

The Politics of Group Representation

Quotas for Women and Minorities Worldwide

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In recent years a growing number of countries have established quotas to increase the representation of women and minorities in electoral politics. Policies for women exist in more than one hundred countries. Individual political parties have adopted many of these provisions, but more than half involve legal or constitutional reforms requiring that all parties select a certain proportion of female candidates.¹ Policies for minorities are present in more than thirty countries.² These measures typically set aside seats that other groups are ineligible to contest. Despite parallels in their forms and goals, empirical studies on quotas for each group have developed largely in isolation from one another. The absence of comparative analysis is striking, given that many normative arguments address women and minorities together. Further, scholars often generalize from the experiences of one group to make claims about the other. The intuition behind these analogies is that women and minorities have been similarly excluded based on ascriptive characteristics like sex and ethnicity. Concerned that these dynamics undermine basic democratic values of inclusion, many argue that the participation of these groups should be actively promoted as a means to reverse these historical trends.

This article examines these assumptions to explore their leverage in explaining the quota policies implemented in national parliaments around the world. It begins by outlining three normative arguments to justify such measures, which are transformed into three hypotheses for empirical investigation: (1) both women and minorities will receive representational guarantees, (2) women or minorities will receive guarantees, and (3) women will receive guarantees in some countries, while minorities will receive them in others. The data provide the strongest confirmation for the third hypothesis, but not for the related expectation that women will gain legislative quotas and minorities reserved seats. To better understand the links between identities and measures, a more inductive approach is used to generate a fourth hypothesis: group recognition emerges through active construction of “relevant” political identities.³ To theorize how and why groups receive guarantees when and where they do, the article introduces the concept of “repertoires” of group representation, which it argues have two sources—historical and transnational influences. After reviewing the evidence for such repertoires, the four hypotheses are assessed through an examination of four cases where proposals have

been made for both women and minorities. The article concludes by discussing implications of these findings for future research on the politics of group representation.

Analyzing Group Representation

Normative literature on group recognition centers largely on developing arguments for the increased descriptive representation of marginalized groups, which is attained when elected officials mirror the broad spectrum of ascriptive characteristics present in the population.⁴ Although some of this work does not address quota policies specifically, but speaks to other mechanisms of group recognition like federalism and group autonomy, most treat women and minorities as facing analogous challenges for increased representation. A closer look at these arguments, however, reveals three distinct approaches to political identities. One emphasizes common features of the experiences of women and minorities, a second recognizes similarities but places identities in a hierarchy of importance, and a third theorizes that they require distinct modes of recognition that lead them to compete for group recognition. While developed with reference to normative standards, these intuitions can be transformed into three hypotheses for empirical examination: (1) women and minorities will both receive quotas, (2) women or minorities will receive quotas, and (3) women will receive quotas in some countries, while minorities will receive them in others.

The Selection Hypothesis Scholars in the first school devise criteria for selecting which groups require improved descriptive representation, focusing on features shared across these groups. In her “theory of fair representation,” Melissa Williams outlines four characteristics that can be used to identify “marginalized ascriptive groups.” These are groups where patterns of inequality are structured along the lines of group membership; membership is not usually experienced as voluntary; membership is not usually experienced as mutable; and negative meanings are assigned to group identity by the broader society.⁵ By way of illustration, she states, “In the United States African Americans and women offer paradigmatic examples of historically marginalized ascriptive groups...if *any* marginalized groups have strong moral claims for recognition, these two groups must be among them.”⁶ While acknowledging that women and minorities have experienced distinct histories of exclusion, she views sex and race as presenting analogous challenges to liberal theories of political representation.

Iris Marion Young makes similar points. She contends that “all oppressed people suffer some inhibition in their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings,” groups which include “women, Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking Americans, American Indians, Jews, lesbians, gay men, Arabs, Asians, old people, working-class people, and the physically and mentally disabled.”⁷ Advocating a more comprehensive view of oppression, she argues that “many different groups must be said to be oppressed in our society, and [thus]...no single form of oppression can be assigned causal or moral primacy.”⁸

All the same, she recognizes that all groups do not experience "oppression" in the same way, but instead through various "faces" that include exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. For Young, the presence of at least one of these conditions suffices for calling a group "oppressed," and thus in need of improved group representation. Therefore, despite her focus on the multifaceted nature of oppression, she treats these groups as identities along a continuum of exclusion that share common challenges in their efforts to attain greater voice in political processes.

The selection approach thus focuses on developing a common set of criteria for determining which groups require increased representation. These arguments can be translated into the expectation that, where groups are recognized, both women and minorities will receive quotas. At first glance, this hypothesis appears to be confirmed. Many of the groups singled out by these authors are among those guaranteed representation around the world. These include identities based on sex, language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, caste, age, expatriation, profession, domicile, and ability (see Tables 1 and 2). Upon further inspection, however, there are few countries where the same range of groups is recognized. Further, despite beliefs about commonalities among groups, most countries recognize *either* women *or* minorities. Only sixteen have enacted measures guaranteeing representation for both groups. It is more the exception than the rule that women and minorities are seen as reflecting similar criteria for group representation.

