

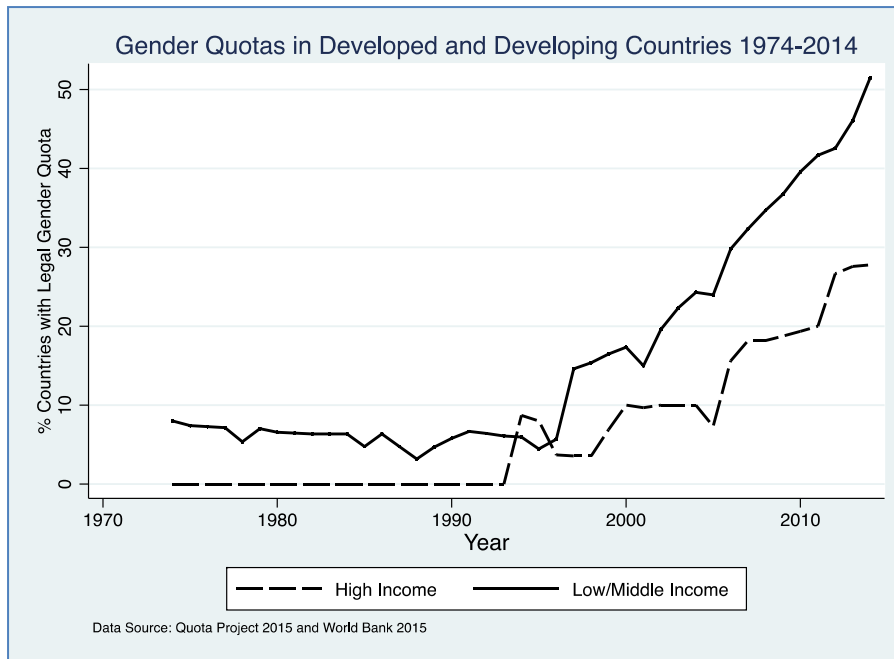
“Political Equality and Accountability: The Impact of Gender Quota Laws”

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Introduction

While accounting for one-half of the population, women hold less than 23% of the seats in legislatures worldwide. Recently, gender quotas - or affirmative action policies that reserve seats or candidatures for women - have become common as countries struggle to increase female legislative representation. Despite their established importance in improving women’s representation, little is known about how gender quota laws affect other aspects of governance. This is surprising given that quotas have been cited as the most common electoral reform in recent decades. The expansion of women’s representation and gender quotas of late has largely been driven by developing democracies - or democratizing countries that fall within the low- to middle- income categories – who presently outpace developed democracies in terms of women’s representation and gender quota policies (Figure 1). This research fills a gap in the literature by investigating outcomes of gender quotas in a developing country. The project broadly asks: Why do governments adopt gender quotas? How do these mechanisms affect political equality and governance? Using a mixed-methods research design, I examine the adoption and effects of quotas in Kenya.

Figure 1



Justification for Research

This project is situated within a broad research program that seeks to comprehend the role of gender quota laws. I argue that developing democracies adopt gender quotas to bolster political equality. Thus, they are an inherently democratic institution. Under structural conditions that limit political equality for women, quotas guarantee female citizens' eligibility and right to compete for political office. Research tracing the effects of institutions in developing democracies has largely overlooked this phenomenon.¹ Instead, much of the literature on gender quotas has focused on explaining their adoption and testing whether they significantly increase women's representation. While a rich body of case study research provides idiosyncratic theories about adoption in particular contexts, the literature lacks any broad theory about why quotas are adopted and how this influences their design and outcomes.² In addition, while much of the literature has shown that quotas do have a meaningful impact on women's numeric representation, little is known about how quotas affect governance and

¹Note that *Women Studies International Forum* (2013, 41:2) did recently run a special issue focused entirely on gender quotas and democratization in Africa.

²Krook (2007).

whether they reverse historical gender inequalities at the elite level.³

The findings of this project will have important implications for academics and policymakers. For political scientists, the project provides important insights into the role that quotas interact with political equality and accountability, two critical components of democracy. From the gender studies perspective, the project has implications for the ongoing debate regarding the relative merits of affirmative action mechanisms for women, including their role in reversing historic inequalities. For ordinary Kenyans, the results will provide important information about how policy dynamics work within parliaments and provide them with a better understanding of how quotas work. This is particularly important where previous research has shown that the mass public has a limited understanding of the roles of women's seats.⁴

Case Selection and Research Design

The project combines the case study of Kenya with a large-N quantitative analysis.⁵ The case study provides historical detail and traces the processes through which quotas were adopted, implemented, and their eventual impacts. The large-N analysis complements this by investigating how well the findings from the case generalize to a cross-national setting. As a result, the project aims to produce findings that exhibit both theoretical thickness and generality.

