Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Women, Policy and Political Leadership

Regional Perspectives in Today's World

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Cataloguing-in-Publication Data is available from the National Library Board (Singapore).

Asian Women Parliamentarian Conference (2014 : Singapore)

Women, policy and political leadership / editors: Dr Wilhelm Hofmeister, Megha Sarmah, Dilpreet Kaur. – Singapore : Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, [2015]
pages cm
ISBN : 978-981-09-2114-9 (paperback)

1. Women – Political activity – Congresses. 2. Women legislators – Congresses. 3. Women politicians – Congresses. 4. Political participation –Congresses. I. Hofmeister, Wilhelm, editor. II. Sarmah, Megha, editor. III. Dilpreet Kaur, editor. IV. Title.

HQ1236
320.082 -- dc23 OCN908684564

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Foreword

There is no disagreeing that the need to push for higher levels of women's representation in politics, as well as enforcing equal rights to participate in decision-making, is apparent. The world average of women in parliament has increased from 15.7% in 2004 to 22.1% in 2015[1] but we are still some way away from the target of 30% of women in decision-making positions set by the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995.

Through the Asian Women Parliamentarian initiative, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) hopes to address the role of parliamentarians in forging the women leadership agenda and pushing it forward through best practices and shared experiences. Many of the participants in this initiative come from very diverse backgrounds and possess rich experiences that can really shape the dynamics of this caucus.

Furthermore, sharing experiences among various countries is equally important for raising women's awareness on their role in all fields of life. In this sense, regional cooperation in the form of network building is instrumental. In the case of Asia, there is no overall Asian caucus for women parliamentarians. Whilst there are a few states that have managed to establish sub-regional or national caucus for female parliamentarians beyond party lines, there are still states that have yet to form national parliamentary caucuses. This disparity in institutionalization can adversely impact the promotion of women's rights and gender equality in the long haul.

It is our hope at KAS that through stronger regional cooperation, these gaps can be bridged by consolidating best practices, influencing policy-agenda in bills passing and encouraging female parliamentarians to stand for a gender-sensitive and inclusive agenda at the respective national parliaments. We are witnesses to the successes of regional institution-building within the African Union and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) for instance. The benefits of these exposures to regional and international standards and interactions are thus not to be understated.

Moreover, many countries are practising similar legislations, such as gender quotas to raise female leadership participation, and yet the outcomes differ. How can we learn from the various forms of policy adoptions when it comes to gender quotas? In general, the use of electoral quotas for women is much more widespread than is commonly held. An increasing number of countries are currently introducing various types of gender quotas for public elections; in fact, half of the countries in the world today use some type of electoral quota for their parliaments. As of January 2015, 41 single or lower houses were composed of more than 30% women. 34 countries have reserved seats for women, thus opening up an important space for women's political participation.

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[1] Accurate as of 1 February 2015. http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm.

A regional caucus can help push these and other discussions further and encourage a more substantive understanding of the quota system, so as to, for example, push for more impactful female participation in politics. Nonetheless, it is as much a challenge to set up institutions as it is to make these institutions accessible to women, especially in Asia. Some Asian countries are still conflict-ridden or undergoing a political transitioning from conflicts.

In this publication, we present an overview with a) a retrospective timeline on milestones in global female political leadership; b) the Global Gender Gap rankings, introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 to assess the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities within and across states, using economic, political, education and health as criterion; and c) a pictorial overview of electoral quotas adopted around the world. Along with this factsheet, we have invited prominent authors from around the world to contribute regional insights into the situation of female political leadership and prospects as well as challenges.

Twenty years have now passed since the Fourth World Conference on Women, where the commitment to achieve gender equality was professed. Women's representation in national parliaments has increased and significant advances have been made in the global agenda on women, peace and security. But there is still a need to address these challenges, especially in regard to securing equal political and economic power between women and men, the gender pay gap, and the elimination of child marriage as well as other forms of gender-based violence.

We hope the compiled material by our authors prove useful for politically active women. Part of regional network-building includes knowledge management and we hope through this caucus to generate more of such content that can help influence perspectives and narratives around the region.

Dr. Wilhelm Hofmeister
May 2015

Reviewing Political Patriarchy and Women's Political Mainstreaming in Asia – Breaking Barriers, Fighting Blind Spots, Carving Opportunities

Andrea Fleschenberg

Asia represents an interesting and diverse laboratory for gender-sensitive policy-making, legislation as well as women's political mainstreaming at various levels of the political system and is home to multiple gender-specific cleavages, contestations and controversies – be it in terms of formal or informal political participation, regimes and processes. Experiences of women politicians in breaking barriers of political patriarchy and carving opportunities for women's sustainable and transversal political mainstreaming have been diverse, sometimes ambiguous or with ambivalent outcomes and implications, more often than not encouraging and continuously widening the public space for women's voice to be heard and agency to unfold.

Assessing a Heterogeneous Region and Introducing Key Concepts[1]

One characteristic feature has been the introduction of different systems of gender quotas at multiple levels of Asian polities – be it in the form of voluntary party quotas, candidacy lists, or reserved seats to be contested directly via elections or to be selected by male gatekeepers. Initially, public and academic debates revolved around the documentation of women politicians' experiences and around the debate of quota designs, issues of representativeness and critical mass theorising. Current debates and analyses of women parliamentarians' experiences have moved away from questions of (descriptive) representativeness towards challenges and gains of substantiveness in participation – from quantity/number games to quality/performance and impact, one could say. This includes reviews of intervening factors such as religion and other sociocultural determinants, strength of local as well as transnational women's movements and other democratic support networks, women's machineries, and external interventions in the shape of ODA-sponsored gender mainstreaming programmes and/or state-/institution-building processes. Bangladesh's former foreign minister, Dipu Moni, argues that the value of women parliamentarians is no longer debated, but their effectiveness has come increasingly into focus, making it all the more important for the respective

[1] For details, see our previous comparative works on which the following section is largely based, including: Fleschenberg and Derichs 2013; Fleschenberg and Derichs 2011; Fleschenberg, Derichs and Ng 2010.

political infrastructure to reflect the needs and concerns of women leaders as such. In her point of view, even a small number of women and their effective participation is significant as is the demonstrative effect by having women occupy key government positions, creating and allowing for women to imagine, have confidence in and aim for political leadership.[2]

As we have argued elsewhere, central questions which emerge are: (i) whether demands for representation and participation lead to effective political mainstreaming of women as well as a rupture, perforation or even transformation of androcentric political power structures, institutionalised political cultures as well as decision-making processes; (ii) what kind of agency and scope thereof do women politicians have for political agenda-setting as well as what kind of political performance can they display; and (iii) whether participation dividends emerge for other political arenas and public spheres and/or a gender democracy dividend for successful law- and policy-making. Or is it possible that recent initiatives and interventions for women's political participation in Asia have led to (i) the reproduction of structures of inequality, exclusion, and marginalisation, such as manifest by the characteristic features of elite capture of political institutions and the commonality of dynastic politics across the region of Asia; (ii) the continued exceptionalism of elite women's political participation and thus lack of political mainstreaming of women across different social strata; (iii) continued dependencies and lack of transversal agency of women politicians from male-dominated support systems and networks due to the design of given quota provisions along with predominant, unaltered androcentric structures and institutions; as well as, in some countries, (iv) violent as well as non-violent counter-movements and discourses, most often linked with the nexus of religion and politics (Fleschenberg and Derichs 2013).

In order to be able to evaluate such considerations and guiding questions, some conceptual food for thought is required, drawing from feminist political science concepts on the issue at hand in a brief, sketchy overview.

First, when talking about *political representation* and *political participation,* some terminological clarification and references are required. The seminal work of Pitkin (1967) outlines four dimensions of *political representation* – formal, descriptive, substantive and symbolic – and coined the difference between *delegate* and *trustee* when reviewing understandings of parliamentary mandates and agency. Building on this, Mansbridge (2003) adds three additional concepts of *political representation* which are of significance: (i) *gyroscopic*, i.e., interests, common sense and principles from one's own background to formulate as basis for parliamentary action; (ii) *surrogate*, i.e., representing constituents beyond one's own spatial electoral basis and of those whose values and identities one shares; (iii) *anticipatory*, i.e., based on what one thinks constituents will approve at the next election and not what has been promised previously in electoral campaigns or manifestos. This links the framework of assessing quota women politicians' experiences with questions of performance, outreach, representativeness, accountability as well as transversal agency, moving the academic debate from the question of "Do women represent women?" to questions such as "Who claims to

[2] Notes taken by the author of presentation held during the conference, Singapore, 16 October 2014.

act for women?" and "Where, how and why does the SRW occur?", and thus regarding representation as "dynamic, performative and constitutive" (Celis, Childs, Kantola and Krook 2008; Francheschet 2011).

In addition, such an understanding opens up the concept of political representation in terms of spaces, actors, agency and manifestations, takes into consideration legislative arenas as well as other arenas of politics, a wide range of actors, sites, goals that inform political processes, and highlights diversity in probabilities, levels, ways, strategies, locations, attempts and expressions / articulations "to act for women as a group" (or not), Celis et al. (2008) argue. Substantive female political representation thus needs to be considered to take place and to be negotiated at different levels – from the local via provincial, national to transnational and international, using strategies of uploading or downloading reference frameworks for policy-making, framing of agenda issues or negotiating issues through the use of various platforms and amplifiers, and not only within the confined space of national parliamentary politics. This also means to review the role of male parliamentarians, cabinet members, civil society representatives or bureaucrats, state agencies and institutions beyond the usually focussed-upon women's policy machineries, state feminism and women's movements (Celis, Childs, Kantola and Krook 2008).

As I have argued elsewhere (Fleschenberg 2009, 2013; see also Celis et al. 2008), the frequent heterogeneity of women parliamentarians in terms of interests, policy priorities, support system or party obligations and dependencies, ideological differences or other societal cleavages as well as the influence of multiple institutions – be it parliamentary practices, political cultures, gender ideologies, or work cultures – and predominant political discourses shape women's substantive political representation. Consequently, Celis et al. (2008) stress that we need to search for critical actors of both genders within and outside political institutions and key arenas, and to explore possibilities of competition, conflict, cooptation as well as cooperation along with multiple directionalities of reinforcement and reciprocity between different actors, sites and levels of political representation and negotiation, which shape the political behaviour and performance of women parliamentarians – be they on quota seats or not.

Having said that, an overview assessment of women's political representation – in numerical, comparative terms – is necessary and will be given in the following section in order to outline briefly patterns, trajectories and developments in recent decades in Asia. This overview is based on data provided by the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU, www.ipu.org) as well as the Stockholm-based QuotaProject (www.quotaproject.org), headed by leading quota scholar Drude Dahlerup and linked with IDEA (www.idea.int).

Where Do We Stand? – Assessing Women's Political Representation and Participation

Reviewing the data on Asian women's political representation provided by IPU, a significant jump can be identified from the late 1990s onwards until today, outlining women's

increased presence as parliamentarians, speakers, and cabinet members and the implementation of supportive gender quota systems.

While until 1997 there was only one Asian country with a female parliamentary speaker, in late 2014, out of forty women presiding national parliaments worldwide (14.7 percent), four were from Asia, respectively, Bangladesh (2013f), India (2009f), Laos (2011f) and Singapore (2013f). Previously, diverse countries such as Japan (1993 onwards) and Pakistan (2008-2013) saw female parliamentary speakers for the first time. While at the end of 2014, women parliamentarians represented 21.8 percent of the world's national legislators (22.2 percent with regard to lower houses), the Asian regional average of 18.8 percent falls some percentage points short of that average: Nordic Countries 41.6 percent, Americas 25.6 percent, Europe (without Nordic countries) 23.7 percent, Sub-Sahara Africa 22.5 percent, Arab states 17.8 percent and Pacific 12.6 percent. Among the current top thirty countries in terms of women's political representation, only the young, independent, post-conflict nation of Timor-Leste is listed. While reviewing numerically the top fifty as well as the bottom fifty countries in terms of women's political representation, a significant gender disparity across Asia becomes apparent. While only predominantly post-conflict countries like Timor Leste (no. 17), Nepal (no. 35), Afghanistan (no. 41) and the Philippines (no. 43) are ranked in the top fifty, double the number of Asian countries, diverse in terms of socioeconomic status, political system, trajectory of women's political participation as well as predominant gender regime (including religious features), can be found in the bottom half of the 189 national parliaments evaluated – India (no. 117), Malaysia (no. 124), Japan (no. 134), Thailand (no. 138), Maldives (no. 139), Sri Lanka (no. 140), Burma/Myanmar (no. 141) and Papa Neuguinea (no. 148), ranging from 2.7 to 11.4 percent of women MPs.

In the past decades, gender-specific quota systems were the tool of choice in 109 countries, predominantly in the regions of Latin America, Europe and Africa. In Asia, we can find thirteen countries with national-level gender quotas: (i) constitutionally codified reserved seats in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China and Pakistan; (ii) legislative candidate quotas in five countries, along with subnational-level quota regimes or a combination thereof at various levels of the political system and within different electoral system designs as well as different quantitative outcomes. While, for example, Timor Leste has 38 percent of female legislators within a list-based proportional representation system without explicit quota provisions, Afghanistan has 28 percent women legislators under the rare Single Non Transferable Vote System and reserved seat provisions, which need to be directly contested in province-based constituencies. The emerging power India only has subnational-level reserved seats, codified in two constitutional amendments of the early 1990s, under a majority first-past-the-post elections system leading to 11 percent of women legislators at the national level. Southeast Asian country Indonesia combines quota systems at the subnational and national level within its list-based proportional representation system, generating 17 percent of women legislators at the national level.

While Asia has seen a number of women as presidents (Mongolia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India) or as prime ministers (South Korea and repeatedly across South Asia in

Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), most stem from an elite background of political dynasties, thus cementing the pattern of exceptionalism of women's political participation instead of a cross-sectional trickle down and diffusion of women in politics, originating thus from various social strata, walks of life and societal backgrounds. Furthermore, the conquest of top political offices has not led to an increase at other levels of the polity or overall female political participation – be it in parliament, bureaucracy, government or community affairs. Having said that, women also played significant roles at the forefront of oppositional reform or democratisation movements, engaging in contentious politics within and/or outside formal political institutions, again in diverse countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, China, Burma/Myanmar, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Timor Leste, among others. Since 1987, a more positive pattern of Asian women's substantive political representation has emerged at the national cabinet level with mostly increasing numbers across Asia and across the spectrum of ministerial portfolios, ranging from agriculture, foreign affairs, resources, justice, infrastructure, social welfare, health, finance, women's affairs, science and technology to defence (see for details Fleschenberg 2009; Derichs and Fleschenberg 2013, 2011; Fleschenberg, Derichs and Ng 2010).

Women have thus gained inroads into Asian politics in diverse and intricate ways – via dynastic descent, quota regulations, civil society activism, or career (party) politics rising from different polity levels or arenas. While a certain number managed to capture the executive level in diverse portfolios, the overall picture is marked by ambivalence, ambiguity, contradictions and contestations, with the region of Southeast Asia showing a better performance in terms of descriptive representation.

To Do List I - Gaps, Blind Spots, Barriers, Challenges and Tales of Political Patriarchy

In their seminal work *No Shortcuts to Patriarchy*, Goetz and Hassim (2003) argue that women's political effectiveness depends on a "chain of responsibility and exchange", which relies on (i) the type of women elected, (ii) their ability to speak out on certain policy issues as well as agency to follow them through; (ii) a supportive, resourceful gender equity lobby in civil society; (iii) credibility of women politicians and policies in political competition / electoral politics; (iv) coalition- and alliance-building across arenas, tiers and levels of the polity; along with (v) the capacity of the state and the political system to respond to new policy issues, to accommodate a new set of actors and to implement (novel, transformative) women policies. Having said that, Asian women parliamentarians encounter myriad, often intersecting and interdependent challenges that need to be taken into account when discussing women's substantive political representation, which I will outline briefly in the following section. Without clearly mapping, reflecting and discussing these challenges, it will be difficult to carve out opportunities to turn tales of political patriarchy into tales of substantive and sustainable political mainstreaming of women.

Gender Roles Ascriptions and Transversality of Parliamentary Mandates

Most women parliamentarians continue to operate in a predominantly androcentric, patriarchal political setting that impacts on their agency as a parliamentarian in terms of territorial and functional dimensions, which I would like to sketch out in the following section, and which need to be addressed not only by repetitive exposure, experience-gathering, networking or capacity-building, but also, and maybe even more so, by changes in the overall political culture, political dynamics and power structures.

Misogynist political cultures within political institutions as well as in other societal domains, be they private or public, result more often than not in gender biases, segregation or mobility restrictions of women parliamentarians in interacting with fellow stakeholders, constituents and society at large. Decision-making is still considered a male prerogative at multiple levels, from community representation, conflict deliberation and mediation to provincial or national governance processes. This can lead, for example, to negative attitudes, gossiping, harassment and other forms of gender-based violence and ultimately in self-censorship of women parliamentarians, curtailing the transversality of their mandate as well as discouraging other women from following in their footsteps. With such a visible communication that politics is defined as a political *malestream*, it becomes more difficult to argue and ally against discriminatory laws and practices, and the assignment of less powerful and/or resourced portfolios and positions to women, regardless of the extent of their descriptive and substantive representation in governance structures.[3]

As discussed during the Asian Women Parliamentarians' Conference *Women, Policy and Political Leadership* in October 2014 in Singapore, women often hesitate to address women's issues in order not to alienate male colleagues and constituents. Cambodian legislator and women and trade union activist Binda Panday explains that women politicians are challenged by the slow speed of changing attitudes and behaviour of male counterparts, who, in addition, repeatedly cite alleged non-gendered policy priorities and concerns as more significant than women's rights issues. However, she also pinpoints dominant patriarchal attitudes among female political leaders and activists along with the lack of role models as problematic. Gender biases and subsequent patriarchal attitudes shaping women's political participation are pervasive in multiple arenas and at multiple levels, from the grassroots to the top of a given polity, thus amounting not only to a glass ceiling but also to multiple glass walls that women need to circumvent. Vietnamese legislator Pham Khanh Phong Lan adds that, as pointed out by other women legislators, gender biases need to be addressed from the grassroots level, the family and community onwards, an issue that she identifies

[3] For instance, Malaysian legislator Chua Yee Ling reported that it was difficult to translate women's organising power at the grassroots level over power struggles when it came to seat negotiations as women are often assigned to remote, less developed and/or resourced constituencies. The key obstacle is a male-dominated patriarchal culture, which also became visible in deliberations over the 2015 budget where the women's affairs portfolio focussed on women's welfare issues rather than, for example, on gender-sensitive education and thus changing mindsets (Notes taken by the author during the respective conference presentation, Singapore, 16 October 2014).

as the biggest challenge. For her, changing communities' perceptions on women's leadership capacities and gender roles is as important as quota provisions for allowing women to be able to perform and prove themselves while performing political duties. Consequently, championing gender concerns, with or without the label of "feminist" or "womanist", might still be considered by far too many as amounting to political suicide, requiring discursive mediation and containment in a wider, hegemonic androcentric political *malestream* where more often than not women's parliamentary caucuses remain volatile or where women politicians' networking, in cooperation with civil society activists and academia, remains a scarcity or insufficient, as outlined by a number of women parliamentarians in Singapore. A rare exception was the experience of Mongolian member of parliament Erdenechimeg Luvsan who shares that the post-2006 Women's Caucus represented five different political parties that were able to work together on a range of issues, including child protection and care, women's rights, violence against women, maternal health challenges due to insufficient service delivery, a demand for changes in the gender quota provisions toward a zipper system, and support in financial and economic resources needed for women candidates to be successful. In a similar vein, Nepalese member of parliament Binda Panday emphasises that gender can serve as a cross-cutting issue for the whole of society, even at a rhetoric level to frame and speed up changes in women's attitudes, values and perspectives, which are changing at a faster pace than men's. For Malaysian legislator Chua Yee Ling, this might also be an issue of adequate framing of policy approaches and agenda issues, as, in her words, *we don't talk about gender equality, women's rights, feminism but about women's participation*. Gabriela Women's Party Congress legislator Luz Ilagan agrees that framing is key as laws often benefit men as well, which needs to be highlighted more than that a particular law is primarily targeting or aiming for women.[4] Linked to this are two contrasting aspects. First of all, this opens the way for an elite capture or dominance of politics, including quota provisions, because the price to be paid to be part of politics, to survive political competition as well as everyday parliamentary politics, might require a higher level of resources and a solid, vast support system that women outside a specific socioeconomic class, political families or political parties cannot access or afford to maintain. Such resource differences might be one reason for the elitist nature of (electoral) politics in many countries across Asia, regardless of a parliamentarian's gender. Women parliamentarians from numerous countries across South, Southeast and East Asia[5] discussed that a quota should be evaluated with regard to which women make it into parliament, as the presence of politically strong women, which have the required capacity-building as well as are able to address women's concerns (which many don't, participants added), is crucial.

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[4] Notes taken on the Welcome Address of UN Women Singapore's Executive Director, as well as during question and answer, group work discussions and informal conversations by the author during the conference, Singapore, 15-17 October 2014.

[5] Women legislators came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Nepal, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar/Burma, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Timor Leste and Vietnam.

Given the predominance of dynastic politics, Philippine legislator, lawyer and civil society activist Leni Gerona-Robredo argues that feedback loops from the grassroots level are important, as is a multi-level approach to avoid elitist women's participation. In that regard, local governments can be enabling arenas to train and gain credentials for a national environment through community-based political work. Moreover, she opines that diversity is key, i.e., to move beyond the same faces and voices at the national level for more diversity in women's descriptive and subsequently substantive representation. Similarly, Cambodian opposition parliamentarian and former minister of women's affairs Mu Sochua questions why women are in politics and whether (elite) women politicians, which partake in a male-dominated political game, have not become part of the problem: *I used to be in the system but left it not to be caught in the system. … the temptation was always there. That's why I joined the opposition*, trying to opt out of the elite appropriation of common resources.

Along those lines, Malaysian parliamentarian Kasthuri Patto refers to her experience of patriarchal mindsets and their gender impact on women politicians' participation, in nexus with the issue of corruption: in a false notion, constituents might consider that women needed to bend the rules of the system to be in power, which might also mean the need to be corrupt. However, she also observes that women politicians might be treated harsher than male colleagues by the media and the general public in case of corruption allegations or charges. Treasurer of Southeast Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption and member of parliament in Timor Leste Maria de Lurdes Bessa Martins de Sousa Bessa provides related additional evidence from her own work in the field when she questions why Timorese women ministers have been easier targets, charged with facilitating contracts for their husbands' companies, and why only women politicians have been imprisoned so far.[6]

But the question remains about the sequencing of efforts: numbers in terms of critical mass first and then quality or not? Gerona-Robredo regards the numeric gender ratio as an inadequate measurement of gender equality and women's empowerment; however, leading Afghan parliamentarian Shukria Barakzai highlights the importance of quota provisions in ensuring women's presence as well as the fact that male legislators might also lack in expertise and experience but do not publicly talk about this lack of capacity-building. She regards a quota as a first step to keep the door open for women "to get in" and stresses that it is crucial to frame the discourse more strategically, in the sense that quota politicians need to talk about obstacles, rather than just about their own inadequacies. "Let's not question our qualities and hinder our progress", former foreign minister Dipu Moni argues and points towards the need for mentoring, supporting gender quotas as an important, but not the only, step to be taken, as well as another necessary conditionality, namely, political

[6] On a different note, Mu Sochua incriminates the complicity of wives as part of a corruption system run by male politicians, abusing their elite societal position as carte blanche for subsequent undertakings. Opposition parliamentarian Kasthuri Patto seconds with cases from Malaysia, where a number of elite women politicians have been implicated in key corruption scandals, thus demanding that "[w]omen shouldn't vote for women but for good women, not to have donkeys again in power (…)" (Notes taken by the author during the presentations, question and answer sessions as well as group work discussions, Singapore, 16-17 October 2014).

parties' commitment to appointing women to leadership positions in different arenas of public affairs and its necessary demonstrative effect for society at large and women and girls in particular.[7]

This is further complicated, secondly, by (i) the lack of quota-within-quota provisions to have diverse women legislators from different socioeconomic strata as well as (ii) specific education clauses (e.g., Pakistan) which bar, for instance, community-level women politicians without tertiary education from rising up the ladder of political success.

In contrast, the case of the Philippines is interesting, where the 1986 post-transition Constitution established party lists in order to represent marginalised social groups instead of gender quota provisions. Luz Ilegan, a legislator in the Lower House and chair of Gabriela, outlines that it was founded in October 2000 as a women's party with a hundred thousand registered members country-wide, and that it has successfully contested elections since 2004 on a platform of promoting women's rights and issues of marginalised women with regard to empowerment, justice and equality, fair and non-sexist participation in all public spheres, and access to basic service delivery. Only those laws are drafted, which are approved by Gabriela's country-wide chapters, thus ensuring that the respective legislative agenda is based on grassroots women's direct input, consultation and voice.[8] Among the issues addressed are controversial ones such as reproductive health, divorce, violence against women and children, and reformulation of penal code provisions on rape, along with focusing on marginalised segments of women, such as overseas workers, and female working poor in rural and urban areas.[9]

Evidence from (post)-conflict countries like Afghanistan and Timor Leste, among others, suggest that being a novel entrant to politics can also mean that particular expectations have to be met – regardless of a more hostile environment towards women's political participation. Especially in post-conflict scenarios, women might be able to convince voters that they have not been involved in conflict dynamics or human rights violations and are thus considered a symbol of change. However, international interventions – military or non-military in nature – have left an ambivalent legacy for gender mainstreaming efforts, if one reviews the cases of Afghanistan, Cambodia, Timor-Leste or Aceh, Indonesia. Key seems to be a political will and commitment to mid- to long-term resources to allow for established women's machineries to be successful and for newly codified laws and mechanisms of positive discrimination, such as gender quotas, to be internalised, implemented and sanctioned beyond the presence of international intervention actors supporting them. While one could

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[7] Notes taken by the author during the conference question and answer sessions as well as group work discussions, Singapore, 16-17 October 2014.

[8] Gabriela members are now running as local and city councillors, but on a ticket with a traditional party as, she admits, it is difficult to run on a women's party ticket and muster the extensive financial and economic resources needed to run as a candidate in traditional politics (Notes taken by the author during the question and answer session after Luz Ilegan's presentation, Singapore, 16 October 2014).

[9] Notes taken by the author during the presentation of Luz Ilegan, Singapore, 16 October 2014.

consider the brevity of time as a key factor for limited norm diffusion, one might also charge the often-experienced overriding securitisation paradigm of international interventions as a key obstacle, overriding other civilian and gender political concerns by its prioritisation. In that regard, Vietnamese legislator Pham Khanh Phong Lan hints towards the importance of choosing the right value and policy frames to be politically successful in ensuring gender mainstreaming policies. Apart from important international documents such as CEDAW, national action plans and policy frameworks are required.

Irrespective of their transformative potentials and opportunities, such post-conflict contexts are not clean slates: they build on pre-existing sociopolitical hierarchies, gender ideologies and conflict legacies, regardless of the opportunities a temporary power vacuum or international intervention might bring. Similar to the experiences during Latin America's transition processes, women might be at the forefront of pro-democracy and peace building struggles, but lose out when political institutions consolidate at the next stage of political change or when there is a need to re-strategise agendas, arenas and tools of political participation within and outside of key institutions such as parliament, government, ministerial bureaucracy and civil society.

