

Helpdesk Research Report: Effects of Political Quotas for Women

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Query: What impact do quotas for seats allocated to women in local and national representative government bodies have on social and political processes and outcomes?

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1. Overview

Women are underrepresented in national parliaments and other representative institutions throughout the world. In order to increase female participation in policy-making, many countries have introduced gender quotas (or political reservations). These can be classified into two main categories: (1) the reservation of seats systems, which ensures that a certain number of women will be elected; and (2) the reservation of candidates system, which ensures a set minimum number of female candidates. These systems can be mandatory, imposed by the constitution or through electoral laws, or they may be adopted by parties voluntarily (Chen, 2010; De Paola et al., 2010).

To date, empirical studies of political quotas for women have focused primarily on the overall numbers of women holding elected office and the implications of differing quota designs and electoral systems on the number of women elected. Scholars find, for example, that the percentage of women in national parliaments tends to be higher in countries that have systems based on proportional representation rather than majoritarian electoral systems (Franceschet et al., forthcoming 2012).

While women's representation in politics is seen as a positive end in itself, quotas are often advocated not only based on concerns with increasing the numbers of women in elected office, but also because the presence of women in politics is believed to have substantive effects for women as a group. There are common assumptions that quotas will 'raise attention to women's issues in policy-making

processes, change the gendered nature of the public sphere, and inspire female voters to get more politically involved' (Franceschet et al., forthcoming 2012, n.p.).

This helpdesk report surveys research on the effects of political quotas for women on (1.) political processes; (2.) service delivery; and (3.) social processes. There is limited empirical evidence on these issues and research that does exist has mixed findings. These are some of the key effects cited:

Effects on political processes

- Increase in numbers of women in electoral politics and leadership positions: studies on India (Bhavani, 2009; Geissel and Hust, 2005) and various countries in Latin America (Jones, 2009) have demonstrated that a well designed quota system is effective in increasing the number of women running for office and in leadership positions. Often referred to as 'descriptive participation', this is the most evident visible change achieved by political quotas. It is important to note, however, that under a reservation of candidates system, there is no guarantee that women will win elections and gain leadership positions.
- Individual level changes: a comparative study on India and Germany (Geissel and Hust, 2005) found that many female politicians felt increasingly confident and competent through their experience in office. In contrast, the increased presence of women in political processes in Bangladesh has not contributed to improvements in confidence and skills (Panday, 2008).
- Mass participation: the presence of women in political institutions can encourage the political engagement of women constituents and citizens more generally. Case studies on India find that the percentage of women who attend and actively participate in local meetings is significantly higher where the local political leader position is reserved for a woman (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2003; Beaman et al., 2010; Deininger et al., 2011). In contrast, studies on Latin America have found that quotas have had limited effect on mass participation of women in the region, relative to men (Schwindt-Bayer, 2011; Zetterberg, 2011).
- Political attention to women's interests: quota systems have in some cases resulted in an increase in women's themes on the political agenda, raised by newly elected women. In other cases, women have sought to disassociate themselves from the quota and women's issues in an attempt to demonstrate that they are 'serious' politicians; or to avoid disturbing the status quo (see Franceschet et al., forthcoming 2012).
- Gender equity and empowerment: changes in the agenda and the introduction of bills concerning women's issues do not necessarily translate into policy gains for women as a group and improvements in gender equity and equality, although there is little research in this area (see Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Franceschet et al., forthcoming 2012).

Effects on service delivery and human development outcomes

An important aim of political quotas for women is to improve the targeting of public service delivery and development and welfare programmes to women (Bardhan et al., 2010). There are, however, few empirical studies that have addressed actual changes in policy output. Among those that have, the studies are usually within country and the results are mixed (Jha et al., 2011).

