are translated from French to English

The creation of COSEF coincided with the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and the African Regional Conference on Women in Dakar in 1994, as well as the UN Beijing conference in 1995. This period saw a general increase in international funding to women's organisations<sup>23</sup> (Hughes, Krook, and Paxton 2015). Furthermore, donor tactics changed during the 1990s: previously where there had been a focus on education, economic development, health and welfare, donors now focused on political representation of women and promoting female leadership (Tripp 2003, 239). COSEF specialised in the political domain and many of its members were female politicians who felt heavily marginalised within their own parties. These women saw the need for an arena like COSEF where the problem of women's underrepresentation and political marginalisation could be discussed (Diop 2011). In COSEF, party ideology and programs had to give way to the common cause of facilitating women's access to decision-making instances: "Our strategy was that when you entered COSEF, you had to remove your political hat. People belonged to different parties, but fought together" (Samb Dia, interview, November 2015). The "spirit of COSEF" was thus for its members not to define themselves by party identification, but by belonging to the women's movement.

COSEF opted for an immediate implementation of point 7 in the Beijing Platform for Action titled "Women and decision-making" that in sum stated the following: "Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making" and to "Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership" (UN Women 1995). COSEF became a member of several international organisations, like Women's International Federation (WIDF), Réseau des Organisations de Femmes de l'Afrique Francophone (ROFAF),<sup>24</sup> and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). COSEF positioned itself as a crucible for the discussion of issues related to the evolution of the place and role of women in decision-making bodies. The different campaigns led by COSEF the following years questioned the quality of the Senegalese democracy, shedding light on what they described as an exclusion of a large segment of the population in the conduct of the country: the women (Diop 2011).

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<sup>23</sup> For instance, financial support to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) increased from 4 million dollars in 1982 to 215 million dollars in 2008. Donations were made from a great number of governments

<sup>24</sup> In English: Network for Women's Organisations in Francophone Africa

### 5.3 Arguments for Parity

When fighting for parity, COSEF and the women's movement used a variety of arguments. While some of these were explicitly fronted in campaigns, other arguments were rather used as a philosophical framework legitimizing parity. As for the latter, there are clear indications that much of the motivation behind adopting parity was based on expectations of changes in women's symbolic representation.

In 1998, COSEF launched their first campaign called "Democracy, where are you?" after having learnt from a COSEF-funded study that women voted overwhelmingly for male candidates. One can thus argue that their first demands were based on theories of women's symbolic representation, since not even women saw their own sex as competent political actors, and that this needed to change if democracy was to improve. Furthermore, in a COSEF-funded study from 1999, Aminata Diaw showed how women and men in Senegal has played different parts in political and public life throughout history, which has affected the Senegalese image of political power as something highly masculine. In pre-colonial Senegal women had a subordinate role as mediators while men were the real actors. At this time, political power was much connected to violence, and women's access to decisions was mainly through patronage relationships. The French colonisers further marginalised women economically and limited their role to the domestic sphere. After universal suffrage and independence, the political field remained divided. Women started playing a central yet not active role in politics through participating in the theatricalisation of politics; they were mobilizing through music and dancing "like marionettes", without being political initiators (Diaw 1999, 21). This pattern is seen in Africa as a whole: women's role in politics has traditionally been to generate votes for incumbents, "...to attend party rallies and meetings, and sing, dance and cook for visiting dignitaries. Beyond these functions they were kept apolitical" (Tripp 2003, 237).

This inferior position of women in terms of real decision-making power has led to a lack of a real "female citizenship". One of the main objectives of COSEF is to work for "the emergence of a true feminine citizenship" (Diop 2011, 3), or from political marionettes to real political decision-makers. This is what Diaw (1999) calls a political ethic, which she states is subject for change. The challenge is to "reconstitute the geography of our imagination" or to "redesign a territory" of what is a political actor (Diaw 1999, 31). The image of the female

citizenship is “determined by something symbolic, something that is nurtured by the history and culture of its society beyond rationality” (Diaw 1999, 40). The solution is that women must be more present and more numerous in political decision-making instances. As previously mentioned, arguments for gender quotas builds upon how they reformulate “the concept of citizenship, adding a female face to the previously male one” (Meier 2012, 160), thus broadening or replacing the male connotation of the role of a politician. By including more women, legislative institutions will more precisely reflect the social composition in Senegal, which will again reinforce democracy. Through promoting increased political representation of women, COSEF is thus presented as a *primus motor* in transforming consciences about the political domain.

In a newer COSEF-publication, Diaw repeats similar arguments. Some Senegalese parties adopted voluntary quotas after pressure from COSEF and the women’s movement, but the results were disappointing. Diaw thus presents parity as necessary tool that will correct gendered stereotypes about politics. Parity can be a starting point for deep transformations, which include an updated definition of political power and a new relationship between men and women (Diaw 2011, 51). The president of COSEF revealed similar expectations when I interviewed her during fieldwork:

In our sub-consciousness, we consider the man as the dominant sex, so he needs to have posts of responsibility... But when we start seeing as many women as men in these instances of power, particularly in the National Assembly and on local level, it means that a part of our mentality is gradually changing with time. To me, this is extremely important... The base that creates the inequality that is reflected in power instances is now changing faces (Kiné Diop, interview, November 2015).

This shows that expectations of symbolic effects was – and still is – an important motivation behind the parity process. Exposure to more women is expected to replace the image of politics as a male domain in our sub-consciousness. Although I have not found symbolic representation explicitly used as an argument in the different COSEF-led campaigns for parity, it seems to have been an important part of the philosophical framework motivating women’s increased political representation. In the next chapter, I will investigate whether these expectations have been met.

On a more explicit level, democratic and juridical arguments were fronted. In the 2005 COSEF-led campaign called “Avec la parité, consolidons la démocratie” (“With parity we

consolidate democracy”), parity was argued to promote democracy: since the Senegalese women make up a small majority of the population, the political marginalization becomes particularly problematic. It was also argued that politicians were elected thanks to women, and that it would thus be unfair to leave women out of the decision-making instances (Fall & Cartelette, interview, November 2015) This touches upon the *justice/democracy*-argument: the underrepresentation of women in elected office violates our modern inclusive definition of democracy, and becomes a democratic problem (Meier 2012).

Another often used argument was that women should have the same right as men in being elected to decision-making instances because they go to same schools, have the same diplomas and the same competences as men. Still men are favoured, which some of my informants attributed to the patriarchal culture in Senegal: “We have a society where the masculine sex dominates the feminine sex. It’s the organisation of the society. And the source is mainly of religious inspiration” (Ka, interview, November 2015). This support theory that connect patriarchal values to Islam, and suggests that the parity supporters saw quotas as a means to lower the cultural barriers keeping women out of politics.

Equal competences were also connected to the development argument: men cannot be responsible for the development of the country all by themselves. The development project needs men and women to participate “both in terms of reflexion and analysis as well as grass root action” (Kiné Diop, interview, November 2015). By giving women access to decision-making bodies, Senegal can profit from the competences of the whole population. Thus, in order to achieve this joint action for development, equality between the genders is necessary (Kiné Diop, interview, November 2015). This connection between women’s empowerment and development has received much scholarly attention since the 1990s, and positions women as agents of change. But for change to come, women need to be involved in the development of the country through political institutions (Tripp et al. 2009, 173). The international community has been important in spreading these ideas. For instance, Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, claims that gender equality is a precondition for achieving the other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, in 2001 the World Bank called for specific measures such as gender quotas in order to “accelerate

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<sup>25</sup> The MDGs include, among other things, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, reducing child mortality, promoting gender equality, and combatting HIV/AIDS (UN 2016).

development” (Duflo 2012, 1053). For many African governments, the women and development-argument has worked as an opportunity to show the international society a move towards “modernity”, and a possibility to receive donor funds (Tripp et al. 2009, 194).

Many of the most prominent women activists were also jurists, which affected both the strategy of imposing parity as well as the argumentation supporting it. Senegal is at the forefront in West Africa when it comes to ratifying international conventions. Among these are the CEDEF-protocol from 1979, aiming at eliminating all forms of discrimination of women, and the Maputo-protocol from 2003, protecting human rights and the rights of women in Africa. According to COSEF, these message in these protocols are “directly concerning parity in politics” (Diop 2011, 14). It was further argued that Senegal had to respect these engagements by adopting consistent policies. According to Tripp (2003), this is a tactic often used by women’s movements all over the world, especially after the UN Beijing Conference “encouraged women’s organizations to hold their governments accountable to their various commitments to improving women’s status” (Tripp 2003, 240). What is more, the Senegalese constitution guarantee legal access for women and men to decision-making instances and forbids gender discrimination. Many of the active members of the COSEF were also working with human rights, and framed parity as a right: “Parity was demanded so that women’s rights to an equal participation in politics is guaranteed” (Camara, interview, October 2015).

#### **5.4 Timeline: The road to parity**

This section presents the main events in the struggle for parity. Already in 1996, members of COSEF organised meetings with politicians from different political parties to discuss the marginalisation of women in politics, but it was under Wade’s presidency from 2000 that the issue appeared on the political agenda (Diop & Ka, interview, November 2015). The parity-process is marked by three campaigns launched by COSEF that were all “a part of a logical strategy of claiming parity in order to get women into the heart of decision-making and political matters<sup>26</sup>” (Diop 2011, 16). Part of this strategy was to frequently evaluate the campaigns as they went by, as well as thoroughly planning the next step ahead. It was also to move *progressively* forwards, while giving much attention to how the subject of parity was presented:

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In the beginning we said: 'Let's first fight for a quota of at least 30%'. We elaborated a strategy: 'What we are going to do now is push things forward'. Because, eventually, the goal we envisaged was parity. But of course it's difficult to say 'parity' from the beginning. (Samb Dia, interview, November 2015)

This claim of a 30% quota was first launched in the 1998 campaign "Démocratie où es-tu?<sup>27</sup>". During this campaign, COSEF-members arranged meetings with political leaders to give attention to and discuss solutions to the marginalisation of women in politics. As a result, some parties were willing to introduce a voluntary party quota of 30% women on party lists. However, this did not bring about satisfactory results: "The leaders of the political parties had all promised to implement these quotas. But they did not respect their promises" (Camara, interview, October 2015). As a response, COSEF launched the Citizen Campaign in 2001, initiating important partnerships with other organisations in civil society also concerned with gender issues: Association des Juristes Sénégalaises (AJS), l'Association des Professionnelles de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication (APAC), le Forum Civil, and Réseau Siggil Jigéen (RJS). This was in line with the general trend among African women's movement: to form broad coalitions instead of "all-encompassing structures" (Tripp 2003, 242). Cooperation with media associations was also common, which in Senegal offered a mainstream media channel for the parity cause through APAC (Tripp 2003). The Citizen Campaign focused on making the population aware of the need for a better representation of women on party lists. This campaign did not produce the desired results in the parliamentary elections of 2002, despite the promises of political leaders to promote a large number of women in their parties to eligible positions (Diop 2011, 17). It did however initiate a cooperation network between women's organisations with expertise in law and media, which would prove to be of vital importance for the effective implementation of the parity law.

When Abdoulaye Wade won the presidential election in 2000, he adopted a new constitution, heavily influenced by international conventions from the UN, AU, CEDEF and the Maputo-protocol that guaranteed the rights of women and access to decision-making instances. During an AU-conference in Durban in 2002, a group of African women's activists asked Wade to support their demand for a gender quota of 30% in the AU. Wade raised the stakes and proposed a quota of 50%. Following this incident, Wade was awarded the African Gender Award in Dakar 2005, and on this occasion he expressed willingness to apply parity in Senegal. This commitment to gender equality was mirrored in his appointment of advisors to

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<sup>27</sup> In English: "Democracy, where are you?"

