4. Rule Changes to Increase Women's Parliamentary Presence: The Diffusion of Candidate Gender Quotas

4

Rule Changes to Increase Women's Parliamentary Presence: The Diffusion of Candidate Gender Quotas

The most effective way to increase the percentage of women in parliament seems to be formal or informal gender quotas on candidate lists set by political parties.

—Council of the European Union, 1999

Gender quotas for parliamentary candidates first emerged in 1975 in Norway, where the proportion of women in parliament has traditionally been highest. As parties across Europe looked to the leader, the number of parties adopting quotas rose sharply in the 1980s—diffusing across nations and within party systems. Gender quotas are the most visible way for parties to symbolically demonstrate their commitment to women. The use of gender quotas and targets denotes a process of changing attitudes within parties toward women in politics that has led to a change in the formal rules.

Importantly, gender quotas appear to have their desired effect. For example, in Germany the Green Party adopted quotas in 1986. By 1994 the delegation the Greens sent to the Bundestag consisted of nearly 60% women. In 1988 the German Social Democrats adopted quotas, and the percentage of Social Democratic women MPs rose from 18% in the prequota 1987 election to 27% in the postquota 1990 election. Likewise, the establishment of a light form of

Table 4.1 Political Parties and Candidate Gender Quotas

	Year Quota Adopted	Other Affirmative Action Policy
Austria PR-List **(20)**		
1. People's Party (OVP)	1995	
2. Freedom Party (FPO)	—	
3. Greens (GA)	1987	
4. Socialist Party (SPO)	1985	
Belgium PR-List **(12)**		
5. Christian People's (CVP)	1993	
6. Socialist (Flemish) (BSP)	—	
7. Socialist (Francophone) (PS)	—	
8. Liberty (Flemish) (PVV)	—	
9. People's Union (VU)	—	
10. Christian Social (PSC)	—	
11. Ecology Party (Flemish) (AGA)	1991	
12. Ecology Party (Francophone)	1991	
Denmark PR-List **(25)**		
13. Socialist People's (SF)	1989	
14. Social Democrats (SD)	—	1984
15. Social Liberals (RV)	—	
16. Christian People's (KRF)	—	
17. Center Democrats (CD)	—	
18. Liberal (V)	—	
19. Conservative (KF)	—	
20. Progress Party (KRP)	—	
Finland PR-List **(13)**		
21. People's Democratic (SKDL)	—	
22. Social Democratic (SDP)	—	
23. Center Party (KESK)	—	
24. Swedish People's (SFP)	—	
25. National Coalition (KOK)	—	
Germany MMP **(10)**		
26. Social Democratic (SPD)	1988	
27. Christian Democratic (CDU)	—	1987
28. Christian Social Union (CSU)	—	
29. Free Democratic (FDP)	—	1987
30. Greens (G)	1986	

Continued on next page

Table 4.1 Political Parties and Candidate Gender Quotas *(continued)*

	Year Quota Adopted	Other Affirmative Action Policy
Ireland STV **(4)**		
31. Workers' Party (WP)	1991	
32. Labour (LAB)	1991	
33. Fianna Fail (FF)	—	
34. Fine Gael (FG)	—	1987
35. Progressive Democrats (PD)	—	1992
36. Greens (G)	—	
Netherlands PR-List **(110)**		
37. Communist Party (CPN)	—	1982
38. Labor (PvdA)	1987	
39. Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP)	—	1983
40. Radical Political (PPR)	—	1988
41. Christian Democrats (CDA)	—	1986
42. Democrats '66 (D'66)	—	
43. People's (VVD)	—	
44. Green Left (GL)	1985	
Norway PR-List **(8)**		
45. Socialist People's (SV)	1975	
46. Labor (DNA)	1983	
47. Center (SP)	1989	
48. Christian People's (KRF)	1993	
49. Liberals (V)	1975	
50. Conservatives (H)	—	
51. Progress (FRP)	—	
Sweden PR-List **(12)**		
52. Communist (VPK)	—	1980
53. Social Democrat Worker (S)	—	1960
54. Center (C)	—	
55. People's (FP)	—	1972
56. Right (M)	—	1975
57. Environmental Party (MP)	—	1991
UK Plurality–FPTP **(1)**		
58. Labour (LAB)	1992	1989
59. Liberal/Lib Dem (LIB/SLD)	—	1988
60. Conservative (CON)	—	

Source: Katz and Mair (1992) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (1993) supplemented with data from country experts collected by Professor Richard Matland.

quotas by the British Labour Party in 1993 is credited with a ten percentage point increase in female Labour MPs from the 1992 to the 1997 elections.