One of the most frequently cited studies is that of Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2003 and 2004). Their study of village level councils in West Bengal and Rajasthan in India reveals that reservation policies increased investment in public services and infrastructure favoured by women in areas where the leadership position was reserved for a woman. This included drinking water supply in both West Bengal and Rajasthan and roads in West Bengal. A more recent study by Beaman et al. (2010) on Birbhum district in West Bengal confirms that reservation for women increases investment in drinking

water infrastructure. Other studies, however, have found no effect or less of an effect (Raabe et al., 2009; Ban and Rao, 2008; Bardhan et al., 2010). Bardhan et al., (2010) note, however, that substantive outcomes may occur with a time lag, after women gain self-confidence and the voting population becomes more receptive to them. A similar point concerning such potential time lags in developing countries is made by Chen (2010) in her study of gender quotas in OECD countries.

There is additional country-specific research on Bangladesh, Rwanda and Argentina. In Bangladesh, the persistence of patronage politics and a strong patriarchal system has limited substantive outcomes of reservations for women. In Rwanda and Argentina, quota systems have facilitated the rise of women's themes on the legislative agenda and the passing of new laws on women's and girls' rights. However, in the case of Rwanda it is uncertain whether these developments can be directly attributed to the quota system; and in the case of Argentina, the majority of women's rights bills do not succeed.

Effects on social processes

- Changes in attitudes about women and gender discrimination: studies that do exist on the impact of political quotas and attitudes are largely focused on India. Beaman et al. (2010) find that after being exposed to reservation once, voters update their opinion on the effectiveness of female leaders in general; and the second generation of female leaders are liked as much as male leaders. A study of temporary gender quotas in municipalities in Italy (De Paola et al., 2010) also indicates progress towards the elimination of negative stereotypes of women.
- Changes in use of time: improved provision of water (among other public services) is welfare enhancing, reducing time spent on household work and allowing women to participate in labour markets. This can improve household incomes significantly (Jha et al., 2011).
- Violence and crime: A study on India (Iyer et al., 2011) found that 'having female political representation at the local government level induces strong positive and significant effects on reporting of crimes by women. It also induces greater responsiveness of law enforcement officials to crimes against women, as measured by the number of arrests as well as the quality of women's interactions with police' (p. 34).

Lessons learned

Most of the cited lessons in the literature on gender quotas relate to aspects of the design of the quota system. These include:

- The need for a set of clear and precise norms and procedures, based on a legal framework
- Clearly defined sanctions for non-compliance
- Additional requirements for the implementation of the quota, such as a placement mandates.

Other lessons learned include:

- The implementation of the quota system needs to be accompanied with information and communication initiatives for women seeking to enter politics and for citizens more generally
- Capacity building of women representatives and support for learning also require attention
- It is important to try to transform patriarchal structures and cultural norms through various cultural, educational and informational policies, alongside the establishment of quotas
- More research and analysis is required in order to understand better under what circumstances gender quotas might affect women citizens' political engagement and advance substantive outcomes for women.

2. Effects on political processes

Increase in numbers of women in electoral politics and leadership positions

Political quotas can have various effects on political processes. In particular, they are aimed at directly increasing the number of women running for office and in leadership positions. Often referred to as 'descriptive participation', this is the most evident visible change achieved by such quotas.

Throughout Latin America, 'the presence of well-designed quota legislation on average results in a significantly greater percentage of women legislators elected than where comparable quota legislation is absent' (Jones, 2009: 75). In Costa Rica, a clearly designed quota system resulted in women's representation in the Legislative Assembly reaching 35 percent in the 2002 elections (Sagot, 2010: 28). The importance of the quota system is demonstrated by the increase in the descriptive participation of women in Congress and local government (where quotas are in place) in contrast to the low presence of women in institutions such as the ministries, the Foreign Service and the Supreme Court of Justice, where quotas are not in place (Sagot, 2010).

Various studies have been conducted on the use of quotas in India. In one study on Mumbai, Bhavani (2009) demonstrates that in non-reserved areas, the average was less than one female candidate per constituency; whereas the use of quotas resulted in an average 7.5 more female candidates (cited in Pande and Ford, 2011). A comparative study on quotas at the local level in India and Germany, for example, demonstrates that quotas in both cases resulted in a greater presence of women in political institutions (Geissel and Hust, 2005).

