

The Impact of Electoral Systems on Women's Representation in Pacific Parliaments

**A Report Conducted for the Pacific Islands Forum
Secretariat by the Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies
in Development & Governance (PIAS-DG)**

By

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1.0 Executive Summary; Women in Pacific Parliaments

The Pacific Island states have the lowest level of women in parliament in the world. Only 4.1 per cent of members of Pacific parliaments are women, well below the world average of 16 per cent. Levels of women's participation in parliaments also vary markedly across the region. The New Caledonia and French Polynesia territories have been able to attain higher than average levels of women's representation, owing to their usage of list proportional representation systems and because of their adoption of a 'Law on Parity'. Elsewhere, the picture is much bleaker. Nauru, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu are among the very few countries in the world to have zero women in their parliaments. Papua New Guinea, Tonga and the Marshall Islands each have only one female MP, and Cook Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu have only two. Gender inequality in Pacific parliaments is often not simply a reflection of women's performance in education or their position in the top echelons of the civil service. Often, women have been advancing strongly in these areas over recent decades. Yet elected assemblies remain largely male-controlled affairs, owing to institutional, political, cultural and socio-economic factors.

This report considers the role of the electoral system in generating gender inequality in Pacific legislative assemblies, and the potential for electoral reform to increase the number of women MPs. It surveys the types of electoral system around the region, finding that most states use first-past-the-post or other plurality-majority systems that tend not to favour women candidates. The report provides extensive data covering the shares of women candidates and MPs for most Pacific Island countries' elections since independence. Multi-member constituencies are commonly thought to be more favourable to women candidates, although we find little evidence of this in Nauru, Tuvalu, Tonga or the Marshall Islands. Niue, however, has seen more women MPs elected to its six-member common roll constituency than its 14 separate single-member village constituencies. In the larger multi-member districts, like those on Guam or in New Caledonia and French Polynesia (even before the Parity Law), women do tend to secure a larger share of seats than elsewhere. The report also finds, across the region (excepting New Caledonia and French Polynesia) very low numbers of women standing as candidates, indicating that problems exist on the supply-side, as well as in the design of electoral institutions.

To substantially increase the number of women in parliament, it would be necessary to introduce larger multi-member district based electoral systems or special measures of some form. Adopting list PR, the most commonly used large multi-member constituency-based electoral system, would not be suitable for those countries without well-developed party systems (or, at the very best, would entail a sudden and probably difficult transformation towards more party-based systems). For similar reasons, quotas aimed at influencing candidate selection are unlikely to work effectively in those countries without robust political parties, or where party allegiances are fluid or where there exist a large number of independent MPs. Quotas like the French Parity Act, which requires parties to alternate men and women on their list, would obviously prove inoperative if applied to countries where large numbers of independent candidates enter parliaments. The example of Wallis & Futuna, where the number of women in the territorial assembly *fell* after the introduction of the French Law on Parity shows the likely fate of such legislation in many Pacific countries. Those countries with stronger party systems, such as Fiji, should consider introducing quotas, whether by statute or, better still if possible, by voluntary agreement within political parties.

For those countries without developed party systems, the most effective way to fast track increased women's representation is by the introduction of special seats for women. These are usually constituencies specifically set aside for women candidates, which all eligible voters participate in selecting. The

Autonomous Government of Bougainville is the only elected body in the Pacific which has such seats; three women MPs are elected from special seats to the 39-member House of Representatives. Other measures to encourage women to stand as candidates, such as usage of campaign finance laws, are found to be less successful. Papua New Guinea's provisions for refunding campaign expenditures to parties who field women candidates have not worked effectively. National-level agitation to increase numbers of women in politics need to be combined with local level initiatives. In Tuvalu, for example, the 1999 Falekaupule Act gave speaking rights to local customary assemblies, and devolved power down to this local level. Women have consequently become highly involved in Falekaupule committees, although this has yet to translate into national-level representation. Campaigns tend to be less successful if they are focussed solely on advancing the position of women in politics in the urban centres, and neglect the potential for increasing female representation of rural communities, as the success of the two women MPs on the Island of Epi in Vanuatu indicates.

In the Pacific Islands, there are usually no formal obstacles to greater women's participation in parliament. Constitutions and Electoral Acts are, by and large, gender neutral. Over recent decades, women's position has generally improved in education, in the civil service and even in private business. Were the number of women in parliament gradually increasing, there would be a strong case for relying on spontaneous future shifts in the political sex balance. Yet where the number of women in parliament is zero, or stagnant at only one or two members or even falling, there is a strong case for usage of a temporary statutory catalyst, as has proved so effective in French Polynesia and New Caledonia. Any such legislative shift, to prove effective, needs to be accompanied by the emergence of a strong cohort of credible women candidates and a strengthening of election campaign organisations backing women candidates. Legislation also needs to be formulated carefully, to prevent laws being confounded by loopholes, and there may be a need for support from within the judicial system.

2.0 Introduction

Pacific Island states have low levels of women's participation in elections as candidates and as MPs in parliaments, although the turnout figures suggest a high participation as voters. Despite a target of 30 per cent of government and civil service jobs agreed by the U.N. in Beijing in 1995, only 15 countries worldwide had reached this threshold in 2004, including none of the independent Pacific states. In a 2005 report titled 'Beijing Betrayed', compiled by the Women's Environmental and Development Organisation, six Pacific Island countries – FSM, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu – were listed amongst the 'dirty dozen' countries in the world with no women members of parliament¹. Excluding women from positions of power diminishes democratic development, and weakens political leadership by depriving society of potentially strong reservoirs of talent. Yet there has been little detailed investigation of the reasons for poor levels of women's representation in the Pacific and little public discussion about what should be done about this. Efforts to advance women's representation tend to be patchy, both in the sense that campaigns lack sufficient continuity (partly due to ebbs and flows in grass-roots activism) and because the issue does not gain a sufficiently high and ever-present profile, for example in the media, in such a way that political parties or parliaments feel under some continuing pressure in this respect.

Nor is there any great Pacific region-wide familiarity with what has occurred in those parts of the region where greater success was achieved in promoting women's advancement in politics. In New Caledonia and French Polynesia, Laws on Parity revolutionised the sex balance of parliamentarians in 2004². Both countries now have close to 50 per cent women MPs. On Bougainville, elections to the new autonomous

government included three reserved seats for women in 2004, an innovation aimed at recognising the important role of women's groups during the late 1990s peace-making and peace-building processes. In other parts of the world, quotas have been used, either by parties (voluntarily) or by nations using statute, to enhance levels of women's representation. Worldwide, recent decades have seen a significant rise in women's representation in parliaments and cabinets, albeit starting from generally low levels and without the global average reaching much beyond half the 30 per cent Beijing target.

The most widely internationally-used figures for "Oceania" or the "Pacific" usually include Australia and New Zealand, but exclude what are classified as non-self-governing countries. Table 1 focuses more specifically on the Pacific Islands, including also the formally non-self-governing territories. On average, it shows that only 10.9 per cent of members of parliaments are women. Excluding the 'law on parity' countries, the picture is much bleaker. The independent Pacific Islands have the lowest levels of female representation in the world (4.1 per cent), below even the Arab countries (7 per cent).

Table 1: Women in Pacific Parliaments as of June 2006

	Size of Legislature	Number of Female Members	%
New Caledonia	54	24	44.4%
French Polynesia	57	24	42.1%
Guam	15	3	20.0%
Wallis & Futuna	20	3	15.0%
Niue	20	3	15.0%
Fiji	71	8	11.3%
Samoa	49	4	8.2%
Cook Islands	24	2	8.0%
Kiribati	42	2	4.8%
Vanuatu	52	2	3.8%
Tonga	30	1	3.3%
Marshall Islands	33	1	3.0%
Papua New Guinea	109	1	0.9%
Nauru	18	0	0.0%
Palau	16	0	0.0%
FSM	14	0	0.0%
Solomon Islands	50	0	0.0%
Tuvalu	15	0	0.0%
Average:	682	74	10.9%
Average excluding French Territories:	559	23	4.1%

Sources: PIAS-DG Database

Multi-country studies aimed at identifying the principal factors explaining variations in the numbers of women in parliaments have tended to emphasise the role of higher living standards and the choice of electoral system³. Those countries with higher positions on the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) tend to also have larger numbers of women in parliaments. As income per head rises, birth rates tend to decline and women's participation in the labour force increases. At the same time, urbanisation and higher levels of education are seen as having a consciousness-raising effect on women, resulting in increased politicisation. This global relationship between economic development and gender equality is also discernible in Oceania, as is the role of the electoral system. Many of those Pacific countries with higher positions on the HDI, such as New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Guam, also have greater sex balance in their legislative assemblies and executives. Those countries where GDP per capita, life expectancy and educational standards are relatively low tend to have fewer women elected as MPs or selected for ministerial portfolios.

Nevertheless, these linkages are not direct or automatic, and other factors come into play. Some of the more prosperous countries in the region, such as Fiji, Samoa and the Cook Islands, have significantly lower levels of women's representation than might be expected. Others, such as Palau, have relatively high Pacific HDI rankings, but no women at all are in the lower house. Greater economic development may provide a spur to reducing gender inequity in politics, but it is not the only important factor.

Our country-specific studies found significant disparities between women's advancement in education and in the labour force and their position in legislative assemblies. In many Pacific countries, women's position has been improving strongly among top executives in the civil service. In educational achievement, women often outperform men, both at secondary and tertiary level⁴. Yet parliaments, central governments and local governments remain a male bastion, even in cases where some of the best qualified staff in the Offices of Speakers or Clerks are women. Frequently, the explanations are historical and cultural.

Representative governments were often first established under colonial authorities with male customary leaders assuming key positions, while more merit-based appointments occurred in other spheres, such as the health service or the church hierarchy. In many Pacific states (e.g. Marshall Islands, Samoa, Fiji), those earlier barriers have been gradually breaking down, with traditional leaders assuming new and changing roles. Leaders' positions in the political order have become less and less determined by standing in the customary hierarchy. Although educational achievement and meritorious performance in the labour force have become increasingly important in determining who gets elected to parliament, recognition of women's achievements in this respect has been much slower. In some cases, countries have zero women in parliament, ensuring that qualified candidates who emerge face a daunting hurdle. Even if successful, subsequent performance of any new woman MP is often subject to particularly ruthless scrutiny as that of a 'first woman in parliament'; scrutiny of a far more exacting type than that faced by male newcomers. In other cases, one or two women have been selected at the odd election, but without sufficient numbers to reach that 'critical mass' beyond which sex balance becomes normal, widely accepted and irreversible (see Box 8 below).

This research project was carried out on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat by the USP's Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance (PIAS-DG). This report is intended to accompany other associated reports, including Elise Huffer's regional review and country-specific papers covering Tuvalu, Nauru and Tonga. In this paper, we focus on the impact of the electoral system on the sex balance of parliament, and the associated issue of which electoral systems are most open to reforms aimed at reducing gender inequality⁵. Using PIAS-DG's developing electoral dataset, which covers Pacific Island

Table 2: Pacific Islands Electoral Systems for Legislative Assemblies

Country/Territory	Electoral System
American Samoa (USA)	First-Past-the-Post
Cook Islands	First-Past-the-Post
Federated States of Micronesia	First-Past-the-Post
Fiji	Alternative Vote
French Polynesia (France)	Party List/ Plurality Seat Bonus
Guam (USA)	Block Vote
Kiribati	Two Round System I
Marshall Islands	First-Past-the-Post/Block Vote
Nauru	Modified Borda Count
New Caledonia (France)	Party List
Niue	First-Past-the-Post/Block Vote
Comm. Northern Mariana Islands	First-Past-the-Post
Palau	First-Past-the-Post
Papua New Guinea	Alternative Vote
Pitcairn Islands	Single Non-Transferable Vote
Samoa	First-Past-the-Post/Block Vote
Solomon Islands	First-Past-the-Post
Tonga	First-Past-the-Post/Block Vote
Tuvalu	First-Past-the-Post/Block Vote
Vanuatu	Single-Non-Transferable Vote
Wallis & Futuna (France)	Party List

Sources: Levine, S. & Roberts, N. 'The Constitutional Structures and Electoral Systems of the Pacific Islands', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, forthcoming; Reynolds, A., Reilly, B., Ellis, A., *Electoral System Design; The New International IDEA Handbook*, IDEA, 2005, Annex A, p166-73.

countries national elections since independence, we look at the fortunes of women candidates. Section 3 looks at the range of electoral systems across the Pacific Islands, and their impact on the sex balance of Pacific parliaments. Section 4 reviews the broader international literature on the linkages between electoral laws and the level of women's representation. Section 5 examines usage of quotas, either entrenched in constitutions or ordinary electoral laws or voluntarily adopted by political parties. Section 6 considers the pros and cons of usage of reserved seats in parliament. Section 7 considers local-level alternatives to increasing women's representation, both at the island or provincial council level and in the more informal associations that so regularly coexist with formal structures of governance. Section 8 looks at the scope for using laws on campaign finance to encourage greater gender equity in legislative assemblies.

3.0 Electoral System Types

The choice of electoral system can have a major impact on the sex composition of parliament. Table 2 shows the type of electoral systems that are used in Pacific territories. All electoral systems are essentially methods of translating votes cast into seats won. Crucial issues are (i) district magnitude (whether single members or multiple members are elected from each constituency); (ii) ballot format (whether voters indicate a single choice or multiple preferences) and (iii) the electoral formula (plurality/majority, mixed or proportional). Choices of electoral institutions inevitably balance many important considerations which vary in different countries. How important is the link between members and their constituents? What form of representation best suits the context (for example, should small minorities secure some over-representation or should constituencies always be roughly equal in size?). Should the electoral system promote stable government? Should systems emphasise the role of political parties? How serious is the problem of ‘wasted votes’? Issues about electoral system choice are regularly linked with broader issues about other types of political institutions. What balance should be drawn between the powers held by national parliaments and federal, local or provincial assemblies? Should countries adopt presidential or parliamentary systems? Many of these issues differ in significance for different countries. Many Pacific states have ongoing debates about the broader appropriateness of their electoral institutions or constitutional frameworks. Promoting statutory change to increase the number of women in parliament therefore requires a wider familiarity with the full gamut of constitutional- and electoral system-related issues facing each country⁶.

3.1 Plurality-Majority Systems

3.1.1. First-Past-the Post (FPP)

Many of the Pacific Island countries inherited Westminster-style constitutions together with first-past-the-post (FPP) systems at independence. With first-past-the-post systems, voters have a single vote for a single member. The candidate with the largest number of votes wins. This is the second most widely used

system internationally (after list PR), and the most widely used in the Pacific.

The Solomon Islands uses a single-member district based first-past-the-post system. Box 1 shows the outcome in the Solomon Islands’ East Central Guadalcanal constituency in 2001, one of the 50 constituencies in the country. In that contest, the country’s sole woman MP, Hilda Kari, lost her seat, in part due to vote splitting among six candidates. Nollen Leni became an MP because his 913 votes exceeded those of all rival candidates. He retained the seat in 2006, again defeating Hilda Kari.

First-past-the-post systems tend to be one of the least favourable types of electoral system for women candidates. As Tables 1 & 2 show, a sizeable number of Pacific countries with FPP systems - including Palau,

<i>Box 1: A First-Past-the-Post Constituency in the Solomon Islands</i>	
East Central Guadalcanal 2001	
Registered voters	4,866
Votes cast	3,885
Candidates	
Mr John Gela	464
Mrs Hilda Kari	800
Mr Nollen Leni	913
Mr Daniel S Sande	456
Mr Johnson Kengalu	187
Mr Mark Gatu	670

Table 3: Representation by Sex in the Solomon Islands, 1980-2006

	Candidates		MPs	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1980	0	242	0	38
1984	1	245	0	38
1989	3	254	0	38
1993	11	269	1	46
1997	12	321	1	49
2001	13	315	0	50
2006	26	427	0	50

Sources: PIAS-DG Database

Table 4: Representation by Sex in Fiji, 1972-2001

	Candidates		MPs	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1972	5	116	1	51
1977 April	4	121	2	50
1977 Sept	2	129	1	51
1982	4	133	1	51
1987	2	129	0	52
1992	4	167	1	69
1994	9	182	3	67
1999	22	282	8	63
2001	29	315	5	66
2006	23	315	8	64

Sources: PIAS-DG Database

Solomon Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia - have zero female representatives in parliament. As Table 3 shows in the case of the Solomon Islands, this has also been the case over the longer-run. Despite increasing numbers of women candidates, no women were elected to the Solomon Islands parliament in 2001 and 2006.

