Engineering Equality?
Assessing the Multiple Impacts of Electoral Gender Quotas

Pär Zetterberg
Abstract

The driving question of this compilation thesis is whether quotas for political assemblies represent an effective tool for breaking down gender inequality in the political sphere. To put it differently, focus is on the possibilities for policy-makers to engineer equality. As a response to persistent patterns of male dominance in political decision-making, approximately 100 countries, both democratic and authoritarian, have adopted these affirmative action measures.

The introductory section presents an argument as to why we should focus on certain impacts in order to be able to answer the question about the effectiveness of quotas. It suggests that the point of departure for empirical assessments of quota policies should be the normative arguments for supporting the reform, and the effects that normative theorists and quota advocates expect from these measures.

The three studies that make up the core of the thesis build on previous empirical research on quotas, and examine some of their possible effects at both the elite level and mass level. Study I theoretically scrutinizes how the procedures for selecting women to political office shape these women’s legislative autonomy, and thereby their possibilities to substantively represent women. The study identifies mainly two factors as important: a large body selecting the candidates and a rule-bound and thus bureaucratized selection procedure.

Study II empirically tests the claim that women elected through quotas are more likely to suffer from institutional constraints in the legislature, and thereby have a harder time working for the benefit of women, than other female representatives. By conducting a comparative case-study of two Mexican state legislatures, no support is found for this hypothesis.

Quotas have also been justified because of their likely impacts on female citizens’ perceptions about politics. Study III addresses this issue by performing a statistical analysis on the impacts of quotas on Latin American women’s political attitudes and behavior. In contrast to previous research on the topic, the study finds little proof of positive impacts of quotas on women’s political engagement.

Taken together, the thesis does not provide a clear-cut answer to the question as to whether it is possible to engineer equality within politics. However, it sheds new light on the complexities of quota impacts, and it qualifies and nuances the picture for those who expect quotas to be an overall solution for problems of gender inequality.

Keywords: quotas; gender; women; equality; representation; participation; candidate selection; Latin America

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INTRODUCTION

Assessing the Multiple Impacts of Gender Quotas

In 1995, world leaders met in Beijing to discuss the situation of women across the globe. At the United Nations’ (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women they were presented with figures showing that women in different spheres of society (education, labor market, health, etc.) continued to lack the same opportunities as men. In the political sphere, large gender gaps also persisted, despite strong democratization trends and socio-economic progress following the economic recovery after the oil crisis in the 1970s. Between 1975 and 1995, female representation within parliaments (either Lower or single houses) had only increased 0.7 units, from a previous low of 10.9 to 11.6 percent. Senates (Upper houses) demonstrated a slight downward trend (from 10.5 to 9.4 percent) (Ballington and Karam 2005). The UN characterized gender inequalities in politics not only as a democratic problem, but also as an impediment to economic and human development. Therefore, the resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action suggested a radical strategy as a response to women’s persistent political underrepresentation as well as to the unsatisfactory trend: it called on governments to take active measures to ensure women’s equal access and full participation in decision-making (UN 1995). Following the Beijing conference, electoral gender quotas – regulations that a minimum (in numbers or percentage) of political (pre-)candidates or members of parliament (MPs) are women – have been an increasingly popular tool used to increase women’s presence in legislative bodies. By now approximately 100 countries, both democratic and authoritarian, have adopted these affirmative action measures (Dahlerup 2007). More than three quarters of these have been passed in the aftermath of the Beijing conference (Krook 2009). Because of the great expansion of gender quotas in the last ten to fifteen years, quota policies represent the widest reaching electoral reforms of recent years (Krook et al. 2009).

This PhD dissertation focuses on the rapid diffusion of gender quotas. My ambition is to take the growing literature on quota policies a step further by examining some of their possible broader impacts at both the elite level and mass level. Previously, scholars have been mainly preoccupied with exploring the reasons for adopting these measures as well as with examining their
implementation and short-term consequences, in terms of the numerical effects on women’s political representation (see e.g. Dahlerup 2006d; Krook 2009). However, feminist scholars and activists have expressed various normative arguments for backing up the reform. Among these are consequentialist arguments: quotas bring women’s distinct experiences and interests into politics, and thereby bring about substantive change on policy issues (see e.g. Bacchi 2006; Chathukulam and John 2000; Tinker 2004); and quotas provide female constituents with new political role models (Bacchi 2006). In other words, quotas aim at impacting both legislative politics and women’s political perceptions within lower levels of society. Therefore, in order to assess whether or not – or to what extent – this large social engineering project has been successful, there is a need for a broader research strategy on quotas that not only takes their numerical impacts into account but also scrutinizes their possible multiple impacts. Such impacts might be suggested by paying attention to research on women’s political representation. It has been held within this body of literature that a numerical increase of women generates more far-reaching consequences at both the elite level and mass level, specifically, an increased attention to issues of particular interest to women (so-called critical mass theories1), or a greater political engagement among grass-roots women (Atkeson and Carrillo 2007; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007). It remains an empirical question, however, whether or not quota policies, in addition to producing possible numerical increases, also bring about such changes. In other words, we should not just assume that quotas have similar, and positive, effects on different aspects of legislative and citizen politics; such claims should be addressed empirically.

The overall aim of this dissertation is therefore to theorize, operationalize, and empirically test hypotheses about the multiple impacts of quotas. I identify and fill in gaps within existing research, thereby contributing new theoretical and empirical insights to the literature on gender quotas. My approach is innovative, as I examine various potential impacts within the context of one single research design. Previously, scholars have focused on one possible impact at a time, without being able to compare possible effects with each other and detect similarities and differences.

Two of the three studies – Study I and Study II – within this compilation thesis build on the normative argument that quotas should generate substantive changes at the elite level in legislative politics. In different ways – theoretically and empirically – the studies pay attention to the preconditions for women elected through quotas to be autonomous legislators, thereby being able, if they want to do so, to push for policy changes that might benefit women. The third study (Study III) empirically examines the expectation among quota proponents and feminist scholars that quotas impact not only

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1 Critical mass theory has been increasingly criticized. For an introduction to the theory, as well as a summary of the critique, see e.g. Childs and Krook 2008.
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elite-level politics, but also women citizens’ political attitudes and agency. By scrutinizing these distinct issues, I draw on, and make contributions to, a broad range of theoretical literature, such as literature on political representation, political participation, policy feedback analyses, political parties, candidate selection, and legislative behavior. Empirically, I focus on the part of the world where quota legislation has been in place the longest: Latin America (with special attention paid to Mexico).

This introduction aims at giving, on the one hand, a closer understanding of the three studies: why these specific studies were selected, what their main results are, and their main contributions and limitations. In this sense, the introduction should be considered a summary of this dissertation project. On the other hand, the introduction also attempts to make an additional independent contribution to the launching of a more cohesive research agenda on the impacts of quotas. Here, I construct a theoretical framework that provides a theoretical baseline for research on the multiple impacts of quotas. Scholars have started to analyze the different impacts of quotas, however, without placing their analyses into a common framework. Moreover, it is rarely made explicit why they choose to analyze specific kinds of possible effects rather than others. By building on the normative arguments for adopting quotas, I present an argument as to why we should focus on certain impacts in order to be able to answer the question of whether or not quotas represent an effective tool to increase gender equality within politics. Thus, the framework should be seen to be as much as an offspring of these studies as an introduction to them.

The introduction proceeds as follows: The next section examines the diffusion of quotas across the globe, providing a conceptual discussion of quotas (and certain quota types) as well as a report of their timing and geographical expansion. Subsequently, I develop the theoretical framework, first, by discussing the normative arguments for supporting (and opposing) quotas, and second, by linking distinct normative arguments to specific forms of representation (descriptive, substantive, and symbolic). In the following section, I review the empirical literature on the impacts of gender quotas and identify certain drawbacks of the literature. The three studies that make up the core of this compilation thesis are summarized in the subsequent section. Finally, I conclude by discussing the theoretical implications of the findings. I also propose ways forward for research on the impacts of quotas, and discuss the policy implications of my findings.
The diffusion of quotas – what kind, when, and where?

Gender quotas – a multidimensional concept

Quotas for political assemblies – or electoral quotas – have been defined as regulations that in public elections require a certain minimum in numbers or percentage of a specific group (Dahlerup 2006b). Among the groups that have benefited from such arrangements are, in addition to women, ethnic or racial minorities, indigenous groups, lower castes, or members of non-dominant nationalities (see e.g. Bird 2003; Htun 2004; Krook and O’Brien Forthcoming). As for gender quotas, these regulations are frequently expressed in gender-neutral terms (a maximum-minimum number or percentage for both sexes).

Importantly, there are a number of factors left unspecified in the definition; in other words, gender quotas have a lot of different faces and should be considered a multidimensional concept. First of all, the regulations could be of a quite distinct character. Quotas could be mandated in a country’s constitution or by law (usually in the electoral code). These are mandatory quotas that all actors in a selection process to the legislature (mainly the political parties) have to comply with. In some quota systems, but not all of them, there are certain sanctions if a political party does not comply with the quota provision. So-called party quotas, on the other hand, are regulated in a specific political party’s own party statutes. In other words, this type of quota is voluntarily adopted by party activists. For this reason, quotas in some countries apply only to those political parties that have chosen to include them in their internal rules (Dahlerup 2006b).

A second important distinction between quota types refers to the stage in the election process that the quota applies to. Three different stages in the recruitment process could be distinguished (see e.g. Matland 2006). First, quotas could apply to aspirants. The reason for adopting quotas at this stage in the process is to amplify the pool of potential candidates; a minimum number of women are required among pre-candidates of political parties. The body that selects candidates (the executive committee of the political party, party members, etc.) could then decide to select either a male or female candidate. This type of quota is the least “demanding” for political parties. It only forces party leaders to look for women that are interested in aspiring to a political office. It is also the quota type that is the least common. Because of the few cases of aspirant quotas, this quota type will not be further examined in this dissertation. Quotas for candidates, on the other hand, are the most common types of quotas. These quotas require political

2 Gender quotas as a term could be contested. If “gender” is separate from “sex” because of its social construction, then “sex quotas” might be a more accurate label for the kinds of regulations that give each sex a certain number or percentage of the candidacies or seats. Nevertheless, I use the term “gender quotas”, mainly for pragmatic reasons: it is the dominating label in the literature on quotas for women (see however Celis and Childs 2008; Meier 2008).
parties to place a minimum percentage of women on their candidate lists. This percentage could vary from five or ten percent all the way to parity (Matland 2006). As in the case of aspirant quotas, quotas for candidates do not guarantee an increase in the number of women MPs. Female candidates might be – and commonly have been – placed at the end of the list, without any real chances of being elected (see e.g. Htun and Jones 2002). Moreover, in political systems with small district magnitudes a woman could appear in a high slot and yet fail to be elected. The only quota type that actually guarantees a certain number of women MPs is so-called reserved seats. This quota applies to the final stage of the recruitment process: the elected. It requires that a certain number of the MPs are women. Usually, a certain number of seats are separated from the rest of the electoral system. The seats are filled with women through sets of special rules that tend to vary from country to country (appointment, direct election, etc.).

