

## SCECLB43 -P Cross-Party Group on Women

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Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Biliau Diwygio | Reform Bill Committee

Bil Senedd Cymru (Rhestrau Ymgeiswyr Etholiadol) | Senedd Cymru (Electoral Candidate Lists) Bill

Ymateb gan Grŵp Trawsbleidiol ar Fenywod | Evidence from Cross-Party Group on Women

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22 April 2024

Dear David,

I am writing to you as Chair of the Cross-Party Group on Women. Our CPG was established in 2021 and electoral reform, diversity of representation and quotas has been one of our key work areas. Our meetings are regularly attended by over 30 Senedd Members and civil society representatives. At previous meetings, the CPG heard from Dr Fiona Buckley about the successful use of gender quotas in Ireland, from Professor Mona Lena Krook on global evidence on the intersectional impact of quotas, and from the Diverse5050 Campaign about the need for diversity and gender quotas in Wales.

The CPG has closely followed the progress of Senedd reform. We were delighted when the Senedd accepted the Special Purpose Committee's report, including its recommendation for the introduction of statutory gender quotas, in June 2022. Following the recent introduction of the Senedd Cymru (Legislative Candidate Lists) Bill, we invited Professor Jennifer Piscopo to our most recent meeting on 19 April 2024. Jennifer is a leading expert on the design and implementation of electoral gender quotas with over 20 years of experience researching gender quota adoption. Some key findings of her presentation were that:

- Gender quotas are the most effective tool to increase the number of women in office, with parity being seen as a permanent expression of a just, fair democracy;
- Gender parity enhances democratic legitimacy – gender balanced legislatures are perceived as more legitimate and their procedures and decision are viewed as fairer by the electorate;
- Gender quotas improve voters' satisfaction with democracy and political trust and improve political participation;
- Parties often practice *minimal compliance* with legislative quotas – standing as few women candidates as possible and only in the most disadvantaged positions. Quota designs that combine ambitious vertical and horizontal placement mandates effectively address the risk of minimal compliance;
- Once quotas are in place, parties generally succeed in finding women candidates but need to diversify their recruitment practices.

Given this overwhelming evidence and the wide civil society support for gender quotas, as shown by the membership of this CPG, it is imperative that the Senedd Cymru (Electoral Candidate Lists) Bill proceeds through the Senedd as part of the wider Senedd Reform package. Without it, the overall policy objective of Senedd reform – to implement a more effective legislature for, and on behalf of, the people of Wales – will be deeply compromised.

A copy of Professor Jennifer Piscopo's presentation and a list of our members have been attached.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Siân Gwenllïan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

