

# Designing for Equality

*Best-fit, medium-fit and non-favourable combinations of electoral systems and gender quotas*

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# Electoral Systems

Way in which votes are translated to seats

3 main groups:

1. Plurality/ Majority
2. Proportional
3. Mixed
4. Others

# 1. Plurality/ Majority systems

Winner = candidate/ party with most votes

## Single member districts:

- First Past The Post (FPTP) Solomon Islands, UK, USA
- Alternative Vote (AV) (50%+) PNG, Fiji, Australia
- Two Round System (50%+) France, Egypt

## Multi-member districts:

- Block Vote (as many votes as candidate seats)  
Tonga, Tuvalu
- Party Block Vote (1 vote, party with most votes wins all seats) Cameroon\*, Chad\*

## 2. Proportional systems

Share of parliamentary seats corresponds to share of votes received

(e.g. 40% votes received = 40% of seats won)

- List Proportional Representation (LPR)

Vote for a party list

Nordic countries, Netherlands, Spain, Morocco

- Single Transferable Vote (STV)

Rank-order candidates in multi-member districts (re-distribute votes of least successful candidates )

Ireland

### 3. Mixed systems

- Parallel systems: Two *independent* elements

Proportional Representation (PR) & Plurality/Majority

Russia, Lithuania, Pakistan, Thailand

- Mixed Member Proportional (MMP): Two elements

PR compensates disproportionality of Plurality/ Majority

New Zealand, Germany (compensatory seats granted)

## 4. Other systems

- **Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV)**

One vote in multi-member district, candidate-centred, highest votes wins

Vanuatu, Afghanistan, Jordan, Pitcairn Islands

- **Limited Vote**

More than one vote in multi-member district, candidate centred but not as many votes as candidates

*Gibraltar*

- **Border Count**

Preferential, candidate centred, voters use numbers to mark preference it is valued accordingly, highest total wins

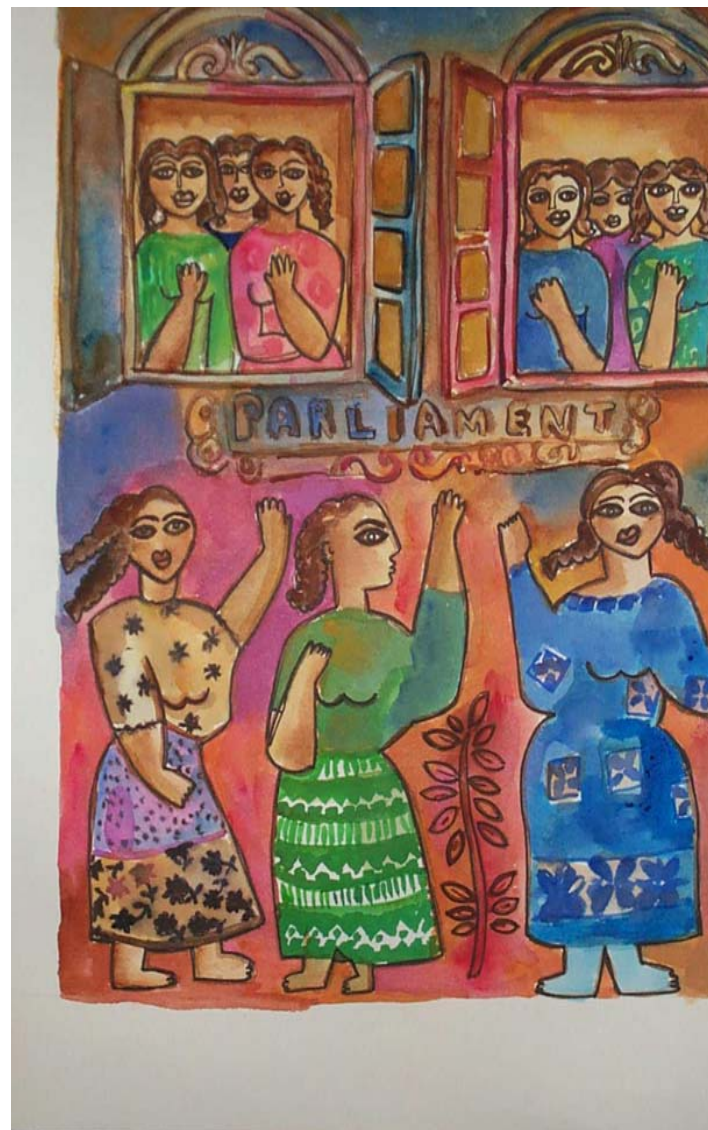
*Nauru (modified)*

# Electoral system variables which impact on women's representation

- **District magnitude:** Size of the district determines number of people a party can nominate – the more people the better chance for gender balance
- **Party magnitude:** The more candidates elected from the same district and same party, the better chance for gender balance
- A **formula** that leads to greater competition:
  - Many parties in the legislature
  - Few "wasted" votes
- **Ballot structure** – candidate or party centered?

