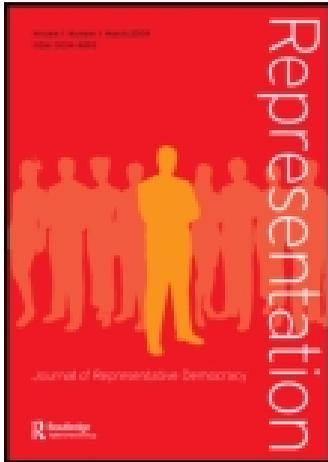


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ELECTORAL GENDER QUOTAS: BETWEEN EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND EQUALITY OF RESULT

Drude Dahlerup

In almost 100 countries throughout the world, parties and parliaments have responded to growing national and international pressure to increase women's political representation by introducing electoral gender quotas. Opponents often see quotas as a violation of the liberal principle of merit. In contrast, quota advocates see gender quotas as a compensation for direct or structural discrimination against women and as an effective instrument for achieving gender balance in political institutions, which is considered essential for democratic development. Based on data on electoral gender quotas from all over the world, this article discusses the basic principles of gender quotas in politics. It is shown that many different types of gender quotas are in use and that various types are preferred in different regions in the world. Variations are also found according to level of democracy and electoral system. The implication of different quota regimes, defined as the combination of the electoral system and the quota type applied, is scrutinised in relation to two different concepts of equality: equality of opportunity and equality of result. It is concluded that – contrary to what is commonly believed – electoral gender quotas come closer to providing real equality of opportunity than equality of result. Quota regimes may even increase competition over elected positions, since gender quotas change the most common de facto situation, where men only compete with men.

Introduction

As of 2007, women occupied only 17 per cent of the seats in the world's parliaments. Increasingly, women's movements and the international community have called on political parties to introduce special measures in order to rapidly alter the historical male dominance of politics, as in the Beijing Platform for Action from 1995 (United Nations FWCW 1995).

In amazing numbers, political parties and parliaments have answered this call, most reluctantly maybe in Europe and North America. During the last two decades almost 100 countries around the world have introduced gender quotas for political assemblies. Gender quotas for public elections are being introduced in very different political systems, democratic and semi-democratic as well as non-democratic. As we have shown in the book *Women, Quotas and Politics*, quota systems that do not match the electoral systems in place tend to be only symbolic (Dahlerup 2006a). In this article the discussion of the basic principles of electoral gender quotas is further developed around the concept of 'quota regimes', here defined as the combination of electoral system and quota type.

Generally speaking it is not the voters but the political parties that decide who gets elected. While voters through elections control how many seats a party will receive, it is primarily the political parties and their nominating bodies that control which candidates will be elected – both in closed- and open-list systems. By nominating candidates for safe or less safe seats, the political parties are the gatekeepers of elected positions and, consequently, they also have the power to change the under-representation of women or other groups such as immigrants.

This article¹ discusses the different constructions of quota regimes in relation to two concepts of equality: *equality of opportunity* versus *equality of result*. The often vehement debates between opponents and proponents of gender quotas tend to neglect that gender quotas come in many different forms with different implications. In the first part of this article, key concepts in the debate about women's representation are discussed. Secondly, variations in women's political representation across countries and regions are analysed. Thirdly, the article provides an overview of various types of gender quotas in use in different political and electoral systems. Fourthly, the degree of competition and of guaranteed representation following from different quota regimes is discussed in relation to the two concepts of equality.

Women's Descriptive Representation

Even if the relevance of the social composition of political institutions is highly contested in democratic theory, the under-representation of women, as well as of immigrants and ethnic minorities, is increasingly questioned, placing great pressure on the political parties.

New discourses challenge the liberal theory of representation, according to which it is primarily differences of ideas that are to be represented. This notion, which itself represented a revolt against the old estates, is being challenged by a renewed interest in who the representatives are. This claim for social representativity may be based on a quest for *justice* or, alternatively (though sometimes even simultaneously), on the argument that different *experiences* and *interests* need to be included. Increasingly, however, equal representation of women and also of other until heretofore under-represented groups is being discussed in terms of the need for *modernisation* and *democratic legitimacy*. In post-conflict countries and countries in transition to democracy, the wish to confer legitimacy on the new political system has led to an increased sensitivity to the social composition of both elected and appointed bodies. Some established democracies as well are discussing the inclusion of women in terms of the need for modernisation and renewal, which in itself is a novelty (Giraud and Jenson 2001; Dahlerup 2006b; Goetz and Hassim 2003). The connection between numerical or 'descriptive' representation and 'substantive' representation of women in terms of policy content is debated within feminist theory and in feminist movements but will not be addressed in this article (Beckwith and Cowell-Meyers 2003; Dahlerup 2006e).

In her argument for a 'Politics of Presence', Anne Phillips stresses that this social representation is not meant to replace the representation of ideas (Phillips 1995, 25). Phillips, however, does not develop a formula for how these two perspectives could be combined in real life. The answer is, however, quite simple. The use of electoral gender quotas in party-based political systems offers this very combination of social representation and representation of ideas, as when a quota system of no less than 40 per cent of

each sex on party lists in public elections are implemented by many socialist parties (Socialist International Women 2006²).

Equality of Opportunity versus Equality of Results

Two concepts of equality are central to the debate about goals and means in equality policies. While 'equality' is perceived as a shared value in many societies, divergence over the strategy to achieve this goal will often reveal that different concepts of equality are at play. In the liberal understanding, 'equality' as a norm is understood as a demand for fair competition, 'equality of opportunity' or 'competitive equality', which implies the removal of all unfair barriers to the process of competing. The feminist critique of the liberal notion rests on the argument that opportunities for men and women are very seldom equal, since men have a privileged position in society, which implies that there is no *real* equality of opportunity.

