The impact of electoral reform on the representation of women and ethnic minorities

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Summary: One objection of moving towards a more candidate-oriented electoral system in the Netherlands is the assumption that this could have a negative effect upon gender and ethnic diversity in parliament. What evidence is there for this expectation? And, if so, what else could be done to overcome this problem? To consider these issues, Part I introduces the argument and Part II in this paper compares the current representation of women and minorities in the Netherlands against the record in other countries worldwide. Part III considers the evidence for the impact of electoral systems on the representation of women and minorities. Part IV examines the policy of statutory quotas regulating the candidate selection process for all parties. Part V evaluates the role of reserved seats in legislatures. Part VI discusses voluntary quotas implemented by particular parties. The conclusion in Part VII summarizes the main findings and the arguments surrounding electoral reform in the Netherlands.

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I. Introduction

The Netherlands is considering changing its nation-wide proportional representation electoral system for the House of Representatives. It is suggested that introducing some single-member districts or some small multimember districts would strengthen the ties of representation and accountability between individual members of the House of Representatives and citizens in local areas. Such a change would alter the geographic basis of representation in parliament, potentially changing the incentive structure for members to deliver constituency case-work, connecting political representatives more closely with the concerns of each area.

One objection against these types of electoral reform is the assumption that this could have a negative effect upon the quality of descriptive representation, particularly the gender and ethnic diversity in the Netherlands parliament. Electoral systems meet competing values and it is argued that any potential gains in geographic representation which arise would be at the expense of other forms of social inclusiveness. What evidence is there for this expectation? And, if so, what else could be done by parliament and by parties to overcome this problem?

During the last two decades, a substantial body of research has established that the use of a majoritarian, combined or proportional electoral system influences the social composition of parliaments. The earliest systematic cross-national studies conducted during the mid-1980s found that PR systems, especially those with a large district magnitude, facilitate the inclusion of women in elected office. The main reason is vote maximizing strategies by parties as well as internal party competition. Recent studies confirm the persistence of this relationship two decades later. To summarize the worldwide evidence, countries using proportional electoral systems for the lower house of parliament elect roughly twice as many women as those with majoritarian systems. In ‘combined-proportional’ electoral systems, as well, slightly more women are usually elected from party lists than from single-member districts.

Many assume proportion systems are also more favorable for the election of ethnic minorities, including representatives drawn from the Turkish, Surinamese, or Moroccan communities in the Netherlands. The number of ethnic minority representatives in the Tweede Kamer is almost roughly proportional to the size of minority populations in the country, and this can be attributed to the proportional electoral system. Systematic evidence confirming the impact of PR on ethnic minorities remains scattered and inconclusive, however, and there are good reasons why this relationship may not hold. In particular, where ethnic minority communities are the spatially concentrated in
particular areas, minority representatives may be selected and returned for these seats even under single member plurality elections².

For proponents of PR such as Arend Lijphart, the social inclusiveness of PR is one of the key qualities which makes ‘consensus’ democracy ‘kinder, gentler’ in its outcomes³. The Netherlands at present exemplifies this pattern, where parliament is relatively inclusive of women and minorities, compared with many other established democracies.

Unless nothing else is done to compensate, therefore, any introduction of single-member districts will probably reduce gender (and possibly ethnic) diversity in the Tweede Kamer. To compensate, any comprehensive package of electoral reform passed by parliament should simultaneously consider other policies which have proved effective for maintaining social diversity in elected office, including the use of statutory quotas regulating the candidate selection processes in all parties and the use of reserved seats in the legislature, while parties should consider the implementation of voluntary quotas in their selection rules. Debate about the pros and cons continues to surround these positive action strategies, however, and case studies in France, Belgium, Italy and Argentina suggest that considerable care is required in the detailed design and practical implementation of positive action strategies if they are to achieve their goals.

To consider these issues, the next part of this paper summarizes the normative arguments why socially inclusive legislatures are desirable and then compares the current representation of women and minorities in the Netherlands against the record in other countries worldwide. Part III considers evidence for the impact of electoral systems on descriptive representation. Part IV examines statutory quotas regulating the candidate selection process for all parties, comparing the cases of Belgium, France, Italy and Argentina. Part V evaluates the role of reserved seats in legislatures, as used in India and New Zealand. Part VI discusses voluntary quotas implemented by particular parties, exemplified by cases in Scandinavia, Germany, and Britain. The conclusion in Part VII summarizes the main findings and arguments surrounding electoral reform in the Netherlands.

II: Inclusive democracy

Recent decades have witnessed growing demands for the inclusion and empowerment of women and minorities in elected office. Feminist theorists suggest that the presence of women leaders facilitates the articulation of different perspectives on political issues, where elected representatives are not just ‘standing as’ women but also ‘acting for’ women as a group⁴. An accumulating body of evidence in North America, Scandinavia and Western
Europe suggests that women legislators do indeed raise distinctive concerns and issue priorities. If so, then their under-representation in parliament may have important consequences for the public policy agenda and for the articulation of women’s interests, as well as for the legitimacy of democratic bodies. Inclusiveness is widely regarded as one of the key values of democratic polities, so that all groups have a voice in the policymaking process.

