

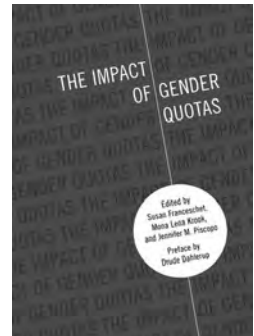
〈書評〉

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The Impact of Gender Quotas

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Women make up 20.3 percent of parliamentarians around the world today (IPU 2012). The world is witnessing the rapid diffusion of gender quotas aimed at improving the historical underrepresentation of women in government—women continue to do better when legislative or voluntary quotas are used. How effective have these quotas been in meeting their original objectives of increasing gender representation? Have undesirable female candidates entered political office as a result of gender quotas? Franceschet et al.'s book (2012) addresses these questions regarding the impact of quotas using in-depth case studies of twelve countries from five regions around the world: Western Europe, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Middle East. This review summarizes major findings of the book, and discusses important contributions in the field of women and politics. I conclude the review by discussing implications these findings have on gender representation in East Asia—a region that is not covered in detail in Franceschet et al.'s book.

The book begins by conceptualizing the impact—"whether the means by which women enter politics influence how, why and to what extent their presence affects different types of representative process" (p. 4). Specifically, the authors distinguish three important types of political representation: "descriptive representation is understood as the numbers and the kinds of women elected, substantive representation is conceptualized as the form and content of policymaking, and finally symbolic representation is theorized as public attitudes toward women in politics and trends in the political engagement of female constituents" (p. 13).

The book, then, discusses a total of twelve countries, assessing how quotas affect descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation in each country. That is, chapters 2, 3, and 4 examine the differences in the profiles of male and female representatives in France, Argentina and Uganda (a distinction made between quota and non-quota women), finding that though backgrounds may differ, female politicians are not necessarily less qualified than their male counterparts. Similarly, assessing what kind of female representatives appeared since the adoption of reserved seats in Morocco, chapter 5 finds that political patronage plays an important role in determining who wins access to power, which applies similarly to both men and women.

Next, chapters 6 through 9 assess how the form and the content of policies change as quota women enter government; however, the empirical evidence on this topic is mixed. Chapter 6 shows that female legislators generally give more priority to minority issues than male parliamentarians in Brazil, although such focused attention on women's issues runs the danger of marginalizing female

legislators, by seeking soft issues rather than hard issues that deal with the essence of government policymaking (e.g., economy, defense). Chapter 7 similarly shows that female representatives act on behalf of women as they gain experience in England. By contrast, as chapters 8 and 9 show, an increase in the number of female legislators has not made much difference in South Africa or Afghanistan, although these findings are not surprising considering the fact that the two countries are nascent democracies, where political institutions are quite young and unstable.

Finally, chapters 10 through 13 examine how public perceptions and attitudes changed as a result of gender quota adoption and implementation. Whereas the Belgian case in chapter 10 shows that quotas widen the gap between male and female legislators in the ways in which political elites think about issues of underrepresentation, other chapters analyzing how “public” attitudes change as a result of quotas find that it is quite difficult to precisely assess the impact of quotas on symbolic representation. That is, though Mexico, Rwanda, and India cases do illustrate how public perceptions of women and leadership changed, studies are unable to confirm whether this is a direct outcome of gender quotas, or a part of broad cultural and political changes occurring over time.

Overall, these findings have important implications for understanding the impact of quotas cross-nationally. Most importantly, quotas in no way encourage under-qualified female candidates to enter government. Additionally, a greater number of women in parliament does change policymaking in a country—more attention is paid to women’s concerns (e.g., domestic violence, and women’s rights) as more women enter government—although the specific degree of impact depends on the context. For instance, a greater number of women in parliament does not necessarily result in policy changes in nascent democracies. Finally, quotas and women legislators do change the ways in which the public think about government and representation, but specific ways in which symbolic representation takes place remain unclear and inconclusive.