In liberal thinking equality of opportunity is contrasted with what may be labelled 'equality of result', a type of equality that is characterised by liberals as an unfair equal redistribution of goods and values to people who have not proved that they deserved it. By way of contrast, many feminists active in women's movements or employed in public equality policy agencies would argue that it is essential to set up targets and goals, such as gender balance in political institutions. Quota advocates maintain that historically as well as in contemporary society the chances are never really equal for women as long as male standards are the norms for most competitions. Consequently, affirmative action is seen as necessary.

Krook et al. argue that the types of controversies surrounding gender quotas influence not only the likelihood of quotas being adopted but also the form that these quotas take and the effectiveness of implementation. Liberal, individualistic models of citizenship prevailing in the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA favour equal opportunity and not equality of outcome or result, while consociational citizenship models, as in Germany, and corporatist models, as in Spain, tend to accept group representation and to foster equality of result (Krook et al. 2006, 194–9; see also Klausen and Maier 2001). Within the classic liberal model, quotas for women are seen as an unfair measure, in fact as discrimination against men. In contrast, proponents of gender quotas argue that as long as we do not have a fair society for all, gender quotas should be considered compensation for the discrimination of women. Carol Bacchi, consequently, argues that it is wrong to locate affirmative-action measures as exemption to anti-discrimination measures, hence labelling such measures as 'positive discrimination', 'preferential treatment' or even 'reverse discrimination' (Bacchi 2006, 33–5). It is, however, open to discussion whether gender quotas actually lead to equality of results.

In this article, different gender quota regimes are analysed in view of these two concepts of equality. One of the main arguments against gender quotas is that they will lead to a situation in which a woman will get a position 'just because she is a woman' (Dahlerup 2005, 143). Many women themselves accept this line of reasoning, according to which quotas are seen as a violation of the principle of merit, and consequently a less 'qualified' woman may get a position, passing over a more qualified man. Other forms of opposition to quotas question the very saliency of gender in politics and see gender as irrelevant – will there next not be a demand for quotas for people with red hair! The latter position will not be discussed further in this article. The focus here is not on quota

discourses or effects of quotas on women's empowerment. Instead, what follows is an analysis of how the two concepts of equality relate to different quota systems applied in various electoral systems, based on the following research questions: (1) *Does the quota regime in place guarantee the target group, in this case women, a certain number or percentage of the seats in the political assembly?* (2) *Do individuals of the target quota group receive their positions in political assemblies without any competition?*

Rotation at the Top of the World Rank Order

At the beginning of the year 1997, when the average representation of women in parliaments worldwide was 12 per cent, only five countries exceeded the threshold of 30 per cent women in parliament. Those countries, all European, were in rank order Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands. For a very long time Finland was at the top of the world rank order; from 1985 Norway assumed this position; and from 1989 Sweden was number one among the Nordic countries and in the world (Bergqvist et al. 1999).

From Table 1, which presents the ranking of all countries with more than 30 per cent women in parliament, three interesting features can be read off. Firstly, the five Nordic

TABLE 1

The top of the world rank order of women in parliament (over 30%), single house or lower house

Country	Women in parlmnt (%) (year of election)	Quota type	Electoral system
Rwanda	48.8 (2003)	Legal quotas (C)	List PR
Sweden	47.3 (2006)	Party quotas	List PR
Finland	42.0 (2007)	No quotas	List PR
Costa Rica	38.6 (2006)	Legal quotas (L)	List PR
Norway	37.9 (2005)	Party quotas	List PR
Denmark	36.9 (2005)	No quotas	List PR
Netherlands	36.7 (2006)	Party quotas	List PR
Cuba	36.0 (2003)	No quotas	Two Rounds
Spain	36.0 (2004)	Party quotas	List PR
Argentina	35.0 (2005)	Legal quotas (C)	List PR
Mozambique	34.8 (2004)	Party quotas	List PR
Belgium	34.7 (2003)	Legal quotas (L)	List PR
Iceland	33.3 (2003)	Party quotas	List PR
South Africa	32.8 (2004)	Party quotas	List PR
Austria	32.2 (2006)	Party quotas	List PR
New Zealand	32.2 (2005)	No quotas	MMP
Germany	31.6 (2005)	Party quotas	MMP
Burundi	30.5 (2005)	Legal quotas (C)	List PR
Tanzania	30.4 (2005)	Legal quotas (C)	FPP

Key to electoral system: *List PR*: proportional representation system with party lists including several candidates; *MMP*: mixed member proportional, a combination of list PR and single member constituencies. *FPP*: first past the post, single-member constituencies.

Key to quota types: *Legal or legislated quotas* are written into the constitutions (C) or/and the electoral law (L). *Party quotas* are voluntary measures adopted by individual political parties. Source: Interparliamentary Union (2007), available at www.ipu.org; International IDEA and Stockholm University (2007); www.quotaproject.org; official statistics. election day figures.

countries and the Netherlands are now being challenged by a number of developing countries, such as Rwanda, Costa Rica, South Africa and Argentina. Since 2003 Rwanda has been number one with 48.8 per cent women in parliament, and since spring 2006 Costa Rica has positioned itself as number three, in 2007 however it was overtaken by Finland. Previous clear regional differences have been equalised somewhat more recently, with only the Pacific and the Arab states positioned far below the world average of 17 per cent (IPU 2007).