*Le Conseil de la République pour les Affaires Économiques et Sociales*,<sup>28</sup> where 13 out of 25 counsellors were female (Diop 2011, 19). This gender-friendly behaviour fuelled the Senegalese women's groups campaigns for gender equality.

Initially there were divisions between those who wanted parity and those who settled for a smaller quota within COSEF. But through numerous meetings and discussions, the COSEF-members agreed on aiming for parity, a concept that would dominate the following campaign. When choosing a slogan for this, "Wade and parity: The African Union in Senegal" was considered, thus revealing a strategy of making president Wade an ally in the struggle for parity and playing on his public commitment to the women's cause. However, COSEF settled on something more neutral: "With parity we consolidate democracy" (Diop 2011, 20-21). The goal of this campaign was to make the parity debate public. By letting the population be familiarised with the parity concept and its meaning for the future of Senegal, COSEF hoped to increase social accept. Another goal was, through the assistance of the numerous women's activist who were also jurists, to prepare the necessary juridical measures for achieving parity: to develop potential sanctions for non-compliant parties, and specify that parity had to be implemented in all elections, both on national and local level. The parity-campaign was launched in 2005 with a petition, which civil society groups distributed around the country. During six months, 4000 signatures in support of parity were collected. The list was then given to the head of state and the minister of Women's Affairs. Senegalese attendees also circulated the petition at the 52<sup>nd</sup> session on the UN commission on the condition of women in New York in 2006 in order to seek support for the parity-project abroad.

The parity-campaign saw women's movements within the political parties, organisations from civil society and the media working together towards the common goal of parity. A specialised parity committee, called *Comité de Suivi*, was created in 2006, coordinated by COSEF. This joint committee allowed women's movements within the political parties to coordinate lobbying for parity. The committee arranged seminars where women's activists were trained in advocacy strategies and techniques of communicating the subject of parity. In so-called "tribunes of parity", citizens were invited to parity debates. Members of the *Comité de Suivi* tried to influence public opinion by appearing on radio and television where they

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<sup>28</sup> In English: The Republican Council for Economical and Social Affairs



presented the advantages of parity and what it meant for the future of Senegal (Cartelette, interview, November 2015).

In 2006, more than 500 women's activists from the committee organised a sit-in in an open session in the National Assembly where they urged the parliamentarians to "write history" by adopting parity in the Electoral Code (Diop 2011, 29). This sit-in resulted in a resolution handed to president Wade. The president then sent prime minister Macky Sall to the National Assembly with a message that instructed deputies and party leaders to notably increase the number of women on party lists in legislative elections. On the occasion, Wade had the following message to the assembly: "Our history predisposes it. Our traditional values permit it. The international norms recommends it" (Diop 2011, 30). The same day several women parliamentarians delivered a message to the president asking him to "be their advocate, for the effective materialisation of this political will so strongly expressed" (Diop 2011, 30). As an answer Wade created a National Commission for Parity, and a Senate which consisted of 40% women. In 2006, the Electoral Code was amended, but it did not meet COSEF's expectations in terms of ensuring gender balance in the composition of candidate lists, nor in specifying penalty for non-compliance. Through their numerous meetings, COSEF had already spent much time reflecting on necessary amendments that would ensure parity. In 2007 COSEF invited experts from a variety of disciplines, like jurists, sociologists, theologians and political scientists to a seminar with the purpose of developing a model law. Prominent jurists and women's activists like Amsatou Sow Sidibé, Ndiaw Diouf, El Hadj Mbodj and Ismaïla Madior Fall, were central in the model law process. Some of the attendees at the seminar suggested to replace the word "parity" with "equal access", but were met with strong reactions; It was argued that people were finally starting to get familiar with the parity concept, which was kept in the final draft of what was called the COSEF Model Law (Diop 2011, 32).

On March 23, almost one thousand women all dressed in white marched from Place de l'Indépendance (the main square in Dakar) to the presidential palace, calling for parity. This march was organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs under the direction of minister Aïda Mbodj. According to Diop (2011, 34-35), several women joined as the procession closed in on the presidential palace. President Wade came out to greet the women, and outside the presidential gates COSEF handed over their model law. Then the president joined the crowd on a walkabout, while expressing his will to implement the modifications in

a bill that became the law n° 23/2007. This was the first time "parity" was mentioned in a national juridical corpus. "Parity installed itself progressively and resolutely on the social agenda. The highest institutions in the republic reacted to our actions. Finally one talked openly about [parity], whether one was for or against it" (Diop 2011, 36). However, this proposal did not bring about parity: it only covered the PR party lists, not the constituency candidate lists. In addition, it only applied for legislative, not local, elections.

In April 2007, a group from the opposition had the law declared unconstitutional with the argumentation that it entailed discrimination based on gender. This had a suspensive effect on the law and made it inapplicable for the 2007 legislative election. COSEF then met with president Wade to encourage him to implement the principle of parity in the constitution, as well as in the electoral code. His answer was to modify the constitution: "The law favour legal access for women and men to mandates and functions" (Diop 2011, 41). In 2008-2009 the Comité de Suivi mobilised again with renewed vigour: "Especially between 2008 and 2009 the women made a real commotion" (Fall, interview, November 2015). COSEF arranged meetings in the municipalities and in rural districts, distributed leaflets, guides and brochures on parity, continued informing and involving the prime minister and other ministers about the campaigns, made songs, theatre plays, t-shirts with parity slogans, and flyers. Delegations from le Comité de Suivi even visited religious leaders such as the Khalife in Touba, as part of a strategy of "obtaining the views" of Senegalese citizens on the parity project. Other meetings with religious families were held in order to exchange with them on the subject of parity as well as gather their opinions and prayers. However, little is said about the fruits from these visits, but it does say something about the importance of religious leaders in Senegal.

With support from the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID), the Comité de Suivi organised a public enquiry through a national forum held on 31 July in 2009, on the Pan-African Women's Day to remind president Wade of the commitments with regards to parity he had taken in the African Union. When the prime minister entered the forum, several of the almost one thousand women present held up a sign with the slogan "50/50" written on it. In December 2009 a partial revision of the electoral code took place, with COSEF and the press following the process thoroughly. In a 2010 interview, Wade expressed will to install absolute parity in all elective instances. A couple of days later, he adopted the draft legislation of absolute parity between men and women in all

elective or semi-elective institutions. COSEF thought the draft to be unclear, and proposed an amendment demanding alternation between men and women for lists to be admissible. Before the days of voting in the Senate and in the National Assembly, COSEF was actively speaking to the audience, while the president was publicly thanking them for their work. The parity law (sometimes called “the COSEF amendment”) was passed with immediate application: “We finally won because the constitutionalist helped us a lot... We were mobilised... The women came to the Assembly the day of vote, and the law went through like a letter in the post.” (Samb Dia, interview, November 2015).

The first time the parity law came into work would be two years later, in the legislative election. In 2014, local elections with parity lists were held for the first time. In both cases, women’s representation increased significantly.

## **5.5 Discussion: why the parity law project succeeded in Senegal**

COSEF and the women’s movement led the fight for parity. However, as already suggested, a strong women’s movement alone is not necessarily enough for the successful adoption of gender quotas (Tripp et al. 2009, 22). As I will discuss in this section, it depends on campaign strategies, the framing of quotas, other political actors and support, as well as a favourable international climate.

### **5.5.1 The strategies of the women’s movement**

The Senegalese women’s movement with COSEF in front was united and campaigned strategically. COSEF worked as a forum where members from different professions, political backgrounds and civil society groups could meet regularly. This helped coordinate and streamline the diverse forms for mobilisation and lobbying that took place under the “spirit of COSEF”. When women from different political parties unite on a common platform for a common cause, the resulting ideas can have had a contagion effect back to and between parties (Bruhn 2003, 112). In the case of Senegal, this might have increased support for the parity law within the political parties. Also, by uniting the women’s movement, competition between different women’s organisations was avoided which could have hampered the cause. COSEF and its partners were also strategically using the media to spread the idea of parity. They invited the press when parity was openly discussed in parliament, which may have inhibited stark opponents from uttering their opinions aloud if these were considered less

politically correct (Bruhn 2003).

Because of the alliance with AFJ, many of the women's activists were also jurists, which brought the women's movement more directly into the process of designing the Law on Parity, allowing them to make propositions and speak out whenever a modification of the electoral law made by the government did not satisfy their demands. As stated by my informants, this made the final stages of the quota process happen quickly, which seems to have obstructed strong opposition within the parliament: "There was little violent opposition. Well, there were some men who were against, but they did not show it since most of them did not think it was going to happen that fast" (Kiné Diop, interview, November 2015). The involvement of jurists also made the parity law highly effective: the alternation of men and women, the strict sanctions for non-compliance, its validity for all electoral instances and for both the PR and majority lists made it one of the most radical quota laws in the world. In this matter, the Senegalese parity law can be seen as much more successful than the French original. France was the first country to initiate a compulsory 50/50 gender parity law in 2000. However, the French parity law includes no placement mandate, which allows parties to place women at the bottom on party lists in practically ineligible positions. Furthermore, if parties do not comply with parity in the composition of party lists, the only punishment is of financial character (Murray 2012, 28). This helps explain why women fill only 26% of the seats in the French parliament (Quota Project 2015).

Also of importance – and also related to France - is how COSEF chose to frame the concept of parity. This concept essentially entails a legislative gender quota of 50%. The word "quota" is controversial however, and some see it as a discriminatory practice. This have in many cases stirred resistance to adopting such measures, as well as a de-legitimizing of "quota women" (Krook 2013, 4). The fact that the Beijing platform urges states to increase women's representation significantly without referring specifically to quotas, illustrates the controversies surrounding the concept. Quota advocates have responded by reframing the quota concept to, for instance, "parity", which first appeared in France: "Whereas [quotas] implied special rights for minorities, supporters claimed, parity entailed the equitable sharing of power between women and men" (Krook 2013, 5). While some scholars regard this simply as a framing strategy, others maintain "that quotas and parity are qualitatively distinct due to their distinct philosophical justifications" (Krook 2013, 5). This latter approach seems to have been dominant in France. This is exemplified by the title of the parity-manifesto *Au pouvoir*,

*citoyennes! Liberté, égalité, parité* (Gaspard, Servan-Schreiber, and Le Gall 1992), which helped popularize the concept. In this case, *parité* (parity) plays on the normative foundation of the French Revolution while replacing the word *fraternité*, or brotherhood in English, with parity, “thereby expressing a social bond between all French citizens instead of limiting that bond to the male sex” (Lombardo and Meier 2014, 40). In this sense, parity calls for a new understanding of citizenship involving both men and women, and is presented as a prerequisite for democracy. In other words, parity was framed as something different than quotas: parity signals inclusiveness of both genders instead of preferential treatment for women.

The Senegalese women’s movement borrowed the concept of parity and applied it to their own setting. This is an example of *regional exposure effects*, which occur when countries observe and learn from other countries’ adoption of policies. An example of this is the sharing of ideas and policies between previous colonies and colonizer. This was the case in Senegal and Tunisia, which have both adopted gender parity laws which have resulted in high levels of women in parliaments (Hughes et al. 2015, 360). The parity concept is likely to have helped COSEF gain support for the application of affirmative action while avoiding fierce resistance among quota opponents. As illustrated above, COSEF used the parity concept actively throughout their campaigns for increased female representation. Their framing of parity seems to have been successful. In fact, during my fieldwork I was corrected twice by male parliamentarians when I referred to gender quotas; I was told that in Senegal, it is *parité* that has been applied, not quotas. In the next chapter I will discuss whether the framing of parity might have had effects on the symbolic representation of women.