Under a reservation of candidates system, however, there is no guarantee there will be an increase in women in leadership positions. 'Parties may run women in unwinnable districts or place them at the bottoms of party lists. Thus, some quotas include placement mandates—rules about the order of men and women on candidate electoral lists' (Hughes, 2011: 605). Archenti and Johnson (2006) find that in the case of Latin America, political parties may place women candidates in positions with little chance of being elected (in situations where there is no placement mandate); or they may be selected based on family ties or clientelism. A study on Brazil finds that although the number of female candidates increased in federal elections, this did not translate into electoral victories. It concludes that 'there does not appear to be a direct relationship between the percentage of female candidates fielded and their probability of winning the elections' (Araújo, 2010: 22).

Diversity of candidates and leadership

There is some limited discussion in the literature on the effect of quotas for women on the representation of other minority groups. Geissel and Hust (2005: 239) find in their study of local level quotas in India and Germany that: 'Politics or parties without quotas usually tend to promote women from elite and/or political family backgrounds. By contrast, the female politicians in the political institutions (party, local government) with quotas predominantly came from modest social and economic as well as non-political backgrounds. This implies that the quota does not only change the political representation in terms of gender, but also in respect of class, caste or education. Thus, quotas introduce changes in the political elite that go beyond mere gender'.

Hughes (2011) suggests that minority women are more likely to benefit when national gender policies are adopted alongside minority quotas (referred to as 'tandem quotas'). Under such a system, the inclusion of minority women in the national legislature can help to fulfill both gender and minority quotas and thus displace fewer majority men. In contrast, where a combination of party gender quotas and national minority quotas (referred to as a 'mixed quota' system) is in place, it is more likely that majority women will benefit more.

Individual level changes

Geissel and Hust (2005) find in that in both India and Germany, the effect of quotas (imposed through political parties or through legislation) extended beyond numerical increases in the presence of women in local political institutions to transformations at the individual level. Many female politicians felt increasingly confident and competent through their experience in office. In addition, once in politics, many of the women interviewed developed political ambitions; in Germany, this was particularly the case in parties with quotas.

In contrast, outcomes have varied in the case of Bangladesh. Quotas that have contributed to increases in the numerical participation of women in political processes have not contributed to improvements in confidence and skills. The vast majority of women councillors interviewed expressed a lack of confidence, for example, in conducting meetings (Asian Development Bank, 2004, cited in Panday, 2008: 505). Hossain and Akhter (2011) find that the election of women through quota systems at the national level has not contributed to strengthening their substantive representation in parliament. Rather, patronage politics and patriarchy have dominated; women are often understood to be acting as proxies for husbands who are unable to stand for themselves. Hossain and Akhter find, however, that the situation is slightly better at the local level. They attribute this to the close engagement of women in local politics with NGOs and civil society, which comprise other sources of support and nomination in rural areas.

Mass participation

Political quotas can also have indirect effects on the participation of women in politics, beyond more women in elected bodies and leadership positions. The presence of women in political institutions can encourage the political engagement of women constituents and citizens more generally. 'Gender quotas have been claimed to increase "the self-esteem, confidence, and motivation of women in general" (Nanivadekar, 2006: 124), to favor women citizens' contacts with their political representatives (Kudva, 2003), and to lead "to a shift [in] the political engagement of female constituents" (Krook, 2006: 111)' (cited in Zetterberg, 2009: 715). Some case studies have found that 'the introduction of quotas appears to increase the rate at which female voters contact their political representatives (Childs, 2004; Kudva, 2003)' (cited in Franceschet et al., forthcoming 2012).

In West Bengal, for example, the percentage of women who attend and participate in local meetings (*gram sansad*, ward level) is significantly higher (increasing from 6.9% to 9.9%) when the leadership position (*Pradhan*) is held by a woman (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2003: 7).

Women are also more likely to engage in active participation; they are more likely, for example, to speak in meetings in which women hold a leadership position. Beaman et al. (2010) finds that 'the likelihood that a woman speaks in a village meeting in India increases by 25% when the local political leader position is reserved for a woman' (cited in Pande and Forde, 2011: 17). Deininger et al., (2011) find that the higher attendance of women in village meetings where reservations are in place persists over time, even for *panchayats* (elected village governments) that had been reserved one or two periods ago; but that the increase in active participation (discussion of issues by females) during the reserved period appears to be partly or fully reversed once reservation lapses.