The Hierarchy Hypothesis A second group of theorists acknowledges similarities, but implicitly or explicitly prioritizes one group over the other. Will Kymlicka offers one example of this approach. Initially, he states that "an adequate theory of the rights of cultural minorities must...be compatible with the just demands of disadvantaged social groups," including "women, gays and lesbians, and the disabled."⁹ However, he goes on to qualify this point by noting that "there is a sense in which gays and lesbians, women, and the disabled form separate cultures within the larger society. But this is very different from the sense in which the Quebecois form a separate culture within Canada."¹⁰ The important distinction for Kymlicka is between national minorities and ethnic groups. While he acknowledges that members of "new social movements" are often marginalized in their own national societies or ethnic groups, he suggests that closer examination of minority cultures can shed light on the plight of these groups.

The hierarchy perspective thus postulates a ranking of political cleavages, which makes some groups more likely than others to gain representational guarantees. Reformulated as a hypothesis, this approach suggests that either women or minorities will receive quotas. This intuition is borne out by the evidence, but not in the way that advocates might expect. In most instances, one identity is recognized to the exclusion of the other. However, the group in question varies significantly across cases. Thirty-four countries make national-level provisions only to women, while twenty-one have passed policies applying only to minorities. In addition, sixteen employ measures for both groups. Together, these patterns undermine the argument that some identities are more likely to be recognized than others.

Table 1 State-Mandated Quotas for Women in Single or Lower House of Parliament (as of December 2008)

Country	Quota Level and Type	Female MPs
Afghanistan	27% RS	28% (2005)
Angola	30% LQ	37% (2008)
Argentina	30% LQ	40% (2007)
Armenia	15% LQ	8% (2007)
Bangladesh	13% RS	19% (2008)
Belgium	50% LQ	35% (2007)
Bolivia	30% LQ	17% (2005)
Bosnia-Herzegovina	33% LQ	12% (2006)
Brazil	25% LQ	9% (2006)
Burkina Faso	6% RS	15% (2007)
Burundi	30% LQ	31% (2005)
China	22% LQ	21% (2008)
Costa Rica	40% LQ	37% (2006)
Djibouti	10% RS	14% (2008)
Dominican Republic	33% LQ	20% (2006)
Ecuador	30% LQ	28% (2008)
Eritrea	30% RS	22% (1994)
France	50% LQ	18% (2007)
Guyana	33% LQ	30% (2006)
Honduras	30% LQ	23% (2005)
Indonesia	30% LQ	12% (2004)
Iraq	25% LQ	26% (2005)
Jordan	5% RS	6% (2007)
Kenya	3% RS	10% (2007)
Kyrgyzstan	30% LQ	26% (2007)
Liberia	30% LQ	13% (2005)
Macedonia	30% LQ	28% (2008)
Mauritania	30-50% LQ	22% (2006)
Mexico	30% LQ	23% (2006)
Morocco	9% RS	11% (2007)
Nepal	33% LQ	33% (2008)
Niger	10% LQ	12% (2004)
North Korea	20% LQ	16% (2009)
Pakistan	18% RS	23% (2008)
Palestinian Authority*	20% LQ	Unknown
Panama	30% LQ	17% (2004)
Paraguay	20% LQ	13% (2008)
Peru	30% LQ	28% (2006)
Philippines	1% RS	21% (2007)
Portugal	33% LQ	28% (2005)
Rwanda	30% RS	56% (2008)
Serbia	30% LQ	22% (2008)
Somalia	12% RS	8% (2004)
South Korea	50% LQ	14% (2008)
Spain	40% LQ	36% (2008)
Sudan	13% RS	18% (2005)
Taiwan*	10-25% RS	Unknown
Tanzania	30% RS	30% (2005)
Tibetan Government in Exile*	13% RS	Unknown
Uganda	18% RS	31% (2006)
Uzbekistan	30% LQ	18% (2004)

*Non-independent territory.

Table 2 State-Mandated Quotas for Minorities in Single or Lower House of Parliament (as of December 2008)

Country	Quota Level and Type	Group
Afghanistan	4% RS	Kuchi nomads
Belgium	58% RS	Flemish speakers**
	41% RS	French speakers**
	1% RS	German speakers**
Bhutan	7% RS	Buddhist monks
Bosnia-Herzegovina	33% RS	Bosniacs**
	33% RS	Croats**
	33% RS	Serbs**
Burundi	58% RS	Hutus
	39% RS	Tutsis
	3% RS	Twa
	50% RS	Hutus**
	50% RS	Tutsis**
Cape Verde	8% RS	Expatriates
China	15% RS	Minority nationalities
Colombia	3% RS	Indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, and Colombians abroad
	2% RS	Indigenous peoples**
Croatia	No more than 9% RS	Croat diaspora
	<1% RS	Czech/Slovaks
	<1% RS	Hungarians
	<1% RS	Italians
	<1% RS	Ruthenian/Ukrainian/German/Austrian
	<1% RS	Serbs
Ethiopia	19% RS	Minorities**
Fiji	32% RS	Indigenous population
	27% RS	Indians
	1% RS	Rotumans
France	4% RS	Expatriates**
India	14% RS	Scheduled Castes
	8% RS	Scheduled Tribes
	<1% RS	Anglo-Indians
	2% RS	Zorastrians, Jews, and Christians
Iran	11% RS	Christians
Italy	2%	Expatriates***
Jordan	4% RS	Circassians and Chechens
	8% RS	Bedouins
Kosovo*	8% RS	Serbs
	8% RS	Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Bosniac, Turkish, and Gorani
Lebanon	50% RS	Christians
	50% RS	Muslims
Mauritius	11% RS	'Best loser' ethnic balancing
Montenegro	6% RS	Albanians
Mozambique	<1% RS	Expatriates
New Zealand	5% RS	Maori
Niger	10% RS	Tuareg
Pakistan	3% RS	Hindus
	3% RS	Christians
	<1% RS	Ahmadis/Parsees
	<1% RS	Other religious minorities