### **5.5.2 The role of president Wade**

The fact that the women’s movement found an ally in president Wade was also of vital importance to the successful adoption of the parity law. Gender quotas are sometimes part of a strategy chosen by political leaders in order to gain political support. The female electorate can be seen as valuable to incumbents, and as stated by Peter (1999, 11): “Every sensible State knows that women are faithful voters. They normally register and actually go to vote... Thus women are regarded as a safe and sure constituency and whoever controls them is guaranteed victory”. This may be of particular importance when incumbents are becoming increasingly unpopular among the electorate (Bruhn 2003, 103). As mentioned, Wade’s

popularity was waning towards the end of his presidency. There is a conviction among some of my informants that his role as the “founding father of parity” (Ka, interview, November 2015) was his way of gaining electoral support from women and thus remain sitting for a third term: “I think there were political arguments present. Because Wade wanted to be re-elected, so maybe he thought it necessary to give something to the women” (Fall, interview, November 2015). Being the one who brought parity to Senegal would perhaps benefit his electoral campaign (Cartelette, D. Wade<sup>29</sup> & Fatou Touré, interviews, November 2015). With this logic, one can say that both the women’s movement and Wade saw a potential for profiting on each other’s support, exemplified by how COSEF constantly reminded Wade of his commitments with regards to parity taken in the African Union and elsewhere.

### **5.5.3 A favourable international climate**

The abovementioned domestic actors would perhaps not have achieved parity adoption without a favourable international climate. After the Beijing conference in 1995, women’s organisations blossomed, and COSEF adopted much of the policies in the Beijing platform into their program. International and transnational policy diffusion is often mentioned as one of the main reasons behind quota implementation (Krook 2006; Hughes, Krook, and Paxton 2015). International norms promoting women’s representation gave the women’s movement extra leverage to their demands, and they played on the fact that Senegal had ratified many of the protocols and conventions stemming from international and transnational meetings on the topic of gender representation. The fact that COSEF used the ratifications signed by Wade to pressure him into accepting the parity law, illustrates how domestic groups can use international pressure to “bear on states violating international norms (...)” (Hughes et al. 2015, 359).

According to international norms, quotas are seen as “enhancing states’ democratic nature” (Towns 2010, 150). The inclusion of previously marginalised groups like women are seen as a way of moving away from “traditional” to “modern” state-formation, and the political status of women have often been viewed as an example of progress (Towns 2010, 152). Wade himself was very well aware of parity being in line with international norms as was made clear in the process leading up to the adoption of the parity law. In the beginning of his

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<sup>29</sup> This informant should not be confused with former president Abdoulaye Wade. See Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviewees.

presidency, Wade had the image of a modern reformer with democratic ideals, exemplified by him adopting a new constitution that limited the presidential term limit from seven to five years, as well as incorporating principles from the aforementioned conventions aiming at improving women's rights and representation. His support of the parity law can be seen as a logical continuation of these policies. As stated by Bush (2011, 104), political leaders sometimes adopt quotas with the purpose of presenting themselves and their countries as "modern" or "democratic" to the rest of the world. Countries that are heavily indebted, largely dependent on foreign aid and/or tourism are more likely to adopt quotas. This is also the case where international involvement is high, for instance through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or through election monitoring (Bush 2011; Hughes, Krook, and Paxton 2015). There are 184 foreign NGOs in Senegal (ICNL 2015), and Dakar has been labelled "West Africa's hub for nongovernmental organisations and international agencies" by the New York Times (Nossiter 2014). Election monitors have been present during elections (EU 2015). Furthermore, Senegal has historically been "one of the most assisted countries in the world" (A. Clark, Gaye, and Sow 1997, 149), and still remains highly dependent on foreign aid. Additionally, Senegal is one of 38 heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) that receives special assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary fund (IMF 2016). In sum, the Senegalese economy is highly dependent on foreign actors, and there is strong reason to believe that this has fuelled the political will to be in line with international norms favouring quota adoption.

#### **5.5.4 Executive-legislative relations and political pragmatism**

Findings from my fieldwork show that there were – and still remains – a certain resistance to the parity law among some of the male parliamentarians. This is not an unexpected reaction: when quotas are introduced in male-dominated legislatures, the zero-sum game presupposed that as the number of women increase, the number of men must decrease (Murray, Krook, and Opello 2011). In Senegal, the parity critics argue that the law violates the rule of equality before the law (D. Wade, interview, November 2015) and promotes favouritism rather than merits (Sy, interview, November 2015) and some see their interests threatened (M. Kane, interview, November 2015). According to one of the female ex-parliamentarians, a majority of men were against the law but voted for it anyway: "It's because of the majority phenomenon, and the chief of the party decides. So Wade said 'Let's vote!'" (Fatou Touré interview, November 2015). This is not an unlikely scenario: as already stated, the Senegalese presidency holds great powers, and the National Assembly rarely votes down his proposals.

He also exercises control over parliament through offering patronage goods and possibilities in the absence of a strong party discipline (Thomas and Sissokho 2005). This is typical in African countries with weakly institutionalized party systems; patronage links matter more (Goetz and Hassim 2003).

In France, parity was adopted after a vote in the National Assembly and the Senate in 1999, even though many were against it. This is partly explained by pragmatism and strategic choices from parties, and strong pressure from both party leaders and the president. In France and Senegal, parity was on the political agenda in the period leading up the presidential elections, a period that “have long been used as an opportunity for agenda setting by interest groups, as candidates are keen to attract voters and take on board new ideas. Feminist groups have exploited such opportunities by using the argument of wooing the women’s vote” (Murray et al. 2011, 537). None of the French presidential candidates wanted to publicly oppose parity, especially due to the high media coverage and polls showing public support for measures increasing women’s representation. In France, this led conservative parties to vote for parity even though they were against it, since they were not in a majority position to win. Also, the Senate originally voted down the proposal, but changed their mind under heavy pressure from president Chirac (R. Murray, Krook, and Opello 2011). This shows that ideology and personal convictions do not always decide which proposals get passed in legislative bodies. Especially not in a political system with a strong president with much political will and women’s groups’ pressures in a political climate favouring women’s representation.

The above factors can help explain how such a radical quota law came to be in the Senegalese context, where Islam is an important part of everyday life and where the marabouts are said to exercise much indirect political power. As already stated, some scholars find a negative relationship between religion, and particularly Islam, and women’s representation in parliaments in Muslim-majority countries is lower than in the rest of the world. However, as noted by Tripp (2013), many of the African countries that have adopted gender quotas have a significant Muslim population, like Mauritania, Senegal, Sudan, Eritrea, Niger and Somalia. Tripp and Kang (2007, 356) claim that Muslim countries outside the Middle East show higher levels of women’s representation than within the Middle East, which suggests that women’s representation is connected to region rather than religion. Ross (2008) claims something similar, focusing on the importance of oil rather than Islam in this matter. Dependency on oil



production leads to fewer women in the workforce, which gives women less political influence. As a consequence, “oil-producing states are left with atypically strong patriarchal norms, laws and political institutions” (M. Ross 2008, 107). Another argument for a more nuanced view on Islam and women’s representation is presented by Ertan (2011), who looks at the relationship between state and religion. In cases where the state and Islam is fused, women’s representation is lower. However, in secular Muslim states like Senegal, Islamic heritage has not been a barrier to women’s political representation. These factors may help explain why we now see the introduction of quotas in countries such as Senegal, where religion continues to play an important role (Kang and Tripp 2007, 357).

This does not mean that religion is irrelevant when it comes to the discussion of parity. In fact, according to my informants, most of the resistance to the parity law come from the marabouts, who used arguments based on religion stating that women and men are not equal (Kiné Diop & Ka, interview, November 2015). Furthermore, some of the fiercest parity-sceptics within parliament are said to belong to religious families. However, religious opposition was not enough to stop the quota law from happening when faced with both international and domestic pressure from the president and women’s organisations. We also need to take into account the “lack of uniformity” of the Senegalese society in order to understand the quota adoption (Creevey 2004, 62-63). On one side there is the importance of Islam and its leaders, which has marked the link between politicians and the people, and has indirectly influenced policies by embracing different candidates. On the other side, politics are dominated by the often Western-educated urban elites focusing on the modernisation and development of Senegal. It is not unlikely that their political conviction is fuelled by the international climate. Creevey (2004) claims that the rural Muslim leaders’ powers are in decline, “in favour of the more individually directed urban voters” (Creevey 2004, 63), a tendency that seems to be affirmed by the quota adoption. Senegal is very concerned with its international reputation, perhaps especially as a peaceful, modern and democratic stronghold in a volatile region. The pragmatism of political elites has put them in a position where they perhaps see bigger benefits from pursuing women-friendly policies in line with international norms rather than being backed by religious leaders.

However, the case of Touba shows that Senegal is still somewhat caught in the middle in this matter. Although religious counter-mobilisation was not dominant when parity was *adopted*, religious forces are still trying to stop parity from being *implemented*. Political parties are

usually responsible of composing candidate lists for elections. However in Touba, this responsibility lies with the Khalif himself. In the 2014 local election, the Khalif presented an all-male candidate list of 100 candidates. Not surprisingly, the Electoral Commission (CENA), concluded that Touba did not respect parity (Leral.net 2014). The Khalif however publicly refused to succumb. He stated that there will never be parity in Touba, and that the only law this city follows is the Sharia (Le Dakarois 2016). While non-compliance to parity has led CENA to reject party lists elsewhere, this has not yet happened in Touba. In fact, in 2014, CENA and the Minister of Interior reached an agreement on the “specificity of Touba” and that the “sociological realities of Senegal” should be taken into account in the development and implementation of laws (Faye 2014). According to my informants, Touba has a special status *de facto*, but not *de jure*: “In the juridical framework, there is no special status for a religious city... But it shows that in reality, on a sociological level, there is a part of the territory that is different” (Cartelette, interview, November 2015). Another informant stated that CENA had let Touba pass without sanctions it because “you do not touch the marabouts” (Samb Dia, interview, November 2015). This indicates that the power of the marabouts has not yet disappeared: “In addition to religious importance, Touba also holds economical importance in this country. And that is the reality of things” (Kiné Diop, interview, November 2015). In other words, the fight for parity does not seem to be over yet.

# 6 The symbolic effects of the parity law

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter shows how and why the parity law was adopted in Senegal. It also indicates that the initiative to the law was based on expectations of changes in women's symbolic representation. In this chapter I will explore whether these expectations have been met or not. I start by analysing interviews from my fieldwork in order to examine whether symbolic effects from the parity law has occurred *within* the National Assembly. I then move on to symbolic effects *outside* the National Assembly, by analysing survey data of public opinion. My findings show that there are some limited attitudinal changes among the political elites, but that this depends on how symbolic representation is operationalized. As for public opinion, the parity law seems to have caused a polarisation of opinions along gender lines, which suggests that people react differently to quotas.

## 6.2 Symbolic representation in the National Assembly

At the very core of symbolic representation theory lies the assumption that politics traditionally has been a male domain. Some argue that this is manifested in the highly masculine culture in parliaments, which has developed through years of exclusion of women. Institutions like legislative bodies becomes gendered

...because of the sociodemographics of the people who founded, populated, and developed them over time. In the process, organizations and institutions create formal and informal structures, rules, norms, and practices in response to the "preferences" of their founders and most influential incumbents throughout their histories (Duerst-Lahti 2005, 231).