Zetterberg (2009: 715) argues that a limitation with such analyses is that they are often based on single cases, which makes it difficult to generalise findings. In addition, he argues that it may be the case in some contexts that 'women who live in societies with gender quotas are already more politically engaged prior to the adoption of the law; as a result, differences in political attitudes and behaviour are because of other factors and not the law itself'.

While quotas have increased women's representation in elected office in Latin America, Schwindt-Bayer (2011) finds that quotas have had little effect on mass participation of women in the region, relative to men. Zetterberg (2009) also finds that quotas in Latin America have not had an effect on women's political attitudes or on their participation in political activities (campaigning, political contact and protest activities). This outcome is attributed in part to the persistence of centralised and informal nomination procedures in Latin America, in which party leaders often handpick candidates. This may result in the view that women leaders are selected based on connections and close ties to particular leaders rather than due to popular support.

The style of women's leadership can play an important role in whether women citizens feel empowered to engage in politics. In Bangladesh, for example, women who operated within a system of political patronage were considered less likely to mobilise other women to participate in politics than those who found it important to engage directly with women citizens as a group (Hossain and Akhter, 2011).

Legitimacy of organisations

While research does not look specifically at the impact of quotas on the legitimacy of institutions, there is some limited research on how women's presence in political institutions affects perceptions and opinions of such institutions. 'Studies on citizens as a whole find that both male and female respondents believe that government is more democratic when more women are present (Karp and Banducci, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005)' (cited in Franceschet et al., forthcoming 2012).

Political attention to women's interests

Political quotas for women are often advocated as a way to raise the profile of issues of importance to women. The assumption is that 'female legislators tend to raise distinctive issues and priorities within the public agenda and give particular attention to women's interests (De Paola et al., 2010: 344). Franceschet and Piscopo (2008) refer to this as 'substantive representation as process'.

There is currently limited research that explores the extent to which women seek to promote women's interests once they are elected to political office. The research that does exist is mixed. Franceschet et al. (forthcoming 2012) provide a brief review of differing studies: 'Women elected through quotas have reported feeling obligated to act for women as a group (Schwartz, 2004; Skjeie, 1991), inspiring them to bring new issues to the table (Kudva, 2003; Thomas, 2004). However, others have sought to disassociate themselves with the quota and women's issues in an attempt to demonstrate that they are 'serious' politicians (Childs, 2004). At the same time, many have been accused of acting only as proxies for men (Nanivadekar, 2006) and of being more loyal to party leaders than men and women who win open seats (Cowley and Childs, 2003; Tripp, 2006)'.

A study on gender quotas at the national level in Germany finds that 'women's descriptive representation in national legislatures can indeed contribute to their substantive representation. Women legislators speak more frequently than men legislators during these debates on issues of particular interest to women, and gender is a statistically significant predictor of frequency of a given legislator's propensity to ask questions. In terms of content, women refer to feminist as well as traditional women's issues with greater frequency than men. [...] The presence of a gender quota appears to enhance women legislators' attention to issues of particular interest to women, even controlling for election type. The persistence of the quota's influence suggests that a quota influences the entire party, not only the women elected under it' (Xydias, 2008: 64).

A comparative study on Argentina (where quota legislation is in place) and Uruguay (where quota legislation is absent) finds that 'as the female presence in the Chamber of Deputies grows, it is accompanied by the presentation of a greater number of bills dealing with different aspects of women's rights. This can be seen to be the case in both Argentina and Uruguay, although given the greater numerical presence of women in the Argentine Congress resulting from the Quota Law, the gender bills in the latter case are more numerous and there is greater diversity among their thematic contents. This confirms the importance of affirmative actions, both in terms of their effect on women's access to legislative bodies and with respect to the introduction of gender issues on to the parliamentary agenda' (Archenti and Johnson, 2006: 144). Franceschet and Piscopo (2008: 409) also find in their study on Argentina that there was widespread agreement among the female legislators interviewed that the quota law had allowed for the 'proliferation of women's themes on the legislative agenda'. This includes discussion of violence against women, sexual assault laws, laws on maternity and pregnancy, and sexual and reproductive health – items that have traditionally not been included on the political agenda.