Sub-Saharan Africa has more gender quotas than any other region in the world, and some of the longest-running quotas are found in Eastern Africa. For example, adopted in 1989, Uganda's gender quota has gained it recognition as the first country to "guarantee women a substantial share of seats in the parliament".⁶ Kenya first adopted special provisions for women in 1997, when it reserved 6 out of 12 presidential appointments to the National Assembly for women. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya expanded the provision of affirmative action for women by introducing reserved seats at the district level, similar to neighboring Uganda. The new constitution also guarantees at a minimum 30%

³ Baldez (2004); Bhavnani (2009); Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna (2012); Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo (2012); Jones (1998); Krook (2009); Lindberg (2004); Matland (1998); Paxton (1997); Tremblay (2007, 2012); Tripp and Kang (2008); Yoon (2001).

⁴ For example see Tamale 1999.

⁵ Drawing on Lieberman (2006), Rohlfing (2007) refers to this as the case-study based nested analysis methodology.

⁶ Hughes, Krook, and Paxton (2015).

representation for either gender in all public offices. This provision still awaits clarification and implementation through a Constitutional Amendment or legislation. While much has been written on gender politics in other East African cases, namely Tanzania and Uganda, Kenya remains relatively unexplored. As a result, the timing of this research is particularly important. It will provide a nuanced assessment of how Kenya's quota is functioning from its genesis. This will contribute not only to filling a gap in the academic literature, but also provide information for policymakers at a critical time of debate.

The case study methodology includes qualitative and quantitative within case comparisons.⁷ I begin by analyzing historical documents and conducting in-depth interviews to explain why Kenya adopted gender quota laws. I will conduct approximately 20-30 interviews with elites and civil society members. I will also engage in a survey of archival documents leading up to and after the adoption of the gender quota. This includes exploring the national archives and the archives of political parties in both countries. Finally, I will consult published memoirs of key political elites. These secondary resources will augment and validate personal histories collected during the in-depth interviews.

To assess the impact of quotas, I examine data on parliamentary activities. Unlike previous studies, which focus on the raw number of women elected, I focus on legislative performance. Are male and female legislators performing their duties differently? How do female legislators benefitting from quota seats differ from their male counterparts? To answer these questions, I count the frequency of participation for each legislator including attendance, committee membership, and lines spoken during session. Using each of these metrics, I will run multivariate regression models to estimate any differences in legislative performance as a result of gender, gender quotas, and other biographical factors. Data for this analysis comes from official daily legislative records (Hansard Reports).⁸

The cross-national portion of the study includes the construction of a new dataset on gender quota laws. This involves the creation of a new composite variable that combines several aspects of a gender

⁷ This methodology draws upon George and Bennett (2005).

⁸ Hansard records provide a daily transcript of parliamentary sessions. They are common practice in most former British colonies and Commonwealth countries (including Kenya).

quota law into one measure, including (1) number of seats reserved, (2) percentage of candidates required, (3) enforcement mechanisms, (4) incentives, and (5) *de facto* enforcement. Using this measure, I will estimate how quotas affect political equality and accountability using a global sample of countries. These quantitative analyses will involve multivariate time series models with controls for relevant confounders. This portion of the research is critical for understanding how the findings apply to other settings.

Statement of Ethics

As a researcher abroad, I have an obligation to respect the host community. As such, I will actively work gauge the likely consequences of my research and avoid all possible negative outcomes. I will also foster openness by providing accurate information about my research and its limitations. The interview portion of the study includes human subjects. Specifically, I will ask participants to recount their experiences with regard to the gender quota law. The questions are not sensitive in nature and should not pose any known physical, financial, or emotional risk (see Appendix B). However, to ensure proper respect and privacy, participants will be asked to verbally consent to the interview. This statement of consent (see Appendix A) includes information regarding their rights and the option to maintain their anonymity if they so prefer.

Dissemination of Results

This project will produce information that is important for policymakers, academics, and ordinary Kenyans. Working with the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, I will disseminate my findings in the form of a final report to the Government of Kenya, as well as, all relevant stakeholders. All participants in the study will also be offered the option of receiving a copy of the completed work.