Secondly, many of those countries with more than 30 per cent women in parliament make use of some kind of quota, be it legally mandated or voluntary party quotas. For some countries, this has resulted in historic leaps in women's representation, as the Costa Rican increase from 19 to 34 per cent women in the first election after the introduction of gender quotas in 1996 (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005). In Costa Rica the electoral commission has the authority, and uses it, to reject lists that do not comply with the country's rather radical requirements of 40 per cent women on each party's candidate list, combined with very specific rules for the ordering of women and men on these lists (International IDEA and Stockholm University 2007). However, the cases of Finland and Denmark, number three and six on the list, indicate that quotas are not a necessary condition for a high representation for women – or a sufficient one, as we shall see.

It should be noted that electoral gender quotas are being introduced in democratic political systems as well as in systems with limited democratic freedoms and or even in non-democratic or authoritarian political systems. Many post-conflict countries such as Rwanda (two women per province), Bosnia-Herzegovina (one-third of the under-represented sex), Afghanistan (two women per province) and Iraq (minimum 30 per cent women on the lists) are introducing quotas in order to make historic leaps towards gender balance in politics.³ This new development challenges our previous theories, which connect increase in women's representation to socio-economic development.

Thirdly, proportional representation, usually with party lists containing several candidates for each party in every constituency, is the most common electoral system in use among these top countries.⁴ In general, proportional representation (PR) systems tend to have a higher representation of women than majoritarian systems (Matland and Studlar 1996). Today, the average for women's representation is 10.5 per cent for majoritarian systems versus 19.6 per cent for PR systems, with mixed systems in the middle with 13.6 per cent, according to Pippa Norris (2006, 5, Table 1).⁵ Thus, the electoral system is one of the major explanations for the surprisingly low representation of women in the United Kingdom and the United States, 19.7 per cent and 16.2 per cent respectively, in the lower houses (IPU, 2007). Electoral statistics from Germany, Hungary and New Zealand – ideal cases to isolate the effects of the electoral system on women's representation because of their mix of PR and single-member constituencies – show that women's representation tends to be higher among the MPs that are elected under PR than among those elected in single-member districts (Grey 2005).

Scotland is an exception to this rule, first and foremost due to the quota system applied by the Scottish Labour Party. In the election to the new Scottish parliament, the Labour Party solved the unsolvable problem of combining single-member districts and quotas by a system matching two constituencies ('twinning'), through which a joint selection process nominates one woman and one man. The result was that women's representation in the Scottish parliament overtook the Westminster parliament by far. Being a new parliament with no incumbents who wanted to keep 'their' seats paved the way for this success (Mackay 2001; Lovenduski 2005, 121–3).

In their distinction between the *fast-track model* and the *incremental model*, Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2005, 29) point to differences in how the political parties diagnose the reasons for women's under-representation: In contrast to previous focus under the incremental model on women's lack of resources and commitment, the fast-track model as an ideal type model leads to a new focus on the mechanisms of exclusion as well as indirect and direct discrimination. The latter diagnosis places the responsibility on the political parties and may lead to more proactive measures, such as electoral gender quotas.

Types of Gender Quotas

Although highly controversial, around 40 countries have introduced some kind of legislated electoral gender quotas in order to increase women's political representation. In another 50 countries or so some of the political parties have on their own introduced gender quotas. This means that *about half the countries in the world apply some type of electoral gender quota today*. Most of these have been introduced during the past 15 years (Dahlerup 2006a; International IDEA and Stockholm University 2007).

Defining Quotas

Quotas in politics may be defined as an affirmative action measure that establishes a percentage or number for the representation of a specific group, in this case women, most often in the form of a minimum requirement, for instance 20, 30, 40 or 50 per cent. Gender quotas may also be constructed in terms of a maximum-minimum representation for both sexes, for instance no more than 60 and no less than 40 per cent for each sex. In the case of the latter gender-neutral regulation, the quota provision sets a maximum for both sexes, whereas quotas for women only set a maximum representation for men. Quota provisions may or may not include rules concerning the ordering of candidates (PR systems) as well as sanctions for non-compliance.

The two most widespread types of electoral gender quotas are, firstly, *candidate quotas*, as in Argentina – the country that led the wave of gender quotas in Latin America – in which at least 30 per cent of the candidates on the list of the individual parties in a constituency must be women; and, secondly, *reserved seats quotas*, as in Uganda, in which each district elects through a special electoral college one woman to parliament, in all 56 women. However, our study of the introduction of quotas worldwide shows that there are many systems and subsystems in the world of gender quotas (Dahlerup 2006a).

Quota types can be defined along two dimensions: (1) *The level of the electoral process*; (2) *The mandate*. Concerning the level, a distinction is made between regulations aiming at changing the composition of (1) the pool of potential candidates, called the aspirants; (2) the candidates that stand for election; and (3) those elected (reserved seats). Quotas as reserved seats set out the number of women (or of other groups) to be elected, usually as a minimum requirement, which also allows women candidates to stand for election for the so-called 'free seats' in competition with men. Concerning the mandate, a distinction is made between (1) *legally mandated quotas*, e.g. quotas introduced in the constitution or by law, usually the electoral law of a country, versus (2) *voluntary party quotas*, in which case quotas are written into the internal rules of a political party. While legislated quotas are binding for all the political parties in a country and may include legal sanctions for non-compliance, voluntary quotas are only binding for the party in question

in accordance with its own internal regulations. Electoral gender quotas may be defined as legal or voluntary regulations that for public elections require a certain minimum number or percentage of women or of both sexes on one of the three levels.⁶

It should be noted that almost all political systems utilise some kind of geographical quota to ensure a minimum level of representation for densely populated areas. That type of quota is, however, not considered as controversial as a gender quota.