In other contexts, however, the introduction of women into decision-making bodies does not necessarily translate into greater attention to women's issues. Liddell (2009) cautions, for example, that in Morocco, the argument that supporting gender quotas at the parliamentary level in order to bring in legislators that will be receptive to the concerns of the women's movement is flawed. This assumes that there is a consensus on women's rights issues, which is not the case in Morocco. It also assumes that once in parliament, women will fight for women's issues. Instead, women in Morocco often owe their seats to male connections and do not want to propose an agenda that is not shared by party leadership or that goes against the 'rules of the game'. In Costa Rica, the rise in the number of women in electable positions due to the quota legislation has also failed to draw greater attention to issues of gender equity. Despite the quota system and 38.5 percent of female representation in the legislature (2006-2010), only one of the legislators put forward an open programme for justice and gender equity (Sagot, 2010).

Gender equity and empowerment

Greater political attention to issues important to women in some countries with quotas represents important progress. Much of the literature cautions, however, that changes in the agenda and the introduction of bills concerning women's issues (substantive representation as process) do not necessarily translate into 'substantive representation as outcomes': 'elected women are successfully gendering the legislative agenda but not successfully gendering legislative outcomes' (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008: 421). Thus, although male and female legislators often have distinct policy priorities, these differences do not necessarily translate into policy gains for women as a group (Franceschet et al., forthcoming 2012).

Persistent formal and informal norms that entrench gender bias often mean, as in the case of Latin America, that it is challenging for female legislators to transform policy outcomes. Although there have been important successes in passing women's rights bills in Argentina (see the following section), the majority of women's rights bills do not succeed (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008: 415). In Brazil, women have been unable to advance their proposals very far in the Legislative Assembly (Costa, 2010). In their comparative study of Argentina and Uruguay, Archenti and Johnson (2006) caution that the quota system has been an insufficient condition for promoting gender equity in terms of empowering and promoting the participation of women who have historically been marginalised from politics.

3. Effects on service delivery and human development outcomes

An important aim of political quotas for women is to improve targeting of public service delivery and development and welfare programmes to women (Bardhan et al., 2010). Women are often more dependent than men on free or subsidised public social and health services (Hossain and Akhter, 2011). Women who take part in decision making processes may favour policies related to children and family, such as education, health and welfare issues, more than men (Chen, 2010). There are, however, few empirical studies that have addressed actual changes in policy output. Among those that have, the studies are usually within country and the results are mixed (Jha et al., 2011).

One of the most frequently cited studies is that of Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2003 and 2004). Their study of village level councils in West Bengal and Rajasthan in India reveals that reservation policies increased investment in public services and infrastructure favoured by women in areas where the leadership position was reserved for a woman. This included drinking water supply in both West Bengal and Rajasthan and roads in West Bengal. Women in these decision-making roles also invested less in public goods that were more closely aligned to men's concerns.

A more recent study by Beaman et al. (2010) on Birbhum district in West Bengal confirms that reservation for women increases investment in drinking water infrastructure. There are 'significantly more public drinking water taps and hand-pumps when the [local village council – *gram panchayats* (GPs)] is reserved for a woman, and there is also some evidence that the drinking water facilities are in better condition' (p. 15). These results persist over time: 'Both in newly reserved GPs and in GPs reserved for the second time, women are 50% more likely to build a new tubewell' (p. 19). Panchayats reserved for women also exhibited more investment in sanitation and roads. The study also finds that over time, women leaders (elected in the second cycle) extend their spending to male-preferred areas in addition to continuing investment in women's priorities. Deininger et al. (2011) relies on nation-wide data from India spanning a 15-year period. They find that: 'female reservation significantly increases contemporaneous willingness to contribute to public good provision overall by males and females' [...] Disaggregating results by public good points toward gender differences regarding the goods individuals are willing to support and the persistence of effects. [C]ontrary to males who are more willing to contribute to productivity-enhancing goods such as roads, electricity, irrigation, and credit, females are the only ones who even in the reserved period contribute to water, schools, health and sanitation' (p. 17-18)