Other first-past-the-post using countries have a slightly better record. The Cook Islands has two women MPs, and Fiji – which used a first-past-the-post system until 1997 - secured a small but significant number of women MPs, including prominent figures such as Taufa Vakatale and Irene Narayan. Whether the increasing number of women candidates and MPs in 1999 (Table 4) was connected with the adoption of the new alternative vote (AV) system in 1997 is debatable. Global data on the impact of the AV system do not support the idea that this system is connected with high levels of women's representation (see Table 14 below). More plausibly, the 1997 shift to a partially common roll system, with 25 'open' electorates and

46 communal electorates, had a significant impact on the fortunes of women candidates. Popular women candidates fared reasonably well in some of the more marginal open constituencies in 1999, 2001 and 2006⁷. Where the two major ethnic groups each approached close to 50 per cent of electorates, making seats marginal for either of the two large political parties, fielding women candidates potentially offered a method of capturing additional floating voters. In the communal constituencies, by contrast, male candidates take a larger percentage of the seats. This is particularly so in the 19 Indian communal constituencies. Fiji's communal seats are detrimental to the position of women, both in the indigenous and Indian-descended communities.

PNG's experience provides a striking example of the low levels of women's representation commonly associated with first-past-the-post systems. Only a handful of women have ever been elected to the 109-member assembly. Analysts regularly point out that in PNG women have considerable political influence that cannot be assessed only by formal representation⁸. Nevertheless, only eight times since 1972 have women been elected to the national parliament, despite growing numbers contesting elections.

Table 5: Representation by Sex in PNG, 1977-2002

	Candidates		MPs	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1972	4	604	1	108
1977	6	872	2	107
1982	10	1,114	0 ¹	109
1987	15	1,502	0	109
1992	16	1,629	0	109
1997	50	2,322	2	107
2002	73	2,763	1	108

Sources: PIAS-DG Database

1 A single woman member was elected after the Court of Disputed Returns ordered a recount of disputed votes

3.1.2 The Block Vote

If constituencies have more than one member and voters have as many votes as there are seats, the system is known as the 'block vote'. In these multi-member constituencies, the candidates with the largest numbers of votes win. In many Pacific countries, gradual population increase was dealt with by adding additional constituencies, rather than subdividing established constituencies. This entailed a shift from first-past-the-post to 'block vote' or partially block vote systems. Tonga has nine 'peoples representatives' elected on a block vote basis from the separate island groups. Guam has a fifteen member legislative chamber, and voters each have fifteen votes. Many Pacific countries have partially block vote based systems, entailing a mixture of single member first-past-the-post and multiple member block vote constituencies.

The Marshall Islands has five members for Majuro, three for Kwajalein and two for several other atolls with the remainder of the 24 atolls and islets having a single member each. The country has seen declining

numbers of women candidates at recent elections, and currently has only one female MP, Abacca Maddison, who represents the nuclear-affected atoll of Rongelap. This is a peculiar constituency, since the majority of voters in fact inhabit either Mejjatto on Kwajalein Atoll, or Majuro, owing to the prevalence of radioactive contamination on their home island.

Samoa has a predominantly first-past-the-post based voting system, but as the size of some constituencies has increased, instead of sub-dividing these into two, additional members have been added on a block voting basis (i.e. the voters in these constituencies get two votes).

Table 6: Representation by Sex in Marshall Islands, 1983-2004

	Candidates		MPs	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1983	7	101	1	32
1987	6	94	1	32
1991	8	104	0	33
1995	3	83	0	33
1999	4	79	1	32
2003	4	81	1	32

Sources: PIAS-DG Database

Table 7: Representation by Sex in Samoa, 1979-2006

	Candidates		MPs	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1979	5	161	1	46
1982	4	193	1	46
1985 ¹	5	141	2	43
1988	5	148	0	47
1991	3	150	3	44
1996	6	160	3	46
2001	7	147	3	46
2006	18	193	4	45

Source: PIAS-DG Database

¹ Information missing for two constituencies (Aleipata Itupailuga and Anoama'a Sasa'e) in 1985. There were 45 seats of parliament in the 1961 elections, 47 from the 1964 general elections onwards and 49 from the 1996 general elections onwards.

Samoa's electoral system is also unique because until 1990 only *matai* (family heads or 'chiefs') were able to register as voters or stand as candidates. In 1990, the system was reformed, but there is still a *matai*-only qualification for candidates⁹. Historically, Samoan women were ideally behind-the-scenes power-brokers, holding male *matai* accountable.¹⁰ Yet contemporary rivalry over titles has diminished customary family

control over *matai* status-bearers, in the process eroding women’s indirect leverage. By 1993, there were 1,261 female *matai*, but this represented only 5.1 per cent of Samoa’s 24,633 *matai* title-holders.¹¹ Empowerment of female electors was probably the critical feature of the 1990 reforms, but the *matai*-only qualification for candidates ensures continuing barriers to women’s representation. The 2004 ‘NGO Shadow Report on the Status of Women in Samoa’ asked ‘government to review the system whereby only *matai* title holders can run for parliament’, but also asked the Ministry of Women ‘to review the villages where women cannot be *matai* and begin actions/training in these villages aimed at removing these social constraints’.

‘While both male and female have a right to be *matai*, it is more usual for males to be offered this role and for female family members to defer to their brothers taking this role. As a result there are fewer women *matai* and so, fewer women eligible to stand for parliament, fewer women in parliament – a situation which perpetuates the view that women have no place in political or public life. A common response has been that more women should take *matai* titles. However, in a significant number of villages there are rules that only males can be *matai*. This is unconstitutional and also not in accordance to traditional Samoan custom’¹²

Like Samoa, Tuvalu has gradually expanded the size of its parliament by adding additional block voting constituencies, but here all but one constituency have become two member constituencies.

Table 8: Representation by Sex in Tuvalu, 1993-2002

	Candidates		MPs	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1993 Sept	1	33	0	12
1993 Nov	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998	0	36	0	12
2002	1	38	0	15

Sources:PIAS-DGDatabase

In theory, block vote systems are often thought more conducive to women’s representation. Where multiple members are selected, as under a block vote system, more balanced slates might be preferred. Guam, with 20 per cent women in its lower house, gives some support to this claim. So too does Niue, with its 14 single-member first-past-the-post districts coupled with a single island-wide six-member block voting constituency.

As Table 9 indicates, Niue’s few women MPs have usually been elected from the block voting six-member ‘common roll’ constituency, rather than the single-member village constituencies, although this has changed to some degree during recent years. Elsewhere, block voting systems do little to favour women candidates, confirming the global findings (see Table 14 below). Samoa’s three women members in both 1996 and 2001 were all elected from the single-member, rather than dual member, constituencies.

If voters cast ballots for party lists instead of individual candidates, such systems are called ‘party block vote’ systems. There are no examples of such systems in the Pacific Islands.

Table 9: Women's Representatives in the Niue Legislative Assembly 1975-2008

	Numbers	Common Roll	Village Constituencies
1975	1	1	0
1978	3	3	0
1981	1	1	0
1984	1	1	0
1987	1	1	0
1990	2	2	0
1993	1	1	0
1996	1	1	0
1999	2	1	1
2002	2	1	1
2005	3	1	2

Source: Information provided by Hon. Va'aiga Paotama Tukuitoga, Minister of Education, Women's Affairs, Taoga Niue & Culture, Justice, Lands & Survey, April 2006.

3.1.3. Two Round System (TRS)

Two-round systems are mostly organised on a single-member district basis but aim to secure an absolute majority for victors. Usually, candidates get elected if they reach a 50 per cent threshold at the first round. If not, all but the top two candidates are then eliminated, and a run-off is held shortly thereafter to establish the victor. This system is used in elections for the French national assembly and for the French Presidency (but not for territorial elections for the local assemblies). By extension, it is also used in New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis & Futuna, when they participate in French elections. In Kiribati, an unusual two round system is used in multi-member constituencies. Box 2 shows the outcome in the 2002 Beru constituency in Kiribati, which sends two members to parliament. To win, candidates need to reach 25 per cent of the vote. At the first round, Tetabo Nakara gets 595 votes (33 per cent) and therefore wins one of the seats. No other candidate crosses the 25 per cent threshold, so voting goes to a second round. At the second round, the candidate with the highest number of votes, Biribo Neemia, with 401, wins. There are few indications that two-round voting systems are favourable to women candidates (but see Table 14 below, and the connected discussion).

3.1.4. The Alternative Vote (AV) & Limited Preferential Vote (LPV)

Like two-round systems, the alternative vote is intended to yield absolute majorities and avoid the problem of victors elected on only small percentages of the vote. It is also intended to avoid large numbers of 'wasted votes'. Sometimes called the 'instant runoff', AV avoids the need to hold a second election. Instead, voters record preferences on the ballot paper (1, 2, 3, etc). If no candidate obtains a majority at the first count, the lowest polling candidate is eliminated and his or her ballot papers are consulted to identify voter second preferences. If, after the distribution of second preferences, there is still no candidate with an

outright majority, the next lowest polling candidate is eliminated, and preferences are redistributed. Box 3 shows outcomes in Fiji's Nadroga open constituency in 1999. There, the local chief Ratu Sakiusa Makutu got the largest number of votes (6,377) at the first count, but did not obtain an overall majority. The lowest polling candidate, Kumar, was therefore eliminated and his votes were recounted and redistributed in accordance with second preferences. This was still not enough to determine a 50 per cent+1 victor, so voting had to go to a third count. At the third count, the FAP candidate with 1,667 votes, was eliminated and his votes were redistributed. Most went to the Fiji Labour party candidate, Mosese Volavola, giving him over 50 per cent of the votes at the final count.

Box 2: A Two-Round System Constituency in Kiribati

BERU (2 seats)

Candidate	First Round		Second Round	
Tiraim Aaram	159	8.8%		
Rameka Barao	20	1.1%		
Tewareka Borau	208	11.5 %	269	27.0%
Arobete Iuta	155	8.6%		
Tetabo Nakara	595	33.0%		
		Victor 1		
Biribo Neemia	225	14.1%	401	40.3%
				Victor 2
Katitio Reirei	22	1.2%		
Kirabuke Teiaua	230	12.8%	325	32.7%
Tokintekai Uereti	188	10.4%		
Total	1,802		995	

Box 3: An Alternative Vote Constituency in Fiji

Nadroga Open 1999

Candidates	Party	1	2	3
Kumar	NFP	35	Ex	
Volavola	FLP	6,239	6,255	7,906
				Victor
Takolevu	FAP	1,667	1,667	Ex
Makutu	SVT	6,377	6,396	6,411

Ex=excluded

Two Pacific Island countries use AV systems; Fiji and, since 2002, PNG. In Fiji, voters are required to rank 75 per cent of candidates to cast a valid ballot¹³. In PNG, voters need to rank only three candidates (hence, the PNG system is often called the 'limited preferential vote' - LPV). Both Fiji and PNG use compulsory AV systems, but AV can entail optional ranking allowing voters, if they so choose, to endorse only one or two candidates (as in Irish single seat by-elections or some of the post-war Canadian provinces). Some argue that preferential voting systems favour women voters and candidates. In PNG, it had been suggested that, under the former first-past-the-post system, women tended to face an obligation to back the (usually male) candidate favoured by their clan. With the introduction of limited preferential voting, some hope that greater freedom of choice as regards 2nd or 3rd preference votes will see an increase in the support for women candidates, although there is little evidence of this so far from by-elections using LPV¹⁴. Campaign financing laws in PNG have also been introduced to provide greater support for women candidates (see Section 8.0 below).

3.2 Proportional Systems

Proportional representation systems aim at reducing disparities between shares of the vote secured by political parties and their resulting shares of seats, and at alleviating the problem of 'wasted votes'. Under FPP systems, if party A has 40 per cent of the vote reasonably evenly spread across the country, while party B has the other 60 per cent of the vote, party B wins all the seats and party A gets no representation (votes for party A are 'wasted'). Proportional systems, by contrast, aim to give party A something close to 40 per cent of seats. They put to work the principle that party shares of the vote should be the same as, or close to, party shares of seats. In practice, there may be discrepancies, owing either to thresholds required before parties secure seats or due to the usage of several multi-member constituencies rather than a single national constituency.

3.2.1. List PR

With simple list PR, each party presents a list of endorsed candidates in multi-member districts. Voters choose a party, usually placing a single tick on the ballot paper. A mathematical formula is then used to calculate the allocation of seats in accordance with shares in the vote¹⁵. List PR systems can vary with regard to the threshold chosen for parties to participate in the seat distribution. In New Caledonia, for example, only parties with 5 per cent of the vote or more secure representation in Congress. Voters select members for their provincial assemblies and the top placed provincial members become members of the territorial Congress. The Southern Province has 32 seats in Congress, the Northern Province 15 seats and the Loyalty Islands Province seven seats. A party that gets 30 per cent of the votes in the Southern Province will get something close to 30 per cent of that province's seats¹⁶. List PR systems tend to be more favourable to women candidates than single-member district based systems; party leaders tend to assemble lists of candidates with an eye to the national distribution of potential voter support. Hence (even before the recent law on parity, discussed below), both New Caledonia and French Polynesia have had larger numbers of women in their assemblies than other Pacific Island territories.

French Polynesia's list PR system is simpler than that in New Caledonia because it lacks the provincial assemblies that provide the bases for selection to the latter's Congress. But the French Polynesian system has been recently complicated by a provision, introduced by former President Gaston Flosse shortly before the 2004 polls, which gave the winning party in each constituency a 30 per cent seat bonus. The French

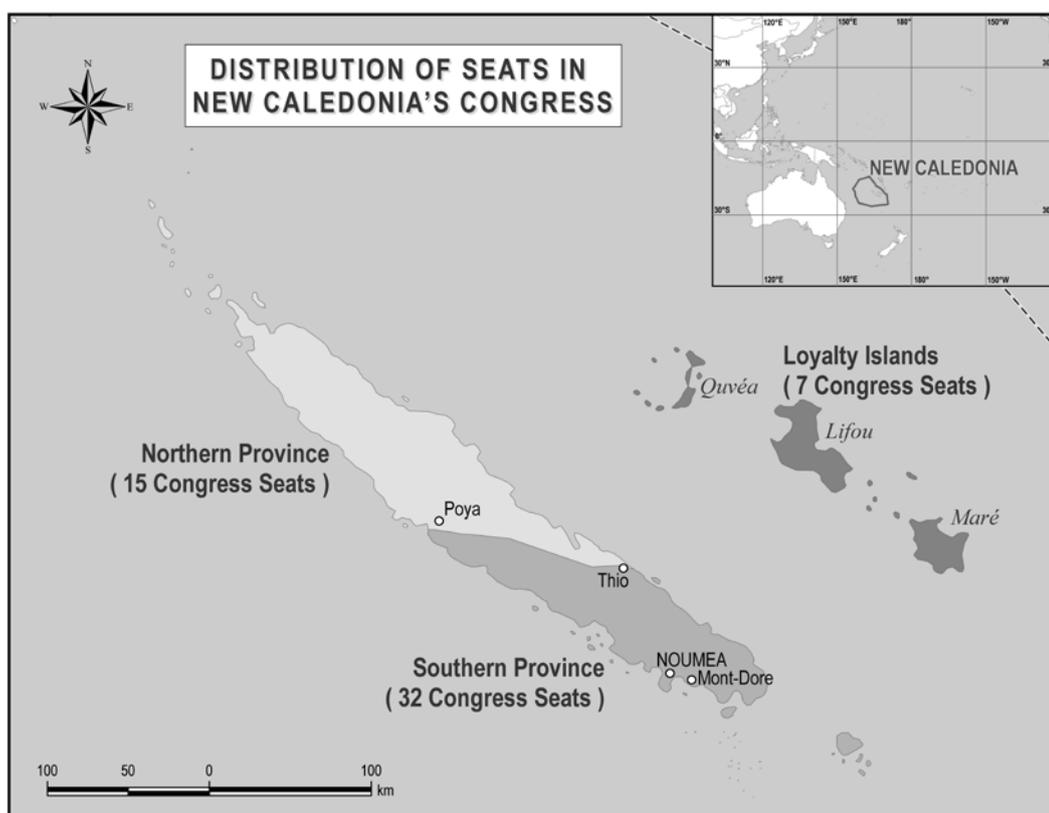


Table 10: French Polynesian Elections, 2004

May 2004 General Election	Tahoera'a Huia'atira (Flosse)		Union for Democracy (Temaru)		Pro-Autonomy Victors	
	Votes %	Seats No.	Votes %	Seats No.	Votes %	Seats No.
Windward Islands (37 Seats)	40.9	11	41.3	24	13.7	2
Leeward Islands (8 Seats)	52.4	6	40.1	2		
Marquesas Islands (3 Seats)	58.2	3				
Austral Islands (3 Seats)	65.3	2	34.7	1		
Gambier Islands & Tuamotu East (3 Seats)	75.9	3	14.0		4.1	
Tuamotu West (3 Seats)	59.4	3	26.3		9.5	
Total	45.7	28	37.9	27	10.4	2

Source: <http://www.polynesie-francaise.gouv.fr>.

