

Quotas for Women in Politics: Global Experiences

Mona Lena Krook

Washington University in St. Louis

Women in National Parliaments

○ September 30, 2010

- 1. Rwanda 56.3%
- 2. Sweden 45.0%
- 3. South Africa 44.5%
- 4. Cuba 43.2%
- 5. Iceland 42.9%
- 6. Netherlands 40.7%
- 7. Finland 40.0%
- 8. Norway 39.6%

- 9. Belgium 39.3%
- 10. Mozambique 39.2%

- 51. Canada 22.1%
- 51. Mauritania 22.1%
- **World average 19.3%**
- 73. United States 16.8%
- 73. Turkmenistan 16.8%

Cross-National Variations

- Political: electoral system, party system
- Social: level of education
- Economic: labor force participation, development
- Cultural: political culture, religion

→Overlooks the role of political strategies

Model of Political Recruitment

- Eligible → Aspirant → Nominee → Elected
- Supply-side explanations
 - Resources
 - Motivation
- Demand-side explanations
 - Elite evaluations
 - 'Information short-cuts'

Supply-Side Strategies

- Diagnosis: not enough women come forward
- Increase resources
 - Fundraising
 - Training
- Increase motivations
 - Consciousness-raising
- Result: modest, incremental change

Demand-Side Strategies

- Diagnosis: elites discriminate against women
- Improve elite evaluations
 - Liability to asset
- Re-signify 'information short-cuts'
 - Introduction of gender quotas
 - Alternative venues of recruitment
- Result: dramatic, even overnight change

Electoral Gender Quotas

- Reserved Seats (1930s to present)
 - Africa, Asia, Middle East
- Party Quotas (1970s to present)
 - Western Europe
 - All regions
- Legislative Quotas (1990s to present)
 - Latin America
 - Africa, Middle East, Southeastern Europe

Origins of Gender Quotas

- Women's groups
- Political elites
- International organizations
- Transnational networks

Combination of principled and strategic motivations – not always about women's empowerment

Effects of Gender Quotas

- Dramatic increases (Rwanda)
- Stagnation/mild increases (France)
- Decreases (Brazil)

*Due to quota design, electoral/party frameworks, and political will/oversight

Conclusions

- Supply-side vs. demand-side strategies
 - Quotas are a demand-side solution
 - Effects are dramatic, but variable
 - Importance of institutions and political will
 - However, political strategies crucial on both supply-side and demand-side
- Change does not occur on its own