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# On the Fast Track: The Spread of Gender Quota Policies for Elected Office

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On the Fast Track:

## The Spread of Gender Quota Policies for Elected Office

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**Abstract:** What has driven the worldwide adoption and subsequent revision of gender quota policies? This study argues that this phenomenon can be best understood as exemplifying ‘glocalization’ – with policies adopted due to a combination of changing international discourses and regional diffusion combined with domestic political activists. Moreover a process of policy learning is evident; where the initial policies were relatively ineffective, by failing to ensure a more equitable gender balance in elected office, this spurs subsequent revisions. Empirical analysis supporting this interpretation draws on a new comprehensive cross-national dataset, *The Gender Quota Database* (GQD, Release 1.0 May 2014).

Part I of the paper provides the theoretical framework and literature review. Part II summarizes the research design, data and evidence. Part III describes the use of the main types of gender quotas in politics in various regions of the world (as of May 2014), and discusses trends (waves) in the adoption and amendment of quotas. Part IV presents the results of the analysis of drivers behind the initial adoption of legal gender quotas. Both regional and domestic forces play a role in the initial adoption of gender quota policies, controlling for fixed socio-economic, political and cultural conditions. Part V considers policy-learning processes leading to subsequent revisions strengthening quota laws, focusing upon the lack of success when implementing earlier policies. The conclusion summarizes the key findings and considers their implications.

The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment has become a global norm endorsed by international organizations and national governments around the world. Since the world community met in Beijing in 1995, the proportion of women in the lower house of national legislatures has doubled (from around 10% in 1995 to 22% by 2015), an unprecedented leap (although far from parity).<sup>1</sup> One major factor contributing towards this striking development has been the spread of gender quota policies in many regions across the world. These have become the most popular institutional reform designed to fast-track more diverse and inclusive parliaments (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005, Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2006, 2009). Figure 1 illustrates the remarkable rise in the number of countries worldwide implementing either legal gender quotas for parliamentary candidates or else reserved seats for women, mostly during the last decades.

[Figure 1 about here]

What has driven both the worldwide adoption of legal gender quota policies, and subsequent revisions strengthening these measures? Single-nation studies have traditionally used historical process tracing to account for the passage of quota reforms in specific countries and to assess their effects over time. Research has also compared cross-national patterns across global regions, including states in Sub-Saharan Africa (Yoon 2004; Bauer and Britton 2006; Bauer 2008), Middle East (Al-Raida 2008), Western Europe (Kittilson 2006), European Union member states (Freidenvall and Dahlerup 2013), post-Communist Europe (Rueschemeyer and Wolchik 2009; Matland and Montgomery 2003; Norris and Krook 2011), Asia and Pacific (Norris 2012), and Latin America (Htun and Jones 2002; Piatti-Crocker 2011; Schwindt-Bayer 2012). Event history analysis techniques have been used to examine the factors leading towards the adoption of voluntary gender quotas by political parties in Western Europe and in 'old democracies' (Kittilson 2006; Dahlerup and Leyenaar 2013). Others have broadened the comparison to compare quota adoptions in democratic states (Thames and Williams 2013) and across developing societies (Swiss and Fallon 2014). From previous research, we know that various types of gender quotas have been implemented in democratic as well as in hybrid regimes and electoral autocracies (Fallon, Swiss and Viterna 2012), in developing and affluent societies (Stockemer 2014; Swiss and Fallon 2014).

Building upon this literature, this study argues that adoption of gender quotas exemplifies 'glocalization', where the international discourses and regional practices interact with domestic networks of women advocates in political parties and the women's movement, leading to policies designed to strengthen gender equality in elected office. Policy learning affects subsequent revisions to

quota policies, especially where initial policies are regarded as largely ineffective in achieving their objectives, yet taking into account that such ineffectiveness might have been intentional by some key actors or the result of lack of knowledge about how different quota systems work. Drawing upon the theoretical literature, this study expands the body of empirical evidence supporting these arguments from *The Gender Quota Database* (GQD, Release 1.0 May 2014), a new comprehensive cross-national time-series dataset classifying the initial adoption *and* the subsequent amendment to these policies in all countries around the world from 1990 to 2014.<sup>2</sup>

The study demonstrates three main findings. Firstly, that both regional diffusion and domestic advocates influence the initial adoption of gender quota policies. Secondly, these findings remain robust even after controlling for other long-term societal conditions commonly thought to influence gender equality in public life, including socioeconomic, political, and cultural factors. Finally the analysis suggests that a process of policy learning occurs, so that quotas which are initially relatively ineffective in improving women's representation, are subsequently revised in a growing number of states to strengthen gender equality in elected office.

Understanding these issues is important, both theoretically and for public policy. A growing body of research suggests that the use of gender quotas in politics has had many political consequences. The implementation of effective and well-designed quota policies in a many countries has served to strengthen descriptive representation and thus increased the number of women members in elected assemblies (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005, Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2006, 2009; Tripp and Kang 2007; Thames and Williams 2013), an important objective in its own right. Moreover the development of more gender balanced legislatures deepens and expands the pool of experienced and well-qualified women in the pipeline for other executive office, including as ministers of state and heads of government. Theories suggest connections between descriptive and substantive representation (Philips 1995), although systematic evidence that women leaders bring distinctive priorities and concerns into the policy agenda remains mixed (see Wangnerud 2009). As well as the political impact of quota policies, our study also throws light on broader theoretical questions about descriptive representation, as well as providing general insights into debates about the overall effectiveness of development aid and electoral assistance.

To develop our argument, Part I provides the theoretical framework and literature review. Part II summarizes the research design, data and evidence. Part III describes the use of the main types of gender quotas in elected office in various regions of the world (as of May 2014), and discusses trends

over time (waves) in the adoption and amendment of quotas. Part IV presents the results of the analysis of international forces and domestic advocacy groups behind the initial adoption of gender quota policies. Part V turns to consider the reasons for subsequent revisions to quota laws. The conclusion summarizes the key findings and discusses their implications for policymakers and scholars. Our study suggests the importance of both regional practices and domestic advocates, both of which contribute towards the adoption of the first gender quota laws in each society. Moreover evidence indicates a policy learning process: design or implementation failures in initial policies (as indicated by persistently low proportions of women elected to parliament despite new laws), leads to their subsequent revision.

### **I: Theoretical framework**

Attempts to strengthen gender equality in elected office have generated a burgeoning research literature. Some of this work has focused upon the 'supply' side of the recruitment process, exemplified by theories of gender gaps in political ambition (Lawless 2012). Attempts to reduce the barriers facing women candidates have commonly sought to strengthen equal opportunities in elected office through initiatives such as awareness-raising, training, funding, and capacity building (Norris and Krook 2011; Krook and Norris 2014). By contrast another related body of literature, more common outside of the United States, has emphasized the 'demand' side of recruitment, notably the adoption of gender quotas policies, and in general pointed to the pivotal role of political parties as the main 'gatekeepers' to elected positions. Developments during the last two decades have spurred a growing body of knowledge among both scholars and international organizations (see, for example, reviews by Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009). To explore these issues, this study first sets out our central argument and also considers alternative theories about the factors commonly regarded as important for driving the diffusion of gender quota policies. The study then reexamines core propositions using a range of comparative evidence in countries worldwide, with models including suitable controls.