If parties can use candidate gender quotas and targets to substantially improve women's representation, then it is important to ask *why certain parties have adopted these policies while others have not.*[1] Further*, why did those parties take action at the time they did?* I employ event history analysis (EHA) to statistically model the adoption of these new quotas. Candidate gender quotas are an intervening variable in increasing women's representation. If we are to understand this increase as a process, then it is important to isolate and examine this intermediary step.

A Systematic Examination of Quotas across Western Europe

Several parties in Western Europe changed their selection rules to improve the gender balance in their delegations to parliament. Table 4.1 lists the sixty parties included in this analysis, indicating if and when quotas were adopted. Gender quotas are often associated with the Nordic countries and with Green parties. The data in table 4.1 show that quotas are certainly not limited to these cases. Strikingly, although candidate gender quotas have diffused across the Norwegian party system, Denmark has only one party with quotas, and no Swedish nor Finnish parties have adopted formal quotas. Further, quotas are not limited to New Left Parties. For example, the Christian People's Party in Belgium and the Austrian People's Party adopted quotas, as did the mass leftist parties in Austria, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Britain.

The second column of table 4.1 notes whether and when parties have adopted another form of policies intended to increase the number of women in office. Some parties adopted affirmative action measures that fall short of qualifying as candidate gender quotas. Yet the presence of these "recommended" percentages of women, such as the "targets" set by the German FDP or the "quorum" of the CDU, have helped to increase the number of women in office.[2] Of the parties in this dataset that had not adopted the more formal quotas, sixteen adopted some form of a "target" number of women candidates. Because the strict nature of quotas makes them controversial, many parties have turned to these softer targets. The party leadership can recommend a certain percentage of women candidates in the party policies, thus giving the localities incentive to recruit women, without diminishing the power of the localities to select their own candidates. Because these targets are unevenly enforced, this statistical analysis is limited to formal quotas.

The electoral rules shape the conditions under which these parties have (or have not) adopted quotas. Because most countries in this study are party list proportional representation (PR) systems, the average district magnitude is

also reported in table 4.1. These nations vary substantially in terms of district magnitude, ranging from 1 to 75.

Influences on the Adoption of Candidate Gender Quotas

This section examines the conditions under which parties adopt quotas. A party's decision to adopt candidate gender quotas may be influenced by several factors, both at the level of the political system and at the level of the party. These factors are grouped into two categories, political and institutional opportunity structures.

Political Opportunity Structure

Women's political power in the party increases women's resources to mobilize for policies such as quotas to ensure greater representation in the future. The concept of a critical mass may link parties with initially higher levels of women in top positions to a tendency to adopt quotas. If a "critical mass," or a sizable number from a minority group, enters into a traditionally majority-controlled institution, that minority group may gain enough power to institutionalize itself (Dahlerup, 1988). Specifically, the new contender may further its gains by pressing for formal policies that are difficult to remove, even when those individual members are gone.

The influence of women's political activity exerts itself both at the national and at the party level. First, the historical proportion of women in a legislative body might signify the power of women in the nation to pressure parties for more support. Second, the individual party's proportion of women MPs may have more direct impact. Once women begin to enter the top party ranks, they can directly pressure the party leaders to take formal steps to promote women.

When this idea is tested empirically across nations, Studlar and McAllister (1999) find little support for the effects of a critical mass on furthering women's seat gains. Yet it remains to be seen whether the critical mass might affect party *policies*. Previous literature on the impact of a critical mass points more solidly toward the minority's effect on policy, rather than on numerical representation (see Dahlerup, 1988, for a review). This finding is because sizable numbers of the minority now participating in decision making can more effectively lobby for the intermediate step of concrete rules, rather than for the ultimate outcome.

In a different manner, quotas may follow a process of diffusion. Taken from Duverger's (1954) conception of a "contagion" among parties, Matland and Studlar's (1996) research suggests that parties are more likely to adopt gender

quotas and/or targets when pressured with the adoption of these rules by a rival party. Competing parties fear losing women's votes if they do not match the gender policies of their rivals. In response, other parties adopt the quotas, and this policy diffuses across the party system. In an analysis of four Western European nations, Davis (1996) determines that parties react to the positive efforts of their electoral competitors.