# Quotas

- Measure to increase women's participation = "fast track"
- < 97 countries around the world have gender quotas today, more and more countries are using quotas
- Other form of quotas e.g. for ethnic minorities and youth (Peru, Senegal)



# Quota types:

## Constitutional/ Legislative Quotas:

- Applied in **Nomination** process **or**
- **Results-based** (e.g. 15 reserved seats **or** 30 % of national parliamentary seats)

## Voluntary Political Party Quotas:

- Applied in **Nomination** process
  - *With* rank-order rules, e.g. every third candidate should be a women (Zipper / Zebra quota)
  - *Without* rank-order rules

# Designing for Equality

**GREEN** = Best-fit combinations  
**YELLOW** = Medium-fit combinations (could work favourably but will need special attention)  
**RED** = Non-favourable combinations

System Type	List Proportional (Representative with a closed list) (List PR)	List Proportional (Representative with a large district) (List PR)	First Past The Post (FPTP)	Two-Round System (TRS)	Parallel Systems	Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)	Block Vote (BV), Limited Vote (LV) and Single Member Transferable Vote (SMTV)	Party Block Vote (PBV)	Alternative Vote (AV)	Single Transferable Vote (STV)	Block Count (BC)
No quota	List PR systems give incentives for women to be nominated and thereby increase the likelihood of women being elected through a variety of different ways. Women can be nominated together with men so that incumbents are not challenged specifically, men vote towards giving the party another seat, which means that it is important for the party to campaign outside its own group of defined voters; parties are more close to each other in terms of policy, meaning that parties that are not perceived as being "left" to women risk losing voters and so on. The larger the districts and the larger the party magnitudes, the higher the likelihood of women being elected.	List PR systems give incentives for women to be nominated and thereby increase the likelihood of women being elected through a variety of different ways. Women can be nominated together with men so that incumbents are not challenged specifically, men vote towards giving the party another seat, which means that it is important for the party to campaign outside its own group of defined voters; parties are more close to each other, meaning that parties that are not perceived as being "left" to women risk losing voters, and so on. The larger the districts and the larger the party magnitudes, the higher the likelihood of women being elected.	Does not come with any specific incentives to elect women. Incumbents are usually men and since only one person can be elected from the party, the party will be likely to go with the most broadly accepted candidate (which is usually a man - especially if he is the incumbent).	Does not come with any specific incentives to elect women. Incumbents are usually men and since only one person can be elected from the party, the party will be likely to go with the most broadly accepted candidate (which is usually a man - especially if he is the incumbent).	The List PR part of the system has incentives to nominate and elect women, but the second element - with only median effects on the election of women as the result.	The List PR part of the system has incentives to nominate and elect women, but the second element will often have no such incentives - with only median effects on the election of women as the result.	Does not come with any specific incentives to elect women.	A very uncommon system, which has the incentives to work fairly well (as a balanced list could be made without specifically denying the incumbent man the possibility to be re-nominated). Indeed, not, however, how all the List PR incentives, such as clear incentives to campaign for voters outside the party's core voters, or more parties in parliament with only slight differences between them, making voter realigning a relevant issue for the parties.	Does not come with any specific incentives to elect women. Incumbents are usually men and since only one person can be elected from the party, the party will be likely to go with the most broadly accepted candidate (which is usually a man - especially if he is the incumbent).	Does not come with any specific incentives to elect women.	A very uncommon system, which has the incentives to work fairly well, as a balanced list of candidates could be made without specifically denying the incumbent man the possibility to be re-nominated. It does not, however, have all the List PR incentives, such as clear incentives to campaign for voters outside the party's core voters, or more parties in parliament with only slight differences between them, making voter realigning a relevant issue for the parties.
Reserved seats: certain districts for women candidates only	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis. (Example India on sub-national level)	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.	Possible, but only either in parts of the country only or on a rotating basis.
Reserved seats: a list for women candidates only	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for. (Example Poland)	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.	Reserving a list where only women can stand is guaranteed to elect as many women as the quota makes provisions for.
Reserved seats: best / worst system	Possible, but only with open lists. If lists are closed, there would be no best list as no candidate-centred system would be best. Will work unless there are not enough women candidates on the list.	Possible, but only with open lists. If lists are closed, there would be no best list as no candidate-centred system would be best. Will work unless there are not enough women candidates on the list.	Not possible since only one person is elected from each district.	Not possible since TRS almost always uses single member districts.	Possible only for the List PR part of the system (if - as is most often the case - the district element is FPTP) and only if the lists are open.	Possible only for the List PR part of the system (if - as is most often the case - the district element is FPTP) and only if the lists are open.	Possible (used in Mauritius and Palestine for under-represented groups, although not women). Will work unless there are not enough women candidates. Since parties incentivise to field women candidates in order voters have any seats to competing parties. (Example Jordan)	Not possible when lists are closed (which is almost always the case). If lists were open, the quota would work as under Open List PR systems.	Not possible since only one person is elected from each district.	Possible by the same logic as Block Vote, LV and SMTV. Where all but the number of reserved seats have been filled in each district - the highest polling women are elected.	Possible by the same logic as BV, LV, SMTV and STV. But only in multi-member districts (MMDs).