Table 2 continued

Country	Quota Level and Type	Group
Palestinian Authority*	7% RS	Christians
	1% RS	Samaritans
Poland	<1% RS	Germans
Portugal	2% RS	Expatriates
Romania	4% RS	Small minorities
Rwanda	1% RS	Youth
	8% RS	Disabled
	8% RS	'Historically marginalized'***
	31% RS	Universities**
Samoa	4% RS	Part- and non-Samoans
Singapore	33% LQ	Malay, Indians, or other minorities
Slovenia	1% RS	Hungarians
	1% RS	Italians
Taiwan*	3% RS	Aboriginal people
Tanzania	19% RS	Zanzibaris
Tibetan Government in Exile*	7% RS	Tibetan diaspora
Uganda	2% RS	Organized labor
	2% RS	Disabled
	2% RS	Youth
	3% RS	Army
Venezuela	2% RS	Indigenous population

*Non-independent territory.

**Upper house.

***Both houses.

The Competition Hypothesis A final set of scholars addresses multiple groups with the intention of exploring differences among these identities that lead them to compete for recognition. At the heart of these arguments is the notion that women and minorities may pose related but separate challenges to state integration. Anne Phillips attributes the trend of women’s promotion through party quotas and minorities through the redrawing of electoral districts to the fact that women are distributed across the population, while minority groups are often geographically concentrated.¹¹ These strategies are not necessarily complementary. Phillips emphasizes that “equality does *not* require proportionality...[the] case for a different system of representation depends on more historically specific analysis of the existing arrangements for representation and the existing conditions of political exclusion.”¹² For Jane Mansbridge, such measures can be justified in only four situations: contexts of group mistrust, uncrystallized interests, history suggesting inability to rule, and low de facto legitimacy. Which identities are recognized is an open question that must be resolved on a case-by-case basis.¹³

Consequently, the competition approach theorizes that differing historical grounds for exclusion cause groups to compete for representation. Variations in the nature of sex and ethnicity as cleavages in turn lead women and minorities to demand distinct mechanisms for improving their political presence.¹⁴ Framed in general terms, this perspective anticipates that women will receive quotas in some countries, while minorities will receive them in others. Moreover, where these measures appear, they will take dif-

ferent forms. The evidence largely confirms this hypothesis. Thirty-four countries have passed policies only for women, while twenty-one have approved them only for minorities and sixteen have made provisions for both groups. Yet, the data do not support the second half of the argument. While most policies for women entail legislative quotas, and those for minorities tend to involve reserved seats, women have been granted reserved seats in nineteen countries, while minorities have received national-level legislative quotas in at least one, in addition to local level quotas in others. Further, where both women and minorities are guaranteed representation, measures are distinct in eight countries, but similar in eight. These patterns appear to be driven by variations in policies for women, which correlate highly with world region.

Politicizing Group Representation

While the primary purpose of the literature on group recognition is to develop normative standards, it often informs—and is informed by—evidence from individual cases. Yet, the three hypotheses derived from this work do not match empirical patterns of quota adoption. To gain better leverage, this article substitutes an inductive approach to map and compare quota policies around the globe in order to theorize why, when, and where groups receive quotas. This data points to an alternative hypothesis: group recognition emerges via the construction of “relevant” political identities. This perspective highlights the politically contested origins behind the identities that are recognized, as well as how and when their representation is guaranteed.

The argument that group recognition emerges in the course of political debate, or as a result of political calculations, has been recognized by some scholars. Daniel Posner finds that the salience of ethnicity increases when it can be mobilized by elites to gain electoral support.¹⁵ Work on affirmative action outside electoral politics explains the adoption of such measures in terms of the need to align groups in support of a particular regime,¹⁶ or emphasize a country’s “highest ideals” and “most significant identities.”¹⁷ Given these political motivations, the groups that are recognized can be expected to, and do, vary significantly across states. These dynamics are not always evident when scholars analyze events in single countries, but become apparent when developments across several countries are compared.

A comparative lens suggests that there is no “right remedy” for group recognition.¹⁸ Patterns in guarantees signal another possibility: nation- and region-specific repertoires of group representation. In social movement research, “repertoires” refer to “a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice,” which constitute “the established ways in which pairs of actors make and receive claims bearing on each other’s interests.”¹⁹ They thus comprise a set of measures that actors employ to make their actions understood in relation to already legitimized political practices. Because debates over group representation are embedded in national contexts, prevailing repertoires are likely to guide decision-making with regard to the measures that are adopted, or not, in the course of recognition. Patterns

in the adoption of guarantees for both women and minorities suggest that these repertoires have two sources: historical practices and transnational influences.