Expectations and Failures to Deliver

At best, being a novel entrant into politics might mean that women parliamentarians are regarded as change agents compared to traditional (male) politicians. However, being considered a change agent, i.e., someone who will alter the way politics is done, the way the power dispensation operates, the way the sociopolitical culture frames means and ways of political communication among decision-makers as well as vis-a-vis the constituents, the way alliances are formed and which issues are on the agenda, often of reformatory if not transformative content and extent, raises expectations. If women are considered as changed agents, they face high expectations to make a difference and to make a difference fast, within only a few legislative periods, regardless of their status of subaltern actor in terms of voice and agency within the given political institution. And this is complicated further by the fact that institutional legacies in term of processes and work/decision-making cultures don't necessarily work in favour of women, who are rather more likely to meet with resistance from veto-actors as well as societal counter-movements within as well as outside of political institutions, and formal as well as informal power brokers, opinion makers and spoilers. Such counter-movements and discourses can also originate in gender mainstreaming interventions of external as well as internal actors, becoming part and parcel of a wider, transnational political contestation.[10]

Institutional constraints can limit a change agent's voice and agency, if a supportive alliance-building among colleagues, with civil society as well as if the necessary political will from key power brokers is not formed – the gender equity lobby and the gender agenda

[10] See evidence drawn from comparative chapters in our special journal issues as well as edited volume: Fleschenberg and Derichs 2013; Fleschenberg and Derichs 2011; and Fleschenberg, Derichs and Ng 2010.

commitment according to Goetz and Hassim (2003). Women parliamentarians may end up in a position where they have to overstretch their capacities through engaging in activism at multiple fronts, sites and levels while at the same time learn on the job as novel entrants and push the boundaries of an institutional culture to become more gender-sensitive and accommodating to women's political participation and thus less androcentric. All of this is done within the temporal confines of electoral politics – be it four or five years of a legislative period when one has to face constituents and compete in electoral politics, demonstrating what has been delivered with little space to negotiate why promises have not been delivered or why change just might simply take so much longer, while the crucial, small, often less visible institutional changes are so much more difficult to communicate to a populace interested in concrete policy outcomes and impact.

Research has so far predominantly looked at the outcome and impact on women's machineries / women's policy agencies and their nexus with women's movements in Western democracies in Europe, North and South America rather than in Asian contexts. Evidence suggests that such women's machineries (or so-called insider agency alliances) are important entry points, negotiation sites and allies not only to represent women as a group, women's movements as a collective actor at the state level, but also to initiate and follow through with procedural access along with state feminist approaches to gender-sensitive policy-making (see McBride and Mazur 2012; Squires 2007).

Less research has been done to highlight the experiences of parliamentary commissions on women's affairs or national commissions on the status of women in the region of Asia, which might be key bridges and alliance-building institutions between women politicians, women's activists and other policy-making stakeholders. Pakistani gender and development expert Saba Gul Khattak's review of women's commissions in South Asia, whose proper functioning she regards as being constantly threatened by bureaucratisation, precarious mandates, symbolic consultations and gender rhetorics, inadequate allocation of resources and lack of policy-influencing, transformative powers is therefore interesting. International experiences seem to indicate, says Khattak, that such commissions are more often than not crushed within the wheels of a patriarchal state machinery and system, circumventing attempts to transform dominant traditional practices and values in the field of religion and culture. In addition, the membership is also important for the commission's work performance as is the question of the selection mechanism, status position assigned, remuneration as well as power devolution model assigned. Experiences shared from representatives from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with the first provincial commission on the status of women set up post-2008, highlight that preference was given to female district members and that female provincial assembly members were involved. However, difficulties in enacting laws were again due to the lack of technical infrastructure, eligibility criteria for members and how they were selected, i.e., the need to avoid political influences, and to ensure mixed membership from politics as well as civil society, beyond government-driven nominations. Thus, a critical distance from government departments and a rootedness in civil society were considered important by gender expert Simi Kamal of Aurat Foundation,

a leading country-wide women's organisation. In the exemplary case of Pakistan, not only are internal factors to blame, but also the project-based approach of UN or other bilateral donor agencies, resulting in project-drivenness and funding issues instead of ensuring an adequate government endowment and a subsequent autonomous space and mandate for such commissions to operate efficiently and effectively. Given the multi-level realities of policy-making in many decentralised and/or federal political systems, leading woman parliamentarian Nafeesa Shah argues that linkages between the local, provincial, national and international levels become all the more important. "We are not able to consolidate gains", she criticises, as reporting on gender policies and women's rights issues under the CEDAW umbrella requires a coherent, streamlined planning process, a focal ministry at the federal level, parliamentary caucusing, and a national framework.[11]

Challenges of Quota Mandates and Status Ascriptions

In my research conducted in Afghanistan and Pakistan, reports of gender quota politicians being challenged over the perceived *quality* or *status* of their mandate surfaced repeatedly over the past decade, but this might be more common across various Asian countries as informal discussions with colleagues and legislators suggest.[12]

Depending on the provisions of gender quotas, women either have to compete directly in an election (Afghanistan) or are selected by a male peer college (Pakistan) for reserved seats, depending on the electoral outcome of a particular political party or parliamentary group. At the same time, the vote threshold might differ between directly contested seats and reserved seats, not to mention indirectly selected reserved seats. Some gender quota legislators subsequently faced comments and challenges from male colleagues over the status of their mandate, given that they might have needed less votes or no electoral competition at the constituency level to become a parliamentarian. Depending on the electoral design, the lack of a specific constituency base or an allegedly weaker one given the number of votes tallied might impact on a woman parliamentarian's standing with male peers.

Furthermore, having no direct constituency-based vote might impact on the necessary resources – be they financial, economic or social in nature – a parliamentarian can rely on in her/his parliamentary work. Asymmetries in access to resources and in the perceived status of the mandate might lead to a higher dependency on male support systems, such as male-dominated political parties, or in terms of political positions assigned, thus moving from allegations of window-dressing, symbolic presence and gender rhetoric to substantive representation. A constituency base is not only key for re-election, but also for a woman parliamentarian to move away from temporary quota provisions to sustainable political

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[11] National Commission on the Status of Women, National Consultation on Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment Post-Devolution, Islamabad, 14-15 December 2011 (notes taken by the author during presentation and discussion rounds).

[12] Notes taken by the author during the conference question and answer sessions as well as group work discussions along with informal conversations, Singapore, 16-17 October 2014.

competition in electoral politics. Therefore, constant grassroots engagement and available feedback loops from constituents one claims and attempts to represent are crucial for a sustainable and successful parliamentary career and for gathering political experience and standing in terms of social capital.

Asymmetries in status ascriptions can also originate from the perceived nature of politics as something filthy, violent, corrupt and clientelistic, and as something detrimental and in contradiction with dominant gender roles ascriptions. Therefore, women engaging in politics might (i) lack, at least at the initial stage, role models along with the support of their families and communities; (ii) be further compartmentalised into what are considered *safe* institutions and arenas of politics, which have a different status in the wider political system but don't threaten to tarnish their reputations required to be a votable candidate; or (iii) face an uphill battle to not only learn, adjust and/or change the rules of the political game but also the perceptions thereof in order to be able to compete and be considered capable and of *appropriate* reputation for the leadership job.[13]

Multi-Level Contestations: Gender Mainstreaming Interventions and Counter Movements

Such asymmetries in status ascriptions and agency (perceived or actual) can also lead to women parliamentarians being hijacked or exploited by other political actors. In countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan, but not exclusively there, where gender policies crystallise wider sociopolitical contestations, ideological discourses and power bargaining, this hijacking or exploitation can occur on multiple levels of the polity.

In South Asian countries, in particular Bangladesh as well as Afghanistan, gender quota systems, part of a wider gender mainstreaming agenda, have been understood by male and conservative stakeholders as a ceiling rather than as a floor for women's political participation. Having said that, women politicians – be they in formal political institutions or operating within civil society – are also characterised by heterogeneity and ideological differences, which might lead to (i) political contestations over gender policy approaches, agenda-setting contents and strategies, along with (ii) a subsequent lack of dialogue as well as concerted action, such as caucusing, to bridge such divides among women politicians and activists, who are not representing a homogenous social group, but rather a socioculturally, economically and politically clustered group of citizens. Assuming women's a priori solidarity and gender difference of experiences, needs and political interests amounts to problematic essentialism, extensively discussed in the literature at hand. Molyneux highlighted already decades ago that we need to be cautious about assuming women's interests and agendas, and that we have to differentiate between strategic women's interests (read: feminist/transformative) and practical ones (read: ranging from various ideological standpoints on gender to intersectional fragmentation) (see Francheschet 2011).

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[13] See evidence drawn from comparative chapters in our special journal issues as well as edited volume: Fleschenberg and Derichs 2013, Fleschenberg and Derichs 2011 and Fleschenberg, Derichs and Ng 2010.

This is further replicated in many heterogeneous, if not fragmented, civil societies and women's movements across Asia, with conservative fringes related to gender equity concerns, and problematised by often under-resourced and marginalised women's policy machineries, which thus need to carefully strategise in their lobbying and advocacy work as well as policy counselling. This then might lead to further contestation with civil society and its representatives, be they women's activists or not. Razavi and Jennichen (2010) point towards a "rising political prominence of religious actors and movements", be they at the local, national or transnational level with specific gendered prescriptions and societal positioning for women, using more often than not the informal power of religion in terms of diffusing ideas and norms, thus shaping the political arena and predominant societal culture in a way which is difficult to counter-argue and counter-act. One example is provided by Afghan woman legislator Shukria Barakzai, on the attempt to codify the Elimination of Violence Act beyond a temporary presidential decree, linking it with the issue of religion and its interpretation, when she stresses that, in her experience, the more one tries to ally with the religious clergy for gender-specific policy issues, the less one achieves it.[14]

The impact of unwritten constitutions – be they of religious nature or not – on norms, discourses and practices of politics cannot be highlighted enough although research findings are scarce. Overall, the impact of informal institutions, such as, but not limited to, religiously gendered rules on mobility or dress code, on the arenas of formal politics, its key institutions and civil society are diverse and create a difficult field for women parliamentarians to navigate in:

> A crucial part of achieving gender equitable institutional change (understood here as any institutional change that contributes to lessening gender inequalities) is, therefore, to improve our understanding of not only the outputs of institutions but also the institutions themselves in both their formal and informal guises. This will, for example, help gender scholars to understand why the outcomes of institutional change, such as the creation of women's policy agencies (WPAs) and the implementation of gender mainstreaming, are often not as hoped for, or how change efforts are subverted. (Waylen 2013, 2)

Subsequently, we can find women also on the move in counter-movements, women from religio-political groups and parties re-appropriating and redefining gender vocabulary and gender mainstreaming interventions for a different societal project, which is not marked by gender equity in the feminist sense but rather highlight gender differences and women's patriarchal subordination, regardless of working for safeguarding women's rights and capabilities within a larger gender conservative reference framework (see Jamal 2012; Zia 2009). Examples in point are female members of conservative political parties championing the abolishment of gender quotas and/or women's domestication, as well as the recent cases of

[14] Notes taken by the author during the conference question and answer sessions as well as group work discussions, Singapore, 16-17 October 2014.

young women joining militant fighters in Syria, which drew worldwide media attention and sensationalised hype given their small numbers.

Instead of Conclusions: To Do List II - Carving Opportunities for Women's Political Mainstreaming

Here I would like to remind readers again of Goetz and Hassim (2003) and their seminal writing on women's political effectiveness, which they regard as being dependent on women politicians' and their allies' ability to build a "chain of responsibility and exchange", i.e., the (i) ability to speak out on policy issues and the ability to follow them through, (ii) gender equity lobby in civil society, (iii) credibility of women politicians and policies in political competition and electoral politics, (iv) coalition- and alliance-building across arenas, tiers and levels of the political system, along with (v) the capacity of the state / political system to respond to new policy issues, to accommodate a new set of actors and to implement women policies.

During the 2014 Singapore meeting, women parliamentarians present debated a number of ways to carve out opportunities, beyond the debate on challenges, obstacles and strategies for caucusing. Afghan member of parliament Shukria Barakzai, for example, highlights not only the importance of maintaining quota systems for the time being but also the need to talk clearly about existing, institutional obstacles rather than focus on women parliamentarians' own inadequacies or needs of capacity-building. In response, Nepalese member of parliament and trade union activist Binda Panday pinpoints the need to start to question back if one is challenged about one's capacities, experiences or for being a quota parliamentarian. Such steps need further supportive structures, as highlighted by former foreign minister of Bangladesh, Dipu Moni, who emphasises the need for mentoring by women for other women to qualify and be high achievers, enabling them to be successful in political competition. For her, this does not amount to women behaving like men or conforming to be accepted; rather it is important for women to accept the importance of being women, for changing key political paradigms – such as of what is "good" political leadership, communication or agency – and bringing their own set of abilities and concerns. This also means the need for increased networking, building women's teams to enhance competency, education, and economic empowerment, along with role models to increase the confidence and competence of women on political leadership, stresses Binda Panday. Many Asian parliamentarians agree that, ultimately, power relations and political cultures – thus societal and political patriarchal values, practices and discourses – have to change, and have to be transformed, apart from women using various empowerment, alliance-building and networking strategies across major sociopolitical cleavages.[15]

[15] Notes taken by the author during the conference question and answer sessions as well as group work discussions, Singapore, 16-17 October 2014.

These experiences and perceptions shared by women parliamentarians themselves are in line with major research findings, for example those presented as part of a comprehensive IDEA effort on strengthening women's political, in particular parliamentary, participation (see for details: Karam and Lovenduski 2005), on which I would like to base my concluding thoughts on the issues discussed above. Karam and Lovenduski (2005) highlight the importance of networking as a crucial socialisation mechanism in terms of knowledge, for deliberating on experiences, expertise and concerns, and to enhance their own political effectiveness within their political groups and political parties as well as within the specific political arenas and institutional settings they are operating in. Both authors stress the significance of cross-party alliances for legislation and policy-making – a necessary ingredient for strengthened standing in electoral politics / political competition. The case of network governance of the Pakistani alliance for a change in anti-sexual harassment legislation AASHA is a key example on how a network governance approach, linking parliamentarians, civil society representatives, entrepreneurs, bureaucrats and government representatives, can provide an effective platform and working mechanism for sociopolitical and legislative change. One key experience of AASHA, also highlighted by a number of Asian women parliamentarians present in Singapore, is also the importance of framing, i.e., the need to flexibly address different policy stakeholders and audiences through adequate reference frameworks to be able to follow through with policy / legislative changes and also ensure proper implementation across society and polity (see Ahmad 2012).

In the IDEA handbook *Women in Parliaments*, edited by Julie Ballington and Azza Karam (2005), key guidelines are presented for women parliamentarians' effectiveness that merit being mentioned here, distinguishing between *institutional / procedural representation* and *influence on output and discourse* and three different steps – *learning the rules, using the rules* and *changing the rules*. In those guidelines, the following measures are highlighted, to paraphrase key ideas and points:

- *training* and capacity-building on effective voice, communication, lobbying and parliamentary procedures, networking, mentoring and media competence;
- *caucusing* in the sense of network governance across institutions, arenas and different types of stakeholders;
- *ensuring visibility* in key political institutions, such as committees, and in key political discourses, with a clear understanding of different framings of what are women's or gender issues;
- *establish supportive institutional structures and critical mass,* such as women's machineries, supportive policy networks across political and gender divides, and nomination campaigns for women's nomination to leadership positions and presence in key political institutions;
- *be proactive in framing* issues by linking them to non-gendered debates and alliances, using the public space to raise concerns and get on the parliamentary agenda – be it in debates or through the use of consultation and inquiry mechanisms;

- *change the rules of the game and of power configurations* – be it how candidates get selected, how parliamentary procedures and communication flows operate, how policy measures and legislative drafts are reviewed (or not) in terms of their compatibility with and accountability to gender mainstreaming concerns as well as how women parliamentarians and women activists in multiple political arenas, including civil society, organise and cooperate among themselves (Karam/Lovenduski 2005).

Asian women politicians have come a long way in the past decades in terms of descriptive and substantive representation across the region and the effort of the conference in Singapore highlights the need for further strategising on what obstacles we are actually looking at to change the overall power of political patriarchy, to increase women's political effectiveness and to carve out opportunities for substantive representation from diverse Asian women politicians, moving beyond elite politics and the challenges of counter-movements and their misogynist discourses. Caucusing across political, socioeconomic and national divides is a crucial step and might become a watershed event in the history of Asian women's political participation and performance.

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Overview

Women's participation in politics and their secure access to political life is very important for democratic development and sustainability. After overcoming stiff resistance and negotiating for their rights, women all over the world have mobilized across political lines and from the standpoints of different social and cultural status and ethnic affiliations to work towards the goal of gender equality. The hard work has paid off and there have indeed been positive changes in most regions of the world: the average number of women in parliament has increased from 15.7 percent in 2004 to nearly 22.2 percent in 2014; but we are still some way away from the Beijing Platform for Action target of 30 percent women in decision-making positions.

In this part of the book, we will present the historical timeline of women's participation in politics, the Global Gender Gap Report 2014 and a graphical illustration of the use of electoral quotas in various countries.

A. Fact Sheet

The fact sheet contains comparative data on the percentage of women in national parliaments. The data has been compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by national parliaments as of 1 February 2015. More information can be found at this link: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm.

B. Timeline – Women in Politics

This timeline illustrates significant milestones in history achieved by female leaders who have been elected into government since 1893. The map is split into two different forms of representation: the first half of the map highlights the landmark years when women were first elected in a country and the second page delineates the tenure of women leaders elected to powerful positions in government.

C. The Global Gender Gap Index 2014

The Global Gender Gap Index 2014, introduced by the World Economic framework in 2006, is a framework to assess the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities and to track their progress across most countries in the world. This Index acts as a benchmark for national gender gaps based on economic, political, education and health criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups, as well as over time. We have narrowly selected the data of 29 countries that broadly represent the different geographical regions and presented them in this book.

D. The Electoral Quota World Map

Quotas are an important instrument to increase women's participation in politics as quotas for women entail that women must constitute a certain number or percentage of the members of a political body, whether it is via a candidate list or party list for a parliamentary assembly, a committee, or a government. With an increasing number of countries introducing the gender quota system for public elections, the hope for a dramatic increase in women's representation by using this mechanism is strong provided it is rid of tokenism. We have collected information on the quotas reserved for women in the parliaments of 30 countries across the different geographical regions and presented them in this publication.

With the various tools available to women, it is imperative that we continue to debate women's political participation. We need to not only increase the number of women represented in parliament but also go beyond numbers and look for ways to increase the effectiveness and impact of women elected to powerful positions.

The data in the tables below has been compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by National Parliaments by 1 February 2015.

World Average

Both Houses combined	
Total MPs	44,978
Gender breakdown known for	44,945
Men	35,022
Women	9,923
Percentage of women	22.1%

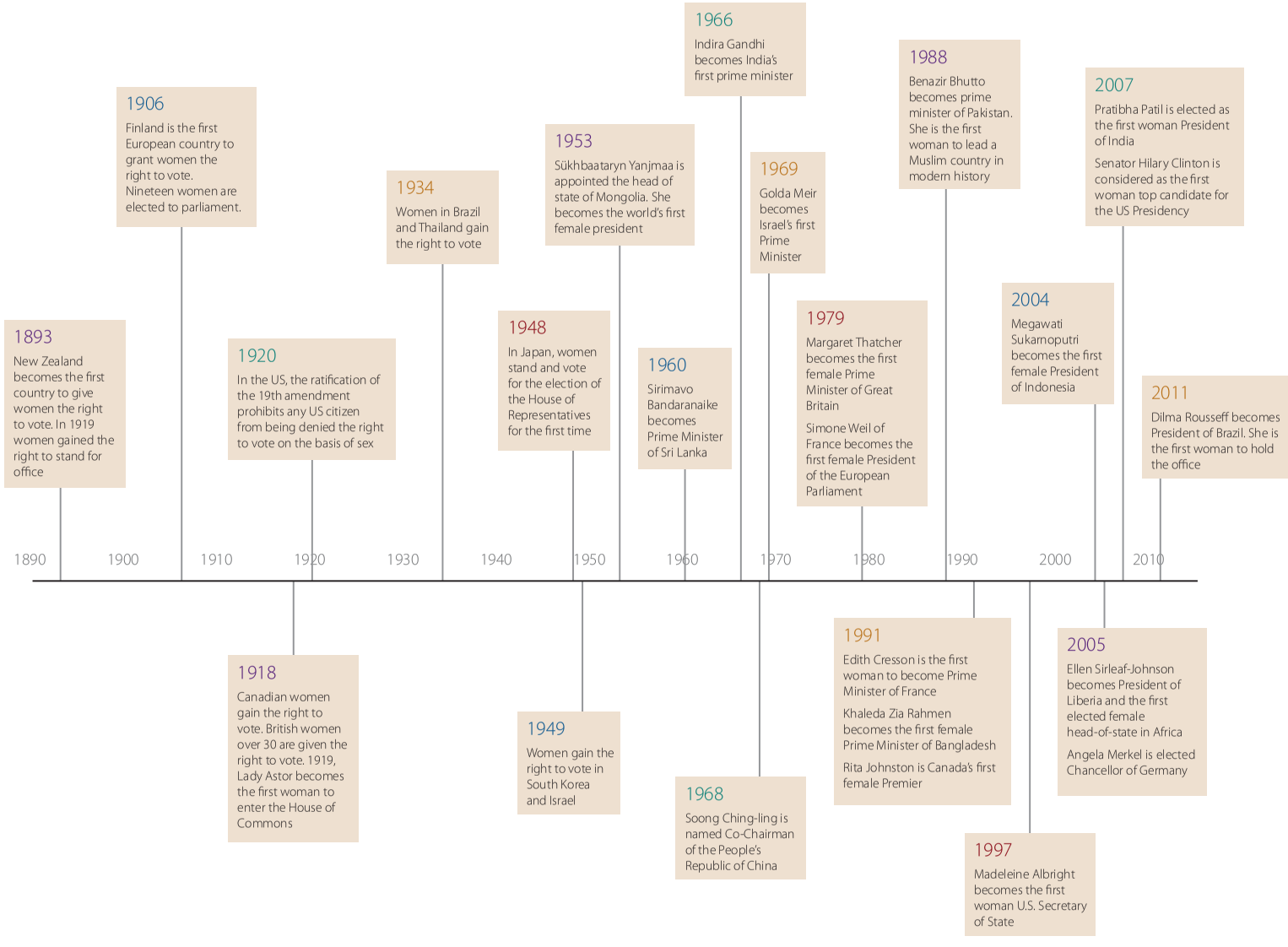
Single House or lower House	
Total MPs	38,044
Gender breakdown known for	38,011
Men	29,501
Women	8,510
Percentage of women	22.4%

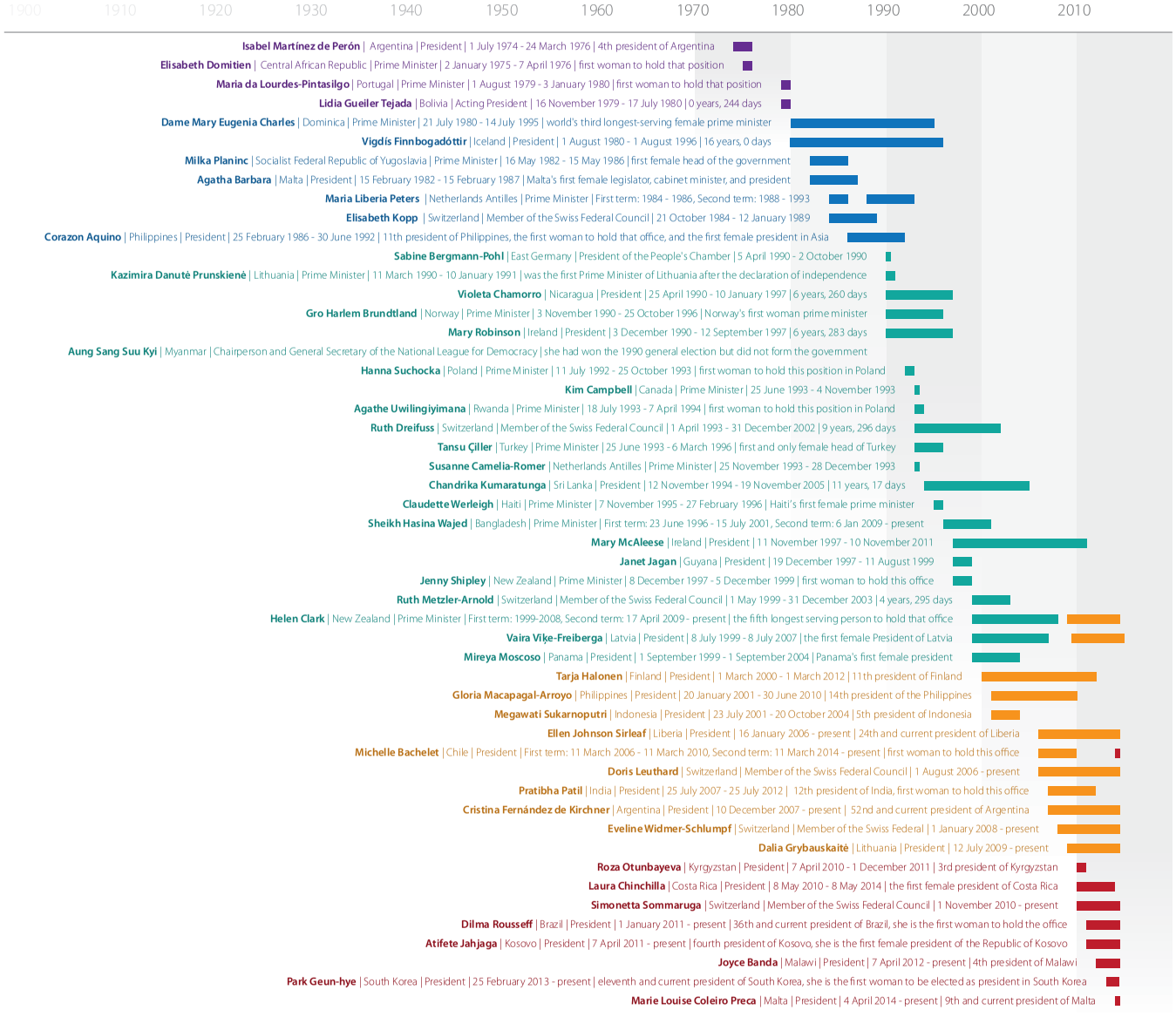
Upper House or Senate	
Total MPs	6,934
Gender breakdown known for	6,934
Men	5,521
Women	1,413
Percentage of women	20.4%

Regional Average

	Single House or lower House	Upper House or Senate	Both Houses combined
Nordic countries	41.5%	---	---
Americas	26.5%	25.5%	26.4%
Europe - OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	25.3%	24.3%	25.1%
Europe - OSCE member countries excluding Nordic countries	23.7%	24.3%	23.8%
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.7%	20.3%	22.4%
Asia	19.0%	13.3%	18.4%
Arab States	18.1%	7.3%	16.1%
Pacific	13.1%	36.0%	15.7%