These incumbents, which in all cases throughout history have been men, also set the terms for power relations, whether they are aware of it or not, "because rationally people prefer that which is comfortable and favourable to them" (Duerst-Lahti 2005, 231). When women enter political institutions, they are "marked as outsiders who operate in contrast to the norm" (Duerst-Lahti 2005, 231-232). Based on these assumptions, and combined with the fact that political elites directly feel the effects of quotas from changes in the gendered composition of their workplace, it becomes highly interesting to study symbolic representation within the

National Assembly. The analysis will be structured around the aforementioned indicators of symbolic representation.

### **6.2.1 Characteristics and competences**

Gender quotas can contribute to women's symbolic representation through "its ability to generate positive attitudes among men and women about female citizens' competency" (Burnet 2012, 197). By having parliamentarians describe the characteristics, contributions and competences of the women representatives, I was able to reveal underlying attitudes towards female political leadership that would possibly not have been made apparent through more direct questions.

An interesting division between the current and former parliamentarians occurs on the subject of competences: according to the male ex-deputies, a lack of competences among their female colleagues was never an issue. This is however reported as a problem in the current parliament, even by some of the women. In Senegal, the illiteracy rates are higher for women, which appears to be reflected in the current National Assembly (M. Kane, interview, November 2015). The influx of women is said to have influenced the "competence level"<sup>30</sup> since the Parity Law requires a 50/50 gender balance on all electoral lists. In the 2012 elections, some parties struggled to find "educated" or "experienced" women for their candidate lists. In other words, the supply of "competent" women has not reached up to the demand, and in the national and local elections in 2012 and 2014, there were reported cases of "just filling up lists" (D. Wade, Diallo & Sy, interview, November 2015).

However, there seems to be an almost unanimous acceptance of this challenge as a *temporary* situation that will improve with time through training: "Parity is a new experience, and we must cheer for it. But for it to work, the parties need to support, prepare and train the women for these instances of decision" (Sy, interview, November 2015). As a means to overcome these challenges, a simultaneous translation service was installed last year, which reportedly was "good for the women" (M. Kane, interview, November 2015). As stated by a female former deputy, one can learn a lot from being elected, and she remains positive that the

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<sup>30</sup> I use quotation marks because of the difficulties connected to what defines a "competent" politician. Informants however frequently used this word.

women in parliament will become increasingly prepared for elective office (N. M. Kane 2015, interview, November 2015).

The criticism of gender quotas promoting the elevation of unqualified women is frequently voiced in quota-adopting countries. This debate touches upon descriptive representation with regards to what “type” of women is elected through quotas, and is part of a so-called “double bind” facing women in politics: if women are “qualified” they are deemed to be too elitist and not representative of most women, while if they do resemble most women, they are accused of being unqualified. However, the assumption that women elected through quotas are less qualified have been rejected by several studies (O’Brien 2012; Murray 2012; Franceschet and Piscopo 2012; Nugent and Krook 2016; Josefsson 2014). Some “quota women” actually have more political experience than their male colleagues, and a high performance in parliament. Thus, instead of promoting unqualified women to parliament, quotas lower the barriers that keep qualified women out (Nugent and Krook 2016). Consequently, in the context of the Senegalese parliament, one cannot take for granted that the reports of unqualified women reflect reality.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, this very discussion of competences can reveal something about the symbolic representation of women in today’s parliament. Some of my informants claimed that there have been many uneducated men in the National Assembly without their competences ever being an issue. According to a male ex-parliamentarian and eager parity-supporter, critics claim that with parity the “level of reflection” in the National Assembly is falling. He blamed these claims on stigmatization and prejudices; before 2012, the competence level was not always that high among men either. Still, one never referred to this as a problem (Sané, interview, November 2015). A female former deputy stated that: “We always see illiterate men get elected to the municipalities as well as to the National Assembly. So why say now that women lack education and cannot be there?” (M. Kane 2015, interview, November 2015). This may indicate that there are different requirements for female and male politicians. Because women historically have not been the “somatic norm” in political decision-making bodies, “they don’t have an undisputed right to occupy this place” (Puwar 2004, 8). Hence, elected women seem to have more to prove than their male colleagues. Even where the

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<sup>31</sup> I was not able to check female parliamentarian’s background, as is normally available through the website of the National Assembly. The site was “under construction” during the whole master’s project.

competence level is equal – albeit high or low - men are advantaged by the virtue of being men. The image of them as political leaders possibly feels more “natural” in the eyes of the makers – who in this case are political elites – regardless of competences or any other “rationally justifiable criteria” (Pitkin 1967, 100).

## **6.2.2 Gender relations in parliament**

Theory suggests that men and women will behave differently in plenary sessions in parliament partly as a consequence of the highly masculine culture of politics. This culture might inhibit women from defending their opinions before the National Assembly.

Accordingly, one can expect women to talk less in plenary debates than their male colleagues (Wang 2014). Comparing talking time between men and women before and after 2012 can reveal if there persists a strong masculine political culture within the Senegalese parliament, or whether this has changed after the influx of women. This may imply that “over time the pervasive culture of masculinity within parliament has been transformed and become more conducive to women” (Wang 2014, 374). Alternatively, women may have adapted to the persistent masculine political environment. It should be noted that I base the comparison of talking time on interview data, which has its limitations: people may conceive or remember time differently, and I have no means to double-check their statements.

However, the advantage of using interview data is that it allows me to cover people’s reactions to women’s contribution in plenary debates. When women enter parliaments, they are sometimes met with resistance from their male colleagues, either by being ignored, discriminated or straight out harassed. Lovenduski (2002) shows with examples from the British parliament how some men developed tactics aimed at humiliating the pioneer women. Demeaning comments about looks or remarks based on stereotypes was common, a problem that to a certain degree remains today. This kind of resistance to female presence can be seen as a symptom of the masculine political sphere in parliament, and one can use the same logic for talking time as for gender relations in a wider context. If there are reports of discrimination or hostilities, one can assume that the political sphere is still considered a male domain by its original incumbents. However, if gender relations have improved, this might be a consequence of more women challenging the male monopoly of the legislature. Are the women taken seriously on an equal footing with their male colleagues, or are they ignored or humiliated?

My findings show that all the parliamentarians have defended their opinions before the National Assembly. Both the current and former female parliamentarians saw this as an obvious part of being a parliamentarian, and no differences in talk time was reported, neither by the men or the women.

On a more general level, parliamentarians in today's parliament reported that relations were good. As stated by a female parliamentarian: "I think that here, we respect each other mutually, whether you're a man or a woman. We consider each other colleagues" (Dionne, interview, November 2015). This was reflected in the men's statements: "To be honest, I don't think about whether I am with a woman or a man. I think that I am with someone, a colleague with whom I defend the same ideal. We discuss different positions in a democratic manner" (Sy, interview, November 2015).

It should be noted, however, that many of the current male parliamentarians did not think gender discrimination existed in Senegal in the first place: "In our tradition, we have never had these problems between men and women" claimed one male deputy (D. Wade, interview, November 2015), while another reported that "there's no hostilities between men and women. It's not in our attitude. How we live in society, we bring with us to parliament" (Sy, interview, November 2015). Another deputy reported to never have seen any discrimination in the National Assembly or elsewhere in Senegal (Balde, interview, November 2015) while a couple of others underlined that Senegalese men were very "tolerant" and "solidary" towards women and women's issues. This stands in stark contrast to established knowledge about Senegal and its patriarchal culture (see chapter 4), and in fact undermines the legitimization of the parity law: if there are no discriminatory attitudes in Senegal towards women as politicians, one can argue that the law is redundant. This reflects the complexity of the situation, and the fact that it can be difficult for people who do not experience discrimination personally to acknowledge its existence (Crosby, Iyer, and Sincharoen 2006).

Among the former female parliamentarians, however, there were reports of a less collegiate relationship between the then small group of women and the male majority. One woman claimed that their male colleagues were not always pleased with the women's presence in the political activities: "It is us that prevented them from going in circles. Sometimes we were in their way, because men always wish to dominate women. They were obliged to work with us

because they had to, but once ‘on the ground’ relations were not the best” (N. M. Kane, interview, November 2015). Another female deputy claimed that the men used other women to get to her: “I was in a very hostile environment as an independent opposition politician. So they organised against me. [The men] used [the women] to yell at me to provoke me” (Fatou Touré, interview, November 2015). One current male deputy claimed that he had seen changes in the mentality of his male colleagues since the beginning of the parliamentary term:

At the time, people said that the man is superior to woman, but today I am with my deputy colleagues, we have equal dignity. There are even women who are superior to me, because they are vice presidents in the National Assembly hierarchy. So one has no longer this “power complex” working with women like before as a collaborator or partner. (Diallo, interview, November 2015)

This may signify that relations between men and women have indeed improved since the introduction of the Parity Law. The increased presence of women is contributing to their symbolic representation by reformulating the role of a political actor. Thus the presence of female parliamentarians are more accepted or respected by their male colleagues. Mansbridge (1999) states the importance of convincing the “haves” (men) that women can play an active part in political decision-making. Based on some of my informants’ reports, there are indications that the “haves” in this case have been convinced.

On the other hand, this topic can be seen in relation to some interesting findings concerning women’s activism in today’s parliament. Theory suggests that women in parliaments with a large male majority can either blend in with the men, or “promote themselves and their achievements” (Bratton 2005, 100). In so-called “skewed” parliaments, the few women present may be particularly politically active, reflected in how they voluntarily enter such a competitive political arena (Bratton 2005). In other words, a small number of women can contribute much to the substantive representation of women. This may have been the case in Senegal, reflected in how the pioneer women expressed some discontent towards the efforts of the women in today’s parliament. One accused the majority of “sleeping”, and consequently not being true role models. Another stated that “[today], even with 64 female deputies, they cannot do what the 22 of us did in terms of being heard and exercising leadership” (female ex-parliamentarian, interview, November 2015). There seems to have been a high level of activism among the female ex-parliamentarians, which is not surprising: it was *them* who campaigned and lobbied for parity in a parliament consisting of 77% men, an impressive achievement in terms of women’s substantive representation. One woman gave an



example of such activism: “Just before the [parity] law was to be voted, we were a group of women who rebelled. We blocked the election until very late in the night... They saw us as troublemakers” (N. M. Kane, interview, November 2015)

What is framed as something negative among the female ex-deputies is presented as positive among some of the current male deputies: “The consequence [of the parity law] that one can see is that the women have calmed down. First they fought for their rights, and now they have calmed down because at least [the law] permits social peace and cohesion” (current male parliamentarian, interview, November 2015). Another claimed that with parity, the “cleavage of feminism” is diminishing in parliament:

You don't see feminists, but representatives of the people in general. Feminism needs for women to be on an unequal footing. But today the women are sufficiently represented. They don't have to be supported by feminism or women's activists. Equality is reality (current male parliamentarian, interview, November 2015).

This is interesting because it shows two different conceptions of the same phenomenon. That women have “calmed down” or are “sleeping” can be seen as both a consequence of having their most urgent requirements satisfied, but also as a consequence of more women - with less political experience and thus less clout - occupying parliament. The fact that this distinction seems to be gendered reinforces the impression that men are less interested in or informed about women's issues. Most women will probably disagree with the claim that feminism loses its purpose because women have the same access to parliament as men. If this supposed decline in activism – and also potentially in conflicts – is the reason behind the reported harmony in today's parliament, one cannot draw the conclusion that women's symbolic representation has changed for the better.