Repertoires for Representing Women Policies to promote women have been implemented in more than one hundred countries, but exist at the statutory level in fifty states. A survey reveals no systematic patterns in terms of their adoption, as they appear in countries with varied institutional, social, economic, and cultural characteristics.²⁰ These measures take three forms—reserved seats, party quotas, and legislative quotas—and vary with regard to how they promote women’s access, as well as where they appear geographically. Reserved seats set aside places for women that men are ineligible to contest. This proportion is usually very low, often less than 10 percent, although recent policies reserve as many 30 percent of all seats for women. These measures are concentrated in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Party quotas, in contrast, are voluntary pledges by parties to include a specific percentage of women. They generally mandate a much higher proportion, usually between 25 and 50 percent, but apply to slates of candidates rather than those elected. These quotas are most prevalent in Europe. Legislative quotas, finally, are measures passed by national parliaments requiring that all parties nominate a certain percentage of women, usually between 25 and 50 percent. These quotas are particularly dominant in Latin America, but are also found in Africa and Europe.²¹ Because the majority of gender quotas apply to the proportion of candidates on party slates, their application has not led to uniform change. Some countries witness increases, while others see modest shifts or even setbacks in the numbers of women elected.²²

Closer examination of the types of policies adopted, as well as where they appear, thus provides initial support for repertoires of group representation. In addition, their dates of adoption reveal strong clustering over time. Ten states established policies for women between 1930 and 1980, followed by twelve countries in the 1980s. In the 1990s, however, measures for women appeared in more than fifty countries, which have been joined by over forty more since 2000.²³ Intersecting with these trends, specific policies have been prevalent at distinct moments in time. Reserved seats were the dominant quota type between 1930 and 1970. In comparison, party quotas first appeared in the early 1970s, but grew more widespread in the 1980s and 1990s. Legislative quotas emerged first in the 1990s, but have gained momentum and constitute the majority of quotas adopted today. At the macrolevel, these regional and temporal patterns point to the possibility of learning within and across national borders.

A move to the microlevel offers more concrete evidence for historical and transnational repertoires. The importance of historical practices can be seen in several instances of quota reform. One relates to the idiosyncratic case of colonialism, secession, and independence in South Asia. During British rule, the Government of India Act reserved seats in the federal legislature for fifteen groups.²⁴ Although the Indian National Congress largely eliminated reserved seats following independence, after partition seats were reserved for women in Pakistan that exist to the present day. Similarly, upon independence from Pakistan, seats were reserved for women in Bangladesh.²⁵

Other examples of historical repertoires emerge in cases where women and minorities receive guarantees and the measures used for one group are simply extended to another. Returning to India, the only groups to receive quotas after independence were the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Traditionally the most marginalized, these groups were allocated reserved seats according to their population in the various states. When local government structures were reformed in the 1990s, identical provisions were extended to women. At the national level, debates on women's representation have also revolved around reserved seats, despite calls to consider other quota types.²⁶ Similar dynamics have taken place in reverse in the United Kingdom. In 1993 the Labour Party instituted a policy of all-women shortlists, mandating that final lists of candidates in some districts consist entirely of women.²⁷ When Labour later decided to promote black and minority ethnic candidates, they borrowed from existing mechanisms and implemented all-black shortlists in specified electoral districts.

Further evidence of within-country innovation and learning can be seen in instances of party reform. In many Western European countries, the adoption of quotas by one party has precipitated their adoption by other parties. Early adopters tend to be small, new-left parties, leading center-left and sometimes center-right parties to follow suit. In Germany the newly formed Green Party applied a 50 percent quota in 1983, requiring its lists to alternate between women and men. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), concerned about possible erosion in electoral support, responded by adopting its own 25 percent quota in 1990, which it subsequently raised to 33 percent in 1994 and 40 percent in 1998. This inspired the SPD's main rival, the Christian Democratic Union, to adopt its own 33 percent policy for party lists in 1996.²⁸ Together, these patterns point to national repertoires, developed over time, that determine how representation is guaranteed within specific countries. While there are elements of contingency in the initial decisions to create these policies, the shape of later measures appears to follow from earlier choices made by political actors.

There is even greater evidence for transnational repertoires, however, when it comes to gender quotas. First, most policies call for women to occupy 30 percent of seats or candidate slots. This trend has multiple sources, including borrowing from countries with 30 percent policies and adhering to 30 percent recommendations by international organizations.²⁹ Second, there is a clear trend in the timing of quota adoption: more than three-quarters of these measures have been proposed in the last fifteen years. Closer examination of individual cases uncovers mechanisms of diffusion linked to international organizations, cross-border contacts among civil society groups, and emulation of policies in neighboring countries. Beyond international declarations, international actors have played a direct role in pressing for gender quotas in some post-conflict societies. In Kosovo the UN Interim Administrative Mission and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) imposed a 30 percent legislative quota for local and national elections in 2000, despite international and local opposition.³⁰ In Afghanistan the UN Special Mission and the U.S. government pressed for the inclusion of women in the new government and parliament, following the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.