Similar arguments can be made for the representation of ethnic minorities in legislative bodies. In recent years, many European nations have seen the growth of more multicultural societies and the rising salience of ethnic and racial politics, due to patterns of immigration, the increased numbers of political refugees crossing European borders, more fluid labor markets, and a backlash against these developments articulated by radical right parties. The last decade has seen growing demands for a stronger voice for ethnic minority leaders capable of representing and articulating the concerns of their communities in national parliaments, especially following heightened concern about the integration of Muslim Europeans. The broad normative claim underlying these arguments is that legislatures should be more like the societies they serve, meeting the criteria of ‘descriptive’ representation, as Hanna Pitkin termed this notion. While these claims are widely recognized and acknowledged today, controversy remains about the most effective and appropriate ways to achieve these goals, as well as the priority which should be given to geographic, ethnic and gender representation.

By these criteria, most parliaments worldwide fail to reflect the gender and ethnic diversity found in modern societies. This pattern persists, even in established democracies, despite trends in the home, family, school, and workforce transforming women and men’s lives during the postwar era, as well as the growth of the more multicultural societies. NGOs, parties, and international agencies have often expressed the need for equal opportunities for all citizens in appointed and elected positions in public life. Governments have signed official National Action Plans and international conventions designed to establish conditions of gender equality in the public sphere, exemplified by the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) favoring the principle of equal opportunities in public life, ratified by 163 nations. The 1995 UN Beijing Platform for Action expressed commitment to the empowerment of women based on the conviction that: “Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.” The UN Platform for Action explicitly aims for a 50-50 gender balance in all areas of society, and its analysis places full participation in decision-
making in the foremost role.

In practice, however, multiple barriers continue to restrict the advancement of women and ethnic minorities in elected office. Out of 193 nations worldwide, only nine women are at the pinnacle of power as elected heads of State or Government. Despite some redoubtable and well-known world leaders, like Margaret Thatcher, Gro Harlem Bruntland, Mary Robinson, and Golda Meir, only 39 states have ever elected a woman President or Prime Minister. According to estimates by the United Nations, women represent less than one tenth of the world’s cabinet ministers and one fifth of all sub-ministerial positions. The Inter-Parliamentary Union estimates that 6,722 women sit in both houses of parliament worldwide in mid-2005, representing 15.8% of all members. This is a rise from 9% in 1987 yet if growth at this level is maintained (0.37% per annum), a simple linear projection predicts that women parliamentarians will achieve parity with men at the turn of the 22nd Century.

Regional variations also illustrate the sharp contrasts around the world in the position of women in elected office (see Figure 1). Women parliamentarians do best in the Nordic nations, constituting 40% of MPs in the lower house. Sweden leads the world; women are half of all Cabinet Ministers and 149 female members sit in the Riksdag (43%), quadrupling from 10% in 1950. Women political leaders have also moved ahead in the other Nordic countries. Elsewhere the proportion of women members of parliament is lower, including in the Americas (19%), Europe excluding the Nordic states (17%), Asia (15%), Sub-Saharan Africa (16%), and the Pacific (11%). The worst record remains in Arab states, where women are 9% of elected representatives. Women continue to be barred by law from standing for parliament in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates. There have been some moves towards reforms in the region, for example Moroccan law introduced 30 reserved seats for women and after the September 2002 elections 11% of the legislature is female. Legal revisions in Bahrain allowed women to stand in elections for the first time, but none were elected although women were 10% of the candidates in the May 2002 local elections and 5% of the candidates for the national parliament five months later. A glance at the rank order of the proportion of women in office in the countries under comparison in Figure 1 suggests that the level of socioeconomic development and length of democracy may be important, but these are neither necessary nor sufficient for gender equality in parliaments; in Rwanda, Mexico, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic, for example, women politicians are more successful than in the United States and Japan, two of the
most affluent democracies in the world.

In the light of these global patterns, the contemporary record of the Netherlands is impressive, as one of the countries which has led the world in the representation of women in parliament. The Inter Parliamentary Union currently ranks the Netherlands 6th highest in the proportion of women in parliament, beaten only by the Scandinavian nations with a long tradition of gender equality in political leadership11, as well as more recently by Rwanda (see Figure 1)12. Nor is this a temporary phenomenon; the Netherlands has consistently ranked 5th or 6th in this world league table for at least two decades. The proportion of women in the Tweede Kamer was fairly low from 1922 until 1972, and it then grew steadily in successive elections (with the exception of a slight dip in 2002), rising to 59 women in the lower house in 2005 or 39.3% (see Figure 2). This figure is high when compared against the global picture, and it is almost double the EU average (22.7%)13.

[Figure 2 about here]

It is more difficult to compare the record of the Netherlands against other countries in terms of ethnic minority parliamentary representation. Cross-national estimates of the composition of parliamentary elites by ethnicity are not collated by any international agency in a consistent fashion and even the available estimates of ethnic populations derived from population census records and official sources remain incomplete, with varying definitions, classifications, and measurements used in different countries. Nevertheless, if we focus just on the Netherlands, ethnic minorities appear to be represented almost proportionally in the Tweede Kamer compared with size of the foreign-born population.

