

Do Gender Quotas Produce a Different Class of Politician?

Dr. Rainbow Murray

Queen Mary University of London

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NB For personal reasons it was not possible to produce a full written paper in time for the conference. The findings outlined in this presentation will be fully written up later in 2013 as a chapter of my forthcoming book. Please email me if you would like to see this written version once it is available: rainbowmurray@gmail.com

Quotas and Qualifications

- Different theories on the kind of women who will be elected through quotas
 - Similar to men ie elite, unrepresentative
 - Less qualified than men – undermining meritocracy
 - Different to men – bringing unique qualities to representative process
- Creates equality/difference double bind – how to compete with elites while being descriptive representatives

French case study

- Quotas (“parity”) introduced in 2000 – set at 50% but weak implementation
- Women in parliament:
 - 1997: 10.9%
 - 2002: 12.3%
 - 2007: 18.5%
 - 2012: 26.9%
- Facilitates study of deputies elected pre/post parity
- Part of larger study on impact of parity on French parliament

Data

- Covers 3 parliaments
- Collected from French parliamentary website and additional biographical sources (Who's Who, Wikipedia, MPs' websites etc)
- Focuses on empirically measurable qualities ie age, prior political experience, education, profession etc
- Recognition that these may not be best measures of ability to represent
- High levels of renewal in 2012: 37.8% of deputies elected for the 1st time
 - 60% of newbies are men – below parity even without incumbency

Career life-cycle

- Prior research (Murray 2010) shows high-flyers start young, access parliament quickly, may acquire local office after, become future leaders
- Slow-starters build up local profile for many years then culminate in national backbench role
- Women more likely to be in latter group
- New focus on specific routes into power: elite education, career politicians, family ties etc

Age

- Mean age of deputies:

Mean age	2012	2007	2002
Men	54.74	55.12	53.37
Women	52.34	53.30	52.29

- So women are younger on average
- Age distribution previously skewed – women clustered around 50s, men wider range – but both sexes now normally distributed with similar standard deviations (ie convergence)

Starting age

- Mean age is misleading – higher proportion of women are first-timers (56% compared to 31% for men)
- Better measure is mean age upon first election: men 45, women 48.5 (highly significant difference)
- So women start later, not earlier – younger only because they are new (men have served 2.5 times more terms on average)
- Matters because early starters more likely to rise to top
- But 2012 new entrants (both sexes) starting later than their predecessors

Experience

- Local politics is important in France – combined with national politics to build power base
- Men have slightly more experience on average than women when first elected – gap continues to grow
- Key difference is executive level – still dominated by men:
 - 2/3 men are/have been mayors - less than ¼ of women
 - More than 20% of men are mayors of large towns - 4% of women
 - 22 men current/former departmental (county) president – only one woman
 - 9 men current/former regional president – no women
 - Where parity is not legally enforced, barriers continue

Profession

- Similar proportions of men/women from certain professions (civil servants/aides, managers, farmers)
- High proportion of school teachers are women but most academics are men
- Men more likely to run a business, almost 2x as likely to come from liberal profession (doctor, lawyer...)
- Women 3x more likely to be skilled non-manual (eg midwife)

Profession

- In 2012 cohort, some differences wash out eg liberal professions BUT big gaps in civil servants/aides (men 50% more), teachers (women almost 2x more), skilled non-manual (women almost 3x more)
- The proportion of civil servants/aides is high and increasing: 24% for those elected pre-2012, but 32% for new women and 43% for new men
- No longer any deputies from manual backgrounds – some deputies speak proudly of working-class roots, but all have risen up social ladder before entering parliament

Career politicians

- People who:
 - Have only worked in politics (as political civil servants, special advisors, parliamentary assistants etc)
 - Have no meaningful alternative profession
 - Have worked in directly political roles for years prior to entering parliament
- Proportion of career politicians is high and growing:
 - Pre-2012 cohort, 38% men, 31% women
 - New entrants, 54% men, 34% women

Career politicians - consequences

- In interviews, female deputies said male career politicians had an advantage
 - Better networked
 - More familiar with unwritten rules of the game – more strategic from outset with eg committee placement
- BUT bad for representation
 - Little to no experience of “real world”
 - Scant representation of most professions, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds
 - A route that seems to be more open to men
 - Nepotism eg assistants inheriting seats

Other ways to inherit a seat

- Be a *suppléant* (reserve MP)
 - Always more women *suppléantes* than deputies – currently 44%
 - New deputies more likely than older cohorts to have female *suppléante*
 - Women more likely than men to “balance ticket” – 92% of women have male *suppléant*, only 57% of men have female *suppléante*
 - 2nd class position but can be route in - 14% of current male MPs and 11% of female MPs are former *suppléants*
- Be related to another politician (child/partner etc)
 - Absolute numbers favour men but proportionally, women more likely to a “daughter of/wife of”
 - 6% of deputies have family ties

Education

- A higher proportion of women than men are educated to postgrad level; gap has widened with the 2012 cohort
 - Negates hypothesis of under-qualified women
- More than 90% of deputies educated to at least degree level (4x more than population)
- “Quota women” are the most highly educated of any group – very qualified, though unrepresentative
- But men far more likely to benefit from elite education:
 - 15% attended Sciences Po Paris (3% women)
 - 6% attended l’Ecole Normale d’Administration (1.3% women)
 - 3.1% attended exclusive Parisian schools (1.3% women)

Discussion

- Some gender gaps (education, profession) are narrowing – “quota women” are more like male elites
 - But still somewhat more diverse, eg wider range of career backgrounds
- Growing professionalisation of politics, especially by men
 - Bad for representation –no experience of “real world”
 - Places non-career politicians, including women, at disadvantage
- Some springboards (elite educational institutions, local executive office) still used far more by men
- Politics is becoming more feminised (+ slightly less white), but still far from descriptive representation – eg class becoming *less* representative

Conclusion

- Quota women: equal and/or different?
 - Bit of both
 - Highly qualified with professional backgrounds
 - Less well embedded in politics – less insider/executive experience, but more “real world” experience
 - Bring in different perspectives but may take longer to learn rules of the game (supported by interview data)
 - Whether considered as good depends on definition of quality (which itself is gendered and needs reconceptualising – but that’s a whole other paper!)