Table 1. *Types of electoral gender quotas (by regulation and stage of the electoral process)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspirants</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory (by law/in constitution)</td>
<td>Aspirant quotas (e.g. Panama, Paraguay)</td>
<td>Legislative quotas (e.g. Argentia, Belgium, Mexico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary (by party)</td>
<td>Aspirant quotas (e.g. United Kingdom)</td>
<td>Party quotas (e.g. Sweden, South Africa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s construction, with inspiration from Dahlerup 2006b and Dahlerup and Freidenvall Forthcoming

By distinguishing between different quota regulations as well as the distinct stages that quotas could apply to, it is possible to discern a number of different quota types: party candidate quotas (usually called “party quotas”), legislative candidate quotas (regularly referred to as “legislative quotas”), and reserved seats (see Table 1). In the remainder of this introduction, I will focus on these three quota types.3

The timing and geographical expansion of quotas

Gender quotas are in general a recent phenomenon; the greatest expansion of quotas has occurred since the second half of the 1990s. There are, however, a few examples of early quota provisions for women. Of those quotas that are still in place, the oldest quota provisions date back to the 1970s. These

3 Note that I am not conceptually consistent in the three studies. For instance, I sometimes refer to “legislative candidate quotas” as “legal quotas” (Study II) or “candidate quotas” (Study III). The reason for this lack of consistency is because the studies were written at different points in time.
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are voluntary quotas (party quotas) adopted by some political parties in the Nordic countries (Christensen 1999). The first country to introduce legislative quotas was Argentina, in 1991. The quota law required that a minimum of 30 per cent of the candidates on party lists are to be women. Quota legislation grew more widespread in the late 1990s, after the Beijing conference, when a large number of countries introduced legislative quotas, either into their constitutions or into the electoral codes. This is the most common provision, and continues to gain momentum as more countries consider adopting gender quota policies (Krook 2009). Parallel to the expansion of legislative quotas, some countries have adopted reserved seats for women, especially countries with very low levels of female representation.

In general, quotas are adopted in all kinds of political regimes: advanced democracies, emerging or less developed democracies, and non-democratic countries. They appear to be most common in developed democracies; in these countries, mainly party quotas have been adopted. Quotas enforced through law, on the other hand, are mainly found in semi-democratic countries, and to a slightly lesser extent also in authoritarian states (Dahlerup 2007). In addition to differences across regime type, the expansion of quota provisions also follows a geographical pattern. As for mandatory quotas, reserved seats are most popular in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Legislative quotas, on the other hand, have been pushed through in a large number of Latin American countries, but are also found in parts of Africa and Europe. Voluntarily adopted party quotas are predominantly found in Western Europe, although they have lately been expanded to other parts of the world as well, such as Africa and Latin America.

A rich body of literature has analyzed the processes leading up to quota adoption on a massive scale. Krook (2007) identifies the key players involved in quota campaigns as well as a number of accounts that commonly have been put forward in empirical literature as to why male-dominated political assemblies and parties have adopted these measures. First, there tends to be agreement among scholars that the principal driving force for quota reforms has been women’s collective mobilization – within women’s organizations, in cross-partisan networks in legislatures, in women’s sections of political parties, and in national women’s agencies. Women in both democratic and authoritarian countries have pushed for reforms to gain access and to increase their presence in decision-making bodies. Second, international organizations (such as the UN) and global regimes (such as the Beijing declaration) appear to have played an important role in national policy-making. For instance, international organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, and the European Union have put pressure on countries to adopt quotas to overcome political gender inequalities in times of electoral reforms or democratic innovation, and/or in moments of democratic transition. Also in another respect, global actors seem to have played a role: transnational networks have contributed with norm diffusion among activists. Third, and
finally, male party elites appear – perhaps somewhat surprisingly – to have rational motives for pursuing gender quotas (Goetz 2003a; Htun and Jones 2002). For instance, male elites might use party quotas as a way to overcome a decrease in popularity, by appealing to new groups of voters (Goetz 2003a). Other parties might follow suit, in order to not have a disadvantage in a close electoral race. Moreover, political elites might express commitment to quotas in order to appear modern and progressive in the eyes of the international community (Htun and Jones 2002). Gender equality as a concept has lately been associated with positive connotations in public debate; it has become a symbol of modernity.4

Normative arguments for quotas and their multiple impacts: a theoretical framework

Quota policies raise the theoretically intriguing question of the role of public policy, and of positive action measures, for breaking down inequality in the political sphere. Ultimately, this question deals with the issue of which tools are available for policy-makers who want to bring about social justice. In other words, what are the possibilities of engineering equality?

In order to address these issues, and assess whether or not – or to what extent – quota reforms have been successful, we should specify the expected effects of the reform. I take on this challenge by moving beyond a focus on policy goals as expressed by politicians; rather, I construct a theoretical framework that has as its starting point the normative debate on this controversial issue. I thereby focus on the origins of the ideas from which quota policies emanate. A reason for this is that quota policies are the result of a long and lively normative debate which started in the scholarly community. Quota proponents and activists have picked up arguments from this debate, and used them in quota campaigns. As a consequence, there are a number of underlying normative motives as to why quota arrangements have been justified.5

4 Krook (2007) also pays attention to the consistency between quotas and emerging notions of equality and representation. For instance, quotas for women have been viewed as a logical extension of other types of representational guarantees (based on language, religion, etc.). Moreover, quotas have sometimes been adopted in times of democratic innovation, in which demands emerge for guaranteeing the representation of traditionally underprivileged groups.

5 These underlying motives do not always coincide with the motives that politicians express when adopting quotas. Quota proponents might perceive certain normative arguments to be the most successful in a quota campaign, and push these forward while downplaying others. For instance, male politicians might be more prone to accepting quotas for the new perspectives that women bring into politics than for compensating for past discrimination in party politics (as men in the latter case are pointed out as part of the problem).
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Normative arguments for supporting (and opposing) quotas

Perhaps not very surprisingly, the normative arguments for adopting quotas are in many respects intertwined with arguments that have been put forward for increasing women’s political representation more generally (see also Dahlerup 2006a). There are generally few justifications for the tool itself (i.e. the quota); rather, most quota proponents justify the means by the end, sometimes by adding that quotas speed up the process of women’s inclusion into politics (see e.g. Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005). As a result, four arguments have commonly been put forward to justify an introduction of quotas: one focusing on reasons of justice, another emphasizing women’s distinct experiences and resources for legislative politics, a third focusing on women’s particular interests (or perspectives), and a final argument paying attention to the beneficial impact that an increased number of female legislators could have on women citizens’ political beliefs (Bacchi 2006; cf. Hernes 1982; Phillips 1995).6

The first argument – the justice argument – is the only argument that employs a procedural justification for quotas. This frequently used argument rests on a notion that legislative bodies would be fairly gender-equal were there no barriers to women in selection procedures. In other words, the core of the argument is that the existing political system uses decision making procedures that do not provide women with equal opportunities to be nominated and elected. Because of political parties’ inability to remove discriminatory structures, active measures (i.e. quotas) are needed that directly target the issue of gender balance in political representation (Bacchi 2006).7 This argument criticizes those liberals who claim that men and women have an equal chance of obtaining a political office, and that quotas discriminate against men; the argument suggests that “opportunities for men and women are very seldom equal, since men have a privileged position in society” (Dahlerup 2007, 75). For instance, quota advocates claim that existing systems of merit are based on a male norm; they downplay women’s merits and favor those skills that are usually characterized as typically male. Feminists supporting quotas therefore argue that women’s low representation in parliament cannot be accounted for by their lack of appropriate qualifications, but by the discriminatory structures within political parties that inhibit them from launching political careers.8

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6 I do not claim to cover every single normative argument for quotas. I include arguments from the normative debate, which literature reviews have regarded as frequently used arguments (see e.g. Bacchi 2006).

7 Quota proponents have therefore suggested quotas to be a tool that shifts focus from an exclusive focus on “equality of opportunity” to an inclusion – at least to a certain extent – of “equality of result” (Dahlerup 2007).

8 Gender quota opponents, on the other hand, have argued that any “preferential treatment” tends to stigmatize those women that are selected through a quota, leading some of them to disassociate from the reform (Bacchi 2006).
The second argument – the resource argument – emphasizes the distinct experiences that women share as a group, and therefore, the specific resources women possess. In contrast to a procedural justification of the justice argument, this argument justifies quotas for their consequences; i.e. the specific outcomes that they are expected to generate. More specifically, the argument calls into question a liberal assumption about representativity, that is, that the full width of opinions is covered by representatives. Rather, it claims that “the majority of elected representatives represent the views of the selected portion of the population from which they come, commonly middle-class men” (Bacchi 2006, 36). Women’s experiences – as well as those of other underrepresented groups – are therefore generally not included in political decision-making. In other words, there are certain resources, or capacities, that are not fully used when making collectively binding decisions. This makes the development of “the common good” more difficult. For this reason, quota proponents who refer to this argument have suggested that political representatives should display the characteristics of the population: sex, age, ethnicity, etc.

The third argument – the interest argument – is similar to the former argument. It focuses on the contributions women make to legislative work, and the bias in policy output that is likely to be a consequence of a male-dominated legislative body. However, in contrast to the resource argument, the interest argument does not rest on a notion that men and women have complementary perspectives as a result of their distinct experiences, which thus facilitates reaching “the common good”. Rather, its approach is more confrontational in the sense that women – at least to a certain extent – might have common interests that conflict with those of men. Quotas are therefore needed for women to push forward shared interests or perspectives (which have been considered to be looser than interests) (Young 2000). The issue of shared interests (or perspectives), however, is hotly debated among feminist scholars, and there is a general lack of agreement. One line of controversy concerns the question as to whether there are any objective women’s interests or if interests only can be subjective, that is, defined by female individuals themselves (see e.g. Jónasdóttir 1991). Some scholars have tried to tie certain objective interests to the historical disadvantage women have faced

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9 Another difference between the justice argument and this and the other two consequentialist arguments is that only the former has an argumentation for quotas that is explicit about why the specific tool is needed. The argumentation of the outcome-related arguments very much resembles the general arguments for increased female presence in elected bodies.

10 Critics of the argument, such as deliberative democrats, expect on the other hand quotas to spur factionalism and undermine dispassionate deliberation (Bacchi 2006).

11 One reason for being considered less complementary is the fact that the resource argument is sometimes associated with a biological view of gender differences: men and women have by nature different resources and skills. The interest argument, on the other hand, is usually based on an analysis which assumes that gender differences are socially constructed (see also Bergqvist et al. 2008).
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(see e.g. Goetz 2003b), or to the kinds of social roles that women tend to fill, such as child-rearing responsibilities, domestic work, etc (Htun and Jones 2002). Others have a more pluralist view, and look at women’s interests as a battle between different representative claims, all of which attempt to speak for women as a group (see e.g. Saward 2008).

The fourth and final argument, which I call “the role model argument”, focuses on the positive consequences that quotas could have not only at the elite level, but also within lower levels of society. More specifically, the argument suggests that quota adoption might provide women with more female political role models (Bacchi 2006). An increased number of female legislators might show women citizens that not only men, but also women themselves, might play an active role in political life. Quotas could therefore indirectly spur women’s political involvement within different levels of society. Again, however, there is a certain controversy surrounding quotas that run not only across, but also within, philosophical disciplines. Within feminism, the essentialist assumptions that appear to underpin this understanding of “woman” have been questioned (see e.g. Mansbridge 1999; Squires 1996). Because identities are multiple and fluid, there might be no common denominators that tie women together. As a consequence, female constituents might not identify themselves with women legislators.