In other cases, the process of quota diffusion is the result of information sharing across borders. The most direct route is through individual connections: Anwar Sadat introduced reserved seats for women in Egypt in 1979 following a trip by his wife to Sudan, where a quota had been in effect for several years.³¹ More commonly, women's organizations in countries with similar languages have shared information on quotas across national borders, as have women's groups in parties with similar ideologies. Argentine women first learned about quotas through contacts with women inside the Spanish Socialist Party, where party quotas were adopted in the late 1980s, and women in Costa Rica, who were mobilizing to include a quota in the Bill on Real Equality between Women and Men.³² Argentina passed a quota law in 1991 and, following the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women, became a model within the region and the subject of meetings among Latin American female politicians in 1995.³³ This led to the adoption of similar quota laws in fourteen Latin American countries in 1996, 1997, and 2000. Similarly, the spread of party quotas across Europe emerged in part from connections among socialist parties within the region. According to observers, quotas in the Norwegian Labour Party were influential in the adoption of measures by the German SPD,³⁴ while the use of quotas in socialist parties in Europe shaped the decision of the British Labour Party to pass all-women shortlists.³⁵ European socialists, in turn, mobilized within the Socialist International for quota adoption by its affiliates in countries around the world.

Repertoires for Representing Minorities Measures for minorities exist in nearly forty countries and apply to a wide array of groups. Even more than with women, who is recognized depends largely on the political context. While most policies are based on ethnic divides, the identities in question vary enormously across cases. In some countries, they are classified by race, as in Latin America and Oceania where seats are allocated to indigenous peoples.³⁶ In others, they are based on nationality, as in Eastern Europe where laws often ensure representation for small national communities.³⁷ Further groups that receive guarantees are defined by religion, language, and class. In several Middle Eastern states, provisions are made to minority religions.³⁸ Belgium divides legislative seats among linguistic groups,³⁹ while India allocates seats for members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes.⁴⁰ Finally, several regimes reserve seats for groups based on age, ability, and occupation. In Rwanda, the new constitution approved in 2003 guarantees seats for youth, the physically disabled, and university professors.⁴¹ As reserved seats, these measures address the number of individuals elected, transforming them into stronger guarantees of presence than most quotas for women.

A more detailed look at the aims of these policies, as well as where and when they appear, is suggestive of broad trends in repertoires of minority representation. Reserved seats for minorities tend to have one of two goals: protection or power-sharing. Protection entails allocating seats to groups which constitute a relatively small contingent within the population, including indigenous peoples, members of minority religions and nationalities, and class- or caste-based groups. These provisions are generally mini-

mal, involving as little as 1 or 2 percent of all seats.⁴² In contrast, power-sharing arrangements involve dividing up most or all seats in the legislature between two or more factions, defined by ethnicity, religion, or language. These policies entail a higher proportion of seats, often as much as 25 to 70 percent, and exist in most regions, including Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific. While distinct, the two categories of measures have appeared in similar waves. They first became popular in the years following World War II and were later “rediscovered” in the 1990s.⁴³ These patterns offer initial evidence for global and regional repertoires of representation.

Individual cases, in turn, lend more tangible support for the notion of region- and situation-specific repertoires. Historical influences are more evident than transnational effects, but these vary to some degree across the two categories of minority provisions. In instances of protection, the aim is often to compensate for past oppression. Reserving seats in these cases typically overrepresents the minority in question, whether indigenous peoples, racial minorities, or members of nondominant nationalities.⁴⁴ Historical grounds often trump other considerations. In Slovenia two seats in the national assembly are reserved for Hungarians and Italians, but not Serbs or Croats, who comprise a significantly larger percentage of the population. The official rationale for excluding the latter is that they are immigrants who came for economic reasons, while Italians and Hungarians are viewed as native Slovenians.⁴⁵ More commonly, these measures are a legacy of colonialism. Communal representation was particularly central to the British colonial system. Most former colonies abandoned these policies, but several retained reserved seats upon independence. In New Zealand four seats were set aside for Maoris, an indigenous group, in 1867 during the period of British rule. These measures were revised and renewed a number of times over the course of the next century, even as the country gained independence. Indeed, reforms to the Electoral Act in 1993 increased rather than decreased the number of seats, which now stand at seven, determined by the population who self-identify as Maori.⁴⁶ In other cases reserved seats are used to protect the interests of the former colonizers who remain in the territory following independence. Laws in Sri Lanka, India, Samoa, Mauritius, and Zimbabwe have made provisions for descendants of European or Asian colonists.⁴⁷

In cases of power-sharing, the goal is to ensure democratic stability in a divided society.⁴⁸ Reserving seats grants group members a guaranteed voice in the political system as a means for preventing their defection which, it is feared, might provoke collapse of the state.⁴⁹ In the wake of conflict, several countries have devised power-sharing provisions based on historical practices of group representation. Ending decades of civil war in Lebanon, the Taif Agreement of 1989 made explicit reference to principles of power-sharing that had been established in the National Pact of 1943.⁵⁰ The National Pact was an unwritten agreement that laid the foundations of Lebanon as a multiconfessional state by designating that the President of the Republic be a Maronite, the President of the Council of Ministers a Sunni, and the President of the National Assembly a Shi'a. It also provided for members of parliament to be in a ratio of six to five for Christians and Muslims. The Taif Agreement amended the constitution to reduce the power of the Maronite president and establish an equal parliamentary ratio. Intended

as a mechanism of national reconciliation, the constitution provides for these seats to be filled by eleven religious confessions in relation to their share of the population.

