

Workshop Title:

Electoral Quotas and Political Representation: Comparative Perspectives

Directors:

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Outline of Topic:

Electoral quotas have emerged as one of the critical political reforms of the last two decades. Policies for women are the most prevalent, having now been introduced in more than 100 countries worldwide – a number that has continued to grow with the emergence of new regimes in the wake of the Arab Spring. While many provisions are adopted by individual political parties, a significant and growing proportion involve changes to constitutions or electoral laws requiring that all parties select a certain proportion of female candidates (Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009; Tremblay 2008). Other groups, however, have also been the subject of quota legislation, including those based on language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, caste, age, expatriation, profession, domicile, and ability (Krook and O'Brien 2010). Measures for these groups, now in force in more than 30 countries, typically set aside seats that members of other groups are not eligible to contest (Htun 2004; Krook and O'Brien 2010; Reynolds 2011).

The recent and global nature of these developments has sparked both scholarly and popular interest in the design, origins, and effects of electoral quotas (Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009; Reynolds 2011). Yet, as an emerging literature has begun to point out, debates over quotas are not simply about increasing the numbers of women and minorities elected. In the case of women, for example, advocates suggest that quotas will also enhance diversity among the types of women elected, raise attention to women's issues in policy-making processes, change the gendered nature of the public sphere, and inspire female voters to get more politically involved. At the same time, opponents object to quotas on the grounds that they will facilitate the election of 'unqualified' women, bring women to office with little interest in promoting women's concerns, reinforce stereotypes about women's inferiority and unsuitability as political actors, and deter ordinary women's political participation (Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo 2012; cf. Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2010).

These competing predictions suggest that electoral quotas may have implications for a wide variety of representative processes. The evidence, however, is not yet conclusive in terms of what quotas 'mean' for legislative diversity, policy-making behavior, public opinion, and patterns of mass mobilization – or, moreover, for other dynamics like internal party democracy and transitions from authoritarianism, which can affect how candidates are chosen and the degree to which they may act in accordance with the party line (Bjarnegård and Zetterberg 2011; Cornwall and Goetz 2005; Pupavac 2005). As a result, it is not possible to draw broader conclusions about whether electoral quotas constitute a step forward for democracy, or whether they contribute in any way to the broader empowerment of group members.

This workshop proposes to engage these important questions by bringing together scholars analyzing a variety of empirical cases and using a range of different research methods, with the goal of collectively expanding current research agendas to theorize, study, and assess the broader impact of quotas on politics and society. The directors encourage the submission of papers that address *electoral quotas* for a range of different groups, whether for

women, or minorities, or both. *Political representation* is understood broadly to refer to all bodies and aspects of the representative process, including political assemblies at the local, regional, and national levels; dynamics within political parties related to policy development and candidate selection; initiatives and decision-making within legislative institutions; and attitudinal and behavioral responses by citizens – either as a whole or as members of underrepresented groups – to the composition and policy outcomes of elected bodies. To enhance dialogue, the workshop seeks to be *comparative* in a number of ways: not only in terms of collectively examining evidence from multiple countries, but also with regard to accepting papers – for example – that look at multiple groups in one country, or investigate the impact of quotas in relation to multiple dimensions of representation or at multiple levels of government.

Relation to Existing Research:

This workshop seeks to build on several research traditions, including the large literature on electoral gender quotas that has emerged over the last decade, a substantial – but continually expanding – set of contributions regarding the content and parameters of political representation, and a more limited and disparate collection of individual case studies regarding the broader impact of electoral quotas for both women and minority groups. In so doing, the workshop aims to forge new research agendas that speak to – and connect – a number of central debates within political science related to electoral reform, political recruitment, legislative behavior, mass attitudes, political engagement, and democratization.