The normative arguments as well as the many concerns raised in the debate should not only be a matter for philosophical discussion. The normative debate should also have repercussions on the way we empirically examine the impacts of quota reforms. There are specific aims and certain expected effects accompanying each justification of quotas. More specifically, the justice argument – having a procedural justification – considers quotas to be a “jump-start mechanism” (Baldez 2007) that is used to break with discriminatory practices within political parties. Building on this justification, the main goal (at least in the short- and mid-term range) is to increase the numerical representation of women. However, if we move to an outcome-oriented justification, and to the resource as well as the interest argument, quotas should be adopted not only to impact the share or number of women within the legislative arena; they are also likely to have more far-reaching consequences on legislative politics. From this perspective, scholarly focus should be on the activities that women perform once they take office. Moreover, if we employ a role-model perspective, quotas are likely not only to impact elite-level politics, but also citizen level politics. In this case, the ways in which quotas impact women citizens’ perceptions of politics and politicians should be emphasized.

I suggest empirically driven research to build on the normative debate, and to examine the extent to which normative researchers (and activists) are correct in their projections about (multiple) quota impacts. Importantly, an extensive analysis of the impacts of quotas should also take possible side-effects into consideration. For instance, opponents to quotas have claimed
that quotas, rather than empowering female legislators, stigmatize those elected through such measures, and marginalize women in legislative work (cf. Bacchi 2006; Dahlerup 2006b). By bringing such possible side-effects into the analysis, it is possible to cover the full range of arguments of the normative debate, and to come up with a nuanced answer to the question as to whether quota reforms have been successful or not.

I explore some, but not the entire range, of these quite conflicting claims. The research questions and the focus of the studies that make up this compilation thesis are, however, not selected at random. I make the argument that empirical research on the impacts of gender quotas has to a great extent examined the numerical effects of quotas. In other words, research has been performed as if quotas were solely justified for procedural reasons. However, as we know from this review of the normative debate, quotas have also been justified from an outcome – or consequentialist – perspective. For this reason, I concentrate my efforts to those issues that relate to such a justification: the analysis of how quotas impact women’s legislative work (at the elite level) as well as women citizens’ perceptions about politics (at the mass level).

The relationship between normative arguments for quotas and forms of representation

An emerging body of literature on the broader impacts of quota policies has emphasized their effects on three forms of representation: descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation (Krook et al. 2009). The conceptual development of these representative modes dates back to Pitkin’s seminal work on the concept of representation (Pitkin 1967). Descriptive representation emphasizes the composition of the legislature. A representative legislature should, according to this aspect, be a portrait of the people at large. The representative’s characteristics are what mainly matters for true representation (how he or she is like), not the actions that the representative performs. Substantive representation, in contrast, focuses on the actions that the representative carries through, and is defined as “acting in the interests of the represented in a manner responsive to them” (Pitkin 1967, 209). Focus has been mostly placed on policy responsiveness; that is, the extent to which legislators have enacted laws that are in line with the needs or interests of the people (see e.g. Eulau and Karps 1977). More recent analyses have highlighted that a distinction should be made between two aspects of policy responsiveness, namely the process of acting in the interests of others and the fact of changing policy outcomes (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). The former aspect focuses exclusively on the individual representative’s responsiveness (by focusing on his/her bill proposals, etc.), whereas the latter takes the legislative environment into consideration (governing party, coalitions, etc.) by emphasizing the outcome of such actions (enactment of laws, etc.).
Finally, symbolic representation pays attention to how representatives are regarded or perceived by those they represent. Emphasis is on a representative’s possibility of being a symbol, and more specifically, on that symbol’s power to “evoke feelings or attitudes” among the represented (Pitkin 1967, 97). A representative’s appearance might affect the self-image of constituents, or their perceived status in society (Goodin 1977).

Interestingly, however, those who argue for a research agenda that takes the three modes of representation into account have rarely made explicit why these particular aspects should be analyzed, rather than others. I suggest that the normative exposé above provides an answer. It points explicitly to the use of, and provides a good argument for, focusing on the three modes of representation. There are indeed overlaps (although not always perfect) between the expected effects associated with each of the normative arguments, and the distinct forms of representation. In other words, the three modes of representation capture to a fairly large extent the specific goals of quotas that are embedded in each normative argument.

Starting with the justice argument, this argument pays attention to the recruitment structures that fail to provide women with equal opportunities to be elected to public office. The basic idea is that quotas will provide women with a “jump-start” and that a rapid increase of women in politics will eventually make political parties more prone to using fair procedures that do not discriminate against women. This argument for supporting quotas is analytically different from the (descriptive) argument that legislatures should “mirror” the socio-demographic characteristics of the people; however, the arguments are similar in the sense that none of them focuses on the actions of legislators or on the decisions they make, but instead on the value of gender-balanced elected bodies as such. In other words, from a justice argument perspective, quotas should in the first place be introduced in order to increase women’s descriptive (or numerical) representation.

The actions of representatives, however, are emphasized by those who argue for quotas in order to better make use of women’s resources (by supplementing male experiences with female ones), or to push women’s interests forward. Although the resource argument and the interest argument should be analytically separated from each other, they are similar when it comes to the empirical investigations that they call attention to. Focus should be on women’s legislative work and the ways through which women bring – or do not bring – new issues onto the political agenda and carry through changes in policy output. This is closely related to the issue of women’s substantive

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12 The existence of such overlaps is confirmed by the fact that normative arguments – as highlighted above – are intertwined with arguments for women’s increased representation more generally; research on women’s political representation has emphasized that an increased number of female legislators is positive for women’s descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation (see e.g. Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005).
representation, and the process of acting on behalf of women constituents (see also Franceschet and Piscopo 2008).

As for the role model argument, finally, I suggest that it is related to symbolic representation. This, however, could be disputed. From a strict sense, being a symbol (Pitkin 1967) is analytically separate from being a role model (Bacchi 2006). It is by no means obvious that the former sends specific cues to women citizens which alter their perceptions about their role in society, and hence spurs their political engagement. However, both concepts emphasize how women representatives are perceived by the represented, and the feelings that women in legislative bodies might evoke among female constituents. More recent interpretations of symbolic representation have, moreover, inserted a slightly new meaning into the concept, perhaps to make it more usable within empirical analysis. For instance, Sawer characterizes women’s symbolic representation in two ways that imply evident overlaps with the role model argument: the mere presence of female legislators impacts, first, women citizens’ political beliefs and actions, and second, the legitimacy of political institutions (Sawer 2000). Thus, by having a less orthodox definition of symbolic representation it is possible – although in an imperfect manner – to link the role model argument to this concept.

In order to be able to speak to an emerging body of literature on quota impact, I will in the remaining part of this introduction use the concepts introduced by Pitkin, for instance, when reviewing empirical literature. In the studies that follow, on the other hand, distinct modes of representation are embedded, although not always as key concepts, in the analyses. ¹³ The advantage of using the concepts of descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation is that I may use an established language usage to sort out the different expected effects at the elite level and at the mass level. By doing so, the theoretical argument about the multiple impacts of quotas could thus be summarized: It establishes that in depending on the normative argument for supporting quotas, a successful implementation of the reform rests – roughly speaking – on the impacts that quotas have on distinct forms of women’s political representation. Table 2 illustrates this argument. It shows that whenever quotas are motivated for reasons of justice, emphasis should mainly be on their impact on women’s descriptive – or numerical – representation. However, we should pay attention to their effects on women’s substantive representation whenever quotas are defended for the distinct resources and/or interests that women are claimed to bring into the legislative process. Finally, quotas motivated by their suggested role model effects on female constituents call for an analysis of their impact on women’s symbolic representation.

¹³ Again, remember that the framework presented here must not be seen as a strict analytical framework for the studies that follow this introduction. It is an independent contribution – a possible guide for future work on quota impacts – that emanates from this research project.
In conclusion, if the ambition is to assess quota policies comprehensively, by starting from the very ideas behind the reform, it is an incomplete ambition, and provides only a partial picture by limiting the study to one of the three forms of representation. An all-encompassing research strategy should include the examination of various expected short-term and long-term consequences. Such a strategy also includes placing distinct effects in relation to one another and possibly detecting similarities or differences across different forms of representation. Empirical analyses in the field of women’s political representation have suggested that distinct forms of representation are positively related to each other (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005; see also Bratton 2005; Thomas 1991). However, it is an empirical question as to whether these findings could be transferred to research on quota impacts. It is theoretically possible that there are competing – not only complementary – impacts of quotas on different representative forms. By examining the impacts of quotas on issues that roughly cover different forms of representation, I am able to deal with the question of similar or different effects. In other words, I contribute to the fulfilling of a cohesive research agenda by moving beyond the analysis of one possible effect at a time, instead integrating them into a research design.

Empirical research on the impacts of gender quotas

What possibilities do different quota types have to generate multiple impacts? The question pays attention to the possibility that different quota types could impact distinctly, but also that the effect of quotas might be different across representative modes. I address the question by reviewing the empirical literature on the impacts of quota reforms. I make the argument that scholars have paid by far the most attention to the impacts on women’s descriptive representation, and significantly less attention to impacts on women’s symbolic and substantive representation. Focusing specifically on the latter two, I conclude by identifying certain gaps in the empirical literature.
The impact of quotas: women’s descriptive representation

The driving question of most empirical analyses on the impact of quotas has been whether quotas have been effective or not in generating an increase in the number of women elected; in other words, the main attention has been on their effects on women’s descriptive representation. Initial analyses focused mainly on single countries (see e.g. Jones 1998; Jones 2004; Schmidt and Saunders 2004); more recent studies have had a regional focus (see e.g. Araújo & García 2006) or global (Tripp & Kang 2008). A general conclusion from these analyses is that quotas might, but do not necessarily, have a positive impact on women’s descriptive representation. In other words, quota reforms have not resulted in a uniform rise in the number of women elected to legislative bodies (Krook 2009).

In order to qualify the picture, and to obtain more knowledge about the conditions necessary for quotas to be effective, some scholars have explored the distinct effects of different quota types. Statistical analyses on a global scale have shown that the effects of different quota types vary substantially; reserved seat quotas have had the most beneficial impact on women’s numerical representation (Tripp and Kang 2008). This might come as no surprise, given that reserved seat quotas are the only quota type that actually guarantees a certain number or percentage of women in the legislature; it is the only quota type that has a specification for the elected, and not only for candidates (see above, on different quota types).

As for quotas for candidates, the extent to which these quota types are effective stems to a large extent from their wording (Krook 2009). At least two aspects have been emphasized: rank order requirements (or placement mandates) and effective sanctions for non-compliance. As for the former, female candidates have commonly been placed at the end of the list, without any real chances of being elected, whenever there are no rank order specifications (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005). As for sanctions, quotas have commonly been rather ineffective if political parties are not put under pressure to meet the provisions (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005; Htun and Jones 2002). For instance, in a number of Latin American countries that use legislative quotas (e.g. Mexico), the ultimate sanction for failing to comply with the quota provision is the rejection of the candidate list. As regards party quotas, it is instead important that quotas are in fact adhered to and implemented by political parties (i.e. good-faith compliance is required) (Htun and Jones 2002).

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14 This does not necessarily imply that countries with reserved seats have the highest representation of women. It only suggests that reserved seats are more likely than any other quota type to produce major increases in women’s representation.