Polynesia group is divided into six constituencies, with the Windward Islands having easily the largest number of seats (37), the Leeward Islands having eight seats and the five smaller groups having three seats each. With a fully proportional system, Gaston Flosse's Tahoera'a Huia'atira would have won the 2004 polls. But Oscar Temaru's Union for Democracy narrowly won the largest share of the vote in the Windward Islands, and the 30 per cent seat bonus his party consequently secured was enough to secure a

narrow victor for his coalition with the pro-autonomy victors (27+2). Both parties contested under the parity laws, with the consequence that this election resulted in French Polynesia's highest-ever levels of women's representation.

3.2.2 The Single Transferable Vote (STV)

The single transferable vote system is a complex proportional system which bears some resemblance to AV but takes place in multi-member districts. Voters also rank candidates in order of preference, but – unlike AV – both losing candidates' votes and winners' surplus votes are recycled. First, a quota is established for victory. Any candidate who reaches that threshold is elected. As with AV, as lowest-polling candidates are eliminated their votes are redistributed among the remaining contestants. Unlike AV, any surplus votes secured by victors who reach the required threshold are also redistributed to the remaining contestants. This system is not used in any of the Pacific Islands, but it is used in elections to the Australian upper house (the Senate) and in some New Zealand local council elections, as well as in Ireland and Malta. Although STV is a proportional system, there is little international indication that it is particularly favourable to women candidates (see Table 14 below).

3.3 Mixed Systems

Mixed member systems attempt to combine the advantages of plurality-majority systems with positive features of pure proportional systems, like list PR and STV. They are hybrid combinations of distinct electoral laws. Usually, part of the legislative assembly is elected by a plurality-majority electoral law, while another compensatory part is selected using a PR system.

Table 11: Votes and Seats in the New Zealand 2005 Election.

	Share National Vote	Electorate Seats		'Top-Up' List PR Seats	Total Seats	
		Number	%		Number	%
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Labour	41.1%	31	25.8%	19	50	41.7%
National	39.1%	31	25.8%	17	48	40.0%
New Zealand First	5.7%	0	0.0%	7	7	5.8%
Green	5.3%	0	0.0%	6	6	5.0%
Maori	2.1%	4	3.3%	0	4	3.3%
United Future	2.7%	1	0.8%	2	3	2.5%
ACT	1.5%	1	0.8%	1	2	1.7%
Progressive	1.2%	1	0.8%	0	1	0.8%
Totals	100%	69	57.5%	52	121	100.8%

Source: Modified from Jack Vowles 'The New Zealand Experience of Proportional Representation and its Potential Relevance for Fiji', Paper presented at a CCF Workshop on Reviewing Fiji's Electoral System, Southern Cross Hotel, 9th February, 2006.

3.3.1. Mixed Member Proportional Systems (MMP)

With mixed member proportional systems, voters usually cast two votes. In New Zealand, for example, the first is a vote for a single constituency member, in one of the 69 electorate seats (Table 11, col 2). The second is a vote for a party list (col 2). The party vote is used to determine the distribution of the remaining 51 seats, which top up electorate seat shares so that the overall seat distribution (col 6) is roughly the same as the party share in the national vote (col 1)¹⁷. If a party manages to win *more* electorate seats than it is entitled to secure based on its share in the national vote, as with the Maori Party in 2005, the size of parliament is temporarily expanded (hence, the total number of seats in 2005 was 121, rather than 120). It is also possible to have MMP systems with voters having only a single vote, with the vote for the candidate deciding the constituency seats and the vote for that candidate's party deciding the distribution of the 'top up' seats.

3.3.2. Parallel Systems

Parallel systems also combine plurality-majority systems with PR systems, but without the compensatory interrelationships that characterise MMP. There are no examples of parallel systems in the Pacific Islands, but East Timor has such a system (see Box 11 below).

3.4 Other System Types

3.4.1. Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV)

In Vanuatu and the Pitcairn Islands the single non-transferable vote system is used. SNTV is similar to FPP, in the sense that voters cast a single vote, but unlike FPP, there are multiple members. The result is a simple-to-understand system, but outcomes can be so uncertain that SNTV has been described as 'the nearest the electoral system world possesses to a fruit machine.'¹⁸ On the plus side, SNTV systems can achieve a reasonable degree of proportionality, since – for example – a 30 per cent minority group can normally secure at least one seat in a four-member constituency. But parties need to plan strategically, and field just the right number of candidates. If the 30 per cent minority fields two candidates and gets its supporters to divide votes equally (15 per cent each), it could end up without any seats if the 70 per cent majority community stands four candidates and is able to direct 17.5 per cent of its supporters to back each favoured candidate. If parties are accurately able to gauge the extent of their support, the system can prove reasonably proportional (hence, it is sometimes called a 'semi-proportional' system). In Vanuatu, where party discipline broke down in the 1990s and growing numbers of candidates contested at the polls, results became increasingly disproportionate.¹⁹

Potentially, Vanuatu's SNTV system might favour women candidates if they were able to draw a sizeable share of women's votes plus some votes from men. But Vanuatu has faced similar difficulties to other Pacific states: negligible numbers of women candidates in the early post-independence elections followed by only very small numbers seeking nomination. For those women who put themselves forward, success rates were strong: in 1987, for example, all those women who stood were successful. But the number of women seeking election did not keep pace with the rocketing numbers of males. Since 2002, those women who have succeeded have, notably, been from the island of Epi, rather than from the urban centres (see Box 15 below).

Box 5: Vanuatu's Electoral Constituencies

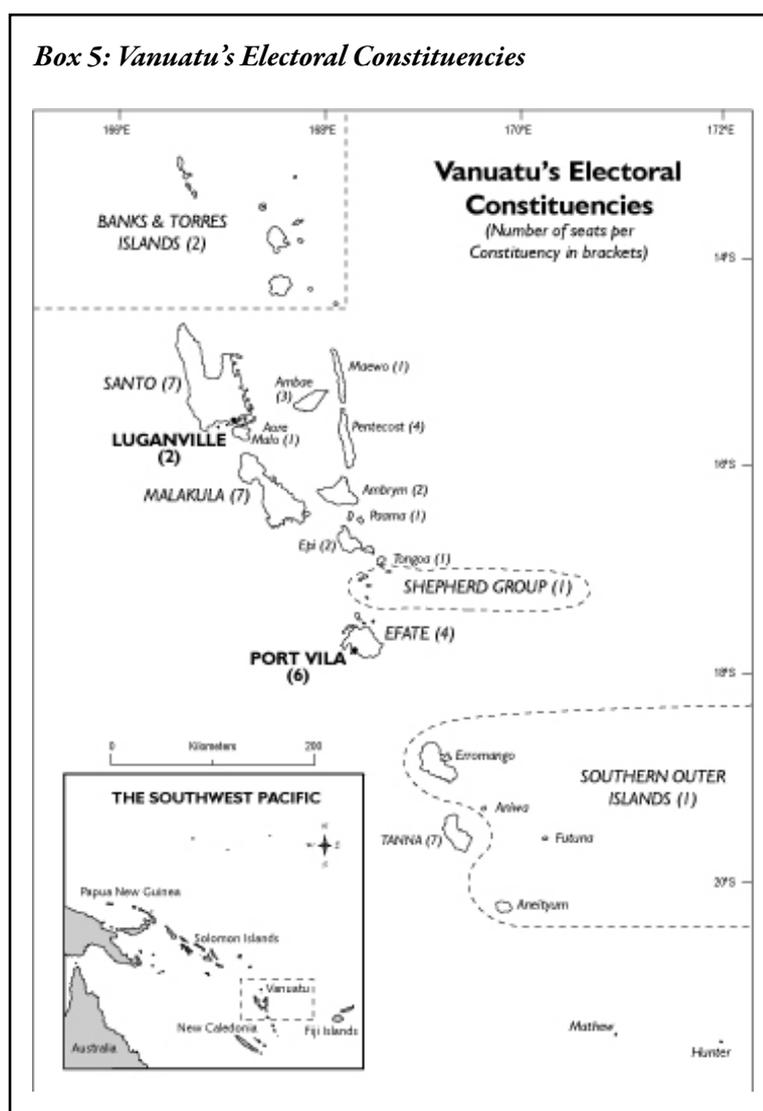


Table 12: Representation by Sex in Vanuatu, 1979-200

	Candidates		MPs	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1979	1	68	0	39
1983	1	90	0	39
1987	2	98	2	44
1991	2	139	1	45
1995	9	161	1	49
1998	6	209	0	52
2002	7	249	1	51
2004	9	227	2	50

Sources: PIAS-DG Database

Box 6: A Dowdell System Constituency on Nauru

Anabar/Ijuw/Anibare in 2004 (2 members)

	Preference Votes					Value of Votes					Tally
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
Ludwig Scotty	182	197	41	21	26	182.0	98.5	13.7	5.3	5.2	304.6
James Deireragea	65	30	71	113	188	65.0	15.0	23.7	28.3	37.6	169.5
Riddell Akua	157	177	56	53	24	157.0	88.5	18.7	13.3	4.8	282.2
Tyrone Deiye	28	22	103	170	144	28.0	11.0	34.3	42.5	28.8	144.6
Godfrey Waidabu	35	41	196	110	85	35.0	20.5	65.3	27.5	17.0	165.3

Sources: Howard Van Trease 'The Operation of the Single Nontransferable Vote in Vanuatu', *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 43, (3), 2005.

3.4.2. Limited Vote

The limited vote is a variant on SNTV, but with voters having more than one vote. Unlike the block vote, there are less votes than the number of candidates. There are no examples in the Pacific.

3.4.3. Modified Borda Count or the Dowdell System

Nauru's preferential voting system is unique. As with Fiji's AV system, voters rank candidates in order of preference, but unlike Fiji or PNG all preferences are immediately tallied to ascertain victors. First preferences count 1, second preferences count for ½ a vote, 3rd preferences for a ⅓ of a vote and so onwards. The system is used in multiple member constituencies (seven two-member constituencies and one four-member constituency), and – uniquely – candidates even obtain votes for coming in last (i.e. if there are 10 candidates, the last-ranked candidate may get a 1/10th vote).

Box 6 shows how Nauru's system works, looking at President Ludwig Scotty's two-member Anabar/Ijuw/Anibare constituency in 2004. Five candidates stood and there were two places to be filled. Voters had to record five preferences to lodge a valid vote. The number of preferences obtained by each candidate is shown on the left-hand side of the box. The count, shown on the right-hand side, shows that Ludwig Scotty's first preference votes each counted 1 (182), that his second preferences counted 0.5 (197/2=98.5), and so on until his fifth preferences which counted only 1/5th (26/0.5 = 5.2). When all the votes were tallied, Ludwig Scotty came in first with 304.6 votes and his running partner, Riddell Akua, took the second position with 282.2 votes.

Nauru has zero women in parliament, despite its multi-member constituencies and elaborate preferential voting system. The country's first president, Hammer DeRoburt, led the country from 1968 to 1976. In the first post-independence elections held in 1968, traditional male leaders, most of whom were formerly councillors from the Nauru Local Government Council, were elected to the new parliament, and they dominated the country's politics for the next 20 years.²⁰ Parliament remains an entirely male-dominated affair, despite dramatic changes occasioned by the defeat of the Rene Harris government by the 'visionaries'

in 2004. No women have been elected at the last four general elections. Both the Nauru and Tuvalu examples suggest that low levels of representation of women in parliament are, to some degree, connected to exceptionally low levels of women standing as candidates, confirming findings in the broader international comparative literature on this subject.²¹ Advancing women’s representation in the Pacific is not simply an institutional issue, requiring a redesign of electoral arrangements to improve women candidate success rates. It is also a supply-side issue, requiring social-psychological shifts that lead increasing numbers of women to put themselves forward as candidates for election.



districts have been carefully drawn to ensure some black representation. For women, such methods are unworkable, since sex groups tend to be roughly equally inter-mixed in different parts of the country.

2. When considering electoral protections of ethnic minorities, there is a regular presumption that such groups will, if given the choice, vote for candidates of their own group or, at least, those who are sympathetic to their own group. In deeply divided societies, few realistically expect an ethnicity-blind approach to voting. As regards the sex balance of parliament, there is no guarantee that women will vote for women. Nor is this necessarily the desirable objective. Eliminating barriers to women's representation in parliament entails encouraging men to vote for women, even if pressure from women's organisations remains a crucial part of this process. The preferable objective is gender-blind voting patterns, where candidates are assessed on merit, whatever end of the political spectrum they belong to.

It is well established statistically that proportional electoral systems tend to be more favourable to women MPs than single member plurality-majority systems.²² In 2004, the global average share of women representatives elected to legislatures was 15.2 per cent. If distinguished by electoral system, parliaments using FPP systems averaged 11.1 per cent women's representation, while those using list PR systems averaged 19.5 per cent.²³ That list PR systems are more favourable to women candidates can also be established by examining the positioning of women in mixed member or parallel systems, where both list PR and single-member district systems are used. For example, in East Timor in 2001, 260 of the 963 candidates for the 75 list PR seats were women (27 per cent), but only 7 per cent of those who ran for the 13 district seats. This proved a shrewd calculation. Only a single woman secured election in the constituency seats, but 22 of the 75 elected (29 per cent) via list PR were women.²⁴

Single member district-based plurality-majority systems, such as first-past-the-post or the Fiji/PNG/Australia-type alternative vote system, are particularly unfavourable to the electoral prospects of women.²⁵ List PR systems, particularly if used in relatively large multi-member districts, tend to result in the election of the largest number of women. Yet PR systems alone do not guarantee an increase in the number of women MPs in parliament. Indonesia, and many of the South American countries, have list PR systems, but nevertheless have low levels of women's representation. PR systems tend to be more favourable to women MPs and minorities in part because there are multiple members per district (rendering more likely a sex balance between women and male MPs) and because women candidates may obtain positions higher up the party lists. As previously noted in

Box 7: A Woman's Party?

“If a woman's party could count on most women's votes, it could hold its own even in one seat districts and be one of the two major parties. However, it would first have to develop support gradually for a woman's party. But the two major parties likely would adopt most or part of the woman's party recommendations and would nip such development in the bud. Therefore, women's parties, too, are thinkable only in multi-seat PR districts. In practice, only Iceland has developed a Women's Alliance able to win a few seats in 1983.”