**Siân Gwenllïan MS**

*Chair of the Cross-Party Group on Women*

# The adoption and implementation of gender quotas: global lessons

Professor Jennifer M. Piscopo

Professor of Gender and Politics

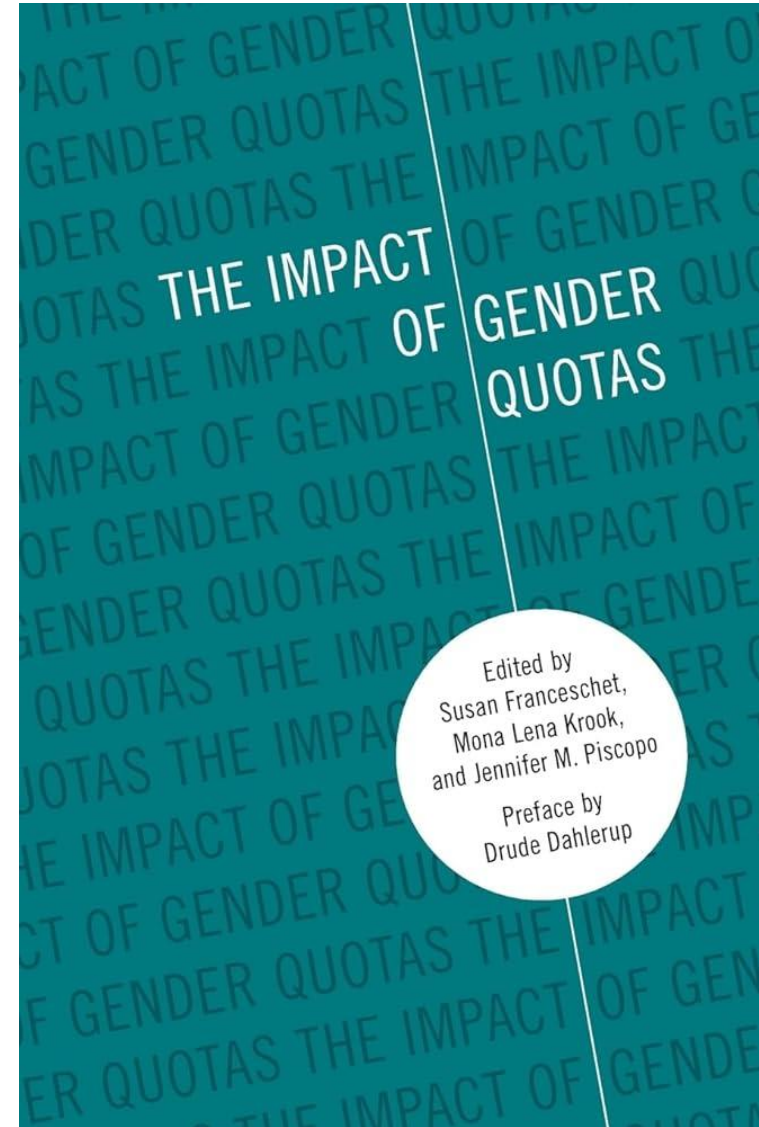
Royal Holloway University of London



*Prepared for the Cross-Party Group on Women  
Gender quotas and Senedd reform  
19 April 2023*

# My background

- ✓ 20+ years researching gender quota adoption
- ✓ Focus on Latin America: has been in the vanguard (today 16 of 18 countries have quotas; 10 have gender parity)
- ✓ Advised national governments in Latin America and East Asia on quota design & implementation



# What is *not* in dispute



Not rare or mysterious: 80+ countries, in all regions, in emerging and advanced democracies

The most effective way to increase number of women in office

Gender parity now preferred: quotas were seen as temporary special measures that benefited women; but parity seen as a permanent expression of a just, fair democracy

Many countries also have parity mandates for executives and judiciaries

# Gender parity enhances democratic legitimacy



## All Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy

**Amanda Clayton** Vanderbilt University  
**Diana Z. O'Brien** Texas A&M University  
**Jennifer M. Piscopo** Occidental College

*Abstract: What does women's presence in political decision-making bodies signal to citizens? Do these signals differ based on the body's policy decisions? And do women and men respond to women's presence similarly? Though scholars have demonstrated the substantive and symbolic benefits of women's representation, little work has examined how women's presence affects citizens' perceptions of democratic legitimacy. We test the relationship between representation and legitimacy beliefs through survey experiments on a nationally representative sample of U.S. citizens. First, we find that women's equal presence legitimizes decisions that go against women's interests. We show suggestive evidence that this effect is particularly pronounced among men, who tend to hold less certain views on women's rights. Second, across decision outcomes and issue areas, women's equal presence legitimizes decision-making processes and confers institutional trust and acquiescence. These findings add new theoretical insights into how, when, and for whom inclusive representation increases perceptions of democratic legitimacy.*

When the political decision-making body had gender parity (versus being all-male), respondents:

- ✓ Viewed the gender-parity body as more legitimate
- ✓ Viewed the decisions made by the gender-parity body as more fair
- ✓ Viewed the decision making procedures used by the gender-parity body as more fair
- ✓ True across issue areas

# When do countries adopt quotas?

- ✓ Contexts of democratization or re-democratization
- ✓ Contexts of electoral reforms that aim to improve how democracy works → Wales fits this pattern
- ✓ Electoral reforms open up moments to improve political representation and address democratic deficits

Research Article

GIGA | Journal of Politics in Latin America

## Lessons from a Late Adopter: Feminist Advocacy, Democratizing Reforms, and Gender Quotas in Chile

Jennifer M. Piscopo<sup>1</sup> , Gwynn Thomas<sup>2</sup> , Peter Siavelis<sup>3</sup> , and Magda Hinojosa<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

Many Latin American and other Global South countries adopted gender quotas during democratic transitions. What explains late-adopting cases like Chile? We analyze two instances: the 2015–2016 electoral reforms, which finally introduced a 40-percent gender quota, and the 2020–2023 constitutional process, which introduced gender parity. Using a qualitative analysis that draws on 39 elite interviews, we posit that efforts to redesign national political institutions in order to address democratic deficits create transition-like moments. In turn, these moments create windows of opportunity for quota advocates. We show how quota advocates in the parties, congress, and civil society leveraged growing voter discontent to pressure their resistant colleagues and ultimately secure gender quotas (and later gender parity) as part of larger reform efforts. Our analysis of the Chilean case elevates two factors explaining quota adoption: the long arc of democratization and women’s role as protagonists in electoral reforms.