15 In other countries, there are sanctions that have proven to be ineffective. For instance, in France there is a fine for those parties that do not comply with the parity law. Some parties have preferred to pay the fine rather than to comply with the law.
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The lack of a generally effective implementation draws attention to at least two additional features of the reform: First, quotas are – to repeat – not only normatively motivated by political actors, but also adopted for pragmatic reasons. Party leaderships might try to make quotas ineffective by either not implementing them in the first place, or by placing women in non-electable slots (see e.g. Krook 2007). Alternatively, quotas are to be implemented in local selection processes, by party leaderships that disagree with the national party leadership about the use of quotas (Guldvik 2008). Thus, quotas are sometimes associated with a certain amount of resistance within political parties (among party elites at distinct levels and/or among grassroot activists), including those parties which have adopted them voluntarily. Second, whenever party leaderships actually intend to implement the reform, institutional structures are likely to impact their effectiveness. What is most evident is that the electoral system is likely to play a key role in the implementation of party or legislative quotas. First, quotas for candidates are more difficult to implement – and less common – in single member districts (in which candidates compete for one single mandate) than in PR systems (in which more than one candidate from the party list might enter the legislature) (Matland 2006). Second, and following a similar logic, high district magnitude is positive for quota impact; a PR system with a large number of seats elected per district is likely to be beneficial for an effective implementation of quotas (Htun and Jones 2002). Third, a closed-list PR system (in which the order of the list is fixed and does not allow for preferential voting among party candidates) appears to generate a greater numerical impact than PR systems with open lists (Htun and Jones 2002).

The impact of quotas: women’s substantive and symbolic representation

In stark contrast to the close attention paid to descriptive representation, empirical analyses are scarce on the impact of quotas on women’s substantive and symbolic representation. The most important reason for the lack of analyses on these aspects of political representation is the newness of gender quotas (see also Dahlerup 2008); as mentioned, most quota reforms have taken place in the last ten to fifteen years. It is therefore not surprising that scholars have first chosen to examine the numerical effects of quota policies. However, another reason for the emphasis on the numerical impacts of quotas is, in my opinion, the lack of a theoretical approach that takes the possible broader impacts of quotas into account. Indeed, recent work on gender quotas has come up with suggestions on how quotas might have far-reaching consequences that go beyond numbers; focus has mainly been on how quotas

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16 See however Matland (2006) who argues that high party magnitude – a large number of seats in the party’s district delegation – is required for a large numerical effect.
affect the legislative work of women elected through such measures (see e.g. Dahlerup 2006d), and calls have been made for paying closer attention to these aspects (see e.g. Krook 2007). Nevertheless, an ambition with this introduction is to fill a theoretical gap by having a more cohesive theoretical approach to the issue of the possible impacts of quota policies.  

Among those empirical analyses that actually have been performed on symbolic and substantive representation, a majority focus on the latter. By reviewing the literature, I split analyses of women’s substantive representation into three different groups: The first group examines the prerequisites necessary for women’s substantive representation to occur, the second group emphasizes the propensity among women elected through quotas to actually work for the benefit of women as a group, and the third group explores the extent to which quotas have had an impact on policy output.

By far the most attention has been paid to the first of these three groups, more specifically, to the institutional conditions under which women elected through quotas pursue their job. One set of analysis concerns the question as to who the women are that gain access to the legislature through quotas (political background/experience, qualifications, etc.). These analyses attempt to address the underlying question of what kind of power base – or political platform – women elected through quotas have by the time they take office. Case studies have shown that male party elites tend to select women that they can control, such as relatives or women with a limited political record (Chathukulam and John 2000; Ghosh 2003; Kudva 2003; Waylen 2000).

Once candidates have assumed office, a second set of analyses focuses on a possible negative side-effect of quotas: the possible constraints that women elected through quotas might face, and that might inhibit these women from performing their tasks the way they prefer. Such constraints include what Franceschet and Piscopo (2008) call “label effects”; regardless of the actual qualifications of women elected through quotas, there might be stereotypes and beliefs among male parliamentarians that women elected through quotas are less skilled and less experienced than other representatives. This might negatively affect how female legislators are received and regarded by their colleagues: stigmatization might occur. Analyses from various parts of the

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17 An additional possible reason as to why focus has mainly been on the numerical impacts of quotas is because of the relative ease with which such possible effects are examined. For instance, data is fairly accessible, and it is relatively easy to single out the effect of quotas in relation to other factors that impact women’s presence in legislative bodies.

18 It might be argued that the “who-question” is related to descriptive representation (Krook et al. 2009). However, the underlying aim of these studies has not mainly been to examine the socio-demographic characteristics (class, caste, race, ethnicity, age, etc.) of women elected through quotas, but instead the possibilities for these women to be effective legislators. For this reason, I suggest that these kinds of analyses mainly refer to substantive representation. This does not rule out the possibility that future studies may come to focus on the descriptive characteristics of women elected through quotas (for instance, if quotas tend to promote the involvement of a uniform group of elite women, or if their backgrounds mirror the features of a wide range of women).
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world provide support for such a claim (Abou-Zeid 2006; Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Nanivadekar 2006). Other constraints are related to actions of harrassment that might be a consequence of men being increasingly challenged by women in the legislature. Among other things, such actions impede women from being taken seriously in their legislative work. Analyses from India and Uganda have shown that harrassment has been fairly common among women elected through reserved seats (Chathukulam and John 2000; Kudva 2003; Tamale 2000); research on party quotas of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, on the other hand, has identified few problems with harrassment (Geisler 2000).

A third and final set of analyses assesses the possibility of women elected through quotas to act autonomously in the legislature. In contrast to research on legislative behavior, which commonly emphasizes the positive value of disciplined legislators (see e.g. Mainwaring 1991), there is an implicit assumption in research on women’s substantive representation that legislators have – and should have – a certain amount of autonomy (Phillips 1995). Thereby, female legislators are believed to have the possibility of pursuing an agenda that not only is in line with the party program but that also benefits women. Claims have been made, however, that women elected through quotas are less likely to act independently than other legislators, male as well as female (see e.g. Baldez 2006; Dahlerup 2006b). For instance, women elected to reserved seats in some Asian and African countries have been held to be bound by, or a vote bank to, political masters, as a consequence of the specific arrangements through which these women are elected in different quota systems (Bauer 2008; Chathukulam and John 2000; Ghosh 2003; Goetz 2003a; Meena 2003). There is empirical support also from the United Kingdom, where those women elected through quotas have been shown to be more loyal to party leaders than other elected representatives (Cowley and Childs 2003).

Less attention has been paid to the direct impact of quotas on women’s substantive representation, regardless of whether focus is on the process (the extent to which women elected through quotas pursue an agenda that emphasizes the demands and needs of women) or on policy output (the legislature’s policy responsiveness to women’s interests and needs). Quotas have, however, been suggested to generate so-called mandate effects (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008), whereby female legislators elected through quotas perceive an obligation to act on the behalf of women. Others have rejected such propositions by arguing that female representatives elected through quotas both tend to lack gender awareness and attempt to not be labelled champions of women’s interests only (Ghosh 2003). In other words, suggestions have been made that quotas could both increase and decrease the actions female representatives perform in order to work for the benefit of women. As to changes in policy output, hardly any empirical analyses have, to my knowledge, been executed. Among those few analyses that have systematically addressed the
issue, there is evidence that quotas have a positive effect on gender-sensitive policy output (Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004).19

As regards symbolic representation, empirical analyses are rare, and none are framed in such theoretical terms. Most of the limited literature on quotas and their possible effects on women citizens’ political attitudes and actions are theoretical expectations. Quotas have been claimed to create an awareness of gender norms, through the politicization of gender relations that they are likely to generate (Htun and Jones 2002). Moreover, their impact on women’s numerical representation is suggested to make women citizens more positive towards politics (Nanivadekar 2006). Case study analyses have given some support to such claims. Quota reforms in India have been held to increase the self-esteem, confidence, and motivation among women (Nanivadekar 2006). Other analyses have indicated that quotas favor women citizens’ contacts with their political representatives (Childs 2004; Kudva 2003). And in Brazil, the adoption of quotas is suggested to have encouraged women to act collectively (Sacchet 2008).

Drawbacks of empirical literature on quota impacts

Although empirical work that moves beyond pure numerical effects have grown rapidly in the last few years, it is evident that literature on the descriptive representation has developed faster than work that touches on issues of symbolic and substantive representation. I identify four drawbacks in the literature that impede research on the broader impacts of quotas from progressing quickly. First, the relationship between quotas and women’s substantive as well as symbolic representation is under-theorized. The main problem is that there are few attempts to separate the specific effects of quotas from those of women’s political presence (see however Franceschet & Piscopo 2008). Therefore, it is difficult to identify the effects of a certain policy (mandatory or voluntarily adopted) from the effects of a general increase in the number of female legislators. Part of the reason lies in the fact that the normative arguments for quotas as well as arguments for an increased presence of women in legislatures are similar. Moreover, the subjects of analysis are commonly similar (female legislators, however differently selected). However, in order to accurately assess the broader impacts of quotas, it is crucial to theorize the effects of this specific policy as well as to be explicit about the possible indirect effects (through an increased number of women in legislatures). As a consequence of the lack of theoretical research, measures for analyzing the more long-term effects of quotas are imprecisely specified. Analyses on the prerequisites for women’s substantive

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19 Some analyses using less systematic data also point in this direction (see e.g. Bauer 2008). Others suggest that quotas have generated an increase in women-friendly policy proposals, but reject propositions of a change in policy outcomes (Devlin and Elgie 2008).
representation illustrate the problem. A number of claims have been made related to this issue (e.g. that women elected through quotas are less experienced than other legislators, that they are more likely to be controlled by party elites than other legislators, and that they are likely to be considered second-class legislators, and so forth); however, empirical analyses have hitherto rarely placed these interrelated claims into a common analytical framework.

Second, and closely related to the first drawback, numerous conclusions from empirical research are drawn based on mere anecdotal evidence of non-systematic analyses. For instance, in analyses on the impact of quotas on women’s legislative performance, there are - with few exceptions – no comparisons between women elected through quotas and other female representatives (for an exception, see Tamale 2000). Part of the reason is related to the framing of the analyses; scholars have frequently analyzed women’s legislative work in parliaments more broadly, without specifically focusing on those elected through quotas (see e.g. Childs 2004). As a consequence, it is rarely possible to single out the effects of quota implementation.

Third, because of the lack of systematic analyses, there are few attempts to control for other factors that might affect the relationship between quotas and women’s substantive and symbolic representation. Again, this makes it difficult to distinguish the effects of quotas from those of other factors. For instance, scholars have made claims about the positive impacts of quotas on the representation of women’s interests by referring to a case study on female legislators in Rwanda (see e.g. Krook 2008). However, the study does not control for the possibility that there are certain factors – political party career, involvement in women’s organizations, profession, etc. – that might affect both the likelihood of being elected to a certain seat (reserved seat or party list) and the propensity to prioritize issues of particular interest to women (Schwartz 2004).

Fourth and finally, because of the emphasis on case studies, there are difficulties in generalizing the findings beyond the specific case. It is therefore difficult to draw any general conclusions about the relationship between quota adoption and various forms of representation.