Source: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm

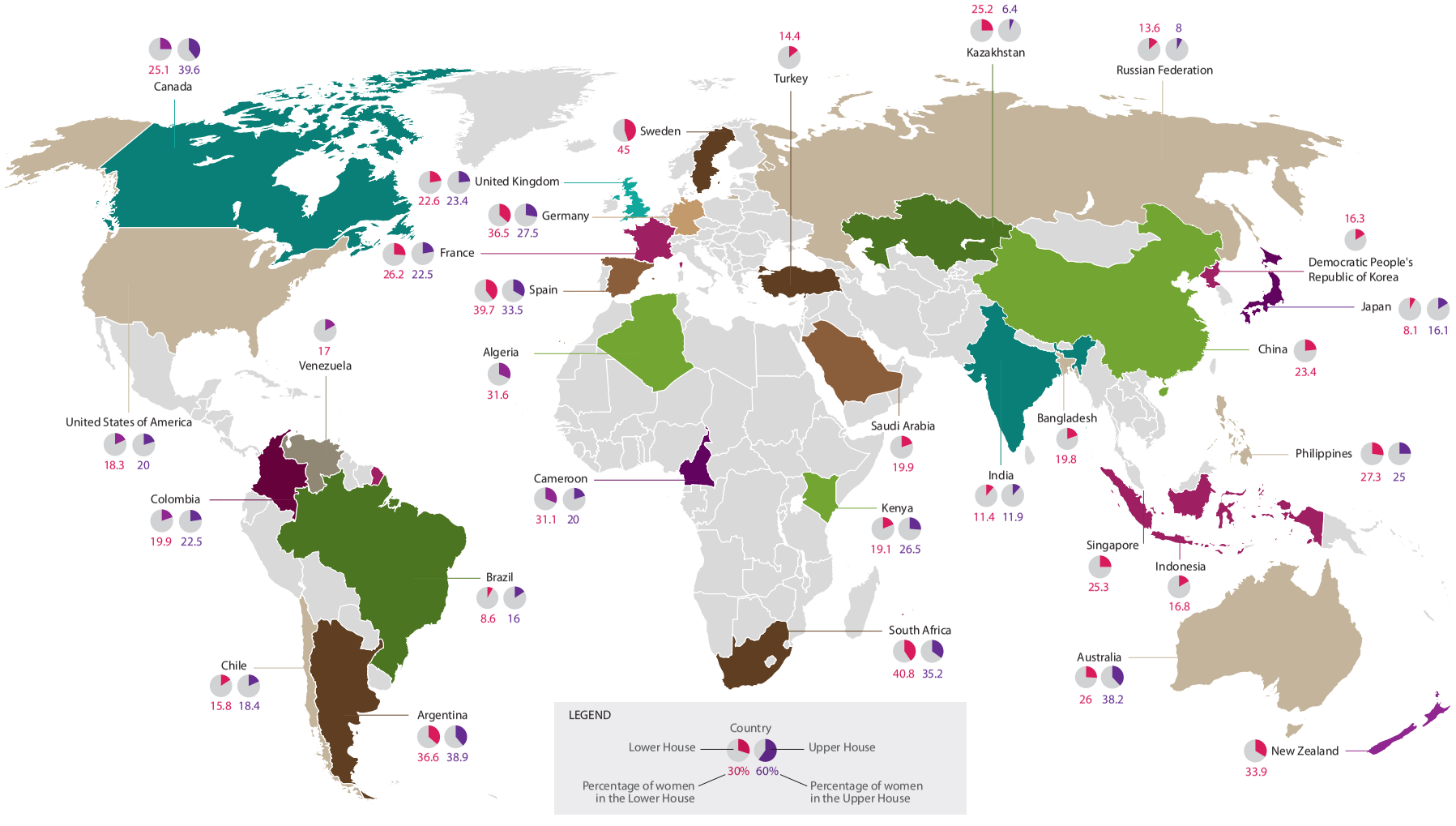

1893
New Zealand becomes the first country to give women the right to vote. In 1919 women gained the right to stand for office
1906
Finland is the first European country to grant women the right to vote. Nineteen women are elected to parliament.
1920
In the US, the ratification of the 19th amendment prohibits any US citizen from being denied the right to vote on the basis of sex
1934
Women in Brazil and Thailand gain the right to vote
1948
In Japan, women stand and vote for the election of the House of Representatives for the first time
1953
Sükhbaataryn Yanjmaa is appointed the head of state of Mongolia. She becomes the world's first female president
1960
Sirimavo Bandaranaike becomes Prime Minister of Sri Lanka
1966
Indira Gandhi becomes India's first prime minister
1969
Golda Meir becomes Israel's first Prime Minister
1979
Margaret Thatcher becomes the first female Prime Minister of Great Britain
Simone Weil of France becomes the first female President of the European Parliament
1988
Benazir Bhutto becomes prime minister of Pakistan. She is the first woman to lead a Muslim country in modern history
2004
Megawati Sukarnoputri becomes the first female President of Indonesia
2007
Pratibha Patil is elected as the first woman President of India
Senator Hilary Clinton is considered as the first woman top candidate for the US Presidency
2011
Dilma Rousseff becomes President of Brazil. She is the first woman to hold the office
1890
1900
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010
1918
Canadian women gain the right to vote. British women over 30 are given the right to vote. 1919, Lady Astor becomes the first woman to enter the House of Commons
1949
Women gain the right to vote in South Korea and Israel
1968
Soong Ching-ling is named Co-Chairman of the People's Republic of China
1991
Edith Cresson is the first woman to become Prime Minister of France
Khaleda Zia Rahmen becomes the first female Prime Minister of Bangladesh
Rita Johnston is Canada's first female Premier
1997
Madeleine Albright becomes the first woman U.S. Secretary of State
2005
Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson becomes President of Liberia and the first elected female head-of-state in Africa
Angela Merkel is elected Chancellor of Germany


1900
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010
Isabel Martínez de Perón | Argentina | President | 1 July 1974 - 24 March 1976 | 4th president of Argentina
Elisabeth Domitien | Central African Republic | Prime Minister | 2 January 1975 - 7 April 1976 | first woman to hold that position
Maria da Lourdes-Pintasilgo | Portugal | Prime Minister | 1 August 1979 - 3 January 1980 | first woman to hold that position
Lidia Gueiler Tejada | Bolivia | Acting President | 16 November 1979 - 17 July 1980 | 0 years, 244 days
Dame Mary Eugenia Charles | Dominica | Prime Minister | 21 July 1980 - 14 July 1995 | world's third longest-serving female prime minister
Vigdís Finnbogadóttir | Iceland | President | 1 August 1980 - 1 August 1996 | 16 years, 0 days
Milka Planinc | Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia | Prime Minister | 16 May 1982 - 15 May 1986 | first female head of the government
Agatha Barbara | Malta | President | 15 February 1982 - 15 February 1987 | Malta's first female legislator, cabinet minister, and president
Maria Liberia Peters | Netherlands Antilles | Prime Minister | First term: 1984 - 1986, Second term: 1988 - 1993
Elisabeth Kopp | Switzerland | Member of the Swiss Federal Council | 21 October 1984 - 12 January 1989
Corazon Aquino | Philippines | President | 25 February 1986 - 30 June 1992 | 11th president of Philippines, the first woman to hold that office, and the first female president in Asia
Sabine Bergmann-Pohl | East Germany | President of the People's Chamber | 5 April 1990 - 2 October 1990
Kazimira Danutė Prunskienė | Lithuania | Prime Minister | 11 March 1990 - 10 January 1991 | was the first Prime Minister of Lithuania after the declaration of independence
Violeta Chamorro | Nicaragua | President | 25 April 1990 - 10 January 1997 | 6 years, 260 days
Gro Harlem Brundtland | Norway | Prime Minister | 3 November 1990 - 25 October 1996 | Norway's first woman prime minister
Mary Robinson | Ireland | President | 3 December 1990 - 12 September 1997 | 6 years, 283 days
Aung Sang Suu Kyi | Myanmar | Chairperson and General Secretary of the National League for Democracy | she had won the 1990 general election but did not form the government
Hanna Suchocka | Poland | Prime Minister | 11 July 1992 - 25 October 1993 | first woman to hold this position in Poland
Kim Campbell | Canada | Prime Minister | 25 June 1993 - 4 November 1993
Agathe Uwilingiyimana | Rwanda | Prime Minister | 18 July 1993 - 7 April 1994 | first woman to hold this position in Poland
Ruth Dreifuss | Switzerland | Member of the Swiss Federal Council | 1 April 1993 - 31 December 2002 | 9 years, 296 days
Tansu Çiller | Turkey | Prime Minister | 25 June 1993 - 6 March 1996 | first and only female head of Turkey
Susanne Camelia-Romer | Netherlands Antilles | Prime Minister | 25 November 1993 - 28 December 1993
Chandrika Kumaratunga | Sri Lanka | President | 12 November 1994 - 19 November 2005 | 11 years, 17 days
Claudette Werleigh | Haiti | Prime Minister | 7 November 1995 - 27 February 1996 | Haiti's first female prime minister
Sheikh Hasina Wajed | Bangladesh | Prime Minister | First term: 23 June 1996 - 15 July 2001, Second term: 6 Jan 2009 - present
Mary McAleese | Ireland | President | 11 November 1997 - 10 November 2011
Janet Jagan | Guyana | President | 19 December 1997 - 11 August 1999
Jenny Shipley | New Zealand | Prime Minister | 8 December 1997 - 5 December 1999 | first woman to hold this office
Ruth Metzler-Arnold | Switzerland | Member of the Swiss Federal Council | 1 May 1999 - 31 December 2003 | 4 years, 295 days
Helen Clark | New Zealand | Prime Minister | First term: 1999-2008, Second term: 17 April 2009 - present | the fifth longest serving person to hold that office
Vaira Viķe-Freiberga | Latvia | President | 8 July 1999 - 8 July 2007 | the first female President of Latvia
Mireya Moscoso | Panama | President | 1 September 1999 - 1 September 2004 | Panama's first female president
Tarja Halonen | Finland | President | 1 March 2000 - 1 March 2012 | 11th president of Finland
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo | Philippines | President | 20 January 2001 - 30 June 2010 | 14th president of the Philippines
Megawati Sukarnoputri | Indonesia | President | 23 July 2001 - 20 October 2004 | 5th president of Indonesia
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf | Liberia | President | 16 January 2006 - present | 24th and current president of Liberia
Michelle Bachelet | Chile | President | First term: 11 March 2006 - 11 March 2010, Second term: 11 March 2014 - present | first woman to hold this office
Doris Leuthard | Switzerland | Member of the Swiss Federal Council | 1 August 2006 - present
Pratibha Patil | India | President | 25 July 2007 - 25 July 2012 | 12th president of India, first woman to hold this office
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner | Argentina | President | 10 December 2007 - present | 52nd and current president of Argentina
Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf | Switzerland | Member of the Swiss Federal | 1 January 2008 - present
Dalia Grybauskaitė | Lithuania | President | 12 July 2009 - present
Roza Otunbayeva | Kyrgyzstan | President | 7 April 2010 - 1 December 2011 | 3rd president of Kyrgyzstan
Laura Chinchilla | Costa Rica | President | 8 May 2010 - 8 May 2014 | the first female president of Costa Rica
Simonetta Sommaruga | Switzerland | Member of the Swiss Federal Council | 1 November 2010 - present
Dilma Rousseff | Brazil | President | 1 January 2011 - present | 36th and current president of Brazil, she is the first woman to hold the office
Atifete Jahjaga | Kosovo | President | 7 April 2011 - present | fourth president of Kosovo, she is the first female president of the Republic of Kosovo
Joyce Banda | Malawi | President | 7 April 2012 - present | 4th president of Malawi
Park Geun-hye | South Korea | President | 25 February 2013 - present | eleventh and current president of South Korea, she is the first woman to be elected as president in South Korea
Marie Louise Coleiro Preca | Malta | President | 4 April 2014 - present | 9th and current president of Malta

The World Economic Forum (WEF)
Global Gender Gap Rankings 2014

Country	Global Ranking (out of 136 Countries)	Economic participation & opportunity Score (0-136)	Educational Attainment Score (0-136)	Health & Survival Score (0-136)	Political Empowerment Score (0-136)
Sweden	4	15	43	100	5
Philippines	9	24	1	1	17
Germany	12	34	34	67	11
New Zealand	13	30	1	96	12
France	16	57	1	1	20
South Africa 1	18	83	85	1	12
Canada	19	17	1	100	42
United States of America	20	4	39	62	54
Australia	24	14	1	70	53
United Kingdom	26	46	32	94	33
Spain	29	84	44	87	23
Argentina	31	96	50	1	21
Kenya	37	9	115	80	48
Kazakhstan	43	33	48	1	66
Colombia	53	50	51	37	67
Singapore	59	18	110	114	90
Chile	66	119	30	36	35
Bangladesh	68	127	111	122	10
Brazil	71	81	1	1	74
Russian Federation	75	42	28	37	125
Venezuela	86	73	81	1	95
China	87	76	89	140	72
Indonesia	97	108	78	58	86
Japan	104	102	93	37	129
India	114	134	126	141	15
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	117	124	103	74	93
Turkey	125	132	105	1	113
Algeria	126	136	113	124	60
Saudi Arabia	130	137	86	90	117

Source: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm


25.1 39.6
Canada
United States of America
18.3 20
17
Venezuela
Colombia
19.9 22.5
Brazil
8.6 16
Chile
15.8 18.4
Argentina
36.6 38.9
Sweden
45
United Kingdom
22.6 23.4
Germany
36.5 27.5
France
26.2 22.5
Spain
39.7 33.5
Algeria
31.6
Cameroon
31.1 20
14.4
Turkey
Saudi Arabia
19.9
Kenya
19.1 26.5
South Africa
40.8 35.2
25.2 6.4
Kazakhstan
13.6 8
Russian Federation
16.3
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Japan
8.1 16.1
China
23.4
Bangladesh
19.8
India
11.4 11.9
Philippines
27.3 25
Singapore
25.3
Indonesia
16.8
Australia
26 38.2
New Zealand
33.9
LEGEND
Country
Lower House
Upper House
30% 60%
Percentage of women in the Lower House
Percentage of women in the Upper House

African Women in Political Decision-Making – "A Voice that Still Remains a Whisper"

Yolanda Sadie

The international drive for the inclusion of women in political decision-making as manifested in protocols and instruments such as CEDAW and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action has also resonated on the African continent in, for example, the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (commonly known as the Maputo Protocol)[1] adopted in 2003. The requirements of the Protocol are generally in line with the pre-existing instruments above. Among other things, it specifically includes combating all forms of discrimination against women and specifically requires states to "ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making" (Article. 9[2]). This was followed by the equally legally binding regional *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development* 2008,[2] which goes further in requiring the equal representation of women in all areas of decision-making, both public and private, through constitutional and other legislative provisions that include affirmative action (Articles 12-13). More importantly, it stipulates that states shall endeavour that, by 2015, at least 50% of decision-making positions will be held by women in the public and private sectors. No such sub-regional instruments exist in the West African region for the member states of ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States)[3]. However, the six Uniterra-partner Coalitions for Women's Rights and Citizenships (Coalitions/DCF) in French-speaking West Africa have taken the initiative in the adoption of an ECOWAS legal instrument for the equality of rights between men and women similar to the SADC Gender Protocol. Together with other regional and international networks it has drafted a legal document entitled the *Draft Proposal for an ECOWAS Protocol on Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development*, which has been handed to ECOWAS'

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[1] Of the 54 African countries that are members of the African Union (Morocco and Somaliland are not members), 36 have ratified the Protocol, while 18 countries are yet to ratify it (FIDH, July 2014). Four countries have not signed or ratified it – they are Botswana, Egypt, Eritrea and Tunisia.

[2] SADC (the Southern African Development Community) consists of 15 countries (**Angola**, Botswana, DRC, **Lesotho**, Madagascar, **Malawi,** Mauritius, **Mozambique**, **Namibia**, **Seychelles**, **South Africa**, **Swaziland, Tanzania**, **Zambia**, **Zimbabwe)**. By the end of 2013, 11 states (those in bold above) had ratified the Protocol, thus bringing it into force through the meeting of the requirement of two-thirds of member states having deposited their instruments of ratification (Article 41).

[3] The 15 member states are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

commissioner for human development and gender to make representations in favour of this new legal instrument (Uniterra, 2013).

The AU also adopted the first AU Gender Policy in 2009. An effort in further bringing women in Africa to the forefront has been the launch of the African Women's Decade (2010–2020) in October 2010, which was initiated by the AU ministers for gender and women's affairs in Lesotho in December 2008 and adopted by the AU in February 2009. Ten thematic areas were identified and emphasis on each will be given yearly. "Women in decision-making" forms one of the themes.

Achievements and Lack of Progress

Despite the existence of all the above African instruments and those such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, which call for women's equal political representation in political decision-making bodies, and above all, measures to enhance such participation, the voice of African women still remains a whisper. Despite the continuing struggle for women to gain a fair share of political power, the achievements should nevertheless not be ignored. Certainly one of the most acclaimed is the election in 2005 (and re-election in 2011) of the first female head of government in Africa, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who had to begin rebuilding Liberia after a shattering civil war. Of further note has been the appointment of Joyce Banda (former vice president) as president of Malawi in 2012 following the death of her predecessor, also inheriting a country mired in political conflict and economic turmoil. She has, however, since lost this position after the general elections in Malawi in 2014. No challenge can be greater than what faces the third African female president, Catherine Samba-Panza, who was elected (in January 2014) as the interim president of the Central African Republic, one of the continent's most fragile states. Also important to the region is the fact that in the AU's 49th year of existence (2012) it elected Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma from South Africa as its first female chairperson.

Further highlights include the fact that Rwanda has, with 63.8%, the highest female representation in parliament in the world after its general elections in 2013, followed by the Seychelles in fifth place (43.8%) and South Africa in 10th position with 40.8%. Algeria became the first North African state to reach the required 30% quota (established by the Beijing Platform for Action) with 31.6% representation in parliament in 2012.

Of the 55 African states,[4] only 11 have reached the 30% minimum requirement, while 19 are between 20-29% and seven states have below 10% female representation – these include Côte d'Ivoire (9.4%) and Nigeria (6.7%) (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1 August 2014). The lowest in Africa is Egypt with a mere 1.8% obtained in the 2012 elections (*Daily News Egypt*, 24 November 2014).

[4] For which the Inter-parliamentary Union (August 2014) provides statistics – statistics for Somaliland not available.

Dahlerup and Leyenaar (2013: 10) provide a useful categorisation of difficult thresholds for women MPs to cross – 10%, 25% and 40%. Only three African countries have reached (according to their classification) "gender balance" (between 40-60% representation), in 12 countries there is a "large minority of women" (25-39% representation), while women's representation in the majority of African countries (33) falls within the band of 10-24% – which means women MPs form a "small minority". In the seven states where female representation is below 10%, a "male monopoly" still exists.

Utilising Gender Quotas[5]

The representation of women would not have even reached the levels mentioned above if it had not been for the widespread use of quotas – 16 African countries have legislated quotas in the form of reserved seats for women in their parliaments[6] while 11 have constitutional and/or legislated candidate quotas to constitute a critical minority of women. These generally range between 20-30%. However, Tunisia employs a "zippered list" model (also known as a zebra system) alternating the names of male and female candidates on electoral lists. As a result, women won 28% of the parliamentary seats.[7] An additional six African countries have voluntary party quotas where one or more parties commit themselves to either a 30% representation of women on their party lists or a zebra system on party lists (Quota Project). This has contributed to the large presence of women in parliament in South Africa and Mozambique where the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) in Mozambique have been the dominant parties in the elections for the past 20 years. The problem is, however, when these parties start to lose support, as has been the case with the ANC in the 2014 elections in South Africa, women's overall representation in parliament also drops as opposition parties do not follow a quota system.[8]

Critics of the adoption of quotas – particularly reserved seats for women – have argued, for example, that women elected to reserved seats lack an independent electoral or organizational base that may reinforce a continuous dependence of women on quota provisions (Tinkner, 2004); that reserved seats is just a way to appease and ultimately sideline women (Norris, 2006: 209); or that quotas can create a glass ceiling and prevent women from being elected beyond the quota or being considered for non-reserved/general seats (Dhalerup

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[5] Three main quota types can be identified: **Party candidate quotas** – i.e., quota provisions adopted by individual political parties to regulate the gender composition of their own candidate lists; **Legislated quotas** – quota provisions by law, regulating the gender composition of all candidate lists, and binding for all parties; and **Reserved seats** – a specified number of seats reserved for women (Quota project).

[6] These include: Algeria, Burundi, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Niger.

[7] The reason why only 28% and 17% of women were elected in the respective countries was the fact that a large number of parties participated in the elections, but most parties only received, for example, one seat per constituency. In Tunisia women only headed 7% of the total number of lists.

[8] Women's representation in parliament dropped from 44% in the 2009 election to 40% in 2014.

and Freidenvall, 2010: 415). However, in strong patriarchal societies reserved seats may be the only practical way of starting to incorporate women into political leadership positions (Darhour and Dhalerup, 2013: 2).

Instead of arguing for or against quotas, the question should be how sustainable[9] gender quotas are – thus, whether gender quotas can lead to enduring changes in women's descriptive representation; whether, for example, gender quotas can contribute in removing some of the barriers that have blocked women's entrance into political life; and whether women's representation is affected when quotas are removed (Darhour and Dhalerup: 2013: 2). The latter has indeed been the case in Egypt – when the quota of the 2010 election was dropped, the female representation proportion of 12% plummeted to 1.8% in the 2012 post-revolutionary election (eight women). In, for example, Uganda (with a female representation of 35%) and Rwanda in particular (63.8%), reserved seats did not prevent women from being elected to "general" seats too. In addition, Burnet (2012: 204) found that in Rwanda "gender quotas have made a significant impact on gendered ideas about the public sphere". This is especially pertinent considering the country's history of a deeply engrained system of patrimonial politics.

Numbers Matter in Political Representation

A study of SADC countries (Lowe Morna, 2004: 251-252) has found that only when women are present in significant numbers in political decision-making positions can they start making a difference, for a number of reasons – for example: the mere presence of women in decision-making is a way of challenging societal stereotypes and creating role models; when a few influential women try to make a difference they find it difficult to effect the changes without a "critical mass" of women to draw on; when women are fewer in number they find it difficult to challenge the status quo (for example, dress codes demands for women MPs in Zambia by the speaker that have long been challenged in countries where women MPs are numerous); and although not all women are feminists, the study has shown that feminists often mobilise and draw on the support of sympathetic women who do not necessarily articulate their concerns with the same passion – an example is the way a few ANC MPs in South Africa championed the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act by mobilising their colleagues when standing up against the pro-life groups and when it came to the vote in parliament.

[9] Darhour and Dhaleroup (2013: 2) define sustainable representation as "a durable, substantial numerical political representation of women, freed of the risk of immediate major backlash".

What Keeps Women Out of Politics?

Given that women constitute half the population of Africa it is evident that there is still a gross under-representation of women in political decision-making positions on the continent – politics remains a hostile terrain for women.

A number of factors (which may vary in type and degree between countries) account for the level of women's representation in the various African countries:

- The single major barrier remains the deeply rooted cultural, religious and traditional stereotypes around the role of women in society, i.e., the public-private dichotomy. As a former South African speaker of parliament, Baleka Mbete, says, "it will take decades until women can sit back and say, 'I should not worry; my husband is at home, he will take care of making sure that the groceries are there, that there is food for all'. It's just a reality" (as quoted in Lowe Morna and Makaya-Magarangoma, 2013: 9).
- The lack of political will from governments. Despite the fact that most states are signatories to the various regional, continental and international instruments that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, little progress have been made in domesticating these commitments.
- Women often lack resources, which limit their capacity to participate in elections – for example, non-refundable deposit fees for parliamentary elections are required from candidates in a number of countries, ranging from about US$100 in Zambia to US$700 in Malawi (SADC Gender Monitor, 2013: 38). The provision of food and other items by candidates at election rallies (which women simply cannot afford) is a common practice in many African states.
- Socio-economic factors such as levels of education, pregnancy, and marriage have a bearing on representation. The limited health care and welfare services in most African countries result in disproportionately heavy burdens on women in caring for children, the sick and the aged, which constrain the political participation of women.
- Political parties are often not supportive of female candidates. A lack of confidence exists in women as "winning" candidates. Women are also often absent in party leadership structures, which thus removes them from decision-making in the party. Consequently, "women are screened out through unclear criteria set by party hierarchies" (SADC, Gender Monitor, 2013: 36).
- Electoral systems also play an important role in facilitating the political representation of women. The First Past The Post (FPTP) single constituency electoral system in particular makes it difficult for women to be elected. Political parties generally do not nominate women as candidates for "winnable" constituencies. The low representation of women in parliament in Ghana (10.9%) for example, can (along with other reasons) be attributed to the FPTP electoral system.

Conclusion – The Way Forward

The African continent is certainly not short of protocols and policies initiated by the AU and other regional bodies (and signed by many member states) that commit members to the empowerment of women. Generally, little progress has been made in domesticating these commitments. A first step would therefore be to hold governments to their commitments. Civil organisations (including women's organisations) and the media should hold leaders to their promises. Action plans should also be demanded. More difficult will be a second requirement – changing the public's mind in accepting women's equal participation in political decision-making. This, as Lowe Morna (2004: 255) emphasises, "should take the form of concerted and well-networked campaigns among civil society organisations working with women politicians and political parties". Lastly, in countries where "male monopoly" in parliaments still exists, or where women MPs constitute a small minority, pressure for legislated quotas (specifically reserved seats) seems to be the only practical way of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, particularly in strong patriarchal societies.

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Women in Politics in Latin America[1]

Mala Htun, Jennifer M. Piscopo, and Sophia von Bergen

Introduction

Women's participation in politics in Latin America has grown steadily since the region democratized beginning in the 1980s. Women's share of parliamentary seats rose from an average of 13 percent in 2000 to 25 percent in 2014.[2] Countries with statutory gender quotas have tended to elect more women, and nearly all Latin American countries will use quota laws in national elections by 2016. Quota laws have also been adopted for other government branches and levels. Although quotas' effects remain uneven, their popularity reflects the consolidation of norms that demand governments take positive action to increase women's political presence.

Women's growing presence in power has led to greater legislative activity on women's rights, leading to policy changes that combat violence against women, expand reproductive rights, improve social services, and extend the reach of gender quotas (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Htun, Lacalle, and Micozzi 2013; Htun, O'Brien, and Weldon 2014; Schwindt-Bayer 2010). Notwithstanding these gains, women in politics continue to experience exclusion from powerful leadership posts within the congress, marginalization of topics related to gender and family, and sexist practices within political parties. To combat these obstacles and increase their political clout, women legislators in many Latin American countries have formed women's caucuses in parliament and forged links with groups in civil society that seek progressive policy changes.

Women in National Office

A significant number of Latin American countries have elected women as heads of state. Latin America's first female presidents—both widows of prominent political figures—emerged in Central America: Violeta Chamorro in Nicaragua (1990–94) and Mireya Moscoso in Panama (1999–2004). However, the more recent wave of female presidents have attained office through their own professional and political credentials, including: Dilma Rousseff of Brazil (2011–15); Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina (2007–15); Michele Bachelet of Chile (2006-2010 and 2014-2016); and Laura Chinchilla of Costa Rica (2010-2014). Women challengers also presented the main opposition for Rousseff in 2010

[1] Portions of this brief are based on Htun and Piscopo (2014).

[2] For data on women in national legislatures: 2000 data from Htun (2001). 2014 data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm). Averages refer to the lower house of parliament.

and Bachelet in 2014, and women have been viable presidential contenders in recent races in Peru and Mexico.

Women's share of cabinet positions has grown. In 2000, women composed 10 percent of ministers in South America and 16 percent in Mexico and Central America; by 2010, these figures increased to 22 percent and 21 percent, respectively.[3] In 2014, women held an average of 26 percent of cabinet posts across the region, though this average obscures significant variation. For example, in Nicaragua and Peru, presidents making explicit commitments to appoint parity cabinets increased the proportion of women ministers to over 40 percent, whereas women ministers composed 8 percent of the cabinet in El Salvador. Notably, women presidents do not always nominate women ministers. Bachelet appointed a parity cabinet during her first term and slightly less than 40 percent women in her second term. But her Argentine counterpart Fernández de Kirchner appointed a mere 20 percent women (below the regional average).

Today the distribution of cabinet posts remains far from even. Analysts previously observed that women ministers cluster in the "soft" portfolios, such as social services, education, tourism, culture, and housing (Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson 2005). This trend largely continues, though women have made inroads into the "hard" domains of commerce, industry, foreign affairs, work, development, and finance. In 2014, women held the portfolio of justice in five Latin American countries, defence in three, and finance in two.

Women's presence in national office shows similar advances, growing significantly in recent decades. In the 1990s, women's seat share in the region's lower or unicameral houses averaged 9 percent; this figure climbed to 13 percent in 2000 and to 25 percent in 2014. These strong numbers are due largely to the adoption of gender quotas, statutory mechanisms—typically laws or constitutional amendments—requiring that women make up a certain percentage of candidates postulated by political parties in popular elections. In 2014, women attained 25 percent of legislative seats in countries with quota laws, compared to 21 percent in countries without them.

Gender Quotas

First adopted by Argentina in 1991, all Latin American countries—save Chile, Guatemala, and Venezuela—had adopted quota laws for national legislatures by 2014.[4] Seven countries in the region recently expanded their quota percentages to parity levels (50 percent): Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. The remaining countries apply thresholds below parity: 20 per cent in Paraguay; 30 percent in Argentina, Brazil,

[3] 2014 data from individual countries' websites and the United States Central Intelligence Agency World Leaders Database (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/). 2000 Data from Htun (2001).

