

**United Nations
Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues
And Advancement of Women (OSAGI)
Expert Group Meeting on
"Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral
Processes in Post-Conflict Countries"
19-22 January 2004
Glen Cove**

**Political Parties and Special Measures: Enhancing Women's
Participation in Electoral Processes**

Prepared by Julie Ballington & Richard E. Matland¹

* The views expressed in this paper, which has been reproduced as received, are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

Political Parties and Special Measures: Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes

1. Introduction

This paper will focus primarily on the role of political parties in recruiting candidates for election, the specific challenges that confront women, and examine the use of special measures as a way to facilitate women's entry into politics. In so doing, there is an emphasis on the role of formal institutions – the electoral system and party rules – in selecting candidates for election. Lessons from both developed and post-conflict states are included.

In most legislative systems, political parties are the main vehicle through which candidates are elected. Although in some contexts and electoral systems particularly at the sub-national level, candidates are elected as independent from parties (typically running on issue-specific or particular ethnic tickets), political parties typically assume the responsibility for nomination. Parties are entrusted with perhaps the most strategic responsibility in democracy – to prepare and select candidates for election and to support them in positions of leadership and governance.²

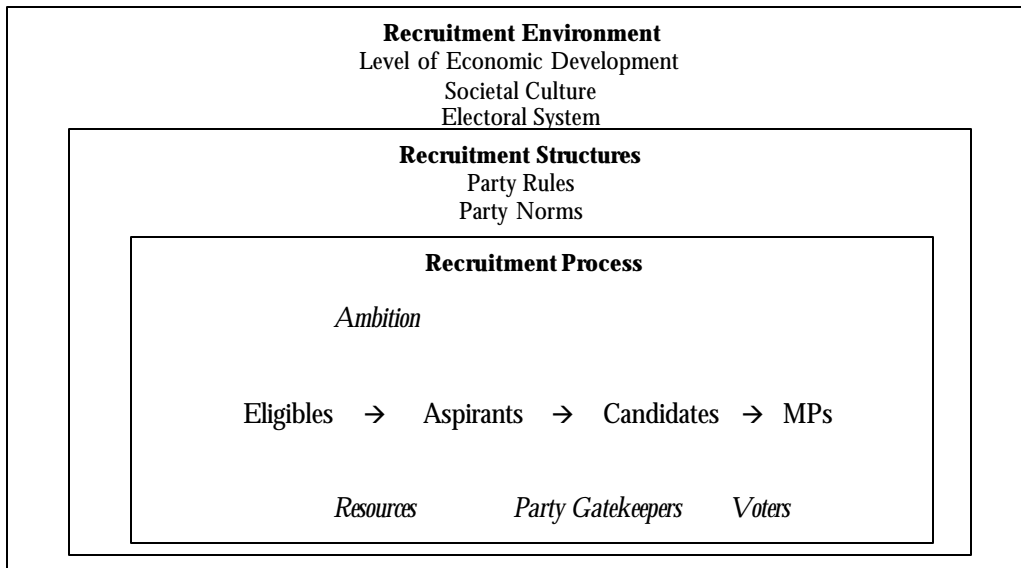
After first examining the general stages of candidate selection by political parties, the particular obstacles that confront women in this process are highlighted. These include the electoral system type, the influence of culture, party organisation and rules, the pool of women candidates, and election campaigning. In light of the challenges that women face, special measures that can compensate for these challenges are discussed.

2. Political Party Candidate Recruitment

The recruitment of candidates for election can be understood in terms of stages, but the actual process varies dramatically from country to country. Country variations result from the nature of the political regime and level of democratic development, the level of organisation of the women's lobby, the supply of women candidates, the strength and organisation of political parties and the electoral system. But in order to explain and highlight the main entry points that potentially affect the election of women to political institutions, the 'stage' approach will be used in this paper.

At the most elementary level, in any given country there will be a pool of 'eligibles' (citizens that fulfil the legal and formal requirements for becoming legislators), but only a small group will consider putting themselves forward as possible candidates – 'aspirants'. An even smaller number will be able to secure the nomination of a party to become 'candidates', and an even smaller number will garner sufficient support from voters to win a legislative seat. Generally women are not formally discriminated against at the start of this process - in most countries, there are no legal barriers to women standing for election. While the eligibility pool at the start of the process is usually more than 50 percent, by the end of the process the proportion has dropped dramatically. The under-representation of women is therefore explained by the barriers women face at different points in the process, including different cultural and political contexts.³

Table 1: Legislative Recruitment System



Source: Adapted from Matland and Montgomery, 2003, “Recruiting Women to National Legislatures,” p. 21.

2.1. Eligibles to Aspirants

There are many factors that affect a potential aspirant’s evaluation of whether she will campaign for election, including an assessment of the costs of time, energy, financial commitment and the likelihood of winning, personal ambition and the benefits of serving as an elected official in terms of remuneration, status and political power. Calculations are affected by a potential candidate’s perception of whether there are substantial openings for new candidates, by how friendly the political environment is to their candidacy, and by an estimation of the resources needed to run an effective campaign.⁴ One of the most important factors that can help increase the number of women considering entering politics is the extent to which a country has a women’s movement or organizations focusing specifically on women’s issues. Women’s organizations provide women with experience in public settings, help build their self-confidence, and provide a support base.⁵ A woman who can draw on resources from a woman’s organization to help support her campaign is more likely to run and is more likely to be seen as a viable candidate by the party apparatus.