Summary of the studies

In this dissertation, I address some of the drawbacks of the emerging literature on the long-term consequences of quotas. I do so by theorizing, operationalizing, and empirically testing hypotheses about the multiple impacts of quotas. The theoretical and empirical examinations concern in one way or another how quotas might impact women’s legislative work as well as women citizens’ perceptions about politicians or politics. Therefore, they deal, directly or indirectly, with what the literature has referred to as women’s
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substantive and symbolic representation (although the respective studies, to repeat, are not necessarily framed in such words). This section briefly summarizes each of the three studies that I have performed. The main focus is on the findings and the lessons learned from the analyses. However, I also discuss theoretical perspectives and the methods used, as well as the limitations of the studies.

Before summarizing the studies, a few words should be said about case selection and the delimiting of the empirical analyses (Study II and Study III). As for case selection, I concentrate on the Latin American countries. Argentina was a pioneer country for quota legislation, and the policy quickly spread to other countries. Thus, the continent is at the core of the quota debate. Because of the newness of gender quotas, and given that any effect of quotas might take a certain amount of time, we are most likely to see an effect in this part of the world. On the other hand, Latin American societies are generally characterized by persistent gender inequalities – in politics as well as in society at large. A machismo and marianismo culture reinforces a gender division; privileges are given to women’s identities as mothers (Craske 1999), and consequently, to women’s role in the domestic sphere. It is therefore surprising, and perhaps paradoxical, that quota policies emanate from such political cultures. For the same reason, it is possible that the adoption of quotas in these contexts might provoke certain resistance from male political players. Taken together, Latin America does not necessarily represent a critical (or, for that matter, representative) case for testing theories on quota impact. Rather, a Latin American focus is also justified for empirical reasons.

Importantly, as the Latin American countries have no reserved seat quotas, empirical focus will be limited to quotas for candidate lists. This makes it difficult to address the problem of generalizability; different quota types might have distinct effects. However, by placing the insights of the empirical studies in relation to previous research, I present in the final section of the introduction some suggestions about specific quota dynamics that could be empirically tested within different quota systems. Moreover, I examine – at least partially (in Study III) – whether different legislative quota specifications have distinct effects.

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20 In Study III focus is restricted to legislative quotas, and on different kinds of such provisions. Party quotas are relatively difficult to deal with in a statistical model, for instance, in cases in which only a few minor parties in a country have adopted such measures. In Study II, on the other hand, I attempt to take party quotas into consideration, in the state where there are no legislative quotas.
Study I: Gender Quotas and Women’s Legislative Autonomy: Theorizing the Role of Candidate Selection Procedures

The starting point of Study I is the normative argument that quotas should be adopted in order for female legislators to represent the interests of women, however such are defined. Justifying quotas with such an argument represents a recognition that women elected through quotas should exercise a diversity of mandates; they should not only represent the party that selected them but also women as a group. To put it differently, they should substantively represent women. Study I theoretically examines the prerequisites for women elected through quotas to exercise the latter mandate. Scholars on women’s political representation have argued that considerable autonomy in the legislature is a precondition for women to perform such tasks (see e.g. Phillips 1995). I suggest that the extent to which women elected through quotas are likely to be able to act independently differs across contexts. More precisely, I assert that attention should be paid to the characteristics of political parties, and how these open up as well as restrict the possibilities for women to be independent legislators. I make the argument that the extent to which women elected through quotas are likely to be able to act autonomously depends – ceteris paribus – on the way these women are selected to candidacy or to a special seat. In other words, I suggest that specific candidate selection arrangements shape the autonomy of women elected through quotas, and thereby their possibilities to substantively represent women.21

I construct a theoretical framework by drawing on a rich body of literature on political parties, and more precisely on the interplay between candidate selection and legislative behavior (see e.g. Rahat and Hazan 2001; Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008a). I also review the empirical literature on quotas and female representatives’ legislative work. By building on these bodies of literature, and having those selection procedures that tend to favor women’s opportunities to enter representative bodies as reference points, I suggest that mainly two aspects of the candidate selection process shape the autonomy: First, I suggest that having a relatively large body select the candidates is beneficial to women’s independent behavior in the legislature. Second, I propose an indirect impact of the bureaucratization of the recruitment process: the more rule-bound and transparent the process, the harder it is for party leaders to reduce the size of the selectorate, and the less circumscribed the autonomy of women elected through quotas. Specifically for reserved seat quotas, there is a third aspect that is suggested to impact not necessarily on women’s legislative autonomy, but on the propensity to represent wom-

21In the study, I discuss the relationship between “women’s autonomy in the legislature” on the one hand, and “women’s substantive representation” on the other. I state that it is utterly an empirical question as to what extent women use their autonomy in the legislature to represent women. However, I argue that certain autonomy is a precondition for those women who want to work for the benefit of women.
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en’s needs and interests: functionally decentralized selection procedures, that is, when the power to select women is put in the hands of female constituents. In these cases, women elected through quotas are assumed to be loyal to women as a group.

There are mainly two theoretically important – and provocative – lessons of the analysis: First, positive opportunities to increase women’s descriptive representation (a small selectorate) may be paired with increased restrictions for women elected through quotas to work autonomously in the legislature, and therefore, to represent women (cf. Beck 2003; Beckwith 2007). Such possible competing effects of quotas go against much of the established findings in the literature on women’s political representation (see however Beckwith 2007). Second, if a large body selecting candidates is beneficial for women’s autonomy, then what is beneficial for these individuals might in the long run be harmful for the ability of the group of women in the party to impact party politics. This argument is based on the idea that when party elites control decision-making, party cohesion appears to be stronger. Thus, women who seek to influence politics have a central target for their demands (Matland and Strudlar 1996). If they are able to convince these leaders, they are likely to affect the party’s politics. Thus, party women might end up in a collective action problem; a single woman’s benefits might be harmful to the collective group of party women.

The main contribution of the study is to highlight and theorize about the possible far-reaching consequences that party recruitment practices have on the relationship between quotas and women’s legislative autonomy, and perhaps indirectly on women’s substantive representation. Despite political parties being the main actors in quota implementation, the literature on gender quotas has not paid sufficient theoretical attention to how different party organizations and selection procedures shape the effectiveness of quotas. Emphasis has mainly been on the specifications of quotas themselves or on the electoral system (see e.g. Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005; Htun and Jones 2002; Matland 2006). These factors are indeed important; however, when we move beyond the analysis of numerical effects, other factors also appear to be crucial. Additionally, I indicate the relevance for those researching political recruitment to examine the ways in which quotas alter – or do not alter – the procedures for candidate selection. In other words, not only should scholars on quotas take into account the role of candidate selection; scholars on political parties should also take the role of quotas into account in their work on candidate selection procedures.

However, a possible limitation with the analysis is that I do not look more closely at possible interactions. For instance, a small size of the selectorate might mainly matter negatively in patronage parties. This calls attention to the role played by political regimes (see also Hassim Forthcoming); dominant leaders in less democratized countries might use lax rules for candidate selection to control legislators. To sum up, there is a necessity not only to
test the theoretical model empirically, but also to build on this study and further elaborate its theoretical argument.

Study II: The Downside of Gender Quotas? Institutional Constraints on Women in Mexican State Legislatures

In contrast to Study I, Study II analyzes a suggested negative side-effect of quotas on women’s legislative work. In the normative debate on quotas, it is a common thought among opponents that women elected through quotas are likely to face particular constraints in the legislature. Again, by considering legislative autonomy as a prerequisite for women’s substantive representation, such a thought suggests that women elected through quotas will have a harder time working for the benefit of women. Study II empirically tests the claim that women elected through quotas are more likely to suffer from institutional constraints in the legislature than other female legislators. Thereby, I explicitly attempt to identify the specific role of quotas (in contrast to a general presence of women) and address a drawback in previous research. By paying attention to the possibility of particular constraints on women elected through quotas, the study highlights the social structures and (male) practices that have been claimed to inhibit women legislators from performing their tasks in the way they prefer. After explaining the hypothesis, I present three constraints – or obstacles – that women have been held to face in legislative politics: tokenism (“externally controlled legislator”; the party leadership selects candidates that they can control), marginalization (the legislator is kept outside leadership positions in the legislature), and invisibilization (the legislator is ignored in decision-making) (cf. Goetz 2003b).

In order to empirically address the issue, I perform a comparative case study on two state legislatures in Mexico. I use written material as well as semi-structured interviews (conducted in Spanish with no translator needed) with both male and female legislators (for more information on the interviews, see Appendix 1). More specifically, by conducting field research in Mexico (September – December 2006) I compare the constraints that women operating in a state that has adopted mandatory quotas (Zacatecas) are facing with the constraints of women who are working in a similar state legislature (in terms of ruling party, socio-demographic structures, etc.) in which there are no legislative quotas (Michoacán). By selecting state legislatures in one single country, I am able to compare the experiences of women who are working in one single political and party system. Hence, it is possible to roughly control for certain country-specific factors. On the other hand, there are also differences within countries and across states. Therefore, an ideal situation would have been to compare the constraints of women in one single legislature, of which some are elected through quotas and others are not. This would have been possible in a reserved seat system, in which some
female legislators enter via party lists whereas others gain access through reserved seats (see e.g. Schwartz 2004). In a legislative quota system, there are no such formal distinctions of legislators. Nevertheless, there might be de facto differences across female legislators in terms of whether or not they have entered the legislature in competition with men. Some parties comply with the quota ex ante, having women on a separate list already at the outset. Others comply with the quota ex post, revising the list after the regular internal selection procedures have taken place (Dahlerup 2007). In the latter case, women compete with men, and might not actually need the quota provision in order to enter the legislature. By examining Mexican legislatures, I open up for the possibility of the latter, not least since Mexico has a mixed electoral system. From party research, we know that political parties are more likely to use open competition for majority seats than for proportional seats. As a consequence, there might not only be differences across state legislatures, but also within them. For this reason, Mexican state legislatures provide a suitable case for testing the hypothesis about institutional constraints.

The empirical analysis shows that women elected through quotas are not more likely to suffer from institutional constraints than other female legislators. Two reasons are identified: First, because of Mexican parties’ lax rules for candidate selection, personal ties and loyalty to dominant groups and leaders appear to be key features in both quota and non-quota systems. Therefore, any political player has to struggle to avoid becoming a token, not only those elected through quotas. Second, as a future political career is mainly dependent on ties to certain leaders or groups of the party, and less on legislative performance, quotas are mainly a threat to male party colleagues. As a consequence, strategies of marginalization and invisibilization are likely to be more visible within political parties than in the legislature.

The study contributes to the literature on gender quotas in several ways: First, it converts rather loose claims in the literature into a testable hypothesis, by theorizing and operationalizing the relationship between gender quotas and institutional constraints on women legislators. By doing so, the analytical framework could also be useful to other scholars who have the ambition of empirically addressing these issues. Second, the study problematizes the relationship between quotas and obstacles to women’s legislative work.

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22 In carrying out the analysis, I was less familiar with the concept of ex post compliance. I therefore chose to categorize one of the female legislators in Zacatecas (Sonia de la Torre Barrientos; see Study II) as “non-quota” although she operated in a quota system. Moreover, male reactions and male behavior are crucial for the analysis. Men are, however, unlikely to be able to separate between women and the specific ways through which women are selected. Therefore, it might have been a better idea to categorize all women in Zacatecas as having entered through quotas, yet still distinguishing between ex ante and ex post compliance.