[4] A 40 percent quota was included in a large package of electoral reforms that passed the Chilean lower house on 12 August 2014. The reforms remain pending in the Senate.

Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti, and Peru; and 33 percent in the Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

Nonetheless, quotas' effects are uneven across countries. Quotas work best when parties compete in closed-list, proportional representation electoral systems. In these systems, political parties present rank-ordered slates of candidates that voters cannot reorder. Candidates are elected off this "closed list" in proportion to the percentage of votes received by the party. Women do best when parties elect large numbers of candidates in each district.

Quota laws' effectiveness also depends on their design: the most successful laws contain placement mandates (directives that female candidates be ranked in electable positions on the list), dictate penalties for non-compliance, and close loopholes. For example, if the law does not stipulate that women receive the titular position on the list, parties often name women as alternates. Parties' exploitation of loopholes reflects an overall trend towards minimal compliance with quota laws (Hinojosa and Piscopo 2013; Jones 1996).

Quota measures have also diffused across government branches and levels. Most Latin American countries also apply quotas to subnational legislative elections. In Colombia, a 30 percent gender quota has applied to the "highest positions" in the executive branch at all government levels since 2000. In Costa Rica, a 50 percent quota applies to one of the two vice presidents, though this post is largely ornamental. Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic apply quotas for mayors. Importantly, Ecuador and Bolivia practise "parity government," which encompasses the entire state: women must constitute half of all elected and appointed offices, at all levels of government, including the autonomous indigenous territories. Quotas now also govern associational life, with Argentina applying a 30 percent quota for trade union directorates since 2001, and Costa Rica applying a parity norm for boards of all civic associations since 2011. While quota mechanisms vary in their efficacy, they have become popular, widespread solutions for gendering public space and leadership (Franceschet and Piscopo 2013a).

From Presence to Power

Does women's greater presence in power lead to policy outcomes more favourable to women's rights? Women's inclusion does not automatically change the substantive activity of representation. While women presidents may enjoy more concentrated and unilateral policy authority, women legislators engage in the complex and often collaborative tasks of introducing bills and amendments, lobbying, voting, and raising consciousness.

Among female presidents, Bachelet of Chile stands out as the most vocal supporter of women's rights. During her first term, she expanded Chilean women's access to contraception, passed laws that protected working mothers from employment discrimination, strengthened the voice and authority of the executive branch's women's policy agency, and presented an (unsuccessful) quota bill to the congress (Franceschet 2010; Jaquette 2010). By contrast, other female heads of state, such as Fernández in Argentina and Chinchilla in

Costa Rica, have eschewed the "feminist" label and distanced themselves from organized constituencies of women.

Scattered evidence suggests that some women ministers have changed policies within their agencies in ways that benefit women's rights. For example, the former defence minister of Argentina, Nilda Garré, is often credited with improving the integration of women into her nation's armed forces and reducing commanding officers' tendency to fire women soldiers for pregnancy.[5] Similarly, the former minister of health in Chile, María Soledad Barría, introduced regulations to make emergency contraception available in public clinics (Franceschet and Piscopo 2013b).

Women legislators, by contrast, are not always sufficiently influential to secure policy change. For instance, women's increased presence in the Argentine Congress has been associated with increased bill introduction activity on women's rights from both women and men (Htun, Lacalle, and Miccozi 2013). However, women lawmakers faced obstacles transforming these initiatives into policy: women's rights advocates in the Argentine Congress have been marginalized, and bills related to women's rights were more than twice as likely to fail as other types of bills (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). Similar patterns of increased legislative attention to women's rights, though not always successful in producing policy changes, have occurred elsewhere in Latin America. Progressive proposals, especially controversial measures on reproductive rights and the family, might be tabled in committee meetings or prevented from reaching the plenary.

Women legislators tend to concentrate in the less prestigious, "softer" standing committees, like those dealing with social issues, especially those devoted to women's, family, or gender issues. Women are virtually excluded from powerful committees, such as those addressing the budget, the armed forces, or foreign affairs (Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Miguel 2012; Zetterberg 2008). At the same time, these are often the committees where most women's rights initiatives are heard. The policy arenas in which women are best able to advocate causes that advance women's rights are those that convey low status and low prestige.

Women legislators have infrequently attained powerful leadership positions within the congress, though Ecuador's assembly currently boasts an all-female leadership. Generally, however, women lawmakers report both explicit and implicit practices of exclusion within the congress. These include the ongoing dominance of men within political parties, the use of sexist or masculine language (i.e., addressing all legislators as *señor* rather than *señora*), the lack of invitations to important strategy meetings, and the devaluing of their credentials and expertise.

Overall, however, women's ascendance to political office in Latin America has coincided with a period of progressive legal change. Latin American countries have expressed their commitment to women's rights through international treaties and agreements, including the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against

[5] Based on Htun's fieldwork, conducted in Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 2009.

Women, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, and the Quito Consensus on gender parity. At the domestic level, countries have adopted equal opportunity laws and gender equality plans; they have made progress on improving women's equal access to employment and education; and they have adopted comprehensive plans to confront and punish violence against women and sex trafficking.

Still, much work remains to be done. Gender-based violence is a serious problem throughout the region, and laws are often not enforced, leading to problems of underreporting and impunity (Htun, O'Brien, and Weldon 2014). Abortion laws remain strict in virtually every country in the region, and several prohibit the practice under all circumstances, even when the mother's life is in danger. While the autonomous district of Mexico City and Uruguay have liberalized abortion access, other countries, such as Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, have deepened restrictions.

Strengthening Women's Power

Scholars and activists have recently focused their attention on three intra-legislative institutions that can improve women lawmakers' access, voice, and power: standing committees with policy remits addressing women or gender, women's caucuses, and technical research units that assist lawmakers (Gonzalez and Sample 2010; Markham 2012; Piscopo 2014).

Legislative standing committees participate in the policymaking process by revising and amending legislation and by monitoring the executive. All Latin American legislatures—save those in Bolivia and Ecuador—have a standing committee charged with reviewing policy proposals that affect women, though female lawmakers' entrance to congress has prompted important shifts in committees' remits away from "women and family" and towards "gender" or "gender equality." Nine Latin American countries currently have standing committees exclusively focused on gender or gender equality. Piscopo (2014) has found an inverse correlation between these gender equality committees and male membership: when the committee focuses on women's rights (rather than "women and family"), male members are few.

Gender equality committees pose a tradeoff. On the one hand, they show that women's policy issues are not exclusively connected to the domestic realm, and they give greater visibility and authority to female legislators seeking progressive policy change. The Bicameral Gender and Equality Committee in Mexico, for instance, has helped women lawmakers attain gender parity, added a gender perspective to the federal budget, and reformed domestic violence laws (Piscopo 2011). On the other hand, these committees, in becoming predominantly female spaces, may exacerbate male lawmakers' disinterest in and marginalization of women's rights.

Women's caucuses do not have formal policy roles. Caucuses are cross-partisan networks of female legislators that unite women based on their identity. For instance, legislators seated on Uruguay's Bicameral Women's Bench "presented themselves as women, not as

representatives of their respective political parties, that is, they signaled that they were undertaking this initiative 'setting aside different ideologies'" (Johnson 2014: 151). Women's caucuses are presently found in Chile, Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Uruguay. Though these groups vary in terms of their profile, organization, and resources, all have a policy agenda that expresses progressive policy goals (Piscopo 2014). For example, the 2009-2014 leadership of the Bolivian caucus seeks laws "that continue the practice of *despatriarcalización* [removing patriarchy from society]."[6]

Standing committees—particularly gender and equity committees—and women's caucuses can enhance the collective voice, action, and influence of women lawmakers. They provide platforms for networking, collaboration, professional development, and consciousness-raising among female members and male allies. Effective committees and caucuses mean that women lawmakers do not "stand alone" if they seek improvements to women's rights policies. They can also serve as access points for civil society groups.

Technical research units, currently found in legislatures in Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Mexico, are designed to assist lawmakers by tracking data related to women's status and assisting legislators when drafting bills on women's rights. Research units' effectiveness, however, depends on the staff's technical abilities and political freedom. In Mexico, for instance, the Center for the Study of the Advancement and Equity of Women was placed under the supervision of the conservative party, a political decision that has limited its involvement in the redaction of policy proposals.

Beyond the legislature, Latin American countries have passed regulations to secure women's greater participation within political parties, typically as part of their quota laws. Colombia evenly divides 5 percent of its state funding for parties among those parties nominating women. Costa Rica and Mexico mandate that parties must include gender equality or gender quotas within their charters; Ecuador and Uruguay demand that parties apply quotas for their governing organs; Ecuador and Honduras mandate gender parity in primaries; and Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama demand that certain percentages of parties' operating budgets be allocated to recruiting, training, or otherwise cultivating women candidates. Brazil also requires that 10 percent of the party's state-granted, non-campaign related television time be used to promote women. Taken together, these "party rules" represent an additional avenue for increasing women's chances not just to govern effectively, but be elected in the first place.

Conclusion

In Latin America, the decisive factor behind the large jumps in women's political presence in countries such as Argentina, Costa Rica, and Mexico has been the adoption and implementation of effective gender quota laws at the national level. Quotas demonstrate and

[6] See http://www.cambio.bo/index.php?pag=leer&n=79283.

reinforce a national political consensus on the importance of promoting more women to positions of power.

What else can be done to continue the increase in women's political representation? Countries throughout Latin America are experimenting with expanding quotas to the executive branch, the judiciary, the political parties, and civil society; they are more heavily regulating political parties' inclusion of women, and they are restructuring legislative committees to focus exclusively on gender equity. Women party members and women legislators have often demanded these changes, working collectively either in women's caucuses or through networks that bring together women lawmakers and civil society activists.

The connection between women's presence and their empowerment depends not only on attaining a "critical mass" of women in political office, but on changing the beliefs, institutions, and practices that structure women's opportunities to act effectively. Policies have changed when domestic and international actors worked together to hold political leaders—male and female—accountable for advancing women's rights.

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Women in Political Office in North America

Farida Jalalzai

Introduction

This chapter explores women's progress in obtaining positions of political leadership in North America. Women's political incorporation varies throughout the region. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mexico has the highest level of women in the national legislature: 37% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies are held by women and 34% of senators are women. Twenty-five percent of the Canadian House of Common and nearly 40% of the Senate are comprised by women. Finally, women in the United States hold 18.3% of the seats in the House of Representatives and account for a record-breaking 20% of senators.[1] This, however, only places it near the middle of the pack globally according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, behind countries including Mozambique and Afghanistan. This is in spite of the fact that women are outpacing men in higher degree attainment and enjoy relatively more progressive attitudes regarding gender and political leadership. While making some comparisons to its northern and southern neighbours, this chapter mainly concentrates on the United States. It provides an overview of patterns of office holding and identifies opportunities for improvements. It concludes by offering some insights into how women can influence the political agenda and help women better articulate and further advance their political interests.

Trends

Women's gains in the US Congress have generally been very incremental. Women were rarities in office before the 1990s. In the House, their percentages were regularly below 5%. They had an even harder time breaking through to the Senate. It was not until the 1990s that women made more headway but even still were grossly underrepresented. In 2000, they only comprised 13% and 9% of the House and Senate respectively. Fourteen years later, they have obviously made gains with women doubling their percentages in the Senate. Still, they remain political outsiders. One main question explored in this chapter is why.

[1] Inter-Parliamentary Union Website. http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm. Accessed 8/14/14.

Explanations for Women's Political Under-Representation

The main explanation for women's under-representation in legislative positions centres on institutions. Countries with proportional representation (PR) electoral systems tend to have a much higher share of women in parliament than countries with majoritarian electoral arrangements (McAllister and Studlar, 2002; Salmond, 2006). PR systems often have higher district magnitudes providing opportunities for women to be included as the total number of members per district increases, and closed party lists enable political parties to place women in electable positions on party ballots (Kittilson, 1999). The United States utilizes a single member majoritarian configuration which explains a good deal why they remain behind much of the rest of the world. The fact that incumbents in office overwhelmingly enjoy re-election advantages in the US (and that there are no federal term limits) only makes it even harder for new women to break through (Thomas and Wilcox, 2014). In contrast, Mexico utilizes a mixed electoral system.

Another institutional mechanism that must be considered is the adoption of gender quotas aimed at increasing the numbers of women selected and elected as candidates to political office (Krook, 2009). Quotas may be mandated by the constitution or by statute. They also may be voluntarily adopted through political parties. Some require a fixed percentage of legislative candidates to be women (particularly in parliamentary systems using party lists) while others necessitate a specific number of reserved seats. Their effectiveness depends on whether they match well with electoral institutions like proportional representation systems and if they are actually enforced. In North America, quotas may form part of the reason why the US trails behind Canada and Mexico in terms of women's representation in the legislature. While Mexico instituted legislative quotas in both houses, in Canada the only quotas are those voluntarily adopted by parties. Of course, the United States completely lacks quotas. While the ultimate impact of quotas on women's representation varies, it is worth noting that most of the countries with the greatest proportions of women legislators use some sort of quota.

Other explanations for women's lack of progress in obtaining legislative positions centres on the scarcity of women candidates. Even when the backgrounds of women correspond to that of other politicians, if not actively recruited for politics, women may still be underrepresented (Niven, 2010). Women's lack of confidence in their credentials forms part of the explanation (Lawless and Fox, 2010). Even the most educated and qualified women fail to consider themselves part of the candidate pool and are less likely to be approached by others to consider a bid. Women's disproportionately low levels of encouragement received from political gatekeepers (Lawless and Fox, 2010) also contribute to their dearth as candidates. No longer just the supply of women but the lack of demand among political elites clarifies this candidate void.

Family duties continue to keep politics out of reach for many women (Lawless and Fox, 2010). The strain of combining political careers with family lives may overwhelm some

women and result in fewer female aspirants. If women decide to pursue executive office, they may forego marriage and children. If not, they delay their political careers until their children grow up (Burrell 1994; Dolan and Ford 1995; Thomas 1994). In contrast, men rarely cite family considerations as reasons they decline or delay political careers (Lawless and Fox, 2010).

Impacts of Women in Office

The dearth of women in politics matters in a democracy. Women in politics send important messages to the public about the accessibility of institutions to women. Recognition of this enhanced legitimacy makes women (and men) more confident in their ability to affect the political system, heightens their interest in politics, and increases their likelihood of participating in the public sphere. This context creates a more active, vibrant, and representative political context which all can benefit from. Prominent women role models may also generate greater public support for female leadership and inspire women and girls to enter the political fray (Wolbrecht and Campbell, 2007). As far as policy considerations go, several comparative studies suggest that women legislators do act more on behalf of women's interests, even after controlling for other relevant dynamics such as party (Bratton and Ray 2002; Childs 2002; Dodson 2006; Swers 2002). For these reasons, it is absolutely imperative to facilitate women's political incorporation.

Strategies and Opportunities

Emphasizing the strategic calculations of potential candidates suggests that women's representation will not increase without significant shifts in the resources and motivations of women to wage effective political campaigns (Lawless and Fox, 2010). We know that when women run, women win as often as men, when controlling for various factors including incumbency status (Thomas and Wilcox 2014). As such, emphasis must be placed on expanding programmes helping women develop their leadership potentials and ambition to wage candidacies. These organizations can spur women's confidence and efficacy, and enhance their capacity and connections, equipping them to participate effectively in politics and to demand policies in line with their diverse interests. Organizations and networks can also help position women candidates on the issues they care about and communicate in a way that reaches people. These institutions can also help build financial networks for fundraising, which is an important consideration in American politics.

With the advance of organizations devoted to women's political aspirations, women can engage one another through virtual networks, share successful electoral strategies and advocate on behalf of women's issues. These linkages build mentoring systems between past and future leaders. Highlighting the positive traits of women as leaders must be done, especially as related to the particular needs of constituencies.

In thinking about the global picture, it is no exaggeration that the world is watching the progress of women as it never has before and holding countries accountable. Women can leverage international and domestic law and policy frameworks related to building their political participation and leadership.

The scholarship highlighted here that analyzes the difference women make in office also provides opportunities. This work can be used to further analyze electoral law to determine impact on women's access to higher office and politically viable changes necessary to support women's leadership. As mentioned, quotas matter. Actors committed to women's empowerment in the United States can take advantage of the many resources available that provide information on how to best design quotas. While quotas may not pass any time soon, if ever, pressuring the government and political parties to pass quotas mandating women candidates needs to be considered.

Since 1980, the proportion of women voting in US presidential elections is higher than men. Women's turnout could make a substantial difference on politics especially since they more often vote for the Democratic Party, which generally takes more liberal positions on gender issues. Activists need to show that there is a women's vote, capitalize on it, and make women an even stronger force in politics. They need to send messages to political candidates and politicians that they will not gain election or stay in power without women's support.

While the above considerations focus on the role of organizations, personal opportunities must also be seized. Individually, women can pursue issues that they are passionate about and use that as their starting point, not power itself. Women are more likely to pursue office when they identify a specific goal. They can focus on making a difference overall but also concentrate on the policies that most empower women. Women can recognize the reality of stereotypes of women in leadership and the importance of confronting them. Understanding the challenges to work/life balance and the importance of this issue can also go far but must be followed up with establishing networks providing support. Identifying the personal, cultural and professional barriers to advancement or leadership and determining potential opportunities for overcoming challenges is also key. Women can also work to build a trusted team of personal and professional advisors, develop a base of supporters from within their specific communities and create networks to build relationships with those who can help attain power including party members, leaders, government colleagues, and civil society. Again, the motivation is not for power for its own sake, but to act on behalf of marginalized groups including women.

The fact that women have surpassed men in their attainment of higher degrees is also an opportunity women can use for greater political empowerment. There are networks of alumni that can be brought together to effect change and help women run for office. Educational settings are ideal for transmitting political aspirations to future women leaders.

Conclusions

Women in North America are gaining ground in politics. The reality is, however, that there is much more work to be done. At the same time, there has never been a better opportunity to develop strategies for political empowerment. With more women at the helms of power, women as a group will attain a greater sense of efficacy and have greater willingness to participate in the political system. As suggested, women legislators are also more likely to work on behalf of issues important to women. Even in spite of differing ideological and partisan considerations, women caucus together to help identify issues and employ strategies that empower women. This is not only better for women but for democracy overall.

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Women in Politics in Northeast Asia

Young-Im Lee

Introduction

This chapter discusses women's political representation in the national legislatures in four Northeast Asian countries: Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, and Taiwan. As of October 2014, the average proportion of women in Asia's national parliaments in lower and upper houses was 18.3%, which is lower than the world average of 21.8% and slightly higher than the average of 15.9% in the Arab states and 15.3% in the Pacific Region (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2014). More to our interest, women lawmakers assume 14.9% of national legislative seats in Mongolia. In Japan, 8.1% of the lower house and 16.1% of the upper house members are women. South Korean women hold 15.7% of the National Assembly seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2014). The Legislative Yuan in Taiwan is represented by 33% of women legislators (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2014).

The level of political representation of women in these four countries is puzzling, as it does not seem to correspond to the countries' levels of economic development or gender equality in other sectors in these societies. According to the World Economic Forum's *The Global Gender Gap Report 2013*, Japan was ranked 105th in the Gender Gap Index out of 136 countries, and 118th in terms of women's political empowerment (World Economic Forum 2013, 236). South Korea was placed 111th in the overall index and 86th in terms of political empowerment (World Economic Forum 2013, 244). More interestingly, Mongolia fared well by securing 33rd place in the overall index, with the world's second-highest level of gender equality in economic participation and opportunity, and was ranked as the world's number one country in terms of gender equality in health and survival. However, it was disappointingly ranked 108th in terms of political empowerment (World Economic Forum 2013, 284).[1]

What are the reasons for women's under-representation in the national legislative offices in these four countries, and how can temporal and cross-sectional variances among them be explained? How can women's presence in the national legislatures be increased, and how can those elected be empowered? This chapter starts by providing the status of women's numerical representation in the four countries from 1999 to 2013, and discusses how electoral systems and gender quotas influence the election of women to the national legislative offices. After discussing some challenges that women face in politics, the chapter concludes by emphasizing the importance of organizing women's political networks and creating gender-sensitive parliaments to make women legislators' participation more effective.

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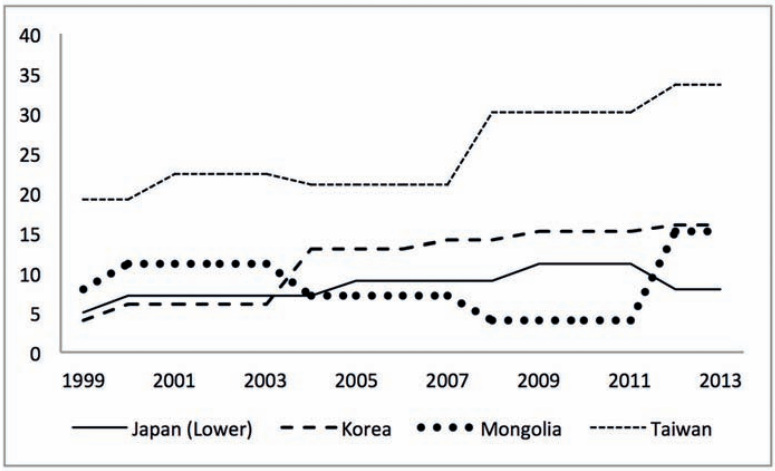
[1] Taiwan was not examined in this report.

Opportunities and Obstacles to Increasing Women's Presence

Graph 1: Percentage of women in the national legislatures, 1999–2013.



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union and Taiwan Central Election Commission 2014

1. Electoral System

The existing literature has demonstrated the importance of electoral systems in the representation of political minorities. It is widely supported that a proportional representation (PR) system is more likely to elect women than plurality-majority voting system (Caul 1999; Matland 1998; Salmond 2006; Yoon 2004). More women are elected in the multi-member districts than in the single-member districts (Salmond 2006). The four Northeast Asian countries generally follow this pattern. Currently, all four countries have adopted a parallel system in which some of its legislators are elected by a plurality-majority system and the remaining seats are allocated by a list PR system (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2010). In the case of South Korea, 19 women were elected to single-member districts and the other 28 women acquired their seats through a closed party list, based on nation-wide proportional representation (Korean National Election Commission 2014). Among 39 women members of the House of Representatives in Japan, 23 were elected to the proportional representation seats and 16 represent single-member districts (The House of Representatives of Japan 2014). Scholars have pointed out the positive impact of multi-member districts and the proportional representation system on the high level of women's representation in Taiwan (Gelb 2011, 388). Even though the four countries share similar electoral systems, the above graph shows the differences in the share of women legislators. This can be partly explained by the adoption and implementation of gender quotas.

2. Gender Quotas

Mongolia, South Korea, and Taiwan have adopted various types of gender quotas for their legislative elections. Japan has not enacted measures to promote women's representation,

which partly explains why the share of women in the Japanese lower house has never exceeded 10% from 1999 onward. In Taiwan, the share of women increased to 30% in 2008 due to the changes in the Electoral Law in 2005. From this change, the total number of seats decreased from 225 to 113; 73 seats are contested in single-member districts, and the remaining 34 seats are distributed among parties proportional to their share of the party-preference ballot (Choate 2008). The new Electoral Law mandates that each political party's list should contain no less than 50% of women candidates (Dahlerup et al. 2013: 199). Even before this constitutional change, Taiwanese parties had adopted reserved seats for women, which explains the already high share of women in 1999. In 1996, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) adopted a gender quota stipulating that 25% of party nominations and party offices should be held by women (Gelb 2011, 388). Not until the Kuomintang (KMT) lost the presidential election in 2000 did it adopt a 25% reserved seat quota (Gelb 2011, 388). As the number of women legislators started to exceed what was instituted by the quota, the quota system worked as a limit to women's representation; thus demand for changes was voiced, which resulted in the constitutional amendments in 2005.

Immediately before the 17th legislative election of South Korea in 2004, the new Election Law mandated a mandatory 50% gender quota applicable to 54 PR seats out of 299 total legislative positions, and that political parties "shall recommend candidates falling under every odd number in order of the candidate roll from among women" (Dahlerup et al. 2013, 121). After the adoption of the quota, the share of women legislators jumped from 5% to 15%.

In the case of Mongolia, the 2011 Law on the Election of the Parliament requires that "at least 20% of candidates on a unified list presented by a political party for both types of contests (majority and proportional) shall be women" (Dahlerup et al. 2013, 136). This is a change from the previous quota which mandated a 15% gender quota for candidates (Jargal 2012). Due to the introduction of proportional representation for 28 of the 76 seats and strengthened gender quotas (Yost 2012), the share of women legislators almost tripled, as we can see in the graph.

3. Financial Support

One of the major barriers for women to enter politics is a lack of financial means. In spite of efforts to curb campaign spendings, elections are still an expensive business. Most of the time, men are likely to raise more money for their campaigns, especially in the case of Japan, where its unique personal support organization, *koenkai*, plays a huge role in election campaigns (Iwanaga 2008, 117). Sherry L. Martin explains how a lack of three critical resources, "*jiban* (a local support base), *kanban* (name recognition) and *kaban* (financial resources)", poses a great challenge for women in Japanese politics (Martin 2009, 407). In Mongolia, a large amount of money required in order to be nominated by political parties is one of the major deterrents for women with limited financial resources (Jargal 2012).

Do Women Legislators Make Differences?

Do women legislators stand up and act for women? Does the election of more women to the legislature lead to the proposal of more women-friendly policies? Existing studies have provided empirical evidence that many women legislators do feel an obligation to represent women constituents and prioritize women-friendly agendas in their legislative portfolios, and having more women in legislatures leads to more policy responsiveness to women (for example, Bratton and Ray 2002; Caiazza 2004; Carroll 2000; Childs 2002; Crowley 2004; Dolan 1998; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2008; Lovenduski and Norris 2003; Schulze 2013; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2008; Swers 2013). Women legislators in the four Northeast Asian countries have made efforts to represent women's interests, even though there is no consensus as to what constitutes women's interests, needs, and concerns. For example, Taiwanese women legislators proposed more bills on feminist issues, childcare, education, and social welfare issues when compared to their male counterparts (Clark and Clark 2009, 615–616) and have cooperated on issues such as women's inheritance rights, abortion, and domestic violence (Gelb 2011, 389). Women legislators in South Korea have been as active as their male counterparts in terms of the number of bills they author (M. Kim 2011, 121–127), and they tend to propose bills related to public health, welfare, social security, and human rights, while their male counterparts focus their legislative portfolios on issues related to economic growth, the environment, welfare, and public administration reform (M. Kim 2011, 207).

However, not all women legislators seem to identify themselves as "women's representatives" and focus exclusively on women-friendly issues in their legislative agendas. Other factors, such as a district's characteristics, legislative committee membership, prospects of re-election, the share of women in the legislative body, and how supportive the environment is to feminist ideas, also influence women lawmakers' legislative activities (Barnello and Bratton 2007; Bratton and Haynie 1999; Carroll 2000; Grey 2006). Therefore, it is naïve to assume that electing more women will automatically lead to increased policy responsiveness to women's interests (Celis et al. 2008), but identifying and tackling factors undermining women legislators' capabilities to translate their issue concerns into legislative activities is important.

How Can Women Legislators be Empowered?

1. Creating a Gender-Sensitive Parliament

At the Regional Conference on Women's Political Participation held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in 2012, Sonia Palmieri suggested a 6-Point Gender Equality Action Plan Framework. The last stage of the action plan is to reform the parliament to become gender sensitive. A gender-sensitive parliament has "no barriers to women's full participation… [and is] a workplace that is attractive to women" (Palmieri 2012). This can be achieved by reforming "the rules and internal procedures within parliament, including the facilities and

working conditions provided for members, such as those determining the hours and days of sitting, the principles used for recruitment to leadership positions, and the provision of childcare facilities" (Palmieri 2012).