[Table 1 about here]

The biographies of current members of the House of Representatives were classified by place of birth.14 Table 1 identifies the 13 current members in the 150-seat lower house of parliament born overseas, representing 8.7% of the total membership. This compares with a foreign-born population estimated by the OECD to include 1.7 million people or 10.6% of the total population in the Netherlands in 200215. If the ethnic minority representation in the Netherlands were perfectly proportional to population size, 16 foreign-born members would be in the House of Representatives, three more than at present. The current ethnic minority MPs are drawn from just three provinces, however, (4/15 in Utrecht, 4/31 in Noord-Holland and 4/42 in Zuid-Holland), which are also the most urban provinces, rather than dispersed across the whole country. These provinces are also the areas from which the most women are drawn16. This geographical dispersion has important
consequences when considering the boundaries used in any candidate-oriented electoral system.

Given this record, if the Netherlands introduces some single member districts, the challenge would be how to maintain and preserve social diversity in parliament. Three main policy options are open for consideration by parliament including the basic type of electoral system which is selected, the introduction of a statutory quota regulating the candidate selection process used by all parties, and the use of reserved seats in the legislature. How do these work in other countries and how effective would these strategies prove in maintaining a socially-inclusive Tweede Kamer reflecting the society from which it is drawn?

III. The Impact of Electoral Systems

Electoral reform involves multiple options ranging from more modest amendments to the current system of nation-wide PR used in the Netherlands to outright revision.

• For example, one option would be to retain the proportional representation electoral system but to adopt smaller multi-member districts based on local areas, so that each district could return 3-5 members, as in Spain.

• Another option would be adopting a ‘combined’ (otherwise termed ‘mixed’ or ‘dual’) electoral system. Under this system, some members would be returned via single member districts in plurality elections. Others would be drawn from national or regional party list proportional representation. There are two further subcategories within this family of electoral systems.
  o In a ‘combined-proportional’ system the overall balance of parties in the Tweede Kamer would reflect the distribution of votes cast in the PR ballot (as in Germany or New Zealand).
  o In a ‘combined-independent’ system the two types of ballots could operate separately in the translation of votes to seats (as in Taiwan).

• Lastly in theory the Netherlands could go for all-out reform by adopting a majoritarian system with single-member plurality elections for all members of the Tweede Kamer, although this step would be so radical, and the political repercussions for the smaller parties would be so severe, that it is highly improbable in practice.

What would be the consequences of these reforms on social diversity? The evidence that more women have usually been elected to parliament under party list PR than under majoritarian electoral systems has been confirmed in a series
of studies since the mid-eighties. These are based on research comparing both
established democracies and also a broader range of developing societies
worldwide. Within proportional electoral systems, district magnitude has
commonly been regarded as a particularly important factor, with more women
usually elected from large multimember constituencies.

[Table 2 about here]

The comparison in Table 2, without any controls, illustrates how
women are far more successful under PR List systems. The results demonstrate
that today around the globe roughly twice as many women get elected to
national parliaments under PR (19.6%) than under majoritarian electoral
systems (10.5%), with ‘combined’ or ‘mixed’ electoral systems falling between
these poles (13.6%). As a simple rule, women proved almost twice as likely to
be elected under proportional as under majoritarian electoral systems. In
‘combined’ electoral systems, more women MPs are elected in the more
proportional combined-dependent electoral systems (16.8%) than in
combined-independent systems (12.6%).

The cross-national evidence could be attributed to other factors
associated with PR, however, for example the colonial heritage, political
culture, or the level of democratic development of countries which chose this
type of electoral system. The impact of the electoral system was also
confirmed, although the difference was usually far weaker, by within countries
comparisons of simultaneous contests in ‘combined’ systems. As shown in
Table 3, in five countries using combined systems where the results were
broken down by gender and type of ballot, slightly more women were usually
elected from the PR party lists than from the single-member districts. It should
be emphasized that this contrast is most evident in Italy and Germany; in the
former, for example, women are 8.8% of those elected through the SMDs but
they are 18.6% of the members of the Chamber of Deputies elected via the
party lists in multi-member districts.

[Table 3 about here]

Despite these findings, considerable variations in the representation of women
were also clear within each major electoral family, as shown by the distribution
shown in Figure 3. More women were elected in certain majoritarian electoral
systems, such as in Australia and Canada, than in some other highly
proportional party list systems, as exemplified by Israel. Although there is a
strong and consistent association, by itself the basic type of electoral system is
neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition to guarantee women’s
representation.
These variations could be attributed to many intervening conditions, including:

- Average district magnitude (the mean number of candidates per district);
- Levels of proportionality;
- The use of statutory and voluntary gender quotas;
- Party ideologies (with parties on the left found to be generally more sympathetic towards gender equality); and
- The type of party organization.