23 This finding speaks against the idea of “social desirability bias” (Brady 1999) especially among men. Male legislators also expressed critical comments about the ways in which women are treated in especially certain spheres of politics. In this respect, male and female stories were strikingly similar.
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by comparing the experiences of women elected through quotas with those of other women legislators. By addressing a drawback of the empirical literature (in other words, by contrasting these two groups, thereby having a “control group”), I come to a different conclusion than previous research (see also Tripp et al. 2006). It is therefore possible that the overall implications of the study – that women elected through quotas are not more likely to suffer from institutional constraints than other women legislators – should be attributed to the methodological choice to not focus exclusively on the former group.

A limitation with the analysis, however, is its limited potential to generalize the findings within other contexts. Most obviously, the comparative case study is very small. Therefore, by providing an analytical framework, it should more be seen as a pilot case that could provide a baseline for further research. Another reason for being cautious when attempting to generalize the findings is the fact that the women in the study did not challenge the rather strict labor division between men and women. They were mainly placed on committees working on social issues and so forth, whereas there was male dominance in typically male domains such as within financial and economic committees. It is possible that women elected through quotas would face more constraints if they chose to challenge these distinct roles. Finally, it is possible that the obstacles for women legislators indeed might be greater in other contexts, not least in less democratized countries and/or less institutionalized parties, if a consequence of quota adoption in these contexts is an increased control of party leaderships over candidate selection (see e.g. Baldez 2006).

Study III: Do Gender Quotas Foster Women’s Political Engagement? Lessons from Latin America

Study III addresses the issue that quotas might impact not only elite-level politics, but also how female constituents perceive politicians and politics. More specifically, the study empirically tests the hypothesis that the adoption of quotas has empowering effects on women citizens’ political attitudes and activities. Thereby, I perform an analysis that could be suggested to cover, although not perfectly, the issue of women’s symbolic representation. Due to the lack of theorizing of how quotas might impact women’s political attitudes and actions, I elaborate a theoretical framework by linking policy feedback literature (see e.g. Mettler and Soss 2004; Pierson 1993) to analyses of how an increased presence of female legislators shapes women’s political engagement (see e.g. Lawless 2004; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007). I

24 This is perhaps mostly true if we move beyond Pitkin’s original interpretation of the concept, and place the analysis in relation to how scholars more recently have chosen to interpret the concept (Sawer 2000).
propose two possible empowering effects of quotas on female constituents: a signal effect and a role model effect. The former is suggested to impact quotas directly, whereas the latter suggests an indirect relationship between quotas and women’s political attitudes and behavior (through an increased female presence in legislative bodies).

In contrast to previous case study analyses on the topic, I test the hypothesis by using a large data set (Latinobarómetro 2005) covering approximately 10,000 women in 17 Latin American countries (for more information about the data, see Appendix 2). Focus is on how quotas might alter women’s perceptions about the legitimacy of politicians and political institutions (political trust) and the possible effects of quotas on women’s interests for – and involvement in – political issues (political interest, perceived political knowledge, party or campaign activities, political contacts, and protest activities). I examine whether quotas as such have had attitudinal or behavioral effects, but also whether the effects differ between quotas that have sanctions for non-compliance and rank order specifications (i.e. those that have been successfully implemented and generated an increase in the number of women MPs) and those that have no such specifications.

The main analytical tool is a contextual model that examines the possible impact of an external factor (gender quota) on an individual’s political attitudes and behavior. There are some problems associated with a contextual analysis using Latinobarómetro data from 2005. To enhance readability, I briefly present two main problems (for a more comprehensive discussion about methodological problems, see Study III): First, there is a built-in problem of using cross-sectional data (i.e. data measured at one point in time) for analyzing changes over time. Therefore, longitudinal data is recommended for analyses on the impact of a particular policy on citizens’ political attitudes and behavior. Second, any relationship between quota policy and women’s political attitudes and behavior might be a reflection of a background factor (such as socio-economic development) that accounts for both the introduction of the quota policy and variation in women citizens’ political attitudes and behavior. The latter problem is exacerbated by the fact that the dataset does not focus specifically on issues of gender equality; there are no specific questions about quotas and people’s knowledge and/or perceptions about such policies in the Latinobarómetro questionnaire. Therefore, I

25 In other words, the theoretical suggestion of the study is that quotas have an impact solely on women’s political attitudes and behavior. However, in order to test for possible effects also on men, separate analyses were run also on this group. They showed no different results from those presented in the study.
26 Thus, it is the signal effect that distinguishes theories on quotas from those on women’s political representation more generally.
27 The main problem is that cross-sectional data does not tell us anything about an individual’s attitudes and behavior prior to the reform.
28 Another limitation with the Latinobarómetro data is of a methodological character, and concerns sampling strategies. In order to be able to generalize our findings to a population, we
simply distinguish between female respondents of those countries that have adopted quotas (or have certain quota specifications) and female respondents of other countries. To address the problems, I control for a number of contextual factors which I expect could explain not only differences in individuals’ political attitudes and behavior, but also why some countries have chosen to adopt quotas and others have not. All these factors are measured at a point in time prior to quota adoption (so-called lagged control variables).

The empirical analysis gives no general support for the hypothesis that quotas have empowering effects on women citizens. The only statistically significant positive relationship – between effectively implemented quotas and protest activities – proved to be substantially small. The study presents only direct relationships. However, additional analyses (which are not presented in the study) also focus on indirect effects (through an increased female presence in politics). These did not generate different results. Without ruling out the possibility that quotas have empowering effects in other empirical contexts, I discuss three propositions that might at least partly account for why Latin American women might not perceive quotas as empowering: First, given the importance of international organizations for the adoption of quotas, women might question their governments’ true commitment to gender equality. Second, as quotas do not necessarily interfere with candidate selection procedures, and women with close ties to powerful leaders might be more successful at being nominated than women with significant popular support (Baldez 2006), this process might send signals to women that there are few changes in the political system aside from the introduction of new players. Finally, in contrast to the first two propositions, a third account suggests that no signals have been sent to women; they simply lack information about the law.

would ideally need random samples in which each unit has an equal chance of being included in the sample. This chance – or probability – should be known (Knoke et al. 2002). However, these criteria are fully met in only two of the 17 countries. In the other 15 countries, these criteria are not met in the final stage of the sampling process (see Table A1 in Appendix 2). Unfortunately, sampling problems are common in cross-national datasets, especially those that move beyond a European or North American focus. In Latin America, Latinobarómetro has no counterpart; therefore, as long as data with more adequate sampling strategies is lacking, I believe that data bases such as Latinobarómetro are able to help us to gain an initial qualified picture.

The contextual model used here is one of various alternatives on how to run the statistic model. Thus, there is not one single way to carry out the statistical analysis. In an attempt to test for the robustness of the findings, I therefore ran an alternative model: a multi-level analysis using a so-called random intercept model. The findings were not substantially different from those presented in the study.

A fourth proposition is possible: a signal or role model effect might be more likely wherever women have almost no political representation at all prior to quota adoption. However, experiences from Latin America speak against such a proposition. On average, the number of women in parliaments was only seven percent in these countries, with barely any differences between those that chose to adopt quotas and others (Araújo and García 2006).
Several lessons could be learned from the analysis. The overall lesson is that there is hitherto little proof of any link between quota reforms and female constituents’ perceptions about politics – at least in a Latin American context. In other words, as far as this analysis can tell, quotas have had no effects on women’s symbolic representation. This goes against the few case studies that have been performed, which also include work on Latin American countries (see e.g. Sacchet 2008). A possible reason for the different findings might be related to a methodological implication of this study: the benefit of using large-scale data in these kinds of analyses. Although there are limitations with the *Latinobarómetro* data, the analysis is able to control for other factors that might account for both quota adoption and differences in political attitudes and behavior. In case study analyses, there is a risk that scholars draw the wrong conclusion; women who live in societies with quotas might be more politically engaged already prior to quota adoption, not as a result of the reform. However, it is also possible that quotas (or particular quota types) have a beneficial impact on women citizens’ political attitudes and behavior in specific contexts. For instance, positive experiences from India have come from local legislatures, with reserved seats for women. Future work should therefore pay close attention to the quota type and at what level quotas are implemented (close to, or far away from, women citizens’ daily lives). Finally, the theoretical contribution is twofold: for one thing, the analysis provides a theoretical baseline for further research by presenting two possible ways through which quotas might impact a mass public (adding a signal effect to the role model effect that has been brought up by scholars on women’s political presence). A second theoretical lesson concerns the use of policy feedback theories. These have mainly paid attention to the attitudinal and behavioral effects of welfare reforms and participation in social programs (Mettler 2002; Soss 1999). Although I found no support for a policy feedback – or signal – effect in this particular study, these theories could be interesting to use in theoretical models that focus not only on redistributive politics, but also on identity politics, for policies related to recognition (cf. Fraser 1998).

Do quotas work? Implications of the studies and guidelines for future research

Theoretical implications for research on quota impacts

My ambition in this dissertation project has been to theorize and empirically analyze several possible effects of quota adoption. Looking at the studies as a whole, the theoretical implications of this dissertation are not unequivocal. From research on women’s political representation, which emphasizes that different modes of representation are positively related to each other (see e.g.
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Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler (2005), we would expect quotas to have similar impacts across different representative modes. For example, those quota provisions that tend to have beneficial impacts on women’s numerical – or descriptive – representation should also have positive effects on women’s perceptions of politics and politicians (i.e. symbolic representation). However, I found no support for the hypothesis that legislative quotas with placement mandates and sanctions for non-compliance impact women’s political attitudes and behavior (Study III). Hence, it should not be taken for granted that a positive numerical impact at the elite level paves the way for beneficial effects for female constituents as well. In other words, quotas – or certain quota provisions – might be very well designed for bringing more women into legislative bodies, yet without necessarily empowering women citizens.

However, the results indicated no particular negative side-effects, either. More specifically, empirical analysis provided no support for the idea that effectively implemented quotas make it more difficult for women to be effective legislators. This was the expectation of the Mexican state-level analysis (Study II). However, women elected through quotas were shown not to face any particular obstacles in legislative work, relative to other women legislators. Therefore, there are reasons to believe that women elected through quotas might have the possibility of substantively representing women to the same extent that any other female legislator experiences. These mixed findings indicate the fruitfulness of my strategy to include within one single research design, and one common framework, the analysis of different possible impacts. Thereby, I point to the importance of nuances when examining quota impacts. At least in one geographical area of the world, the impacts on distinct modes of representation, operating within different levels of society, point in somewhat different directions.\(^{31}\)

Similarly, the findings highlight the importance of theoretically developing the field of quota impacts. There might be specific dynamics operating in (particular) quota systems that – at least to a certain extent – make previous theories on women’s political representation invalid. Looking at particular quota designs, for instance, each quota type has quite a distinct logic that might impact the possibilities of increasing the number of women in elected bodies on the one hand, and have more far-reaching consequences, on the other. To give an example, most previous elite-level studies that have moved

\(^{31}\) It is difficult to know, from my selection of cases, if these findings could also be generalized to other contexts. On the one hand, Latin American countries have had quotas for quite some time. If it takes a certain amount of time for effects to appear – as is suggested in Study III – then we might expect a similar lack of positive effects elsewhere as well. On the other hand, in reference to the same study, it is also possible to make the opposite argument: Because of a relatively gender unequal political culture within Latin American countries, possible effects on women citizens’ political engagement might be absent in this particular context. Rather than providing a clear-cut answer to the question of generalizations, I suggest that more empirical research should be carried out in order to gain a more comprehensive picture.
Assessing the Multiple Impacts of Gender Quotas

beyond a focus on numerical impacts have analyzed Asian and African societies that have adopted reserved seat quotas (see e.g. Chathukulam and John 2000; Chowdhury 2002; Meena 2003; Tripp 2001). This might explain why I find no support for the claim that women elected through quotas are more likely than other female legislators to suffer from institutional constraints; such obstacles might simply be more present in reserved seat systems. It may well be argued that reserved seats, while being most successful in increasing the number of elected women, are associated with certain obstacles to the effective representation of women’s interests. Reserved seats are “add-on” seats that run parallel to the regular nomination procedures of political parties, and they are often selected after the general election (such as in Tanzania, at national level in Bangladesh, etc.). As a consequence, the chances of these women to prove themselves and to integrate with pre-electoral networks and alliances are slim (see also Bjarnegård and Zetterberg 2008). This might spur negative stereotypes about women elected through quotas, as they are not seen by others as important political resources. Women in reserved seat systems could therefore be suggested to run a greater risk of becoming marginalized in parliament than those who are nominated by political parties to candidate lists (either through party quotas or legislative quotas).

