

Definition and Purpose

- = mechanism to guarantee a certain percentage of women are present either (1) the ballot paper or (2) in parliament
- act as a process and a facilitator of women's political inclusion
- compensate for the many gendered barriers of accessing political office

Types of Gender Quota's

- Constitutional (e.g. France, Rwanda) → aka reserved seats: are usually enshrined in a country's constitution and guarantee that a certain proportion/number of parliamentary seats are reserved for women
- Voluntary (e.g. Scandinavian countries; Germany) → quota's are voluntarily set by political parties to facilitate the nomination of a certain number or proportion of women candidates
- Legislative (e.g. ROI, Belgium, Spain, Poland, Argentina) → are enshrined in the election law, political party law or other comparable law of a country; usually apply to the nomination stage of candidate selection

Application of Quota's

- Results /Outcome (Reserve Seats)
- Nomination (Candidate Selection)

Effectiveness of Quota's (Franceschet et al, 2012)

- imposing significant quota obligations and penalties
- strong political will
- combining (fit) with institutional structures

Reasons for Implication

- women's mobilisation
- democratic renewal/change
- international pressure (UN)

Reasons for Implication (cont)

- elite support and strategic considerations -
- > often times key if positive action measures are to be introduced

Reasons for Movement

- Legacy of (i) historical exclusion of women from political citizenship (ie suffrage); (ii) bias towards traditional gender roles have resulted in women's under-representation worldwide; and (iii) challenge the gendered nature of political institutions and decision-making
- progress in women's representation is slow, static, and subject to reversals
- growing pressures on states/political parties since 90s to tackle women's under-representation

Men are over represented: 26.9% women parliamentarians; 73.1% men parliamentarians -

> time to problematise men's overrepresentation rather than normalise women's underrepresentation (Rainbow Murray)

Ireland is ranked 104th of the world today

endogenous pressure: e.g. women's movements, growing electoral competition, political parties

exogenous pressure: e.g. UN, and the EU

Illegitimacy of Gender Quotas

- Three main tools mobilised to "render gender quotas illegitimate" are:
- Tool 1: false universalism and political principles
- Tool 2: male power and political survival
- Tool 3: gender and leadership norms
- > Each tool is underpinned by gendered norms to protect the status quo
- > Each tool has associated strategies to undermine the effectiveness of gender quotas (see image)

Reason for Differences in Success

- Issues of system fit -> easier to 'fit' gender quota with PR-List electoral system
- Placement rules/mandates
- Sanctions, compliance and enforcement -
- > how are the quotas enforced? financial, disqualification, list rejection, etc.
- winnable seats
- political leadership & will
- political & wider societal culture

Lessons Learned

- it takes at least three electoral cycles to see numbers increase
- Resistance from 'local' party and resentment from male candidates
- Quotas have been associated with an increase in the introduction of women-friendly policy legislative proposals
- need to manage expectations: "Women elected following the introduction of gender quotas shouldn't carry the sole responsibility 'to change the system'"

resistance against gender quota's

	Goals	Forms	Actions	Effects	Tools	Counter-strategy
Pre-election period	Criticism: quota fosters ambiguity in legal status	Applied to legal frameworks to overturn or minimise quotas	Aggravated men, Media, Legal "persons"	Quotas declared unconstitutional or illegal	False universalism of political principles	Constitutional and legal reform to "legitimize" quota
Election period	Violate spirit and/or letter of quota rules	"Misunderstand" or "bargain" quota requirements	Party elites, Male crash	Quotas not effective in electing more women	Male power and political survival	Clarifications to quota requirements
		Apply minimal interpretation of quota rules		Effect but dis-empower women as political actors		Improved monitoring of compliance
		Engender women's electoral losses				Legal judgments and reforms to strengthen women's political rights
		Current violence, intimidation, or electoral fraud				Name-gathering campaigns
		Normative views and disapproval of male politicians				
Post-election period	Reduce women's capacity and legitimacy as legislators, whether or not elected through quota	Rate as double that quota women are "qualified"	Male elites, Media, Citizens	Disparage female politicians	Gender and leadership norms	Studies on qualifications of quota and non-quota officials
		Undermine women's legislative performance		Reduce other women's political ambitions		Women-specific orientations and training
						Law and policies on violence and harassment

Gender Quota's in Ireland

In Ireland, legislative gender quotas require that political parties nominate 30% women candidates for general elections.

- Passed in 2012 to address gender imbalance in Parliament.
- Quotas apply to parties running at least 30 candidates.
- Parties face financial penalties for not meeting quotas.
- Aims to increase representation of women in politics.

reasons:

- The under-representation of women in Irish politics
- Voluntary measures/'soft' targets were tried but failed
 - > Party investment on attracting and promoting women in politics was low
- Political reform, democratic renewal, 'New Politics'
 - > a desire to break away from the 'old way' of 'doing' politics
- Women's mobilisation and feminist activism in society and parliament
- Levelling the 'political playing pitch'
- Party elite support in government

impact:

- 90 per cent increase women candidates
- 48 per cent increase in number of women TDs
- At the 2020 general election, 22.5 per cent women's representation in Dáil Éireann
 - > A record high but far away from gender parity



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