While these patterns suggest that minority guarantees are historically specific, there is also evidence of transnational repertoires. Indeed, a global view points to a growing international norm in favor of reserved seats. While reserved seats were treated as idiosyncratic solutions to the problem of governing multicultural societies, “at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the attitude toward reserved communal seats and special mechanisms has swung to a point where they are considered signs of liberal progressiveness.”⁵¹ Promoting protection measures, for example, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities made a speech in 1999, largely in reaction to the situation in the former Yugoslavia, in which he asserted that “states should ensure that opportunities exist for minorities to have an effective voice at the level of the central government,” through “special arrangements” like reserved seats in “one or both chambers of parliament.”⁵² More evidence of diffusion can be seen in the case of indigenous rights in Latin America, where countries expanded these rights as they were adopted in neighboring countries. After Colombia passed a significant set of indigenous constitutional rights, similar reforms appeared in Bolivia, Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela.⁵³

Power-sharing provisions provide even greater evidence of international pressure and the role of individual policy entrepreneurs. Many of these measures are rooted, at least historically, in earlier models of compromise known as “consociationalism.” In these regimes, no group is large enough to be the dominant majority and cooperation among groups is ensured through a variety of measures, mainly through consultation among the elites of each of the major groups, but also through mechanisms that facilitate group participation.⁵⁴ In Switzerland, for example, these arrangements include a strong commitment to the autonomy of the cantons and a collective head of state. This Federal Council consists of seven members, selected according to the “magic formula” of two members each from three parties and one member from a fourth party. These and other mechanisms facilitate the inclusion of a wide range of groups, including Protestants and Catholics, as well as French-, German-, Italian-, and Romansch-speaking Swiss.⁵⁵

Although consociationalism was initially a descriptive theory of democratic stability in Western Europe, it developed over time into a more prescriptive theory of conflict resolution.⁵⁶ Scholars like Arend Lijphart point to societies where they believe power-sharing has reduced ethnic conflict, including Cyprus, Lebanon, and Malaysia, and have actively promoted consociationalism in countries like South Africa. Many of these ideas have been taken up and promoted by international actors, such as the Carnegie Corporation, the OSCE, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. They have also been influential among actors on the ground. In the former Soviet Union, Tatars argued that such policies would reduce conflict with Russians and Ukrainians in the Crimea, while in Moldova elites agreed in 1994 that consociationalism was the best solution to reduce tensions among Russians, Gagauz, and Moldovans.⁵⁷ The influence of these models is evident in the fact that nearly all negotiated civil war settlements today include some form of power-sharing arrangement.⁵⁸ Notable examples include the

interim constitution in South Africa, the Dayton Accords in Bosnia, the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, and the transitional law in Iraq.

The force of ideas is not the only reason that power-sharing is now a dominant repertoire in post-conflict negotiations, however. In several instances, international pressure has played a key role. Power-sharing solutions may appear especially attractive to parties if the agreement offers important side benefits, like foreign aid or international legitimacy, which are jeopardized if a settlement is not reached.⁵⁹ In Angola these concerns led the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola to enter power-sharing negotiations in 1994 with the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, despite the fact that the rebels were retreating. Similarly, the African National Congress reportedly tolerated power-sharing in the post-apartheid transition in South Africa because it added legitimacy and stability to the political process and helped garner support from whites.⁶⁰ Pressure from international actors may also intersect with historical repertoires of representation: since 1985, a series of UN Secretary-Generals have made proposals for a unified Cyprus that strongly resemble the basic power-sharing features of the 1960 constitution.⁶¹

Mapping Group Representation

Broad trends in the guarantees made to women and minorities around the globe thus do not conform to the three hypotheses implicit in the normative literature on group representation that informs a great deal of empirical research. Rather, when viewed more inductively, the data point to the presence of both historical and transnational repertoires of representation, which shape which groups are recognized and how and when their representation is guaranteed. To further explore these points, as well as relations between guarantees, four countries are examined where proposals for legal provisions have been made for both women and minorities. The choice of cases where demands have been resolved in distinct ways offers a means to juxtapose the relative leverage afforded by the four hypotheses. Viewed separately, each case lends support to one of the three traditional intuitions: selection in Rwanda, hierarchy in Belgium, and competition in India and Iraq. On their own, each set of debates suggests very different conclusions regarding the nature of sex, language, caste, religion, age, profession, and ability as political identities. Comparing them, however, exposes the contingent nature of these solutions as the product of vivid struggles over which groups should be recognized.