However, an important contribution of this dissertation has been to highlight the possibility that there are differences also within quota systems, by paying attention to the impact of selection procedures on the long-term consequences of quotas (Study I). For instance, I shed light on the dynamics of selectorate size. By placing power over candidate selection in the hands of a relatively large amount of people (for instance through primary elections, etc.), the possibilities of autonomous action is likely to increase. Thus, not only quota design itself might generate different consequences; also meso-level factors such as party organizations might account for asymmetries in quota impacts. Such propositions are also supported by studies focusing on macro-characteristics of the political system. Analyses of reserved seat systems in Africa have pointed to the importance of a society’s democratic quality as well as the party system, in order for quotas to have beneficial effects on women’s substantive representation (see e.g. Hassim Forthcoming).

The ways in which meso or macro factors might produce asymmetries in quota impact are illustrated also by analyses on the symbolic effects of quotas. In contrast to previous research, I found no support for the idea that quotas have empowering effects on women (Study III). Interestingly, a majority of the previous studies have been carried out in India, where women are directly elected to reserved seats. It is likely that women who are directly elected are more visible to female constituents (cf. Soss and Schram 2007). More broadly speaking, female citizens might be more informed about the quota reform if it includes a certain (women’s) constituency that selects particular legislators. In contrast, female constituents could be suggested to
have less knowledge about the quota policy as well as about female legislators if women run no active electoral campaign. This might be the case whenever women are selected to special seats by political elites after the general election, alternatively (in legislative or party quota systems) by party leaderships to closed lists (as in most Latin American countries).

In conclusion, placing the findings of this dissertation in relation to previous research sheds new light on the complexities of quota impacts. It is likely that quota designs themselves as well as factors external to quotas – party organizations and overall party system, electoral system, political culture, regime type, etc. – shape their short-term as well as long-term consequences. Future research should pay close attention to these issues and to the possibility of certain interactions between specific quota types and the surrounding political environment.

There are also question marks remaining from the studies, however. Although the analyses highlight specific dynamics of quota systems that might impact elite and citizen politics, there are also indications that politics operate fairly similarly in quota and non-quota systems. More specifically, I expected particular effects from quotas that did not appear: a signal effect on women’s political attitudes and behavior (Study III) and particular institutional constraints on female legislators (Study II). The lack of such particular effects points to the challenges for scholars on quota policies to identify the specific impacts of these measures in relation to what we already know from research on women’s political representation, and on the impact of a general increase in the number of women.32

Guidelines for future research on the impacts of quotas

This dissertation has contributed a qualified piece to the construction of a more cohesive research strategy on the impacts of gender quotas. A novelty has been to present a theoretical motivation as to why we should include the analysis of certain possible effects in a comprehensive approach on quota impacts; another has been to move beyond the study of one single effect at a time and instead integrate various possible effects into one single research design. To address the challenges that remain, I suggest that scholars carry out at least five kinds of analyses: First, because of the newness of quotas, a number of possible impacts of quotas largely lack empirical attention. Therefore, there is still a general need for empirical analyses of different kinds of possible effects of quotas. For example, there is – again – a shortage of systematic analyses on the direct impacts of quotas on women’s substantive

32 It might be argued that quotas should not be compared to a situation in which there is “non-quota” female presence in politics, but instead to a situation with no women at all in legislatures. However, my point is that scholars on quota policies should strive to analytically distinguish between an effect of a specific measure – quotas – and an effect of mere presence. Otherwise it is difficult to assess the specific effects of this specific tool.
representation. Thus, we have fairly limited knowledge as to whether an increased number of women elected through quotas tends to put greater focus on issues of particular interest to women. Moreover, scholars have not yet addressed the perhaps ultimate question of those who justify quotas for reasons of justice, namely if and how quotas contribute to breaking discriminatory recruitment structures of political parties (see however Bjarneberg and Zetterberg 2008). Thus, as quotas leave their infancy, scholars should pay increased attention to possible long-term impacts.

Second, comparative analyses across countries as well as quota types should be executed. Such analyses are increasingly common regarding the numerical effects of quotas, yet are largely lacking regarding their possible broader impacts. Because of the emphasis on single case studies, it is difficult to generalize the findings within a larger context. I have identified and partly addressed this problem (see Study III); however, the issue deserves further empirical attention.

Third, scholars should engage in not only spatial comparisons, but also in over-time analyses, for at least two reasons: It is likely that the impacts of quotas differ depending on how quotas were adopted (e.g., top-down by strategic politicians or bottom-up by women’s organizations, etc.) (see also Franceschet and Piscopo 2008). Therefore, it is essential to take into consideration the causes behind quota adoption when examining their impacts. Moreover, we should distinguish between the short-term – or transitional – effects of adopting quotas and the more long-term consequences of having such measures (cf. Elster 1993). For instance, the possible discursive effects of quota debates and quota adoption on women’s perceptions about politics (Sacchet 2008) are not necessarily incompatible with the findings of Study III. It might be that the former effects are merely temporary. This latter aspect is related to a broader question about quotas, namely, how long we should expect effects from such policies. Quotas are fairly young; however, as time goes by these policies might become integral parts of representative democracy (unless they are seen as temporary and are removed). Therefore, it needs to be examined as to whether so-called mandate effects (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008) – the perception of female legislators feeling obliged to pursue an agenda in the name of women’s interests – are the strongest during the first years after quota adoption. Interrelated to this, scholars have a responsibility to critically discuss issues such as how long female legislators in quota systems should be considered “quota women”. This is also critical

33 As mentioned above, it has been assumed that a rapid increase of women in politics will eventually make political parties more prone to use procedures that do not benefit men. Quotas could thereby be temporary measures (see e.g. Baldez 2007; Bhavnani 2009; Rahat 2009). Exactly how quotas might be able to alter candidate selection procedures of political parties, however, is largely shrouded in mystery.
34 A possible answer to this question is to compare quotas to a situation of parity. In such a case, for instance by using “zipper quotas” (i.e. every other candidate has to be a woman),
from a political perspective: at the same time that scholars have to distin-
guish these women from other legislators to assess the impacts of quotas, we
also run the risk of contributing to the stigmatization of women elected
through quotas.

Fourth, the above-mentioned empirical analyses require a wide selection
of methodological approaches. My ambition has been to include methods in
the research design that have rarely been used in literature on the broader
impacts of quotas (such as statistical analysis on issues related to symbolic
representation). In order to gain a fuller picture of how quotas relate to legis-
lative as well as citizen politics, multi-method analyses should be performed.
There are reasons to use statistical analysis of bill proposals or law enact-
ments on specific issues (for substantive representation), and alternatively, of
women’s political attitudes or behavior (for symbolic representation). Such
analyses should be supplemented by historical analyses of legislative process
using process tracing (for substantive representation), and alternatively, by
in-depth interviews with representatives of women’s organizations at various
levels of society, or by textual analysis of media debates, etc. (for symbolic
representation). Thus, research on quota impacts should be characterized by
methodological innovation and imagination.

Fifth and finally, theoretical analyses of the dynamics that shape the im-
ports of quotas should accompany empirical examinations. Thus, theoretical
and empirical analyses should cross-fertilize one another in order to under-
stand which contexts are beneficial as well as harmful to women’s emanci-
pation within different levels of society. I have identified a few contexts that
deserve attention: the quota context itself (the type and design of quotas),
meso-level contexts (such as party organizations) and macro-level contexts
(such as political culture, party and electoral system, and political regime
type). By supplementing empirical analyses with a closer theoretical exami-
nation, we will be able to gain a more complete picture of the relationship
between quotas and their possible multiple impacts.35

Is it possible to engineer gender equality?

Gender quotas represent a radical reform strategy and a large social engi-
neering project in the area of political representation. Because of their wide
expansion across the globe, quota policies have rapidly been placed at the

women are not seen as beneficiaries. Consequently, we might not talk about “quota women”,
unless we also talk about “quota men”.

35 The guidelines focus explicitly and exclusively on gender quotas. An important challenge
for scholars who are interested in the remedies for political inequality, however, is to expand
the research agenda and include quotas for other marginalized groups (indigenous, religious,
or ethnic groups, etc.) in the analyses. There has been limited joint analysis of gender
quotas and quotas for other groups in society (see however Bird 2003; Htun 2004; Krook and
O’Brien Forthcoming).
centre of political as well as scholarly attention. In this research project, the driving question has mainly been empirical, that is, if quotas are an effective tool to increase gender equality. In other words, focus has been on the possibilities for policy-makers to engineer equality. It has never been my intention to take sides in another vivid debate, of normative character; I have throughout this research process remained neutral to the question as to whether quota adoption can be morally justified or not.

This dissertation is not able to provide a clear-cut answer to the question as to whether quotas represent an effective means of increasing equality. However, it does qualify and nuance the picture for those who expect quotas to be an overall solution – a panacea – for problems of gender inequality. Quota advocates have expected quotas not only to increase women’s numerical representation, but also their substantial advancement in society. However, one of the main contributions of this dissertation has been to theorize as well as empirically demonstrate that quotas – or certain quota provisions – might very well bring more women into legislative bodies, however without necessarily empowering women citizens or opening up new opportunities for women in legislative processes. Therefore, we should not expect automatic spill-over effects from a positive numerical development into more long-term consequences. The kind of quota adopted, and in which context, is crucial for the broader impacts of quotas.

For this reason, my best recommendation to social engineers who want to adopt quotas is to carefully consider, and be explicit about, two things; first, the specific normative motives for supporting quotas (e.g., procedure-related versus consequentialist arguments), and second, the quota type that should be adopted (e.g., reserved seats). Given that each quota type is expected to have specific effects on distinct representative modes, it is crucial not to uncritically “copy and paste” (by simply adopting the same quota type as neighbor countries) but to propose a quota type that maximizes the possibilities for quota proponents to reach their ultimate aim. In other words, the suggested quota type should match the principal reasons for justifying quotas – or the expected ultimate objective of the reform. For instance, if the main underlying motive for supporting quotas is justice-related, and a numerical “jump-start” is priority, then reserved seat quotas might be a good idea. However, the same quota might – at least in some political contexts – be a bad idea if the main objective is to pursue women’s interests and bring about substantive change.