### **6.2.3 A broader perspective on representation**

A majority of my informants claimed that one of the main reasons for including more women into politics was because women contributed with something different than men, which was of value to the conduct of the Senegalese society. Many of my female respondents reported being particularly concerned with women's issues. Their main contribution to parliament was to work for the women's cause. This was acknowledged as an important contribution from both genders. Furthermore, women were described as being more in contact with the population, knowing their worries, knowing more about social problems than men, and representing their sisters who remained back home in the village. On this matter, there was no

clear difference between the former and current parliament. With help from the recently installed translation service, the female parliamentarians from rural areas are seen as intermediators between the rural population and the political elite: “No matter their background, women are now entering decision-making instances. Because of parity, the National Assembly now represents the population better”, said one current female parliamentarian (Dionne, interview, November 2015). One of her male colleagues claimed that the National Assembly needs both the rural women who can mobilize and be “close to the population”, as well as the educated and experienced women. One man even stated that the parity law was only valuable if it benefited the rural women. One can thus argue that the parity law contributes to women’s symbolic representation “in that they broaden the perspective of whom representatives, and politicians more broadly speaking, should represent and to whom they should be responsive” (Meier 2012, 161). Based on my sample, I was not able to trace any differences between the former and current parliament in this matter. However, many saw the increased diversity as to who should be represented as one of the main advantages of the parity law.

It is therefore an apparent recognition in the Senegalese parliament that women hold specific qualities connected to their gender. With the exception of one male current deputy who applauded his female colleagues for “talking like men”, there was a consensus that women contributed by being women, not by imitating men. This is reflected in research from other parts of the world: women are still “associated with ‘communal’ attributes, concerned with the welfare of others, and men portrayed as more ‘agentic’, as assertive, controlling and confident” (Nugent & Krook 2016, 132). One can argue that these views are socially constructed: women are believed to be closer to social issues because these are more connected to the local or domestic sphere. From a western feminist point of view, this gendered partition of qualities might seem contradictory to the principles of parity, namely that gender should not determine roles in politics. One can also argue that it limits women to the domestic sphere (Miguel 2012, 105). The public and political realms has been “constructed through the exclusion of women and all that we symbolize” (Pateman 1995, 52, quoted in Puwar 2004, 14). However, the traditional cultural division between men and women have left women’s movements in Africa with different resources to draw from when mobilizing for political change. The concept of “motherhood” has thus been used actively to legitimize women’s inclusion into politics. By introducing more “female” values like nurturing, justice and caring to the political scene, these are meant to replace some of the

more negative “masculine” traits, like corruption. Also, “[women] sometimes draw on their domestic experiences to create a new kind of political imagery that defies the paternal one that evolved with the colonial state and has remained in the post-colonial context” (Tripp 2003, 250). It should be noted that motherhood is not the only trait African women’s activists draw on. Still, it is not considered controversial or problematic in the African traditions, which does not draw a sharp divide between the public/political and domestic sphere as is common among Western feminists. In politics, as in other “public spaces”, women generally want equality but they do not aspire to be considered in the same way as men (Tripp 2003, 250).

In other words, the fact that women in the Senegalese parliament still are believed to hold “distinct moral attributes” (Miguel 2012, 105), does not necessarily mean that there has not been a development in their symbolic representation. In fact, it can be actively used to create a new political imagery: it is important that women are numerous in parliament because they contribute with something valuable. This shows that we must take into account cultural factors not only when measuring symbolic effects, but also when deciding what is in fact a symbolic effect. However, this gendered division of political issues is not unproblematic. As shown in the case of Brazil, women pursue so-called “soft politics” like social issues, but these themes are seen as less prestigious than other types of politics. When women rise in the hierarchy within parliament, they usually abandon these issues for “harder” themes: “It becomes clear, then, that there is a link between giving preference to specific themes in parliamentary activity – themes associated with men – and opportunities for greater and faster ascension in political life” (Miguel 2012, 116). In other words, the relationship between political issues and gender can work against women moving upwards in the political hierarchy. This is an argument against the essentialism of politics. However, a bigger presence of women in parliament can draw men’s attention towards women’s issues, thereby increasing its prestige (Miguel 2012). With time, “soft issues” will perhaps not inhibit women from climbing the hierarchy of the parliament.

#### **6.2.4 Delegations of posts**

As stated above, the political field is a hierarchical one, which is reflected in the different positions within representative bodies. Some posts are more important and prestigious than others, but these are seldom taken by women (Miguel 2012). This is apparent in the uneven

distribution of important posts within the Senegalese National Assembly. According to female informants in the former and current parliament, men are prioritised to the detriment of women when choosing leaders of commissions and other posts of responsibility: “When women have the same competences as men, the post is usually given to the man” (M. Kane, interview, November 2015). This suggests that the perception of political decision-making as a male domain possibly lingers more within the National Assembly than its members would like to admit or realize. However, the gendered division of political issues as discussed above can also explain the uneven distribution of posts. It remains a challenge to gender equality within the National Assembly nonetheless. It should however be mentioned that there is a will in today’s parliament to even out this unbalance, as parity recently was expanded to include elective posts within the parliament (M. Kane & Balde, interview, November 2015)

### **6.2.5 Support for the parity law**

According to Meier (2012), support for gender quotas can indicate changes in the symbolic representation of women. Gender quotas “underline that the public space and its normative foundations, structures, processes, and outcomes are not neutral” and can thus contribute to turning public space “into a space reflecting and considering the diversity characterizing society” (Meier 2012, 161). It is therefore important that gender quotas are not limited to being just a set of formal rules: its underlying gender equality norms need to be internalized by individuals. Meier (2012, 162) claims that “by challenging attitudes about the maleness of the public space and by underlining the need for the equality of men and women as citizens and politicians”, quotas contribute to the symbolic representation of women”. In the case of Senegal, support for the Parity Law among the deputies can then reflect if underlying equality norms have been internalized.

The female respondents overwhelmingly supported the parity law. So did the male ex-parliamentarians. The quota law was reported to correct social injustice, to recognise women’s legitimate rights and to symbolise social progress. Among the current male parliamentarians, some criticism was made as to what the substantial consequences of the law would be: “Parity is good if it benefits the rural women... That is what I have said in the assembly: we must evaluate the law. Has the situation changed from before we had parity? In terms of development, who benefits in their daily life?” (D. Wade, interview, November ;). However, in the same interview it was stated that the parity law lacked its “raison d’être”, since Senegalese women were excelling in education, and that at least in the city, men and

women already were equal. One current male parliamentarian claimed that the law was introduced too early and too fast, before the Senegalese people were ready for it, although he personally supported it. Simultaneously he said that women no longer needed feminism, since, thanks to the parity law, they were already on equal footing with men (Diallo, interview, November 2015). Another male respondent used the chance to congratulate president Macky Sall for maintaining parity, but at the same time stated that he had never witnessed any difference linked to gender in the National Assembly or beyond. A fourth male deputy acknowledged the challenges surrounding the parity law, but underlined that this was a first experience, and that it should be applauded. My informants further told me about male politicians in the parliament who were highly critical of the parity law. These other men argued that the parity law violates the rule of equality before the law, that it promotes favouritism instead of meritocracy, and that the law is unfair. Although few of my respondents directly criticise the law, they do not acknowledge discriminatory practices or gender inequality. Thus the gender equality norms underlying gender quotas do not appear to be internalized. Based on this operationalization of symbolic representation, there are no traceable symbolic effects of the gender parity law.

It should be noted that two of those who were most sceptical of the parity law were also openly critical towards president Wade. As stated in the previous chapter, the parity law is highly connected to the presidency of Abdoulaye Wade, and a de-legitimization of the law can act as a de-legitimization of Wade. As stated by one: “Wade voted for parity, but he didn’t believe in parity... He played the lottery: ‘If the law is passed, the women will applaud’ [he thought]” (D. Wade, interview, November 2015) while another claimed that Wade wanted to please the women by being the one who brought them parity (Fatou Touré, interview, November 2015). In other words, one must not underestimate the role of politics when analysing these results. It should also be noted that one of the male ex-deputies was a member of the Observatory for Parity, while the other was a supporter of former president Wade. This might have influenced their support for the parity law positively compared with some of their colleagues.

## 6.2.6 Pulling the other women

Central to the theory of symbolic representation is that more women in legislative bodies can weaken gender stereotypes and legitimize women as political actors. These women can act as role models for other women, inspiring them to participate in politics (Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo 2012). It is difficult to measure the impact of female role models in the Senegalese society before the next election.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, it is interesting how many parliamentarians saw role modelling as an important function of women's presence in politics, which is why I have included this aspect in this part of the analysis. One of the current female parliamentarians saw herself as a role model for the Wolof-speaking women in particular (Sarr, interview, November 2015). Another reported that she was a role model "by being a deputy who do not just go to listen in the parliament and then go home. I solve problems" (M. Kane, interview, November 2015). Among the female ex-deputies, being a role model was central for all three informants: "We, the pioneers, were role models" (N. M. Kane, interview, November 2015). One claimed that she felt a responsibility on behalf of other women: "I was a woman, and I did not want people to say that women are mediocre". She further claims that women today approach her on the street, calling her their idol (Fatou Touré, interview, November 2015). A third identified herself as a role model for young girls in particular, and that this process continued through her daily work as a leader of a NGO for the education of girls (Samb Dia, interview, November 2015).

An overwhelming majority – both among current and former, male and female parliamentarians – claimed that one of the most important consequences of the parity law was that the female deputies could act as role models for other women. Women as political leaders can motivate young girls to stay in school, who will witness women deputies' behaviour and try to be like them, claimed one male current parliamentarian (Balde, interview, November 2015). One of his male colleagues expressed hopes that women witnessing the female parliamentarians at work would think: "If it's possible for them to reach these instances of decision-making, why not us?" (Sy, interview, November 2015). A third predicted that talented women in the future would have to share their seats with mediocre men because they inspired so many women to involve themselves in politics (Diallo, interview, November 2015). One of the female ex-deputies said that if the women in parliament did good work,

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<sup>32</sup> Yet, when compared with ordinary citizen's perceptions of gender in the political sphere, some assumptions can be made. I will discuss this further below.

they would be role models for other women who would recognize their values “and the rest will happen by itself” (Fatou Touré, interview, November 2015).

As the examples above show, many respondents stress the importance of the female legislators’ *actions* with regards to functioning as role models; they have to contribute, particularly through fighting for women’s issues. This links the descriptive representation of women to symbolic representation *through* substantive representation. In other words, women’s mere presence alone is not necessarily enough to encourage others to follow, as is suggested by Phillips (1995). For instance, in Indian local politics this interdependency between the three forms of representation is affirmed: “Individuals change their attitudes about the effectiveness of female leaders when they are exposed to female leaders who deliver public goods” (Beaman et al. 2012, 222). The scope of this thesis does not allow for an empirical testing of what the female parliamentarians have contributed with in terms of substantive representation, but it affirms that actions and achievements are connected to symbolic representation for many of the parliamentarians. However, some parliamentarians did not see substantive representation as a prerequisite for symbolic representation: the mere presence of more women in decision-making positions signified increased possibilities for women. This again would improve women’s status overall:

[Up north,] we have a problem. When a woman gives birth to girls only, she’s an unhappy mother. Now, the grass root will know that men and women have the same value... So for me, the benefit from the parity law is above all that it permits women up north to no longer feel unhappy when they give birth to only girls. To know that equality is a reality, and that now both men and women access the same level of responsibility (N. M. Kane, interview, November 2015).