Rwanda: Reserved Seats for Minorities and Quotas and Reserved Seats for Women Rwanda reflects a striking double distinction. It is the country with the most women in parliament and is known for one of the most infamous genocides perpetrated along ethnic lines. Both can be linked back to the Arusha Accords, an internationally backed power-sharing agreement which in 1993 sought to end three years of civil conflict between the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF, an exiled Tutsi guerrilla group) and the Hutu government. Though designed to ensure a lasting

peace, a series of events in 1994 sparked a three-month genocide, during which one million people were killed and another two million made refugees before the RPF gained control.⁶² These events had profound effects on gender relations, as they forced women into new roles as heads of households and economic providers, as well as community leaders and activists.⁶³ In this context, women's networks mobilized for the inclusion of women's concerns in the new constitution.⁶⁴ At the same time, a number of male RPF officials in the transition government expressed strong support for women's representation. Drawing on experiences with reserved seats in Uganda and party quotas in South Africa, as well as the help of the international community,⁶⁵ they instituted an extended system of reserved seats, quotas, and other mechanisms to ensure the representation of women and other marginalized groups.

In the Chamber of Deputies, fifty-three members are elected by direct ballot. The remaining twenty-seven members are reserved for traditionally underrepresented groups—twenty-four women, selected by women's organizations; two young people, elected by the National Youth Council; and one disabled person, chosen by the Federation of Associations of the Disabled. The Senate is composed of twenty-six indirectly elected members—twelve nominated by each of the twelve provinces, four chosen by the parliamentary Forum of Political Parties, eight nominated by the presidents to represent marginalized groups such as the Twa and the disabled, and two put forward by institutions of higher learning. Although there are no seats reserved for women, the constitution mandates that at least 30 percent of Senators be female. These provisions are striking in two ways. First, they identify nearly similar groups as neighboring Uganda, where many of RPF members spent their exile. Since the 1980s, Uganda has reserved seats in parliament for youth, the disabled, organized labor, and the army.⁶⁶ Second, they explicitly ignore ethnicity as a political cleavage, going as far as attempting to reeducate Rwandans to believe that it does not exist.⁶⁷ The experience of genocide, therefore, has removed ethnicity from the agenda in favor of recognizing sex, age, and ability as political identities.

Belgium: Reserved Seats for Minorities and Quotas for Women The Belgian conception of citizenship has long been oriented towards social groups, mainly religious, economic, and linguistic.⁶⁸ Struggles between French- and Flemish-speaking elites in the nineteenth and early twentieth century led to language laws that increased the status of Flemish speakers and later culminated in a bilingual state, divided into two largely monolingual regions and one bilingual region. These linguistic "frontiers" were formally acknowledged in 1962, when they became a template for redrawing local government administrative boundaries.⁶⁹ Subsequent reforms created a federal state structure, based on decentralization and autonomy for these linguistic communities. Constitutional reforms in 1970 created formal power-sharing arrangements obligating the inclusion of equal numbers of French- and Flemish-speaking ministers in government, members of the highest courts, and officers in the upper ranks of the military. The House of Representatives was split into two language groups, who obtained special veto rights in order to prevent the adoption of major decisions against the will of one group. Reforms in 1988

and 1993 extended further autonomy by establishing directly elected regional and communal parliaments.⁷⁰ The Senate was similarly divided according to language groups. Forty-one seats were reserved for Flemish speakers, chosen by a Dutch-speaking electoral college and the Flemish Parliament; twenty-nine seats were designated for French speakers, selected by a French-speaking electoral college and the Parliament of the French Community; and one seat was allocated for German speakers, appointed by the Parliament of the German-speaking Community.

The first quotas for women were adopted by various political parties in the 1980s and 1990s. At the initiative of the government, legislative quotas were passed by parliament in 1994, mandating that women comprise at least 33 percent of all electoral lists. After the passage of a new law on equality, parliament raised the quota to 50 percent in 2002.⁷¹ The main point of contention in these debates was whether sex was a category of representation on par with linguistic identities. Aware that even those opposed to quotas for women accepted the idea of proportionality, advocates stressed that balanced representation of key social groups was an essential legitimizing feature of the political system.⁷² These discussions led to extensive bargaining over the form that such quotas might take. The governing parties agreed to quotas for women, but made them distinct from those for linguistic groups. Gender quotas apply to electoral lists, while seats for linguistic groups are guaranteed regardless of election outcomes.⁷³ The use of linguistic seats therefore created opportunities for improving women's presence, but these claims were not on par with existing guarantees for other groups.

India: Reserved Seats for Minorities over Reserved Seats for Women India gained its first experiences with reserved seats as part of the British Empire. The Government of India Act of 1935 reserved seats in various assemblies for fifteen groups on the basis of sex, profession, race, religion, "social backwardness," and other kinds of minority status.⁷⁴ Because these provisions were made in the context of discussions regarding shared government, nationalists concluded that reservations and separate electorates were tactics to perpetuate British control by dividing the population into numerous special interests.⁷⁵ For this reason, the Indian National Congress objected to reserved seats, and its women's group issued a statement denying special privileges for women. Following independence in 1947, debates surrounding the new constitution included questions about reserved seats for various groups, but only Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) received guaranteed seats, distributed according to their proportion of the population in the various states.⁷⁶

Although the constitution abolished seats for women, by the 1980s several states began to set aside places for them. These policies were extended in 1992, when constitutional reforms reserved one-third of seats in local government for women. A bill proposing similar provisions in the national parliament followed in 1996. Although many parties had enthusiastically embraced this idea during elections earlier that year, a large number of male parliamentarians voiced opposition, on the grounds that the bill would promote upper caste Hindu women if it was not revised to incorporate subquotas for Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and Muslims.⁷⁷ Female MPs suggested that attention

to minority women was simply an excuse for male leaders who did not want to lose their own seats.⁷⁸ A select committee determined that subquotas could not be included because provisions for these other groups did not exist in the constitution.⁷⁹ Despite this clarification, a reserved seat bill has not yet been passed, despite being introduced in every subsequent parliamentary session. Debates on the representation of women and minorities in India have thus been ongoing, revolving around the mechanism of reserved seats. Across all these discussions, provisions for minorities are prioritized over those for women, whether real (in the case of SCs and STs) or projected (OBCs and Muslims).