The book has distinct strengths that deserve a further mention. First, the book clearly conceptualizes the impact of gender quotas on distinct types of political representation (i.e., descriptive, substantive, symbolic). Second, the book examines the impact of quotas across countries and regions around the world by relying on the common concept of representation. Finally, the geographical scope and methodological diversity the book offers to assess the impact of gender quotas around the world is unprecedented and truly impressive.

At the same time, however, the book also has several caveats. Most importantly, different ways of operationalizing key concepts like descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation across countries make it difficult to assess the true impact of quotas comparatively. This is most problematic in the case of substantive representation—measuring when and how women parliamentarians have made a difference in politics and policymaking in a country. Additionally, the political variable, or the political context that affects the impact of quotas remains unclear. For instance, do gender quotas work better under certain electoral and party systems? What political and social characteristics promote or prevent women’s political representation?

Though the book does not discuss much about the impact of quotas in Asia, the findings of the

book have important implications for understanding gender representation in the region. Regional averages of women in parliament statistics show that women comprise 17.9 percent of parliaments in Asia today. This is well below the average in the Nordic countries (42.0%), and significantly lower than that of sub-Saharan Africa (20.4%). Furthermore, East Asia remains a region where there is relatively little research on gender representation. Most discussions are limited to analyzing the impact of quotas on descriptive representation, particularly because the number of women in government remains low in these countries. Whether electoral or party quotas have assisted gender representation in government in East Asia remains largely unexplored.

Japan, in particular, remains a country where the number of female representatives is still very low in comparison to established democracies, as well as many developing democracies. Women comprise 8.1 percent of the Lower House, 16.1 percent of the Upper House (see Inter-Parliamentary Union website: <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>), and 10.4 percent of subnational parliaments (Eto 2010). The absence of legislative gender quotas, and different electoral rules present at the national and local elections complicates means to increase gender representation. Furthermore, socio-cultural factors (e.g., gender roles, and bias against women's involvement in politics) also contribute to women's underrepresentation in parliament. Nevertheless, political parties (e.g., The Japan New Party in the early 1990s, the Liberal Democratic Party in the early 2000s) have made successful attempts to implement gender quotas voluntarily in order to increase the number of female representatives. Similarly, the women's movement associated with the Life Club Co-operative made important advancements in getting their representatives elected in local legislatures (Le Blanc 1999). The impressive strides made by women's groups in Japan in subnational parliaments suggest that women's electoral success can be promoted not only through institutional means (i.e., quota provisions and electoral reforms), but also through noninstitutional mechanisms (i.e., social movements).

On the other hand, women in public office became the focus of public attention when Park Geun-hye—a fifth term National Assembly member before announcing her decision to run for president—became the first woman President of Korea in 2013. Korea has adopted gender quotas at both national and subnational parliamentary elections since the early 2000s (Shin 2014). Yet, whether quota women have made any policy difference, or affected how the public think about politics remains relatively unknown (but for an exception see Kim and Oh 2010). It is particularly important to examine these questions given the recent discussions of electoral reforms in Korea over abolishing party nominations in provincial and municipal elections (Park 2013). Though the goal of the reform is to eradicate the negative influence of political parties in having too much control over local governance and politics, party involvement in local elections makes it impossible for political parties to commit to nominating a certain proportion of female candidates (implementation of quotas). If evidence finds that quotas have assisted women's representation descriptively, substantively, and symbolically in Korean politics, any movement that obstructs the implementation of gender quotas should be treated with caution.

In sum, Franceschet, Krook and Piscopo's edited volume on the impact of gender quotas does a

stunning job of conceptualizing political representation, and applying them in various national contexts using different research methodologies. The editors as well as authors of individual country chapters deserve applause for their accomplishments and academic contributions in the field of comparative politics. Few comparative studies to date integrate theories of electoral and party systems with minority representation, and extend the discussion to different regions around the world (for an exception see Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012). In this regard, the book is a significant addition to growing research on cross-national studies of gender and politics.

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