2.2. Aspirants to Candidates

The stage at which the party gatekeepers actually choose the candidates is perhaps the most crucial stage for getting women into office. Here, parties face both external and internal pressures that affect their decisions about candidate nomination. External pressures that bear on parties include how they will be evaluated by voters and presenting candidates the party believes will maximise their vote. If certain candidates are seen as liabilities (oftentimes women), they will not be nominated by the party. Additionally, an aspirant’s track record and activism in the

party organisation is important - those with name recognition or who are visible in the community through their profession or by holding public office will stand a better chance of nomination.

The actual process of selection of candidates differs from party to party and country to country and can be distinguished by a number of features, including, for example, the breadth of participation and centralization or decentralization of the process. Party rules and norms will affect the way in which a party carries out the actual process of nomination. For women, bureaucratically-based systems that have incorporated rules guaranteeing women's representation are a significant advantage. When the rules are unwritten it becomes much harder to devise a strategy to break into the inner circle of power

2.3. From Candidate to MP

A common perception is that sexism by voters at the final stage serves as a brick wall for women seeking to enter parliament. The evidence is mixed and it is hard to draw firm conclusions as this will vary according to electoral systems. Studies from advanced industrialised democracies suggest that voters elect parties rather than individual candidates,⁶ although this may certainly be truer for closed list proportional representation systems than majoritarian systems or open list systems. In closed list systems where electors vote for parties rather than candidates, the crucial stage for women is nomination by the party. In open list systems, the voter has the option to influence which of the candidates on the party's list should be elected by altering the composition of the list by either demoting specific candidates, for example by striking their name, or promoting a candidate by advancing the candidate's name to a higher position on the party list. This system is thought to harm women's chances for election. In majoritarian systems, being a female may be a liability where there are underlying cultural perceptions about the ability of women to perform leadership tasks.

3. Challenges Facing the Nomination of Women in Political Parties

In all three stages outlined above, there are specific challenges that women face that affect their chances of election to parliament. In most countries we find that women face specific obstacles, but these can be even more pronounced in elections in post-conflict and transitional democracies.

3.1. Electoral Systems

There is overwhelming evidence that the type of electoral system can greatly affect women's chances of election. While electoral systems alone do not determine the level of representation of women, they are important because they can be, and regularly are, changed. Compared to the cultural status of women in society or level of development, electoral rules are more malleable and may offer opportunities for the inclusion of women in the short-term.⁷ As is now common knowledge, proportional representation systems are viewed as the most 'woman-friendly'. It is no coincidence that 13 of the 15 countries with the highest representation of women use some form of proportional representation and have an average representation of 34.7 percent women in their parliaments (see Table 2). At the other end of the spectrum, the 15 countries with the lowest representation of women use plurality or majority systems, averaging one percent women in their legislatures.⁸

Table 2: Highest Ranked Countries by Electoral System Type

Rank	Country	Electoral System	% Women
1	<i>Rwanda</i>	<i>Parallel</i>	48.8
2	Sweden	List PR	45.3
3	Denmark	List PR	38.0
4	Finland	List PR	37.5
5	Netherlands	List PR	36.7
6	Norway	List PR	36.4
7	<i>Cuba</i>	<i>TRS</i>	36.0
8	Belgium	List PR	35.3
9	Costa Rica	List PR	35.1
10	Austria	List PR	33.9
11	Germany	MMP	32.2
12	Argentina	List PR	30.7
13	Iceland	List PR	30.2
14	Mozambique	List PR	30.0
15	South Africa	List PR	29.8
Average for PR countries:		13 List PR	34.7 %

Source: Information taken from Inter-Parliamentary Union and International IDEA, 2004.⁹

Why do Electoral Systems Matter?

3.1.1. Magnitudes: One of the important factors is that PR systems have higher district magnitudes which typically produce higher party magnitudes: the district magnitude is the number of seats per district and the party magnitude is the number of seats a party can win in a district. The magnitudes are important because they affect party strategy when choosing candidates. If district magnitude is one, as in majoritarian systems, the party can only win one seat in a district and cannot ‘balance the party ticket’. Female candidates must compete directly with men, and when nominating a woman, a party must deny the aspirations of all men in that district. When district magnitude increases, the chances that a party will win several seats increases and party leaders may be more conscious of balancing its ticket. Party gatekeepers have the space to think about different candidates’ appeal to specific sectors of voters, including women. Party gatekeepers may also consider balancing the demands of different factions in the party – if a women’s branch of the party exists women can be one of the groups demanding to be included in winnable positions.¹⁰

3.1.2. Party Lists: In PR systems, a party receives seats in direct proportion to their overall share of the national vote, with seats being filled from lists of candidates submitted by political parties. Most PR systems use closed lists where the political party determines the rank ordering of candidates.¹¹ This system has proven to be the most beneficial for women, provided that a sufficient number of women are nominated as candidates, and placed in electable positions on party lists. Where the number of seats per district is high, parties that win a large number of seats will go deeper into their lists which results in a better chance of women being elected. A number of political parties have adopted informal party quotas to ensure that women are placed

in significant positions on party lists. For example, in the African National Congress in South Africa, a woman must be placed in every third position on the national list. A similar legislated provision applies to all parties in Argentina. In Sweden several political parties have developed 'zipper' policies, where positions on lists are alternated between men and women.