Regional Variations in Preferred Quota Type

Table 2 shows the preferred quota type among countries with gender quotas along the two dimensions.⁷ While quotas to enlarge the pool of aspirants (first level) are usually decided on by the parties themselves, as in the example of the British Labour Party's controversial 'women-only short lists', candidate quotas for party lists at elections (second level) may be mandated either by the parties themselves (voluntary party quotas) or by the constitution or law (legal quotas). In Latin America, the region with most quota regulations, legally mandated candidate quotas are most frequent. In the Balkans, voluntary candidate quotas were introduced in the first period after the civil wars, but due to a lack of results legal quotas are now in place in several countries in this region. The Western world, including the Nordic countries, if quotas are applied at all, use voluntary party quotas for the candidate lists, most prominently among social democratic, green and left parties, as in Sweden (50 per cent), Norway (40 per cent), Spain (40 per cent), and Austria (33–50 per cent).⁸ The legislated gender quotas in Belgium and France are exceptions to the rule that the liberal democracies of the West prefer voluntary quotas. In certain parts of Africa voluntary party quotas are in use, most predominantly in South Africa after democratisation when the ANC introduced a successful gender quota of 30 per cent (Lowe-Morna 2004; Tripp et al. 2006).

Reserved seats is the most widespread gender quota type in South Asia and in the Arab region, where reservations for other groups are well known. Several sub-Saharan African states have introduced reserved seats for women in their parliaments, among others Rwanda (two women per province), Uganda (one woman per district) and Tanzania (75 special seats for women). Reserved seats systems are by their nature legislated quota systems, mandated by the constitution and/or law, by decree from the ruling party in a one-party system or by the monarch. However, there are examples, such as Morocco, in

TABLE 2
Regional variations in preferred quota type^a

Mandate	Level		
	Aspirant quotas	Candidate quotas	Reserved seat quotas
Legal quotas (Constitutional or law)	n/a	Latin America The Balkans	Arab region South Asia, Africa ^b
Voluntary party quotas	Women's short lists	The 'West', Nordic regn, Africa, The Balkans	Morocco (charter signed by parties)

a. According to the predominant type of quota. A region placed in two categories indicates that two quota types are used equally or almost equally. No clear pattern in the Pacific Ocean region.

b. Reserved seats in one-party states are categorized as legislated quotas.

Source: Dahlerup (2006c: 294), minor revisions.

which a charter was signed by all of the political parties temporarily reserving all 30 seats on a national list for women candidates.

Frequency of Gender Quotas in Different Political Systems

Even if the introduction of gender quotas has become a trend in the world today, one should not forget that half of all countries have no gender quotas at all. The level of democracy as well as the electoral system has proven to be crucial for quota frequency (Matland 2006, 276–7). Tables 3 and 4 divide countries with legal quotas and voluntary party quotas, respectively, according to their level of democracy and electoral systems.⁹

Tables 3 and 4 confirm the importance of both the level of democracy and the electoral system in analysing why some countries have introduced gender quotas and not others. According to Tables 3 and 4, 49 per cent of countries have some kind of gender quotas: 39 countries (22 per cent) have introduced legislated gender quotas, while in 50 other countries (28 per cent) at least one political party represented in the parliament applies a system of voluntary gender quotas for public elections.¹⁰

Level of Democracy

Tables 3 and 4 taken together show that gender quotas are being introduced in all kinds of political systems –most frequently, however, with increasing levels of democracy: 55 per cent of democratic countries have gender quotas, 47 per cent of semi-democratic countries and 38 per cent of non-democratic countries. It has been argued that even non-democratic patriarchal states may give in to pressure from women’s groups and from the

TABLE 3
Frequency of legal quotas^a

	<i>Democratic countries legal quota</i>		<i>Semi-democratic countries legal quota</i>		<i>Non-democratic countries legal quota</i>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Major ^b	1 (3.6%)	27 (96.4%)	5 (18.5%)	22 (81.5%)	4 (19.0%)	17 (81.0%)
PR ^c	10 (21.7%)	36 (78.3%)	8 (42.1%)	11 (57.9%)	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)
Mixed ^d	3 (20.0%)	12 (80.0%)	5 (45.5%)	6 (54.5%)	1 (16.7%)	5 (83.3%)
Total	14 (15.7%)	75 (84.3%)	18 (31.6%)	39 (68.4%)	7 (20.6%)	27 (79.4%)

Notes

a: The levels of democracy are based on Freedom House’s (2006) ranking system, including both political rights and civil liberties. For more information see www.freedomhouse.org. The concepts used by Freedom House – ‘free’, ‘partly free’ and ‘not free’ – are in this table represented by ‘Democratic’, ‘Semi-democratic’ and ‘Non-democratic’ respectively. The quota information is collected by International IDEA and Stockholm University (2006), see www.quotaproject.org. The electoral systems in the countries are listed as by the International IDEA (2005), see www.idea.int. Countries that have no provisions for direct elections are not included in this table. Updated and extended version of Matland, Table 13.1 (2006: 276). A total of 180 countries are included in Tables 3 and 4. Omitted are smaller countries such as Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Netherlands Antilles.

b: Major=plurality-majority systems

c: PR=proportional representation systems

d: Includes both mixed systems and ‘other’ systems.