Journal of Politics in Latin America  
1–24

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# How do quotas work best?

The design and fit with the electoral rules matters

## Vertical placement mandates

- Refers to ordering of women's and men's names *down* the list
- Minimal compliance
- Vertical parity: called zipper lists / zebra lists / alternation (*alternancia*)
- Zipping alone cannot guarantee gender parity (minimal compliance can still apply)

## Horizontal placement mandates

- Refers to placement of women in the *first* list position across parties' lists
- Horizontal parity: even distribution of men and women in first (or sole) position
- Solution to the problem of minimal compliance on vertically zippered lists

# Is parity always a strict 50/50?



*Chile's 2021-2022 constitutional convention added to the draft constitution gender parity as a ceiling for men but a floor for women and other diverse genders*

In some places, parity functions as a maximum for men but a minimum for women

Bolivia tacitly permit women to have more than 50%: gender parity applies to candidates, but more women win, so Bolivia has had majority-female legislatures

Senedd bill implicitly follows this idea, by allowing consecutive women but not consecutive men

Parties **can still choose** whether to zipper or whether to have consecutive women → parties retain choice

# Myth-busting

## ‘Quotas lower credibility and legitimacy’



***In 12-country study (including the UK), we show that attaining gender parity in decision-making bodies via quotas is still preferred to having all-male decision bodies***

# 'Quotas permit the entrance of unqualified women'

*American Economic Review* 2017, 107(8): 2204–2242  
<https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20160080>

## Gender Quotas and the Crisis of the Mediocre Man: Theory and Evidence from Sweden

By TIMOTHY BESLEY, OLLE FOLKE, TORSTEN PERSSON, AND JOHANNA RICKNE

*We develop a model where party leaders choose the competence of politicians on the ballot to trade off electoral success against their own survival. The predicted correlation between the competence of party leaders and followers is strongly supported in Swedish data. We use a novel approach, based on register data for the earnings of the whole population, to measure the competence of all politicians in 7 parties, 290 municipalities, and 10 elections (for the period 1982–2014). We ask how competence was affected by a zipper quota, requiring local parties to alternate men and women on the ballot, implemented by the Social Democratic Party in 1993. Far from being at odds with meritocracy, this quota raised the competence of male politicians where it raised female representation the most. We argue that resignation of mediocre male leaders was a key driver of this effect. (JEL D72, J16)*

Across the globe, research shows that women elected under quotas have the same – or *more* – qualifications and political experience than men

There is no empirical support for quotas lowering the quality of politicians → in fact, by forcing more competition, they likely enhance politicians' 'quality'

# 'Parties don't have enough women to run'

The absence of women in politics is largely explained by political parties' failure to diversify from where and how they recruit candidates: 'Like follows like'

Quotas force parties to look outside the usual arenas. 'Binders full of women' is one way of talking about diversifying from where qualified candidates are sought.



*This 2012 gaffe from US presidential candidate Mitt Romney obscured an important truth: diversifying recruitment strategies matters.*

# 'Parties are already doing enough to support women'



Parties can have internal ('voluntary') quotas, but not all have them

So parties 'do the work' and others do not → gains in women's representation then concentrated among left parties