To understand the reasons for the outcome, it helps to distinguish the different stages in the candidate selection process, using the model illustrated schematically in Figure 4. In this paper we leave aside questions about how the selection process operates within different parties, an issue explored in depth elsewhere and in other presentations. The type of electoral system, and the use of statutory quotas or reserved seats, regulate the context of the candidate selection process used within each party. The ‘demand’ of party selectors and the ‘supply’ of candidates interact to generate the pool of parliamentary candidates. In the final stage, demand by the electorate (for parties or candidates) determines the composition of parliament. Given this process, women usually benefit from PR for because of party vote maximizing strategies, patterns of incumbency turnover, and the implementation of positive action strategies.

Vote-maximizing strategies: Under proportional systems, each party presents the public with their collective list of candidates for each multimember district. As such, parties have an electoral incentive to maximize their collective appeal in such lists by including candidates representing all the major social cleavages in the electorate, for example by including both middle class professionals and blue-collar workers, rural farmers and urban shopkeepers, Catholics and Protestants, as well as women and men, and Muslims and Christians. Multimember districts encourage collective party accountability for the complete list of candidates. The larger the district, the longer the candidate list, the easier it is for the party to juggle all forms of social considerations to create a ‘balanced’ ticket. The smaller the list of candidates, the more difficult it is to include all groups. Where parties have to nominate a slate of candidates for a multimember district, the exclusion of any major social sector, including women or minorities, could signal discrimination, and could therefore risk an electoral penalty at the ballot box. By contrast in first-past-
the-post systems, parliamentary candidates are selected to run within each single member district. Where the selection process is in the hands of the local constituency party, this creates minimal incentive for each particular constituency to pick a ticket that is 'balanced' at the district or national level. Local party members often want a representative who will maximize their chances of winning in that constituency, irrespective of the broader consequences for the party or parliament. The selection of the default option (i.e. a candidate reflecting the traditional characteristics and qualifications of previous parliamentarians) may be expected to predominate in many cases, as the rational vote-maximizing strategy designed to minimize electoral risks.

**Incumbency turnover:** Moreover rates of incumbency turnover play a role. One major barrier to women and minority candidates lies through the strength of incumbency, with elected officials returned over successive contests, due to the personal vote advantages of familiarity, name recognition, and media attention, as well as greater financial and organizational resources that accompany legislative office. In many contests the key challenge facing women and minorities is not just becoming nominated per se, but contesting a winnable seat in single-member districts, or being ranked near the top of the party list of candidates in PR systems. In the United States, for example, 85% of incumbent congressional representatives have been returned in successive election from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s. A broader comparison of election to the lower house of the national parliament in twenty-five established democracies from 1979-1994 found that on average about two-thirds of all incumbents were returned from one general election to the next, including 66% in PR electoral systems and 70% in majoritarian elections. This difference is modest but it could generate slightly more opportunities for challengers, including 'outgroups' in the pipeline for elected office. For example, in Britain it was the massive turnover in MPs following Labour's landslide victory in 1997, coupled with the use of positive action placing women in target seats, which doubled the number of women in the UK House of Commons. As incumbents, Labour women MPs were reelected in the 2001 British general election, despite the fact that the original positive action strategy was discontinued. In the United States, studies have established that from 1998-2000 women increased their numbers in states with term limitations more than elsewhere, although this effect is reversed in states like California where women representatives have already made much progress.

**Implementation of positive action strategies:** Party list PR also facilitates the implementation of positive action strategies used for women and minorities. Candidate quotas can also be used under majoritarian electoral systems as well, as shown by the British case, but it can be harder to implement.
within single member districts than within party lists. Reserved seats can also be used for majoritarian electoral systems, for example in New Zealand prior to reform, but these have been less commonly employed in most established democracies. For all these reasons, PR systems are more likely to produce socially-diverse parliaments than majoritarian electoral systems.

IV. Statutory Quotas

If the Netherlands opts for an electoral system with some single member districts then what else could be done to promote social inclusiveness in parliament? One option would be for parliament to introduce statutory quotas specifying that women or minorities must constitute a specified minimal proportional of parliamentary candidates within each party. Statutory quotas can be introduced by parliament as they are implemented by law and they would apply to all parties contesting an election. These should be distinguished from voluntary quotas which are decided upon by each party and implemented by the internal regulations and rule books governing each party. Quotas can be specified for women and men, and for other relevant forms of ethnic identity, such as nationality, language, religion, and for indigenous groups. Statutory gender quota laws have been applied to elections for European and Latin American parliaments (see Table 4), as well as for appointments to public bodies and consultative committees in countries such as Finland and Norway.

As shown by the last column in Table 4, monitoring short-term change in the election immediately before and after passage of the law, in some countries, and in some elections, the introduction of statutory gender quotas appears to have worked far more effectively than in other cases. Hence the substantial rise in women in parliament found in Argentina, and the modest growth in Peru and Belgium, but minimal progress evident in France, Mexico, or Brazil. Why is this? The effective implementation of statutory gender quotas depends upon multiple factors, including most importantly:

- How the statutory mechanisms are put into practice;
- The level of the gender quota specified by law;
- Whether the rules for party lists regulate the rank order of women and men candidates;
- Whether party lists are open or closed;
- The mean district magnitude;
- Good faith compliance by parties; and also
The penalties associated with any failure to comply with the law.