#### **The role of international organizations and transnational feminist organizations**

Our argument seeking to explain why gender quotas have been adopted, and a perspective which has becoming increasingly popular during the last decade in the research literature, emphasizes the role of the international community. One way that international organizations function is thought to be through establishing conventions, treaties and agreements attempting to shape global norms, including strengthening the principles of gender equality and women's rights (Grugel 1999; Simmons 2009; Bush 2011). Our thesis contends that a range of international actors – including UN agencies and bureaus, international organizations and transnational feminist organizations as well as bilateral donors

-- function in this regards through spreading appropriate models and standards of legitimate action worldwide and within regions. Intergovernmental regional organizations, in particular, are likely to promote common practices within their area. Thus the principles of gender equality have been recognized in a long series of conventions, protocols, guidelines and targets adopted by the international community. These include the seminal Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, which enshrines “the equal rights of men and women,” including the right to participate in government.<sup>3</sup> A series of other documents signed by United Nations (UN) member states over the years – including the World Plan of Action in Mexico City in 1975,<sup>4</sup> the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1979, CEDAW<sup>5</sup> and the Nairobi Forward- looking Strategies in 1985<sup>6</sup> – which resulted in a landmark commitment in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, signed by all member states at the UN’s Fourth World Conference on Women.

The Beijing declaration represented new aims and strategies. Based on a power perspective on women’s underrepresentation, the declaration not only talks of ‘discriminatory attitudes and practices’, but also of ‘unequal power relations’, thus opening up for affirmative action, even if the controversial word ‘quotas’ was not mentioned. Pointing to the fact that the specific target of 30 per cent women in decision-making positions by 1995, which was recommended by UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1990 had not been met, the Beijing declaration sets the goal as ‘equitable distribution of power and decision-making at all levels’.<sup>7</sup> The world’s governments endorsed gender equality and women’s empowerment as the third of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the 2000 UN Summit, however in rather vague terms when it comes to political representation. Similar principles underlie the Sustainable Development Goals which are due to replace the MDGs in 2015. The engagement of countries in the world community can be monitored through their endorsement of international conventions and treaties, especially ratification of CEDAW, and state participation with official delegations sent to UN conferences (Swiss and Fallon 2014) as well as through the growing number of transnational feminist movements (Bakshe and Harcourt 2015). The availability of international comparisons through comparative research and by, for example, the global ranking list of women’s parliamentary representation ([www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)) and the global web site on quota provisions country by country ([www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org)) has facilitated an increased competition between states, who wish to ‘look modern’ by showing a high representation of women in their national parliaments.

The most common strategies used by multilateral organizations and bilateral donors involve opening barriers to the diffusion of global norms through the free flow of information across national borders, encouraging and supporting transnational NGO-communication, and gaining endorsements for

international treaties and conventions, as well as targeting development aid invested in strengthening women's empowerment. Globalization through cosmopolitan communications, open trade barriers, the free flow of information, and membership of regional and transnational organizations, can be understood as the most general long-term conditions facilitating the diffusion of international norms (Norris and Inglehart 2009). This is supplemented by the provision of the international community's distribution of official development aid and technical assistance, which function as medium term strategies. Moreover researchers have argued that contagion within global regions has also contributed towards the adoption of gender quotas, with the types of policies adopted in each society spreading across national borders most easily among countries sharing similar languages, cultures, and religious traditions, trade relations and media markets, and colonial legacies (Franceschet et al 2012; Thames and Williams (2013).

Beyond legitimating normative standards, the international community has also sought to strengthen the diffusion of gender equality policies through the provision of development aid and technical assistance which aims to expand the capacity of local actors to design and implement measures to strengthen women's leadership in public life. A wide range of multilateral organizations are engaged in the provision of technical assistance promoting women's rights and gender equality in elected office, as well as broader processes and institutions of democratic governance, including UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the International Federation of Electoral Systems (IFES), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, the Commonwealth, the Organization for American States (OAS), the African Union, International IDEA, and bilateral donors such as USAID, SIDA, NORAD and CIDA. The role of the world community is particularly important in peace-building and state-building processes after sustained conflict and in newly independent states, such as in Rwanda, South Sudan and Timor-Leste, and transitional regimes may well look to their neighbors for constitutional and legal models. Little is known with any certainty about the more complex medium-term impact of technical assistance and aid spending on institutional capacity building initiatives, however, and there is continued heated debate about the general question of whether aid 'works', including by strengthening women's rights (Carothers 1999; Simmons 2009; Burnell 2011).

### **Domestic mobilization by women activists**

At the same time, however, while authorizing international conventions and norms of gender equality in elected office, we argue that, by themselves, the international community and multilateral

regional organizations cannot generate sustainable and effective legal reforms unless there is a mobilization of domestic stakeholders, policy advocates and women's movements within each society. Despite the growth of global governance, the United Nations continues to respect the principle that nations have the right to considerable autonomy over their own domestic affairs and UN agencies as well as international organizations providing democratic assistance such as IPU and International IDEA provide assistance only at the invitation of member states. Thus we argue that the adoption of gender quota policies comes about through the international community working closely with local partners in government, such as official state equality agencies, and with activist NGOs in civic society, with political parties (including women's organized sections within parties), and with feminist social movements. A number of scholars have explored how far demands for gender equality in elected office are shaped by the strength of the women's movement (Paxton, Hughes and Green 2006), and women's activism in NGOs (Swiss and Fallon 2014), as well as women's sections within political parties (Dahlerup and Leyenaar 2013). Accounts have emphasized how voluntary party quotas were adopted in specific Western European political parties, especially left and green parties, following pressure from the independent women's movement and from women's sections within political parties, for example in the Nordic countries (Freidenvall et al 2006), and in the case of the use of all women shortlists in the UK Labor party (Childs 2004). Similarly the Organization for Security and Cooperation within Europe has worked with government agencies, political parties, and women's NGOs in post-communist states to implement gender quotas and other measures designed to strengthen the proportion of women in elected office (Galligan et al 2007; Krook and Norris 2011), while UNDP has provided technical assistance and encouraged the development of national strategic action plans for gender equality in Asia and the Pacific (Norris 2012). Women's groups may therefore be critical advocates in quota promotion through participating in transnational movements, bringing the new international norms of gender equality into national policy discussions, and pointing to best practice policy measures in neighboring countries. One such very influential network advocating gender quotas is Socialist International Women, affiliated to Socialist International, which has members from 94 countries around the globe.

This view can be challenged, for example some accounts suggest that gender quota policies implemented in state-building initiatives in Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Iraq were driven by the priorities of the world community, by constitutional technical consultants, and by strings attached to external development aid, more than by domestic demands made by local politicians or local women's groups and grassroots activists (Bush 2011). In our personal experience, however, in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan, or Bhutan and Tunisia, international technical assistance from the world community



only supplements local demands for strengthening gender equality in politics mobilized by women activists (Norris 2007, Dahlerup 2014). Consequently alongside the role of the international community, the strength of the women's mobilization around quotas is another important factor included in our models.

### **Policy learning and subsequent reforms**

In addition, we argue that a policy learning process occurs, so that the many subsequent revision of gender quota laws is more likely to occur in countries which pass ineffective measures which continue to fail to achieve gender equality in legislatures. A continued paucity of women leaders in politics is expected to raise the priority of this issue on the policy agenda, increasing demands to address the problem through positive action strategies. In particular, low level of representation in countries where women are well-educated and integrated in the labor market should challenge the traditional discourse, which blames women, not the political institutions, for women's lack of representation (Dahlerup and Leyenaar 2013). Wlezien (1995) and Soroka and Wlezien (2010) have developed the thermostatic model in democratic states as a simple, yet very powerful, framework that connects government action to public opinion. Their 'thermostat model' suggests that in general, perceptions of worsening problems, such as growing rates of unemployment, immigration, crime, or climate change, increase public concern which, in turn, generates pressures for governments to respond to these problems. Similarly, from this perspective, prior levels of women's representation which are either relatively low (compared with MDG targets, neighboring states, or the world average) or else declining over time should strengthen public concern. In turn, this may mobilize popular support for the adoption of gender quota policies.