A report issued by the Inter-Parliamentary Union also identifies strategies to induce institutional changes to create gender-sensitive parliaments, one of which concerns women's committee assignment. It is not uncommon for women legislators worldwide to concentrate on "soft committees" such as those addressing family affairs, social issues, and education (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2008, 64). Even though those issues are traditionally related to women's interests, women legislators should participate in more diverse committees in order for their perspectives to be reflected on various governance agendas.

2. Organizing Women's Networks

Several studies in Korea, Japan, and Taiwan have echoed how women lack informal networks, while male counterparts rely on exclusive networks based on kinship, education, and faction (Iwanaga 2008; Korea Women Parliamentarians Network 2013, 32; Sun 2005). Even though Korean women legislators were as productive as their male counterparts, a lack of political networks and support systems within their parties and their districts resulted in fewer women candidates being nominated (Kim, Kim, and Oh 2013, 48).

Organizing networks to provide political training and financial support, and to assist legislative activities is critical in empowering women politically and recruiting more women to the political arena. The organization can take various forms, such as non-governmental, bipartisan or partisan arrangements, or even women's caucuses within parliaments. Women's political networks can socialize and prime potential candidates who have yet to enter the political arena, and provide them with political training and opportunities. For women incumbents, these networks can provide systematic support for their agenda-setting and empower their legislative activities within parliaments (Korea Women Parliamentarians Network 2013, 33–34).

A number of women's networks and organizations have provided political training for women at various stages of elections. In Japan, the Ichikawa Fusae Memorial Society has provided training for potential candidates and incumbents as well as financially supported women's organizations and individuals who promote women's political participation. (Korea Women's Political Solidarity 2014, 46). WINWIN (Women in New World, International Network) in Japan is another organization aiming to provide financial support for women candidates; it was founded in 1999 benchmarking EMILY's List in the US (www.winwinjp.org; Korea Women's Political Solidarity 2014, 68).

Another notable example is South Korea's "Women's Alliance for the 17th General Election" (*sip-chil-dae chongsuneul wihan yeosung yeondae*). Consisting of 32 women's organizations, the alliance successfully pressed for the passage of the 50% gender quotas for PR seats, and the Political Fund Act, which mandates that 10% of government subsidies to parties should be spent as a fund for women's political development (W.-H. Kim 2008: 142–144; Korea Women Parliamentarians Network 2013: 127–129). Former and current

women national legislators organized the Korea Women Parliamentarians Network to provide networking opportunities for women politicians, as well as to train potential candidates.

One of the common arguments against recruiting more women is that the pool of potential, eligible women is too small. The case of the "Women's Network for Clean Politics" (*malgeun jeongchi yeosung network*) in Korea is an example of how to discover potential women candidates. The network was organized in 2003, drafting a list of 102 potential women candidates and handing the list to major political party leaders to consider them for nomination for the 17th Legislative Election. The network tried to find women demonstrating professionalism and innovative ideas, both liberal and conservative (Malgeunjeongchi yeosung network 2004, 30). Among 157 women candidates for the election in 2004, 46 of them (29.3%) were those recommended by the network (Malgeunjeongchi yeosung network 2004, 100). Among 39 women finally elected, 21 women (53.8%) were recommended by the network (Malgeunjeongchi yeosung network 2004, 20). Not only did the network suggest potential women candidates, it raised a campaign for voters a week before the election day, encouraging women voters' turnout and drawing their attention to women candidates' women-friendly policies (Malgeunjeongchi yeosung network 2004, 19).

Conclusions

In the last 15 years, women in four Northeast Asian countries have navigated their way to the national legislative offices, in spite of cultural, institutional, and financial challenges. More and more women have been elected, and they have contributed to representing more women's issues and needs. To make their participation more effective, and to empower them to be responsive to women's interests, needs, and concerns, this chapter suggests the importance of creating gender-sensitive parliaments in which women legislators can exert their full potential as effective members, and organizing women's networks to strengthen women's social capital before and after they enter the political arena. Meaningful and fruitful efforts to empower women legislators and potential candidates have already been made, and these endeavours should be continued.

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Women and Political Leadership in South Asia

Mallarika Sinha Roy

Introduction

The issues of gender equality and women's autonomy have been recognised as key factors in the recent political discourses.[1] However, it has also been argued, and rightly so, if we want to operationalise these ideas at various socio-economic levels of the stratified societies of South Asian countries, we must understand the entrenched structures of inequality based on multiple identities such as class, caste, religion, ethnicity, and region. Gender is implicated in each of these identities. The popular notions of public and private, nature and culture, reason and emotion, modern and primitive become analytical features through which gender becomes involved in shaping individual and collective identities. An overview of female political leadership in South Asia with special references to opportunities, gaps, negotiations, and resistances of "women" must be situated within these complexities of social formations.

In the last couple of decades the scholarship on gender and politics in the South Asian context has developed theoretical depth and a wide-ranging coverage of issues. This article is strategically placed within this scholarship.[2] This scholarship offers a framework to understand how the politics of gender influences the formation of "woman" as a political category and how interests, needs, and concerns of this category are defined in different South Asian countries. Drawing from the larger body of feminist scholarship, and especially, South Asian feminist scholarship, this article makes an effort to elaborate an overview of female political leadership in South Asia.

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[1] Anne Phillips (ed), *Feminism and Equality* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (eds), *Feminists Theorize the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Michelle Barrett and Anne Phillips (eds), *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

[2] Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in Third World* (London: Zed Books, 1984); Susie Tharu and Tejaswini Niranjana, "Problems for a Contemporary Theory of Gender" in Shahid Amin and Dipesh Chakraborty (eds), *Subaltern Studies IX* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996); Kumari Jayawardena and Malathi de Alwis (eds), *Embodied Violence: Communalising Women's Sexuality in South Asia* (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996); Patricia Jeffery, "Agency, Activism, and Agendas" in Patricia Jeffery and Amrita Basu (eds), *Appropriating Gender: Women's Activism and Politicised Religion in South Asia* (London: Routledge, 1998), 221-43; Mary E. John and Janaki Nair (eds), *A Question of Silence: The Sexual Economies of Modern India* (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998).

Women and Politics in South Asia

In order to understand the complexities of women's political leadership it is imperative to recognise that gender is not a synonym for women. If we agree with Simone de Beauvoir's foundational statement that one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one, it will be reductive to accept that men are born men.[3] Accepting men as universal subjects of politics usually overlooks the constituent codes of "manliness", their internal differentiations, and the contextual meanings of femininity and masculinity. It is the perception of difference between men and women which needs to be considered in the idea of "gender equality". Accepting men and women as different but equal has certain advantages. This analytical standpoint allows us to define politics, especially political leadership, differently for men and women, i.e., the qualities of political leadership need not be the same for men and women leaders. However, in the context of "realpolitik" such considerations are rarely valued. An anecdotal reference will illustrate the point. Inder Malhotra, in a biography of Indira Gandhi, wrote that Gandhi had been wryly humorous about her anomalous position of a woman in power. In response to US President Johnson's hesitation about how she should be addressed, Gandhi is reported to have said, "You can tell him that some of my cabinet ministers call me 'sir'. He can do so, too, if he likes."[4] The issue is not merely about addressing a woman head of state, but rather how the presence (or absence) of femininity in a position of leadership can be conceptualised.

South Asia provides an extraordinary regional background to conceptualise this connection. If we consider the case of South Asian women, the contextual meanings of women's political agency become more complex in everyday life and in periods of crises.[5] Jeffrey argues that even though South Asian women have been repeatedly stereotyped as victims, epitomised by the child bride, oppressed widow or *sati*, illiterate woman doomed to ignorance, and more recently as victims of dowry murders, honour killings, public sexual harassment or rape; they have been involved in anti-colonial struggles, various caste- and class-based political and social movements, registering their voices. Their everyday resistance to different forms of patriarchal domination has also attracted the attention of feminists. In sites of everyday resistance like reproductive capacity, autonomy over body, division of labour, access to resources like education and wage labour the impact of women's participation in mass-based social and political movements have not always been impressive, but decisive changes are also not uncommon. Women in South Asia have also emerged as leaders in the public sphere of politics from the grass-root level to the level of supreme command in the electoral democracy with political parties. Familial ties, caste status, social

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[3] This is a much quoted sentence from Beauvoir's ground-breaking book *The Second Sex*, first published in 1949. See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2012). For an exposition of feminist conceptualisation of masculinities and gender, see Terrell Carver, *Gender is Not a Synonym for Women* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

[4] Inder Malhotra, *Indira Gandhi: A Personal and Political Biography* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), 191.

[5] Jeffery, "Agency, Activism and Agenda".

class, and sheer political acumen to manoeuvre specific situations have been crucial factors in either catapulting women into leadership positions, or to pave a tenacious ascendancy within a leadership structure.

Women leaders in South Asian countries (Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi in India; Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan; Sheikh Haseena Wajed and Khaleda Zia in Bangladesh; Sirimavo Bandarnaike and Chnadrika Kumartunga in Sri Lanka) have often assumed power in periods of intense political crises and usually been propelled to power by their respective political parties to continue some sort of dynastic rule following the death of a close male relative – either father or husband. Raunaq Jahan, in her rather comprehensive study of women leaders of South Asia, points out that these women leaders were chosen by the party bosses for their relative political inexperience and their acceptance among the people to be able to carry on the legacy of the dead leader.[6] The significance of family relations is undeniable in these women's rise to power. However, the issue which Jahan admits not to have touched upon and which Rajeswari Sunder Rajan analyses with the case study of Indira Gandhi concerns how these women leaders consolidate at the helm after rising to that position. Sunder Rajan's excellent analysis reads selected high-cultural and popular texts to situate the cognitive structures of "female" authority.[7]

Female Political Authority vis-à-vis Women's Interests

A significant feature of this gap is the fact that no woman leader has overtly concerned herself with women's issues, even less with women's movement. In the Indian context, women political leaders at the regional level, like Jayalalitha in Tamilnadu, Mayawati in Uttar Pradesh and Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal, have also not in any manner explicitly taken up women's issues as main issues of politics. This gap, a section of feminist political theorists have interpreted, is an inevitable outcome of the largely patriarchal system within which political power functions. At this point of overview, however, it is important to remember that women's empowerment in schemes of development and the issue of female political authority are separate, albeit with some overlappings. Unpacking certain dimensions of this overlapping will help us to further situate the complexities of political leadership/participation, women's interests and women's needs.

Women's political participation, outside the "elite" circle of women leaders, in South Asian countries has traversed an uneven territory in the postcolonial period. Let us discuss the contours of this uneven territory through three examples. In India though the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution in 1992 gave a historic opportunity to women's representation in governance at the local level (*Panchyati* System) by granting 33% reservation, women still face structural inequalities. These inequalities, based on lesser access to resources like

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[6] Raunaq Jahan, "Women in South Asian Politics", *Third World Quarterly* 9.3, July 1987, 848-70.

[7] Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, "Gender, Leadership, and Representation" in her *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1993), 103-128.

education, wage labour, autonomy over one's own sexuality, and financial independence, are entrenched in an overarching patriarchal social and cultural organisation which refuses to give women the final decision-making power.[8] Similarly, in Bangladesh, although women have made serious advancement towards women's empowerment through increased economic participation and widening girls' enrolment in educational institutions since 2000, women's political participation has not increased noticeably even after having two women leaders at the top of the principal political parties contesting for power.[9] In contrast, in the protracted people's revolution in Nepal (*Janayuddha*), the Nepali Maoist leadership took a conscious decision to mobilise women, especially young women. This strategic interest in women, it has been argued, involved a degree of coercion in Maoist recruitment policies. The greater visibility of illiterate and neo-literate young women reflect a move towards restricting women within lower ranks. The question of gender equality in the leadership of the movement remained undecided in spite of reformist practices like abolition of polygyny, and establishment of women's rights to inherit land, to divorce, to choose marital partners, and to access formal education.[10]

All three examples invite us to closely review women's interests and needs. Drawing from Maxine Molyneux's argument of making a considered division between the "strategic" and "practical" interests of women, it is possible to point out that it is important to distinguish between immediate reforms required to be implemented by the state to ensure a certain level of gender equality, and the long-term goals of effectively challenging (and eventually abolishing) patriarchal forms of oppression.[11] Reservation for women in processes of political representation is a reformist practical interest that would help in women's easier access to resources like land, financial independence, education, and entrepreneurship. It is imperative to overcome both tendencies of either *mystifying* – perpetuated through images of powerful figures of motherhood, or an almost androgynous soldier-like figure of "manly woman" – or *trivialising* – reducing *all* women leaders as replacements of their dead male relatives – the relationship between femininity and political leadership as a long-term goal of gender equality. The crucial question in deciding on the course of action concerns prioritising between immediate and long-term goals. What constitutes women's interest depends on the need of "women" as a political category.

Women as a category, however, is heterogeneous and the "strategic" as well as "practical" interests are equally diverse. In such a situation, countries in South Asia face the

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[8] UNDP, India [United Nations Development Programme], *From Reservation to Participation: Capacity Building of Elected Women Representatives and Functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions*, Report published on 31 December, 2009.

[9] Sohela Nazneen, Naomi Hossain and Maheen Sultan, *National Discourses on Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh: Continuities and Change*, IDS Working Paper, Volume 2011, Number 368 (July 2011).

[10] Rita Manchanda, "Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Radicalising Gendered Narratives", *Cultural Dynamics*, 16 (2/3), 2004, 237-58.

[11] Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilisation without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State and Revolution in Nicaragua", *Feminist Studies*, 11:2 (1985: Summer), 227-254.

challenge of deciding what kind of need can achieve at least a sense of alliance among various identities residing within "women". Ferree and Mueller argue that "[n]eed definition is a political struggle over whose version of reality will be translated into public policy and social practices".[12] The problem becomes acute for women outside the "elite" circle of women leaders, when the same "elite" circle refuses to overtly concern itself with women's issues, which are also political articulations of women's needs.

Conclusion

The collective mobilisation around women's interests, needs, and concerns is referred in everyday parlance as the women's movement. Feminism, as a body of knowledge, is inextricably connected with the women's movement because the principal concern of feminism is gender-based inequalities and the goal remains defining, analyzing, and challenging the power relations between femininity and masculinity. Feminist authors and activists are not necessarily women, but rather, the movement and the knowledge production construct women as a political category. Political leadership, consequently, is an integral part of the movement as well as feminism. However, there has been an ambivalence in feminism regarding individual women leaders who have risen to positions of power within the public sphere of politics. Rajeswari Sunder Rajan has pointed out that the typical female subject of feminism has been the subaltern woman, or the woman-as-victim where the analytical point of departure for defining the principal protagonist of feminist politics is the shared experiences of oppression – powerlessness and collectivity. Individual women leaders, especially those who have not shown an overt solidarity with this shared experience creates an unease among feminist authors and activists. This unease concerns the feminist opposition to the repressive role of the state – coercion and dominance often achieved through the armed forces, where typical codes of "manliness" are deployed with regularity. Political leadership in feminist politics, therefore, is more about shared aims than a hierarchy of obeying orders.

South Asian feminism conceptualises the region beyond a cluster of border-sharing nations and their political relations in terms of neighbourhood foreign policies. Insights from a range of disciplinary specialisations – ancient Indian history, literary criticism, histories of oceanic region formations, political sociology, and cultural studies – have influenced South Asian feminism(s) to trace the historical formation of the region through movements of people, goods, and ideas. South Asian feminist politics tracks the diverse yet connected feminist struggles of a region where public and private spheres intersect at various nodal points like family, community, religion, sexuality, caste and class.[13] In this broader vision of politics the understanding of women's political leadership, even when achieved through family ties

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[12] Mya Max Ferree and Carol McClurg Mueller, "Feminism and the Women's Movement: A Global Perspective" in David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 576-607.

[13] Ania Loomba and Ritty Lukose (eds) *South Asian Feminisms*, (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2012).

or specific caste/religious affiliations, gain different meaningful dimensions. It becomes far more important to ask the question why family ties and dynastic rule are referred to more in cases of women leaders when male leaders also benefit by such connections than arguing that women leaders are "puppets" at the hands of male party bosses. Similarly, it also becomes a more serious concern for feminist politics to identify conditions of oppression at the grass-root level of political leadership and collectively challenge them rather than ask for only reformist public policies to accommodate women.

In conclusion, I would like to argue that a more radical reconstitution of the concept of power is required, where leadership ceases to be a tool for securing hierarchy and dominance. South Asian feminist politics is striving for redefining women's struggles. One half of achieving that courses through greater inclusion of women in governance, but the other half demands redefining modes of governance itself.

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Promoting Inclusion: Women's Political Participation in Southeast Asia

Bridget Welsh

With global icons such as Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar, multiple female presidents in the Philippines including Cory Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, a female president of the largest Muslim democracy in the world of Indonesia of Megawati Sukarnoputri and a female prime minister of Yingluck Shinawarta in Thailand, Southeast Asia has an impressive coterie of women national leaders. At 18.9% of women in parliament the region stands slightly above the global average in the level of female representation in parliament of 18%. The eleven countries of ASEAN and Timor L'este have made progress in the inclusion of women in politics and these gains have made an impact on policy and rights more generally. This article explores the nature of female political representation in Southeast Asia. While the story that emerges is one of positive gains and contributions over time, considerable hurdles remain for women to fully and equally participate in politics in Southeast Asia. A closer look at the region reveals that women struggle to achieve parity with men in political power.

Not Just Women's Work: Limited Female Executive Control

Of the 54 different presidents and 86 prime ministers who have held office in Southeast Asian countries since 1945, only 6% and 1% have been women respectively. Attaining the position of prime minister via a political party is particularly difficult. There is only one example where this has happened – Thailand. In this case, the woman was ousted from power in a military coup. The examples of women leaders at the national level that do exist are a relatively recent phenomenon, with the first woman elected to the presidency in 1986 in the Philippines – Cory Aquino. The last woman to date to hold national office was Yingluck Shinawarta in 2014.

Similar to neighbouring South Asia, Southeast Asian leaders have followed the "wives and daughter" syndrome of being related to someone who has held the position earlier or a prominent leadership position. Yingluck was a sister of a former premier, but she was still part of the family and benefited from the exposure to political life and name recognition. Family ties and political socialization play a large role in boosting the chances for women to be elected, a pattern that is as prominent at the local level as it is in the national arena. The country where family connections are the most prominent for women in Southeast Asia is the Philippines. There the two-term limit for legislatures encourages the appointment of wives to hold the seat for the male incumbent to return to two terms later.

In other parts of the executive, namely the cabinet, women have held office for decades. Indonesia was the first country to appoint a woman in cabinet, in 1946, as Maria Ullfah Santoso was appointed Minister of Social Affairs. The Philippines followed a few years later in 1948 when Asuncion Arnola Perez was appointed the Commissioner of Social Welfare. Burma followed with the appointment of Daw Ba Maung Chien as the Minister and Premier of the Karen State in 1952. Half a decade would pass before the next appointment in 1959 of Tong Siv Eng as the Minister of Social Action in Cambodia. The late 1960s would be another marker, as both Malaysia and Vietnam appointed their first woman in cabinet in 1969. Thailand appointed a female cabinet member in 1976, with Laos following in 1988. Brunei only appointed its first woman in cabinet in 1995, when Princess Hajah Masna was made Ambassador-at-Large and Second in Command of the Foreign Affairs. The newest country in the region appointed women in cabinet at independence. Timor L'este appointed a handful of women in its first cabinet, beginning in 2001. These milestones are captured below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Time Line of Breaking the Cabinet Glass Ceiling in Southeast Asia.

The country that stands out in its late representation of women in the executive and missing from the figure above is Singapore. Despite gaining independence from 1965, it was not until 2009 that this developed country appointed the first full minister woman in cabinet, Lim Hwee Hua. She lost her seat in the 2011 polls, but was replaced with Halimah Yacob as Minister of State for Community Development, Youth and Sports. The Singaporean government expanded female representation when it appointed Grace Fu to the Prime Minister's Office. This city state, governed for over thirty years by statesman Lee Kuan Yew and with one of the region's highest levels of development, is exceptional however, for its low political representation of women. Unlike more developed countries globally, Singapore has not significantly expanded female representation until recently.

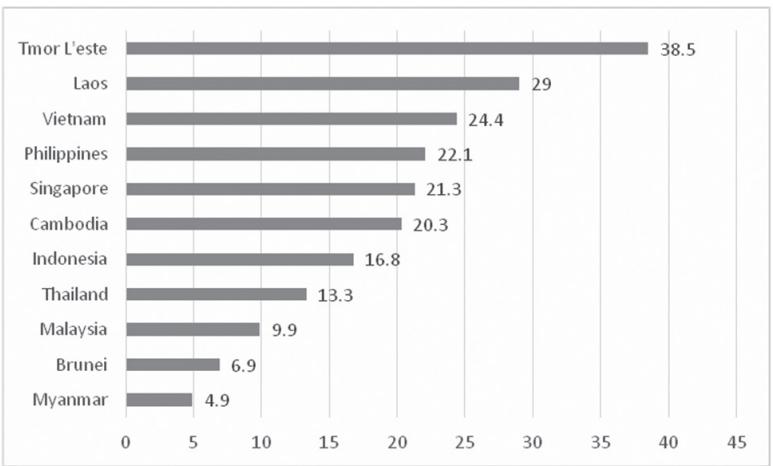
The level of women's representation in cabinet varies considerably across the region, with three countries having over 10% of their core executive as females as ministers – the Philippines, Timor and Thailand – and seven countries with over 10% as female deputy ministers. Only three countries fall below the 10% female representation bar at all ministerial levels – Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The Philippines and Timor, in contrast, are close to reaching international targets for females in the cabinet, with well over a quarter of the positions.

In the early years, women in senior executive positions were relegated to "women's work". This included heading up the "women's affairs ministry" or issues related to family and children. Even today, disproportionately women still hold these positions, especially in countries with comparatively low levels of women in the executive such as Laos or Cambodia. Yet, the trend has been to have women involved in a wider range of policy issues. In the Philippines and Indonesia, women have managed portfolios that include finance, trade, labour and more. Prominent examples include Sri Mulyani and Mari Pangestu of Indonesia who have recently served in former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's cabinet. The only male bastion area that remains untouched is defence.

Voices and Collaboration: Legislators and Caucuses

Greater barriers have been broken by women in the national legislative assemblies, although the share of women varies across countries. As noted above, the region's average is 18.9%. Chart 1 shows that the majority of countries in Southeast Asia have over 20% of women in parliaments, with Timor leading in representation with 38.5%. Vietnam and Laos have a comparatively high share of women in their legislatures, in contrast to low female representation in their executive. Myanmar, whose parliament is still comprised of 25% of military personnel, has less than 5% female representation. These figures represent gains over time, with gradual increases across countries. For example, in 2006, Singapore's People's Action Party increased the number of female candidates it slated, more than doubling the number and share of women in parliament. Similar increases were made in Indonesia and Timor with democratization.

Chart 1: Women's Representation in Southeast Asian Legislatures 2014.



The factors accounting for representation of women in parliament in Southeast Asia are similar to those globally. The dominant factor lies with the institutional arrangements that

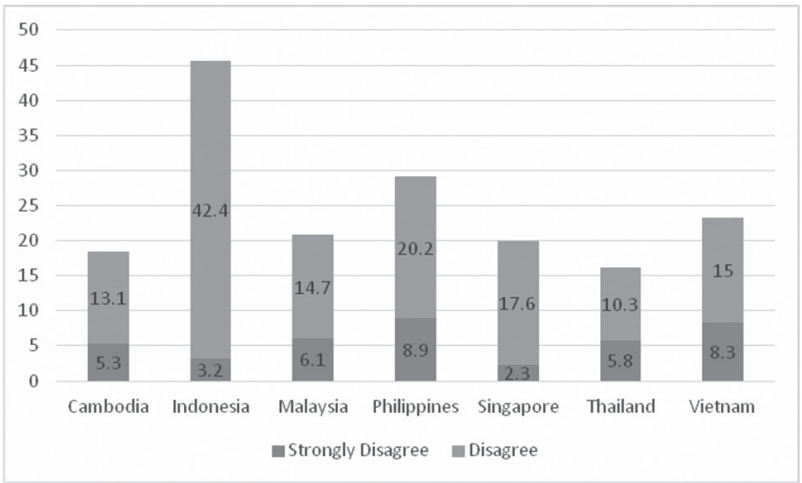
shape the access of women to political positions. Political parties profoundly shape who can run for office. Most Southeast Asian parties select candidates centrally, giving power to institutional bodies within parties such as the women's wing and to party leaders. The strength of women's branches in places such as Vietnam and Laos have contributed to more women in office, as have decisions by leaders to slate women, as has occurred in Cambodia in 2013. The failure of political parties to increase the level of representation of women as in Malaysia since 2008 helps us understand the stagnation in the increase of women in office over time.

Another important institutional arrangement involves quotas. This factor alone accounts for the impressive level of female representation of women in Timor. The pattern has been to raise the quotas for the legislature, bringing more women into office in each election. Indonesia has also introduced quotas, but they are for parties (rather than for the legislature) and administered in a manner that allow for loopholes in slating women into positions. They have been less effective. In fact, over the last two elections, the levels of women's participation have also stagnated. Quotas were introduced during the democratization period in both countries starting from 1999, encouraged by international donors and strong women's activism locally. The experiences of Indonesia and Timor provided an opportunity to "jump start" higher female representation, a lesson that has not yet been applied in Myanmar. This country's opposition party, the National League for Democracy, aims to slate more females, but there is no substantial discussion of introducing quotas.

Along with institutional conditions, sexist and conservative norms serve as a barrier for women. Women are expected to follow traditional roles and behaviour. Women are constrained in campaigning alone or at night, for example. They are not allowed the same freedom to move around and solicit funds for campaigns. They are expected to do a "triple shift" – take care of their family, complete their main source of revenue and campaign for office. Many Southeast Asian female politician have been labelled "bad mothers" or criticized for divorcing, as they are expected to be the "perfect homemaker" while holding office. This stands in stark contrast to men who are forgiven, and in some cases lauded, for their immoral sexual exploits and questionable activities outside of the home.

The level of public resistance to women equally participating in politics varies across the region. Findings from the latest wave of the Asia Barometer Survey administered in seven Southeast Asian countries from 2012-2014 and detailed in Chart 2 below show that many do not believe that women should participate on the same level as men. Close to a majority of Indonesians do not believe in gender political equality. Even in the Philippines, which has one of the strongest levels of female political inclusion, this number reaches over a quarter of the population. Interestingly, many of the countries in the ABS survey with the lowest levels of resistance toward female political participation do not have levels of support for women in politics that reflect public support for women in office, e.g., Singapore or Malaysia.

Graph 2: Findings of Resistance to Equal Political Participation of Women.



Source: Asia Barometer Survey, Wave III.

The sad fact is that politics is not seen as an arena for women among many in the region. It is "dirty" – the arena of "guns and goons" – to quote a common phrase in Filipino politics. In highly competitive races such as those found in the Cambodia and Malaysia, women candidates face threats and real concerns about entering politics. Mary Ortega of the Philippines reported at least one death threat. Similar reports have occurred across the region. Many potential candidates are further discouraged by the attacks made on women politicians, many of which focus on stereotypes and their physical appearance. When Dyana Sofya ran for a seat in parliament in a by-election in Malaysia in 2014 she was heavily criticized for her clothing and appearance. Ironically, the party that slated her, the Democratic Action Party, used her beauty as a means to promote her rather than focus on her other credentials. The focus for women candidates is often on looks rather than content. A similar situation emerged when the Malaysian opposition slated Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as a possible Chief Minister for the state of Selangor, as the media focused on her "wifely" status not her experience or credentials. Even worse is the misogyny that women can face in office. The attacks on Yingluck Shinawarta of Thailand in late 2013, for example, included the use of vulgar language and references to private body parts. Disproportionately Southeast Asian women politicians are subject to more intensive exposure and ridicule of their personal lives.