However, some PR systems allow preferential voting through open lists where voters are able to influence which of the parties' candidates are elected through personal voting. While open lists provide the opportunity for some voters to promote women, this can easily be outweighed by the opportunity for other voters to demote women. The experience from Norway shows that the experience for women has been largely negative. In countries with conservative views about the role of women, voters with traditional views may use this to lower the women's names on a party list. Open lists may also take the pressure off political parties to address gender concerns internally – if voters do not elect women candidates then they cannot be held responsible. It therefore seems that the use of closed lists places the onus of representation on the party gatekeepers – by placing women in large numbers in electable positions, women will be elected to parliament.

3.1.3. Electoral Thresholds: PR systems encourage the election of many small parties with one or two seats, unless an electoral threshold is set which specifies that parties must receive a minimum share of the vote in order to secure a seat in parliament. Electoral thresholds can vary from 1.5 to 5 percent of the national vote. The election of a number of smaller parties to parliament can impact negatively on women, as typically parties are headed by males, and party leaders invariably take the first few slots on the list.¹² Women tend to show up further down the list, and being placed mid-list will mean they will not win any representation, unless a party wins a landslide victory.

Woman friendly institutions, including proportional representation systems, high district magnitudes and closed party lists provide the opportunity for, but do not guarantee, high levels of female representation. Other factors that influence the election of women to parliament include the cultural standing of women, the organisation of women in civil society and funding.

3.2. Cultural Context

The cultural context influences the perception of how friendly the political environment will be to women standing for election and the likelihood of winning. In highly patriarchal and traditional societies, women seeking leadership positions are often discriminated against and view politics as hostile and aggressive. Socialisation patterns in many post-conflict countries emphasise politics as a male domain, and many voters view men as better leaders than women. Customary law often asserts that males are often heads of households and are better equipped to deal with decision-making, especially in rural areas. In Jordan for example, men are generally viewed as the decision-makers, making them best suited to be members of the House of Representatives. Voting also proceeds largely on the basis of tribal affiliation where electors are likely to vote on their tribal or religious affiliation rather than follow a political ideology or issue specific platform.¹³ Traditional cultural values work against the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process.¹⁴

3.3. Political Parties

3.3.1. Party Organisation: Political parties vary substantially in different country and electoral settings with regard to the number of women candidates they nominate, where they rank on

party lists and the proportion they send to parliament. They also vary in their breadth of participation and centralization or decentralization of the process. At one end of the spectrum are systems that provide a broad opportunity for people to participate, such as primary elections in the U.S. At the other end of the spectrum are systems in which the party leader, national faction leaders, or the national executive choose the candidates. In between, in several countries all-member caucuses provide substantial opportunity for significant input from rank and file members. Depending on which of these procedures is used, party leaders, a broader set of party officials, or a significant portion of party rank and file will play the gatekeeper role.¹⁵ Party rules and norms will affect the way in which a party carries out the actual process of nomination. For women, bureaucratically-based systems that have incorporated rules guaranteeing women's representation are a significant advantage, especially if they include a party quota guaranteeing women a certain percentage of the candidacies. Even when there are no explicit rules to guarantee representation, having clear bureaucratic procedures by which candidates are chosen can be a distinct advantage to women. When the rules are unwritten it becomes harder to devise a strategy to break into the inner circle of power.¹⁶

In post-conflict elections, the status of parties and preparedness to take part in the process is an important consideration. Are the parties that are contesting the election borne out of a liberation struggle and are they sufficiently organised and resourced to ensure functionality in the electoral process? The absence of an institutionalised party system allows for the dominance of elites, patronage and clientelism where candidate recruitment tends to be hierarchical and dominated by party or faction leaders, reinforced by patriarchy, ethnic ties and loyalty. Alternatively, some states are characterised by a number of smaller parties which can be based on regional, religious, tribal or linguistic representation. In these settings, the opportunity for the party to aggregate the interests of the larger population, or facilitate the participation of women, is low. "The party system is clearly a reflection of the society from which it has come; in it the politicians reproduce the styles and conduct of society."¹⁷ In some Middle East countries, tribal support for the nomination of candidates and the adherence to tribal priorities are prerequisites. These informal candidate prerequisites are arguably a major barrier for competent women seeking to enter into the political arena.¹⁸