Similarly explanations for the revision of gender quotas also need to take account of policy learning from the effects on women's representation after passage of new laws. In several countries, quota rules have been seen as very effective, generating dramatic leaps in the proportion of women in elected office, as exemplified by Rwanda in 2003 (rising from 26 to 56% of women), Costa Rica in 2002 (from 19 to 35%), Senegal in 2012 (from 23 to 43%), Algeria in 2012 (from 8 to 32%) and most recently, Bolivia in 2014 (from 25 to 53%). Yet by contrast elsewhere, where reforms have failed to achieve their stated objectives, gains have often proved modest. The impact of gender quota policies varies substantially due to several factors, including by the type of quota rules, the type of electoral system, whether regulations are designed with placement mandates or ranking rules, any enforcement mechanisms, the penalties for non-compliance, and high or low targets (Schwindt-Bayer 2009).

Disappointment with symbolic quota provisions should lead to pressure to revise the original policies, subsequently 'deepening' gender quotas (Franceschet and Piscopo 2013). The recent, 'Third Wave' of quota revisions can be seen as the result of experiences gained, and mounting disappointment, with many of the original gender quota policies.

### **Controlling for societal conditions**

The evidence for our core propositions have not been systematically demonstrated worldwide, however, and several rival theories suggest that potentially confounding socioeconomic, political and cultural conditions need to be incorporated in fully-specified models.

#### *Socioeconomic conditions*

Thus modernization theories common in developmental political sociology emphasize the need to control for fixed socioeconomic conditions and levels of development. These accounts emerged in the mid-twentieth century, exemplified by the long tradition established by Seymour Martin Lipset (1959, 1960) and Stein Rokkan (1970). Over the last six decades, an extensive literature has linked theories of societal modernization with growing female participation in the workforce and public sphere and the breakdown of traditional sex-role stereotypes. Simultaneous patterns of development, economic growth, industrialization, urbanization, demographic trends and changes in fertility, the spread of communications, and wider access to education, are theorized from this perspective as the standard 'usual suspects' to drive gender equality and cultural change, as well as transitions from authoritarian regimes and processes of democratization.

These theories suggest that as economies develop from those based largely upon agricultural production towards industrial and post-industrial societies, changes in the labor force and society, typified by the entry of more educated women into administration, management and the professions, facilitate the growing mobilization of women and fuels opportunities for female careers in elected office. Supply-side theories of political recruitment emphasize that aspirants need the skills, networks and resources to succeed in elected office and hence women gaining educational qualifications and relevant professional employment provides advantages in public life. The structural viewpoint has becomes less common today although it has not died away. Some contemporary studies continue to emphasize the impact of residual gender gaps in literacy, educational qualifications, family responsibilities, work-based professional networks or political ambitions on women's entry into political elites. All of these factors are regarded as limiting the resources, experience, and capacities which women bring both to civic engagement at mass level (Schlozman 1999), and well as to the pursuit of

elected and appointed office for legislative, executive and judicial elites (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008). Hence Michael Ross (2008) has claimed that in Arab region, the well-known 'resource curse' (oil, gas), has led directly to inequality of men and women's participation in the paid labor force and this, in turn, indirectly limits female opportunities to run for elected office in these states. Several other empirical studies suggest that women's participation in the workforce is an important predictor of the proportion of women in parliament (Matland 1998; Rule 1987; Stockemer and Byrne 2012; Togeby 1994).

#### *Political conditions*

Among political conditions, there are reasons to expect that the adoption of legal quotas would also be affected by the level of democratization in a country. By expanding opportunities for women to mobilize, and strengthening government responsiveness to public concern, gender quotas may be more likely to be adopted in democratic states. More competitive multiparty elections could also potentially strengthen opportunities for women's representation, as nomination processes are no longer in the hands of a single party elite. In fact, however, several cases cast doubt on this argument. For example, some of the world's oldest democracies, including New Zealand (the first state to extend the suffrage to women in 1893), and the United States (birthplace of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention women's movement), have no legal quotas in use today. The Nordic countries with their high political representation of women already from the 1970s never adopted quotas by law for popular elections. Many Nordic parties use of voluntary party quotas, as do many other countries in Western Europe (Freidenvall et al 2006; Freidenvall and Dahlerup 2013). By contrast, legal quotas have been established in some of the world's newest independent nation states, including South Sudan and Timor-Leste.

#### *Cultural values*

Finally, fully-specified models also need to control for the potential mediating role of cultural values, including predominant religious legacies. Previous work by Inglehart and Norris (2003) presented extensive evidence that linked the spread of more egalitarian attitudes towards sex roles with their representation in national parliaments. Others have also found cultural values to be an important predictor of women's success in gaining elected office (Ruedin 2012), and one which outweighs institutions. In addition, Inglehart and Norris (2012) theorized that the main type of religious faith in any society will continue to leave an enduring imprint on cultural values towards sex roles, even in places where secularization has taken hold. The predominate type of religion is predicted to be associated with the passage of laws governing gender quotas, with Muslim predominant societies more conservative in attitudes towards traditional sex roles than Protestant and Catholic societies (Norris and Inglehart 2012).

If religious cultures influence public policies, then the predominant type of faith should predict the adoption of gender equality policies. On the other hand, gender quotas for parliament is a widespread practice in many contemporary states in the Middle East and North Africa, partly as a symbol of being 'modern' (Dahlerup 2009).

## II: Research Design

What evidence would throw new light on these propositions? Compared with previous studies, this study broadens our understanding by presenting a more comprehensive comparison of legal gender quota policies adopted and revised for the lower or single house of national parliaments in all independent nation-states around the globe during the period from 1990 to 2014. Models in this study test the effects of our thesis for the potential drivers behind the adoption and revision of electoral gender quotas world-wide, controlling for rival factors. In particular, this study examines cross-national evidence testing *how far the adoption of gender quota laws can be attributed to the role of the international community, and advocacy mobilization efforts by national groups of women activists, while controlling for alternative socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions.*

### Typology of gender quota policies

While the use of 'gender quotas' for elected office is widely debated, the core notion and classification is often poorly understood and conceptualized (Krook 2014), and the ways in which these policies operate vary widely in many detailed aspects. To clarify our terms, therefore, in this study, 'quotas' are defined as regulatory policies designed to achieve descriptive representation through *rules entailing that the composition of a candidate list or a body must contain a certain minimum number or proportion of a specified category of people.* Quotas can be applied to the representation of communal groups and minorities in plural societies, such as in elected bodies in Lebanon, Macedonia, India, and New Zealand, and the relevant groups can be defined by indigenous heritage, language, race, caste, and ethnicity, nationality, region, or religious affiliation (Reynolds 2011). 'Gender quotas' are defined by sex. Beyond representative assemblies, quota provisions can apply to diverse institutions in the public, non-profit and private sectors, including party conference delegates, internal party offices, regulatory bodies, official commissions, judicial appointments, access to education, and most recently the membership of company boards (Meier 2014).

Gender quotas for representative assemblies therefore specify that a certain minimum number or proportion of women (women-specific) or of women and men (gender neutral) should be included at specific stages of the recruitment process. Like a game of musical chairs the 'funnel of recruitment'

progressively narrows the stages leading towards legislative office (Lovenduski and Norris 1993; Norris and Lovenduski 1995). Consequently, a further distinction is made between *aspirant quotas*, *candidate quotas* (legal or voluntary), and *reserved seats*:

1. *Aspirant gender quota* policies govern *the pool seeking nomination*. Constitutional provisions, laws, or party rules regulate the composition of nomination short-lists (for example, for the Scottish parliament), or who can run in primary elections (such as in Panama).