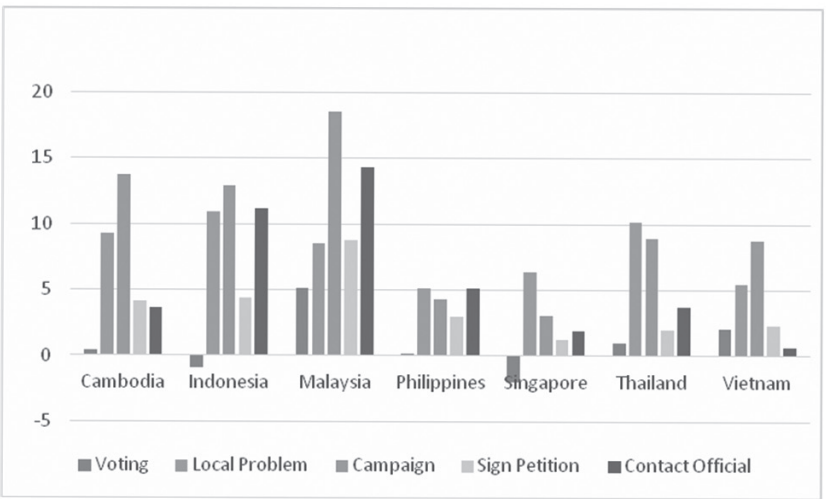
These hurdles have encouraged women to join forces across party lines to address issues in parliament. Women's groups have come out to defend candidates as occurred with both Dyana and Yingluck. A similar collaborative spirit has developed within legislatures. Southeast Asian countries have seen the emergence of women's caucuses to address concerns ranging from domestic violence to women's rights and welfare. Caucuses have been more prominent and successful in the consensus-oriented political systems such as in Indonesia

and the Philippines. Here party differences have not splintered cooperation among women on policy issues. Fights against discriminating against women and strengthening the charter for women's protections have all emerged through women caucuses, supported by women NGOs in civil societies. Women's caucuses have been less effective in countries riddled with political partisanship such as Thailand. In Malaysia, the tact has been to work behind the scenes rather than in the limelight on issues of family law and development.

Engaged Politically: Voting and Political Participation

The work of women in parliament is supported by Southeast Asian publics, women in particular. While women do not necessarily vote for women candidates more than men, they do disproportionately support women participating in politics. Importantly, they also participate in politics themselves. Women vote, actively campaign in elections, sign petitions, demonstrate and lobby officials. The role that ordinary women play in politics in Southeast Asia cannot be understated. Women voters have been decisive in electoral victories such as the recent election of Joko Widodo in Indonesia and Najib Tun Razak in Malaysia. Women make up half the electorates, and survey data from the Asia Barometer Survey shows that women vote almost as often as men. In fact, in Indonesia and Singapore women vote more than men, as shown in Chart 3.

Chart 3: Gender Gaps in Political Participation in Selected Southeast Asia Countries.



Source: Asia Barometer Survey, Wave III.

Nevertheless, there is usually a gap in the participation of women compared to men, with women participating less. This is seen to be a product of the limited time women have to actually participate. As has been found globally, this is connected to their roles as caregivers and lower social capital or networks in the public sphere. The differences in levels of political participation for women compared to men are larger with regard to activities that take women outside of the household, such as working to solve a local problem. We also

see larger gender gaps in Muslim Southeast Asia, where there are more limits on women engaging in the public sphere. Values and the roles that women are expected to play shape their political participation.

Despite these differences, the prominence of women in politics cannot be discounted. Successful political campaigns have been tied to the support of women. Nowhere is this clearer than in key policy arenas that have affected women. These include domestic violence, trafficking, sexual harassment laws and more. Women's NGOs such as AWARE in Singapore or EMPOWER in Malaysia are among the most effective civil society organizations in the region and work with the support of ordinary women – and some extraordinary leadership. One example of many is Zainah Anwar, who currently leads the organization Musawah, dedicated to empowering Muslim women.

It is this blend of ordinary and extraordinary that distinguishes women's participation in Southeast Asia. Many of the hurdles for women in office are shared with other regions around the world, but within the region there have been courageous and systematic efforts to work around and break down barriers. Southeast Asia is ahead of the global average in markers for inclusion and given the efforts and activism on the ground likely to continue to make progress, even as conditions will make the struggle a difficult one.

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Women in Politics in Australia

Elisabeth Porter

It is a real puzzle as to why women are not more conspicuous on the Australian political landscape. There are good reasons why women's presence should be more obvious. South Australian women (with the exception of indigenous Australians) gained the right to vote in 1894 and the rest of the country's women gained this right by 1902. Indigenous Australians were granted suffrage in 1962. Edith Cowan was the first woman elected to a state Legislative Assembly in 1921. In 1943 Enid Lyons and Dorothy Tangney made history in being elected to Australia's national parliament. Reasons for why so few women were active in political life in this era include "the difficulties of combining the roles of wife, mother and housekeeper with public, political life, and the fears of the parties that the electorate would not generally accept women candidates" (Clarke and White 1983, 311). Has much changed?

Australian feminists have a long tradition of being active in the state bureaucracy. These femocrats, or feminist bureaucrats, consciously work "to 'represent women's interests' within the state" (Franzway, Court and Connell 1989, 133). From the 1970s on, femocrats made a significant difference in addressing practical issues like domestic violence, childcare, anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation, custody and child support, women's participation in the labour force, and of course, women's election to political positions. Since then, varying governments have built on this early work to strengthen women's opportunities to engage in active participation in public life. However, particularly since the election of the Liberal government led by John Howard in 1996, there have been progressive budget cuts to health, housing, education, employment and training that have a major everyday impact on women's lives.

In the current context, factors that still limit women's opportunities for political participation are not dissimilar to those of previous eras. Mainstream political parties persist in favouring men in pre-selection and in promotion to senior party positions. There remains the social expectation that women should be the prime carer within families for children, the elderly and ill, despite increasing assistance from many men. It is true that "being a 'family man' is an advantage" for men "whereas many women with high profile public positions have no family dependants" (Porter 2002, 397). We return to this issue shortly when analyzing Australia's first woman Prime Minister.

It is important to identify what remains as chief obstacles facing women, not to be negative or pessimistic, but to determine prevailing challenges that must be overcome. Obstacles faced by women in all high profile professional positions overlap to include sexism, discrimination, workplace bullying, sexual harassment, inflexibility of work hours and

lack of access to childcare and mentors. Sheryl Sandberg argues that in addition to these external constraints, there are many internal obstacles women face "that says it's wrong to be outspoken, aggressive, more powerful than men" (2013, 8). She makes a case "for being ambitious in any pursuit" (2013, 10) in order to demonstrate leadership. Part of this drive is that "the more women help one another, the more we help ourselves" (2013, 164). Effective leadership galvanizes support, both within one's ranks and outside of it, cultivating as many potential useful links and networks as possible.

What is the current situation with regard to women's political representation? As of 7 July 2014, women comprise 29 percent of all parliamentarians in Australia, and 30.5 percent in the Commonwealth Parliament[1] (McCann and Wilson 2014, 4). In international terms, "Australia's comparative ranking for women in national parliaments has steadily declined over the past decade from 20th position in 2001 to 48th in 2014" (2014, 4). Amongst the reasons these authors cite for the under-representation "include party candidate selection practices, the nature of the electoral system, the challenges women face in balancing work and family responsibilities, discriminatory views about women in politics, and the adversarial nature of the parliamentary environment" (2014, 4). In Ministry positions, women hold only 5.3 percent of Cabinet positions in the Parliament of Australia and 36.4 percent in the Outer Ministries (2014, 7). Senator Nova Peris, elected in 2013, is the first indigenous woman to be elected to the Federal Parliament since federation.

It is interesting to reflect on the importance of quotas in post-conflict scenarios where "since the early 1990s, quotas have been established for women's participation in government" (Ní Aoláin, Haynes and Chan 2011, 238); Rwanda being a superb example. These authors highlight the advantages of quotas as being empirically effective, raising the profile of women as role models, compensating for previous discrimination and permitting the delivery of substantive equality outcomes. However, in Australia, the Coalition parties of the Liberal Party and the Nationals do not adopt any affirmative action measures, believing that gender quotas contradict merit principles. The Australian Labor Party introduced a 40:40:20 quota system from 1 January 2012 "to produce an outcome where not less than 40 percent of seats held by Labor will be filled by women, and not less than 40 percent by men" (McCann and Wilson 2014, 18) and the remaining 20 percent can be either women or men.

At local government level, in 2011, women comprised only 27.8 percent of elected representatives (McCann and Wilson 2014, 27). To date, the Parliament of Australia has not had a woman appointed as Treasurer or Minister for Defence. More typically, women have held portfolios in agriculture, arts, community services, education and social security. Australia currently has a woman Minister for Foreign Affairs and from 2010-2013, the first woman to be appointed as Prime Minister was Julia Gillard. Some reflections on this are apt.

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[1] Australia has governments in states, territories and a national parliament and also at local government level in states and territories. The national parliament is called the Parliament of Australia, Commonwealth Parliament or Federal Parliament.

When in opposition, the current Prime Minister Tony Abbott taunted Gillard as then-Prime Minister, when he "repeatedly implied that, as an unmarried woman who has not given birth, Julia Gillard can't empathise with ordinary Australian families" (Johnson 2012). Yet when asked about her achievements, Gillard said: "I'm proud of what we've done in paid parental leave and the more support for childcare, all of those things that actually support family and support women" but the thing that is "really absolutely closest to my heart is the equal pay case" (in Summers 2013, 18).

Gillard's famous "misogyny speech" went viral on social media. As she explained, it was the result of an emotional "crack point" (in Chan 2012) after Abbott persistently made derogatory sexist remarks. Misogyny is offensive. "Sexism should always be unacceptable" (Gillard 2012). Gillard's motivation in giving this passionate speech was for the national parliament to "think seriously about the role of women in public life and in Australian society because we are entitled to a better standard than this" (2012). In her last formal interview before being voted out of office by her party, she reflected on her successes, singling out health reform, pricing of carbon, paid parental leave, disability care, school improvement program, a Royal commission into child sexual abuse in institutions and her foreign policy record. She "was our most productive Prime Minister, responsible for legislating at the rate of 0.495 acts per day" (Summers 2013, 17).

There are many reasons for the need for higher levels of women's representation in politics, including equal rights to participate in decision-making, women's particular priorities and the need for a critical mass. Women's political leadership in decision-making is vital to a nation for three main reasons. First, equality-based arguments support "an ethical commitment to inclusivity" as a "fundamental pillar of good governance" (Porter and Mundkur 2012, 111). Second, rights-based frameworks highlight the need to change "structures and relationships of power to create a just society" (2012, 111). Third, women have multiple different experiences to men and thus often have different priorities, so the hope is that more women in politics might "change the way politics" are done (Sawer and Freidenvall 2013, 270) in exercising power differently to men.

Some of the best practices identified by the National Democratic Institute (NDI)[2] (2013) include determining "the skills that every woman needs to participate fully and capably in the political process" (2013, 51), including what training assists; what positive and negative factors help or hinder building skills and confidence to participate capably; and what strategies women use "to take advantage of the positive forces and mitigate the negative forces" (2013, 54).

It is important to stress that many women in Australia are very active in informal political networks and NGOs. A good example of this can be seen in the recent Civil-Society Report Card (2013) on Australia's national action plan on UN Security Council Resolution

[2] The NDI partners with UNDP, UN Women, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance to establish the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics to advance women in politics. See: http://iknowpolitics.org.

1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This evaluation of the Australian government's response to the resolution was brought together by the Australian Council for International Development, UN Women Australia, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Women, Peace and Security Academic Collective.[3] A wide range of women play an active role on the political landscape, including in NGOs such as Action Aid, Amnesty International, Care Australia, International Women's Development Agency, Oxfam, Red Cross and World Vision.

In conclusion, to make Australian women's participation effective so as to influence the governance agenda and make it responsive to women's concerns, a gender-sensitive approach to all political decisions permits analysis of how policy decisions affect women and girls as well as men and boys. This approach broadens a gender awareness so that the supposed "soft" political concerns of education, health, childcare and welfare are not merely seen as women's concerns, but as gender-inclusive human needs; nor are supposed "hard" concerns of defence, finance and foreign policy exclusively men's affairs because they are important for human security.

Politics is about public expression and participation in the decision-making processes of a nation. Where women are a lone voice, clarity of purpose, courage and confidence is essential. Where women ideally are part of a coalition, whether interest-based or ideological and party-based, there are strengths in acting together and in sharing a platform congenially with sympathetic men. Male champions, high-profile men who oppose violence against women and actively support equality, play a crucial role in changing perceptions of men and boys in particular.

Effective women politicians are women who have learnt to be productive, constructive, fruitful and powerful leaders. These women do not shy away from presenting compelling, convincing and valid reasons why their presence on the political stage is valuable. Many Australian women from multicultural backgrounds are articulate, impressive and authoritative politicians and Australia needs many more.

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[3] This collective conducts research, raises awareness on the women, peace and security agenda and monitors progress on Australia's implementation of UNSCR 1325. See http://wpsac.wordpress.com/.

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Women in Politics: Pacific Islands and New Zealand

Nicole George

The Pacific Islands is regularly recognized as a region which does not favour the political ambitions of women. While Pacific women have played important political roles within women's organisations as advocates for social and political change in past decades, their path into institutional politics has been more difficult. The result is a region where women currently hold under 4% of parliamentary seats.

New Zealand is not included in these figures. As a post-industrialised country, it makes more sense to compare the political standing of women in New Zealand with women in Australia rather than other Pacific Island Countries (PICs) because of both countries' regionally unique levels of wealth, long histories of self-government, and broadly similar political traditions. New Zealand was the first state to recognize women's right to vote in 1893 but women did not win the right to stand for electoral representation until 1919, and it was not until 1933, that the first woman entered New Zealand's national parliament. By the 1980s however, women began to make their political mark to the extent that New Zealanders elected their first woman Prime Minister, Helen Clark, in 1994. It was not until 2010 that Australia was able to boast a female Australian Prime Minister, and indeed no woman had even been nominated to lead either of the major political parties until that point. Today, New Zealand's women hold 33.9% of seats in the national legislature, a number which exceeds women's more modest 26% representation in the Australian federal parliament.

These figures contrast sharply with the electoral standing of women in Pacific Island countries. In the following pages of this chapter I explain some of the factors which contribute to women's marginalisation from electoral politics, the fates of various campaigns to promote electoral reform which might challenge this marginalization as well as examples of positive change for women's electoral representation.

Obstacles to Women's Political Representation

Custom and faith

It is often argued that Pacific women's political marginalization is explained by the patriarchal underpinnings of Pacific Islands culture. While there is some truth to this claim, the idea that culture legitimizes the kinds of discrimination that prevents women achieving political office is also an over-simplification. It is certainly true that Pacific women with

political ambitions face accusations of "inauthenticity" (Jolly 1992), and of acting "above themselves" or *bikhet* (Macintyre 2012, 247). If they achieve success it is often alleged that they have lost touch with both tradition, and their "real" grass-roots constituents/sisters. But claims that women with political ambition are acting against custom overlooks how custom has been subject to enormous change across the Pacific Islands since the period of European contact; modified by colonial, missionary and other globalizing influences (Douglas 2002). Indeed it has been observed that the matrilineal political and economic structures that were present in tribal societies in many parts of the region, and privileged women's land rights, women's rights in decision-making or their place within chiefly hierarchies (Jolly and Macintyre 2009) were actively undermined by colonial governments which overlaid them with European-style legal systems that replicated the "patriarchal, hierarchical and hereditary" structures of their own societies. Christian Church missionaries also contributed to this erosion of women's cultural status by encouraging Pacific women to emulate European conjugal norms which privileged women's domesticity (Huffer 2006, 33). By contrast these same influences tended to privilege men's public and political roles, thus normalizing, even in the post-colonial context, masculine dominance of institutional politics.

In the Melanesian countries of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, Christian values are closely intertwined with customary protocols and have been institutionalized in various state constitutional structures (Douglas 2002b). This has further contributed to a general masculinisation of the political realm as male political leaders invoke religiously oriented discourses which seek to remind politically ambitious women about their "rightful" roles. At times, male parliamentarians have also adopted strongly moralistic tones to discredit female parliamentary colleagues, as Kiribati cabinet minister Tangariki Reete found when she faced criticism from opposition representatives because of alleged misbehaviour while consuming alcohol. These included comments that she set a poor role model as a "wife and mother" and had acted "against Kiribati" custom (RNZI 27 August, 2014).

In the rare cases that they achieve political representation, women parliamentarians are commonly admonished by both female and male voters for working against each other, failing to agree amongst themselves and speak with "one voice". This criticism has been voiced to me personally by informants in Bougainville, Fiji prior to the coup of 2006, and recorded by Berman in New Caledonia (Berman 2006). It is perhaps underpinned by the customary importance of consensus-style negotiations and the high value Pacific Islanders place on "quiet diplomacy" as opposed to outward confrontation (George 2012). But these assessments are highly gendered and assume that women can identify common goals easily and should work together productively to achieve them. The same judgments are not applied to men. When masculine political disagreements occur they are accepted as natural and indeed often celebrated as indicative of men's political acumen, strength and resolve.

New research in Samoa shows how tradition and faith intertwine in ways which appear to undermine women's confidence in themselves as active participants in decision-making

(Meredith 2014). The Matai title that endows Samoans with chiefly authority and the right to participate in local and national decision-making is denied to all but 6% of Samoa's women. Even when they do hold these titles, women are excluded from 14% of village councils and in other cases choose not to attend these meetings even if they are entitled. This broadly patriarchal system of neo-traditional village government appears to deter women from assuming local-level leadership roles (Meredith 2014). This is significant for in other Pacific Islands contexts, and particularly in the Francophone Pacific territories, it has been argued that women's access to electoral politics can depend upon them achieving recognition and success as effective decision-makers at the local, village or municipal level of decision-making (Merceron 2014).

Faith and custom do not always combine to politically disempower women in the region however. Kanak Independence leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou, an ordained catholic priest until 1970, frequently articulated perspectives on Christian belief and indigenous custom that emphasised their elasticity and responsiveness to adaptation and contemporary reinterpretation (Tjibaou 2005, 128, 129). He was also quick to acknowledge the contributions that Kanak women could make to the evolution of Kanak nationalism. These ideas remain central to articulations of indigenous culture and nation-building in New Caledonia today (Wadell 2008, viii) and afford indigenous women some latitude when they contest discriminatory treatment (George 2014). More concretely, the positive representation of women in Kanak culture helped them win acceptance for the local adoption of Parity measures in New Caledonia in the early 2000s against widespread masculine opposition (Rettig et al. 2007).[1] In the following years, these same discourses have enabled Kanak women to attain high-political office at all levels of government. municipal, regional and territorial, and pursue innovative gender policy reform (George 2014) (see further discussion below).

Economic considerations

Politics in many parts of the Pacific Islands is seen to reflect a "big man culture" where candidates demonstrate their capacity for political office through personal achievement, clan-based exchange and material accumulation. Gender-disaggregated economic data for the region indicates the obstacles that prevent women from acquiring the equivalent of "big man" status. Between 54% and 66% of women are employed in subsistence food cultivation, agriculture or fisheries (rising to 95% of women in PNG), while patrilineal systems of hereditary land and wealth transfer prevent women from accessing capital, credit and education opportunities. Women's waged employment is generally ghettoized in low-skilled, low-income, feminized occupations such as factory production-line work (e.g., fish canneries, garment manufacturing), teaching, nursing and caring professions, and low-scale clerical work (Huffer 2006, 38; True 2012). Women's subordinate economic status has

[1] French Parity laws also operate in the French territories of the Pacific Islands and require political parties to field lists of candidates which alternate the names of men and women from the bottom to the top of the list.

negative implications when they stand for election as they frequently finance their campaigns as independents from their own limited purse, and hence have difficulty meeting the material expectations of an electorate expecting "big man" largesse. Even if they do win party endorsement they are unlikely to be favoured with the same levels of financial support as their male colleagues (Zubrinich 2014).

The big man style of politics has become excessive in some political contexts and in Papua New Guinea has evolved into what Kerry Zubrinich has termed "money politics". At every site where Zubrinich conducted observation during the 2012 national election she saw votes traded between electors and candidates for amounts ranging from 5 Kina for individual votes to amounts of 10,000 or even 100,000 Kina for guarantees of block voting across a whole village or clan group. She also observed the gendered campaign behaviour that occurred in the campaign houses established by prospective candidates in PNG's highlands provinces whereby (male) electors are generously plied with food, alcohol and sexual partners as part of vote trading (Zubrinich 2014). She has concluded that female electoral candidates in many parts of the country are greatly disadvantaged by these practices which commoditise women (as tradable sexual partners) but ignore their political potential.

Political Violence and Corruption

It has become commonplace to argue that there is a contagion of state weakness across Pacific Islands countries (Reilly 2000), evidenced by recent conflicts occurring in Bougainville (1990s) and Solomon Islands (early 2000s), a history of coups in Fiji (1987 onwards) and ongoing tribal fighting in the PNG highlands. In some contexts, democratic values are described as "foreign flowers" and the intrusions of the state itself can be seen by Pacific Islanders as challenging the customary and religious structures that regulate their lives (this is particularly so in remote settings and is more marked in some Melanesian countries).

In contexts where these challenges are pronounced, women may be disinclined to become involved in institutional politics. In Fiji, for example, parliamentary statistics up until 2006 seemed to indicate a regionally unique acceptance of female representatives with women making up 11% of the national legislature. However, political office here has come with a risk of exposure to violence. When civilian rebel forces invaded the country's parliament in 2000, women MPs were detained for a number of days by coup perpetrators and subject to threats of violence. The military coup which occurred in 2006 again resulted in the dismissal of the national parliament and later city councils. Women within provincial councils, labour unions and women's civil society organisations who voiced criticism of the government were subject to military threats of arrest and intimidation (Kepa 2011, George 2012).

Fiji will go to the polls in September 2014, in an election that will bring to an end the current period of military rule that began with the 2006 coup. This return to democracy has been much anticipated across the country and certainly by Fiji's women, who represent 16% of the 249 candidates standing for election. Some parties have made a significant

show of support for women by adopting 30% female quotas governing their preselection of candidates and appointing women as their party presidents (Tabuya 2014, *Fiji Sun* 29 March, 38). But this support has not been universal. One of the youngest women contesting the election is Roshika Deo, who stands as an independent. Deo has a strong background in advocacy for women and has been a high-profile member of one of Fiji's most visible women's organisations. But her youth combined with her feminist politics have also made her a target of particularly virulent and sometimes intimidating campaigns which include media harassment by personalities closely aligned to Fiji's post-coup ruling elite (*Fiji Sun* 29 March 2014, 45, 48), as well as intimidation and threats of violence directed at her via social media (*Fiji Times* 3 June 2014, http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=270360).

Allegations of corruption also surround the conduct of some elections and are claimed to undermine women's electoral prospects. In the 2012 elections held in Vanuatu, a high number of women candidates contested seats in urban and rural areas. The fact that no women candidate succeeded in winning election prompted some to later identify corruption as a key factor which influenced voter behaviour and the conduct of the electoral office, and prevented women from winning office (*Radio Australia* 2 November 2012; *Vanuatu Daily Post* 9 November 2012).

In a bid to avoid this challenge, electoral authorities in Fiji have designed a ballot paper for the September 2014 poll which avoids identification of political candidates or political parties. Instead voters are required to remember and put a mark against the number that has been assigned to their favoured candidate (in a draw that took place three weeks before the official polling day). However given that the whole country is treated as one electorate and 249 candidates are standing for election, observers fear the processes will prove cumbersome and difficult for voters to manage. There is concern that the ballot system will favour only those parties who are well-funded enough to advertise candidates numbers nationally in such a short space of time (Tabuya 2014, Australia Network 18 August 2014). Given that women candidates tend generally to be less well funded than men, this system may have a particularly detrimental impact on women's electoral success.

Promoting Electoral Reform

Quotas, Temporary Special Measures (TSM), Parity Provisions

The desirability of adopting electoral reforms that will assist women's political representation is hotly debated across the region. With the exception of Tonga and Palau, all other independent PICs have ratified UNCEDAW, which allows lobbyists, activists and women's machineries in government to refer to the provisions of article 4 covering women's political participation as they lobby for gender equitable electoral reform. As a result there has been increased institutional activity on this question in many countries, but results have, to date, been mixed.

In Solomon Islands a campaign to develop a bill establishing 10 seats for women in the national parliament was initiated from the Solomon Islands Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, and spearheaded by its Permanent Secretary, Ethel Sigimanu, in 2008. Despite recent survey data showing broad public support for reserved seats for women (McMurray 2012), these efforts did not win sufficient government support, with the result that the project appears to have reached a stalemate. At present Solomon Islands has only 1 woman sitting in its 50-seat assembly (*Solomon Star* 25 July 2011).

In 2011, Dame Carol Kidu, at that time PNG's only woman in national parliament, led a campaign to create 22 reserved seats for women within that country's 111-seat national assembly. Her efforts won strong public support, and seemed headed for success when a constitutional amendment passed parliament in preparation for a later reading of the TSM bill (*Sydney Morning Herald* 24 November 2011). The latter attempt failed however and the TSM bill has not become law. Even though 3 women were elected in the most recent PNG election held in 2012, a development that surprised many observers, they have recently argued that they do not support TSMs in PNG and that women parliamentarians can only win respect by getting "your hands dirty like the guys" (Loujaya Toni *ABC Radio Australia* 13 August 2012). Some contend that these views were generated by pressures placed upon the new women members inside the parliament (Zubrinich 2014).

In June 2013, the Samoan government passed a bill amending the constitution which established a system of up to 5 floating reserved seats for women.[2] During the debating process, the bill's detractors argued that the provisions were undemocratic and amounted to Samoa "following orders from the UN" (Levaopolo Talatonu cited *Samoan Observer* 5 February 2012). Yet when the bill was passed into law it gained widespread media support and prompted wider debate on other areas where women in Samoa still suffer serious discrimination (*Samoan Observer* 26 June 2013). The bill will be put to the test during Samoa's next general election, which must be held before March 2016.

Positive Change

In the region's Francophone territories, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna, parity provisions adopted in 2001 have resulted in women's political standing rising from 17% to 42% in the Congrès de Nouvelle Calédonie, and 12% to 50% in the Assemblée de Polynésie Française.[3] These same laws also operate for municipal and regional

[2] In the event that no woman wins a parliamentary seat in open contest, the five highest polling women candidates will win seats in the parliament; if 1 woman wins an open seat, the next four highest polling women candidates will be appointed, and so on.

[3] It has been argued that for parity provisions to assist the representation of women a stable party structure needs to be in place as well as a proportional voting system. The success of these provisions relies upon only a few parties achieving most of the vote with the result that a large number of candidates will share out the seats according to the party list order. In Wallis and Futuna a more fragmented party system means that there have been up to 29 parties contesting 20 seats at a given election and only 1 or 2 winning more than two seats (Fraenkel 2006).

elections and have contributed to a meteoric rise in women's political standing in the New Caledonian and French Polynesian jurisdictions particularly. In New Caledonia women's increased political participation has allowed them to mobilise state resources to fund a series of agencies specifically devoted to women's well-being known as "la secteur de la Condition Féminine". They have also enabled women to assume high political office. Between 2004 and 2008 an indigenous Kanak woman, Déwé Gorodé, held the office of Vice President in New Caledonia, and a European woman, Marie-Noëlle Thémeraeau, held the office of territorial President from 2004 until 2007. Déwé Gorodé continues to serve in the current territorial assembly as Government Minister for Culture, Citizenship and Women's Affairs. During the 2014 municipal elections in New Caledonia, 10 women were at the head of party lists and 5 women won mayoral office, including Sonia Lagarde, who became the first female Mayor of Nouméa, the territory capital. In 2013, Caroline Machoro, a Kanak woman member of the national assembly, was nominated as the leader of the Melanesian Spearhead Group's Foreign Minister's Meeting, the first time this body has ever given this high level of recognition to a female representative.

Women's advancement to high political office has not been replicated in French Polynesia (where parity has also seen numbers of women parliamentarians rise dramatically). Although women have demonstrated increasing political acumen and achieved some success in mayoral elections in this territory, this differing outcome may be explained by the fact that their political aspirations have not received the same kind of cultural endorsement that has occurred for Kanak women in New Caledonia. This suggests that institutional reform alone may not assist the long-term advancement of women in politics in region unless it is also supported by sympathetic cultural norms (See discussion above).