Rein Taagepera 'Beating the Law of Minority Attrition, Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective; Their Impact on Women & Minorities (eds) Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman, Greenwood Press, Westport Connecticut, & London, 1994, p237

Table 14: Average Global Shares of Women in Legislative Assemblies by Electoral System Type

Electoral System Type	Sample Size (No. of Seats)	Share of Women in Lower or Single House
Parallel (Party Block Vote + List PR)	371	22.64
List Proportional Representation	11,399	19.75
Single Nontransferable Vote	411	18.49
Mixed Member Proportional	2,422	18.08
Two Round System (TRS)	4,326	16.34
Parallel (TRS+List PR)	395	16.20
First-Past-the-Post (FPP)	6,372	14.53
Alternative Vote	330	13.33
Single Transferable Vote	231	12.12
Parallel (FPP+List PR)	3,086	12.12
Block Vote	717	11.30

Sources: Modified from International IDEA & IPU databases.

Notes: the table excludes those countries which, according to the IDEA Handbook, do not fit into any of the above classified electoral systems, such as Marshall Islands, Samoa, Madagascar, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Singapore, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Panama, Hungary, Monaco, Georgia, Nauru. It also excludes countries classified as 'in transition – undecided'; Dem. Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Liberia, Serbia and Montenegro, Somalia. It also excludes those classified as having 'no provisions for direct elections'; Bhutan, China, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

the discussion of New Caledonia, when determining the position of candidates on lists, party leaders tend to pay attention to ensuring closer reflection of the nation-wide demographic balance than when they do when selecting candidates to contest in single member districts. Some debate surrounds whether such 'closed list' systems are more beneficial to women, or whether 'open list' systems – in which voters are able to select the order of candidates on lists – are preferable.²⁶

Table 14 gives more detail about the impact of a range of electoral system types, by combining information from the international Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) database on electoral system type with the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) database on shares of women MPs in legislative chambers.

The table confirms the previously made points about the superior performance of proportional representation systems over majoritarian systems, although with some caveats. In particular,

- i. The top position of those parallel systems which use the Party Block Vote together with List PR systems occurs mainly because Senegal (19.2 per cent) and the Tunisia (22.8 per cent) dominate a relatively small sample, but smaller countries like Andorra (28.6 per cent) and Seychelles (29.4 per cent) confirm the strong performance of these types of system. Neither Senegal nor Tunisia have quotas.
- ii. The strong performance of SNTV systems is also odd, but occurs mainly because the small sample is heavily influenced by Afghanistan (27.3 per cent) which accounts for over half the total sample, and has quotas. Other smaller SNTV-using countries, Jordan (5.5 per cent) and Vanuatu (3.8 per cent), perform much more poorly.

- iii. That two-round systems perform better than FPP is notable, but in part explained by the influence of socialist countries like Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea on the TRS sample. More generally, countries with left-wing governments have been found to be more likely to have higher shares of women MPs than those with right-wing governments.
- iv. STV's poor performance is heavily influenced by the restricted sample (only Ireland and Malta), but is probably also indicative of that system's localised focus.
- v. That block vote systems are bottom of the table is perhaps surprising, given the frequent association of multi-member constituencies with higher levels of women's representation. It is in part explained by the heavy weight of Middle Eastern countries, like Syria, Kuwait and Lebanon in the eight-country sample.

Judged by these data, the case for introducing PR systems may seem strong, but the adoption of PR entails also a host of other considerations, which need to be balanced with some care. List PR or MMP would also not work well if introduced in countries without well-organised political parties. In much of western Melanesia and Micronesia, many MPs are independents and those that are affiliated to political parties tend to be only loosely aligned. 'Crossing the floor' during motions of no confidence, or in search of ministerial portfolios, is common. Without political parties, using formulas to equate party shares of the vote with party shares of seats would prove counter-productive, and might serve to actively discourage the emergence of political parties. STV, which is a candidate rather than party-based electoral system, but which is nevertheless reasonably proportional if district magnitude is sufficiently large, may avoid difficulties associated with other more party-based forms of PR, but it is one of the most complex electoral systems; countries with STV systems, as Table 14 shows, tend to have considerably lower levels of women's representation than countries with list PR systems.²⁷ If voters find difficulty in understanding the counting process (let alone the ballot paper), electoral outcomes can lose some degree of legitimacy with some groups protesting that 'the system' works against them.

Another alternative is multi-member majoritarian systems, such as the block vote in Guam or some of the Marshall Islands or Niue constituencies or the Dowdall system in Nauru. Where voters are required to select multiple members, it may be the case that they are more likely to back more sex-balanced slates. This accords with the widespread claims that, owing to prevailing cultural norms (although this issue is far from unique to the Pacific), men are more likely to be selected if only a single MP is to be elected.²⁸ As we saw previously, Guam, which has a 15-member legislative assembly elected 'at large' (i.e. all voters can cast 15 votes), and which also has a higher-than-average share of women in the legislature, seems to support this notion. But Nauru, Marshall Islands and Niue have elected no more women to their multi-member than countries with single-member constituencies. Likewise Kiribati's two-member constituencies are no more likely to return women members than the country's single-member constituencies.²⁹ And similarly, Fiji, at the time when it had two- and three-member constituencies (under the 1990 constitution), saw no significant change in the direction of greater numbers of women MPs. Given the constraints on introducing list PR systems owing to the absence of political parties in the region, there is no gender-blind electoral system reform that is likely to substantially change the sex composition of Pacific parliaments. To accomplish this, additional measures would be required, although debates are required in each Pacific country about the merits of affirmative action policies.

Table 15: Top 20 Countries in the World with 25 per cent or over Women Representatives

Rank	Country	% Women	Quota Type	Electoral System
1	Rwanda	48.8	Legal Quotas (C)	List PR
2	Sweden	45.3	Party Quotas	List PR
3	Norway	37.9	Party Quotas	List PR
4	Finland	37.5	No Quota	List PR
5	Denmark	36.9	No Quota	List PR
6	Netherlands	36.7	Party Quotas	List PR
7	Spain	36.0	Party Quotas	List PR
7	Cuba	36.0	No Quota	Two Rounds
7	Mozambique	36.0	Party Quotas	List PR
8	Costa Rica	35.5	Legal Quotas (L)	List PR
9	Belgium	35.3	Legal Quotas (L)	List PR
10	Argentina	33.5	Legal Quotas (C)	List PR
11	Austria	33.3	Party Quotas	List PR
12	South Africa	32.8	Party Quotas	List PR
13	New Zealand	32.2	Party Quotas	MMP
14	Germany	31.8	Party Quotas	MMP
15	Iraq	31.6	Legal Quotas (C)	List PR
16	Guyana	30.8	Legal Quotas (C)	List PR
17	Burundi	30.5	Legal Quotas (L)	List PR
18	Iceland	30.2	Party Quotas	List PR
19	Namibia	26.9	Party Quotas	List PR
20	East Timor	26.1	No Quota	Parallel – List PR & FPTP

Notes: (C) = Constitutional, (L) = Legal or Act of Parliament

Sources: Dahlerup, D. 'Introduction'. In D. Dahlerup (ed.). *Women, Quotas and Politics*. (pp. 1–31). Oxon: Routledge; Global Database of Quotas for Women: A joint project of International IDEA and Stockholm University. (2006); <http://www.quotaproject.org/country.cfm?SortOrder=LastLowerPercentage%20DESC> (Date Accessed: 16th March, 2006); Inter-Parliamentary Union. 'The Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making: The Parliamentary Dimension.' Proceedings from *Expert Group Meeting on "Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes with particular emphasis on political participation and leadership."* Ethiopia, 24-27 October, 2005.

5.0 Electoral Quotas

Electoral quotas for women entail usage of positive discrimination, in a manner aimed at shifting the sex balance of legislative chambers. This can occur either through a 'slow' or 'incremental track' or the 'fast track' approach. The Nordic countries which have led the world in women's representation are an example of the 'slow track' approach which is based on reliance solely on the use of voluntary party quotas. Here, the increase in women's representation has been gradual. Examples of the 'fast track' approach are mainly 'post

conflict' countries, such as Burundi, Iraq, Mozambique, Rwanda and South Africa. Some of these have also used voluntary party quotas (South Africa, Mozambique), but others have used reserved seats (Rwanda) and/or legislated quotas (Iraq and Burundi). What these 'fast track' countries have in common is a prescribed and rapid increase in the number of women represented. Among the top 25 countries in the world in terms of women's representation (see Table 14) all of them except Finland, Denmark, Cuba and East Timor use quotas of one form or another.³⁰

The purpose of electoral sex quotas, whatever their form, is to ensure that women make up a certain number or percentage of the members of a body, whether it is a candidate list, a parliamentary assembly, or a government.³¹ Quotas place the burden of recruitment not on individual woman aspirants or candidates, but on those who determine the recruitment process – usually political parties. They focus on the demand- rather than the supply-side of politics, and aim at a "politics of presence".³²

List PR and MMP systems are more susceptible to introduction of quotas aimed at enhancing women's representation than single-member-based systems, as the story of the introduction of the "law on Parity" in mainland France illustrates (see Box 9). That law required political parties to submit their lists in a form that alternated men and women. If a man led the list, a women would have to appear as number two, followed by another man, then a women, and so on. Hence, if an even number of candidates were elected, the result should be 50 per cent or more women MPs. In practice, however, some parties may get only one or three members elected, resulting in slightly less than 50 per cent women MPs. For the Pacific, the results of this legislation have been dramatic. French Polynesia had 42 per cent women MPs after the 2004 polls. New Caledonia had nine women MPs in the 54-member assembly (17 per cent) after the 1999 elections, but after the introduction of the new Parity Law, the number of women in Congress rose to 24 (44 per cent) in 2004 (see Table 1). Having a list PR system helped ensure a higher level of female

Box 8: Critical Mass

The idea of 'critical mass' is that beyond a certain threshold, increases in numbers of women representatives become inevitable. Attitudes may change once a sizeable cohort of women enter parliament, removing pressures towards conformity with entrenched agendas, outdated standing orders and styles of policy-making. Once women's representation passes a certain mark, women may be assessed on their merits. Like other politicians, some will fail the test, but some will excel and move into positions of leadership on either the government or opposition side. Studies in Scandinavia have shown that women politicians work hard to recruit other women. They also tended to initiate or support legislation that favours women, in the process changing public perceptions and pushing back barriers. The UN in 1995 set a figure of 30 per cent as the critical mass point for women's representation to break down barriers. Others have distinguished a *skewed* distribution as being one where women count for less than 15 per cent of parliamentarians, a *tilted* group as one where they obtain 15-40 per cent and a *balanced* distribution as one where women surpass the 40 per cent mark. Yet efforts to specify quantitative thresholds in this way perhaps ignore the all-important qualitative issues. Even a small number of women in parliament can make a significant impact.

Further Reading:

Joni Lovenduski 'Women and Politics: Minority Representation or Critical Mass?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 54, 2001, pp743-758.

Drude Dahlerup, 'From a Small to a Large Minority: Theory of Critical Mass', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 11, (4), 1988, pp275-298.

Box 9: The French Law on Parity

France introduced a 'Law on Parity' in June 2000. The law requires political parties to include 50 per cent women on their lists of candidates in one round elections (e.g. European, list PR Senatorial and Regional elections) in so-called zipper lists (i.e. alternating one man and one woman from top to bottom of the list). Parity by 'slices' of six candidates (three men, three women) applies to municipal elections in towns with more than 3,500 inhabitants. Non-compliance by parties results in their lists not being registered. Consequently at the municipal level (which uses a list PR system) the number of women office-holders rose from 25 per cent to 47 per cent at the March 2001 polls.¹ In the September 2001 senatorial elections, in the list-PR districts the number of women candidates was 45 per cent versus the FFP districts where women constituted only 20.9 per cent of candidates. In the case of the French National Assembly, which returns members from single-member districts via the two round system, the law merely reduces public financing available to parties if they do not put forward 50 per cent women candidates. At the June 2002 National Assembly elections, the share of women rose only from 10.9 per cent to 12.3 per cent. The main reason was the electoral system: owing to the single-member district based system, parties were able to concentrate women candidates in unwinnable constituencies. Both major parties failed to promote women candidates: the UMP had only 20 per cent and the Socialist Party had 36 per cent even though they stood to lose (and did lose) public campaign funding for failing to meet the new quotas: 5 per cent of funds if the sex difference was 10 per cent, 30 per cent for a difference of 60 per cent and 50 per cent maximum for a difference of 100 per cent.²

France was the first country to adopt parity, followed by Belgium in 2001. The new law is the most recent step in a two decade battle to achieve equality in political representation in France. The struggle for parity was initiated by civil society groups and academics (particularly through the publication of a book on parity in 1992) before being taken up by women politicians, and a number of progressive political parties (in 1994 a handful of bills seeking a constitutional amendment in favour of parity were brought to the French Assembly). In 1995 President Chirac established a 'Parity Observatory' which is still today tasked with reviewing existing and proposing new measures to enhance parity and the status of women in France. In 1997, the Socialist Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, declared that it was time for "French women to enter public life without obstacles". In 1999 the French Parliament modified two articles of the Constitution to ensure that "the law will favour the equal access of women and men to electoral mandates and legislative functions".

1 In municipalities with less than 3,500 inhabitants the number of women councillors also increased between 1995 and 2001 by 20 per cent to 30 per cent, even though the parity law does not yet apply to these small towns.

2 As a result the UMP is losing more than 4 million Euros per year during this current 5-year term and the Socialist Party approximately 1 million Euros per annum.

Janine Mossuz-Lavau, 2005. Parité: la nouvelle « exception française, in Margaret Maruani (ed.), *Femmes, genres, et sociétés: l'état des savoirs*, Paris: La Découverte, 2005, pp.307-14.

Janine-Mossuz-Lavau, 2005. La Parité introuvable, in *Sciences Humaines, Hors-Série Spécial N.4, Femmes: Combats et Debats*, novembre-décembre 2005.

representation than elsewhere, but it required the Law on Parity to bring representation somewhere near to gender-equality in parliament. In New Caledonia, the Law on Parity – if applied without any parallel strengthening of women’s organisation or political engagement – might have had counter-productive results. That women were well-prepared to take advantage of the new laws is indicated by the fact that, without legal pressure, two women, Marie-Noëlle Thémereau and Déwé Gorodé, emerged respectively as President and Vice President after the 2004 polls.³³

In list PR systems, quotas may work better if ‘closed’ lists (where the party hierarchy selects the ordering of candidates) are used rather than ‘open’ lists (where the voter is allowed the choice as regards the positioning of candidates on party lists).³⁴ There is, however, some discussion about whether this applies also in the less-developed countries.

5.1 The Range of Quotas

Electoral quotas can be constitutionally or legislatively mandated (legal quotas), and/or voluntarily adopted by political parties (party quotas). Some countries have adopted reserved seats in combination with voluntary party quotas (this is notably the case of Rwanda). Others have only voluntary party quotas (the Nordic countries). Still others have constitutionally and/or legally mandated quotas requiring that political parties put forward a certain percentage of women candidates (e.g. France). The bulk of quota-using countries have adopted national level quotas, but some have adopted quotas at the local level only (India, Bangladesh and Pakistan) and some have quotas at both national and local levels.

Without legislation, political parties may voluntarily opt to increase their numbers of women candidates. Voluntary quotas introduced by political parties have the advantage of encouraging spontaneous political rivalry, perhaps aimed at securing the female vote or the support of those who favour increased women’s representation, without stirring negative reactions to legally-sanctioned affirmative action programmes. If one party succeeds in consequently attracting a larger share of the women’s vote, it may trigger other parties to follow suite, although this is not inevitable. Women may choose not to vote for the party that adopts voluntary sex quotas or they may feel constrained in their choice of candidate.