TABLE 4
Frequency of political party quotas^a

	<i>Democratic countries political party quota</i>		<i>Semi-democratic countries political party quota</i>		<i>Non-democratic countries political party quota</i>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Major ^b	6 (21.4%)	22 (78.6%)	3 (11.1%)	24 (88.9%)	3 (14.3%)	18 (85.7%)
PR ^c	25 (54.3%)	21 (45.7%)	5 (26.3%)	14 (73.7%)	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)
Mixed ^d	4 (26.7%)	11 (73.3%)	1 (9.1%)	10 (90.9%)	1 (16.7%)	5 (83.3%)
Total	35 (39.3%)	54 (60.7%)	9 (15.8%)	48 (84.2%)	6 (17.6%)	28 (82.4%)

Notes

a: The levels of democracy are based on Freedom House's (2006) ranking system, including both political rights and civil liberties. For more information see www.freedomhouse.org. The concepts used by Freedom House – 'free', 'partly free' and 'not free' – are in this table represented by 'Democratic', 'Semi-democratic' and 'Non-democratic' respectively. The quota information is collected by International IDEA and Stockholm University (2006), see www.quotaproject.org. The electoral systems in the countries are listed as by the International IDEA (2005), see www.idea.int. Countries that have no provisions for direct elections are not included in this table. Updated and extended version of Matland, Table 13.1 (2006: 276). A total of 180 countries are included in Tables 3 and 4. Omitted are smaller countries such as Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Netherlands Antilles.

b: Major=plurality-majority systems

c: PR=proportional representation systems

d: Includes both mixed systems and 'other' systems.

international community to increase women's representation because they find it favourable to their international image and to the legitimacy of the regime. The growing importance of a country's international image can thus lead to some changes in the overwhelming male dominance of politics even in less democratic countries, as the example of the introduction of gender quotas in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan shows (Ballington and Dahlerup 2006; Tripp et al. 2006; Rai et al 2006).

Tables 3 and 4 also show that voluntary party quotas are the most frequent gender quota type in what is here labelled democratic countries (35 countries), whereas legislated gender quotas dominate among the semi-democratic states with gender quotas (18 countries). Legal and voluntary quotas are equally frequent among the only 13 non-democratic states with gender quotas. According to Matland this difference between democratic and semi-democratic states may be explained by the power of political parties, since strong local party organisations in democracies oppose central interference in their prerogative to select the candidates for election (Matland 2006, 275–6). However, it should be added that in democratic countries voluntary party quotas decided by the central party congress or executive can also be very unpopular among local party organisations for the very same reason, especially among liberal and conservative parties, but even on the left (Freidenvall et al. 2006, 70–4; Krook et al. 2006 200–7).

Electoral System

Variations in quota frequency in relation to electoral system are considerable. Tables 3 and 4 together show that only one-third (29 per cent) of countries with

majoritarian electoral systems use gender quotas in contrast to four-fifths (72 per cent) of PR systems. The reason may be sought in the difficulties in combining a first-past-the-post system, such as the British, with any type of quota. How can you have 30 per cent women when you only have one candidate?

Table 3 shows that only one fully democratic country with majoritarian elections has introduced legislated gender quotas (France), whereas ten PR and three mixed systems have. Legal quotas are most popular among semi-democratic countries. Table 4 shows that in only six fully democratic states with majoritarian electoral systems have some political parties adopted gender quotas (21.4%), often in the form of aspirant/pre-selection quotas as in Australia and Canada, in contrast to PR systems, where in the majority of countries, 25 countries in all (54.3%), one or more parties represented in the parliament have introduced voluntary gender quotas.

In conclusion, gender quotas are today found in many different political systems, but with clear variations in relation to level of democracy, electoral system and quota type. In accordance with Matland's conclusions, this study has found that level of democracy affects both the frequency of quotas and their form, and further that electoral system has an independent importance for both the frequency of gender quotas and their form (see Matland 2006).

We can now try to answer the question as to why different regions seem to prefer different quota types (see Table 2). Aspirant quotas are no doubt related to the majoritarian electoral system, which does not allow for candidate quotas. The adoption of gender quotas in the form of reserved seats in countries in the Arab world, in Africa and in South Asia is partly a consequence of less free elections and a general widespread use of group representation. However, the electoral system is an important factor in itself. In a democratic country such as India, the tradition of quotas for scheduled castes combined with the majoritarian electoral system has led to the adoption of gender quotas in the form of reserved seats in local elections. Whereas most fully democratic states, except those with majoritarian elections, seem to prefer candidate quotas, other factors are needed in order to explain why some prefer legislated and others voluntary party quotas. Research has pointed to the importance of different concepts of citizenship (Krook et al. 2006), of regional diffusion and even sheer coincidence (Krook 2004; Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005, 27; Dahlerup 2006c, 294).

Equality of Opportunity or Equality of Result?

Are electoral gender quotas a violation of the principle of free elections and the principle of merits, as quota opponents argue? Do gender quotas provide gender balance in politics, as advocates hope? Having analysed the frequency of gender quotas in different electoral systems, we can now return to the question of the effects of various quota regimes seen in relation to the two concepts of equality – equality of result or (real) equality of opportunity – by answering the two research questions presented earlier: (1) *Does the quota regime in place guarantee the target group, in this case women, a certain number or percentage of the seats in the political assembly?* and (2) *Do individuals from the quota target group receive their positions in political assemblies without any competition?*

There are no simple answers. The following analysis of different gender quota regimes examines how different types of gender quotas operate in various electoral

systems. It is a major point of this article that there are many forms of quota regimes and consequently, many different effects of quotas.

The lack of equality of result may be embedded in the quota regime itself. Thus a discrepancy between quota provisions and the actual number of women nominated or elected may be intentional (symbolic policy) or be the result of a lack of attention by legislators or party congresses to the way in which the quota system will operate in the context of the electoral system in place.¹¹ It might, however, also be the result of a lack of compliance with the quota regulations. Studies of the electoral lists – the actual nominations – are needed in order to evaluate the degree of compliance on the part of the political parties.