2. *Candidate quota policies* regulate the gender composition of lists officially nominated by political parties or other nominating bodies for election or appointment to representative bodies. These fall into two main sub-categories:

- *Legal candidate quotas* are legally-binding requirements applying to *all* political parties nominating candidates in an election in any state. These regulations may be specified in party laws, election laws, party finance laws, or national constitutions. These measures are an extension of other common legal requirements for eligibility to become a candidate, such as age, citizenship, and residency requirements. Sanctions for non-compliance of legal gender quotas is usually determined in the law and implemented by election management bodies and electoral courts.
- By contrast, so-called '*voluntary*' *candidate quota* are specified in specific political parties through internal party rule-books, selection procedures, and party constitutions. These requirements within particular party organizations are usually internally enforced by recruitment rules and procedures set up by the party.

3. Finally, *reserved seats for women* target the membership of elected or appointed assemblies, exemplified by seats reserved for women (and scheduled castes) on Indian village councils. These principles are often specified in national constitutions and implemented through electoral laws. Reserved seats are constructed in various forms, but are increasingly based on direct elections among only women candidates.

Gender quotas for political office may apply to elected or appointed assemblies at sub-national, national, or supranational levels, including those running for local councils, regional assemblies, national parliaments, or continental parliaments, including the European parliament and the Assembly of the African Union. Appointed members of parliament, be they women or men, tend to be especially dependent upon party leaders and they may therefore simply serve as compliant supporters for rulers seeking to stack assemblies. By contrast, women (and men) competing as candidates for election have

incentives to develop a grassroots support base in order to win legitimate contests, allowing more independence in office. It has proved important that the elected women have a constituency basis of their own, in contrast to 'added' seat like in Bangladesh (local) and Morocco (national (Dahlerup 2006; Darhour and Dahlerup 2013)).

### **Country coverage and time period**

This study focuses upon understanding the adoption and reform of gender quotas designed to regulate the nomination or election of women for the lower or single house of federal or national parliaments. The study covers 196 independent nation-states from 1990 until 2014. The Global Database of Quotas for Women ([www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org); Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas 2014), developed by the University of Stockholm and International IDEA, later joined by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has gathered updated data providing comprehensive estimates for the number of independent nation-states using these policies. Based on this database and supplemented with additional information, including on women's representation in the elections just before and after the introduction or revision of quota laws, a new comprehensive cross-national time-series dataset was established and used for this article, *The Gender Quota Database, (GQD)* (Release 1.0 May 2014. Stockholm University).

For the multivariate analysis, the study uses cross-national comparisons of contemporary nation-states around the world. The logistic regression models compare the factors which are plausibly associated theoretically with the adoption of legal gender quotas, with countries dichotomized into those with/without any legal quota (whether a law specifying candidate quotas or reserved seats) used for the lower/single house of the federal or national legislature in 2014. We therefore exclude party-specific voluntary candidate quotas, since this would require an alternative (party) unit of analysis.

### **Measures and indicators**

The sources and operationalization of all measures are described more fully in technical appendix A.

*The role of international organizations* is tested using several indicators. We believe that the role of globalization, especially access to cosmopolitan communications (Norris and Inglehart 2009), is important to strengthen the diffusion of international norms, since this process exposes countries to cultural norms and standards beyond national boundaries, helping to network transnational and national women activists. How far countries are either largely isolated from this process, or else bound tightly with transnational ties of trade, communications, technology, labor, cooperation, and migrant flows of peoples, can be monitored empirically through the KOF Globalization Index, combining social,

economic and political indices.<sup>8</sup> In addition to worldwide diffusion, how far countries learn from policies adopted in bordering societies (or regional contagion effects) can be compared by estimating the mean adoption of legal gender quotas as a norm among neighboring states within each global region. Based on the Quota Project, coders identified states where international organizations advocated passing gender quota laws. The provision of development aid and technical assistance can be examined through AidData, including ten year averages estimating levels of Official Development Aid spending on democratic participation and civil society (which includes support for gender equality groups in civic society).<sup>9</sup> All things being equal, if international forces are important, then the adoption of legal gender quotas should be higher in more cosmopolitan states, in regions where these policies have been widely adopted, in states where international organizations or donors have advocated passing gender quota laws, and in countries where the international community has provided long-term development assistance supporting inclusive and participatory forms of democratic governance.

*Activism by domestic advocacy groups* is measured through coding (of information from the Quota Project and from supplementary search procedures) by whether women's organizations mobilized in the passage of the first gender quota law. Agencies were also sub-divided and classified as domestic women's or feminist NGOs, women in some political parties, and woman's commissions or other official state equality policy agency.

To control for *socioeconomic conditions*, the study includes several macro-level factors in models (see technical appendix A), including the role of economic development (logged per capita GDP), the ration of women in the labor force, the ratio of girls to boys in schools, and the distribution of natural resources (logged per capita resource rents as a proportion of GDP). To control for the impact of *political conditions*, models also include the state's contemporary level of democratization (measured by the combined Freedom House and Polity IV estimates). Finally, *cultural factors* are monitored including the predominant religion and thus whether societies were classified as Muslim or Orthodox.

### **III: The Global Spread of Gender Quotas**

We can first describe contemporary patterns and trends in the adoption and revision of gender quotas observed around the world before looking at the multivariate evidence for the core propositions already discussed.

#### **First, second and third wave of gender quotas**

In this paper we identify *three quota waves* of gender quotas for federal or national parliament. The early, *First Wave* consists of the use of various types of gender quotas in a considerable number of

the Communist states and in a few other countries, Pakistan since 1956 and Bangladesh since 1972, in both countries with interruptions, and Egypt 1979-84. Under state socialism, the Communist Party mobilized separate women's organizations, which in some countries, for instance in the DDR, were secured a certain number of seats alongside with trade unions, youth organizations etc. Or efforts were made to ensure that legislative bodies contained women through the use of loose quotas or guidelines for candidate selection. Nevertheless real power remained in the upper ranks of the party, such as the Central Committee or Politburo, where far fewer women held office (Lapidus 1975; Wolchik 1981; Waylen 2007; Matland and Montgomery 2003). More research is needed on the actual use of various types of gender quotas in the Communist countries, since the myth of a general 30 percent quota for women is obvious a post-communist construction.

Further, during the 1970-80s a number of political parties in the Nordic countries starting using gender quotas for their own internal organizations and their electoral lists, e.g. voluntary party quotas. This no doubt contributed to the world high level of political representation of women, even if electoral quotas by law were never adopted in the Nordic countries (Freidenvall et al 2006).

The *Second Wave* of gender quota adoption is here dated to the period after 1990, starting with the Argentinian 'Ley de Cupo Feminino' from 1991, which required that 30 per cent of the candidates of the electoral lists of all parties should be women, e.g. legal candidate quotas. In some of the countries, especially in Western Europe, the law was preceded by voluntary party quotas adopted by one or more political parties, but in other cases gender quotas for election started by an act of legislation, passed in parliament and binding for all parties.

*The Gender Quota Database, GQD* reveals a steady continuation of quota adoptions by new countries, but with a highpoint after the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995. The discussions about the Millennium Development Goals, MDG and not least the 2010 report showing lack of sufficient progress may also have contributed to later increase in quota adoption.

This study has the second wave as its focus. However, the paper also identifies a recent trend of amendments of the quota laws, tentatively labeled a *third wave* of electoral gender quotas, a movement of changing the original first quota law, in an overwhelming number of cases making it stronger. This third wave or next generation of quota laws will be discussed in section V.