The possibilities to come up with qualified policy recommendations should not be exaggerated, however. As this dissertation has demonstrated, quotas are likely to set complex processes in motion, in which short-term gains might be long-term losses, and positive effects appear in some contexts

As to scholarly attention, research on quotas has over the last few years increased at a very rapid pace. It is currently one of the fastest growing fields in the area of gender and politics.
but not in others, and so forth. This places great responsibility on scholars of the field to rigorously test claims about quotas, and as in this dissertation, to sometimes also falsify them (cf. Popper 1963). In other words, we should take on these challenges with a great deal of open-mindedness and preciseness, and be careful not to jump to punchy but oversimplified conclusions.

The same quota complexities give me reason to make a final cautionary note to those who put a lot of hope to this electoral reform. As other large social engineering projects, quotas are likely to generate not only advancements but sometimes also disappointments: a lack of expected effect, negative side effects, and so forth (cf. Bobbio 1987). Quota advocates should bear this in mind and have reasonable expectations on the reform. A plausible strategy, I suggest, is to put quotas in a broader context, and consider these measures to be qualified pieces in a large reform project to overcome injustices and enhance equality.
Appendix 1: Information about the interviews (Study II)

Timing and location
I conducted field research in Mexico in September to December 2006. In addition to the collection of written material (newspaper articles, scientific articles and reports, governmental reports, bill proposals, law enactments, etc.), I conducted a large number (approximately 50) of interviews. Most interviews were done in relation to the comparative case study of the two states Zacatecas and Michoacán; however, I also carried out some initial interviews with key informants in Mexico City. These were done to learn more about the Mexican political and party system as well as about the roots of Mexican quota reforms. Among the informants were journalists, political advisors, members of parliament, and scholars of Latin American electoral systems, Mexican political parties, and gender and politics at CIDE (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas), UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), and El Colegio de México.

The interviews in the state of Zacatecas were carried out in the state capital carrying the same name, during the time interval of November 1 to November 22, 2006. In Michoacán, all interviews were conducted in the state capital, Morelia (November 24–December 13). With one exception (a phone interview with a state legislator of Michoacán), the interviews were face-to-face interviews that lasted on average 50 minutes to one hour. Among the exceptions were a few interviews of half an hour and others of almost two hours. Almost all interviews were carried out in the office of the interviewee (with the door closed). Approximately 6-7 interviews were, however, conducted in a coffee shop or a restaurant. Most of these were interviews with people who had no office space. In one case, however, a female interviewee who shares office space with male colleagues preferred to do the interview in a coffee shop. This was the only time I could sense that the location of the interview might impact the answers of the interviewee.

Who are the interviewees?
In Zacatecas, seven of eight women representatives were interviewed, and in Michoacán interviews were done with all seven women parliamentarians (see Study II for a closer description of the female legislators of each state). A selection of male legislators was also interviewed, to gain a more complete picture and to detect similarities and differences in the perceptions of legislators of both sexes. In Zacatecas, three represented the largest party PRD (50 per cent of the seats), with one from PRI (20 per cent), PAN (13.3 per cent), and the Workers’ Party (PT) (13.3 per cent), respectively. Ten interviews were carried out with male legislators in Michoacán; four from PRD (having 42.5 per cent of the seats), four from PRI (37.5 per cent), and
two from PAN (15 per cent). Male legislators in both states were selected with the ambition of interviewing coordinators of the party group by the time of entering parliament, in order to learn more about the process of committee assignments, as well as to have variation in political party, committee, and age. Additional interviews were carried out with women ex-legislators, party presidents/vice presidents, presidents of women’s section of the parties, and the director-general of the women’s agency of each state, in order to have a fuller picture of the political and party structure of the states (for a list of interviewees in Zacatecas and Michoacán, see “References”).

A selection of interview questions
I used semi-structured interviews. This implies that a set of predetermined questions and topics were dealt with, yet there was still a certain flexibility to digress from the questionnaire in appropriate situations (e.g. with follow-up questions, etc.) (Berg 2009). Below is a selection of questions that were part of the predetermined questionnaire to male and female legislators (my translation from Spanish to English).

- What level of education do you have?
- What is your profession?
- How long have you been a member of [party]?
- Are you – or have you been – also active in non-partisan political organizations?
- What political appointments have you had prior to entering the state legislature?
- Why did you choose to run for office?
- How were you nominated to the candidacy?
- During the nomination/election process, what were the dominating issues of your electoral program?
- Once entering the legislature, which committee(s) did you solicit?
- In your legislative work, have you had contact with civil organizations? [if yes, which organizations?]
- Who would you say that you mainly represent?
- What issues do your bill proposals cover?
- Tell me about your experiences of working with your male colleagues (identical question about female colleagues).
- Have you ever voted against the party line? [if yes, in what issues?]
- What is your personal opinion about the quota law (question asked only in Zacatecas)?
- Do you think that the adoption of quotas has altered internal procedures of the political party/of the legislature? [if yes, in what ways?]
I used the specified order of questions in order not to put the interviewee on “the quota track” until the very end of the interview (when approaching the legislators, I claimed to be analyzing women’s legislative work). Otherwise there might have been the risk of biased answers (letting the quota policy influence how they perceive their representative role, etc). Transcriptions of the interviews are available upon request.
Appendix 2: Information about the *Latinobarómetro* data (Study III)

Study III relies on statistical data from the *Latinobarómetro* (data collection in August and September in 2005). Because of space limitations, the data set was only sketchily presented in the study. For instance, there was hardly any information about the samples. A short summary of such information is therefore presented in Table A1. Nor was it possible to include tables for descriptive statistics in the study. Descriptive statistics are therefore found in Table A2 (for women) and Table A3 (for men).

### Table A1. *Information about the sample, by country*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sampling method</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Representativity (% of the country)</th>
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</thead>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Probabilistic sample (two stages), quota (final stage)</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>Probabilistic sample (two stages), quota (final stage)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Probabilistic sample (two stages), quota (final stage)</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Probabilistic sample (two stages), quota (final stage)</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Probabilistic sample (two stages), quota (final stage)</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Probabilistic sample (two stages), quota (final stage)</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Probabilistic sample (two stages), quota (final stage)</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Probabilistic sample (two stages), quota (final stage)</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>Nicaragua</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
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<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Probabilistic sample (two stages), quota (final stage)</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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<td>Uruguay</td>
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<td>Venezuela</td>
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</table>

Source: Lagos 2005
## Table A2. Country mean for women’s political attitudes and three modes of political participation, by country, separating countries having and not having gender quotas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Political trust (0-6)</th>
<th>Political knowledge (0-4)</th>
<th>Political interest (0-3)</th>
<th>Party/Campaign (0-3)</th>
<th>Political contacts (0-8)</th>
<th>Protests (0-6)</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1.84 (1.44)</td>
<td>2.11 (0.91)</td>
<td>1.00 (0.95)</td>
<td>0.11 (0.40)</td>
<td>0.56 (1.26)</td>
<td>0.60 (1.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>1.20 (1.23)</td>
<td>1.55 (1.00)</td>
<td>0.62 (0.82)</td>
<td>0.15 (0.46)</td>
<td>0.58 (1.23)</td>
<td>0.61 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasil</td>
<td>1.59 (1.53)</td>
<td>1.67 (1.03)</td>
<td>0.92 (0.86)</td>
<td>0.23 (0.56)</td>
<td>1.36 (1.69)</td>
<td>0.54 (1.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<td>0.75 (0.92)</td>
<td>0.17 (0.53)</td>
<td>0.53 (1.01)</td>
<td>0.39 (0.83)</td>
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<td>0.68 (0.78)</td>
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<td>0.48 (1.34)</td>
<td>0.36 (0.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.22 (0.61)</td>
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<td>0.28 (0.85)</td>
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<td>1.34 (1.75)</td>
<td>0.70 (1.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.74 (0.86)</td>
<td>0.30 (0.54)</td>
<td>0.75 (1.26)</td>
<td>0.25 (0.68)</td>
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<td>Paraguay</td>
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<td>1.41 (1.12)</td>
<td>0.66 (0.89)</td>
<td>0.16 (0.55)</td>
<td>0.60 (1.30)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
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<td>0.68 (0.81)</td>
<td>0.13 (0.43)</td>
<td>0.48 (0.97)</td>
<td>0.45 (0.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>1.51 (1.43)</td>
<td>1.69 (0.99)</td>
<td>0.83 (0.91)</td>
<td>0.19 (0.53)</td>
<td>0.73 (1.37)</td>
<td>0.47* (0.97)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>1.48 (0.96)</td>
<td>0.89 (0.92)</td>
<td>0.22 (0.57)</td>
<td>0.62 (1.26)</td>
<td>0.36 (0.74)</td>
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<td>0.71 (0.86)</td>
<td>0.07 (0.31)</td>
<td>0.54 (1.34)</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
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<td>1.50 (0.96)</td>
<td>0.53 (0.84)</td>
<td>0.18 (0.49)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.68 (0.80)</td>
<td>0.20 (0.44)</td>
<td>0.46 (1.00)</td>
<td>0.23 (0.73)</td>
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<td>0.21 (0.58)</td>
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<td>Uruguay</td>
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<td>2.07 (0.99)</td>
<td>1.16 (1.00)</td>
<td>0.20 (0.58)</td>
<td>0.56 (1.39)</td>
<td>0.57 (1.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>2.48 (1.68)</td>
<td>2.04 (0.94)</td>
<td>1.02 (0.97)</td>
<td>0.30 (0.72)</td>
<td>1.43 (2.31)</td>
<td>0.47 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<td>1.71 (0.99)</td>
<td>0.80 (0.92)</td>
<td>0.20 (0.53)</td>
<td>0.61 (1.41)</td>
<td>0.37 (0.89)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Standard deviation in brackets. For exact wording of the questions, see Appendix in Study III. * = The difference between ‘quota countries’ and ‘non-quota countries’ is statistically significant (at < 0.05).

Source: Latinobarómetro 2005 (N=20,222).
Table A3. *Country mean for men’s political attitudes and three modes of political participation, by country, separating countries having and not having gender quotas*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Political trust (0-6)</th>
<th>Political knowledge (0-4)</th>
<th>Political interest (0-3)</th>
<th>Party/Campaign (0-3)</th>
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<th>Protests (0-6)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>With quotas</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
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<td>1.10 (0.99)</td>
<td>0.17 (0.53)</td>
<td>0.75 (1.51)</td>
<td>0.58 (1.05)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>1.59 (1.31)</td>
<td>2.05 (0.78)</td>
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<td>0.32 (0.69)</td>
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<td>Brasil</td>
<td>1.64 (1.47)</td>
<td>1.91 (0.96)</td>
<td>1.09 (0.94)</td>
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<td>1.50 (1.79)</td>
<td>0.44 (0.94)</td>
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<td>0.98 (0.96)</td>
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<td>0.83 (1.19)</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.35 (0.73)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2.03* (0.99)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0.27 (0.62)</td>
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</table>

Notes: Standard deviation in brackets. For exact wording of the questions, see Appendix in Study III. For all attitudes and activities, men are significantly more politically engaged than women (at < 0.05; cf. information in Table A2). * = The difference between ‘quota countries’ and ‘non-quota countries is statistically significant (at < 0.05).

Source: Latinobarómetro 2005 (N=20,222).