To give an example, the disappointing 12.1 per cent women elected to the French National Assembly in 2002, after a comprehensive public debate leading to a radical 50 per cent quota law (*parité*), was due to lack of compliance on the part of the political parties, limited financial sanctions and the general problems of applying quotas in a majoritarian electoral system. This conclusion is supported by the relative success of the law in the municipal elections in France, in which women's representation jumped to over 40 per cent (Sineau 2005; Krook et al. 2006).¹²

Table 5 shows the effects of the very construction of different quota regimes under the assumption of full compliance with the rules. Column 1 provides the answer to the question of guaranteed representation, while column 2 shows whether we will or will not find individual competition under various quota regimes. First aspirant quotas will be discussed, followed by candidate quotas, and reserved seat quotas.

Aspirant Quotas

With the exception of reserved seats systems, quotas in general do not guarantee the target group, in this case women, a certain representation. Looking at the way aspirant quotas function, it is obvious that no representation is certain, neither among the candidates for election (it is up to the nominating body to choose among the aspirants) nor among those elected (the strength of the party depends on the voters), as illustrated in Table 5's first column. Aspirant quotas are a modest, voluntary, party measure primarily

TABLE 5
Guaranteed seats and competition under different quota regimes

	Target group representation guaranteed	Competition between individual candidates
Aspirant quotas	NO	YES
<i>All-women short lists</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>Only between women</i>
Candidate quotas	NO	YES
<i>50-50% with 'zipper' system competition^a</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>Only intra-sex</i>
Reserved seat quotas	YES	Varies
<i>RS, with election</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>Only between women</i>
<i>RS, appointment</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>

a: However, sharp inter-sex competition for the position as number one of the party list.

designed for majoritarian electoral systems. Short-list requirements of, for instance, 50 per cent women and 50 per cent men among potential candidates (aspirants) have been introduced by some political parties in the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand, especially for open seats when the incumbent has stepped down (Krook et al. 2006).

Electoral gender quota rules are accused of violating the principle of merit. It is said that women are 'given' a certain representation without having to fight for it. Women are elected 'just because they are women' and not on their merits. Even if such statements are ambiguous, one may argue that the crucial factor here is to what extent quotas suspend competition for political posts. Do these short lists allow for competition? Sharp competition for the single candidacy is actually widespread, thus the 'Yes' in the second column of Table 5 concerning aspirant quotas.

The example of all-women short lists in the UK. In some of the recent elections, and only in some constituencies, did the British Labour Party apply all-women short lists, a controversial measure that has been challenged legally as well as politically (Lovenduski 2005). Do these all-women short lists allow for competition for the candidacy? The answer is yes. No individual woman is guaranteed a nomination, not to speak of a seat. With all-women short lists, we do see competition, namely *competition among women*. In these cases, and that is what makes them so controversial, potential male candidates are excluded from the competition. It is, of course, important who are formally entitled to participate. But do we see competition between women as including a lower degree of competition than competition between only male candidates, which is the most widespread de facto situation in the world?

Candidate Quotas

As in the case of aspirant quotas, gender quotas regulating the social composition of candidate lists do not guarantee that a fixed number of women will be elected, thus the 'No' in Table 5's first column. Candidate quotas only aim at increasing the number of women on the lists at elections. The main *raison d'être* for electoral gender quotas is to force the political parties to break with their tradition of recruiting mainly male candidates for their lists and instead to start seriously recruiting women.

Also, candidate quotas, legally mandated or voluntary, do not suspend competition among potential candidates during the selection process – thus the 'Yes' in Table 5's second column. Even competition between female and male potential candidates is upheld in most of the nomination processes, adjusting the final list in the end, if necessary. The required share of female candidates in most countries is far below what could be called gender balance (50 per cent), varying from 5 to 50 per cent, with 30 per cent as the most widespread requirement (Dahlerup 2006e). However, limited competition may occur in those cases in which there is a lack of female candidates, most often in the beginning and especially for marginal seats, while competition is usually fierce for top positions. In general, many factors other than the quota system, not least the incumbency factor, limit competition among potential candidates within a party.

Without rules about rank ordering, also called 'double quotas', candidate quotas may be without any effect and have led to great disappointment among those who, perhaps against strong opposition, fought for gender quotas: 30 per cent women mostly placed at the bottom of a list in a PR system is merely symbolic.

Candidate quotas in Brazil and Argentina. While Argentina, the first country to introduce gender quotas in Latin America, has experienced a large increase in women's representation because of the quota, the Brazilian case has been a disappointment to gender quota advocates. Both countries operate a 30 per cent legal candidate quota, but women's representation to the lower chamber is now 35.0 per cent in Argentina compared to only 8.8 per cent in Brazil. One of the main reasons is that in contrast to Argentina there are no rules about rank ordering in Brazil, since the vote is preferential and individualised.¹³ In Brazil, if the minimum of 30 per cent candidates for each sex is not attained, those positions should remain empty, according to the law (Araújo and García 2006:96). In neither the Argentinian case with rank order rules nor the Brazilian case without such rules is competition for a place on the list suspended.

Sweden's 'Every other for the ladies'. In Sweden several political parties have introduced voluntary candidate quotas according to a 50-50 principle. In the Social Democratic Party this is practised as a 'zipper system' in which a list of female candidates and another list of male candidates are selected in equal numbers and subsequently combined like a zipper. The only question remaining is whether the party list will be topped by the first male or by the first female candidate. As a result, women's share of the members of the Social Democratic group the Swedish parliament has varied between 47 and 50 per cent in the four general elections since the statutory introduction of quotas in 1993. However, women's share was as high as 41 per cent in the last election before the introduction of quotas (1991), which is why such quotas are labelled 'high echelon quotas' (Freidenvall 2006; Freidenvall et al. 2006, 75–8). When a 50-50 zipper system is introduced, there is only intra-sex competition, except for the position as number one at the top of the list.