In the UK, Tony Blair’s Labour Party introduced all-women shortlists in numerous constituencies in 1997, with the result that close to 28 per cent of Labour MPs are women, while the opposition Conservative Party have only 9 per cent women.³⁵ Some argue that using political parties as the springboard to expand women’s representation provides the most viable strategy.³⁶ Such innovations may trigger competition among parties to enhance the number of women candidates positioned in seats where they have a genuine chance of victory. In 2004, 46 countries had legally binding quotas, while at least 61 countries had some voluntary party quotas. Quotas of one or the other type tended to more frequent in PR systems (45 countries) and less frequent in mixed systems (15) or plurality/majority systems (17).³⁷

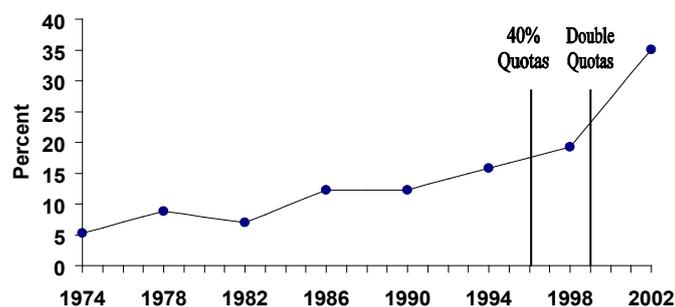
Quotas can be applied at different levels of the body politic. They can be applied by political parties to regulate the sex balance of those applying for positions as party candidates. A certain number of women can be required to be represented in the pool of candidates. This was the model used in by the Labour Party in Great Britain with the women’s short lists (of 1987) and the All Women’s Shortlist (adopted in 1993).³⁸ At the second level, the quotas mandate that a certain number of candidates presented by parties are women. A third type of quota may entail a certain number of positions in Cabinet or the Executive being allocated to women.

5.2 Historical Background

Electoral quotas were introduced initially in the 1970s by political parties in Norway. Other Nordic countries followed suite in the 1980s when it appeared that the spontaneous increase in women's numbers was not sufficient to attain balanced representation between women and men. The lack of women's representation, particularly in long-standing democratic systems, became an increasing concern internationally (largely due to the pressure of women's groups) in the 1970s and beyond with the UN Conferences (Nairobi, Beijing, Beijing + 5 and Beijing + 10) and the adoption of the CEDAW Convention. The Beijing Platform for Action pointed out that women had consistently been 'excluded' from politics and that the onus was on states and parties to modify institutions and structures to achieve greater gender equality worldwide. Since then it has become recognised internationally that "the responsibility for dealing with the under-representation of women rests with the political institutions."³⁹ This is the foundation for the 'fast track' approach which advocates strong and quick measures to resolve the problem. The 'fast track' approach has been adopted in the past decade or two particularly in countries which have undergone re-democratisation (for example, in Latin American countries such as Argentina) and those coming out of conflict (such as Afghanistan and Iraq).

Today quotas are used across the world, including in North Africa and South Asia, where there are often local level sex quotas. There are now approximately 40 countries that use legal sex quotas for national elections and more than 50 in which the biggest parties use voluntary quotas.⁴⁰

Box 10: Costa Rica: Percentage of Women in Congress



Increasing women's activism in Costa Rica in the 1980s and 1990s led to substantial changes in the sex balance of Congress. In 1997, a quota law was introduced, requiring parties to field a minimum of 40 per cent women candidates. Costa Rica uses a list proportional representation system, and many parties initially responded by putting women candidates near the bottom on their lists (hence only 11 of those elected in 1998 were women). In 1999, the Supreme Court ruled that parties had to place women also in a minimum of 40 per cent of those seats a party had won at the previous election. The result was an increase in women's share in Congress to 35.1 per cent. Women in Costa Rica now have the highest share of Congress seats in the Americas.

Sources: Richard E. Matland & Michelle M. Taylor 'Electoral System Effects on Women's Representation; Theoretical Arguments and Evidence from Costa Rica', *Comparative Political Studies*, 30, (2), 1997, pp186-210; Karen Olsen De Figueres, 'The Road to Equality – Women in Parliament in Costa Rica', in *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, International IDEA Handbook, 2002; IDEA, 'Costa Rica', in *Global Database of Quotas for Women*, <http://www.quotaproject.org>.

5.3 Arguments Surrounding Quotas

Quotas frequently generate controversy, and even hostility from politicians. It is sometimes argued that quotas are undemocratic, or violate the principle of equality. Quotas are sometimes viewed as generating inefficiency, because those elected owing to their sex may be less qualified than those who would be elected in an open contest. An alternative view is that quotas are not discriminatory, but aim to rectify *de facto* barriers that prevent women from gaining their fair share of seats in parliament. They aim to ensure equality of results, as well as equality of opportunity. The efficiency arguments are either entirely wrong (in the sense that women's qualifications are less recognised politically than those of men) or justify a vicious circle; women may be unable to break through political barriers that make possible greater experience in law-making that generates greater efficiency. Greater participation of women in parliament may also change the range of issues considered, or shift prevalent approaches to policy making.

5.4. Implementing Quotas

It is important when considering the use of quotas to focus not only on their introduction but also on the implementation process. In the worst case scenario, quotas may be introduced after a heated debate but then have no effect on increasing women's representation because there are no mechanisms to ensure their implementation or because they are at odds with the electoral system and/or the political context. As shown in the French case, parity works well where proportional representation is used but may have little direct effect where plurality-majority systems are used. Party quotas (particularly zipper quotas) are effective when parties are strong and few in number (and provided the electoral system matches) but not in polities which do not have a strong party tradition. This explains the differences between the application of the French parity law in New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna, in spite of all three having proportional representation systems. In the first two territories, the parity law has led to high levels of women's representation whereas in the latter, women's representation is only 10 per cent (two women out of 20 MPs). New Caledonia and French Polynesia have a tradition of reasonably strong political parties, whereas Wallis and Futuna has a much more fractionalised political system (see Box 12).

Quotas prove ineffective unless combined with concerted popular pressure to improve levels of women's representation in parliament.⁴¹ Where quotas are introduced as part of a strong, popular, campaign to elect qualified female candidates, they tend to be far more successful than in situations where change is sought by institutional engineering alone. Without popular pressure, quotas are likely not to be implemented, particularly where this depends on Electoral Management Bodies de-registering parties that fail to achieve required thresholds. Loopholes in the legislation are far more likely to be exploited in situations where there is an absence of grass roots organisation aimed at finding credible local women candidates and cultivating popular support for them.

In some cases, the legality of quotas has been contested in the courts. This happened in France, resulting in the defeat of a pre-Parity Law attempt to legislate for increased women's representation. In Argentina, and in Costa Rica (see Box 10) the courts have supported quotas.

Quotas can be enforced through strict sanctions or soft sanctions or incitement. The French parity law uses strict sanctions at the municipal, local (regional), senatorial and European level (all of which use list PR) but not at the national assembly level where the soft sanction is less access to public funds.

Box 11: The Debate on Sex Quotas in East Timor

East Timor witnessed a vigorous debate over the pros and cons of introducing quotas prior to the first post-independence elections of 2001. The proposal was ultimately defeated after strong hostility from the UN Department of Political Affairs, lobbying of Timorese MPs by the UN Transition Administration and a negative vote by the National Council, backed ironically by women members who had obtained their positions as a result of previously-used sex quotas. Nevertheless, East Timor found itself with the highest share of women legislative assembly representatives in South-East Asia after elections held in 2001.

In June 2000, 400 Timorese women gathered at a 1st Congress of Women and recommended a 30 per cent target for women in decision-making positions. The United Nations Transition Administration of East Timor (UNTAET) had previously backed sex quotas for elections to village and sub-district development councils, although in some districts traditional male-dominated power structures ensured that those women played a marginal role in actual decision-making. When UNTAET established the National Council, a transitional quasi-legislature, it directed that women should comprise at least half of the nominees from the District Councils and NGOs. Women were also encouraged by quotas applied to civil service employment and in recruitment to the police force, substantially altering the sex balance in the public sector. When the National Council gathered to decide on the framework for the post-independence Constituent Assembly elections, women's organisations proposed a 30 per cent quota on party lists, with every third candidate required to be a woman.

The issue generated considerable controversy within the UN. The Electoral Assistance Division had opposed usage of quotas in municipal elections in Kosovo and told UNTAET that 'while some countries do have quotas for women (and for other groups, other democratic countries vehemently oppose the practice. This would include some members of the Security Council ... Electoral quotas for women (or any other group) do not constitute international best practice for elections'. UN staff members in the East Timor capital, Dili, lobbied National Council members against quotas, who eventually reversed their previous position and rejected their adoption. UNTAET did, however, provide funds to train close to 200 women candidates, as well as other assistance including free media air time for parties with women candidates in strong positions, and some political parties adopted informal internal quotas. When East Timor went to the polls in August 2001, 27 per cent of the MPs elected were women; 22 from the 75 list-PR using national seats and one from the 13 first-past-the-post using district seats. Many consequently argued that mandatory quotas proved unnecessary, and that significant advances could be achieved without affirmative action.

Sources - Milena Pires, 'East Timor and the Debate on Quotas', paper presented at a 'Regional Workshop on the Implementation of Quotas - Asian Experiences', International Institute for Democracy & Electoral Assistance, 25th September 2002, Jakarta, Indonesia; East Timor election results, <http://www.pcug.org.au/~wildwood/01sepresults.htm>; 'Women elected to be 26 per cent of the Constituent Assembly', <http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/projects/easttimor/EastTElection.htm>

Box 12: What Went Wrong with Parity Laws in Wallis & Futuna?

Like the other French Pacific territories, Wallis & Futuna has become subject to the French Parity Act. Yet the results have been strikingly different to those in New Caledonia and French Polynesia. At the 2002 elections, the number of women elected to the Territorial Assembly fell from two to only a single member. To understand why, it is necessary to look at the way the electoral system works. The territory is divided into five constituencies, with between three and six members each. As is necessary under list PR systems, ‘parties’ put up lists in each constituency, and as required by the Parity Law male and female candidates were from 2002 onwards alternated. Yet the nature of Wallisian and Futunian politics frustrated the intention of the law. The law assumes that a small number of political parties will get most of the votes and share out all the seats, subject to the requirement that they ensure sex balance. But in Wallis & Futuna, no “party” ever secures more than two seats, and most only secure one.

No women were elected prior to 1992. There were 29 separate lists vying for the 20-seats in 1992, and only 2 of these gained more than a single seat. There were 34 lists in 1997 and only one gained more than a single seat. Under the new parity legislation, there were 32 lists in 2002 and again only one gained more than a single member. Usually, in 2002, male candidates headed the lists. Hence, the single woman elected in 2002 was also the only candidate in second position on any list. It was the resignation of one member and the death of another that brought women’s representation in Wallis & Futuna up to its present level of three members.

6.0 Reserved Seats

Reserved seats are a form of constitutional or legislated quota which provides that only women can contest a certain number of seats, normally entailing all eligible citizens casting one ballot in one of the reserved women’s constituencies and another in one of the open constituencies. Reserved seats may be more likely to generate substantial increases in women’s representation in the Pacific than the quota systems used elsewhere in the world, owing to the absence of party systems in many Pacific countries.

6.1 The Case for Adopting Reserved Seats, Rather Than Quotas.

Where there are no political parties or where there are large numbers of independents, quotas which aim at influencing the party selection process are likely to prove ineffective. Independents are by definition immune to laws requiring them to have as many women as male candidates. If a country has a strongly party-oriented system like list PR, what happens to those who would otherwise stand as independents? Usually, if there is no threshold, they will behave like single-member political parties, putting up “lists” with the only real candidate at the top and various supporters who are not expected to win in lower positions (as the example of Wallis & Futuna indicates – see Box 12). Even where political parties exist, but alongside large numbers of independent MPs, quotas aimed at political parties may simply change the composition of the legislature towards independents, frustrating the efforts of reformists. In such circumstances, the way to ‘fast track’ substantial increases in women’s representation is inevitably, for better or worse, via the introduction of reserved seats for women.

Table 16: Share of Independents in Pacific Legislative Chambers

	Election Year/ System Type	Share of Independent
American Samoa	No Party	100%
Cook Islands	1999	0%
FSM	No Party	100%
Fiji	2001	4%
French Polynesia	2001	0%
Guam	2002	0%
Kiribati	1998	36%
Marshall Islands	1999	45%
Nauru	No Party	100%
New Caledonia	1999	0%
Niue	No Party	100%
Nor. Mariana Islands	2003	0%
Palau	No Party	100%
Papua New Guinea	2002	81%
Pitcairn Islands	No Party	100%
Samoa	2002	27%
Solomon Islands	2001	2%
Tokelau	No Party	100%
Tonga	2004	100%
Tuvalu	No Party	100%
Vanuatu	2004	15%
Wallis & Futuna	2002	0%

Notes: Election years selected are those recorded in the 2005 edition of *Political Parties of the World*.

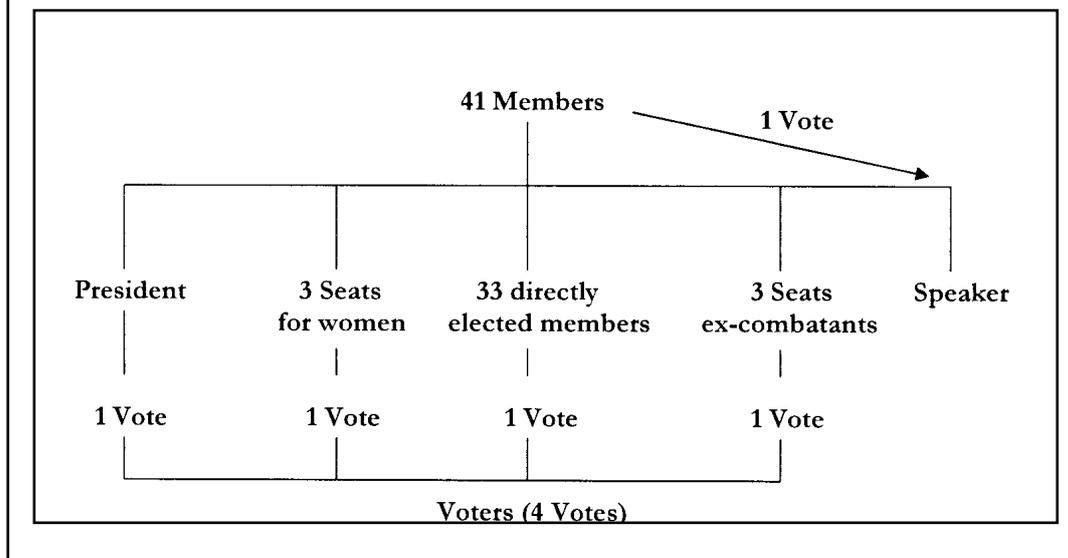
Sources: Szajkowski, B., (ed) *Political Parties of the World*, John Harper, 5th edition 2005 (1st edition – 1980).

Aside from Fiji, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and, perhaps, Samoa, Cook Islands and the Marshall Islands, the Pacific generally does not have well-developed party systems.⁴²

Table 16 shows the party/independent composition of legislative assemblies across the Pacific region.⁴³

Quotas are potentially workable in party-centric countries like New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Fiji, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands and perhaps Cook Islands and Samoa. They are not likely to work effectively in the other countries, owing to their larger shares of independents, or fluid and changing party systems. PNG is exceptional, because political parties have been among the most fluid in the region, with MPs regularly switching sides and a large number of independents securing election. The new 2001-2 Organic Law on Political parties and Candidates aims at changing this situation, by strengthening political parties. If successful, the country would join those where party quotas might prove effective. Conversely,

Box 13: Composition of the House of Representatives after the 2005 Elections to the Autonomous Government of Bougainville



Samoa often witnesses considerable change in party affiliations straight after elections, the Cook Islands regularly experiences floor-crossing by MPs and the Kiribati party system is very recent and represents no more than a mild entrenchment of the factions that assemble together in parliament. In these cases, as with the no party systems, the repercussions of these setups need to be carefully considered before any proposal to adopt quotas is considered. For such countries, the way to ‘fast track’ increased women’s representation is via reserved seats.