Most of the parliamentarians talked about women as role models on a theoretical or “hopeful” level, and some said it was too early to see any real effects of role models in terms of inspiring other women. “It’s a process” and “I remain positive” were frequently used phrases among my respondents. The woman with the above quotation claimed that she already saw symbolic effects in the rural world, where more and more girls went to school, and where more and more women refused to be “pushed around”. Parity provided them with “the right to be elected” which inspired them to refuse being limited to political marionettes and instead inhabit real posts of responsibilities, like mayors (N. M. Kane, interview, November 2015). However, among the 557 mayors elected in the 2014 local elections, only 13 were women. This is connected to the fact that party leaders are most frequently men (Wagne 2015). As for

the education of girls, statistical data from after 2012 is not yet provided (UNICEF 2016). In other words, concrete examples of symbolic effects of women role models are hard to come by, and should be a topic for future research.

### **6.3 Symbolic representation outside the National Assembly**

I will now turn to another audience, namely ordinary citizens. These are the ones who elect representatives and observe the political domain from an outside perspective. It is thus interesting to observe whether the parity law has affected ordinary citizen's attitudes, beliefs and assumptions about gender roles in the political sphere.

#### **6.3.1 Survey data: Women as political leaders**

Using survey data on people's attitudes towards women as political leaders before and after the Parity Law came into effect, allows us to say whether the descriptive increase in women's presence in parliament has had any effect on ordinary citizen's beliefs in women's ability to govern. As we know, the 2012 legislative election saw a dramatic increase in women's descriptive representation from 22,7 % to 42,7 % in the National Assembly. Based on the theoretical relationship presented in this thesis, we can expect people to be more positive towards women as political leaders after 2012 than before. Alexander (2012) conducts a cross-national and longitudinal analysis of this relationship, and finds that increased descriptive representation of women in parliament is reflected in support for female leaders among women, but not men. Are these findings mirrored in the case of Senegal?<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Due to lack of data, I am not conducting a statistical analysis myself. The statistical data used in this thesis is merely of a descriptive character.



Table 2: “Women vs. men as political leaders in Senegal”, Afrobarometer 2005/2006, 2011/2013, 2014/2015

SENEGAL	2005/2006	2011/2013	2014/2015
Agree very strongly with 1:			
Men	37,20 %	32,70 %	39 %
Women	47,30 %	48,40 %	66,70 %
Total	42,10 %	40,60 %	52,80 %
Agree with 1:			
Men	28,80 %	23 %	12,90 %
Women	30,30 %	23,80 %	10,80 %
Total	29,50 %	23,40 %	11,90 %
Agree with 2:			
Men	16,80 %	15,80 %	8,50 %
Women	12,70 %	12,90 %	7 %
Total	14,80 %	14,40 %	7,70 %
Agree very strongly with 2:			
Men	15,50 %	27 %	38,50 %
Women	7,90 %	13,40 %	14 %
Total	11,80 %	20,20 %	26,30 %

“Statement 1: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men”

“Statement 2: Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women”.

The numbers from Table 2 show that people’s attitudes towards women as political leaders have changed over the years. In 2005/2006, 42,1% of the total population agreed very strongly with the statement that women should have equal chances to be elected to decision-making instances as men. By supporting this statement, respondents are implicitly stating that women can be as able to govern as men. In 2014/2015, the number had risen to 52,8%. However, those who agree very strongly with men being better political leaders than women, have actually increased more, from 11,9% in 2005/2006 to 26,3% in 2014/2015. Those who just agree with either statement, has decreased. It therefore seems to have been a *polarisation of opinions*; those who supported women as political leaders before, now supports it even more, while those who oppose it are even more sceptical today. It appears that people have had their original perceptions reinforced.

The findings become even more interesting when separating between genders. There is little change in men’s strong support for the statements that women should have the same chance at being elected to political office as men, from 37,2% (2005/2006) to 39% (2014/2015). However among women, strong support has increased from 47,3% (2005/2006) to as much as 66,7% (2014/2015). Furthermore, strong beliefs about men being more fit to govern than

women has increased dramatically among men, from 15,5% (2005/2006) to 38,5% (2014/2015). This alteration in attitudes is reflected among women: in 2005/2006 7,9% strongly supported that men were better political leaders than women, while by 2014/2015, this number had increased to 14%.

All in all, changes have occurred in women's symbolic representation in Senegal, which is reflected in the polarisation of opinions about gender roles in the political sphere. I will discuss these findings in further detail below. Firstly, I will test if these findings can be interpreted as consequences of the parity law by comparing with other countries that has not implemented parity.

Table 3: “Women vs. men as political leaders in sub-Saharan Africa”, Afrobarometer 2005/2006, 2011/2013, 2014/2015

<b>SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA</b>	<b>2005/2006</b>	<b>2011/2013</b>	<b>2014/2015</b>
Agree very strongly with 1:			
Men	44,50 %	39,50 %	38 %
Women	56,50 %	48,70%	50,60 %
Total	50,5 %	44,10 %	44,30 %
Agree with 1:			
Men	26,20 %	26,60 %	23 %
Women	23,10 %	26,50 %	23 %
Total	24,60 %	26,50 %	23 %
Agree with 2:			
Men	12,30 %	13,90 %	12,80 %
Women	9,30 %	10,70 %	9,70 %
Total	10,80 %	12,30 %	11,30 %
Agree very strongly with 2:			
Men	14,70 %	18,00 %	24,50 %
Women	9,30 %	11,80 %	14,90 %
Total	12 %	14,90 %	19,70 %

“Statement 1: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men”

“Statement 2: Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women”.

When compared to developments in attitudes across sub-Saharan Africa, Senegal stands out (see Table 3). The support for the statement that women should have the same chances for being elected to political office as men, has remained relatively stable in sub-Saharan Africa: among both men and women, support has declined moderately. Those who agree strongly that men make better political leaders than women, has increased from 14,7% among men in (2005/2006) to 24,5% (2014/2015), while the number among women was 9,3% in 2005/2006 and 14,9% in 2014/2015. These numbers do not differ significantly when comparing Senegal to its neighbouring countries in West Africa<sup>34</sup> (see Table 4).

<sup>34</sup> These countries are the ones included in the Afrobarometer round from 2005/2006 to 2014/2015: Cape Verde, Benin, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria.

Table 4: “Women vs. men as political leaders in West Africa”, Afrobarometer 2005/2006, 2011/2013, 2014/2015

<b>WEST AFRICA</b>	<b>2005/2006</b>	<b>2011/2013</b>	<b>2014/2015</b>
Agree very strongly with 1:			
Men	45,10 %	36,90 %	36,50 %
Women	53,20 %	46,60%	49,10 %
Total	49,20 %	41,80%	42,80 %
Agree with 1:			
Men	22,70 %	23,70 %	23,10 %
Women	21,90 %	25,10 %	22,40 %
Total	22,30 %	24,40 %	22,70 %
Agree with 2:			
Men	13,50 %	16,20 %	14,20 %
Women	11,80 %	12,40 %	11,60 %
Total	12,70 %	14,30 %	12,90 %
Agree very strongly with 2:			
Men	17,20 %	22,20 %	24,40 %
Women	11,70 %	14,90 %	14,60 %
Total	14,40 %	18,50 %	19,50 %

“Statement 1: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men”

“Statement 2: Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women”.

Strong support for women as political leaders has declined among men in West Africa from 45,1% in 2005/2006 to 36,5 % in 2014/2015, which is slightly more than in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Among women, strong support for other female political leaders has decreased moderately. The number of men who strongly favour other men as political leaders has increased somewhat from 17,2% (2005/2006) to 24,4% (2014/2015). Among women, this support has increased as well, although to a lesser degree, from 11,7% (2005/2006) to 14,6% (2014/2015).

Neither sub-Saharan Africa nor West Africa has seen a similar increase in women’s strong support for female political leadership as Senegal. Further, the strong support for men as political leaders has increased more in Senegal than in the rest of Africa. In addition, while Senegal has seen a strong polarization of opinions, numbers are more stable in the rest of Africa. To learn more about the workings of the parity law in a Muslim context, it would be interesting to compare Senegal with Tunisia. However, the first legislative election after the adoption of the law was in 2014, while survey data was collected in 2014/2015. It is thus too early to trace symbolic effects in Tunisia.

In order to strengthen the explanatory power of the parity law in the attitudinal changes discovered in Senegal, it may be fruitful to compare Senegal with a similar country that has not experienced such an intervention. This method is called a paired comparison of similar systems. Its advantages is that it can point out the ways the different variables in two similar systems differ (Gerring 2007, 133-135). Although the extent of this thesis does not allow another in-depth study of a different case, paired comparison can contribute to “significantly increasing the inferential power of the design over the single-case study” (Tarrow 2010, 244). Will changes in women’s symbolic representation develop correspondingly in a country that has *not* experienced a dramatic increase in women’s descriptive representation? This method is frequently used when comparing differences in public opinion (Tarrow 2010, 231). In this study I see it fruitful to compare Senegal with Niger. Niger is situated in West Africa and used to be a French colony. Like Senegal, Niger gained independence in 1960 and is poorly developed. Niger is also a secular republic with a predominantly Muslim population (Globalis 2014; UNDP 2015). Gender quotas of 10% were adopted in 2000, but women’s representation in Niger remains low at 13,30% (IPU 2016). Senegal is currently given a “freedom rating” of 2.0 by Freedom House (Free) while Niger is rated 3.5 (Partly Free). One weakness of comparing these two cases is that survey data for Niger only dates back to 2011/2013. However, people’s attitudes in Senegal have changed considerably during these years, and I thus deem it sufficient to limit the comparison to this time period.

Table 5: “Women vs. men as political leaders in Niger”, Afrobarometer 2011/2013, 2014/2015

<b>NIGER</b>	<b>2011/2013</b>	<b>2014/2015</b>
Agree very strongly with 1:		
Men	19,60 %	30,90 %
Women	31,00 %	34,10 %
Total	25,30 %	32,50 %
Agree with 1:		
Men	23,10 %	10,50 %
Women	28,10 %	15,70 %
Total	25,60 %	13,10 %
Agree with 2:		
Men	26,10 %	18,40 %
Women	16,40 %	18,80 %
Total	21,20 %	18,60 %
Agree very strongly with 2:		
Men	30,40 %	39,70 %
Women	23,40 %	31,30 %
Total	26,90 %	35,50 %

“Statement 1: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men”  
 “Statement 2: Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women”.

As Table 5 shows, Niger has seen an increase in men’s strong support of women as political leaders from 19,6% in 2011/2013 to 30,9% in 2014/2015, while this number has changed less in Senegal during the same period, from 32,7% to 39%. Interestingly, Nigerien women’s strong support for women’s and men’s equal chance to be elected has only slightly increased from 30,40% to 34,1%, while in Senegal, this number increased from 48,4% to 66,7%. Furthermore, the proportion of men who strongly favoured male political leaders increased slightly less in Niger than in Senegal. Nigerien women’s strong support for men as political leaders also increased somewhat, as it did in Senegal. However, what is striking is the lack of polarisation among the genders in Niger that is so apparent in Senegal. In fact, Nigerien men and women seem to agree more today than before.