## **The contemporary distribution of gender quotas**

[Figure 2 about here]

The typology discussed earlier can be used to classify policies in use around the world, derived from the classification in the Gender Quota Database. Figure 2 suggests that almost two decades after Beijing, by May 2014 the majority of countries worldwide (56%) use gender quota policies for election or appointment to the lower or single house of the federal or national parliament. The database indicates that by May 2014, out of 196 independent nation-states worldwide, 57 (29%) have legal candidate quotas regulating the gender composition of the nominated candidates, while 21(10,7%) have reserved seats for women, and an additional 32 countries (16.3%) which lack legal provisions have adopted voluntary gender quotas in the internal rule-book used by at least one of the three largest individual political parties represented in parliament.<sup>10</sup>

Gender quotas in politics have become a global trend. The cumulative rise of this phenomenon is illustrated in Figure 1, presented earlier, showing the number of countries which have passed gender quota policies for the lower or single house of federal or national parliaments annually since the early-1990s, by main legal quota types. The figure illustrates how the number of countries in the world without legal gender quotas is steadily decreasing. It is impossible to analyze recent electoral trends in the world disregarding this 'revolution', which represents a challenge to the traditional point of view that gender equality must come 'by itself' without state intervention.

### **IV: Why are quotas first adopted?**

So what are the factors driving the initial adoption of legal gender quotas (combining both measures requiring gender laws for candidates for all parties and reserved seats for women) since 1990? Table 1 presents the results of a series of multivariate logistical regression models with the main variables and the controls discussed earlier.

#### *International forces*

The results in Model A support the proposition that international forces have played a role in the diffusion of gender quotas, as Bush argues (2011). External factors which are important for the adoption of legal quotas include the overall level of Official Development Aid invested in democratic participation in a country. We believe that this is because developing countries which are seeking to attract inward investment and bilateral donor aid have a strong incentive to comply with international norms and standards, especially in transitional regimes writing new constitutions as part of state-

building and peace-building processes. Moreover the provision of resources and technical assistance for democratic participation can assist local actors to mobilize and design effective policies which facilitates achieving targets for gender equality in public life set by the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Common activities by international organizations, designed to encourage the adoption of effective gender quota policies, involve sharing knowledge about international standards and best practices, encouraging south-south cooperation, organizing capacity-building workshops, highlighting countries lagging behind the MDG target in women's representation, and providing technical reports, handbooks, guidelines, and expert advice. Through conventions, treaties, and agreements such as the MDGs and SDGs, the international community also plays a strong normative role advocating member states to take steps to ensure gender balance and women's rights in public life, including through many equal opportunity and positive action measures.

In Table 1 Model A, the regional adoption of use of legal gender quotas also proves significant; this suggests a contagion effect of policy learning flowing across national borders, especially among neighboring states sharing cultural, linguistic, colonial and economic ties. The clearest examples include the rapid diffusion of gender quotas in the form of legal candidate quotas in Latin America, following their adoption by in Argentina in 1991 (Htun and Jones 2002; Araújo and García 2006). Similarly, the use of reserved seats in Afghanistan was probably influenced by policies in neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh. Another widely-cited example is the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian constitution in 1993, through the reservation of 33% of seats for women, created 1,000,000 slots for women in local self-government institutions. The effective ANC-party quota, which raised women's representation to over 30%, later to over 40% in the South African parliament are also commonly cited in discussions about Africa. The French parity law influenced debates for quota adoption in Morocco, Tunisia and in other Francophone African countries, and inspired other Western European countries such as Spain, Portugal and Belgium, to move from voluntary party quotas, usually initiated by left and green parties, to gender quotas by law. The countries in former Yugoslavia adopted legal candidate quotas one after the other. Experience in Uganda influenced the adoption of reserved seats in Rwanda, the country which was later to obtain the first parliament in the world with a female majority. Regional diffusion is now always positive for women, however, as shown by the abandonment of all quotas which had been used in Communist party recruitment in Central and Eastern Europe. This led to a sharp decline in women's representation in the early 1990s, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, before the eventual re-adoption of some quotas in more recent years (Galligan et al 2007; Norris and Krook 2011).

Table 1 and Figure 3 about here

To examine this further, Figure 3 maps the geographic distribution of gender quota policies in use today. The regional patterns are apparent, including the popularity of reserved seats in the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia and parts of East Asia, and thus in many countries with single-member plurality electoral systems and often with more authoritarian regimes. By contrast, legal statutory gender quota policies have diffused throughout Central and South America, and these policies are also popular in Central Africa and parts of Francophone Africa. Europe was never in the forefront in adoption of quotas by law, but today legal quotas are also found in some established democracies in Western Europe, including Belgium, France, Portugal, and Spain, and in a few of the new democracies in Eastern and Central Europe, including Slovenia and Poland. Yet, quota policies are uncommon today in many states in post-Communist Eastern Europe, where the legacy of the Soviet-era continues to make these policies unpopular, although legal quotas now have been implemented in Albania, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and most of the countries in former Yugoslavia ([www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org); Antic and Lokar 2006; Norris and Krook 2011). Voluntary gender quotas have been adopted by specific political party rules in countries in the Southern Cone of Africa, as well as in many Anglo-American democracies (with the exception of the United States) and in many (although not all) states in the Nordic region.

#### *Domestic advocates*

Table 1 Model B continues to include the international factors and adds domestic advocacy. This evidence suggests that quotas are not simply imposed on countries as a result of external pressures by Western donors or regional organizations; the initial adoption of legal gender quotas are also influenced by advocacy within each country by the women's movement and women in political parties. Where activists press policy-makers to strengthen opportunities for women's representation through the adoption of positive action reforms, this appears to have a significant impact on the successful passage of these laws. The statistical models reflect our personal direct experience in the process in several countries, which suggests that a combination of international advocacy and technical assistance, the role models of neighboring countries which have passed gender quota laws, and the strength of women's advocacy groups, seem to facilitate the adoption of these measures.

#### *Controls*

Moreover in Table 1 Model C the role of regional practices and women advocacy groups in political parties and civil society remain significant after incorporating successive structural, political and cultural controls into the models. The results of the full model confirms that the adoption of legal

gender quotas was significantly with the factors already identified, although it was unaffected by levels of economic development or societies where girls and boys have been relatively equal in educational opportunities. The ratio of women to men in the labor force, an indicator of women's growing entry into the economic marketplace, also does not explain the adoption of these measures, even though others have found this to be associated with the success of women in elected office (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008). Ross (2008) argues that the 'resource curse' appear to hold back women's engagement in the paid workforce and also opportunities in public life, as well as having many other negative consequences for corruption and patronage politics. Nevertheless the use of gender quota policies does not seem to be affected today by whether Middle East and North African societies are oil rich (such as Iraq) or relatively oil-poor (such as Tunisia). Cultural explanations suggest that more women will succeed in elected office where traditional social mores and norms about the appropriate division of sex roles in the home, family and public sphere have become more egalitarian. Yet the predominant type of religious faith in a society, where Muslim societies might be expected to prove both more culturally conservative and also against the use of quotas, remain insignificant. Societies with an Orthodox tradition may also be expected to be more negative towards these policies, which are widely associated as part of the Communist legacy of earlier decades, nevertheless the main type of religious culture does not prove to be significant predictors of the adoption of gender quotas. As shown by the cases of Bangladesh and Pakistan, some Muslim societies have in fact been some of the earliest adopters of reserved seats. Legal quotas have today been adopted by many other Muslim societies, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia and Indonesia. Thus on balance in the final model three factors predict the initial adoption of gender quota policies: regional practices, women advocates who support these policies in political parties and in the women's movement.

#### **V: Why are gender quota policies revised?**

A dynamic perspective on quota law adoption reveals that of all the 80 countries, which had adopted electoral gender quota by law in 2014, as many as 37 have later amended their law, often within a relatively short span of years.<sup>11</sup> Lawmakers as well as electoral authorities have been involved in changing the text of the law and its implementation. In contrast to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's suggestion that the impact of quotas is "wearing off" (Press release, March 10, 2015), the many amendments rather point to future growth.