Even under well-intended and properly implemented quota systems with rules about rank ordering, women's representation in various political parties will fluctuate from election to election, following the specific electoral result in each constituency. In Norway, where the majority of parties apply a 40 per cent voluntary party quota with strong rules for rank ordering, women's parliamentary representation has for the parties in question fluctuated between zero and 60 per cent since the introduction of gender quotas (Freidenvall et al. 2006, 71).

For small parties, even a radical 50 per cent quota combined with a strict rank ordering rule may result in an all-male parliamentary group if male candidates top the lists in those districts that yield a seat in the election. As in the case of quotas under majoritarian systems, only interference from the central party organisation in the prerogatives of the local party organisations' nomination process secures a gender-balanced result.

Reserved Seat Systems

Contrary to aspirant and candidate quotas, reserved seat quotas do guarantee the election of a certain number of women, thus the 'Yes' in Table 5's first column. It should be noted that no reserved seat systems in the world today demand gender balance, i.e. a 50-50 equality of result between men and women. Quotas in the form of reserved seats can, however, be a very effective measure in rapidly increasing women's representation or even in jump-starting it in strongly patriarchal countries. Reserved seat quotas come in many forms, as the following examples will show.

In *India*, a 33 per cent reservation for women in the local *Panchayats* (local councils) was introduced in 1993. How does this quota system work? Some wards (sub-districts) are reserved for women candidates at each election on a rotation basis. The problem is that most women elected leave their posts at the next election when, because of the rotation principle, the seat will be turned into a free seat where women have to compete with men. Quotas for scheduled castes and others that have been in force since independence follow the population pattern and, consequently, do not rotate. The gender quota system has resulted in the election of more than one million women locally, an impressive result in the very strongly patriarchal context of rural India (Baviskar 2002; Rai et al. 2006).

Reserved seat quota systems usually, at least according to the electoral law (though perhaps not in the constitution), operate with absolute numbers, not percentages. However, expressed in percentages, existing reserved seat quota systems vary from Nepal's 5 per cent, over 17 per cent in Pakistan and 18 in Uganda, to 27 and 30 per cent (Afghanistan and Rwanda). In Burundi, the electoral administration, if necessary, adds more women members to the parliament in order to meet the 30 per cent quota (International IDEA and Stockholm University 2007). In Jordan, a minimum of six women must be elected, and in case no woman wins a seat in the ordinary election, the six women who have received the highest percentage of votes in their constituencies are elected thanks to the quota system (Abou-Zeid 2006). To what extent such a 'fast-track policy' gives the women elected sufficient resources to function as politicians is another question (see Dahlerup 2006d).

Reserved Seats with or without Election

Reserved seat systems have always been under attack for violation of the principle of merit, offering seats without any competition, since the exact number of women to be elected is defined in advance. Whereas for aspirant and candidate quotas the notion of competition means that several candidates compete over the same post, in intra-party competition or in competition with candidates from other parties, the question with regard to reserved seats is whether you receive your seat through election or appointment. It is noteworthy that an increasing number of reserved seat quota systems today choose their parliamentarians through some kind of public elections, e.g. based on competition between candidates as in Rwanda, Uganda, Jordan, India (local), Bangladesh (local), Morocco, Afghanistan and Taiwan. Our studies of quota systems throughout the world reveal a multitude of systems, thus the answer 'Varies' in Table 5's second column.

In Rwanda, of the 80 members of the chamber of deputies, 53 MPs are elected in free seats (PR). A further 24 seats (30 per cent), two seats from each district and from the capital city, Kigali, are contested in women-only indirect elections. Only women are allowed to vote, which is an exception among reserved seat elections.¹⁴ In the 2003 election in which Rwanda achieved the highest representation of women in the world, 48.8 per cent, another 15 women were elected to non-reserved seats, an amazing result that challenges the theory that reserved seats tend to become not only a minimum representation but also a maximum, a glass ceiling for women. (Powley 2005; Tripp et al 2006). In Morocco, women's issues reached the public agenda when 30 seats in the 2002 election were reserved for women nominated on a 'national list'. In the election voters have two votes, one for a candidate on the constituency lists and one for a candidate on

the national all-women list (PR). In these examples, competition takes place *between women candidates*.

In the case of reserved seat quotas without elections, open competition is absent, hence the 'No' in Table 5. However, in most such cases male members of parliament are also appointed, meaning that no further limitation on competition is added as a consequence of the gender quota system. There are, however, exceptions to this rule. In Tanzania, Pakistan and Bangladesh, a proportion of the seats in parliament are reserved for women, and these women seats are allocated to the political parties based on their proportion of the parliamentary seats.

One may ask if women-only selections or elections are a violation of the principle of merit and competitive equality. The *de jure* exclusion of male candidates is a serious limitation. But in none of these cases does any individual woman receive her candidacy or her parliamentary seat without competition, though it is *competition among women*. If the problem is considered to be not lack of competition *per se* but the fact that women do not compete with men, then we cannot ignore the fact that historically and currently the most widespread problem is that in most elections throughout the world men are *de facto* competing only with men or with very a few women candidates.

In conclusion, the answer to the first question is, as illustrated in Table 5's first column, that, contrary to what is commonly believed by quota opponents as well as by quota advocates, most types of electoral gender quotas do not deliver equality of result, defined as a guaranteed representation in public elections for the target group, in this case women. The exception is quotas in the form of reserved seats, a quota type that by its legal status and its embeddedness in the electoral process usually guarantees a certain representation for the target group, however not for the individual.