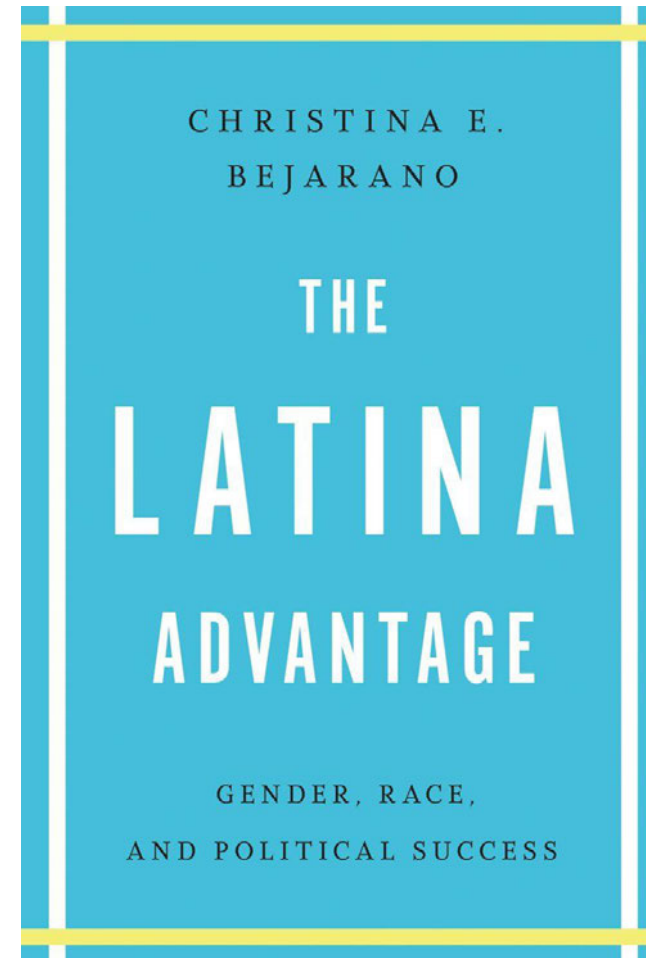
But called 'voluntary' for a reason: no binding commitment and no lasting change

# 'Quotas do not benefit diverse women'

Complementarity advantage: parties look for candidates that 'check multiple boxes'

Downside: concentrate diversity among women, but not men

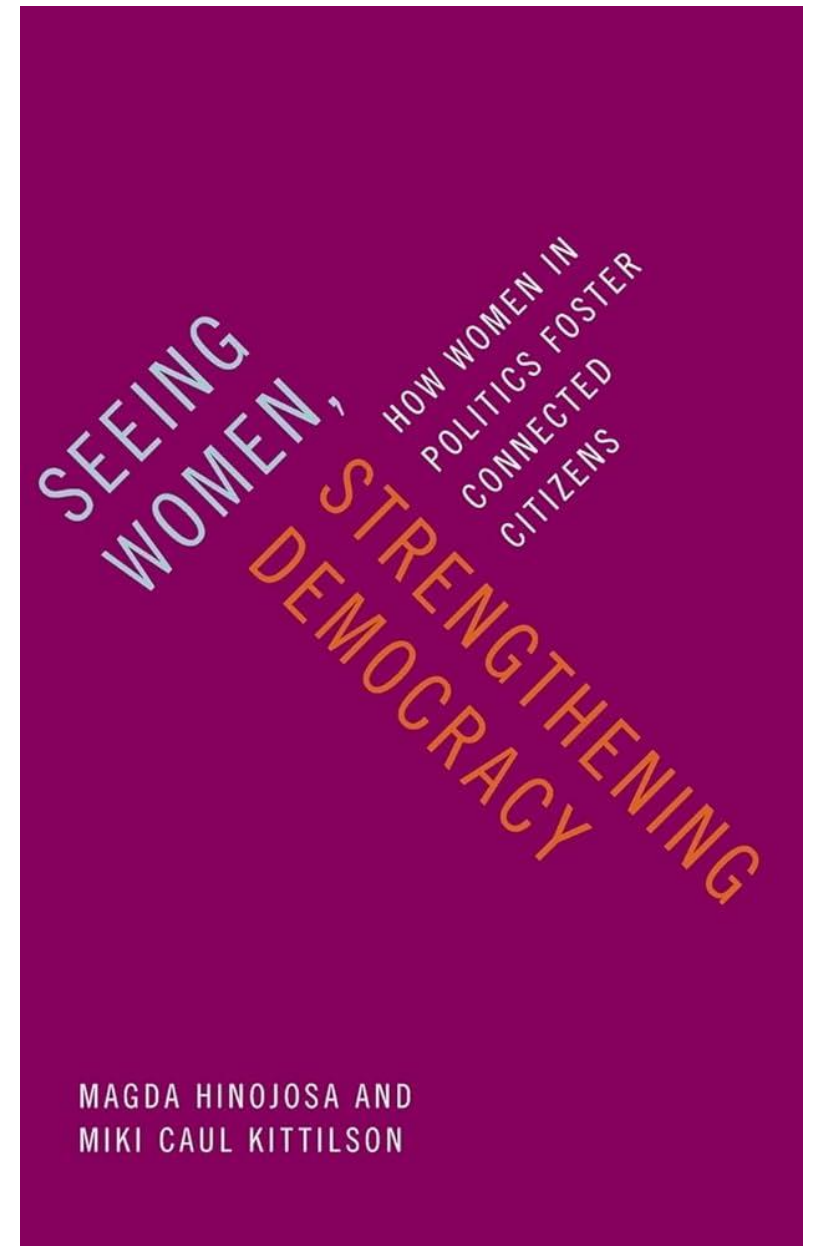
Intersectionality does not apply 'just' to women and is not only relevant when we talk about electing women → efforts to diversify parliament apply to men, too