The diffusion of an innovative policy such as quotas may occur simply because there is a prototype. For example, the German Greens' introduction of quotas set the stage for rival parties in the system. If the process of adoption of quotas is simply one of diffusion, then a simple indicator of the year the first party in the system adopted quotas should help to explain the adoption by other parties. The earlier one party in the party system adopts targets or quotas, the more likely it is that other parties in the system will subsequently adopt similar party policies.

Institutional Opportunity Structure

An important institutional structure, exogenous to the party, that conditions its ability to adopt candidate gender quotas and targets is the electoral system. In contrast to a single-member district system, a party-list PR system may improve the ability of a party to adopt candidate rules, because achieving gender balance on a list should be more feasible than mandating that one particular seat be filled by either gender (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993). Previous scholarship finds that party-list PR systems are positively associated with parties' adoption of candidate gender quotas (Caul, 1999).

The mechanism that links the type of electoral system to the presence of quotas may be the number of seats per district within a nation (district magnitude). As Matland and Studlar (1996) point out, parties in a system with a low district magnitude, such as the single-transferable vote system (STV) in Ireland, may have a more difficult time installing quotas, because in order for women to be mandatory in the party's parliamentary delegation, the incumbents, usually men, must lose seats. In contrast, where there are many MPs per district, established politicians within the party may not have to be deposed in order to make room for newcomers such as women. Thus, one expects that the higher the district magnitude, the more likely a party will be to adopt quotas. More specifically, Matland (1993; 1994) points out that it may not be the general district magnitude that impacts the election of women, but rather the "party magnitude"—the number of seats a party actually expects to win. That is to say, a party may only have a chance at winning one seat in a particular district, and if a woman is ranked second on the list, her opportunities for election are nil.

Another set of institutions is located within the party. Together, a party's ideology, organizational structure, size, and age may affect a party's propensity and capacity to adopt candidate gender quotas. As shown in chapter 3, leftist parties tend to be more supportive of women within their ranks. By extension, parties with leftist ideologies might be more likely to employ active strategies to increase women's representation, because an egalitarian ideology justifies intervention into recruitment in the name of balancing power. Both women activists and party leaders alike in these leftist parties reasoned that equal opportunity was not enough to help severely underrepresented groups. Instead, the rules change is deemed necessary to bring structural change. In contrast, more conservative parties may extend their "laissez-faire" approach to the economy to the gender composition of candidate lists, as well (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993, p. 320). Conservatives may continually eschew any form of quotas, contending that women's promotion must be based upon merit alone, and that quotas serve as a form of special protection not necessary for qualified women. However, both Lovenduski and Norris (1993) and Matland and Studlar (1996) posit that while leftist ideology might once have been a strong predictor of a party's likelihood to adopt gender policies, it is no longer as strong.

Further, as reasoned in chapter 3, the traditional, unidimensional Left/Right ideological continuum may be too simple to describe how ideology affects women's representation. The lines of political conflict, based upon "Old Politics" cleavages of class conflict, may be less conducive to the adoption of quotas than the new dimension, based upon a "New Politics" cleavage (Inglehart, 1977). Therefore, I include summary measures for both Old Left values and New Left values, which are the same measures of ideology used in the previous chapter (see Appendix A).

Another party-level influence is the organizational structure of a party. One component, level of nomination, characterizes the level at which candidates are selected by the party. A more centralized level gives party leaders more control to initiate gender quota policies—when they see fit to do so. Matland and Studlar (1996) point out that centralized party procedures in general allow party leadership to respond to pressures for measures to increase women's representation. In a more localized process, each region or locality must be pressured separately to adopt measures to promote women.

The second component, the degree of institutionalization, denotes the nature of the party organization. Using the same measure as in chapter 3, I consider highly institutionalized parties as rule-oriented and bureaucratic. More highly institutionalized parties should be more likely to resort to rules such as quotas to achieve goals and should be more likely to actually implement these rules.

Finally, one might expect that smaller and newer parties would be the first

to adopt quotas and initiate the process of a contagion. Evidence from Norway supports this hypothesis (Matland and Studlar, 1996). Although not concerned specifically with women as an underrepresented group, Czudnowski (1975) more generally addresses the relative strength of parties in a national system and argues that majority parties would be less concerned with "problems of sociodemographic representation" than would a minority party (p. 181). His prediction can be extended to the problem of women's representation in the present—smaller parties that draw on women's support may have more to lose. They may be more concerned with maintaining their strength among women.