Constitutional negotiations established Bougainville as an autonomous region of Papua New Guinea as part of the post-conflict reconstruction process at the end of a 10-year period of conflict. In recognition of the matrilineal structures of Bougainvillean society and the important role women had played in the peace processes that would end fighting on the island, 3 seats were reserved for women in the new territorial assembly, allocated to represent the 3 regions of the island territory.

Sitting member Elizabeth Burain, elected to the Bougainville assembly in 2010, argues that the provisions have encouraged wide acceptance of women parliamentarians (Burain cited *Radio New Zealand International* 28 March 2011). Yet women contesting the 33 open seats have been something of a rarity. In the 2010 election, 5 women stood for open seats without success. Some contend that Bougainville's voters are disinclined to support women campaigning for open seats, believing that the quota system gives them sufficient electoral representation (Kelly 2010). My own research conducted with would-be women parliamentarians in Bougainville in June 2014, indicates a strong determination amongst many women leaders to change this situation. Many of my informants stated their frustration with the reserved seats system, arguing it was too difficult and costly for women to campaign effectively across their large regional electorates. They also declared that having women in only 3 parliamentary seats of a 39-seat assembly was not enough and more women needed

to achieve parliamentary representation before real gains could be achieved. Time will tell if and how these women's political ambitions are realised, but their apparent determination to run for political office suggests that the reserved seats provisions in Bougainville have inspired women to think seriously about how they could contribute to political leadership on their island.

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Women in Politics in Eastern Europe: A Changing Outlook

Ekaterina R. Rashkova and Emilia Zankina

The dramatic transformations that have marked East European countries, namely the implosion and then collapse of communist regimes, followed by an uneven and troubled transition towards democracy and European integration, have defined the role of women in politics. Change is what best describes gender representation in Eastern Europe.

Former communist countries are often described as patriarchic in culture and a place where women face discrimination, are under-represented in politics, and are expected to have superior credentials in order to be granted access to political positions (Matland 2003: 326). East European women are often accused of "gender blindness" (Fuszara 2010) and aversion towards the Western feminist agenda (Matland 2003), while political parties are blamed for a lack of interest in promoting women or gender equality (Chiva 2005). While such a view is not inaccurate in comparative terms, it prevents us from seeing the fast and dramatic changes that are taking place in the region and that are reshaping women's political representation. If communist regimes staged women in large numbers but with no power, today, female politicians are claiming the highest political posts. Representation in parliament is steadily growing, in many places due to the reintroduction of gender quotas, whereas the presence of women in government is growing at an even faster rate. The EU's influence is evident not only in legal transposition, but in the gradual adoption of norms and values that bring increased gender awareness and a change of mentality.

We offer a brief account of the changing nature of gender representation in Eastern Europe, emphasizing the positive trends in the last decade, while accounting for still-existing gaps and past legacies. Gender representation in the region has undergone three major transformations – the forced and hollow emancipation of women during communist rule, the almost complete neglect of women's issues and sharp drop in women's political representation following the collapse of communist regimes, and the gradual increase in the number and status of women in politics as a result of European integration. To illustrate the change of women's political representation, we briefly examine each.

Women and Communist-Era Emancipation

Women's activism in Eastern Europe dates back to the 19th century, but in these early days, little progress was made towards women's political and economic rights. With the establishing of communist regimes across Eastern Europe following World War Two, women's emancipation became an official goal of state policy. The so-called "socialist emancipation

project" which focused on integrating women into paid labour and into state positions of power had dubious success. Female participation in the labour force steadily increased, even surpassing figures in the West, and the nature of female labour changed with more women occupying managerial positions and jobs in the industry and the state administration. At the same time, women occupied less prestigious, lower-level and lower-paid jobs, in professions that required less education and more commitment. Women were given the additional role of workers, but the bases of the unequal gender order were never contested (Popa 2003: 69), as women were still expected to carry out most household chores.

Communist regimes further showed great commitment to opening channels for women's political participation. Women were granted voting rights (if not gained in the interwar period) and access to political positions; women's socialist mass organizations were formed to mobilize the female population; gender quotas for state legislatures were introduced; and efforts were made to recruit women to communist parties. As a result, the proportion of women in parliaments reached an average of 25 percent by the 1980s and for the first time women entered executive positions. Yet, women played a marginal role in political decision-making, occupying positions at the lower and/or local level. While rubber-stamp parliaments welcomed female representatives, women's participation in bodies with real political power was extremely limited. Women did not exceed 10 percent in Party central committees and practically did not feature in Politburos. Women's organizations became an instrument of party control and were hardly defenders of women's rights. Political equality came to be associated with women's nominal presence in political bodies, indicating a hollow commitment to women's emancipation.

Communist Legacies and the Post-Communist Context

The communist experience of centralized decision-making, regimented political mobilization, and political oppression left a legacy of passivity, as well as a distaste for Western feminism[1] which had little applicability in the East European context. Unlike their Western counterparts, East European women did not view men as oppressors, but rather as fellow victims of state oppression. Given such legacies, women's political involvement in post-communist societies was characterized by (1) an aversion to political mobilization, (2) hostility towards Western feminist agenda, and (3) negative attitudes towards affirmative action for women (Rashkova and Zankina 2014a). The immediate result of such an outlook was the abolition of gender quotas for legislatures and a subsequent 50 percent drop in women's political representation (United Nations 2005).

The transition context further proved particularly harmful to women's representation and interests as women's issues were subordinated to the "larger" issues of democracy and

[1] With the exception of Yugoslavia, which was much more open to the West and where Western feminist ideas penetrated and took root in the 1970s, resulting in independent women's organizations and embracing of Western feminist ideas, particularly by Croatian and Serbian women's activists.

economic restructuring (Graham and Regulska 1997: 6). Women's interests were bundled with those of larger groups such as the unemployed or the pensioners, preventing the emergence of a distinct women's agenda and strong women's parties. Women's parties were found in few post-communist states, with only three of these parties entering national parliaments (Krook and Rashkova 2006).

At the same time, the number of women occupying executive positions in Eastern Europe has dramatically risen. In Slovenia, Croatia and the Baltic states, for example, 68 women headed 80 ministries and at least 122 women held 132 executive positions in the first decade of the transition (Forest 2011: 6). In Bulgaria, women's representation in the executive reached over 35 percent in recent years, while in Romania and Croatia, it reached 25 percent (Rashkova and Zankina 2014b). Female executives have further enjoyed greater access to "big" ministries such as Economy, Finance or Defense, in addition to the more traditional ministries for women – Environment, Social Care or Education. The growth rate of women ministers has been much higher than the steady and slow growth rate of women in parliament (Bego 2013: 347). Moreover, a few ministers had previously served as members of parliament, suggesting a much broader source of supply than just the legislature.

One of the most significant factors in improving women's representation and placing gender equality high on the agenda has been the role of the EU (Anderson 2006). Legislative and policy transfers entailed by EU accession have resulted in a smaller gap in women representation between new member states and EU-15 average (Forest 2011: 5), as well as legal frameworks more sensitive to women's issues. Along with regulatory changes, European values have been making headway, slowly changing rigid views of gender relations. The EU has been the key external force in increasing women's representation, but domestic actors and their ability to mediate external pressures have been critical in the implementation of the EU's gender equality policy in the East (Anderson 2006).

Women in Politics Today

Women's representation in Eastern Europe has changed vastly since the region's transition to democracy. While the number of women in the majority of the first post-communist parliaments was negligible, today, nine out of the seventeen countries examined here show a proportion of women in parliament on par with or larger than the current world average of 22.2 percent (IPU, 2014).[2] The data in Table 1 indicates that in their current legislatures, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Serbia and Slovenia have a higher percent of women in parliament than most world states. Furthermore, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia have more than 32 percent women in parliament, a figure which is significantly larger than the European average of 25.3 percent.

[2] IPU Women in National Parliaments. Available here: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm (last accessed November 15, 2014).

This phenomenon can be attributed to the EU's influence, as well as the gradual reintroduction of quotas across the region. From the countries examined here, only three have no gender quotas, seven have legislative candidate quotas of 30-35 percent, and one (Kosovo) has reserved seats (see Table 1). Voluntary quotas ranging from 20-40 percent are also common, primarily among social-democratic parties. This shows that in most cases negative attitudes towards affirmative action for women have been overcome and gender awareness is increasing.

Besides a vastly changing parliamentary representation, women are beginning to penetrate "the highest ceiling" by increasing their numbers, as well as improving their roles, in governments. Data from the current cabinets in the seventeen East European countries included here shows that the average proportion of women in government for the region is 19.7 percent, with some countries like Estonia and Slovenia having 40 or more percent women. Given the fact that politics is considered a primarily male domain in many of the East European states (Matland 2003: 339), this is a remarkable sign that things are rapidly changing. Moreover, East European states have pioneered in electing female politicians to the highest political leadership posts. Four states have chosen females to be President, and nine of the countries have had female Prime Ministers. Poland stands out with the fact that it has had not one but two female Prime Ministers since its transition to democracy. Despite the relatively high average of both women in parliament and women in government, three of the countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary and Slovakia – do not have any women in their current cabinets, and also have less than the regional average proportion of women in parliament. While for Bosnia and Herzegovina this may be attributed to the legacy of ethnic conflict which is associated with lower political representation of women, particularly in the executive (Ariola and Johnson 2014), the low results for Hungary and Slovakia are a surprise. The explanation there may have to do with the fact that parties which have adopted voluntary quotas and presumably are more sensitive to women's representation are not currently in power in either country.[3]

In addition to seeing a largely more optimistic picture of the current representation of women in Eastern Europe, for a smaller segment of five democracies from Southeastern Europe[4], we observe a positive trend not only in representation as a whole, but also in the type of representations that women have. In those countries women are making headway across the political spectrum and, unlike in many West European countries, their avenues to power have not been primarily limited to left parties. In fact, it is the right parties that have assigned women to the highest positions of power and those traditionally occupied by men. Such findings may be explained by the peculiarity of the political spectrum in post-communist countries, where the Left was largely dominated by former communist

[3] Slovakia represents an interesting case, as the incumbent social-democratic party has no voluntary quotas, whereas the conservative HZDS has a voluntary quota of 30 percent.

[4] Those are Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia. See Rashkova and Zankina 2014b.

Table 1. Female Representation in Parliament and Government, Quotas in Eastern Europe.

Country	Last election	Women in parliament	Women in government	Female PMs since transition	Female Presidents	Quotas: Type, %
Albania	2013	20.0 % (28)	33.3% (7)	0	0	Legislated candidate, 30
Bosnia & Herzegovina	2014	21.4 % (9)	0.00 % (0)	0	0	Legislated candidate, 40
Bulgaria	2014	24.6 % (59)	33.3% (7)	1	0	None
Croatia	2011	23.8% (36)	23.8% (5)	1	0	Voluntary party, 40
Czech Republic	2013	19.5% (39)	18.8% (3)	0	0	Voluntary party, 25
Estonia	2011	19.0% (19)	42.9% (6)	0	0	None
Hungary	2014	10.1% (20)	0.00% (0)	0	0	Voluntary party, 20-30
Kosovo	2014	32.5% (39)	4.34% (1)	1	1	Reserved seats, 30
Latvia	2014	25.0% (25)	28.6% (4)	1	1	None
Lithuania	2012	24.1% (34)	13.3% (2)	1	1	Voluntary party, 33
Macedonia	2014	33.3% (41)	8.3% (2)	0	0	Legislated candidate, 33
Montenegro	2012	14.8% (12)	15.8% (3)	0	0	Legislated candidate, 30
Poland	2011	24.4% (112)	31.6% (6)	2	0	Legislated candidate, 35
Romania	2012	13.5% (55)	20.0% (5)	0	0	Voluntary party, 30
Serbia	2014	34.0% (85)	21.1% (4)	1	1	Legislated candidate, 30
Slovakia	2012	18.7% (28)	0.00% (0)	1	0	Voluntary party, 30
Slovenia	2014	35.6% (32)	40.0% (6)	1	0	Legislated candidate, 35
Total (average)		**23.2%**	**19.7%**	**10**	**4**	

Source: Data collected by authors. The number of female leadership positions for Serbia have been counted since 2000, after the end of the war period.

parties, and hence, was associated with the status quo, whereas the Right came to represent change and reform, attracting people with more progressive views and diverse backgrounds (Rashkova and Zankina 2014a).

Conclusion

The story of women's political representation in Eastern Europe is one of dynamic and positive change. We have witnessed growing representations of women in parliaments and a drastic increase of women in the executives. Moreover, women are represented across the political spectrum, occupying a wider range of positions, as well as positions traditionally reserved for men. Nevertheless, mentalities have been slower to change, with the EU being the key driver of increased gender awareness and the transfer of values and norms. Quotas are increasingly the norm in the region and have proved very successful in improving women's political representation. Yet, countries with no quotas have demonstrated some of the highest number and percentage of women in the executive.

While positive trends are evident in regard to the presence of women in politics, the substantive representation of women in Eastern Europe remains a far-fetched reality and the most we can argue for is *substantive presence* (Rashkova and Zankina 2014a), i.e., the increased presence of women in key decision-making positions, which holds a potential for substantive claims and for bringing social-attitude transformation. Hence, efforts from here on should be focused not only on placing women in key positions, but on pushing a political agenda that is responsive to women's interests and concerns, which can eventually bring change not only to the policies addressing women's issues but also to the mentality regarding what is a man's job and what isn't.

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Women's Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Nordic Politics

Lenita Freidenvall

In the international perspective, the five Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – are often pointed to as models of gender equality, and they have frequently been placed at the top of world ranking lists pertaining to women's political representation. Today there is an average representation of 42.0 percent women in the national parliaments of the five countries, ranging from 39.1 percent in Denmark to 43.6 percent in Sweden, compared to an international average of 22.2 percent women parliamentarians. The specificity of the Nordic countries in terms of women in politics can also be noted in the website of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, where regional statistics on women in parliamentary politics is provided with and without the Nordic countries (www.ipu.org). Although the pursuit of gender balance in decision-making has been established as a cornerstone of the Nordic concept of democracy and gender equality policy for a long time, it is not so commonly known that it has taken quite some time to achieve high levels of women's representation. In fact, it has taken 70 to 80 years after the enfranchisement for women to reach the representation level of 30 to 40 percent of parliamentary seats. The proportion of women has increased by 2 or 3 percentage units per election, with only a few historical jumps. Scholars have described the development as a step-by-step process and the Nordic discourse on gender equality as an incrementalist discourse of empowerment (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005; Freidenvall et al. 2006; Freidenvall 2013; Dahlerup and Leyenaar eds. 2013). Considering the time it has taken for gender balance to be achieved and the many challenges that remain, scholars have even rejected the idea that the Nordic countries constitute a model for gender equality, at least not the only model (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005).

Departing from theories on descriptive and substantive representation, this chapter will analyze women's political representation in the Nordic countries. The chapter will give an overview of female leadership in the region and address the opportunities and gaps. It will also discuss how to make women's participation effective enough to influence the governance agenda and make it responsible to women's interests, needs and concerns.

Theories on Gender and Political Representation

Departing from Hanna Pitkin's seminal work (1967), scholars have made a distinction between descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation. *Descriptive representation,* or numerical representation, concerns the composition of elected bodies. It normally refers to the number of women elected and the ways in which the proportion of women can increase. It is usually argued that political decision-making bodies should reflect the composition of the population. *Substantive representation* focuses on the activities of women in parliaments and the ways in which elected women may change political procedures, political agendas and public policies to make them more women-friendly. *Symbolic representation,* finally, concerns the perception of women as political leaders and the importance of gender-balanced decision-making bodi-es.

The first topic (descriptive representation), including the vast research on gender quotas, has received by far the most attention in comparative work (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Young 2000; Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009). The second topic (substantive representation) includes research on attitudes and priorities (Schwindt-Bayer 2006) and introduction of bills (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). Research within this field has also discussed whether a critical mass of women is needed in order for legislative changes to occur (Celis 2006; Dovi 2002; Celis et al. 2008). In contrast, research on the third topic (symbolic representation) is much less common, as it is often the least concrete outcome to investigate, creating difficulties with operationalization, measurement and effects. One approach examines how women's presence affects the perceived legitimacy of elected bodies (Childs 2004; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). Another approach focuses on what functions symbolic representation fulfils in the construction of gender, in terms of what social roles get legitimized in policy discourse, and how this affects power constellations, ultimately revealing much about the relation between symbolic, descriptive, and substantive representation (Lombardo and Meier 2014).

Women's Descriptive Representation in the Nordic Countries

The Nordic countries share a number of characteristics, including democratic stability, secularism, a large public sector and an extended welfare state, as well as high standards of living and a long tradition for popular participation in politics (Freidenvall et al. 2006). The Proportional Representation-list (PR-list) electoral system, the dominance of the Social Democratic Party, and the long and continuous activities of the women's movement are additional common traits. Table 1 shows women's descriptive representation in Nordic politics in two periods, the mid-1990s and 2010-2014.

Table 1. The descriptive representation of women in a number of key political positions in the Nordic countries in the mid-1990s and 2010-2014. Percent.

POSITIONS	DENMARK		FINLAND		ICELAND		NORWAY		SWEDEN	
Parliament and government	1994	2014	1995	2014	1995	2014	1993	2014	1994	2014
MPs	34	39.1	34	42.5	25	39.7	39	39.6	40	43.6
Committee chairs	31	48 (2012)	20	41 (2009)	25	45 (2012)	33	36 (2009)	47	46 (2014)
Ministers	35	30	41	54	10	33	42	33	50	50
Municipalities	1997	2014	1996	2014	1994	2014	1995	2014	1994	2014
Municipal assemblies	27	32	31	36	25	40	33	38	41	43

Sources: Niskanen ed. (2009), own calculations.

The table shows that the proportion of women at various key political positions in the Nordic countries is quite good. Based on the 40-60 principle, that a proportion of 40-60 percent of each sex constitutes an equal or balanced representation, gender balance has been achieved in Finland and Sweden. In Denmark, Iceland and Norway the representation of women is just below 40 percent. Compared to 20 years ago, in the mid-1990s, the representation of women has increased in all countries but Norway. In Denmark, Finland and Sweden the increase has been moderate, while Iceland has experienced quite an increase, from 25 to 39 percent.

The representation of women among parliamentary committee chairs has increased in all countries but Sweden. In Denmark, Finland and Iceland the increase is quite large indeed, around 20 percentage points in each country. Generally the proportion of women committee chairs reflects the parliamentary representation of women.

The current governments of the Nordic countries vary in terms of gender balance. The governments of Finland and Sweden are gender-balanced, with 40-60 percent of ministers being women. In Denmark, Iceland and Norway the ratio is around 30 percent. In Iceland the proportion of women ministers has increased quite extensively, from 10 to 33 percent in 20 years. In Denmark and Norway, on the contrary, the proportion of women ministers has decreased from 35 and 42 percent respectively to 33 percent.

The representation of women in local political assemblies is lower than in national parliaments, on the average, 37.8 percent in local bodies compared to 42.0 percent in national assemblies. However, in all of the Nordic countries the proportion of women councillors has increased, and the biggest increase can be noted in Iceland where the proportion has increased from 25 to 40 percent in the last 20 years.

Special Measures, Including Party Quotas

In many countries across the world electoral gender quotas has been adopted to increase the number of women in politics (Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009). In the Nordic countries, no legal electoral gender quotas have been adopted (Freidenvall et al. 2006). In fact, there has

been quite some resistance towards the introduction of legislative means to achieve gender balance. However, due to persistent pressure by women's organizations, including women's sections within the political parties, political parties have been forced to review their internal party nomination practices and adopt various kinds of special measures to increase the number of women on party lists. Three basic types of special measures have been introduced: recommended targets, voluntary quotas for internal boards and committees (internal party quotas), and voluntary quotas for electoral lists (candidate quotas). More or less all political parties, except for some populist parties, have adopted recommended targets. Quite a few of them, and primarily all parties to the left, have adopted voluntary party quotas.

Internal party quotas and candidate quotas were adopted by centre and left-wing parties in Denmark and Norway in the 1970s, in Sweden in the 1980s, and in Iceland in the 1990s. In Denmark, quotas were adopted by two political parties in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but they were also abolished a few years later on the grounds that they were no longer considered necessary (Freidenvall et al. 2006, 64). In Finland, no party has adopted electoral quotas, due to the electoral system in which preferential voting plays a key role. However, a majority of the parties represented in parliament have adopted internal quotas and the remaining parties promote gender balance (Hart, Holli, and Kovalainen 2009). In Finland, however, the Gender Equality Act of 1995 stipulates that each sex shall have at least 40 percent representation on the municipal executive board. In Iceland, the Left Party adopted a 40 percent quota in the 1980s. One may also define the Women's Party as possessing a radical quota system, because only women candidates were eligible on the party's list in 1983-1999. In Norway and Sweden party quotas have been adopted by many parties, including the large Social Democratic Parties. In 1993, the Social Democratic Party in Sweden adopted the zipper system, in which men and women are altered on party lists. In 1986, the Social Democratic prime minister in Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland, made gender balance a regulative norm also for cabinet appointments, forming the world's first women's cabinet. Quotas have today become an institutional norm in Norway; this is true also in other areas of public life including the corporate sector.

It is important to keep in mind, though, that party quotas were adopted during a period of time in which the parliamentary representation of women was relatively high, between 20 and 30 percent. The quotas adopted in the Nordic countries have therefore been labelled "high echelon quotas", being promoted by a strong female minority in parties that took advantage of their position of power to achieve a better gender balance in party politics (Freidenvall et al. 2006).

A key effect of the adoption of special measures, such as party quotas, may be found at the discursive level: women's movements' pressure on political parties to improve the gender balance as well as the competition between parties for votes have forced the entire political spectrum to react and take an active position on representational issues (Freidenvall et al. 2006, 78-79).

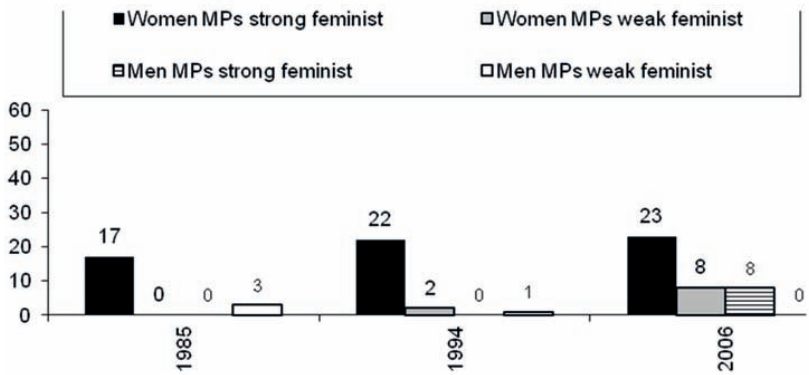
Women's Substantive Representation

To what extent do women MPs prioritize gender equality issues? In what ways do they promote women-friendly policies? Previous research has shown that men and women MPs espouse distinct policy priorities (Swers 1998) and that women MPs share many of the same opinions as female voters (Diaz 2005). Research has also shown that women MPs tend to differ from men MPs in terms of setting the legislative agenda and proposing new policies that deals with issues of concern to women (Bratton and Ray 2002).

While there is agreement that gender has an impact, scholars disagree on the degree of the impact (Lovenduski and Norris 2003; Wängnerud 2011, 141). Scholars have also noted that a simple increase in the numbers of women elected—a "critical mass"—does not necessarily result in policy gains for women, because of various constraints such as party affiliation and institutional norms (Celis et al. 2008). Political scientist Hege Skjeie (1992), for instance, has shown that female MPs in Norway prioritize issues related to combining working life with family responsibilities to a greater extent than male MPs. However, left-wing women MPs tend to promote state intervention as a proper solution, while right-wing women MPs tend to prefer individual solutions. Party affiliation thus matters.

Political scientist Lena Wängnerud (2011) has analysed the extent to which Swedish parliamentarians promote issues of gender equality in political work. Figure 1 shows the response to the question: "Which political issues/area are you personally most interested in?"

Figure 1. Gender Equality as an issue in the work of Swedish MPs. Percent.



Comments: The figure shows the response to an open question that read: "Which political issues/areas are you personally most interested in?" Up to three issues could be mentioned. The responses were coded according to a detailed code scheme. The members of parliament whose answers included gender equality, women's issues, sex discrimination, affirmative action etc. were entered into the "gender equality policy" category. "Strong feminist" refers to members of parliament who consider the duty to promote the interests/views of women as "very important", while "weak feminist" refers to those who consider this duty as "fairly important", "not very important", or "not at all important" (categories are merged). The number of respondents: 1985: women MPs strong feminist 54, women MPs weak feminist 44, men MPs strong feminist 19, men MPs weak feminist 190; 1994: women MPs strong feminist 68, women MPs weak feminist 51, men MPs strong feminist 10, men MPs weak feminist 169; 2006: women MPs strong feminist 62, women MPs weak feminist 66, men MPs strong feminist 25, men MPs weak feminist 121.

Source: Wängnerud (2011; p. 147).

As the figure shows, it is primarily women MPs categorized as strong feminists who promote gender equality policy in their political work. In 1985 and 1994, 17 and 22 percent, respectively, prioritized gender equality policy. In 2006, women MPs categorized as strong feminists remain the ones that promote gender equality issues the most (23 percent). However, now also men MPs categorized as strong feminists score fairly well, eight percent, which corresponds to the figure among women MPs categorized as weak feminists (Wängnerud 2011). Thus, feminist actors also matter. As scholars have pointed out, it appears crucial to have "critical actors", parliamentarians who initiate policy proposals or encourage others to take steps to promote gender sensitive policies (Childs and Krook 2006). Indeed, in some contexts, men may play a key role in promoting women's policy concerns (Celis 2006).

Conclusion

The Nordic countries have for many years been at the top of the league pertaining to women's political representation. Today, they are moving down on the global ranking list, as their leading position is challenged by other regions. It is also notable that it seems like the linear development in the Nordic countries has come to a halt. The 40 percent threshold seems to be a magic line that is difficult to pass, and in some countries, such as Sweden, the proportion of women MPs has even decreased for two consecutive elections. These trends should function as a wake-up call for the Nordic countries, making them pay attention to the fact that gender equality will not manifest automatically. Without political will or political pressure positive change is unlikely to occur.

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Women in Politics in Western Europe

Mary Nugent

Introduction

Historically, Western Europe has been both at the forefront of, and most resistant to, women's representation in politics. Many cite Western European movements and thinkers as the first to articulate ideas of political rights for women – indeed, one of the grievances of the famous list presented to the Estates General during the French Revolution included rights for women, and suffragist struggles in Europe were some of the most famous, inspiring activities across the globe.[1] And yet, Switzerland in 1970 was one of the last countries in the developed world to extend the right to vote to all women. More contemporaneously, today only the Netherlands makes it into the top twenty countries in the world for women's representation in parliaments, with the UK placing the lowest as 61st. Thus, despite the rich history of thought and action around women in politics, there is still much to be done, with resistance to change a common theme.

In the hope of exploring the current status of women in politics in Western Europe more closely, this article will first consider the number of women in parliaments and how they get there (or not), and second the place and practice of women in politics: once in power what difference do women make, especially in advocating for the female citizens that they represent?

How Many Women?

The last few decades has seen big shifts in the representation of women in politics around the world, and Western Europe is no exception. Whereas the regional[2] average of women in parliaments[3] was 20.7% in 1997, as of November 2014 it had increased by over 50%, to 31.2%. Western Europe's place in the world however, as mentioned in the introduction, has dropped significantly. In 1997, three countries made the top ten, and five the top twenty. The entire region was within the top 50 countries in the world for women's representation. By 2014 however, *no* country in Western Europe was amongst the top ten and only one in the top twenty.

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[1] Further, writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft in England and Theodore Gottlieb von Hippel in Germany were amongst the first in recorded history to outline a theory of politics that called for women's inclusion. See Martin Pugh, "Martin Pugh charts the Women's Movement's origins and growth 1850-1939," *History Review* 27 (1997).