Positive action policies alter the balance of incentives for the party selectorate. Where these laws are implemented, then selectors need to weigh the potential penalties and benefits if they do or do not comply. Selectors may still prefer the default option of nominating a male candidate under certain circumstances, for example if the laws are designed as symbolic window-dressing more than as de facto regulations; if the regulation specify that a certain proportion of women have to be selected for party lists but they fail to specify their rank order so that female candidates cluster in unwinnable positions at the bottom of the list; or if any sanctions for non-compliance are weak or non-existent. As in many attempts to alter the incentive structure, the devil lies in the details. Superficially similar legislative policies turn out to have different consequences in different nations. Selected case studies in Belgium, France, Italy and Argentina illustrate these contrasts.

In Belgium the Electoral Act of 24 May 1994 specified that no more than two-thirds of the candidates on any party electoral list may be of the same sex. The minimum representation requirement is thus exactly the same for men and women. It applies to the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, and also to regional, community, provincial and municipal councils, as well as elections to the European Parliament. If this requirement is not respected, the list candidacies that would otherwise have been held by women have to be left blank or the whole list is declared invalid. The Act was first fully enforced in the 1999 European elections that saw the proportion of Belgian women MEPs rise from 18.5 to 23.3%. This was an increase, albeit a modest one, but the powers of incumbency means that it will take many successive elections under the new rules before women become a third or more of Belgian parliamentarians.

In 1999 France passed the parity law, a constitutional amendment requiring parties to include 50% representation of women in their party lists for election, with financial penalties attached for failure to do so. The gender parity law passed in June 2000 specified that for elections to the National Assembly between 48 and 52% of all candidates presented nation-wide by any given political party must be women. If this percentage is higher or lower, the state will cut its financial contribution. The results of the first elections held in March 2001 under the new rules indicate a substantial impact at municipal level, almost doubling the number of women in local office from 25 to 47 percent. Nevertheless in the first elections to the French National Assembly held under the parity rules, in June 2002, the proportion of elected women rose by only 1.4 percent, from 10.9 to 12.3. Only eight more women entered the Assembly, dashing the hopes of the reformers. The main reasons were that the
parity law failed to specify the selection of women for particular types of single member seats, so that women nominees could be concentrated in unwinnable constituencies. Moreover the major parties decided to favor incumbents, largely ignored the financial penalty of reduced party funding associated with imbalanced party lists. The sanction is a reduction in the public funding received for each party’s campaign on a sliding scale of 5% for a gender difference of 10% on party lists of candidates, 30% for a difference of 60%, and a maximum 50% for a difference of 100%. Hence an all-male list would still get half the public funding. Despite the parity law, the proportion of women in the Chamber of Deputies means that France is ranked 61st worldwide after reform, compared with 59th before parity was introduced.

Italy provides another parallel European case, where a quota system was introduced in 1993 into the legislation governing municipal, provincial and national elections. These laws asserted that a minimum of 30% of both sexes had to be present in electoral lists. In 1995, however, the Italian Constitutional Tribunal repealed these regulations, considering that they were contrary to the principle of equality. Some parties have introduced voluntary gender quotas into their party rules, set at 50% for Verdi, 40% for DS, 40% for the PRC, and 20% for the PPI. Yet in the 2001 election women remained only 9.8% of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, ranking Italy 77th worldwide. In Armenia, the 1999 Electoral Code states that the voting lists of the parties involved in the proportional parliamentary electoral system should contain not less than 5% female candidates, but the low level and poor implementation meant that women in the June 1999 elections were only 3.1% of the national parliament.

Argentina also provides an example which has been widely influential in Latin America. During the early 1990s, with the expansion of democracy, the popularity of statutory gender quotas spread rapidly in this region. The first and most effective law (Ley de Cupos) was passed in Argentina in 1991, introducing an obligatory quota system for all parties contesting national elections to the Chamber of Deputies - "lists must have, as a minimum, 30% of women candidates and in proportions with possibilities of being elected. Any list not complying with these requisites shall not be approved." Most importantly, the law stipulates that women must be ranked throughout party lists, not consigned to the end where they face no realistic chance of election. Party lists failing to comply with the law are rejected. If a rejected list is not corrected so as to bring it into compliance with the law, the party in question cannot compete in that district's congressional election. The provincial branches of the political parties create the closed party lists from which the Argentine deputies are elected, although at times the national party intervenes to impose a list. Following the implementation of the law, in the 1993 Chamber election, 21.3% (27 of 127) of
the deputies elected were women, compared to only 4.6% (6 of 130) in the election of 1991. A decade after passage, the proportion of women in the Chamber of Deputies had risen to 30.7% (79 out of 257), ranking Argentina 9th from the top worldwide in the representation of women.

In total eleven Latin American countries have now adopted national laws establishing a minimum percentage for women’s participation as candidates in national elections and a twelfth—Colombia—had approved a quota of 30 percent for women in senior positions in the executive branch. Although their impact has been varied, in these countries a comparison of the elections held immediately before and after passage of these laws in Table 4 suggests that legislative quotas generated on average an eight-percentage point gain in women’s election to congress.