New parties may act as the "policy entrepreneurs" identified in the state policy diffusion literature (Mintrom, 1997). New parties must carve out a niche for themselves within the party system and attract voters if they are to survive. Therefore, new parties may try to lure female voters by making a commitment to ensure that the parties will have female candidates, and more broadly, to demonstrate their commitment to women's issues. Further, the smaller, newer parties also may have less to lose if the strategy fails. New parties may not have loyal groups whose support may be lost. Likewise, innovative policies, such as quotas, may meet with less resistance in newer parties because there are fewer established norms and few entrenched power holders who would be deposed by a policy such as quotas.

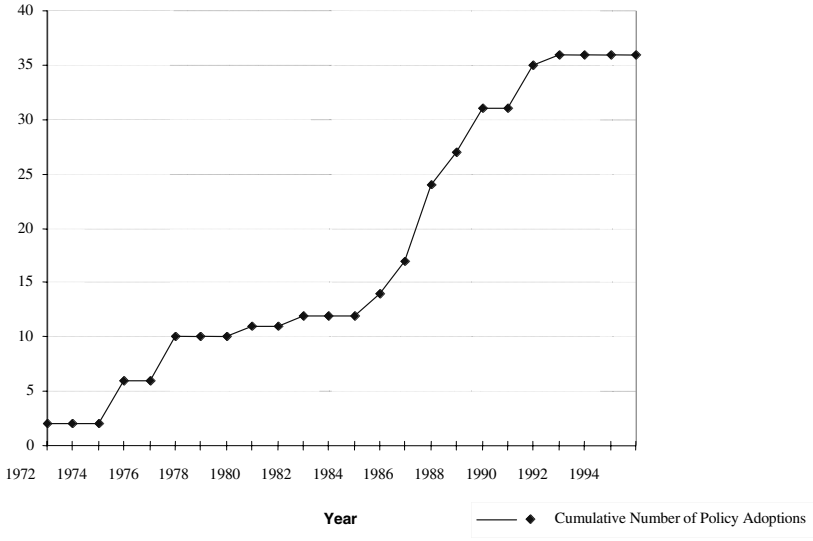
Data Analysis

The primary focus of this chapter is to describe the diffusion of quotas as an innovative policy across parties and to explain a party's adoption of candidate gender quotas for the national legislature. The statistical analysis is based on sixty parties[3] in ten Western European democracies.[4] Measures for each of the independent and dependent variables were collected from published national statistics and other data sources. A full list of variables and their sources is presented in Appendix A. The dependent variable in each case is the presence or absence of candidate gender quotas. The adoption of candidate gender quotas is examined from 1970 to 1995. The first candidate gender quota was adopted in 1975. Finally, systematic data on gender quotas is available only up to 1995.

Parties and the Adoption of Gender Quotas

Parties have adopted candidate gender quotas steadily over time. Figure 4.1 displays the cumulative number of parties adopting quotas from 1972 to 1995

Figure 4.1 Cumulative Quotas Adopted 1972–95



Source: Calculated by the author based on data obtained from Katz and Mair (1992) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (1993), supplemented with data from country experts collected by Professor Richard Matland.

for the sixty parties in this study. From 1975 to 1984, the number of parties with quotas remains below four and then begins to take off. The most rapid increase in the adoption of quotas occurred from 1985 to 1993, from five parties to eighteen. After 1993, the rate slows again.

This graph follows the characteristic "diffusion of an innovation," which is the process by which a new idea is communicated over time among members of a social system (Yamaguchi, 1991). The standard s-shaped curve displays a pattern in which adoption is slow and then reaches a takeoff point, rising toward a maximum rate of diffusion, and leveling off. A slowdown in the adoption rate is because there are fewer potential adopters left; thus the policy has reached a saturation point. This is the case with quotas. Those parties that are most likely to adopt quotas had likely done so by 1993, and the pool of favorable parties decreases, leading one to predict that fewer parties will adopt quotas in the future.

Event History Analysis

A special statistical procedure is needed to analyze the diffusion of gender quotas. Scholars of policy diffusion frequently use event history analysis

(Berry and Berry, 1990; 1992; Mooney and Lee, 1995). Event history analysis (EHA) is the best method to analyze this dynamic process. Where the standard ordinary least squares (OLS) regression uses interval/ratio variables as dependent variables, EHA allows one to use a dichotomized variable measuring the event we are interested in—quotas. Further, one can measure the presence or absence of quotas in each year within the study. Therefore, there is no need for a separate variable measuring time; it is built right into the dependent variable. In addition, EHA is an improvement over logistic regression because it handles "right censoring." That is to say, among the parties in the data set, there is a set of parties that never adopt quotas. In a standard regression, these cases are treated in the same manner as those parties that adopted quotas in the last year of our time period. Clearly the two sets of parties are quite different when it comes to quotas, and EHA distinguishes between the two in its analysis.