The vast majority of research on electoral quotas to date focuses on quotas for women (for partial exceptions, see Holmsten and Moser 2009; Htun 2004; Hughes 2011; Krook and O'Brien 2010; Reynolds 2011). In light of the relatively recent nature of this phenomenon, most work addresses questions of quota design, adoption, and numerical impact. In addition to categorizing quotas in different ways (Dahlerup 2006; Krook 2009; Matland 2006), scholars have offered a variety of explanations for quota introduction and variations in their effects. Accounts of quota adoption variously emphasize the importance of women's mobilization inside and outside political parties (Kittilson 2006; Krook 2009), the strategic incentives of political elites (Baldez 2004; Chowdhury 2002; Meier 2004), party- and country-specific norms of equality and representation (Inhetveen 1999; Opello 2006), and pressures from international organizations and transnational networks (Krook 2006). Scholars have explained variations in numerical effects in relation to the details of individual measures, like their wording (Htun 2002), requirements (Meier 2004), sanctions (Murray 2004), and perceived legitimacy (Yoon 2001); the 'fit' between quotas and other political institutions, most notably electoral (Caul 1999; Jones 2009; Tremblay 2008) and political party systems (Kittilson 2006); and the direction of political will in favor or against quota policies (Baldez 2004; Costa Benavides 2003; Jones 2004).

The literature on quotas draws extensively on prior research on gender and political representation, which is itself informed by ongoing innovations – theoretical and empirical – in the study of political representation more generally. Drawing on Hanna Pitkin's (1967) conceptualization of multiple facets of political representation, gender and politics scholars have extensively explored questions like why there are so few women elected to political office (Caul 1999; Franceschet 2005; Matland 1998; Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Tremblay 2008), whether women in politics represent women as a group (Beckwith 2007; Childs 2004; Goetz and Hassim 2003; Swers 2002), and how the presence or absence of women in politics affects voter perceptions and opinions (Atkeson and Carrillo 2007; High-Pippert and Comer 1998; Karp and Banducci 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). Similar issues have been explored within the race and politics literature, with researchers seeking to establish whether the increased

presence of minority legislators leads to greater attention to the policy interests of minority citizens (Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996; Canon 1999; Lublin 1997; Swain 2006; Tate 2003) and to decreased levels of political alienation among group members (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Barreto, Segura, and Woods 2004; Brace et al 1995; Gay 2001; Gay 2002; Pantoja and Segura 2003). More recently, studies of gender and race in politics have also begun to explore opportunities for representation beyond the electoral realm (Celis et al 2008; Saward 2010; Weldon 2011).

These rich and varied literatures provide a starting point for exploring how electoral quotas may affect patterns of political representation. Yet, it is also possible that quotas may alter in important ways the dynamics that are already in place. For example, debates and controversies surrounding quotas, which have been well-documented (Bacchi 2006; Dahlerup 2007; Krook, Lovenduski, and Squires 2009), may shape expectations about who 'quota legislators' are and what they will do once they reach political office (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). It is therefore worth asking whether the *means* by which female and minority legislators enter politics influences *how*, *why*, and *to what extent* their presence affects different types of representative processes – being sure, as well, to explore the conditions under which various scenarios are likely to occur (Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo 2012).

A nascent literature on the broader effects of gender quotas offers some initial insights, but their mixed findings raise questions about how to best conceptualize and operationalize 'impact' – highlighting the need for ongoing dialogue and discussion related to the comparative study of electoral quotas. Some studies conclude, for example, that quotas lead to the election of 'token' and 'elite' women (Abou-Zeid 2006; Pupavac 2005), while others suggest that 'quota women' are often equally if not more qualified than their non-quota counterparts (Murray 2010; O'Brien 2012). Similarly, work on policy-making indicates that being elected through quotas may have contradictory effects (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008): women elected under quotas may feel obliged to speak on behalf of women (Schwartz 2004; Skjeie 1991), or they may seek to avoid the stigma of quotas by disavowing women's issues entirely (Childs 2004; Zetterberg 2008). Finally, some researchers find that introducing quotas plays a key role in challenging traditional stereotypes regarding women's proper roles (Beaman et al 2012), while others suggest that such shifts may not extend to male elites (Holli, Luhtakallio, and Raevaara 2006; Meier 2008). At the same time, quotas have been argued to enhance (Benstead 2011; Bhavnani 2009; Childs 2004), deter (Britton 2005), and even have no effect (Davidson-Schmich 2009; Zetterberg 2009) on the political engagement of ordinary women.

Types of Papers:

The workshop directors welcome empirical as well as theoretical papers examining the effects of electoral quotas on a wide variety of representative processes. *Electoral quotas* may be provisions in place for women or other underrepresented groups, or both. *Political representation* is understood broadly to refer not only to legislative presence and policy-making, but also to mass-elite linkages, internal party democracy, and dynamics of democratization, among other possibilities. The directors especially encourage proposals that are *comparative* in some fashion, whether these comparisons involve multiple countries, different groups, levels of government, or facets of representation.