With weak internal organisation and rules of recruitment that are not clear, decisions are made by a limited number of elites, typically men. Women are usually on the outside and excluded from the 'all boys' network. While it is not uncommon for there to be some women who are on the inside, they are few in number, and promoting the greater representation of women is rarely seen as a party goal. Patronage systems are fairly closed and not likely to be favourable to women.¹⁹

Maley has noted that political parties in post-conflict states may refuse to take part in the electoral process, or do so late in the process. This has an effect on candidate nominations where there is little time to gather and nominate lists of candidates. This was the experience of the Inkatha Freedom Party in South Africa's 1994 election, where deciding to take part in the process a week prior to the election meant that there was little participation in the compilation of its lists of candidates.²⁰

3.3.2. Pool of Women Candidates: An argument that is sometimes used by political parties is that there are not enough women willing to stand for election as they lack experience and confidence to stand, which may be true to some extent. Post-conflict states are influenced by the regime that precedes it - in highly militarised or authoritarian regimes such as those that existed in Latin America, few women held office and there were sometimes few mobilised women.

Regimes may suppress the conventional political sphere, often banning activities of trade unions, political parties and civil society movements. In extreme cases, women are deprived of their most basic human rights, as witnessed in Afghanistan. High illiteracy rates among women only fuel arguments about their lack of qualifications. This argument is somewhat related to the level of development – with development comes increased resources and ambition, which established democracies have shown lead to a greater willingness to accept women as candidates by the parties and the general electorate. Where women are largely sidelined in transitional processes, this may result in their absence in post-conflict electoral processes unless political parties actively recruit women members to their ranks.

However, in most regimes social movements do emerge, creating the space for the mass mobilisation of women in civil society and within political organisations. Where women have been active in mobilising against the regime, there is often a greater pool of candidates to take up political positions. The number of potential women candidates has been greatly increased by the presence of the women's movements, and national and international organisations that have been involved in encouraging, preparing and training women for election. They have been instrumental in encouraging women to contest elections, often working directly in partnership with political parties themselves.

Additionally, as women build name recognition and competence in their professions they develop the networks, confidence and skills to compete in the political arena. Although it is because of gender stereotyping that women often have high levels of occupational presence in the health and education sectors, this has allowed women to demonstrate their competences and skills with a select few making the transition into the political system.²¹

Women are sometimes deterred from politics by the 'masculine model' of politics and the competitive and confrontational environment. In transitional regimes in Eastern Europe, public opinion is patriarchal in its view of the proper role of women, and these views may affect are likely to lead to diminished political ambition on the part of women.²² A further deterrent is that many women find that the parliamentary work schedule is difficult to balance with demands of family life and sometimes full time careers, often referred to as the double or triple burden. In the post-conflict situation in Rwanda, many women have been widowed as a result of the conflict leaving women as primary caretakers and breadwinners of the family. Combining these tasks with a political career is unimaginable for many women.

3.3.3. Women's Mobilisation: Not all experiences with candidate recruitment in post-conflict situations are negative. As mentioned above, the nature of the transition and the influence of different political actors in that process play an important role in the structure of the new regime. How women participated in the transition will have a bearing on the gender gains that will be made in the new regime²³ – where women activists and women's organisations are able to pressure political parties during the transitional period, the chance of the inclusion of women in electoral and party politics is greater. This was the case in the transitions in both South Africa and Mozambique. In South Africa, women's organisations and political women formed the Women's National Coalition that fought hard to be included in constitutional negotiations, winning a quota to ensure their representation in all committees. Women from the African National Congress Women's League continued the struggle for representation within their own party, proposing and eventually winning a quota to ensure that 30 percent of all candidates in the 1994 elections would be women. By applying pressure on the leadership of the party, women were able to ensure that representation was secured in the new government. The

Women's League is even assured representation in the nomination committees that decide on the placement of candidates on the party's electoral lists.

However, not all women's auxiliaries have power and there are often very few women on the executive committee of political parties. But the presence of a few vocal women can highlight the importance of women's nominations in winnable positions or constituencies. The openness of parties to women and their perception of women as a legitimate constituency are more likely to result when women are organised effectively and make the increased representation of women in legislature and the party an explicit goal.²⁴

3.4. Campaigning

Political competition demands that at least two parties or candidates effectively contest an election, communicating party or personal platforms by means of an election campaign. Campaigning is a relevant factor to examine when considering the viability of women candidates. In traditional societies, women may face discrimination during the very act of campaigning, where male and female voters may be hostile to the mere fact that a woman is contesting in this usually male dominated domain. Women may also feel that they do not possess the relevant experience and skills needed to compete and market themselves or their party, as was the case in Rwanda's recent district elections.²⁵

Another aspect which typically affects women is the financing of election campaigns and the influence of money in electoral processes. Women typically have access to less power and fewer resources than men in general, which is especially pronounced in post-conflict states. A certain amount of funding is needed in order to secure a political party's nomination. The challenge of funding also applies to men, but there are several reasons why obtaining financial resources is especially problematic for women:

3.4.1. Psychological Barriers: Gender socialization remains a barrier for some women, particularly in traditional, patriarchal societies where men have traditionally been positioned as "breadwinners" and accustomed to raising money for their own use. Where women are traditionally relegated to the private sphere, they are not typically accustomed to raising funds on their own behalf.