Overwhelmingly, recent revisions of quota laws have strengthened the provisions. In a few exceptions the amendments have weakened or even abandoned gender quota policies, including Egypt,

where the regime for the 2011-election exchanged the reserved seats for a minimalistic demand of just one woman on each list, as well as Venezuela and Italy, who abandoned their quota laws. All other amendments have made the quota provisions stronger, for instance by raising the quota percent or number, introducing or strengthening rank order rules on the candidate lists, and raising sanctions for non-compliance. To give some examples: In *Belgium*, the 2002 law requires that the two top positions cannot have candidates of the same sex, and the whole list shall have 50-50 of each sex, while the first quota law only demanded a minimum of one third of each sex. In *Armenia*, a quota rule in 1999 required 5 per cent women among the candidates for the PR part of the election to be increased to 15 percent in 2007, from 2012 with stronger rank order rules. In *Uganda*, women on reserved seats were prior to 2006 elected indirectly, but from 2006 in direct elections of 112 district seats reserved for women candidates. In *Morocco*, following the first introduction of reserved seat quotas in 2002, the number of seats reserved for women was raised from 30 to 60 in 2011 and the provisions in general made more sustainable ([www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org); Darhour and Dahlerup 2013).

Can these many amendments be interpreted as a move away from symbolic to more substantive quota regulations? If quota regulations in the first place in many countries turned out to have little effect – which might have been intentional in some cases – while at the same time the knowledge of the importance of effective quota designs is spreading internationally, then the tendency to strengthen the original law would rise.

This perspective can be formulated into a question of the relation between the level of women's representation and quota reforms, both from the outset and in relation to amendments. In Part I, we suggested that low representation could lead to increased probability of adopting quotas.

[Table 2 about here]

Table 2 shows the level of women's representation at the outset for all countries, firstly, before the first quota law adoption, secondly before the new generation of amended quota laws. The table shows that the largest group, 41 (51%), were countries which when adopting their first quota law had a very low women's representation, below 10 per cent. But even countries with over 20 per cent's representation or even over 30 per cent as for example Spain, have passed quota laws, so-called 'high echelon' quotas (Freidenvall et al 2006). It is no surprise that the general level was higher at the outset of the latest revisions, since women's representation in general has increased over the years – partly an effect of gender quota laws. The wave of countries amending their quota laws is of special interest. Was this large number of amendments primarily a reaction to disappointing effects of the first quota law -

being non-substantial, and merely symbolic? To answer this question we need to know the effects of the first quota laws.

[Table 3 about here]

Table 3 brings the first global overview over the effect of the first quota laws, linking it to the likelihood of later amendments, by quota type. This is measured by per cent unit change, no matter the level, from the election just prior to quota adoption to the first election after the adoption. The result is that more than half the countries experienced no or only a very modest increase (<5 per cent units) at the first election, when the quota provision took effect. However, the other half of the countries experienced a substantial increase. Consequently, it would be wrong to label quota provisions in general as being merely symbolic. Reserved seat countries are doing a little better than candidate quota countries, following the more decisive character of reserved seats. Eleven countries experienced no change or even a decrease after the adoption of the first quota law, and of these only five have later amended their law. Interestingly, the table illustrates that even countries with good results have amended their quota laws.

In conclusion, an ineffective first quota law cannot be seen as the only factor behind this new wave of amendments designed to strengthen quota provisions. Policy tracing is also needed to monitor the importance of other factors, including policy learning, raised expectations and the role of women's movements. In all reported cases on amendments, women activists inside and outside the political parties had expressed disappointment with the first results or with the procedures around the implementation, no matter the level, and have pushed for improvements.

## **VI: Conclusions**

The worldwide spread of gender quota policies in recent decades has been a remarkable development, not least because these statutes are far more radical than many other alternative policies which are designed to strengthen equal opportunities in elected office, such as investing in training and capacity development for candidates, or providing public funding and outreach. There is a growing literature on this phenomenon but much research is case-study based, rather than providing broader generalizations. This study has sought to develop and test an integrated theory emphasizing the role of international organizations and domestic political activists, as well as the relative level of women's representation prior to the adoption and revision of gender quota policies. Models control for the role of structural conditions and mass cultural values. The propositions arising from the theory have been examined empirically by drawing upon the new comprehensive cross-national time-series dataset

classifying the adoption and amendments to these policies, *The Gender Quota Database* (GQD, Release 1.0 May 2014). Several key findings emerge from the analysis.

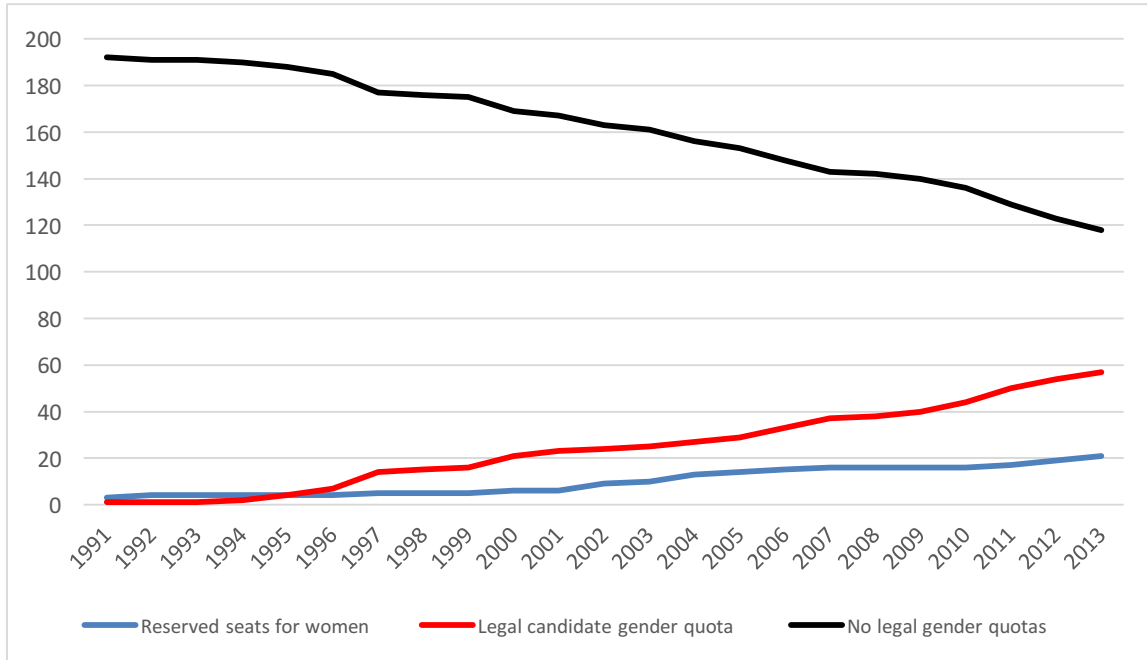
The results underline the importance of both international diffusion and domestic advocates for the adoption of initial gender quota laws. In many ways, this reflects the role of norm diffusion in international human rights. The international community adopted the issue of gender equality in elected office, and the radical Beijing declaration from 1995 changed the goal from ECOSOCs 30 per cent (1990) into 'equitable distribution of power' and recommended affirmative action strategies, even if the controversial word of 'quotas' was not mentioned. This push for gender equality in elected office was reinforced by the 2000-2015 MDGs. Quota adoption has been encouraged by changing insights into the causes of women's low political representation, shifting from women's alleged lack of political interest and competence on the supply side to blaming political institutions on the demand side, including political parties for their lack of inclusiveness. Following international declarations, agencies such as UN Women, multilateral bodies such as OSCE, International IDEA, IPU and OAS, and northern bilateral donors such as NORAD and SIDA, have prioritized initiatives designed to strengthen women's participation. Consequently, many post-conflict countries have adopted gender quotas, and today such measures are in use in a broad selection of political regimes, more often in democratic and authoritarian regime, less often in mixed regimes. The successful example of gender quotas in several countries, exemplified by South Africa in the southern cone of Africa and Argentina in Latin America, encouraged neighboring states with cultural ties to follow suit. Women activists working in human rights NGOs and within political parties have been able to use global norms, technical assistance and development aid to amplify demands that countries should take action to meet international standards. Comparative analyses have fostered an international competition between states to have a higher level of women's representation in parliament than at least their neighboring countries.