Other studies have found no effect or less of an effect. Raabe et al. (2009)'s study of political reservations in Karnataka, India, finds that increasing the participation of women in local policymaking does not guarantee more gender-equitable outcomes in rural service provision. It stresses the importance of pursuing additional strategies such as gender-targeting, gender-budgeting and gender-monitoring of programmes. Ban and Rao (2008)'s study on village level councils in south India also does not find any evidence that women presidents are acting in favour of the preferences of women. The one difference found was that *panchayats* reserved for women had significantly more education-related activities than unreserved *panchayats*. There were no differences however, for other sectors examined (water, health, sanitation, roads, transport, and electricity). Bardhan et al. (2010)'s study on the impacts of political reservations in West Bengal covers more districts than that of Chattopadhyay and Duflo and a different time span. They do not find any evidence of a positive impact of reservations for women on benefits for female-headed households or village-level benefits in terms of drinking water or roads. They note, however, that substantive outcomes may occur with a time lag. Reservations for women may have generated pure 'empowerment' effects that do not initially translate

into substantive outcomes, but that as women gain self-confidence and the voting population becomes more receptive to them, this may result in positive targeting impacts in the longer term.

A similar point concerning such potential time lags in developing countries is made by Chen (2010) in her study of gender quotas in OECD countries. This study differs from most others by looking at the reservation effect of women on a cross-country basis. It finds that: 'gender quotas are very likely to influence policy outcomes through its effect on the proportion of female legislators [...] The increasing representation of women in politics affects government spending decisions, especially for those issues related to women's traditional role in the family. Social welfare is again confirmed as the issue that is most concerning for women. An increase in the share of female legislators by one percentage point increases the ratio of expenditure on social welfare to GDP by 0.28 percentage points. This conclusion is not driven by a time trend. The results also suggest that the fast track to gender equality by mandated legal gender quotas among developing countries has a sound effect on the representation of women in politics, but the increasing level of female legislators in developing countries may not yet yield an impact on policy outcomes. Therefore, continuous tracking of the data would facilitate investigation of the effect of women in politics on policy outcomes' (p. 27).

There is additional country-specific research, outside of India, on Bangladesh, Rwanda and Argentina. In Bangladesh, the persistence of patronage politics and a strong patriarchal system has limited substantive outcomes of reservations for women. There has been progress though in one area; women elected to local councils through a system of reserved seats have established legitimacy in deciding on certain types of 'women's issues', particularly family dispute resolution. Communities, particularly women, are more comfortable discussing issues related to marriage, divorce, domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence with women council members. It is unclear, however, whether this involvement will contribute to larger changes at the local level (Hossain and Akhter, 2011).

In Rwanda, the election of women candidates to parliament has surpassed the constitutional mandate of 30 percent. Women's priorities are considered to include education, health, children, basic needs and social issues. Female legislators have emerged as strong advocates for addressing problems facing children and families in the country; they have initiated pro-child legislation, challenged key ministers to deliver and prioritised the needs of children in the budget (Powley, 2006: 16). Women legislators have also been active in the passing of new laws on women's and girls' rights to inherited land and on violence against women (Bauer, 2008, cited in Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2010: 417). It may be problematic to attribute these developments specifically to the gender quota, however, as gender issues have already been part of the public agenda prior to the increase in the number of women in parliament (Delvin and Elgie, 2008, cited in Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2010: 418).

In Argentina, the vast majority of female legislators interviewed agree that the quota law facilitated the rise of women's themes on the legislative agenda. They note three important women's rights bills passed since the implementation of the quota law: the Labour Union Quota; the Sexual Health Law, which created a national health programme for sexual health education and provision of contraception; and the Surgical Contraception Law, which expanded the Sexual Health Law by legalizing surgical contraceptive methods and making such procedures available in public hospitals (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008). Franceschet and Piscopo (2008) note, however, that these three laws, while important, do not amount to a transformation of policy outcomes in Argentina; as noted, the majority of women's rights bills do not succeed.