3.4.2. Networks: It is common that men are able to campaign more effectively outside the party structure because they are more likely to be linked to business and professional networks which can provide the financial resources and expertise. The network argument reaches further into what is traditionally understood as the "all-boys network" within the party—most party leaderships today remain male-dominated, and women are often excluded from the circle of power. The absence of women from network occasions works against their effective participation in decision making. The exceptions to this are often the spouses, daughters and sisters of well-known politicians who by virtue of their relationship have access to family capital and connections.²⁶ In many Arab states, the large majority of political women usually come from well-off classes, as they are "able to mobilise or win over a volunteer force of largely male solidarity and support."²⁷

3.4.3. Early Money and Nomination Contests: Early money is the initial financing a candidate requires to launch a campaign for candidature, enabling the candidate to establish name recognition, gain exposure and organize a campaign team. Much early money will often come from the candidate him/herself. This self-financing is often a major obstacle for women in

particular. Women still earn less than their male counterparts, and the situation most women candidates find themselves in is not conducive to putting large sums of personal money into a campaign. The acknowledgement that women needed early money in the campaign process was the inspiration behind the founding of EMILY's List in the United States.

3.4.4. Family Responsibilities: Active campaigning demands time and flexibility which few people, particularly women with families, can afford. In many families women assume primary parenting responsibilities which are often extremely difficult to combine with long hours of campaigning.

3.4.5. Scarcity of Resources: In many developing democracies the lack of money to pay even modest candidate deposits can exclude women from the election process. In Tanzania, women candidates are affected by a relative lack of resources for campaigning compared with their male counterparts. One result of this inequality is that few women run in the country's constituency seats, relying instead on the system of intra-party elections for access to reserved seats. The scarcity of resources is often felt hardest among new parties or those not represented in parliament, as only represented political parties receive public funds in Tanzania. Several women from opposition parties interviewed prior to the 2000 parliamentary elections noted that the biggest problem they faced was a lack of financial resources for effective campaigning. Women candidates often had to finance the costs of transport and campaigning materials themselves, expenses which they could barely afford. This was particularly problematic in rural areas where the cost of transport to reach rural voters is very high. Because of the expense involved, some candidates resorted to door-to-door campaigning, often with a limited impact.

These funding obstacles are most pronounced in candidate-centred electoral systems but also affect aspiring candidates in proportional representation systems. Women still need to build name recognition, canvass and be elected onto the party ticket. It may also be the case that candidates with money may be able to buy themselves a place high up on a party's list, as has been noted in some transitional democracies. However, once elected onto a party list (especially closed lists), women in list-PR systems have an advantage over women contesting in constituency systems. Where political parties are responsible for campaigning, rather than the individual candidate in the constituency, women stand a greater chance of election provided they are placed in "electable" positions on the party list.

3.4.6. Options for Reform: Certain proposals and recommendations to deal with these obstacles have been suggested by different international and local organisations, including:

Limit Campaign Spending

In order to ensure equality of opportunity for all candidates, one option is to limit expenditure during electoral campaigns. Women are often unable to raise the same levels of funding as men. Setting a ceiling on campaign expenditure and limiting the campaign period, it has been suggested, would promote the ability of all individuals to participate in political life on an equitable basis.

Public Funding: Levelling the Playing Field

An adequate system of rules for the funding of political parties should improve the equality of opportunity for all parties competing in an election. Public funding aims to reduce the influence of special interest groups and help create a level playing field for all political actors in the electoral process. Public money is provided usually without any obligation for the recipients, but

it can be regulated in such a way as to ensure that parties nominate a certain percentage of women candidates for election, as is the case in France.

Media

Another way of providing indirect public funding is access to the state and privately run media. This is an important element of party campaigning, establishing a connection between the candidates and the community. Media time free of charge is a subsidy in kind, and was used in East Timor as one way to help women candidates: Those parties that had women placed in high positions on party lists received additional media time.

NGOs and Fund-Raising Networks

Today there is a trend where local and international organisations appear to be doing more to support women candidates than political parties by providing funding and training on campaign management. In Bosnia, the OSCE has worked to increase the visibility of women in the media by developing standards of content in the media, and trains women politicians on media strategies. Women's fund-raising organizations have a huge effect on the flow of money to women candidates. These fund-raising networks are particularly important where there is no public funding and candidates have to raise private funds to contest an election.

4. Positive Action Measures

It is because of the obstacles that women face in the electoral process that positive action measures have been proposed and in many cases implemented by political parties. Positive action strategies vary. In terms of political parties themselves, positive action strategies may consist of developing incentives to attract women to the party (such as provided funding to run an election campaign), providing training and skills development for women candidates to stand for election, or setting a target within the party that a certain number of executive positions will be held by women. Other measures may include drafting legislation that creates incentives for political parties to increase the number of women candidates: for example, by linking the allocation of public funding to the number of women candidates a party nominates for election, as in France, or providing more air time during campaigning to political parties that nominate women candidates, as in East Timor. Arguably the most common and effective positive action measures are electoral quotas, which are defined as mandatory or targeted percentages of women candidates for public elections.