The comparison of legal gender quotas suggests grounds for caution for those who hope that these strategies will automatically produce an immediate rise in women legislators. The French case, in particular, illustrates the way the detailed aspects of how such quotas are implemented, and the sanctions for non-compliance, can generate very different results even for municipal and national elections within the same country. The variations in the impact of these policies across Latin America confirm these observations.

V: Reserved seats

An alternative policy option would be the introduction of some reserved seats that would be only open to contestation by women or by ethnic minority candidates. This policy has been adopted to boost women's representation in local government in India and to represent Maoris in New Zealand. Reserved seats have also been used in some developing nations in Africa and South Asia, particularly those with a Muslim culture, including for the lower house in Morocco, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Botswana, Taiwan, Lesotho, and Tanzania (see Table 6).

One advantage of this mechanism is that it guarantees a minimum number of women or minorities in elected office, without the uncertainty which arises from the implementation of statutory quotas. Critics argue, however, that the use of reserved seats may be a way to appease, and ultimately sideline, women or minorities. Being elected does not necessarily mean that these members are given independent decision-making power. Particularly in countries where members are appointed to reserved seats by the president or chief executive, so that they lack an independent electoral or organizational base, this process can reinforce control of parliament by the majority party. In Uganda, for example, 53 parliamentary seats out of 292 are reserved for women (18%), which are indirectly elected, along with seats set aside for
representatives drawn from the groups such as the army, youth, the disabled, and trade unions, despite a ban on opposition parties standing for election\textsuperscript{31}.

Nevertheless against these arguments, where there are free and fair contested elections for those who are standing for the reserved seats, then members have an independent electoral base. \textbf{India} provides one of the best known examples of reserved seats allocated through democratic elections. One fifth of the seats in the Indian Lok Sab are reserved for scheduled castes, schedules tribes and Anglo-Indians. Moreover reserved seats for women have been used for one third of all seats at local level in India, with considerable success, bringing thousands of women into public office\textsuperscript{32}.

[Table 6 about here]

Reserved seats based on regional, linguistic, ethnic, or religious ethno-political cleavages have also been used elsewhere, especially in post-conflict settlements, although their effects depend upon the size and spatial concentration of minority populations, and controversy continues about the consequences of their use. Some argue that reserved seats have reinforced inter-group relations and heightened ethnic conflict, while others suggest that these are a legitimate part of power sharing arrangements and a practical way to make sure that leaders from all communities are included in representative bodies\textsuperscript{33}.

A recent review by Reynolds noted that reserved seats have been employed as part of the constitutional settlement in Croatia and Bosnia, as well as for indigenous groups such as the five reserved seats and the communal voting rolls used for Maoris in New Zealand.\textsuperscript{34} Language is the basis for some reservations, including the division of the Belgian Senate into French, Flemish and German seats, while religion was the criteria for this policy in Lebanon, Jordan, and Pakistan. Other positive action policies designed to bring about the inclusion of certain ethnic groups include race conscious districting (used in the United States), the over representation of specific ethno-national regions (such as the Faroe Islands in Denmark), and lower electoral thresholds for parties representing minorities (such as the exemption from the 5% threshold for parties representing the Germany minority in Poland).

\textbf{VI: Voluntary Gender Quotas}

An alternative policy concerns the use of voluntary gender quotas within specific parties. In this regard, while party leaders can take the initiative, this is not a matter which parliament could implement through electoral law\textsuperscript{35}. Rules, constitutions, and internal regulations determined within each party are distinct from electoral statutes enforceable by the courts. Parties in the
Netherlands have used affirmative action strategies for women although with the exception of Labour and Green Left, most have been reluctant to adopt quotas. Scandinavia, Western Europe, and Latin America have often used voluntary gender quotas, and Communist parties in Central and Eastern Europe employed them in the past.

International IDEA’s Global Database of Quotas for Women estimates that 181 parties in 58 countries use gender quotas for electoral candidates for national parliaments. The effects of these measures can be analyzed by focusing on their use within the European Union. By 2000, among 76 relevant European parties (with at least ten members in the lower house), almost half (35 parties) use gender quotas, and two dozen of these have achieved levels of female representation in the lower house of parliament over 24%. Among the European parties using gender quotas, on average one third (33%) of their elected representatives were women. By contrast, in the European parties without gender quotas, only 18% of their members of parliament were women. Of course it might be misleading to assume any simple ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ at work here, since parties more sympathetic towards women in public office are also more likely to introduce gender quotas. European parties of the left commonly introduced voluntary gender quotas during the 1980s, including Social Democratic, Labour, Communist, Socialist and Greens parties, before the practice eventually often spread to other parties.

The ‘before’ and ‘after’ test, exemplified by parties in Scandinavia, Germany, and Britain, suggest that the effects of voluntary gender quotas within parties varies substantially.