Owing to the greater strength of party systems elsewhere in the world, party quotas are much more widely used than reserved seats for women. In Afghanistan, each of the 32 provinces elects two women, resulting in 25 per cent of seats being held by women. In Uganda, each of 56 districts has one woman member, resulting in 18 per cent women MPs. In Rwanda, women vote alone for 24 members, and thereby elect 30 per cent of the legislature.⁴⁴ In Afghanistan, multi-member constituencies are used, and the law provides that some of those elected need to be women. For example, in a three seat constituency where male one gets 1000 votes, male two gets 900 votes, male three gets 800 votes, a sole female candidate gets 700 votes, and several others get below 700 votes, male one and male two would take two of the three seats, and the third would go to the woman candidate, as the top scoring female. Male three would miss out. One problem with this kind of system is what to do if, for example, the top scoring female only secures one or two votes. Would she still be elected in preference to male three, with 800 votes? Special seats for women are preferable to the Afghan type arrangements.

The autonomous government of Bougainville is the sole territory in the Pacific Islands that has introduced reserved seats for women. The surrounding debates are of particular importance much more broadly in the Pacific. The Bougainville Constitutional Commission sought to recognise the part played by women in the island’s mostly matrilineal society and the role played by women’s groups in the post-conflict peace process. It expressed concern that ‘if no seats were set aside for women it could be likely that they would not succeed in contests for a single member constituency at the election, and that as a result there might be no female members in the legislature’. The Commission rejected ‘the argument that it would be contrary

to custom for women to play a prominent role in public affairs in special seats reserved for women, and that women had the same rights as men to nominate and stand for ordinary single member constituencies.' The report emphasised that 'in the situation of a new and changing Bougainville, the roles of women are changing' and that 'in order to ensure that women's voices are heard clearly in the Bougainville legislature it is right and proper that some seats are reserved for women members of the house who specifically represent the interests of women.' Initially, the proposal was to have a single seat for women selected from a single cross-Bougainville electorate. In part owing the view that this might potentially entail some friction with the President (who is elected from a single Bougainville constituency), it was decided instead to have three women members, representing the South, Central and North regions. The Constitutional Commission also recommended that there should be at least one woman's representative on the Executive Council.⁴⁵

At the first elections held for the autonomous government of Bougainville in May-June 2005, there were 33 directly elected members, three seats for ex-combatants and three seats for women, as well as a separately elected President (see Box 13).⁴⁶ The International Election Observer team which visited Bougainville for the 2005 elections made reference to the view that the three reserved seats had a negative impact on the number of women elected.

'The Team recognised the key role played by women in the Bougainville peace process, and the allocation of three seats specifically for representation by women. However, while 25 women contested the three allocated seats, we understood that no women contested constituency seats, for which they were also entitled to stand. Some people we spoke to suggested that allocating three seats specifically for women may have had an unintended effect of marginalising them within the process. We were of the view that women should be encouraged in future to contest general constituency seats.The Team recommends that the reasons for the low numbers of women candidates contesting constituency seats are examined, with a view to encouraging a larger number of women to contest future elections.'⁴⁷

An alternative view, as expressed by the Bougainville Constitutional Commission and others, is that without reserved seats no women at all would have secured election. Whichever way, the three women's seats are entrenched in the new constitution, and it will therefore be possible to see, in the longer-run, how these influence electoral behaviour. The International Observers Group accurately noted that it is preferable that, over time, women come to contest also the other non-reserved seats.

Box 14: Campaigning with Quotas

“One cannot deal with the problem of female representation by a quota system alone. Political parties, the educational system, NGOs, trade unions, churches - all must take responsibility within their own organisations to systematically promote women's participation, from the bottom up. This will take time. It will not happen overnight, or in one year or five years; it will take one or two generations to realise significant change.

This is what we are working on in Sweden. We did not start with a quota system. First we laid the groundwork to facilitate women's entry into politics. We prepared the women to ensure they were competent to enter the field; and we prepared the system, which made it a little less shameful for men to step aside. Then we used quotas as an instrument in segments and institutions where we needed a breakthrough.”

Birgitta Dahl, Speaker of Parliament, Sweden.

In Papua New Guinea, there has also been some debate about the possibility of introducing reserved seats for women. At present, the country has 109 constituencies, 20 of which are provincial constituencies, and 89 open constituencies. Both types of constituency cover the whole country, and eligible voters have two votes; one in each type of constituency. There is some support in PNG for converting the 20 provincial seats into reserved seats for women (18.3 per cent), but the issue is a subject of ongoing discussion.

While there may be debate about whether reserved seats for women are desirable or not in each country's specific circumstances, some Pacific states have electoral systems that are more conducive to the adoption of reserved seats for women than others. Where two-member constituencies exist, as in Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru and some of the Samoan districts, one of these might potentially be set aside for women candidates. Another possibility, for these countries and for others with single member districts, is that any new seats established might be reserved for women. Over time, most Pacific Island countries have expanded their numbers of seats in legislatures, owing to population increase of growing unevenness in numbers of eligible voters per constituency. Larger single-member districts are often divided in two.

Other alternatives, such as constituencies in which only women vote for all-women slates are usually less favoured; the objective is to gain broad popular acceptance for women to play a greater role in politics, not to separate electorates by the sex of voters. Similarly, allocating specific districts to women on a rolling basis, as in some of the Indian *panchayats* (local governments),⁴⁸ makes it difficult for female representatives to build strong community support and retain seats over time. Although common roll reserved seats are preferable to women-only electoral rolls, there are no easy ways to avoid generating some controversy around the introduction of reserved seats. Where there is no increase in the size of legislative assemblies, introducing reserved seats for women will normally be at the expense of male incumbents. Constitutional limits may limit the size of assemblies (as in the Solomon Islands, which has reached the allowed maximum of 50 MPs) and there may be other good reasons for seeking to avoid the expansion of legislatures which are already large relative to populations.

Introducing reserved seats in a vacuum tends to be counter-productive in the longer-run. Reserved seats for women, like quotas for political parties, are not an alternative to building support for women candidates, to training women for involvement in politics or to seeking credible candidates with cross-community appeal. Such work needs to occur over the longer-term. Campaigns which begin only weeks before a general election or which rely on poorly known urban-resident candidates being fielded in rural areas tend to prove unsuccessful. It is in situations where the groundwork has already been done, but where prevailing cultural attitudes create obstacles to women's success at the polls, that positive discrimination can play an effective role.

7.0 Local-Level Measures to Enhance Women's Political Participation

Pressures to increase women's representation should not occur solely at the central government level, neglecting the position at the island, municipal, provincial or village council level. Local-level experience proves a critical training ground for national politics, as does experience in trades unions or civil society organisations. The style of politics conducted at the local level can also be a critical determinant of the gender bias of political parties or parliaments. Political parties, where these exist in the Pacific, are often sustained by organisational structures that are rooted at the more local level. Independent candidates likewise may find their fortunes strongly influenced by their role in communities. Incumbents who remain

Box 15: Isabelle Donald & the Election of Women on Epi, Vanuatu

At the 2004 elections, two women were elected from the island constituency of Epi, to the north of the capital, Port Vila. They remain the sole women MPs in Vanuatu's parliament. Their success in this rural constituency was a surprise to many, owing to the concentration of activist support for increased women's representation in urban areas like Port Vila and Luganville. These women obtained local support due to longstanding dissatisfaction with the previous incumbent male MPs, who took up residence in Port Vila, got over-involved in personality-based power struggles in the capital city and failed to sustain strong links with their constituents.

Isabelle Susie Kora Donald was born in Burumba on Epi in 1966. Her father was district official working for the francophone authorities and Presbyterian missionary teacher and her mother a leader of the Presbyterian Women Mothers Union. Isabelle had only three years of secondary education, at the Onesua High School on north Efate. She took up holiday jobs in Port Vila to pay for courses in typing and office management, obtaining a position in 1984 as a secretary working for the Epi Local Government. She was subsequently promoted to Clerical Officer, then Assistant Secretary and Regional Development Planner. In 1987, she led a successful strike against the Council over the issues of low salaries and staff welfare. In 1993, she became Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and, as part of this work, took responsibility as Coordinator of the Rural Skills Training Programme. That position led Isabelle to return to Epi, where she continued her work with local communities. She usually travelled on foot, spending a week in each village, and seeking to enhance education and training opportunities for women and youths.

Before the 2002 elections, traditional chiefs and community leaders from the island chose to endorse Isabelle Donald as a candidate owing to recognition of her qualities as a community leader. Many men opposed her candidature, saying 'women have no right to stand for election' and 'you ladies are wasting your time'. But Isabelle was supported by her husband, Donald Apia, a small businessman, who recounts "Many people said Isabelle should not stand up for the election, but because of all the work she did around Epi, she knows every community in the island, and men wanted her to represent us in Parliament. When she became an MP I knew then I had to help her a lot so other men and women can look at me and my example. It is good that in Vanuatu men can help women to advance and work together with them".¹ Isabelle secured 20 per cent of the vote in 2002, securing the second Epi seat for the Vanua'aku Party. In 2004, Isabelle was again successful, although this time customary leaders also endorsed a second female candidate, Leinavau Tasso, and both narrowly scraped home through a crowded field. On her re-election in 2004, she was given a ministerial portfolio (cabinet minister responsible for the Comprehensive Reform Programme, women, disabled people and children) and she retained this position when a new government was formed in 2005 and during subsequent reshuffles. On Epi, Isabelle and Leinavau are now able to stand and speak in most traditional *nakamals* (village meeting houses) and to drink *kava* with the chiefs when official matters are discussed, although there are still, a few restricted areas where even they, as women, are not usually allowed to sit.

1 "I Stret Nomo" Girls in Vanuatu Can Do Anything, by Shirley Randell and Jeannette Bolenga, 2003, Port Vila, p.50.

Donald, . Strachan, J & Taleo, H. 2002 'Slo slo: Increasing Women's Representation in Parliament in Vanuatu', Development Bulletin, 59, pp54-57.

away from their constituencies during the entire life of a parliament tend to figure prominently among those who lose out at general elections. One reason why 75 per cent of PNG's MPs were defeated at the 2002 polls, and 50 per cent of MPs in the Solomon Islands lost their seats in 2001 and 2006, is due to this remoteness from the constituency base. By contrast, those women who have proved successful in elections in the Pacific have often proved their worth at the local level, and from this basis proved able to move on to playing an important national role (see Box 15).

Styles of local governance may have a considerable influence over the chances of election of women. Connected to this, the poor fortunes of women candidates may be symptomatic of broader problems of local level community governance. Writing of the Solomon Islands, Scales and Taekeni suggest that Westminster-style first-past-the-post campaigning in rural Solomon Islands constituencies puts the emphasis on individual candidates' relationship with what are sometimes atomised or highly fragmented communities. Where community spirit is at its lowest ebb, local candidates have developed well-established routines of campaigning via procurement of political support through donations to village headmen or through buying off dissenters.⁴⁹ In such communities, success may be determined by usage of landowner connections with foreign logging companies, links with powerful business barons from urban centres (such as casino operators) and networks of patronage built-up both in town and country. Stronger communities tend rather to organise themselves into electoral college-type arrangements, enabling something akin to primary elections to establish which MP is endorsed as having community support. In this way, the community may be able to exercise a stronger collective choice about a favoured candidate and, perhaps even more importantly, may be able to hold their subsequently elected MP to account. MPs in the capital city thus become more genuine *representatives* of strengthened political communities, rather than skilful politicians relating to fragmented electorates. Proposals considered (but not so far adopted) during the Solomon Islands constitutional review process for the introduction of an effective recall system for non-performing MPs might strengthen this collegial type of set-up.

Despite clear advantages, it is important to acknowledge difficulties with this type of arrangement, both as it might apply in the Solomon Islands and elsewhere in the region. In some parts of the Solomon Islands, broadly respected local councils exist (such as the Isabel Council of Chiefs). In other parts of the group, self-styled councils have been established, but have little genuine authority. Were such groups empowered by statute to control the selection or dismissal of candidates, serious injustices might occur. Nor do such arrangements necessarily favour women, particularly if local leadership is tied up in the hands of councils of all-male chiefs. In other parts of the Pacific, village-level associations do play a strong role in candidate selection, but in consequence other problems can appear. In Samoa, for example, the village *Fono* regularly select favoured candidates. In the 1960s and 1970s, such MPs were often elected unopposed, and the right to elect the MP was often circulated around the villages in a constituency, with each taking a turn at each election. Although elections have since become much more competitive, decisions by the village *fono* still carry significant weight during election campaigns. Even where such decisions are close to unanimous, penalties meted out to candidates who stand in defiance of the decision of the *fono* (such as 'banishment') can prove highly controversial, and have proved issues of extensive litigation. On balance, while electoral college type arrangements are probably an asset for rural communities in the region, it is important to keep in place basic freedoms to stand as candidates.

Box 16: Falekaupule Act and Women's Participation in Tuvalu Local Governance

The Falekaupule Act was enacted by Parliament in 1999. It serves to decentralise more power and authority to local governments in managing their island affairs, in the process empowering women, youth and other community groups. Prior to the Act, women could not speak at the Falekaupule, and decisions were solely made at the national level. Local Falekaupule assemblies were entrusted with implementing those decisions, not with making policy. The Act is aimed at improving linkages between customary government and national-level institutions and encouraging wider participation on the part of communities. Through the mandated annual Falekaupule Assembly, all community residents of legal age and regardless of sex can participate in community planning and decision-making, or air their grievances and other concerns of common interest. The Falekaupule Act made it possible for greater women's participation as candidates in local government elections. There has been an increase in the number of women elected as members of the Kaupule. Out of the eight islands, three women were elected to the Council in two islands, Niutao and Nukufetau. There also exists a very high participation rate amongst women in the various island development committees.

Number of Female members in Tuvalu local government

Islands	Elected Kaupule Members	Kaupule Committees							Courts	
		PHCC ¹	School	IDCC ²	CFC ³	Disaster	Pre-school	Budget	Island	Lands
Vaitupu	0	3	6	7	0	1	0	1	1	0
Nanumea	0	10	4	5	1	1	5	2	0	0
Nanumaga	0	6	5	6	0	2	0	3	0	0
Niutao	1	4	5	3	1	2	0	2	0	0
Nui	0	4	4	2	1	0	0	2	1	0
Nukufetau	2	4	3	3	2	3	0	3	1	0
Funafuti	0	10	16	4	0	2	5	2	1	0
Nukulaelae	0	6	5	2	0	0	4	2	2	0

1 PHCC = Primary Health Care Committee, 2 IDCC = Island Development Coordinating Committee, 3 CFC = Community Fisheries Centre.

The Falekaupule Assembly is an accountability mechanism purposely established for the Kaupule (the working arm of the Falekaupule) to consult and discuss their budget, seek stakeholders approval for their plans, and report on the status of their work programmes to the people. It is the place where all stakeholders can voice their opinions, and raise concerns about how the Kaupule runs its affairs. The Falekaupule Act mandates for these assemblies to meet once every three months and once for the budget session at the beginning of the financial year.

8.0 Campaign Finance

In many parts of the Pacific region, gifts of sweets, cash food parcels or cigarettes, or even more substantial presents of agricultural implements, outboard motors or payments of school fees and medical expenses influence the political process. Foreign donors sometimes back favoured political parties or pliant candidates, or, as is frequently the case with big mining or logging interests, hedge their bets by backing numerous rival parties. Usually, both types of donations – those which fund the politicians, and those which are received by the voters – are to ‘big men’, village headmen, male chiefs and male politicians.⁵⁰ Women’s marginal position in money politics thus becomes another means of ensuring their marginalisation from Pacific parliaments.