Iraq: Quotas for Women over Reserved Seats for Minorities The U.S.-led invasion and associated change of political regime in Iraq raised various issues related to the representation of women and minorities. Given the history of Sunni dominance over both the Kurds and the Shi'as, despite the Sunnis' numerical minority, U.S. authorities initially focused on laying the foundation for a consociational power-sharing agreement between the three groups. This principle informed the composition of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) along ethnic and religious divides to include thirteen Shi'as, five Sunnis, four Kurds, one Turkoman, and one Assyrian Christian.⁸⁰ In contrast, U.S. authorities made few attempts to ensure representation for women. Almost no women were invited to attend a conference of future Iraqi leaders, and only three women were appointed to the Iraqi transitional government. As a result, women were not included in the nine-member rotating presidential council or the committee on constitutional reform. Further, while the British government advocated a 25 percent quota for women, U.S. officials emphasized that there were "no plans for quotas," though they were "planning on empowering women through...women's organizations, democracy trainings, and involving them in the political process."⁸¹ Consequently, in the early days of transition there was a deep concern with ensuring equitable treatment for religious and ethnic minorities, but hostility toward mechanisms promoting women's inclusion.

Although the U.S. authorities had identified Iraq's three sectarian factions for guaranteed representation, virtually all notions of power-sharing were abandoned in the constitution drafting process. They were replaced with mechanisms providing for decentralization, federalism, and majoritarianism. In contrast, Article 47 stated that the electoral law would aim for women to constitute no less than one-quarter of the members of the National Assembly. This provision had its origins in demands from a wide range of female actors for a 40 percent gender quota. The three women nominated to the IGC spoke openly in favor of quotas, and in December 2003, two of these women coauthored a *New York Times* editorial in which they urged the U.S. to "ensure that the Governing Council sets aside slots for women in all levels of government and in the constitutional drafting process in proportion to their percentage of the population."⁸² Following similar claims by women's groups, the new electoral law clarified that no fewer than one out of the first three candidates on the list must be a woman, effectively creating a 33 percent quota. Hence, while reserved seats for minorities were initially the focus of U.S. officials, these measures took other forms as attention turned to the representation of women in the new regime. Invasion created opportunities for women's

groups to speak to international audiences and mobilize for gender quotas, despite continued focus on sectarian violence.

Conclusion: The Politics of Group Representation

In the literature on group recognition, women and minorities are often treated as presenting similar challenges to existing patterns of representation, although they are rarely studied together as such. Recent developments in quota provisions granted to both groups present an opportunity to explore how, where, and when identities get recognized in politics. This article grapples with these questions through a series of comparisons between normative and empirical research, provisions for women and minorities, and countries where similar claims have been resolved in distinct ways. Among the various intuitions regarding group representation, the argument that women will receive guarantees in some countries, while minorities will receive them in others, receives the greatest support. Yet, a second set of expectations related to this account are disconfirmed.

Reversing the approach, this article examines the material more inductively and generates an alternative hypothesis, namely that group recognition emerges through the construction of “relevant” political identities. This lens suggests two influences on the measures that are adopted, or not, in the course of group recognition: historical practices and transnational effects. After presenting the evidence for the existence of repertoires of group representation, the validity of all four hypotheses are evaluated through case studies of countries where proposals have been made for both women and minorities. Individually, each case lends support to one of the three traditional intuitions about group representation. Collectively, however, they reveal the more contingent dynamics behind policies of group representation, which cause groups to be recognized in diverse ways across national contexts.

These findings fill an important gap in the literature on group recognition, which has not been characterized by a great deal of comparative research on measures within and across cases, especially with regard to provisions for both women and minorities. The analysis, in turn, offers several broad insights for future research on these groups. First, the patterns observed caution against studying one group and then generalizing to the other. This is not to say that women and minorities share no common experiences of marginalization, but rather that scholars should outline and defend their assumptions regarding similarities or differences among these groups. Second, diversity among empirical patterns around the globe, juxtaposed with ideas implicit in the normative literature, points to the importance of distinguishing between empirical statements and normative arguments. The analysis here reveals the fruitfulness of engaging in a dialogue across literatures and traditional subfield divides to consider how the data on quota policies “speaks” to reigning assumptions about political identities. Third, these results add an important new layer to recent work in political theory emphasizing the active and mutually constitutive nature of the representative process.⁸³ This lens stresses that

decisions regarding quotas do not simply emerge from who these groups are, but from what they are represented to be. Subjecting these measures to closer empirical study is thus not simply an academic question. It requires us to reexamine and reengage with the theory and practice of political representation itself.

NOTES

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