EHA allows us to look at both the cross-temporal pattern and the influences on the adoption of candidate gender quotas. For each party, EHA asks what determines the probability that quota adoption occurs. This probability is called the "hazard rate" in EHA, and it denotes the likelihood that a quota will be adopted at a given point in time, given that the event has not already occurred (Yamaguchi, 1991). EHA models produce maximum likelihood estimates, which provide a great deal of information about the likelihood that each party might adopt quotas through the defined time period (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 1997).[5]

An Event History Analysis Model of Candidate Gender Quota Adoption

I combine the four categories of hypotheses outlined in the literature review to predict the likelihood a party will adopt candidate gender quotas.[6] Although there are distinct reasons to believe that leftist values based on both Old and New Politics would make a party more likely to adopt quotas, I could not include both variables in the same model because they correlate too strongly with one another. Therefore, I include only the degree of leftist orientation based upon Old Politics. When I substitute the indicator of New Left Politics, it is highly statistically significant as well, and the impact of the other explanatory variables remains similar.[7]

Table 4.2 presents two models: Model I covers 1975 to 1995, and Model II covers only 1985 to 1995. Because the assumptions of EHA require that the set of cases not change throughout the observation period, only those parties that had gained seats in parliament by 1975 could be included in the first model. Those parties that gained their first seat in the national legislature after 1975 (e.g., several New Left parties[8]) are eliminated from this first model.[9]

Table 4.2 Logit Maximum Likelihood Estimates for Event History Analysis Model of Candidate Gender Quota Adoption

	Model I 1975–95		Model II 1985–95	
Independent Variables	*B*	Exp(*B*)	*B*	Exp(*B*)
% Women MPs—National	.02	1.028	.06	1.061
% Women MPs—Party	–.02	.978	–.01	.970
% Women Party Leadership	.07*	1.077	.04**	1.040
Electoral System Proportionality	–.02	.986	–.03	.965
Year First Quota in Party System	–.25**	.778	–.15**	.865
Leftist Ideology	–.42**	.656	–.38**	.682
Level of Candidate Nomination	1.97	1.055	.97	2.64
Degree of Institutionalization	–.49	.608	–.34	.706
Age of Party	.01	.997	–.01	.985
Number of Cases	61		66	
-2 (Log-likelihood ratio)	75.617**		76.42**	

Significance Levels:* = $p < .1$, ** = $p < .05$

Certainly one must take this exclusion into account when interpreting the results from the first model. The second statistical model limits the time period to 1985 to 1995 in order to include those parties established between 1975 and 1995. Hence, the first model sacrifices the inclusion of new parties for a greater span of time, and the second model the reverse.

The coefficients (*B*) are maximum likelihood estimates obtained through logit, and the signs of the estimates indicate whether a variable increases or decreases the "hazard rate" across time.[10] The most important explanations for the adoption of gender quotas are consistent across both models in table 4.2. A high number of women among the party's leadership, the year the first quota was adopted by a party in the system, and a leftist ideology strongly influence the likelihood that a party will adopt quotas. Because these three explanatory variables are the only statistically significant indicators, the discussion will focus on them. The results reveal that for each percentage point gain in the proportion of women among the party's leadership, or national executive committee, the likelihood that the party will adopt quotas increases by almost 8% in the first model and by 13% in the second model. Further, for each year closer to 1975 that the first quota in the party system was adopted, the likelihood that other parties will follow suit increases by 22% in the first model, and by 13% in the second. The degree of leftist values that a party holds, based upon Old Politics issues, shows that for every one point toward

the left on the index, a party is 34% more likely to adopt quotas in Model I, and 32% more likely in Model II.

The strong and significant estimate yielded by the percentage of women on the national executive committee emphasizes the integral role of women within the party in pressing for measures to increase women's representation at the parliamentary level. Where women acquired power within the party by the mid-1970s, their presence at the decision-making table heightened the likelihood their party would adopt formal rule changes to advance women's gains in parliament. Further, other parties within the party system strongly impact the decision to adopt gender quotas. The earlier the first party (the prototype) adopts quotas, the more likely other parties in the system are to follow the innovator's lead. Finally, although quotas have spread across the ideological spectrum in some cases, when compared systematically, a leftist party is more likely to adopt quotas, and to adopt them sooner. These cross-national findings, controlling for other factors, support the "contagion theory" of Matland and Studlar (1996), who predict a contagion after a party from the Left sets the precedent for rival left parties to follow.