As for lack of competition, Table 5's second column shows a result much more complex than quota opponents will have it. In most quota regimes individual candidates have to fight for their candidacy or seat in competition with other candidates, sometimes limited to candidates of their own sex. As with the question of guaranteed seats for the target group, but even more so under the second research question on individual competition, the entire quota regime is decisive. In judging the merits of gender quota regimes, we need to make comparisons with how other candidates, mostly males, actually win their seats.

Conclusion

Introducing gender quotas in political parties is, if successful, a way of combining what Anne Phillips has called 'the politics of presence' with the quest for representation of ideas. Almost 100 countries have during the past 15 years introduced electoral gender quotas. This amazing development represents a shift of focus from structural explanations of variations in women's political representation to a new emphasis on the political parties as gatekeepers of elected positions and their decisive role in including or excluding under-represented groups in politics.

Even if gender balance in political assemblies is far away, we have seen examples of rapid increases in women's representation. Several countries from the Global South are now, with the help of gender quotas, challenging the historically leading position of the Nordic countries in terms of women's representation in politics.

The aim of this article was to demonstrate that gender quotas come in many forms and with different effects. The focus has been on the basic principles of various quota regimes, e.g. how different types of electoral gender quotas function in different electoral systems seen in relation to two concepts of equality: equality of competition and equality of result.

The overall result of this investigation is that, with the exception of reserved seat quotas, gender quotas neither guarantee individual women nor women as a group a certain number or percentage among those elected. Further, evaluated in terms of the degree of individual competition under various gender quota systems, the notion that gender quotas in general suspend competition and violate the principle of merit is rejected. Under most electoral gender quota systems, women candidates do get their positions as aspirants, candidates or elected representatives through a process of competition, in a few cases competition only between women. One may even argue that gender quotas increase the competition over elected positions, since gender quotas change the most common *de facto* situation, where men only compete with men.

Consequently, it is concluded that most forms of gender quota regime – contrary to what is commonly believed among both quota opponents and quota advocates – is just a step towards providing real equality of opportunity rather than equality of result. Those whose freedom is being restricted are the local party organisations. The main effect of properly implemented quota systems is that they make the political parties start recruiting women in a serious way. Consequently, gender quotas offer a real opportunity for both sexes to compete for political positions and the possibility for the voters – perhaps for the first time – to be able to choose between male and female candidates.

NOTES

1. Åsa Fredell, Master of political science, has worked as research assistant on this article.
2. Note that not all quota data on individual countries are updated on the home page of Socialist International Women.
3. In Bosnia-Herzegovina additional rules about the rank order states that among the first two candidates one must represent the under-represented sex, among the first five two must and among the first eight three must; all in all one-third must be women. In spite of these radical rules for constructing the lists, the open-list election of 2002 resulted in only 16.7 per cent women and that of 2006 14.3 per cent. In Iraq one out of the first three, and two out of the first six must be women and so forth, to the end of the list. The result was 25.5 per cent women elected in the 2005 election.
4. This article makes use of the electoral systems classification of International IDEA 2005.
5. Focusing on structural variations, Pippa Norris is able to show that the differences between the outcome in PR systems versus plurality-majority systems are much more distinct in 'post-industrial' societies, whereas the differences between these two electoral systems in terms of women's representation are much smaller in industrial societies and minimal in poorer agrarian societies (Norris 2004, 188; see also Matland and Studlar 1996).
6. There are many other forms for gender quotas in politics than electoral gender quotas. A political party may use quotas in relation to the internal organisation, like its steering committees or nominations committees. Moreover, women's representation in public committees and boards on the local or national level might be legally regulated, as in the

Nordic countries (Freidenvall et al. 2006). Only quotas for national parliaments are discussed here.

7. The Pacific region is not included in Table 2 since there is no clear pattern: there are legally mandated candidate quotas in Indonesia and South Korea, reserved seats in Taiwan and reserved seats for marginalised groups, including women, in the Philippines (International IDEA and Stockholm University 2007).
8. As in Dahlerup 2006a, 'West' here includes Western Europe, Canada and the United States, Australia and New Zealand.
9. Richard Matland (2006, 276–77) distinguishes between countries with either single-member districts or multi-member districts, whereas this article distinguishes between majoritarian systems, PR systems and mixed systems, the latter including a few 'other systems' according to the categorisation in International IDEA 2005. While Matland's data on level of democracy is from 2004, this article is based on Freedom House 2006.
10. In the case of voluntary gender quotas for elections, the number of political parties with quotas may span from only one to all of the parties in a country. Only parties represented in parliament are included here.
11. Such ignorance may, however, also turn out to be what Gregory Schmidt on the Peruvian case has called 'a blessing in disguise' (Schmidt 2003, 3).
12. It has been concluded that for legally mandated candidate quotas to be effective and applied, the following conditions need to be met: high district magnitude, closed-list proportional representation, rules about rank order (placement requirements) and good-faith compliance from the political parties (Htun and Jones 2002). Matland has argued for the importance of high party magnitude in each constituency rather than a large total number of seats, since these might be spread among many smaller parties (Matland 2006, 284).
13. In Argentina, a decree from 1993 fixed a minimum number of seats that would have to be accorded to women: at least one post when two to four were available; at least two posts where five to eight were available; at least three when nine to 11 were available; at least four when 12–14 were available; at least five when 15–18 were available; and at least six when 19–20 were available.
14. Further, two members are elected by the National Youth Council and one by the federation of disabled.

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