Finally this study has shown that it would be wrong to call the wave of quota adoption, 1990-2014, merely symbolic, since almost half of the countries with quota laws experienced a substantive increase in women's numerical representation in the first election after the adoption, an important achievement in its own right. However, during the recent wave of quota amendments, many countries with only weak results of their quota regulation have strengthened their provisions, for example by introducing or tightening penalties for non-compliance, rank order rules or raising levels. Strengthening has, however, also taken place in countries with more effective policies, probably as a result of experiences learned, including from neighboring countries, as well as raising expectations. Only two countries have abandoned their quota law, and only one has weakened it, indicating that electoral

gender quota as a measure to change women's historical under-representation has won wide-spread acceptance in spite of controversies around their adoption.



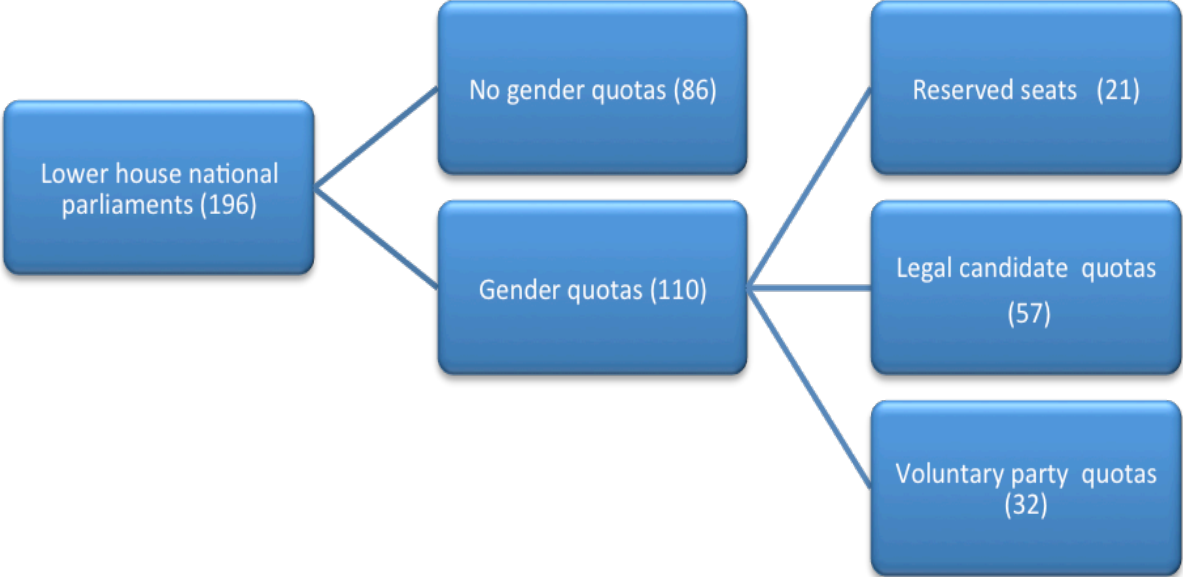
**Figure 1: Trends in the global spread of gender quota laws since 1990**



**Note:** Number of independent nation-states using each policies for the lower or single house of national parliaments since 1990.

**Source:** The Quota Project <http://www.quotaproject.org/>

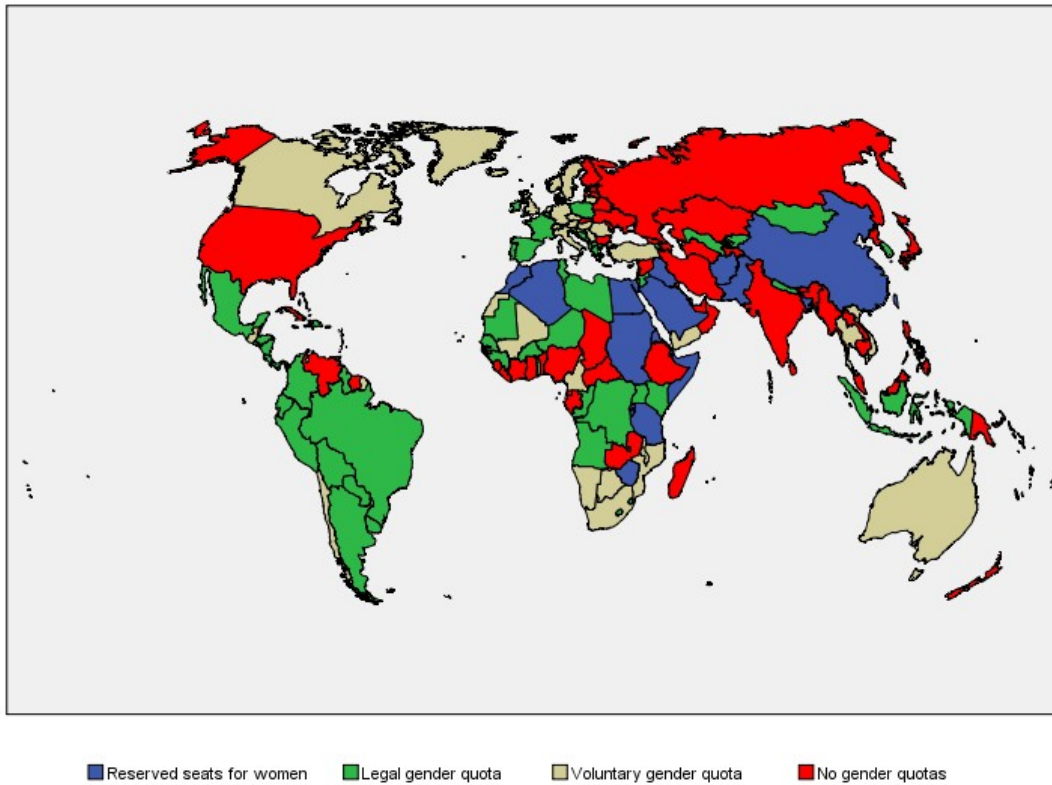
Figure 2: Classification and distribution of gender quota policies



**Note:** The use of gender quota policies for the lower or single house of the federal or national parliament in 196 contemporary independent nation-states (incl. Palestine, Taiwan and Kosovo). May 2014. Countries are categorized into reserved seats for women members in the lower house of the national parliament; legal candidate gender quotas (applying to all lists of party nominees); voluntary candidate gender quotas (applying to some lists of party nominees); and no gender quotas. Six countries have both reserved seats and candidate quotas and are listed according to the strongest provision, the reserved seats (Algeria, Iraq, Kenya, Kosovo, Mauritania and Rwanda). A country is listed as having voluntary party quotas if at least one of the three biggest parties represented in parliament has opted for gender quotas. Only countries without legal quotas (reserved seats or candidate quotas) are listed as having voluntary party quotas. Since Venezuela and Italy have abandoned their quota laws, they are omitted in Figure 2 and 3, which show the current use of gender quotas.

**Source:** The Gender Quota Database (GQD). Release 1.0 2014. Stockholm: University of Stockholm.

**Figure 3: The regional distribution of gender quota policies**



**Note:** The global distribution of gender quota policies for the lower or single house of the national parliament, 196 countries, May 2014. Countries are categorized into reserved seats for women members in the lower house of the national parliament; legal candidate gender quotas (applying to all lists of party nominees); voluntary candidate gender quotas (applying to some lists of party nominees); and no gender quotas.