Reserved seats: party list or best / worst system	Increases the likelihood of women being elected, but not as much as in large districts or under first-past-the-post. In countries with a population largely unwilling to vote for women, open lists (compared to closed lists) will limit the effect of the quota, while in countries with a population willing to vote for women candidates, open lists can work in favour of the women candidates. (Examples: Rwanda and Paraguay)	Increases significantly the likelihood of women being elected, especially with large party magnitudes as when women placed quite low on the list tend to get elected. (Example: Macedonia)	Not possible within districts since only one candidate from each party usually stands in each district. If more than one candidate were to stand because of a quota on the number of nominated candidates, it would be against the party's interest to nominate a strong second candidate as that risks splitting the votes between the two, and the party's interest instead nominate a weak and unknown woman in order to nominate the superior candidate afterwards. Possible only between districts (on a national or regional level) e.g. by stipulating that women will be fielded in a certain number of districts. Not to be confused with the "women only" list. This runs the risk that parties who are not eager to nominate women will only nominate them in districts where the seat is likely to be won by a competing party anyway. (Example: Nepal, 1991 election)	Not possible since only one candidate from each party usually stands in each district. If more than one candidate were to stand because of a quota on the number of nominated candidates, it would be against the party's interest to nominate a strong second candidate as that risks splitting the votes between the two, and the party's interest instead nominate a weak and unknown woman in order to nominate the superior candidate afterwards.	Possible for the List PR part of the system. For the single-member district (SMD) part of the system please see the FPTP call on this row. The effectiveness will be affected by lists being open or closed and by the party magnitude. (Example: Armenia, TN quota in 2000 elections, and Republic of Korea)	Possible for the List PR part of the system. For the SMD part of the system please see the FPTP call on this row. The effectiveness will be affected by lists being open or closed and by the party magnitude. (Example: Palestine)	This is possible in theory, but difficult, especially if more independent candidates stand. Block Vote is likely to work better than SMTV and LV as voters have many extra as there are seats to be filled and those who are to get to one party will cast all their votes for that party - including the women candidates.	Is guaranteed to work since the whole list is elected if it receives the highest number of votes. Independent candidates who could lessen the effect of the quota are not likely to stand to see great seats as their chances of winning are minimal. (Example: Cameroon, voluntary party quota adopted by the two largest parties, and DRC)	Not possible within districts since only one candidate from each party usually stands in each district. Possible only between districts (on a national or regional level) e.g. by stipulating that women will be fielded in a certain number of districts. Not to be confused with the "women only" list. This runs the risk that parties who are not eager to nominate women will only nominate them in districts where the seat is likely to be won by a competing party anyway.	This is possible in theory, but difficult, especially if more independent candidates stand. Where independent candidates, there are no guarantees that any women will be elected.	Is possible and is likely to have a medium effect as voters will mark their preferences.
Reserved seats: party list or best / worst system / top-ranking of party	Guaranteed to work when lists are closed. If lists are open, the order can change, thus undermining the predetermined ranking. Likely to be slightly less effective in List PR systems with small districts than in List PR systems with large districts as party magnitude is likely to be smaller and more seats are usually reserved for women.	Guaranteed to work when lists are closed. If lists are open, the order can change, thus undermining the predetermined ranking. Likely to be slightly less effective in List PR systems with small districts than in List PR systems with large districts as party magnitude is likely to be smaller and more seats are usually reserved for women.	Not possible since ranking cannot be determined beforehand.	Not possible since ranking cannot be determined beforehand.	Possible for the List PR part of the system. For the SMD part of the system please see the FPTP call on this row. The effectiveness will be affected by lists being open or closed and by the party magnitude. (Example: Palestine)	Possible for the List PR part of the system. For the SMD part of the system please see the FPTP call on this row. The effectiveness will be affected by lists being open or closed and by the party magnitude. (Example: Palestine)	Not possible since ranking cannot be determined beforehand.	Is guaranteed to work just as well as without first-past-the-post as the whole list is elected if it receives the highest number of votes.	Not possible since ranking cannot be determined beforehand.	Not possible if the candidate-centred. Ranking is determined by voters.	Not possible since ranking cannot be determined beforehand.