4. Effects on social processes

Changes in attitudes about women and gender discrimination

The effects of gender quotas on attitudes could theoretically be positive or negative: 'On the one hand, exposure to female politicians may contribute to a change in citizens' attitudes with regards to appropriate roles for women (Dasgupta and Asgari, 2004). In addition, when anti-female prejudices are based on the idea that women are poor policy makers, being exposed to greater female involvement in politics may help voters to modify these beliefs. On the other hand, if elected women have less experience and, as a consequence, their performance is not as good as that of their male colleagues, gender quotas may produce, at least in the short term, negative effects on women's representation' (De Paola et al., 2010: 345).

There is little empirical research on the impact of gender quotas on helping to eliminate anti-female bias among political parties and voters. One of the key difficulties in determining the effects of gender quotas on stereotypes of women is disentangling the effects of the intervention from other factors. For example, if gender quotas are permanently adopted by a country, it may be difficult to distinguish between the effects of the implementation of electoral rules and the effects of more general societal changes in social and cultural attitudes (De Paola et al., 2010).

Studies that do exist on the impact of political quotas and attitudes are largely focused on India. Beaman et al. (2010) relies on social psychology tests to determine the impact of reservations for women in West Bengal. It finds that initially, reservation does not make male villagers more sympathetic to the idea of female leaders, although it does make them more likely to associate women with leadership (p. 1533). After being exposed to reservation once, however, voters update their opinion on the effectiveness of female leaders in general; and the second generation of female leaders are liked as much as male leaders. This indicates that while the first generation of women leaders may experience significant prejudice, they contribute to subsequent improvements in attitudes (Beaman et al., 2010). This time lag may be attributed to the time needed for 'voters to adjust to quotas, learn about the abilities of women leaders, and update their beliefs' (Pande and Ford, 2011: 24)

These changes in attitudes are reflected in increases in the election of women over time. Using data from Mumbai, Bhavnani (2009) demonstrates a sustained effect of increased female participation even when the reservation policy was no longer directly in effect (cited in Pande and Ford, 2011: 17). Beaman et al. (2009) also found that after two rounds of reservation, the number of female candidates elected to *panchayats* in West Bengal more than doubled from 4.8% to 10.1%: 'The delay of the effect to occur after having a female leader twice suggests that discrimination takes time to diminish in order to lead to sustainable impacts' (Pande and Ford, 2011: 17).

A study of temporary gender quotas in municipalities in Italy also indicates progress towards the elimination of negative stereotypes of women. Reservations, requiring a percentage of the places in the party list for Municipal Council elections for female candidates, were in place from 1993-1995. Given the short time period, only some municipalities implemented the system. Since the repeal of the reservation system, municipalities that had implemented the gender quota have continued to elect a larger proportion of women from among entrant candidates. This reflects in large part the higher propensity of parties to present female candidates and the higher propensity of voters to support them. This is in line with the studies conducted on India that demonstrate that 'exposure to female leaders weakens negative stereotypes regarding women' (De Paola et al., 2010: 352).

Changes in use of time

The delivery of substantive outcomes through political gender quotas can also influence women's use of time, productivity, and intra-household dynamics. It is estimated that time spent by women fetching water in India represents almost 22% of their working days and comprises a significant unproductive component of their work time. Thus, improved provision of water (among other public services) is welfare enhancing, reducing time spent on household work and allowing women to participate in labour markets. This can improve household incomes significantly (Jha et al., 2011).

Violence and crime

A study on India found that 'having female political representation at the local government level induces strong positive and significant effects on reporting of crimes by women. It also induces greater responsiveness of law enforcement officials to crimes against women, as measured by the number of arrests as well as the quality of women's interactions with police' (Iyer et al., 2011: 34). The study notes that it is the presence of women at the local level of governance (where they have the greatest proximity to potential crime victims), rather than in higher levels of governance, that is important in giving women voice and encouraging greater reporting of crimes (Iyer et al., 2011).

5. Lessons learned

Most of the cited lessons in the literature on gender quotas relate to aspects of design of the quota system. These include:

- The need for a set of clear and precise norms and procedures, based on a legal framework (constitutional requirement or electoral legislation) (Costa, 2010; Sagot, 2010).
- Clearly defined sanctions for non-compliance (Costa, 2010; Sagot, 2010; Araújo, 2010). In the case of Latin America, the quota system has not worked in countries where there is no obligation attached to the quota law. Sanctions could entail, in the case of quotas for the number of candidates, disallowing a party to participate in elections if it does not fulfil the requirements (Araújo, 2010).
- Additional requirements for the implementation of the quota, such as a placement mandates.