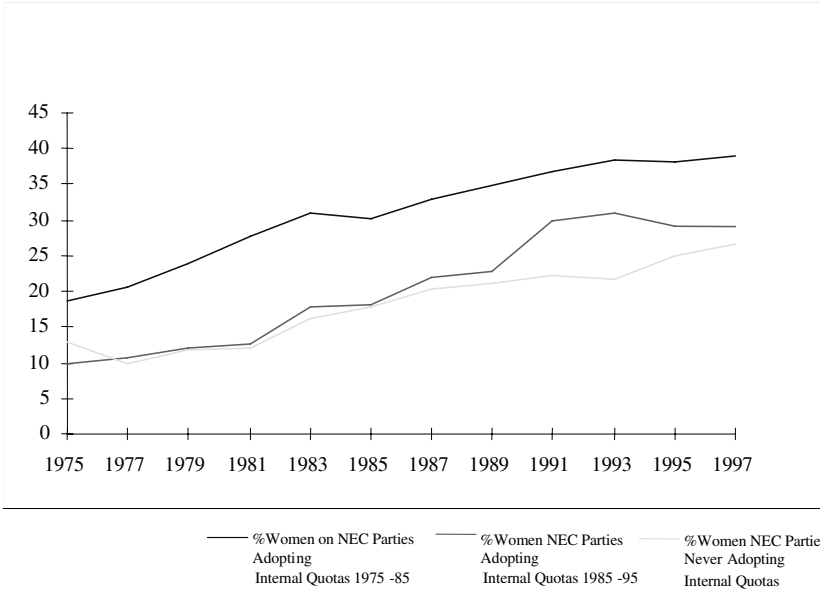
In short, leftist values, based on both Old Politics and New Politics issues, are important. By looking at two time periods, it is evident that it is not New Left parties alone that drive this process. In the first model (1975–95), a majority of New Left parties is omitted, because of their late entrance into parliament.[11] However, parties were adopting quotas, and women's activism and New Left values within established parties were quite important.

Establishing Sequence: Women on the National Executive, Parliament, and Rules

It is important to systematically assess the sequence of events that led to the adoption of quotas and to their effects. The multivariate analysis in chapter 3 made clear that *internal* party rules are strongly related to the presence of more women on the national executive committees of the parties in this study. And past scholarship shows that the number of women on the NEC is strongly related to the number of female party MPs. Further, the present chapter has linked the adoption of quotas to the percentage of female MPs. Yet one might question the sequence of events. Which comes first, quotas or women in high party posts? Women in high party posts, or women in parliament? Quotas or women in parliament?

While internal quotas are often credited with raising the proportion of women within the party, it may also be that parties with initially high levels of women in the top party echelons are the ones that are most likely to adopt quotas. Thus, we must test whether internal quotas achieve their desired effect.

Figure 4.2 Women on the NEC and Internal Party Rules, 1975–97

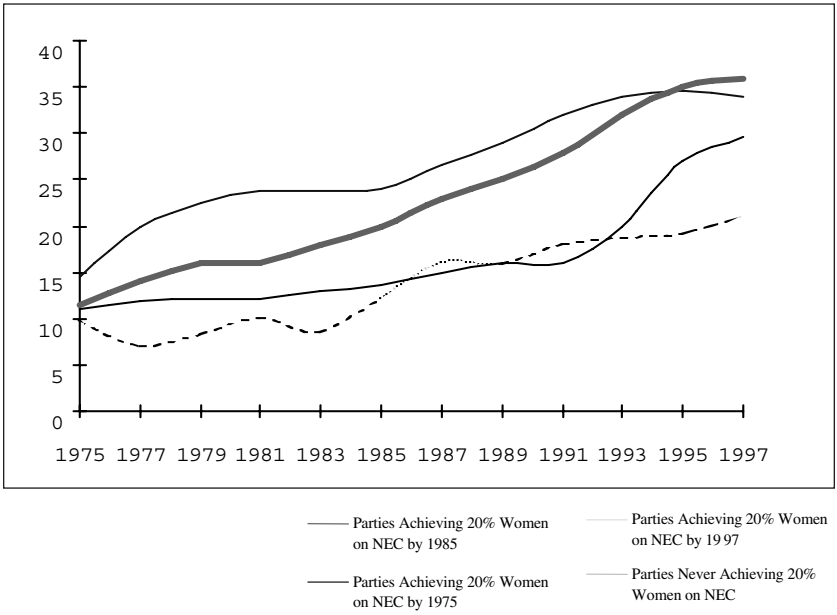


Source: See figure 4.1.