In sum, through comparing people’s attitudes towards women and men as political leaders in Senegal versus the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, West Africa and lastly Niger, there are strong reasons to believe that attitudinal changes in Senegal is a result of the dramatic increase in women’s descriptive representation in 2012. It is thus not unreasonable to assume that the parity law has led to changes in women’s symbolic representation. Among the female

electorate, the strong support for women’s right to be elected has increased dramatically after 2012, which may indicate that more women now than before believe in women’s ability to govern. This is not reflected among men whose support has remained relatively stable during the same period. Parity also seems to have triggered negative attitudes towards women’s capability to govern especially among men, but also among some women. I will discuss these findings in the next section, and compare it with the findings within the National Assembly.

**6.4 Discussion: The symbolic representation of women in Senegal**

How has the parity law affected the symbolic representation of women in Senegal? The answer to this question depends on *how* you measure effects and *who* you measure these effects on. Table 6 below summarises the main findings from this chapter.

Table 6: Women’s symbolic representation, main findings

Audience			
Political elites		The public	
Positive effects	No positive effects	Increased polarization: Positive effects	Increased polarization: Negative effects
<p>- <i>Better gender relations:</i> Indicates that masculine culture has diminished. NB: might be explained by less activism</p> <p>- <i>A broader perspective on representation:</i> Better descriptive representation since also rural women are represented. → the scope of who should be represented is broadened. Women’s contribution is valued.</p>	<p>- <i>Discussion of competences:</i> More is expected of women than men, thus the image of the male politician remains</p> <p>- <i>Delegation of posts:</i> Gender hierarchy remains as men are still given most responsibility</p> <p>- <i>Legitimization of the parity law:</i> Men has not internalized the gender equality norms</p>	<p>- <i>Women more pro-women:</i> Women’s strong belief in other women’s ability to govern has increased</p> <p>Those who were positive before are more positive now</p>	<p>- <i>Men more pro-men:</i> Men favour men as political leaders more than before.</p> <p>Those who favoured male political leaders before are more convinced now</p> <p>- <i>Women’s negative perceptions reinforced:</i> More women than before favour men as political leaders</p>

These findings show the complexity of measuring symbolic representation. Within the National Assembly there are indications of some limited positive changes in women's symbolic representation, like improved gender relations and a broader perspective on who should be represented. However, some things remain unchanged, as indicated by the discussion of women parliamentarians' competences, an unbalanced distribution of posts of responsibility and a lack of internalization of the gender equality norms underlying the parity law. As for ordinary citizens, the parity law appears to have had a positive effect on women's symbolic representation among women, whose strong support for female political candidate's right to be elected has increased. Among the male population, however, there are no traceable positive symbolic effects. In fact, men favour male political leaders more now than before. In other words, we see a polarisation of attitudes along gender lines, and that previous attitudes seem to have been reinforced with the parity law.

What can explain these findings? First of all, people can react differently to gender quotas depending on who benefits from them. For those previously excluded, the women, parity can be seen as a fundamental right, lowering the barriers for women's access to parliament, thus creating a more diverse and inclusive democracy. For men who have never experienced discrimination or marginalization, quotas can rather be seen as giving preferential treatment to women at men's expense. Instead of inclusion, quotas thus symbolise exclusion.

Alexander (2012) suggests that women's attitudes towards gender relations in the political sphere are less rigid than among men. This is reflected in how Senegalese women strongly support female political leaders after the adoption of the parity law, whereas men's support has remained relatively stable. The attitudinal changes detected among women can indicate that exposure to more women in the National Assembly has had symbolic effects; the women parliamentarians act as role models by symbolising increased opportunities and potential. Furthermore, women more often support gender-based affirmative action than men; since women are victims for discrimination they are more likely to acknowledge its existence. People in privileged position - which in Senegalese society and politics traditionally have been men - often favours the status quo (Crosby, Iyer, and Sincharoen 2006). If the males in parliament are representative of the men in the Senegalese population, gender inequality in Senegal is not a perceived problem. It is thus not surprising that the parity law seems to have had positive symbolic effects on women's public opinion, but not on men's.



In addition, it has been suggested that the way gender quotas are adopted matters for its symbolic effects. For instance, Clayton (2014) finds that quotas in Lesotho have influenced women's symbolic representation negatively among women. She attributes this to a lack of justification for quota adoption, which was adopted in a top-down manner without the involvement of the grassroots. Further, women in Lesotho did not perceive themselves as victims of discrimination, which delegitimized quotas and "quota women". However, the Senegalese women's movement was the primus motor behind quota adoption. As the previous chapter shows, COSEF focused on raising awareness about the importance of parity for Senegalese women and the country's development. COSEF members came from a wide variety of backgrounds, and the organisation had cells on a local level. As a country with one of the strongest women's movements in Africa (Tripp 2013), one can assume that Senegalese women are well aware of gender inequality. In other words, women in Senegal were more *involved in* and *aware of* the quota process and its implications than in Lesotho, which may help explain why parity seems to have had such a positive effect among women.

However, the parity law has also caused negative reactions towards women as political leaders. This trend is most apparent among men, but also among some women. As stated by Clayton (2014, 399), "the positive effects of symbolic representation due to quotas rests on the assumption that citizens respond to quotas in positive ways". For privileged groups that favour the status quo, quotas are possibly regarded as an illegitimate tool promoting "undeserving" women who are not elected based on merit alone. As we know from interviews in parliament, there exists an impression of the many unqualified women filling up the National Assembly, an impression that is likely shared by the public. Furthermore, the type of quota implemented can have different symbolic effects (Clayton 2014). One would perhaps expect legislative quotas like the one in Senegal to have less negative effects since there are no identifiable "quota women" to aim aggression at. On the other hand, by not being able to separate those who get elected through quotas from those who do not, there is a risk that the label "quota women" - with all its negative connotations - is attributed to *all* the female legislators elected after 2012.

Quotas can also trigger negative reactions when they are seen as violating appropriate gender roles, which can be deeply rooted both among men and women (Clayton 2014). According to social psychology research, both "men and women 'punish' women who behave counter-

stereotypically by aspiring to leadership positions” (Nugent & Krook 2016, 132). This can help explain why the parity law has led to negative reactions amongst both genders. This is perhaps of extra importance in deeply patriarchal societies where religion regulates everyday life, like in Senegal. According to a representative from Open Society Initiative for West Africa, in some parts of rural Senegal, *parité* has become a negative word in Wolof, meaning “I no longer accept my husband’s authority” (Hirsch 2012). This is reflected in the survey data: both men’s and women’s strong support for women as political leaders is lower in rural than urban areas, whereas perceptions of men as more qualified to govern is higher. For instance, the differentiation between rural versus urban women’s strong support for other women’s equal access to elective office is around 12%. Rural men’s strong support for men as political leaders is 7% higher than urban men’s support for the same statement (Afrobarometer 2016b). In other words, while the framing of quotas as parity might have helped its implementation among the pragmatic political elites, this framing has not necessarily contributed to parity endorsement among the rural population. As stated by one of the bureaucrats in the National Assembly:

There is a big cleavage between the political elite vis-à-vis the population. When you ask a Senegalese person on the street (...) what he thinks of the quotas, he will tell you ‘No, man and woman will never be equal’. In the mentality of the population, [parity] is not entirely accepted, but this is not a problem on elite level (Ka, interview, November 2015).

This reflects the complexity of the Senegalese society. Politics are dominated by urban, educated elites, influenced by French and Western thinking. In addition, these politicians operate in an international climate that favours “modern” states focusing on improving women’s status. Although my findings among political elites only showed limited improvements in women’s symbolic representation, few parliamentarians displayed direct opposition toward the parity law. They acknowledged its challenges, but considered the situation to improve with time. Even though I have used different measurements to capture attitudes amongst political elites and the population, there is still reason to believe that opinions do vary between these groups. Once elected to a legislative body, elite opinion tend to converge with “the rules of the political game”, like for instance tolerance for minority groups and support for democratic values (McAllister 1991, 259). One can argue that the parity law falls under these kinds of values, both since it is presented as a consolidation of democracy, and as a guarantee for marginalized women’s right to access decision-making

position. In addition, international pro-quota norms are likely to have influenced elite's opinions.

On the other hand, there is the rest of society, where many perhaps have more contact with their *marabout* than their local representative. The population is more separated from the political correctness of the parliament. One can expect symbolic changes to develop slower among these segments of society. However, one can argue that with the parity law, the role of politician is changing and is perhaps brought closer to the population as political parties expand their pool of eligible political candidates.

As suggested by the political elites in the National Assembly, and by some theory, substantive representation may matter for outcomes in symbolic representation (Beaman, Pande, and Cirone 2012; Yoon 2011). Many of the newly elected women are new to legislative politics. For instance, one respondent regarded herself as an apprentice rather than a role model (Dionne, interview, November 2015). Before the translation service was installed, those who do not speak French have not been able to fully participate in politics. Besides, women in politics seem to have more to prove than men as “outsiders”. In other words, even though the women in parliament claimed to represent other women, this is not necessarily reflected in what they have accomplished in parliament so far. More women do not instantly contribute to more substantive representation. In fact, drawing on Bratton (2005), the pioneer women parliamentarians might have seen their role as “acting for” other women as Senegalese women's only chance of being represented. Further, where women make up a minority in predominantly male groups, they become more visible which “creates intense performance pressures” (Crowley 2004, 112). After all, the parity law was passed in a parliament with few women. However, if positive attitudes toward women as political leaders depend on their accomplishment in parliament, one can expect that this will improve in the future. There is a political will present in parliament to facilitate the substantive contribution of the newly entered women, exemplified by the translation service and the recently voted law to apply parity on all levels within the National Assembly (Kane, interview, November 2015).

# 7 Conclusion

This thesis has been a case study of the Senegalese parity law and its symbolic effects. The process has been driven by a motivation to investigate how such a radical gender quota law can develop under what appears to be unlikely conditions. In addition, I have been interested in exploring the power of affirmative action beyond numbers. Many scholars attribute the increased presence of women in African legislatures to the end of violent conflict. However, this study has shown how highly progressive changes in electoral systems can take place in the absence of historical junctures like civil wars. I have also focused on how gender quotas can be adopted in a patriarchal context where Islam plays an important role in everyday life. Through interviews with parliamentarians who sat in the Senegalese National Assembly before and after the dramatic influx of women to parliament, I have investigated the theoretical relationship between the descriptive and symbolic representation of women. The focus has also been on the effects of the parity law on ordinary citizens. One of the purposes of this thesis has been to contribute to the still emerging field of study that is women's symbolic representation. I present the main findings and implications of this study below, as well as topics for future research.

## 7.1 Main findings

The Senegalese parity law is a result of several interactive factors. A strong women's movement led by COSEF initiated the law, and legitimized parity partially based on expectations of its effects on women's symbolic representation. The women's movement found an ally in former president Wade. He may have supported parity in order to gain electoral support from the female electorate, or based on his own ideological convictions. Nevertheless, the timing of the adoption of the parity law coincided with waning popular support for president Wade. The role of the international community was also of vital importance. COSEF played on Wade's commitments to gender representation through the ratification of international protocols and his commitments taken in the African Union and elsewhere. Furthermore, the international community views gender quotas as a modern and democratic trait. Since Senegal remains dependent on foreign aid, it is likely that a favourable international climate gave the women's movement extra leverage to their demands for parity. Executive-legislative relations can help explain why a male-dominated parliament passed the law: the presidency is strong, and the National Assembly rarely votes down the president's

proposals. In addition, the party representatives in COSEF spent much time lobbying within the National Assembly, which might have increased support for parity. Also of importance is the choice of words: “parity” may have facilitated quota adoption, since “quotas” remain a controversial concept. I have not found any signs of strong religious counter-mobilization against parity adoption. I attribute this to the waning political power of the marabouts and the duality of the Senegalese society. However, the case of Touba indicates that religious elites still hold enough powers to stop the parity law from being implemented.