Often, such activities take place within the law. As long as government funds are not abused, political parties or independent candidates are normally free from any requirement to disclose their links with big businesses or foreign or local benefactors (although there exists plenty of scope for introducing legislation on disclosure of funding sources, in the Pacific no less than in the rest of the world). In some countries, like Samoa and Kiribati, ‘bribery’ or ‘treating’ is a recognised offence, and parliamentarians regularly lose their seats where they are found to have exercised ‘undue influence’. But ingenious politicians find ways to bend the rules. Samoa’s courts have ruled that providing food at election rallies constitutes bribery, but provision of tea and sandwiches are legal. Candidates responded by placing \$10 notes between slices of bread and calling this the ‘meat’ in the sandwich.⁵¹ The costs of campaigning can become heavy, for example in the Solomon Islands or PNG, spurring politicians who have incurred heavy expenditures on the campaign trail to seek to compensate by accepting bribes for voting one way or another in Prime Ministerial elections or in the new parliamentary session. Incumbent MPs may also acquire a

Box 17: Papua New Guinea Campaign Finance Laws

In PNG, The Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC) included some mild measures aimed at encouraging the election of larger numbers of female candidates via campaign financing legislation. Section 62 of OLIPPAC requires the Central Fund Board of Management (CFBM) to refund 75 per cent of costs incurred in the course of any women candidates who secure 10 per cent or more of the constituency vote. Some doubts have been expressed about the efficacy of this measure. Financial disincentives, such as the massive increase from K100 to K1000 in the required deposit for candidates in 1992 (bringing the costs up to a level similar to per capita GDP), aimed at constraining the rising number of candidates contesting PNG elections have not been successful in the past. Political parties tend to back potential winners, rather than tailoring their selection with an eye to reimbursement of campaign costs. Only a single woman was elected to parliament in the first elections after the introduction of OLIPPAC in 2002. The provisions also did not benefit elected candidates if they were members of political parties (such as Dame Carol Kidu). Political Parties receive separate funding (K 10,000) under OLIPPAC and so were not allowed to ‘double dip’ for refunds of campaign expenditures associated with successful women candidates.

Further reading; Ketan, J, Okole, H., Gelu, A., & Sepoe, O., ‘Testing the Limited Preferential Voting System in the National Capital of Papua New Guinea; An Election Observation and Assessment Study on the Port Moresby North-East Open Electorate By-Election, September-October 2004, Port Moresby, 20th December 2004, p13-14.

distinct advantage due to usage of discretionary funds which are deliberately aimed at enabling politicians to cement networks of patronage in their constituencies.

Women candidates may be at a distinct disadvantage in this campaign funding process,⁵² as are all those who reject the art of politics as a means for securing personal allegiances by dispensation of state or other funds. In high income countries, such as the USA and Canada, there may be negligible differences in the abilities to raise funds of male and female candidates.⁵³ In the lower income or high-birth rate Pacific countries, women are regularly consigned to the domestic sphere or in the non-monetary sectors of the economy, while men predominate in formal sector occupations. Where women candidates are unmarried, without children and in waged employment, they may find difficulty accessing financial support via village or provincial councils, trades unions, or church organisations, or by using control over natural resources to obtain funding from local or foreign companies. It is no accident that many of those women who have been elected around the region are the wives or daughters of prominent male chiefs, foreign nationals or businessmen. Political parties themselves are often based on such interlocking networks, and serve as gate-keepers excluding women from parity in participation. Regulating campaign funding, formulating rules on donor disclosure, altering tax provisions with regard to political donations, or providing state funding for parties or independent candidates potentially provide a means for redressing this imbalance, 'levelling the playing field' and promoting greater participation by women in politics.

Funding can prove important to candidates' chances of success at the polls. So-called 'early money' can prove critical to gaining exposure. It enables candidates to establish campaign team offices, distribute publicity and/or manifestos, set up district offices with adequate communications facilities and hire support staff for door-to-door canvassing or polling booth checking off or registered voters.⁵⁴ In PNG, effective campaigning by travelling throughout the electorate (or key strategic parts of it) and local-level discussions with villagers, 'being known' (an advantage for incumbents or candidates with provincial government backgrounds) or kinship links with famous politicians, establishment of local campaigning networks and manipulation of client relationships can prove critical to victory.⁵⁵ Cash donations by candidates to potential voters are, as we have seen, widespread throughout the Pacific, as are bribes aimed at buying off prominent critics who might otherwise undermine election campaigns. Party rallies are often complemented by distribution of food parcels and other enticements to voters. In Fiji, the 'sheds' erected outside polling booths provide food and *yaqona* for potential voters, and heavy costs are incurred transporting votes to and from the polling stations. In Vanuatu, MPs have in the past hit the campaign trail driving ministerial cars, and incumbent parliamentarians have the advantage of VT800,000 per annum 'MP Allocations' and voters readily acknowledge receiving bribes for votes.⁵⁶ Similar advantages are enjoyed by sitting MPs in Solomon Islands ('Rural Constituency Development Funds') and Papua New Guinea.

8.1. Public Campaign Funding

In many countries, the state provides direct subsidies to political parties, normally allocated in proportions based on their performance at previous elections. Public funding may encourage equality of opportunity, and may be used in tandem with restrictions on private funding. Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands, among others, provide state subsidies for political parties. In Samoa, political parties obtain state funding on the basis of the number of candidates, a provision which tends to favour the governing party. In other circumstances, grants may match other financial support raised by political

parties or candidates from private sources, or may be proportional to shares of votes or seats gained at the previous election.⁵⁷ If such public campaign financing is deemed desirable, the important thing is that such grants are distributed in an equitable and transparent fashion, without advantaging one party or another.

Only a few countries use campaign financing laws to favour women candidates. In France and Cape Verde, for example, parties with larger quotas of women candidates receive proportionally larger shares of state campaign finance. Yet in French legislative elections, which return members from single-member districts via the two round system, such laws have not been greatly successful (see Box 9). In the Pacific region, where elections tend to be highly competitive (and often costly) and where parties tend to be weaker than in the mass democracies, efforts to influence the financial incentives facing party executives entrusted with candidate selection are unlikely to work effectively. In Samoa, for example, the ruling Human Rights Protection Party had 78 candidates standing at the 2006 polls for the 49 seats. Even in Fiji, with its relatively robust party system, multiple candidates stood for Laisenia Qarase's ruling Soqosoqo ni Duavata ni Lewenivanua in some constituencies in 2001, much to the annoyance of its campaign managers. In PNG, it is often said that 'candidates choose the party', rather than the party choosing candidates. For this reason, financial incentives are unlikely to increase the number of women candidates, unless they are already seen as potential victors (see Box 17). Campaign finance laws may nevertheless play a valuable enabling role for those women who do stand as candidates, at least diminishing the obstacles posed by other commitments.

8.2. Tax Deductibility of Campaign Expenditures

Even where no formal system of state campaign financing exists, an indirect subsidy may occur in the form of allowing tax deductions on campaign expenditures. In Fiji, for example, candidates can write off election expenditures against tax, creating an advantage for richer candidates and a disadvantage for those without big monetary resources.⁵⁸ Similarly, in Canada, small contributions can get a 75 per cent tax credit, effectively a state subsidy.⁵⁹

8.3. Restrictions on Campaign Expenditures

One alternative is not to provide state funds for campaigning, but rather to restrict the amount parties or independent candidates are allowed to spend during the election period. Limiting the campaign period may also diminish costs of candidacy, or ease the way to new entrants into the political process. Ceilings on expenditures are difficult to police, but many political parties and politicians themselves favour measures aimed at bringing down the cost of campaigning. In the process, this may create a more-level playing field for women candidates. In Canada, for example, from 2004 only individuals were able to contribute to political parties up to a maximum of C\$5,000 per annum. Businesses and trades unions are able only to make donations to candidates, not political parties, up to a limit of C\$1,000 per annum.⁶⁰ In the Solomon Islands, the Electoral Act specifies that, within a month of the election, each candidate has to submit to the Returning Officer a 'statement of account, specifying all expenses incurred by him in his election campaign' and that any candidate who spends more than \$50,000 'shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, or to both such a fine and such imprisonment'.⁶¹ But candidates do not in general submit such statements, and the arrangements have proved difficult to police, only potentially resulting in investigations if the election results are

disputed by parties before the courts. In any case, the potential S\$100 fine is chicken feed for the more prosperous candidates, and amounts to less than \$20 Australian dollars.

8.4. Rules on Financial Disclosure

Transparent systems of disclosure of funding received by parties or candidates may diminish unfair advantages secured by richer candidates linked into 'old boy's networks'. Such provisions also require a strengthening of electoral management bodies (EMBs) and court sanctions for non-compliance, unless these occur via voluntary codes of conduct. At present, EMBs tend to be relatively weak in the Pacific, and to be more or less fully resourced only in the weeks immediately preceding general elections, municipal or local elections or by-elections. Many of the potential reforms aimed at increasing women's representation (including usage of quotas) require a strengthening of EMBs, and their supervisory powers (as was the case in many parts of Latin America).

8.5. Other Funding Sources

Women in the United States and Canada have proved able to raise funds to a similar degree to male candidates. Women may be able to gain access to local NGO or donor funds for training aspiring female politicians or to cover campaign expenditures. Women in the Solomon Islands' Western Province in the early 1990s sent around letters requesting contributions for 'transport funds' to pay for boat fuel and other transport expenditures, enabling them to visit the more remote areas.

8.6. Media Access

TV, newspaper and other advertising are often critical elements of the campaign process, particularly in more urbanised countries. Public funding or legislation aimed at balancing access to the media may provide another means of encouraging political parties to field more women candidates in winnable seats. Broadcast allocation, for example, is a mandatory role of the New Zealand Elections Commission. Samoa has provisions for free air time for political parties on state-run media, with air time determined by the number of candidates they put forward for election. In East Timor, which uses a parallel system with a list PR component, political parties which placed at least 30 per cent of women candidates on their party lists received additional air time on UN-run radio and TV.⁶²

8.7. Childcare

Standing for elections makes heavy demands on candidates' time, creating particular difficulty for women with families. Many of those women who do run for parliament in Nauru are single and without children (see Nauru report), but more generally, the few women who do enter parliament have tended to be older. The average age of women politicians in the Pacific in 1998 was 45, and most had children who had already grown up.⁶³ Those who are married and have children are less likely to be able to stand as candidates. Providing adequate child care, or crèches, for women candidates thus provides a means of encouraging women's participation in politics. In the UK and Canada, there are proposals to have childcare costs included in the campaign financing.

9.0 Conclusions

Using the electoral system to promote some kind of greater balance in parliament or to remove obstacles to the representation of disadvantaged groups is widespread. Often, minorities located in particular parts of the country are granted representation beyond that which would be secured if constituencies were designed using strict reference to ensuring equality in size. For example, the predominantly Polynesian island of Rotuma, to the far northwest of Fiji, gets a single seat in parliament, despite numbers on the island being far lower than those, on average, found in other mainland constituencies.⁶⁴ Using the districting system in this way to enhance women's representation is impossible, simply because women tend to be evenly spread throughout the country. In Samoa, 'individual voters', those Samoan citizens whose descent can be traced to foreigners, have a separate constituency. So too, in the Kiribati parliament, have displaced Banabans resident on Rabi Island in Fiji. In the Pacific Islands, electoral system design frequently aims at lessening the potential for conflict. For example, Vanuatu's single non-transferable vote system was deliberately aimed at ensuring some francophone representation in the wake of independence. Fiji's allocation of reserved seats to indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians was aimed at ensuring some ethnic proportionality in parliament, and at strengthening the position of the indigenous community. No such considerations have ever been applied to women. Tonga's system of allocating nine positions in parliament to nobles effectively entails reserved seats for men, since women are not able to acquire noble titles.

Even where there are no such formal top-level constraints on women's representation, there may be 'informal' obstacles that operate similarly to 'laws', restricting women's participation. Often, for example, the candidate nominated by the village assembly is the one that proves successful at the polls. But women frequently lack rights to attend village assemblies (via 'unwritten rules') and, even if they are able to attend, may lack speaking rights or may be required to undertake subordinate tasks (food preparation, tea-making etc.). In Tuvalu, national-level legislation giving women rights to speak at the Fale Kaupule has opened possibilities for greater equality in local-level participation (see Box 16). Throughout the Pacific Islands, local village or rural government as well as municipal council arrangements, provide a powerful determinant of the national political culture. As the colonial authorities showed in the 1940s and 1950s, advances in local self government were prerequisites for national self-government. Local level government may serve as a training-ground for national-level politicians, and advances in women's representation at this level may plausibly, eventually, filter through at the national level.

In the Pacific Islands, there are in most cases no formal obstacles to greater women's participation in parliament. Constitutions and Electoral Acts tend to promote social equality and therefore equal participation of women. One widely heard argument is that women do not need special provisions, and need only to take advantage of existing opportunities. If women's weak representation in parliament reflected a broader lack of participation in public life, as indicated also in the education system, civil service employment and in non-government employment, there would be a stronger argument that a more preparatory type of effort to promote greater engagement in politics is required. Political inequality might, in such circumstances, owe its origin to a broader social inequality tied up with women's position in the home, as child-bearers, child-carers, and home-makers. Yet this is not the case in many of the Pacific Islands. Women are increasingly well represented among senior public servants in many countries, often outperform their male counterparts in schooling and are often strongly represented in business. It is in the *political sphere* where women are severely under-represented, even where, as in the Marshall Islands, they are regu-

larly chosen to manage the campaigns of male candidates. Political leadership has, historically, been a male preserve, and a strong conservatism tends to discourage women from standing as candidates and to discourage voters, chiefs, 'big men' or local assemblies from backing women MPs. In such circumstances, the potential for enhanced women's representation is clearly visible, but requires some concerted effort to be realised, whether through greater political organisation around this objective or some affirmative action provisions.

The problem of enhancing women's representation in Pacific parliaments is not one of encouraging or accentuating an already-prevalent trend or removing any formal barriers to greater participation. Where women's representation is gradually increasing, there is a reasonably strong case to be made for allowing voluntary processes to take their course. In many parts of the Pacific, the problems are more acute. Many states currently have zero women's representation at the national level, and often also in local and municipal assemblies. In such circumstances, a strong case can be made for the use of some kind of legislative catalyst to trigger greater participation, even if this is kept separate from the ordinary electoral law, so that this serves as a temporary catalyst, overcoming obstacles to meritorious women's representation, rather than being required as a permanent support. If used in isolation, however, legislative changes are unlikely to enhance the strength of women's voices in parliament and may lead to women being sidelined and lacking genuine decision-making power. Legislative changes or voluntary party quotas only prove effective when they are combined with concerted activism on the part of women's organisations, civil society or political parties, not only on strictly gender-based issues. Triggering increased women's representation has frequently occurred in tandem with the activism of groups around other issues of national relevance (as, for example, with women's activity in the Bougainville Peace Movement).

10. Concluding Recommendations

- Where political parties are absent or where independents form a substantial component of the legislature or where party affiliations are highly fluid and changing, use of enforceable quotas aimed at political parties (whether backed by the constitution or act of parliament) may well turn out to be counter-productive. Parties will respond by increasing numbers of nominally unaffiliated candidates or the preponderance of parties in the legislature will diminish relative to independents.
- In such circumstances, the most effective way to 'fast track' increased women's representation is via introduction of reserved seats for women. This normally entails eligible citizens having more than one vote; one in a 'general' constituency and another in a 'reserved women's constituency'.
- Voluntary party quotas for women should be encouraged in the more party-centric Pacific Island countries, and may, if parties consequently obtain an increase in support, establish some degree of competition between parties on sex balance issues.
- Electoral reform away from single-member constituencies towards multi-member constituencies may work to improve numbers of women MPs in countries with strong party systems, but constituencies need to be larger rather than smaller.
- Without concerted activism on the part of civil society organisations aimed at increasing women's representation and/or without the emergence of credible women candi-

dates, women securing office via such reserved seats will tend to become 'token' MPs, marginalised in terms of effective decision-making, in a way that may prove counter-productive from the longer-term point of view. In other words, statutory affirmative action programmes will tend to be either ineffective or even counter-productive unless combined with broader popular pressure to alter the sex balance of parliaments.