**Source:** The Gender Quota Database (GQD). Release 1.0 2014. Stockholm: University of Stockholm.

**Table 1: Explaining the adoption of legal gender quotas**

	INTERNATIONAL		DOMESTIC		ALL	
	Beta	Sig	Beta	Sig	Beta	Sig
<b>INTERNATIONAL FORCES</b>						
Globalization index	.039	.068	-.025	.523	.063	.354
<b>Aid spent on democratic participation, 10 yr av.</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.043</b>	.000	.439	.000	.717
International advocacy	22.30	.999	22.6	.998	23.9	.998
<b>Regional adoption of legal quotas</b>	<b>9.09</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>.010</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>.024</b>
<b>DOMESTIC ADVOCACY</b>						
Women's Commission advocated quota			24.1	.998	27.8	.997
<b>Women in political parties advocated quota</b>			3.09	.071	<b>6.65</b>	<b>.048</b>
<b>Women's movement advocated quota</b>			<b>4.06</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>.003</b>
<b>CONTROLS</b>						
Log per capita GDP					.000	.109
Ratio of women in the labor force					-.113	.964
Gender ratio in schools					.054	.396
Log natural resources					.194	.509
Predominant Muslim society					1.99	.151
Predominant Orthodox society					-.989	.846
Levels of democratization					-.057	.828
Constant	-7.12		-7.01		-18.7	
Nagelkerke R2	.410		.839		.872	
% predicted correctly	75.2		93.4		91.7	
N. countries	121		121		121	

**Note:** The models use logistic regression with cross-national data where the dependent variable is whether the country has adopted 'legal gender candidate quotas for all party lists of nominees or reserved seats' (0/1). See the Technical appendix for details of all the variables.

**Sources:** The Gender Quota Database (GQD). Release 1.0 2014. Stockholm: University of Stockholm; Quality of Government standard dataset (Dec 2013). [www.qog.pol.gu.se/](http://www.qog.pol.gu.se/)

**Table 2. Prior level of women’s representation before quota law adoption/amendment**

Proportion of women in parliament	Last election before the first quota		Last election before the latest quota	
	<i>N.</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<10%	41	51%	5	14%
10-19.9%	21	26%	13	37%
20-29.9%	10	12%	11	31%
30-39.9%	3	4%	5	14%
>40%	0	0%	1	3%
DK	2	2%	0	0%
No prev. election	3	4%	0	0%
Number of countries	80	100%	35	100%

**Note:** Kosovo, Libya and Guyana had no previous functioning elections. Italy and Venezuela are omitted among amending countries.

**Source:** The Gender Quota Database (GQD). Release 1.0 2014. Stockholm: University of Stockholm.

**Table 3. Effect of quota laws on women's representation and on quota law revision**

Change in the proportion of women's representation following the first quota law in % units	Countries with reserved seats	Countries with legal candidate quotas	Total number of countries	Of these: Countries which have changed the original quota law
	<i>N.</i>	<i>N.</i>	<i>N.</i>	<i>N.</i>
Decrease	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
No change		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Increase < 5%	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>
Increase 5-9.99%	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>
Increase 10-19.99%	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>
Increase >20%	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>
No previous election		<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Elections not held yet	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	
N/A	<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>N</i> =	<i>27</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>35</i>

**Notes:** The effect of quota policies is estimated by comparing the change in the proportion of women in the lower or single house of parliament in elections held immediately before and after the introduction or immediately before the revision of gender quota laws, without any controls. Italy and Venezuela are omitted.

**Source:** The Gender Quota Database (GQD). Release 1.0 2014. Stockholm: University of Stockholm.

## Technical Appendix A: Indicators and variable measures

Category	Indicator	Measure	Year(s)	Source
<b>DEPENDENT VARIABLE</b>				
Gender quotas	Classification of the type of gender quota policies	1..Reserved seats for women; 2. Legal gender quotas for lists of party candidates; 3. If none of the above, then voluntary gender quotas for lists of party candidates in at least one of the three largest parties; 4. None of the above.	2014	Quota Project
Legal gender quotas	Adoption of any legal gender quota policies or reserved seat	1,2 above = yes (1); 4= No (0).	2014	Quota Project
<b>EXPLANATORY VARIABLES</b>				
International	Development aid spending	Aid for democratic participation & civil society (10yr ave)	2013	AidData
International	Global diffusion	KOF Index of Globalization, 100-pts	2013	KOF/QoG
International	Regional adoption of quota policies	Mean number of states with any gender quota policy in a global region.	2014	Quota Project
International	Advocacy	Coded: Did women's organizations ... advocate passing the first gender quota law? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International organizations, movements, donors</li> </ul>	2014	Quota Project
Domestic political activists	Advocacy groups	Coded: Did women's organizations ... advocate passing the first gender quota law? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women/feminist NGOs</li> <li>Women in some political parties</li> <li>A woman's Commission or other equality policy state agency</li> </ul>	2014	Quota Project
<b>STRUCTURAL CONTROLS</b>				
Socio-economic	Level of economic development	Logged per capita GDP (in ppp constant US dollars)	2012	WDI

Socio-economic	Female labor force participation rate	Women in labor force, ratio to Men	2012	WEF
Socio-economic	Gender Ratio in School	Ratio of girls to boys in secondary level education	2013	WDI
Socio-economic	Natural resources	Log total natural resources rents (as % of GDP)	2012	WDI
Political conditions	Contemporary level of democracy-autocracy	Freedom House/Imputed Polity	2013	QoG
Cultural values	Predominant religion	Predominant religious population in each society (Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, Other)	2014	CIA Yearbook



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For more details about the data, see [note 10](#). We want to thank Master students of political science at Stockholm University, Alma Jonssen and Vaselis Petrogiannis, who worked as interns at International IDEA with the update of the quota database, <http://www.quotaproject.org>, and later as university research assistance for this paper, and Women in Politics Network at Stockholm University and the Electoral Integrity Project at the University of Sydney and Harvard University for providing financial support for developing *The Gender Quota Database*. GQD: Release 1.0 May 2014. Stockholm: University of Stockholm.

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*The Gender Quota Database, GQD*. Release 1.0 May 2014. Stockholm University.

[www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org) – the global overview over quota provisions, by International IDEA, Stockholm University and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

[www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm) – the global ranking of countries according to women's representation in national parliaments.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org) Women in National Parliaments, last referenced June 2015.

<sup>2</sup> *The Gender Quota Database*. GQD: Release 1.0 May 2014. Stockholm: University of Stockholm.

<sup>3</sup> Art. 2, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

<sup>4</sup> Par. 62, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/mexico.html>

<sup>5</sup> Article 7, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Par. 86, 88, 91, <http://www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/conf/fwcw/nfls/nfls.en>

<sup>7</sup> Par. 181-95, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/fwcwn.html>

<sup>8</sup> KOF Index of Globalization <http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch/>

<sup>9</sup> Analyzed from [www.AidData.org](http://www.AidData.org).

<sup>10</sup> For details, see <http://www.quotaproject.org/>. The May 2014 update of the Global Quota Web site is published as *Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas*, June 2014 and is available at [www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int). This paper is based on this updated data base, but additional data has been collected, including on the effect of quota adoption specified for elections before and after the first and the present quota adoption (if different): *The Gender Quota Database (GQD)*. Release 1.0 2014. Stockholm: University of Stockholm. The present study does not include quotas at subnational level or Upper House quotas, thus the total number of countries with electoral gender quotas is limited to 110 (In contrast the Atlas lists 133 countries: 36 with R.S, 60 with legal candidate quotas and 37 with voluntary party quotas). Of the countries with legal gender quotas in *GQD*, two third (63%) also have also adopted legal gender quotas for local elections, and among the countries with an Upper House, a little more than half (55%) have also adopted such quotas for their Upper House.

<sup>11</sup> Two countries, Venezuela and Italy, have abolished their quota laws, leaving 78 countries with quota laws as of May 2014.