As for the symbolic representation of women, COSEF’s expectations have been met to a certain degree. However, tracing effects within the National Assembly is difficult, and largely depends on the operationalization of symbolic representation. Reports of better gender relations between male and female parliamentarians and a broader perspective on who should be represented indicate that positive changes in women’s symbolic representation have taken place. However, discussions of women’s competences, unbalanced delegation of posts and a lack of internalization of gender equality norms suggest no symbolic effects. Among ordinary citizens outside the National Assembly, the parity law have led to a polarization of opinions along gender lines. Instead of turning opinions around, there has been a reinforcement of opinions; men favour male politicians more than before, while women believe more strongly in female political leadership. It is perhaps not surprising that people react differently to gender quotas. For women, parity may signal increased possibilities to access political life, while for previously privileged men parity limits this access. In other words, how people react to quotas has consequences for the symbolic effects of more women in parliaments.

## **7.2 Implications of the study**

This case study focuses on explanatory richness over generalizability. However, it can contribute with some theoretical insights concerning gender quotas and its causes and effects.

First of all, this thesis provides an analytical framework for the further study of symbolic representation that has previously been lacking in the literature. In this still emerging research field, the need for a standard is vital in order to be able to compare across cases and thus develop more knowledge about the subject. I have developed the following indicators for measuring changes in women’s representation: changes in gender relations in parliament, discussions of female parliamentarian’s competences, delegation of posts within the

parliament, perspectives on who should be represented and legitimization of gender quotas among parliamentarians.

Secondly, much of the literature on women's representation in Africa has focused on the explanatory power of a post-conflict context. During war, gender roles are turned upside-down, and in the political vacuum that often follows conflict, women's movement can push for political measures like gender quotas. My study of Senegal shows how highly radical reforms to increase women's representation can be adopted in a stable and peaceful setting where there has been no historical juncture.

In addition, this in-depth study of Muslim-majority country shows the importance of case studies in understanding causal relationships. Patterns are rapidly changing in many African Muslim states with regards to women's legislative representation. Tanzania, Mauritania, Eritrea, Sudan, Niger and Somalia all have significant Muslim populations *and* have adopted gender quotas (Tripp 2013). There is thus a need for in-depth studies that aims at comprehending the relationship between Islam and women's representation in different contexts.

Another aspect highlighted in this thesis is the importance of *framing*. By borrowing the parity-concept from its former colonizers, COSEF seem to have avoided stark opposition on the political scene since "quotas" remain a highly controversial concept. However, in the case of Senegal, the concept of parity does not seem to have been successfully transmitted to the population. Instead, it has taken on a new negative meaning among parts of the rural population.

### **7.3 Limitations and further research**

This thesis hypothesizes that political actions matters for how female politicians are perceived, thereby linking substantive representation to symbolic representation. However, this study does not measure substantive representation in any way. It should be a topic for further research to empirically study the relationship between all three forms of representation - descriptive, substantive and symbolic – and how they influence each other.

Furthermore, symbolic representation can be expressed in other ways than the ones I have covered in this thesis. For instance, future research can focus on whether the gender parity law has motivated more women to engage in politics, or if there has been changes in voter turnout. Do the different aspects of symbolic representation follow the same patterns?

Moreover, it is not unlikely that women's presence on different political *levels* matters for symbolic outcomes. For instance, women in local legislative bodies are perhaps closer to the people, which may influence perceptions in the local community. On the other side, women in government positions are more frequently portrayed in the media, which may contribute in changing people's perceptions of the political sphere.

In conclusion, the short time span since the adoption of the parity law cannot be ignored. The negative attitudes we have seen from male citizens after the influx of women to parliament may be a reaction to what they perceive as unfair political measures rather than actual opinions of female's capabilities to govern, as is suggested by Clayton (2014). Perhaps with time, we might see positive attitudinal changes among Senegalese men, especially if the women in parliament show "good governance". This may be facilitated by the recently introduced translation service. Furthermore, there seems to be a need for COSEF and other parity supporters to continue raising awareness among the Senegalese population. It remains for future research to follow the evolution of this process.

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# Appendix 1

Table 7: "List of interviews conducted during fieldwork in November 2015, Dakar, Senegal"

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title/occupation</b>	<b>Location</b>
Kine Sarr	Female current parliamentarian	National Assembly, restaurant/lounge
Marfame Kane	Female current parliamentarian	National Assembly, her office
Penda Seck Dieng	Female current parliamentarian	National Assembly, restaurant/lounge
Mame Bayangue Dionne	Female current parliamentarian	National Assembly, her office
Alpha Balde	Male current parliamentarian	National Assembly, restaurant/lounge
Djibril Wade	Male current parliamentarian	National Assembly, restaurant/lounge
Seydou Diallo	Male current parliamentarian	National Assembly, restaurant/lounge
Cheikhou Omar Sy	Male current parliamentarian	National Assembly, his office
Néné Marîames Kane	Female former parliamentarian	Her home
Ndeye Fatou Touré	Female former parliamentarian & lawyer	Her office
Mame Boussou Samb Dia	Female former parliamentarian & COSEF-member	Her office
Soleymane Amandigüe Diedhiou	Male former parliamentarian	In a restaurant
Abdou Sané	Male former parliamentarian & member of the Observatory for Parity	In a hospital
Ndéye Diop	Works at the Secretary of Debate in the National Assembly	National Assembly, her office
Fatou Kiné Camara	Lawyer, member of Association of Senegalese Jurists	Interview conducted by mail
Djibril Ka	Works for the Quaestor of the National Assembly	National Assembly, his office
Baba Fall	Works at the Institute for Human Rights and Peace, Cheikh Anta Diop University	Cheikh Anta Diop University
Ricardo Cartelette	Researcher in law/anthropology	Cheikh Anta Diop University
Fatou Kiné Diop	President of COSEF and the Observatory for Parity	Her office



# Appendix 2

## INTERVIEW GUIDES

### 1. The quota process

*Interviewees: Academics, civil society, civil service*

- Who were the initiators of the parity law?
- What other groups supported this initiative?
- Why did they want to introduce parity?
- How did these actors work to obtain parity? Can you describe the process?
- Where were there opponents to the quota introduction? Who?
- What arguments were used against the quota law?
- How is the support of the parity law among the population?
- In your opinion, is it necessary to have quotas in Senegal today? Why/ why not?
- What consequences do you actually see from the quota law today?
- In your opinion, what are the most important consequences of the increase of women to parliament?
  - a) The women can work for women's interests in politics
  - b) The women can be role models for other women in Senegal
- Who are the main promoters, and the main opponents to the Parity law today?
- What is the main discussion concerning parity today?

### 2. Symbolic representation for women

*Interviewees: Current and previous female members of parliament*

- What is your main issue with regards to politics?
- What is the most important thing you have accomplished this far in the National Assembly?
- What is your biggest challenge in the National Assembly?
- What is your most important role as a parliamentarian?
- Who do you represent first and foremost?

- For you as a woman, what is your biggest task/contribution by being present in the National Assembly?
- Do you regard yourself as a model? For whom? What do you do to be a good role model?
- Have you ever given a speech before the parliament? What did you talk about? Can you describe the response afterwards? Where there any differences in how the men and women reacted?
- In your opinion, are there any differences in how women and men are treated in the assembly? Examples?
- What do you think about the parity law?
- In your opinion, what are the most important consequences of the increase of women to parliament?
  - a) The women can work for women's interests in politics
  - b) The women can be role models for other women in Senegal
- What consequences do you actually see from the augmentation of women today?
- Have the relationship between men and women parliamentarians changed since the quotas were introduced?
- What does parity mean to you?

### **3. Symbolic representation for men**

*Interviewees: Current and previous male members of parliament*

- What is your main issue with regards to politics?
- What is the most important thing you have accomplished this far in the National Assembly?
- What is your biggest challenge in the National Assembly?
- What is your most important role as a parliamentarian?
- Who do you represent first and foremost?
- Have you ever given a speech before the parliament? What did you talk about? Can you describe the response afterwards? Where there any differences in how the men and women reacted?
- What do you think about the parity law?
- How have you noticed the increase of women to the parliament?

- How do they contribute?
- Do you think that women have other types of qualifications than men?
- Is there any difference in how men and women are treated in the parliament? Examples?
- What do you think about women as political leaders?
- In your opinion, what are the most important consequences of the increase of women to parliament?
  - a) The women can work for women's interests in politics
  - b) The women can be role models for other women in Senegal
- What consequences do you actually see from the augmentation of women today?
- Have the relationship between men and women parliamentarians changed since the quotas were introduced?
- What does parity mean to you?

## Appendix 3

Table 8: "Women in African parliaments", IPU 2016

Sub-Saharan African country	Percentage of women in national parliament (lower or single house)
Rwanda	63.8%
Senegal	42.7%
South Africa	42.0%
Namibia	41.3%
Mozambique	39.6%
Ethiopia	38.8%
Angola	36.8%
Burundi	36.4%
Uganda	35.0%
Zimbabwe	31.5%
Cameroon	31.1%
Sudan	30.5%
South Sudan	26.5%
Lesotho	25.0%
Equatorial Guinea	24.0%
Eritrea	22.0%
Guinea	21.9%
Cabo Verde	20.8%
Madagascar	20.5%
Kenya	19.7%
Togo	17.6%
Malawi	16.7%
Chad	14.9%
Gabon	14.2%
Somalia	13.8%
Guinea-Bissau	13.7%
Niger	13.3%
Djibouti	12.7%
Zambia	12.7%
Sierra Leone	12.4%
Mauritius	11.5%
Liberia	11.0%
Ghana	10.9%
Botswana	9.5%
Burkina Faso	9.4%
Gambia	9.4%
Cote d'Ivoire	9.2%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	8.9%
Mali	8.8%

Congo	7.4%
Benin	7.2%
Swaziland	6.2%
Nigeria	5.6%

## Appendix 4

Table 9: "Women in parliaments in Muslim-majority countries", The Pew Forum 2012 & IPU 2016

<b>Muslim majority country</b>	<b>Percentage of women in national parliament (lower or single house)</b>
Senegal	42,7%
Algeria	31,6%
Tunisia	31,3%
Sudan	30,5%
Afghanistan	27,7%
Iraq	26,5%
Kazakhstan	26,2%
Turkmenistan	25,8%
Mauritania	25,2%
United Arab Emirates	22,5%
Guniea	21,9%
Albania	20,7%
Pakistan	20,6%
Bangladesh	20%
Saudi Arabia	19,9%
Kyrgyzstan	19,2%
Tajikistan	19%
Indonesia	17,1%
Morocco	17%
Azerbaijan	16,9%
Libya	16%
Uzbekistan	16%
Chad	14,9%
Egypt	14,9%
Turkey	14,9%
Somalia	13,8%
Niger	13,3%
Djibouti	12,7%
Sierra Leone	12,4%
Syria	12,4%
Jordan	12%
Malaysia	10,4%
Burkina Faso	9,4%
Gambia	9,4%
Mali	8,8%
Bahrain	7,5%
Maldives	5,9%

<b>Iran</b>	3,1%
<b>Lebanon</b>	3,1%
<b>Comoros</b>	3%
<b>Kuwait</b>	1,5%%
<b>Oman</b>	1,2%
<b>Qatar</b>	0
<b>Yemen</b>	0