- Public funding aimed at assisting women candidates, whether through training for 'women in politics', subsidies enabling media air-time, tax breaks or refunds of campaign expenditures may prove viable techniques of advancing the role of women in politics, but offers to refund campaign costs are unlikely to prove of much assistance unless power-brokers identify women candidates as potential victors.
- Strengthening relevant data collection, covering women's performance at elections and women in positions of leadership, would advance awareness of gender inequality issues and assist the monitoring of women's participation in political life.
- Increasing women's participation in parliament is not simply an issue of fairer 'descriptive representation', but also important owing to the distinct range of issues women may import to the political process.
- Pressures to increase women's representation in parliament need to be politically neutral. It is crucial to avoid discounting efforts to promote candidates or existing politicians on the grounds that they belong to one or other political faction. Too often, divisions between separate women's organisations influence the scale and tempo of activism. Some groups refuse to support candidates associated with other groups, or reject some women politicians due to their political affiliations. Where this occurs, efforts to advance women in politics become increasingly seen as 'politically motivated' in the process damaging the broader thrust of the movement. For these reasons, political neutrality is critical.
- Strategies for increasing women's representation in national parliaments need to be combined with strategies for enhancing women's involvement at the local level, whether through formal lower tier provincial, area or island assemblies or through more informal local associations. Women who show strengths in assisting communities have proved successful national parliamentarians, particularly where they retain strong local-level links. Strengthening local governance and enhancing women's representation should be viewed as two prongs of an approach aimed at reforming governance in the Pacific Islands.
- The connection between potent national issues and women's representation should be emphasised. Women's role in peace-building during and after the conflicts in Solomon Islands, East Timor and Bougainville led to increased recognition in post-conflict settlements (e.g., women's reserved seats on Bougainville). A similar case could be made for women's involvement in efforts to check financial abuses on Nauru, or women's involvement in community resistance to some of the more exploitative resource extraction issues.

Notes

- 1 'Six Pacific Nations included in "Dirty Dozen" countries, UN Reports', PacNews, 8th March 2005. Tonga has since secured the election of a single woman MP at a by-election.
- 2 The new laws require political parties to submit lists alternating male and female candidates. This type of reform is eased by usage of a list proportional representation voting system, with multiple members per district, in the French territories (see box 9 below).
- 3 Richard E. Matland (1998) 'Women's Representation in National Legislatures: Developed and Developing Countries', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 23(1):109-125.
- 4 In Fiji, for example, studies of secondary school examination results found that the biggest difference was not between Fijian and Indo-Fijian students, but rather women of both ethnic groups tended to perform better than males of both ethnic groups (Narsey, W., *Academic Outcomes and Resources for Basic Education in Fiji*. Vanuavou Publication and Institute of Education (USP). 2004).
- 5 Beatrice Olssen and Elise Huffer provided considerable assistance in preparing materials for this report, as did Fakavae Taomia and Susie Kofe, Jeannette Bolenga and Sadhana Sen, and the participants at a workshop held in the Cook Islands in April 2006. Alamanda Lauti also cooperated with the author in preparation of the separate Nauru report. Robert Early assisted with the box on Isabelle Donald.
- 6 This was also the case in France, where arguments that preceded the introduction of the 'Law on Parity' were critically centred around appeals to the ideals of the French Revolution, '*liberté, égalité et fraternité*' (Liberty, Equality and Fraternity) as entrenched in that country's constitution. Quotas alone were perceived as discriminatory, but laws aimed at achieving gender 'equality' were successfully urged as a realisation of the country's fundamental constitutional laws (see Box 9).
- 7 Five of the eight women elected in 2006 were from open constituencies, two from Fijian communal constituencies and one from the Suva General Voters constituency. Three of the five women elected in 2001 won marginal open constituencies, one secured the Rotuma communal seat and one secured an ethnic Fijian communal seat. Four of the eight elected in 1999 were from open seats, three from Fijian communal seats and one from the Rotuman communal seat. Successful women candidate's share of the open seats was 16 per cent in 1999, 12 per cent in 2001 and 20 per cent in 2006, whereas their share of communal seats was 8.7 per cent in 1999, 4.3 per cent in 2001 and 6.5 per cent in 2006. No Fiji-Indian women were elected to any Indian communal seats in any of these three elections.
- 8 Brouwer, Harris & Tanaka, *Gender Analysis in Papua New Guinea*, World Bank, p7; McLeod, A., 'Where are the Women in Simbu Politics?', *Development Bulletin*, 59, pp43-46.
- 9 So'o & Fraenkel, 'The Role of Ballot Chiefs (*Matai Pālota*) and Political Parties in Sāmoa's Shift to Universal Suffrage', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 43, (3), 2005
- 10 S. Tcherkézoff, 'Are the Matai "Out of Time"? Tradition and Democracy: Contemporary Ambiguities and Historical Transformations of the Concept of Chief', in E. Huffer, & A. So'o, (eds.), *Governance in Samoa; Pulega i Sāmoa* (Canberra & Suva: Asia Pacific Press & Institute of Pacific Studies, 2000), p128-9n.
- 11 Figures from *Annual Report of the Land and Titles Department*, 1993; for 1982, see R. Norton, 'Titles, Wealth and Faction; Electoral Politics in a Samoan Village', *Oceania*, 55/2, (1984), 102.
- 12 PPSEAWA, 'NGO Shadow Report on the Status of Women in Samoa', December 2004
- 13 Fiji's system is complicated by the usage of a split format ballot paper. Voters may either rank candidates 1,2,3,4 etc 'below-the-line', or they can simply place a tick next to a party symbol (voting 'above-the-line'). Ticks above-the-line are taken to endorse party specified preferences. Shortly before elections, parties are asked to lodge rankings of other parties and independents with the Elections Office. If a ballot is ticked above-the-line, it will be allocated to the party indicated on that party-specified preference list, either at 1st, 2nd or subsequent preference.
- 14 Indeed, claims that LPV would benefit women have, to some degree, been responsible for weak campaign strategies by women candidates. Basing strategies on appeals for second or third preferences, on the grounds that males are more likely to pick up first preferences, is scarcely a convincing way of eliciting popular support (personal communication, Orovu Sepoe).
- 15 The 'highest average' or 'largest remainders' methods can yield small, but significant variations in the number of seats obtained by political parties.

- 16 In fact, the proportion of seats will be slightly larger, since some parties will fail to cross the 5 per cent threshold. In other words, qualifying parties will divide among themselves the residual share, where there are small parties that fail to reach the 5 per cent threshold.
- 17 The Sainte-lague method is used to calculate the number of seats each party is entitled to, after which the seats already gained via electorates are deducted from each party's total and the residual seats are distributed to their parties.
- 18 Andrew Ellis, 'Joined Up Democracy Building', International Conference on Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP and Government & Chamber of Representatives of Belgium, Brussels, 20th April 2006.
- 19 See Howard Van Trease 'The Operation of the Single Nontransferable Vote in Vanuatu', *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, November 2005.
- 20 Kun, R., Togomae, W., & Kun, R., 'Nauru 2004', National Integrity Systems, Transparency International Country Study Report, Transparency International, 2004, p15.
- 21 Nadezdha Shvedova, 'Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament', in *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, Stockholm, International IDEA, 1998, updated version, 2002, available www.idea.int, p4.
- 22 Rule, Wilma 'Parliaments of, by and for the People: Except for Women', in Rule and Zimmerman (eds) *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women and Minorities*, Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1994; Rein Taagepera 'Beating the Law of Minority Attrition', *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women & Minorities* (eds) Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman, Greenwood Press, Westport Connecticut, & London, 1994, p243.
- 23 International IDEA, *Electoral System Design; The New International IDEA Handbook*, IDEA, 2005, p61.
- 24 See 'Participation of Women as Candidates for the Constituent Assembly', 10th August 2001, and 'Women elected to be 26 per cent of the Constituent Assembly', both on <http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/projects/easttimor/EastTElection.htm>, accessed 16th March 2006.
- 25 Reynolds, 'Women in the Legislatures', p555; Rein Taagepera 'Beating the Law of Minority Attrition', *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women & Minorities* (eds) Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman, Greenwood Press, Westport Connecticut, & London, 1994, p239, p243.
- 26 Reynolds, 'Women in the Legislatures', p555-6.
- 27 Reynolds, A., 'Women in the Legislatures and Executives of the World; Knocking at the Highest Glass Ceiling', *World Politics*, 51, 1999, p559; Rein Taagepera 'Beating the Law of Minority Attrition', *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women & Minorities* (eds) Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman, Greenwood Press, Westport Connecticut, & London, 1994, p239. This is confirmed by Table 14.
- 28 'In three seat constituencies, major-group males are apt to react indifferently to the inclusion of a lone woman on a slate of three candidates. But some males may react with hostility to the inclusion of a minority person. All other factors being equal, a two-male and one-female slate might be superior to an all-male slate, as the former may please some voters' (Rein Taagepera 'Beating the Law of Minority Attrition', *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women & Minorities* (eds) Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman, Greenwood Press, Westport Connecticut, & London, 1994, p238-9, p242).
- 29 Of Kiribati's two current women MPs, one is elected from a single-member constituency (Arorae), and one from a two-member constituency (Onotoa).
- 30 Although as pointed out by Drude Dahlerup not all countries using quotas have achieved similar results Dahlerup, D. 'Introduction'. In D. Dahlerup (ed.). *Women, Quotas and Politics*. (pp. 1-31). Oxon: Routledge; Global Database of Quotas for Women: A joint project of International IDEA and Stockholm University. (2006), p19).
- 31 In this report, however, we distinguish quotas as applied directly to parliament, by way of reserved constituencies, and handle these separately in section 6.0. The distinction is particularly important to make in the Pacific, where, as shown below, urging quotas of a similar design to those most widely used elsewhere in the world is unlikely to prove effective.
- 32 Bacchi, Carole, 2006. Arguing for and Against Quotas - Theoretical Issues, in Dahlerup, (ed.), *Gender, Quotas and Politics*, Routledge Research in Comparative Politics, London., 2006, p43.
- 33 Maclellan, N, 'From Eloi to Europe: Interactions with the Ballot Box in New Caledonia', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 43, (3), 2005, pp394-417.
- 34 Mark. P. Jones & Patricio Navia 'Assessing the Effectiveness of Gender Quotas in Open-List Proportional Representation Electoral Systems', *Social Science Quarterly*, 80, (2), 1999, pp341-355

- 35 *The Economist*, 26th November 2005, p74.
- 36 Caul, M., 'Women's Representation in Parliament', *Party Politics*, 5, (1), 1999, p79-89.
- 37 IDEA Handbook, p122.
- 38 See Childs, Sarah, 2004. *New Labour's Women MPs: Women Representing Women*, London: Routledge.
- 39 Dahlerup, D. 'Introduction', p8.
- 40 Dahlerup, D. 'Introduction', p3.
- 41 Julie Ballington & Richard E. Matland 'Political Parties and Special Measures: Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral processes', *Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Post-Conflict Countries*, OSAGI & Department of Political Affairs Experts Group Meeting, Glen Cove, New York, USA, 19-22 January 2004, p11
- 42 See the survey of party politics in the Pacific in Fraenkel, J., 'The Political Consequences of Pacific Islands Electoral Laws', SSGM Discussion paper, 2005. <http://eprints.anu.edu.au/archive/00003314/>.
- 43 Table 16 uses the latest data available from *Parties of the World*, although this is highly imperfect. The difficulties facing efforts to more accurately gauge the party allegiances of MPs across the region are a) that candidates are not required to specify their political party when seeking nomination in many countries and b) candidates regularly change their allegiances between general elections and the subsequent vote, when they gather in parliament, to select a Prime Minister. For example, the Solomon Islands is listed in Table 15 as having only two independents in 2001. But this is only because figures were recorded from claims made by rival candidates for the premiership, including various 'shadow' and 'associated' members. Reports straight after the 2001 polls identified a far larger number of independent candidates (see Fraenkel, J. *The Manipulation of Custom; From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands*, Victoria University Press, 2004, p135-138). This fluidity of party alignments is also true of PNG (at least prior to the Organic Law of 2001-2), Vanuatu and even Samoa.
- 44 IDEA Handbook, p121.
- 45 Report of the Bougainville Constitutional Commission, Arawa and Buka, July 2004, p159, p179.
- 46 Constitution of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Third Draft, July 2004
- 47 'Report of the International Election Observer Team', First General Election for the Autonomous Bougainville Government, 4th June 2005, p10.
- 48 Following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in India, 'one-third seats are reserved for women in general in each panchayat, that is, at the village cluster level, at the block level, and at district level ... The reservation is to be rotated among the various constituencies and panchayats to ensure the widest spread' (Raman, V., 'The Implementation of Quotas for Women: The Indian Experience', Paper prepared for a workshop hosted by International IDEA, 25 September 2002, Jakarta, Indonesia, p4).
- 49 Scales, I & Teakeni, J. 'Election of women in Solomon Islands: the case for a local governance approach' Paper presented at Conference - Political Culture, Representation and Electoral Systems in the Pacific USP Emalus Campus, Port Vila, Vanuatu, 10-12 July 2004
- 50 In the Solomon Islands, 'a clear assumption by candidates in campaign mode is that if they can convince the male household heads, the rest of the household will follow his vote. That this is so is demonstrated if vote buying occurs. Vote buying consists in many cases of simple gifts like tobacco or flashlights. These are usually given only to male household heads' (Scales, I & Teakeni, J. 'Election of women in Solomon Islands: the case for a local governance approach' Paper presented at Conference - Political Culture, Representation and Electoral Systems in the Pacific USP Emalus Campus, Port Vila, Vanuatu, 10-12 July 2004). In Vanuatu, the picture is more mixed; in Port Vila, 10 per cent of men and only 4 per cent of women reported receiving bribes, whereas on Tanna, men were less likely than women to admit to receiving bribes (0 per cent vs 4 per cent) (Electoral Commission/ Transparency International Vanuatu project, Report of the Election Observers Group, Republic of Vanuatu National Elections, 2nd May 2002, p26, p65). In Samoa, there is some suggestion that the shift to universal franchise in 1990, which had the major impact of enfranchising the bulk of Samoan women (only 5 per cent of so had been, as *matai* [Family heads], entitled to vote previously), in fact increased resort to bribery and 'treating' during the campaign period.
- 51 Crocombe, *The South Pacific*, p533;
- 52 Joseph Zimmerman, 'Equity in Representation for Women and Minorities', in Rule & Zimmerman (eds) *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective; Their Impact on Women and Minorities*, Westport Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1994, fn 11.

- 53 See, for example, Lisa Young 'Campaign Finance and Women's Representation in Canada and the United States', in *The Delicate Balance between Political Equality and Freedom of Expression – Political Party and Campaign Finance in Canada and the United States*, IDEA & Organization of American States, 2005, p48, p53-54.
- 54 Julie Ballington & Richard E. Matland 'Political Parties and Special Measures: Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral processes', *Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Post-Conflict Countries*, OSAGI & Department of Political Affairs Experts Group Meeting, Glen Cove, New York, USA, 19-22 January 2004, p8.
- 55 May, R., 'Looking at the "Clan Vote" in Papua New Guinea Open Electorates; Data from Angoram', *Journal of Pacific Studies*, 2006.
- 56 Electoral Commission/ Transparency International Vanuatu project, Report of the Election Observers Group, Republic of Vanuatu National Elections, 2nd May 2002, p26, p64.
- 57 'Campaign Finance and Expenditure', in *International Electoral Standards: Guidelines for Reviewing the Legal Framework of Elections*, IDEA, 2002, p66.
- 58 Interview with Krishna Dutt, Fiji Labour Party, Labasa
- 59 Lisa Young 'Campaign Finance and Women's Representation in Canada and the United States', p53.
- 60 Lisa Young 'Campaign Finance and Women's Representation in Canada and the United States', p53.
- 61 National parliament Electoral Provisions Act, Cap 87, Laws of the Solomon islands, Chapter 87 National Parliament Electoral provisions, S45.
- 62 Julie Ballington & Richard E. Maitland 'Political Parties and Special Measures: Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes', *Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Post-Conflict Countries*, OSAGI & Department of Political Affairs Experts Group Meeting, Glen Cove, New York, USA, 19-22 January 2004, p9; Milena Pires, 'East Timor and the Debate on Quotas', paper presented at a 'Regional Workshop on the Implementation of Quotas – Asian Experiences', International Institute for Democracy & Electoral Assistance, 25th September 2002, Jakarta, Indonesia, p4.
- 63 Women in Politics Pacific Centre, *The Long Road; Pacific Women's Journey to Political Empowerment*, June 1998, p3.
- 64 This is partly also because many Rotumans, resident on the mainland, opt to vote in the 'general' constituencies, rather than voting on an island with which they may have few links.