# 19 Best-fit combinations

- Systems with a **second tier + reserved seats** – a tier for women candidates only
- **List Proportional Representation (LPR) +**
  - Small districts or Large districts (Belgium) + **nomination – percentage regulations *with* rank-order rules** (e.g. Zipper-quotas)
  - Large districts + nominations – percentage regulations ***without*** rank-order rules (Macedonia)
- **Others e.g. Block Vote + (Limited Vote and Single Non-Transferable Vote) + reserved seats** – “Best loser” system (Jordan)

# 16 Impossible or non-favourable combinations

- 16 identified combinations are either **not possible or not likely to be favourable** to achieving a higher level of political participation for women
- Likely reason:
  - Candidate centred systems **do not allow ranking to be determined beforehand** or elected candidates to be changed after the election

# Other variables affecting the representation of women

- **Enforceability** of quota provisions: legislative vs voluntary
- **Capacity of Election Management Body** (supervise, sanctions)
- **Cultural factors** and **voter preference**
- **Political parties**, level of internal democracy:
  - Identification and support of aspirants
  - Nomination procedures

**Table1. Comparative overview of selected countries**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Quota type</b>	<b>Electoral system</b>	<b>% of women in parliament at last election</b>
<b>Rwanda</b>	<b>LQ</b>	<b>List Proportional Representation</b>	<b>56,8%* (2008)</b>
<b>UK</b>	<b>PQ</b>	<b>FPTP (Plurality/ Majority)</b>	<b>19,5% (2005)</b>
<b>Australia</b>	<b>PQ</b>	<b>AV (Plurality/ Majority)</b>	<b>26,7% (2007)</b>
<b>Fiji</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>AV (Plurality/ Majority)</b>	<b>(11,3% )</b>
<b>PNG</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>AV (Plurality/ Majority)</b>	<b>0,9% (2007)</b>
<b>Vanuatu</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>SNTV (Other system)</b>	<b>3,8% (2 women 2008)</b>
<b>SI</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>FPTP (Plurality/ Majority)</b>	<b>0,0% (2006)</b>

PQ = Voluntary party quotas

LQ = Legislative quotas

Source: [www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org); [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

\* according to BBC press release

18th Sept 2008

# Conclusions I

- An electoral system is **not neutral**
- Quotas = **fast track** but **controversial** tool
- **Party-centred** electoral systems tend to work well with **quotas targeting** the **nomination** of candidates
- **Candidate-centred** electoral systems often need **quotas targeting results**
- The **most effective quotas** are likely to also be the **most controversial** ones

# Conclusions II

- Electoral system & quota to be used must be considered **together** instead of separately
- Electoral systems & quotas **can be modified/ adapted** to suit the specific context in which they are implemented
- When (re-) designing electoral institutions, include as **many stakeholders** as possible for broad endorsement

# Sources

- Designing for Equality, 2007, International IDEA, by Stina Larserud & Rita Taphorn
- <http://www.quotaproject.org>
- <http://ipu.org>
- Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook, 2005 edition
- Picture: Anoli Perera