Schwindt-Bayer (2009) finds that 'stronger quotas (those with placement mandates and weak-to-strong enforcement) lead to more women in office than do weaker quotas (those without placement mandates and enforcement). The effect is quite large—almost three times as many women get elected under strong quotas than under weak quotas. Countries such as Argentina and Costa Rica have been highly successful with quotas because these nations require near-parity in the representation of men and women and specify placement mandates and enforcement mechanisms. In contrast, countries such as Guyana and Honduras have only moderate levels of women's representation with 30% quotas that lack placement mandates and enforcement mechanisms. Although they have no independent effect on the election of women, placement mandates and enforcement mechanisms do, in fact, play a role in increasing women's representation by reinforcing the effect of quota size. The design of quota laws can have significant effects on the election of women (Schwindt-Bayer, 2009: 20)'.

The implementation of the quota system needs to be accompanied with information and communication initiatives (Hossain and Akhter, 2011; Zetterberg, 2009):

- Limited information about quota laws can undermine women's political engagement (as in the case of Mexico) (Zetterberg, 2009)
- Accessible public awareness campaigns are needed to broaden and deepen awareness and provide information to the public about quota systems, with emphasis on the potential role of female representatives (Hossain and Akhter, 2011)
- Communications with elite groups at national level about local quota systems are also required in order to get the backing of key opinion formers (Hossain and Akhter, 2011)
- Information interventions aiming to inform citizens on ways to access information, to make their voices heard and to promote accountability are also needed if reservations are to improve individuals' ability to engage with political processes (Deininger et al., 2011).

Capacity building of women representatives and support for learning also require attention (Hossain and Akhter, 2011; Deininger et al., 2011):

- Quotas may in some cases bring less experienced and qualified individuals into positions of leadership. Deininger et al. (2011) finds in the case of India that the immediate effect of local level reservations on the quality of public service position is negative. Over time, however, the level and quality of women's political participation and willingness to contribute to public goods increases, demonstrating the importance of learning.
- Many women entering politics for the first time have capacity development needs that extend beyond initial induction training and should include: peer-to-peer learning; on-the-job support to learn practical skills (e.g. how to manage meetings, draft resolutions); support related to social accountability tools; and identification of and tackling of gender issues (Hossain and Akhter, 2011).

As discussed, the implementation of a quota system is insufficient in producing substantive representation in process and outcomes for women. In many contexts, representative structures are patriarchal. Women elected into office may feel pressurized to assimilate to fit this model and to avoid raising issues associated with the priorities of women. In other cases, their attempts to implement policies directed at improving women's rights and welfare will be blocked. It is thus important to try to transform patriarchal structures and cultural norms through various cultural, educational and informational policies (Panday, 2008). These include education curricula and media initiatives that make clear that discrimination against women is unacceptable; and that highlight the importance of gender equality and the significance of women's participation in development at all levels (Panday, 2008).

More research and analysis is required in order to better understand under what circumstances gender quotas might affect women citizen's political engagement (Zetterberg, 2009). More information is also needed on how women elected to office are likely to affect substantive outcomes for women and what areas are of particular relevance. These could range from children's health to intra-household bargaining (Deininger et al., 2011). In order to properly assess such substantive effects, Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2010) argue that it is necessary to clarify and develop common concepts and criteria for evaluation, including establishing a clear set of indicators. Longitudinal studies and studies that examine alternative empirical contexts could be particularly helpful, including attention to the kind of quota implemented (candidate quota or reserved seats) and at what level of government it is implemented (Zetterberg, 2009). To date, most of the positive experiences from India have been from local legislatures, with reserved seats for women. It is possible that this is due to closer ties between representatives and those represented at the local level, which makes quotas

at this level more conducive to mass public engagement (Soss and Schram, 2007, cited in Zetterberg, 2009: 726).

6. Sources

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