Gender quotas have become an important policy tool to increase women's access to decision-making bodies. When properly implemented, they ensure women entry to decision-making positions rather than leaving this to the good faith of political parties or the traditional procedures of candidate selection. The introduction of gender quotas is highly influenced by recommendations from international organisations and used to a great extent by those lobbying for quotas. It is no coincidence that the majority of Latin American countries that instituted legal quotas did so after the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The number of countries that have pledged support for CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action has provided an important lobbying platform for the global women's movement.

4.1. What is the Current Status of Quota Implementation?

International IDEA and Stockholm University are engaged in a global research project on the implementation and practice of quotas worldwide. A website database on Electoral Quotas for

Women (www.quotaproject.org) contains information for 80 countries where quotas exist, previously existed or are currently under discussion. Although there are many different variations, quotas fall into three main groups:

- **Reserved Seats:** where a certain number of seats are set aside for women, filled either by representatives from regions or filled by political parties in direct proportion to their overall share of the national vote. Reserved seats typically exist in plurality or majoritarian electoral systems, and are often entrenched in a country’s constitution (e.g.: Afghanistan, Uganda, Rwanda and India at the local level).
- **Legislated Party Quotas:** can be constitutionally binding, or legislated in political party and electoral laws. The law stipulates a minimum target of women candidates in political parties for election, and generally applies to PR electoral systems. However, this law does not always guarantee that the target is met unless there is strict placement and enforcement mechanisms guaranteeing women are placed in electable positions on party lists, i.e. every second or third place on the list. E.g.: 11 Latin American countries adopted legislated quotas in the 1990s.
- **Voluntary Party Quotas:** are similar to above, with the exception that the quota is not a legal quota but has voluntarily been adopted by the party. It may apply to political parties in all electoral systems. As the quota is voluntary, there is no guarantee the quota target will be met by parties, and in many cases they are not (e.g. many parties in Western Europe and parts of Africa).

Today we find that 12 countries have quotas entrenched in the constitution (including most recently Afghanistan where the constitution stipulates that two female delegates must be elected from each province amounting roughly to a 25 percent quota)²⁸, 30 countries have legislated quotas, and at least 129 parties in 61 countries have adopted their own voluntary party quotas. In terms of regional spread, we find that 19 African countries have adopted quotas of some sort, 16 in Europe, 16 in Latin America and 12 from Asia. In terms of electoral system type we find 21 countries in plurality or majority systems with quotas, 14 in semi-PR electoral systems and 45 in PR systems.²⁹

4.2. Are Quotas Effective?

Quotas are by their nature controversial. Yet the evidence to date suggests that where quota are implemented, and properly enforced, they are an extremely effective way to guarantee women representation in parliament. If we take the earlier Table 2 with the top-fifteen countries in terms of women’s representation and add a column with Quota Type, we find that 12 of the 15 highest placed countries have quotas, with Denmark reaching the stage where quotas have now been abolished by political parties. Eight of the 12 are voluntary party quotas, three have legislated quotas and one has reserved seats.

Table 3: Highest Ranked Countries by Quota Type

Rank	Country	Electoral System	% Women	Quota Type
1	Rwanda	Parallel	48.8	Legislated Quota
2	Sweden	PR	45.3	Political Party
3	Denmark	PR	38.0	Previously Political Party
4	Finland	PR	37.5	No

5	Netherlands	PR	36.7	Political Party
6	Norway	PR	36.4	Political Party
7	Cuba	TRS	36.0	No
8	Belgium	PR	35.3	Legislated Quota
9	Costa Rica	PR	35.1	Legislated Quota
10	Austria	PR	33.9	Political Party
11	Germany	MMP	32.2	Political Party
12	Argentina	PR	30.7	Legislated Quota
13	Iceland	PR	30.2	Political Party
14	Mozambique	PR	30.0	Political Party
15	South Africa	PR	29.8	Political Party
Average all countries:			35.7 %	12 with Quotas

It is important to note quotas often do not work in isolation: they usually interact with other factors such as the nature of the electoral and party system and the presence of an organised and strong women's lobby both within and outside political parties. There is a tendency that quotas that rest on a previous mobilisation and integration of women in all spheres of society have a better chance of success than those without. Political will to increase women's representation is obviously an important factor. However, the way the quota provisions are formulated directly affects their implementation: many quotas are simply not enforced, either because the law stipulates a target but does not specify how to reach it, or because political parties ignore it in the absence of enforcement mechanisms. As a result, political parties may meet a 30 percent target of women on lists, but place women at the bottom of the lists in largely un-electable positions.

