



Gender Quotas and Women's Political Empowerment

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Candidate gender quotas

- 100+ countries have adopted quotas for the selection of female political candidates
 - 1930-1980: 10 countries
 - 1980s: 12 countries (20+ total)
 - 1990s: 50+ countries (70+ total)
 - 2000s: 40+ countries (100+ total)

Gender quota policies

■ Reserved Seats

- First appeared in 1930s, but as recently as 2005
- Africa, Asia, and the Middle East

■ Party Quotas

- First adopted in 1970s by left parties in W. Europe
- Many different parties and regions of the world

■ Legislative Quotas

- First appeared in 1990s
- Latin America, Africa, Middle East, and Europe



Why are quotas adopted?

- Mobilization of women's groups
- Strategic calculations of political elites
- Norms of equality and representation
- Pressure from international organizations
- Transnational information sharing



Why do quotas have varied effects?

- Details of the measures
 - Types, requirements, and sanctions
- Institutional frameworks
 - Electoral systems and party systems
- Actors for and against implementation
 - Elites, citizens, courts

What are the broader effects of quotas?

- Descriptive representation
 - Kinds of women elected
- Substantive representation
 - Passage of 'women-friendly' public policy
- Symbolic representation
 - Public attitudes toward women in politics
 - Political engagement of female voters

Preliminary evidence: descriptive representation

- Elite women, party activists, connections to prominent men (Bangladesh)
- Women with less experience (Germany, France)
- Intra-country variations (India)
 - Cities: higher castes, higher education, and higher prestige professions
 - Rural areas: lower castes, landless, illiterate, married, under 40, with no experience

Preliminary evidence: substantive representation

- Quota women are more loyal to party leaders than women who win open seats (UK)
- Quota women act as proxies for men, usually male relatives (India, Pakistan)
- Quotas confer a mandate (Norway, Rwanda)
- Quota women bring new issues and gain confidence over time (Argentina, India)

Preliminary evidence: symbolic representation

- Public attitudes on women in politics:
 - Negative publicity (UK, Kosovo)
 - Positive effects (India; Africa)
- Political efficacy of female voters:
 - No effect on political activities (Mexico)
 - Spur mobilization of women (Costa Rica)
 - More women consider running (Uganda)

Conclusions

- Quotas are a diverse set of measures.
- Quotas can reach the political agenda for many different reasons.
- Quotas can have a variety of effects on the election and empowerment of women.
- *More systematic research is needed on quotas to determine their effects on women as a group.

Conclusions

- Is there a need for gender quotas? – **Yes!**
- However, we need to better understand:
 - Where they come from
 - How they are designed
 - What positive/negative effects they may have
- To ensure that quotas serve women as a group