Figure 4.2 displays the trends in the proportion of women on the NEC in parties with and without internal quotas from 1975 to 1997. The three lines in figure 4.2 represent the average percentage of women on the NEC for: (1) parties that adopted internal quotas from 1975 to 1985; (2) parties that adopted internal quotas from 1985 to 1995; and (3) parties that never adopted internal quotas. By breaking down parties with internal quotas into two periods of adoption, we have two separate tests of the effect of quotas. In the period after quotas are adopted, one can expect a jump in women's representation on the NEC.

Each line in figure 4.2 shows an increase in the number of women in office, yet the significant increases occur at different points for each group. The first line shows that while all three subgroups began at similar levels, parties with internal quotas early on jumped far above the others shortly after quotas were adopted. The takeoff point for the early quota parties is 1977, and the average percentage of women on the NEC climbs steadily, but more slowly, into the 1990s. The second line reveals that parties that adopted internal quotas from 1985 to 1995 averaged numbers of women on the NEC similar to parties without quotas up to the late 1980s, when the average percentage of women on the NEC jumps substantially for parties with internal quotas, rising

Figure 4.3 Percentage of Women in Parliament by Year in Which Women Reach "Critical Mass" on NEC

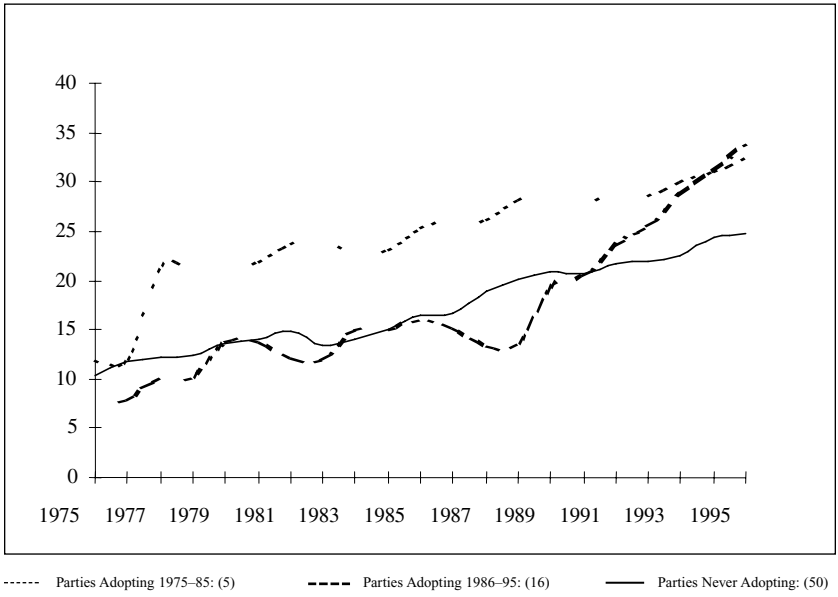


Source: See figure 4.1.

above those without quotas. Finally, the third line reveals that parties that never adopted internal quotas are nevertheless increasing their percentage of women on the NEC, yet these parties end up in 1995 with the lowest average. It is clear that internal quotas are a mechanism of increase in women's presence on the NEC across parties.

In a similar fashion, it is important to examine whether women's gains on the national executive committees of parties preceded their gains in the party's delegation to parliament. If attaining a "critical mass" of women on the NEC, or crossing a certain threshold, leads to gains in parliament, then it would appear that women's power within the party allows them to lobby for further gains in parliament. Past theorizing on what constitutes a critical mass sets the threshold at anywhere from 10% to 35% women in a given institution (for a thorough review of the literature, see Studlar and McAllister, 2002).[12] Given this variation, it seems most prudent to select a point between the two extremes, and thus the threshold for a critical mass of women has been set at 20%. It is hypothesized that when the composition of the NEC reaches 20% women, women's acquired power will translate into

Figure 4.4 Average Percentage of Women MPs by Adoption of Quotas, 1975–95



Source: See figure 4.1.

further power, manifesting itself in significant increases in the proportion of women in the party's parliamentary delegation.