Many of the parties ranking at or near the top of the proportion of women MPs are in Scandinavia. The Norwegian Labour Party was the first in this region to implement a 40% gender quota for all elections in 1983, although this did not specify the location of women candidates within their lists. Other Norwegian parties followed suit, including the Social Left, the Center Party, and the Christian Democrats. This was followed by Denmark where the Social Democratic Party introduced a 50% quota for elections in 1988. Because the rank position of candidates on the party list is critical to their success in being elected, in 1994 the Swedish Social Democratic Party introduced the principle of including a woman as every second name on the list - the ‘zipper’ or ‘zebra’ principle. This means that every second name on the party’s nomination list must alternate between women and men. In Sweden, since the general election in 1994, the largest political party, the Social Democrats, and later the Greens and the Christian Democrats, have systematically alternated women and men’s names in their lists of the constituency candidates for parliamentary, local, regional, and the EU-
Parliament elections. Gender quotas are used by some Swedish parties with a high proportion of women MPs, such as the Social Democrats and the Vansterpartiet, although not all the credit should go to the use of positive action, by any means, as other Swedish parties including the Centerpartiet also have a substantial number of women MPs despite not using any gender quotas.

Another case is Germany where three of the five major political parties have a 40-50% quota system in their party rules. In 1980, when the Greens turned from a social movement into a political party, they instilled gender balance by including a strict 50 per cent quota combined with a zipper system in their statutes. Except for the very top positions in government, the Greens have been more or less able to meet their requirements. In 1988 the Social Democrats followed suit by stipulating in party rules that in all internal party elections at least one third of candidates must be female. From 1994 onwards, 40 per cent of all party positions have to be held by women. For election lists, parliamentarian mandates and public office a transition period with lower percentages was agreed. It started with one-quarter in 1988, required one-third in 1994, and reached 40 per cent in 1998. The SPD met the targets within the party but fell slightly short for seats in parliaments and in governments. In 1996 the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) introduced the so-called ‘quorum’ requiring 30 per cent of female representation in both party functions and election lists, but so far these targets have not being met. After German unification the Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (PDS, former East German Communist party) introduced a strict 50 percent quota in combination with a zipper system. In many elections the PDS has outperformed its own targets. Currently only the Christlich-Soziale Union (CSU, the Bavarian sister party of the CDU) and the Liberals (Freie Demokratische Partei, FDP) refuse to introduce voluntary gender quotas.

It is often easier to implement positive action in proportional elections using party lists but these strategies can also be used under majoritarian rules. In Britain, the Labour Party first agreed the principle of quotas to promote women’s representation in internal party positions in the late 1980s. In 1988 a minimalist measure was agreed for candidate selection for Westminster, so that if a local branch nominated a woman, at least one woman should be included on the constituency shortlist. In 1993, following an electoral defeat where the party failed to attract sufficient support amongst women voters, it was decided that more radical measures were necessary. Consequently the Labour party’s annual conference agreed that in half the seats where Labour MPs were retiring, and in half the party’s key target marginal seats, local party members would be required to select their parliamentary candidate from an all-women shortlist. Other seats would be open to both women and men. Although this
policy was subsequently dropped under legal challenge, it still proved highly effective, contributing towards doubling the number of women in the UK House of Commons from 1992-1997\textsuperscript{42}. Despite abandoning the original policy, low levels of incumbency turnover maintained most of these gains in the subsequent general elections in 2001 and 2005. For the first elections to the new Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Great London Assembly, Labour adopted a ‘twinning’ policy. The system ‘twinned’ neighboring seats, taking into account their ‘winnability’, so that each pair would select one man and one woman. This opportunity was uniquely available, given that there were no incumbent members. Under this system, local party selectors in the two constituencies would come together to pick candidates, and each would have two votes - one for a woman and one for a man.

In general we can conclude that reliance upon voluntary quotas introduced by parties into their own rules and regulations governing candidate selection can be effective but this does depend upon party initiatives and effective implementation. There are fewer guarantees that such positive action strategies will work, compared with the policies of statutory quotas or reserved seats, although at the same time leaving the decision whether or not to use quotas up to parties gives them greater control over these decisions and preserves their autonomy as voluntary associations in civil society.

VII: Conclusions and summary

International agencies, governments, parties and groups concerned with increasing the representation of women and minorities have advocated a range of initiatives designed to break through the barriers in elected office. The evidence presented in this study provides further confirmation that the basic type of electoral system influences the inclusiveness of elected bodies. Women are generally more successful in being nominated and elected under proportional electoral systems than under combined or majoritarian systems. Under PR, especially systems with a large district magnitude, parties have considerable incentive to create a balanced list of candidates, to avoid any electoral penalties from the appearance of discrimination against any particular group. This electoral incentive is absent among local selectors with single member districts in majoritarian elections, where each local party can choose an individual candidate without any collective responsibility for balancing the social profile of the parliamentary party at national level. At the same time, the incentives facing party selectors differ for women and minorities, because of the role of geography. Women are spread fairly evenly throughout all districts, whereas contrast minorities are often clustered in certain regions and places. As a result, parties selecting candidates for single member districts in areas where ethnic minority populations are strongly concentrated also have
an incentive to select minority candidates for these seats.