[2] Western Europe is here defined as Germany, France, Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and the UK.

[3] Lower, or single house – as per IPU definitions. http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm.

This relative lag compared to the rest of the world is not due to a lack of significant change – the regional average has increased by over 10 percentile points, and every country has increased by at least 7 percentile points (with most increasing by more – see Table 1). The fall in rankings then, speaks to the *speed* of increase in women's representation, with other regions rising in the league table of women's presence much faster. In 1997, the global average of women in lower houses was 12.7%, and it is now 22.2% – almost doubling the level of representation.

This comparatively slow rise in representation is a multifaceted and complex issue. Central to it, however, is the relative lack of substantial and robust gender quota provisions in the countries of Western Europe. As significant research has demonstrated, gender quotas has been a central factor in the increasing levels of women in elected office.[4] Scholars categorize gender quotas into three types: legal candidate quotas, voluntary party quotas, and reserved seats.[5] Only one country in Western Europe (France) has any kind of legal candidate quota – a legal provision that imposes a rule on all parties about the minimum level of women that should be put forward as political candidates. All seven of the countries under discussion, however, have at least one party with a voluntarily imposed gender quota for their candidate selection.

The impact of all gender quotas – both legal candidate and voluntary party – is very much dependent on the design of the quota provision, and the simple fact of a quota existing is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for a gender-balanced parliament, as research on Western Europe and elsewhere has demonstrated.[6] For legal candidate quotas, both the mandated level of representation and the punishment for non-compliance are key to determining the resultant levels of women represented in the elected body.[7] In the case of France, when the gender quota law that applies to parties does not dictate what kinds of seats (whether they are likely to be won by the party or not) the party places women in, scholars have found that women tend to be in less "safe" seats, meaning their chance of actually winning are often low. This helps to explain the low levels of women's representation in France, despite their more far-reaching quota – as of 2014, only 26.2% of the lower chamber was made up of women, and France ranks 6th out of the 7 countries in the region (and 47th in the world).

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[4] See Mona Lena Krook, *Quotas for Women in Politics: Gender and Candidate Selection Reform Worldwide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[5] http://www.quotaproject.org/aboutQuotas.cfm.

[6] Emelie Lilliefeldt, *Political Parties and Gender Balanced Parliamentary Presence in Western Europe: A two-step Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis* (Sussex European Institute, 2009).

[7] Rainbow Murray, Katherine A. R. Opello, and Mona Lena Krook, "Why Are Gender Quotas Adopted? Parity and Party Pragmatism in France," *Political Research Quarterly* 65 (2012): 529-543.

Just like legal candidate quotas then, when it comes to the party quotas, not all quotas are made equal. In the case of party quotas, the electoral success of the party (or parties) utilizing a quota is central to determining the effect of party quotas on the overall system gender balance of the parliament. This was evident in the UK, where the Labour Party's "All-Women Shortlist" served to double the number of women in the House of Commons in the 1997 election. The All-Women Policy recognised the difficulty of increasing women's representation if women are not placed in "winnable seats", and so commits the party to placing women in at least half of all "winnable" seats being contested. The robust quota design was important, but it was only impactful on the level of representation in parliament when coupled with the overall success of the Labour Party in 1997, with a landslide victory and majority of the seats in the House of Commons. Many small parties, in Western Europe and elsewhere, have voluntary party quotas that though principally conducive to increasing the levels of women's representation have little effect on the gender balance of parliament due to the lack of seats these small parties can win.

In addition to quotas and the partisan composition of a parliament, there are a multitude of other contributing factors surrounding the political system, such as the electoral system, which contribute to women's representation. Research has suggested that Proportional Representation (PR) systems are more conducive to the election of more women into parliament – a pattern that is borne out in the case of Western Europe. The Netherlands, which leads the pack in Western Europe in terms of proportion of women in parliaments, utilizes a list PR system. List PR systems, which see multiple parliamentarians elected from a party list, are much more conducive to effective quotas – allowing for the party to simply demand that a certain percentage of each list be women. By contrast, the UK has the lowest representation of all of the countries under discussion here, and uses a "first past the post" system. The single-member districts that go along with this electoral system certainly make quotas – at the party or legislated level – more difficult to implement. Where there is only one spot up for grabs in a given locale, the introduction of a provision that ensures women are represented means that in some places men are necessarily entirely excluded (rather than remaining a portion of a candidate list). This dynamic is seen in the UK, where the difficulty in implementation is often cited by the other parties who have decided not to follow Labour's lead in introducing an internal quota for selection.

The broader conditions in which politics operates are also considered as important in understanding the levels of women's representation. In particular, women's place in society and the economy is key to understanding their place in politics; when women are in the occupations that many consider as making them "eligible" for office, they are more likely to enter politics.[8] In the case of Western Europe, Mateo Diaz compared measures of women's socioeconomic progress and levels of women's representation in parliaments. Though the two are correlated, she notes that the relationship is certainly not sufficient to understand

[8] Jennifer L Lawless and Richard L Fox, *Girls Just Wanna Not Run: The Gender Gap in Young Americans' Political Ambition* (Washington, DC, 2013).

the complex dynamics both in society and within politics that are entailed in the level of women's representation in politics.[9] It is clear though, that a pool of qualified and educated women in society is key to enabling the possibility of women in politics; in this regard, Western Europe is amongst the most hopeful regions in terms of future potential of women's representation. Given the correct political context – with parties, parliament, and selection systems conducive to encouraging women to come forward – there is surely great hope for increasing the ranks of women in elected bodies.

What are the Women Doing?

A look at women in politics in Europe is not complete without an analysis of not only how many women are elected, but what the women who get into legislative chambers are actually able to, and chose to, do once in power. What difference, if any, does a more gender-balanced parliament make?

There is significant evidence that, across Western Europe, the presence of women in parliaments has changed the institutions that they sit in, and at times women have been seen to promote a divergent policy agenda to that advocated by men. In the case of the UK, Catalano found a difference in the areas of focus between men and women; women MPs were more than twice as likely as their male counterparts to participate in debates on healthcare.[10] As Catalano notes, women voters prioritize social issues such as healthcare more than male voters – perhaps reflecting the traditional association between women and caregiving. In this way, we can see patterns emerging when more women are in parliament, with more voice to issues that may not have previously have been given as much import in (even more) male-dominated parliaments. Similar findings were reached in studies of a region of the UK – Northern Ireland. In interviews with female elected officials, Cowell-Meyers found women to be "more concerned than men with issues of healthcare, childcare, education, and eldercare."[11]

Further, there is evidence of some (limited) effect of the presence of women in parliaments on increasing the advocacy surrounding issues more explicitly related to women constituents. Scholars have noted that in the 1970s in Germany, female legislators fought for divorce reform that specifically benefited women.[12] In the UK, Childs found in interviews with female British Labour MPs that they often purposefully focused on issues of particular importance to women, and saw it as an obligation on women to raise some issues; one MP

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[9] Mercedes Mateo Diaz, *Representing Women: Female Legislators in Western Europe* (ECPR Press, 2005).

[10] Ana Catalano, "Women Acting for Women? An Analysis of Gender and Debate Participation in the British House of Commons 2005–2007," *Politics & Gender* 5, no. 01 (March 09, 2009): 45.

[11] Kimberly Cowell-Meyers, "Gender, Power, and Peace: A Preliminary Look at Women in the Northern Ireland Assembly," *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 2001, 72.

[12] Kimberly Cowell-Meyers, "Women in Northern Ireland Politics: Gender and the Politics of Peace-Building in the New Legislative Assembly," *Irish Political Studies*, 2003, 415.

said "I don't see men lining up to talk about childcare, never have; [I] don't see men lining [up] to talk about women's rights to abortion, never have."[13] Childs's interviews also highlighted another way in which women may be better placed to represent their female constituents. In an interview, another female Labour MP described an instance where a constituent discussed the issue of rape with the MP: "I felt she found it easier to talk to me than she may have a male MP."[14] This aspect of representation – the interaction between representative and the represented – is an important part of the role of an elected representative. Gender-balanced parliaments, as we are increasingly seeing across Western Europe, serve to change and hopefully improve this relationship.

However, women in parliament do not automatically flock towards so-called "women's issues". For example, though research by Bird found that, on average, women were more likely to ask a higher proportion of parliamentary questions about issues that disproportionately affect women[15], they also asked questions on a range of topics. Further, not all women displayed this tendency; more women in parliament is by no means a guarantee that women's political interests will be better articulated in parliament. The success of this representation of women's issues depends on a range of factors – including the political ideology of the women in parliament and the party balance of that parliament, as well as the willingness of parties to promote and support their women MPs. In the Netherlands, for example, Koning found that there was a connection between women's presence and substantive policy actions on behalf of women – but only amongst representatives from some parties and not others.[16]

This complexity in the relationship between the number of women in parliament and policy outcomes for women has led some scholars to call for a movement beyond the idea of "critical mass" (which sees a critical number of women as necessary for women to make a difference) to the idea of "critical actors" – which instead posits that even when small in number, well-placed and dedicated actors, both male and female, can alter the course of policy discussion in favour of the women's issues for which they advocate.[17] This is seen in some of the examples where women have "made a difference" in politics, working for the interests of women specifically. In the UK, Childs and Withey offer the example of the feminine sanitary taxes.[18] Here it was key actors who consistently pushed on the issue,

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[13] Sarah Childs, "'Attitudinally Feminist'? The New Labour Women MPs and the Substantive Representation of Women," *Politics* 21, no. 3 (September 2001): 181.

[14] Ibid., 179.

[15] Karen Bird, "Gendering Parliamentary Questions," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 7 (2005): 353–370.

[16] Edward A Koning, "Women for women's sake: Assessing symbolic and substantive effects of descriptive representation in the Netherlands," *Acta Politica* 44 (2009): 171–191.

[17] Sarah Childs and Mona Lena Krook, "Analysing Women's Substantive Representation: From Critical Mass to Critical Actors," *Government and Opposition* 44, no. 02 (January 02, 2009): 125–145.

[18] S. Childs, "The Substantive Representation of Women: The Case of the Reduction of VAT on Sanitary Products," *Parliamentary Affairs* 59, no. 1 (November 04, 2005): 10–23.

rather than the voting power of many women combined, that made a difference. Increasing the number of women in parliament increases the chance of such critical actors emerging, but ultimately the process is more complex than numbers alone. This important balance, of both a "critical mass" and "critical actors" is played out in the case of France. Opello finds that the number of "women-friendly policies" increased when women held a majority of local council seats. She notes, though, that the policies resulted not from the power that came with a higher proportion of women elected, but were "primarily" due to the critical acts of certain officeholders – both male and female.[19]

The phenomena of critical actors as a key variable in understanding positive change for women is especially clear where there are prominent women in politics who appear to change the gender landscape via their prominence. There have been a number of prominent leaders emerging in Western Europe in recent years, Chancellor Angela Merkel being the most obvious example – but the pattern extends beyond only Germany. Italian politics, for example, has seen a rise in the number of prominent women in leadership positions in recent years, which some have suggested is both an indicator and cause of a shift away from the traditionally male-dominated and macho style of politics in Italy. This is exemplified in Laura Boldrini, President of the Chamber of Deputies, who has been notable for her advocacy around domestic violence and women – something that most politicians have avoided addressing.[20]

The role of women as representatives can also extend beyond their legislator role, where parliamentary systems mean that a portion of legislators also make up the government. Traditionally, in line with the make-up of the parliament, executives have been heavily dominated by men. More recently though, there has been signs of change; in Switzerland in 2010 for the first time women outnumbered men in the executive.[21] This comes only four decades after Switzerland finally granted women the right to vote, showing that political history does not determine, though it certainly shapes, the future path of women's representation.

Looking Ahead?

To conclude, it is clear that the process of getting women into parliament and seeing women's views represented in political debate and policy outcome is a complex one. Both sympathetic actors and a conducive political context are required. Western Europe though, has many reasons to be hopeful. Proportional representation, the electoral system that research suggests is most helpful to increasing women's representation, is prevalent across the region. The status of women in society and the economy is such that there is an ample talent

[19] Katherine A R Opello, "Do Women Represent Women in France? The Case of Brittany's Regional Council," *French Politics* 6 (December 2008): 321-341.

[20] https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/simona-aimar/rise-of-women-in-italian-politics.

[21] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/22/switzerland-female-ministers-cabinet.

pool of potential politicians across the region. And the recent emergence of critical actors who are committed to advocating for women in politics and for issues that women voters wish to grant more attention to offers hope of these conducive conditions being turned into positive steps towards a more politically gender-balanced region.

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Table 1: November 1997 and November 2014 respectively. Compiled from IPU 'Women In Parliaments' Archives

	1997		2014	
	% Women in Parliament	Global rank	% Women in Parliament	Global Rank
Germany	26.2	8	36.5	21
France	10.9	41	26.2	47
Netherlands	31.3	5	38.7	16
Austria	26.2	8	32.2	27
Switzerland	21.0	15	31	33
Italy	11.1	49	31.4	30
United Kingdom	18.2	19	22.6	61
Regional Average	**20.7**	**-**	**31.2**	**-**

Asian Women Parliamentarian Conference 2014 Report

Asia is one of the regions where women, policy and political leadership are topics that have yet to gain traction. Therefore a concerted regional effort to begin building bridges to promote best practices and shared experiences began with a regional meeting of female parliamentarians from all over Asia on 16-17 October 2014, in Singapore. Jointly organised by the Konrad Adenaeur Stiftung, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia (KAS) and the Singapore Committee for UN Women, the conference saw over 30 attendees from 18 different Asian countries getting together to discuss thematic policy issues on how to strengthen female leadership in Asia.

The first day of the conference began with introductions as delegates registered and met each other. **Ms Trina Liang**, President of the Singapore Committee for UN Women, and **Dr. Wilhelm Hofmeister**, Director, KAS, welcomed the delegates and offered opening remarks to commemorate the start of the conference. In her opening comments, Ms Liang raised the point of how national development is being increasingly linked to gender equality and that politics is, therefore, the best way for women to create change to achieve gender equality. UN Women reports that 1 in 5 parliamentarians are women. It is a slow increase from 11.3% in 1995 when it was 1 in 10. Southeast Asian countries for instance have seen an increased number of women in political positions in recent years but women still continue to experience discrimination in the male-dominated world. She therefore hoped to use this platform to engage women in Asian countries on striving towards political leadership positions.

Following Ms Liang, **Dr. Wilhelm Hofmeister** reiterated the importance of women's participation in politics as a crucial aspect of democracy and democratization. He also

raised the importance of institution-building at the respective state level and also regionally, through the Asian Women Parliamentarian caucus. He suggested that regional cooperation could help bridge gaps between countries by consolidating best practices, influencing policy agenda in bills passing and encouraging female parliamentarians to stand for a gender-sensitive and inclusive agenda at the respective national parliaments to a level of parity.

> "Numbers and targets are important but participation by women in politics in and of itself can make a significant difference. While our further push should be relentless, we should also take note of the value of the work that women have done even in small numbers. When women take office, issues of healthcare, racial and ethnic priorities and more social policies are addressed in policymaking."
>
> – Dr. Dipu Moni, Bangladesh

After the introductory welcome remarks, **Dr. Dipu Moni**, Bangladesh's first female Foreign Minister, delivered a keynote address in regards to increasing Asian women's interest in politics, grappling with the male-dominated cultures in most Asian societies and the need for legislated measures to improve women's role in politics. Dr. Moni expressed her appreciation for the networking opportunities presented by the conference and hoped that the conference would help to break the glass ceiling that prevents women everywhere from participating in politics.

Ms Teresa Jimenez-Becerril Barrio, member of the European Parliament (MEP) since 2009 and member of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, delivered the second keynote address, which covered experiences from **Europe**, specifically on how it has been possible to increase women's participation in policy making and leadership; actual challenges for women in politics; and the role of regional solidarity structures such as the Committee on Gender and Equality within the European Parliament. Ms Jimenez-Becerril highlighted that European countries were working to surpass the 30% goal of female participation in politics. Mandatory quotas have been set in certain European countries to increase female participation. However, the role of the mass media and the lack of female role models in political positions have contributed to the slow progress of increased female participation in politics. These obstacles need to be overcome through discussion so that democracy can be taken seriously. Ms Jimenez-Becerril also shared her work advocating against terrorism and gender-based violence and promoting entrepreneurship among women as a form of empowerment.

The commonalities between both keynote speakers raised the universality of impediments to women's political participation between the two regions, and prompted a robust discussion from the floor.

This provided the right energy as the conference proceeded to discuss the first panel's topic on **Opportunities, Gaps and Overview of Female Political Leadership in Asia**.

Prof. Andrea Fleschenberg, from the Quaid-i-Azam University in Pakistan and a renowned researcher in the field of women and politics, immediately dived into the challenges and opportunities for women parliamentarians in Asia. Prof. Fleschenberg said that

she believed that the effectiveness of women in leadership carried more weightage than the number of women in political leadership. She noted that there were still issues in terms of effectiveness in regards to substantive participation and representation – who do women represent? Who claims to act for women? Therefore, strategies and failures of women in political leadership should be addressed with criticism.

For a regional caucus, Prof. Fleschenberg urged the parliamentarians to sit with experts and identify what kind of structures and skills they require to bolster stronger female leadership in Asia. She stressed the need for substantive representation and spoke passionately about looking at the effectiveness of women in leadership rather than just the sheer numbers. Her suggestions to the women leaders in the room were: network; share knowledge; enhance political effectiveness through appropriate framing; and not to be afraid to cross political parties in order to learn the rules and change the rules.

The second panellist, **Ms Binda Pandey,** Central Committee Member of CPN-UML and Deputy Member of ILO Governing Body, Nepal, used her experience as a lawmaker and former Member of the Nepali Constituent Assembly to talk about the quota systems used in Asia. Ms Pandey stressed the need for functionality of women representation and participation through various organisations and avoidance of merely establishing symbolic structures. She also raised a debating point about the significance of women in high political positions and their impacts on overall female leadership in the region.

The panel's discussants could not agree more with the speakers. **Rep. Leni Gerona-Robredo** of the Philippines Congress shared the success of focusing on local level participation, especially with rural women in the Philippines. **Dr. Pham Khanh Phong Lan** of Vietnam National Assembly shared the introduction of the Gender Equality Law (2011-2020) and the discourse behind the implementation of gender quota.

The second panel continued the theme and suggestions of the first: **Building Up Women Leadership Presence in National Parliaments.** Moving on from a broader discussion on opportunities and challenges for women in politics, this panel focused on the country examples of institutions available for women to participate in politics and their effectiveness.

Initiating the panel was **Rep. Luz Ilagan** from the Philippines, who introduced her all-women party Gabriela. Not a common practice in most countries, this party is not just agenda-driven but service-driven as well, as it is created from an alliance of women grassroots organisations in the Philippines. The party actively focuses on and advocates for improved reproductive and maternal health care, anti-trafficking laws, and increasing salaries for teachers. Rep. Ilagan shared positively her experiences of Gabriela at elections and campaigning.

Malaysia's **Hon. Hajah Mumtaz MD Nawi**, State Executive Councillor, Chairperson of Women and Family Development, Welfare and Community Wellbeing in the State Government of Kelantan, Malaysia as well as Vice-Chairperson of the Women's Wing in the Pan-Malaysian Islamic party (PAS), shared the various structures in place to promote and advocate for women's leadership in the state of Kelantan. The many initiatives shared

by Hon. Mumtaz were grassroots in nature and offered communities that are otherwise neglected, opportunities to participate. This sharing of what local bodies can do to promote female leadership in a largely Islamic state such as Kelantan was encouraging.

The discussion continued with **Hon. Erdenechimeg Luvsan,** Chair for the National Women Caucus in the Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia, sharing her experiences on the importance of forming national committees, such as a national women's caucus for women leaders to meet *beyond* party lines. Currently, in Mongolia, there are five different parties represented in the caucus and collectively they work on specific platforms as well as submit laws on women's issues within parliament. The aspiration is to work towards 25% women in parliament; this translates to approximately 20 more women. Mongolia has a 20% gender quota for women in parliament.

The Asian discourse was further supplemented by **Ms Dubravka Suica**, Vice-President of Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, from Croatia, and **Ms Anna Bildt,** MEP and Member of Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, representing Sweden. As Ms Suica and Ms Bildt were not able to be at the conference in person, the delegates viewed video messages where both MEPs shared European developments in advancing women's rights and gender equality as well as country reflections from Croatia and Sweden concerning national policies and strategies to advance gender equality.

The day ended with a policy panel discussion on **Migration and Increasing Vulnerabilities for Women in Asia**. National University of Singapore's Asia Research Institute Visiting Fellow **Assoc. Prof. Pardis Mahdavi** started the conversation by telling three stories of young women around the world who remain stateless, jailed, and forced away from their children. Assoc. Prof. Mahdavi reminded participants about toxic charities, the pitfalls of the way human trafficking is framed, and the necessity of rewriting laws for stateless children as well as taking into account lived experiences in policy consideration.

Adding to the conversation, **Ms Sabine Miehlau**, Senior Parliamentary Adviser to Laos's Social and Cultural Committee in Parliament, spoke of how institutionalism painted a different picture of sexism and pressed for a change of trafficking laws to help migrant women who come for help to avoid exploitation.

Mr. Jolovan Wham, Executive Director for Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (H.O.M.E.), highlighted the implementation woes of policies in place to "help" migrant workers. Often, he argued, these policies lacked inclusivity, especially in labour laws as well as awareness and proper implementation. Coming from a non-governmental organisation, Jolovan stressed that laws might not help migrant workers as it was a race to the bottom for them. Countries therefore should move as a bloc on migration issues and through other policy platforms such as free-trade agreements for instance. He concluded with the need to also domesticate ratified international conventions and hold governments accountable.

The second day of the conference began with a policy panel on **Corruption and Bad Governance – Can Women Parliamentarians Make a Difference in combating one of the Most Serious Obstacles to Achieving Efficient Governance and Development**

in Asia? Mr. Tony Kwok, Course Director at the Hong Kong University and member of the UN Anti-Corruption Expert Group, introduced the topic at hand through a number of great examples, both historical and contemporary, and highlighted the nature of the crime in all its aspects. His recommendations for the women leaders in the room included: create sunshine tests, push for a national strategy, support the ACA, and commit to checks and balances because political will is crucial if corruption is to be stymied.

The second speaker, **Dr. Bridget Welsh,** from the National Taiwan University, looked at corruption through a gendered perspective – she reviewed common concepts of corruption and its "grey areas". She also raised difficult perspectives on women being equally corruptible and stressed the need to address institutionalised corruption even more so. She also reviewed the double standards in media when it came to broadcasting corrupt women as opposed to men who are equally if not more corrupt.

Ms Maria de Lurdes Martins de Sousa Bessa, Treasurer of the Southeast Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption (SEAPAC) and Member of Parliament, Timor Leste, said that she could easily relate to the ongoing discussion, as a number of elected politicians in her country were currently waiting to go to court for corruption charges. She shared the Timor Leste experience and the different organisations tackling corruptions by national chapters of regional entities, such as the SEAPAC and GOPAC, and the policy discourse at these levels.

After much policy discussion, it was time to brainstorm the action plan for the AWP caucus. Facilitated by Prof. Fleschenberg, delegates were divided into groups with different country representatives sharing and building upon their hopes, experiences and expertise required. Each group came up with a list of top-five policy issues that needed intervention and activities that could help pursue the agenda. Annex A provides a summary of all the discussions that took place. The session culminated with participants going on a gallery walk to view and respond to what other groups had discussed.

The final half of the second day began with personal training workshops for the delegates, led by **Ms Clair Deevy** of Microsoft and **Ms Harpreet Kaur** of Bain & Company. Ms Clair Deevy, who leads Microsoft's Corporate Social Responsibility programmes in Asia Pacific, facilitated a discussion on how to clearly define communication strategies, the effective use of mass media and social media, and the importance of understanding target audiences and identifying voter needs. Thoroughly engaged and responsive to the topic at hand, the delegates were also treated to a spontaneous iMovie tutorial by Hon. Mu Sochua of Cambodia.

The second session, facilitated by Ms Harpreet Kaur, a manager at Bain & Company Singapore, involved an exploration with the delegates of different characteristics of effective leaders within the political arena through a gendered approach. She also expounded on how biases can be effectively overcome by getting the delegates to share their experiences through exercises with the conference delegates.

Having witnessed the enthusiasm and engagement of all the delegates, Dr. Hofmeister closed the conference with words of gratitude for the level of participation and sharing of

experiences exhibited by the parliamentarians, including the speakers who stayed through most of the conference. He thanked everyone for their brainstorming outputs and noted that having started on the right note, the organisers looked forward to future engagements. In response, Dr. Dipu Moni thanked the organisers on behalf of all the delegates, especially for offering a rich networking opportunity to meet fellow Asian parliamentarians, from Afghanistan to Timor Leste, and said that she looked forward to future engagements as well.

Annex A

Brainstorming Results from 17 October 2014 Discussions

No.	Top 5 Topics	Activities Suggestions for 2015
1	Violence Against Children and Women/ Gender-Based Violence • Human Trafficking	• Education on parliamentary process/ drafting and understanding laws (both national and international) • Collaborate on statements/ recommendations/shadow reports for international processes such as the MDG review, UPR to international organisations (i.e. UN)
2	Women's Participation and Empowerment of Women (i.e. economic, political) • Quota • Focus on women's leadership as well • In all sectors, priority, not just politics	Networking • Exchange of practices and experiences • Locally, regionally and globally • Travel observation Leadership training; examples: • Lobbying tactics • Management skills; crisis management • Campaign skills Communication 360 degrees • Message development • Public Speaking • Use of ICT; i.e. Social Media • Negotiation Skills Fundraising tactics • Campaign-related Balancing personal and professional life • Time and Stress Management • Work-life balance Create a portal with updated information on various policy issues/approaches • For knowledge acquisition purposes
3	Combating Corruption	Transparency and Accountability • Law • Financial Management • Avoiding Conflict of interest Education on parliamentary process/ drafting and understanding laws (both national and international) Collaborate on statements/ recommendations/shadow reports for international processes such as the MDG review, UPR to international organisations (i.e. UN) Produce research or collect data • from national representative bodies/ agencies or • Create an Asian Studies Centre? • To better inform policy drafting, etc

No.	Top 5 Topics	Activities Suggestions for 2015
4	Gender-Sensitive Budget/Gender Mainstreaming Approaches	Gender-sensitive policy-making • Law, budget, curriculum planning • Gender balanced budget • Provide access to tools/mechanisms for better implementation and monitoring • Education on parliamentary process/ drafting and understanding laws (both national and international) • Collaborate on statements/ recommendations/shadow reports for international processes such as the MDG review, UPR to international organisations (i.e. UN) Produce research or collect data • from national representative bodies/ agencies or • Create an Asian Studies Centre? • To better inform policy drafting, etc Create a portal with updated information on various policy issues/approaches • For knowledge acquisition purposes
5	Social Inclusion (i.e. marginalised groups, religion, ethnics, access to education, justice) • Social Security • Processes that can help with countries implement their own forms of economic reforms, etc	Education on parliamentary process/ drafting and understanding laws (both national and international) Produce research or collect data • from national representative bodies/ agencies or • Create an Asian Studies Centre? • To better inform policy drafting, etc

Reviewing Political Patriarchy & Women's Political Mainstreaming in Asia
Andrea Fleschenberg

African Women in Political Decision-Making – "A Voice that Still Remains a Whisper"
Yolanda Sadie

Women in Politics in Australia
Elisabeth Porter

Women in Politics in Eastern Europe: A Changing Outlook
Ekaterina R. Rashkova and Emilia Zankina

Women in Politics in Latin America
Mala Htun, Jennifer M. Piscopo and Sophia von Bergen

Women's Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Nordic Politics
Lenita Freidenvall

Women in Politics in Northeast Asia
Young-Im Lee

Women in Political Office in North America
Farida Jalalzai

Women in Politics: Pacific Islands and New Zealand
Nicole George

Promoting Inclusion: Women's Political Participation in Southeast Asia
Bridget Welsh

Women and Political Leadership in South Asia
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ISBN 978-981-09-2114-9