Reserved seats are by their nature enforceable – a certain number of seats are set aside for women – although some have argued that they set a glass ceiling for women. Legislated quotas that apply to political parties need to be framed in such a way so as to ensure compliance. In Latin America, several quota laws stipulate a minimum threshold of representation of women on party lists, as well as placement mandates where for example, every second or third candidate must be a woman. This has led to a unique oversight role for the Electoral Management Body (EMB) where lists that do not comply with the law will not be registered for election, as in Costa Rica, Argentina and Mexico. Legislated quotas bring with them the danger that male dominated party leaderships may select and choose candidates that are close to them, either ideologically or literally in terms of family or blood ties.

With voluntary quotas, some parties may adopt placement mandates on party lists - 'zipping' in many Scandinavian parties means that lists will alternate one man, one woman on lists. But as the quota is voluntary, there is every chance that a party may not to implement it unless it is established as a regulation of the party. In South Africa, the ANC's Adopted List Process for National Elections states that affirmative action for women will be a central part of being representative, and no less than one-third of the lists are to be made up of women.³⁰ Political will from party leadership is a necessary condition for the enforcement of party quotas.

4.3. Lobbying for Quotas

When lobbying for quotas, the institutional setting, the party structure and the influence of the women's movement are crucial. Because of space constraints, this will not be dealt with here in detail suffice to highlight some key points. Discourses on types of quotas are very much related to the electoral system a country uses, as well as nomination systems. Quotas are less likely to

succeed in electoral systems based on single-member constituencies, where a party presents one candidate, unless reserved seats are used in that system. Evidence to date suggests that political party quotas (legislated with placement mandates) in multi-member districts are most likely to increase the political representation of women. Is it better to lobby for voluntary or involuntary party quotas? The evidence is mixed, although in Argentina both types were lobbied for simultaneously which resulted in the eventual passage of a quota law in 1991.

Who are the main actors behind the introduction of quotas? Different country experiences point to an array of actors that intersect at different stages. Of critical importance however, is the presence of mobilised women, both inside and outside political parties. Support from the upper echelons of power is also important – women in Peru lobbied for quotas in the early 1990s, but it took the public support of then President Fujimori to send a quota bill to parliament in 1997, and opponents to the law soon fell into line after public support from the party leader. Another consideration is timing – there are certain ‘golden opportunities’ that exist in the political process that facilitate the introduction of quotas. In countries undergoing transition, constitutional and legal reform, there is a small window of opportunity for the introduction of quota laws. It is much harder to amend the constitution and rewrite electoral or parties laws in established regimes. Some mobilised women in Iraq recognise the window that currently exists and are pushing for quotas for women. However, while there is support from below, the provisional authority has denounced the use of quotas presently making this unlikely.³¹

Quotas in Post-conflict States

It is now common for quotas to be discussed as a way of securing women representation in post-conflict states. In fact most of the recent country experiences with quotas have emerged from transitional and post-conflict states. They have taken varying forms, ranging from voluntary party quotas adopted by the ruling (liberation) parties in Mozambique and South Africa, to reserved seats and constitutional quotas most recently in Rwanda and Afghanistan. The implementation of quotas is often surrounded by a cloud of controversy and debate, dividing the women’s movement, political leaders and the international community on the issue.

Table 4: Quota Provisions in Selected Post Conflict States

Country	Electoral System	Quota
Afghanistan	N/A	Constitutional Quota: 25%
Bosnia and Herzegovina East Timor	List PR Semi PR	Legal Party Quota: 30% on party lists Quota was forcefully lobbied for by women’s groups, being rejected by the transitional authority
Kosovo	List PR	Legal Party Quota: 30% on party lists
Mozambique	List PR	Voluntary Political Party: Frelimo 30%
Rwanda	Semi PR	Constitutional quota: 30% seats for
South Africa	List PR	Voluntary Political Party: ANC 30%

In many instances though, quotas have secured women positions in the post-conflict dispensation. In South Africa it was the implementation of a voluntary party quota by the ANC in 1993 that accounted for the mass of women who entered the first democratic parliament in 1994, raising the levels of female representation from three percent to 25 percent in one election. A similar situation evolved in Mozambique where the adoption of a 30 percent quota by the Frelimo party secured women representation in parliament. In other cases, legislated quotas have been adopted. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Women in Politics Programme was initiated in 1997 by the OSCE Democratisation Unit which aimed to increase the representation of women.³² A new 'gender rule' applied to the 1998 election where parties fielded at least three women in the top ten candidates on a party list. While the recommendation largely received support from the international community, a network of 13 NGOs provided education and information to voters, as well as prepared women to be party candidates. This resulted in the dramatic increase in the number of women in all decision making bodies, from two to 15 percent in the House of Representatives. The positive change is a result of the initiatives from NGOs in co-operation with women politicians and the international community.

In Kosovo, a quota for women was introduced in the local elections modelled on the Bosnian law – 30 percent of the first 15 names on party lists were to be held by women, with at least one woman being placed among every three places on the list. There was both international and local resistance: some political parties argued that they did not have enough competent women to meet the quota. However, the OSCE, local NGOs and political women strongly supported the intervention and worked to ensure that it was met. However, the quota was applied in the open List-PR electoral system giving voters the option to vote for individual candidates – as a result only 8 percent women were elected to municipal assemblies. In the assembly election, the quota was more effective where one-third of the top 67% of the candidates' lists were required to be women, accompanied by sanction for non-compliance. This highlights the fact that quotas tend to work best in a closed list system, and may need to be accompanied by public information or voter education campaigns.