The general conclusion is that any electoral reform in the Netherlands which introduces a combined system including some single-member districts will probably thereby serve to reduce gender (and possibly ethnic) diversity in the Tweede Kamer. To compensate, electoral reformers should also consider implementing other policies which have proved effective for maintaining social diversity in elected office, including the use of statutory quotas regulating the candidate selection processes in all parties or the use of reserved seats in the legislature, while parties should consider the implementation of voluntary quotas in party rulebooks.
Table 1: Ethnic minority representatives in the Tweede Kamer, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khadija</td>
<td>Arib</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coskun</td>
<td>Çörtüz</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Haarlem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nihat</td>
<td>Eski</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Utrecht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen G.</td>
<td>Ferrier</td>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>Leusden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayaan</td>
<td>Hirsi Ali</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>Karimi</td>
<td>Netherlands/Iran</td>
<td>Utrecht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatma</td>
<td>Koser Kaya</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Den Haag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Lazrak</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Leerdam</td>
<td>Nederland Antilles</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fadime</td>
<td>Örgü</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Vlaardingen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirmala</td>
<td>Rambocus</td>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>Utrecht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.T.</td>
<td>Tjon-A-Ten</td>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>Zoetermeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.M.</td>
<td>Varela</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Maassluis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The ethnic minority members of the lower house of parliament were identified from the Tweede Kamer website biographies by place of birth.

Source: [www.houseofrepresentatives.nl](http://www.houseofrepresentatives.nl)
Table 2: Women's representation by type of electoral system, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral System</th>
<th>% Of women in the lower house of parliament, 2000</th>
<th>Number of nations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Majoritarian</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Vote</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block vote</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Ballot</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Past-The-Post</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Non-Transferable Vote</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Combined</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Independent</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Dependent</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL Proportional</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Transferable Vote</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party List</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3: The proportion of women MPs in mixed electoral systems in five nations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single Member Districts</th>
<th>Multi Member Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania 2004</td>
<td>13/71</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand 2002</td>
<td>19/62</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy 2005</td>
<td>43/475</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaco 2003</td>
<td>3/16</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany 1998</td>
<td>76/328</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
Italy: [http://english.camera.it/](http://english.camera.it/)
Monaco: [http://assembly.coe.int](http://assembly.coe.int)
Germany: [http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/wahlen/download/abc2002e.pdf](http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/wahlen/download/abc2002e.pdf)
Table 4: Statutory gender quotas in use worldwide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date of Law</th>
<th>Gender Quota %</th>
<th>Legislative Body</th>
<th>Electoral System</th>
<th>List open or closed</th>
<th>% Women MPs before law (i)</th>
<th>% Women MPs after law (ii)</th>
<th>Change (i)-(ii)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Majoritarian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Unicameral</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>+21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Unicameral</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Unicameral</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Rep</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Unicameral</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea, North</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Majoritarian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Majoritarian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 30 % 10 14 +4

Note: Statutory gender quotas for the lower house of national parliaments are defined as legal regulations specifying that each party must include a minimum proportion of women in their candidate lists. Change is estimated based on the percentage of women MPs in the parliamentary election held immediately before and after implementation of the gender quota law.

Table 5: Reserved seats for women used in the lower house of parliaments worldwide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of MPs in the lower house</th>
<th>Number of seats reserved for women</th>
<th>% Of seats reserved for women</th>
<th>Appointed or elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>Indirectly elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Reserved seats for women in the lower house of the national parliament are defined as those that by law can only be filled by women, either by appointment or election. It should also be noted that in Nepal three seats are reserved for women in the upper house, according to the 1990 constitution.

**Sources:** The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) [www.eisa.org.za](http://www.eisa.org.za); *Elections Around the World* [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org); International IDEA [www.IDEA.int](http://www.IDEA.int).
Figure 1: The ranked proportion of women in the lower house of parliament, 2005

Figure 2: The growth in the proportion of women members in the Tweede Kamer, 1918-2005

Figure 3: Countries classified by electoral systems and ranked by the percentage of women in the lower house of parliament, 2005

Figure 4: Stages in the candidate selection process

**Policy framework**
- Majoritarian, combined or proportional electoral systems
- Statutory quotas of candidates
- Reserved seats in the legislature

**Demand by party selectors**
- Candidate selection procedures within each party
  - E.g. Voluntary quotas in party rulebooks

**Demand by electorate**
- Pool of parliamentary candidates

**Supply of eligible candidates**
- Equal opportunities in education, home, and the workforce

**Members of Parliament**


Women and minority representation


12 Inter-Parliamentary Union. *Women in National Parliaments,* as at 30 June 2005. www.ipu.org. It should be noted that Rwanda used a policy of reserved seats for women in the 2003 elections.


14 It should be noted that this may provide an under-estimate as it does not classify any second-generation ethnic minority representatives, for example if one or both of their parents was born in Turkey, Suriname or Morocco. See http://www.houseofrepresentatives.nl/members_of_parliament/mps/index.jsp


29 The Italian articles included law 277/93 for elections at the House of Representatives, law 81/93 for local elections, and law 43/95 regional elections. For details see Women in Decision-making: European database. www.db-decision.de.