Figure 4.3 displays the trends in the average percentage of women MPs for parties: (1) that achieved 20% women on the NEC before 1975; (2) that achieved 20% women on the NEC between 1975 and 1985; (3) that achieved 20% women on the NEC between 1985 and 1997; and (4) that never achieved 20% women on the NEC. By breaking down parties into three eras in which women reached a critical mass on the NEC, we have three separate tests of the effect of women's internal power. In the period after women reach 20%, we expect a jump in women's representation on the NEC.

Each line in figure 4.3 shows an increase in the proportion of women in office, yet the significant increases occur at different points for each group. The first line shows that while all three subgroups began at similar levels, parties reaching a critical mass by 1975 jumped above the others straightaway, and then the rate of growth slows and then levels off. The second line reveals that parties reaching a critical mass by 1985 averaged intermediate numbers of women MPs up to the mid 1980s, when the average proportion of women MPs jumps substantially, rising far above the others and eventually matching

the parties reaching a critical mass by 1975. The third line reveals that parties that do not reach a critical mass of women until 1997 do not realize gains in parliament until the mid-1990s, when there appears a steep upward slope. Finally, the fourth line reveals that parties never reaching a critical mass are only slightly increasing their percentage of women MPs. It is clear that having a substantial number of women on the NEC is a mechanism of increase in women's parliamentary representation across parties.

Finally, while quotas are often credited with raising the proportion of women in office, it may also be that parties with initially high numbers of women members of parliament (MPs) are the ones that are most likely to adopt quotas. Thus, we must test whether quotas achieve their desired effect. Figure 4.4 displays the trends in the proportion of women MPs in parties with and without quotas from 1975 to 1995. The three lines in figure 4.4 represent the average percentage of women MPs for: (1) parties that adopted quotas from 1975 to 1985; (2) parties that adopted quotas from 1986 to 1995; and (3) parties that never adopted quotas. By breaking down parties with quotas into two periods of adoption, we have two separate tests of the effect of quotas. In the period after quotas are adopted, we expect a jump in women's representation.

Each line in figure 4.4 shows an increase in the percentage of women in office, yet the significant increases occur at different points for each group. The first line shows that while all three subgroups began at similar levels, parties with quotas early on jumped far above the others shortly after quotas were adopted. The takeoff point for the early quota parties is 1977, and the average percentage of women MPs climbs steadily, but more slowly, into the 1990s. The second line reveals that parties that adopted quotas from 1985 to 1995 averaged lower numbers of women officeholders than parties without quotas up to the late 1980s, when the average proportion of women MPs jumps substantially, rising above all others. Finally, the third line reveals that parties that never adopted quotas are nevertheless increasing their percentage of women. However, although parties that never adopted quotas start off in the 1970s with similar percentages to all other parties, these parties end up in 1995 with the lowest average. It is clear that quotas are a mechanism of increase in women's representation.

Conclusions

The strongest explanatory variables may be linked logically in a sequential chain of influences to explain both why and when parties adopt policies to promote women candidates. First, the more women who establish themselves within the highest ranks of the party, the greater the chances the party will

adopt quotas. These women may actively point out that there are too few women in parliament and directly pressure the party leadership to adopt formal measures to increase women's legislative representation. Further, parties with leftist values may be the same parties that have greater numbers of women among the party hierarchy to begin with, and they are the parties where the leadership is more likely to listen to the demands of women on their national executive committees. The strong influence of an entrepreneurial party in the system adopting quotas, and other parties following suit, suggests a process of contagion. And leftist parties may be more likely to initiate the process of contagion. These leftist parties appear to start the process of contagion, and they appear more likely to respond to the precedent set by their rivals.

It may be that parties adopt quotas merely as a symbolic act, in an effort to attract votes. Quotas for women candidates are a visible method of demonstrating support for women's issues. And quotas are often adopted in a process of competition. As such, quotas may be more of an election strategy and less a reflection of real support for women's parliamentary presence. Yet an institution initially designed for one end can often have unintended consequences. Once women are in positions of power, no matter how they got there, it will become more difficult in the future to exclude them. The increasing numbers of women MPs have set a standard for all parties to follow, and greater proportions of women in the party delegation will be expected in the future.

Although a contentious issue, the adoption of candidate quotas and targets reflects some changes that parties have undertaken regarding women's issues. As formal rule changes, gender quotas represent an institutionalization of changing attitudes toward women in politics. Once quotas are in place, there is less need for constant pressure for women's representation. In turn, it is possible that formal rules can turn into norms, reinforcing the changing attitudes toward women in politics.