It is apparent that in many instances quotas have contributed to an increase in the number of women in parliament. However, it is not the quota in isolation, but how it interacts with the type of electoral system, the nature of women's movement, how women were involved in negotiation processes, how the laws have been drafted and enforced. Quotas will not be successful when introduced as a single measure. In the short term they may dramatically increase the representation of women, but they allow parties to make concessions to women without necessarily addressing key gender issues. The attainment of gender justice in post-conflict states and in the consolidation of democracy in the long term depends on a host of factors including the development of a democratic political culture, the level of mobilisation of women in civil society and the transparency and accountability of democratic institutions. Perhaps most importantly the attainment of gender justice rests on the political will of party leadership.

Endnotes

¹ Julie Ballington is a Programme Officer in the Political Parties Programme at International IDEA based in Stockholm. Richard Matland is Professor of Political Science at the University of Houston, Texas.

² Karen Fogg, "Preface," in Reginald Austin & Maja Tjernstrom (eds.), 2003. *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns*, International IDEA: Stockholm, p. v.

³ Richard E. Matland and Kathleen A. Montgomery, 2003. "Recruiting Women to National Legislatures: A General Framework with Applications to Post-Communist Democracies," in Richard E. Matland and

Kathleen A. Montgomery (eds.), *Women's Access to Political Power in Post-Communist Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 20.

⁴ Matland and Montgomery, 2003. p. 21.

⁵ Richard E. Matland, 1998. "Enhancing Women's Political Participation: Legislative Recruitment and Electoral Systems," in International IDEA, *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, IDEA: Stockholm. p. 66.

⁶ Matland and Montgomery, p. 25.

⁷ Matland, 1998, p. 75.

⁸ This is not to assert that only electoral systems matter as representation will be affected by other factors including inter alia the level of democratic development. Data taken from Inter-parliamentary Union, *Women in National Parliaments*, 30 October 2003, at <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

⁹ See IPU, Idem. International IDEA Database on Electoral System Design at <http://www.idea.int/esd/data/world.cfm>. TRS = Two Round System; MMP = Mixed Member Proportional.

¹⁰ Matland and Montgomery, 2003, p. 27.

¹¹ Julie Ballington, 1998. "Women's Parliamentary Representation: The Effects of List PR," in *Politikon*, Vol. 25, No. 2, p. 79.

¹² Matland and Montgomery, 2003. p. 28.

¹³ Sean Dunne, 2003. *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Needs Assessment Mission*, United Nations, Unpublished. p. 4.

¹⁴ Nadezhda Shvedova, "Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament," in International IDEA, *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, IDEA: Stockholm, p. 33.

¹⁵ Matland 1998, p. 70.

¹⁶ Matland 1998, p. 71.

¹⁷ International IDEA, 2003. *The Implementation of Quotas: Latin American Experiences Workshop Report*, IDEA: Stockholm, p. 108.

¹⁸ Dunne, 2003. p. 5.

¹⁹ Matland and Montgomery, 2003. p. 33.

²⁰ Julie Ballington, 2002. "Political Parties, Gender and Elections," in Glenda Fick, Sheila Meintjes and Mary Simons (eds.), *One Woman, One Vote: The Gender Politics of South African Elections*, EISA: Johannesburg, p. 90.

²¹ Dunne, p. 6.

²² Richard E. Matland, 2003. "Women's Representation in Post-Communist Europe," in Richard E. Matland and Kathleen A. Montgomery (eds.), *Women's Access to Political Power in Post-Communist Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 325.

²³ Georgina Waylen, 2000. "Gender and Democratic Politics: A Comparative Analysis of Consolidation in Argentina and Chile," in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 32. p. 770.

²⁴ Matland and Montgomery, 2003. pp. 24-25.

²⁵ Elizabeth Powley, 2003. "Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda's Transition," Women Waging Peace Policy Commission, Washington D.C., p. 22.

²⁶ International IDEA, 2003. p.83.

²⁷ Azza Karam, 2000. "'Democrats without Democracy: Challenges to Women in Politics in the Arab World", in Shirin Rai (ed.), *International Perspectives on Gender and Democratisation*, Women's Studies at York, Basingstoke: Macmillan, p. 72.

²⁸ The countries include Afghanistan, Argentina, China, Eritrea, France, Guyana, India, Kenya, Nepal, Philippines, Rwanda, and Uganda.

²⁹ See Global Database of Quotas for Women, at www.quotaproject.org

³⁰ Ballington, 1998.

³¹ Annia Ciezadlo, "Iraq Women Raise Voices – For Quotas," *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 December 2003.

³² Anna Lithander (ed.), *Engendering the Peace Process: A Gender Approach to Dayton – and Beyond*, Kvinna till Kvinna, Stockholm, p. 35.