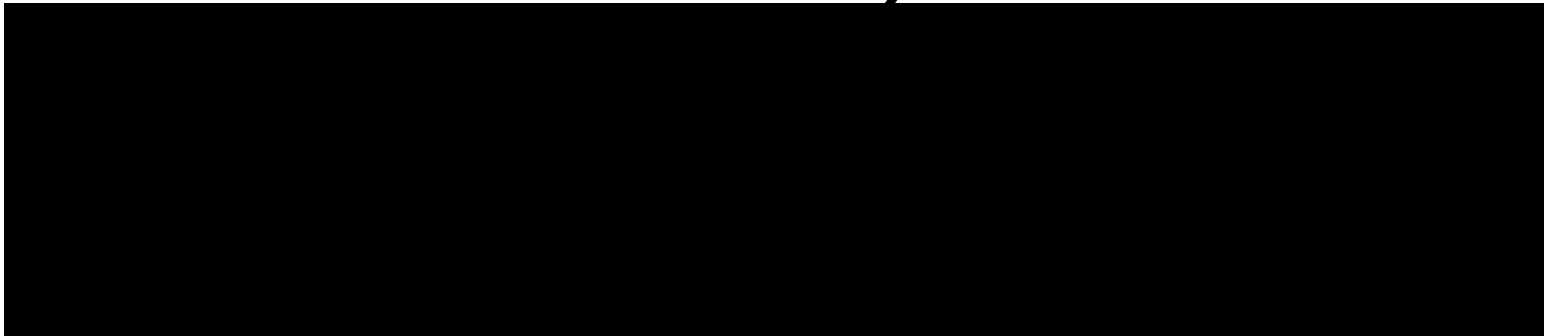
# Concrete impacts of quotas

When more women are in office, their presence:

- ✓ Raises democratic legitimacy
- ✓ Improve voters' satisfaction with democracy and political trust
- ✓ Improve voters' political participation
- ✓ Inspire women and members of other underrepresented groups to increase their participation



*Thank you!*



1. Sian Gwenllian MS
2. Sioned Williams MS
3. Elin Jones MS
4. Heledd Fychan MS
5. Delyth Jewell MS
6. Jane Dodds MS
7. Sarah Murphy MS
8. Joyce Watson MS
9. Carolyn Thomas MS
10. Hannah Griffiths, WWBG
11. Alison Parken, Cardiff University
12. Debbie Shaffer, FTWW
13. Dee Montague, FTWW
14. Ele Hicks, Diverse Cymru
15. Chris Dunn, Diverse Cymru
16. Jane-Fenton May, Wales Assembly of Women
17. Jenny Ramsay, Office of Paul Davies MS
18. Johanna Robinson, National Advisor VAWDASV
19. Kirsty Rees
20. Dr Rachel Minto, Cardiff University
21. Rhianydd Williams, Wales TUC
22. Sarah Thomas, NFWI
23. Bethan Sayed
24. Stephanie Grimshaw, Welsh Women's Aid
25. Jen Mills, Welsh Women's Aid
26. Victoria Vasey, WEN Wales
27. Jessica Laimann, WEN Wales
28. Megan Evans, WEN Wales
29. Evelyn James, WEN Wales
30. Dr Larissa Peixoto Vale Gomes
31. Leanne Waring, CAVC
32. Sarah Rees, Oxfam Cymru
33. Hade Turkmen, Oxfam Cymru
34. Krista Powell Edwards
35. Laura Shobiye, Sported UK
36. Megan Thomas, Disability Wales
37. Christina Tanti, Race Equality First
38. Sandy Club, Office of the Future Generations Commissioner
39. Tanya Harrington, Stonewall Cymru
40. Nancy Lidubwi, Bawso
41. Carwen Wynne Howells, Soroptimist International Wales South
42. Abi Thomas, Plaid Cymru
43. Jess Blair, Electoral Reform Society
44. Anna-Marie Lawrence, Plan Int UK
45. Carmel Boston
46. Jackie Jones
47. Nkechie Allen Dawon, Race Council Cymru
48. Yasmin Khan